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Deviant Subjectivities: monstrosity and kinship in the Gothic Imagination

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Abstract

This thesis posits British and American Gothic as a construction of, and critical engagement with, Enlightenment cultures of embodiment and subjectivity: its monsters are reflections on, and explorations of, those figures excluded from the humanist subject position, as it was constructed by John Locke and later Sentimental philosophers. The concept of heteronormative kinship is central to the philosophical understanding of the subject in the modern era; from scientific ideas about genus and species, to philosophical debates about the structure of the nation state, family is the key term. Interrogating kinship and its relation to normativity in texts ranging from *Frankenstein* to the splatterpunk novels of Clive Barker and Poppy Z. Brite, and nineteenth-century plantation novels to television crime dramas, I argue, is crucial to understanding the cultural construction of humanity itself. Focusing on representations of the monstrous as a deviation from the norm of an able and reproductive body, I centre my analysis on the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, and disability, taking a critical stance informed by critical disability studies and feminist queer theory. Previous studies have read physical anomaly as a metaphor for other minority identities, and so (dis)ability disappears as a question in its own right. In this respect, critical discourse may continue to re-enact Enlightenment structures of domination, hegemony, and universalization, even as they seek to challenge them. Charting Gothic explorations of the relationship between self-subject-citizen and other-object-monster, from their eighteenth century origins to the contemporary era, I examine changing representations of monstrosity and kinship within an historicised context. I argue that what is under consideration in all Gothic art and critique which features the monstrous – no matter its political stance or thematic focus – is the subject itself. These fictions provide a space in which monstrous otherness – a deviant subjectivity – can be expressed and explored as an embodied identity and lived experience.

Acknowledgements

This work is dedicated to Ellie Keggin, with all my love.

We care a lot!

Declaration: I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged:

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Contents

Table of Figures

Introduction

The Gothic novel is full of monsters and the monstrous: that which is, by definition, deviant; that which transgresses. Monstrosity is created by the establishment of categories, and thus conceptualised as a challenge to the imposition of social or moral norms. The queer, the disabled, the racially other, the feminine, all are frequently positioned as monstrous in Anglophone Gothic texts. Defined against these 'others', the normative is thus constructed as, and to be, an able-bodied, straight, white, man. Approached from the opposite perspective, through a philosophy of idealisation, rather than a (de)construction of the monstrous other, we find the straight, white, able-bodied man at the heart of the philosophies of Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment humanism. This thesis thus positions the Anglo-American Gothic as a construction of, and critical engagement with, Enlightenment cultures of embodiment: its monsters are reflections on, and explorations of, the humanist subject position and those that it excludes. This thesis charts Anglo-American Gothic explorations of the relationship between self-subject-citizen and other-object-monster from the eighteenth-century origins of the genre to the contemporary era, examining changing representations of embodied identity within an historicised context. Though the Gothic exploits the construction of the monstrous other against the norm, to induce fear and unease, these fictions also provide a space in which monstrous otherness – a deviant subjectivity – can be expressed and explored as an embodied identity and lived experience.

What it is, and what it means, to be a subject is often conflated with the question as to what it means to be human, and both conundrums are at the heart of post-Enlightenment philosophy. The Gothic is, I argue, the critical shadow of the Enlightenment; figured as the darkness that needs illumination, or the shadow that adds depth and nuance to that which is already lit, it can present a regressive and/or progressive stance. The binaristic relationship between darkness and light, in which the definition and realisation of each state relies upon its opposite, acknowledges also the temporal shifts that occur, as darkness is also conceived of as that which precedes light. Thus critics such as Jarlath Killeen have explored the relationship between the Gothic's depiction of otherness and time, as others, like Chris Baldick, have

explored the Gothic's potential to be both radical and conservative in its engagements.[1] However, the subject under consideration in all Gothic art and critique which features the monstrous – no matter its political stance or thematic focus – I would argue, is the *subject* itself. I suggest that the definition of this subject is triangulated through three key topics of philosophical debate in post-Enlightenment texts and cultures: the body as the material representation of the subject; the educational and environmental development of the 'natural' subject into the 'civilised' citizen; and the governmental and juridical structures that situate the subject as a citizen of the nation state. All of these are connected through the reproductive politics of heterosexuality.

Interrogating the boundaries of kinship and its relation to normativity, I argue, is crucial to understanding the cultural construction of humanity itself. The concept of heteronormative kinship and the idea of the monstrous (non)reproductive 'other' have both been central to the philosophical understanding of the subject in the modern era, from scientific ideas about genus and species, to philosophical debates about the structure of the nation state. In the modern nation state, increasingly bound up with capitalist ideals of profit and loss and imperialist expansion, the body of the ideal citizen-subject must be productive and reproductive. The importance of heritage in establishing racial identity and the boundaries of those who 'belong' to a particular nation, is thus tied to the reproductive capability in the subject-citizen, situating the exploration of the queer and/or disabled body and its relation to normativity within a framework of ideas about kinship. This thesis therefore focuses on representations of the monstrous as they relate to considerations of the reproductive body, engaging with philosophies of eugenics, and ideas around heredity and miscegenation, as well as queerness and sexuality.

Bringing up the bodies: normativity, disability, and critical queerness

The human is, like the monster, an unstable subject; constructed through the establishment and maintenance of constantly-reconfigured scientific and social boundaries and limits, such as sex, gender, disability, race, and species. The individualist subject is a societal explication of the body and self, defined through the construction of boundaries and borders which,

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[1] Chris Baldick, *In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity, and Nineteenth-Century Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Jarlath Killeen, *Gothic Literature 1825-1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009).

according Foucault and Canguilhem, also create monsters. Canguilhem theorises that monsters are measured as deviant against two axes of normalcy – the physical and the moral.[2] The first category depends upon measure against a genus, or archetype, and thus Canguilhem states that the monster must be organic: 'that which has no rule of internal cohesion […] a spectrum that can be called a measure, mould, or model – that cannot be called monstrous'.[3] Foucault refined Canguilhem's second categorisation; insisting that all boundaries are constructed by human observation rather than pre-existing facts, he states 'there is monstrosity only when the confusion comes up against, overturns, or disturbs, civil, canon, or religious law'.[4] Foucault thus defines four potential boundaries for the monster to transgress – the natural, the legal, the social, and the scriptural – all of which are culturally constructed. As critical disability scholar Margrit Shildrik argues, 'the Western notion of subjectivity in general is both guaranteed and contested by those who do not, indeed cannot, unproblematically occupy the embodied subject position'.[5] Thus, both the subject of the law and the monster who lies outside it are constructed through a process of recognition and normalisation that establishes normativity on one side, and monstrosity on the other.

I argue, then, that Gothic monstrosity has been a check upon the project of Enlightenment that, too often, foregrounds a model of subjectivity that privileges the experience of white, able-bodied, straight European men. Universalising aspects of human experience is, I suggest, what enables the erasure of specific viewpoints that are inconvenient to the project of Enlightenment. In his recent monograph *Materialism* (2017) Terry Eagleton suggests that there is a 'kind of body that is currently fashionable in cultural studies […] the ethnic, gendered, queer, starving, constructed, aging, bedecked, disabled' – this list continues.[6] This is essentially a list of 'otherness', of the traditionally excluded. If 'the body' has no gender, no ethnicity, no sexuality, no specificity, it cannot be distinguished from the normative white, male, and able-bodied. In seeking to find a body 'of a more rudimentary kind' that is not 'a cultural construct', this scholarship risks reinscribing Enlightenment hierarchies of value.[7] The Gothic deals with specificity, the body that is not and cannot be considered rudimentary,

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[2] Georges Canguilhem, 'Monstrosity and the Monstrous', translated by Theresa Jaeger, *Diogenes*, 10.4 (1962), 27-42.

[3] Canguilhem, p. 28.

[4] Michel Foucault, *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974-1975*, edited by Antonella Salomoni and Valerio Marchetti, translated by Graham Burchell (London: Verso, 2003), p. 63.

[5] Margrit Shildrik, *Embodying the Monster: Encounters with the Vulnerable Self* (London: Sage, 2002), p. 5.

[6] Terry Eagleton, *Materialism* (New Haven, NC: Yale University Press, 2017), p. viii.

[7] Ibid., p. ix.

and is thus marginalised, its experiences silenced, by a universal application of the indistinguishable construct *the* human body.

Deviation from the normative, however, does not in and of itself disrupt the dominant norm; normativity requires an 'other' as a definitional opposite. As Xavier Aldana Reyes suggests in *Body Gothic* (2014): 'bodies are always defined by opposition and […] notions of the grotesque or the abhuman shift to accommodate perspectives anxious to establish themselves as normative'.[8] Queer theorists, such as Lee Edelman, argue that incorporation within the normative is always predicated on the extension of the majority model to the 'other', reducing its transgressive and disruptive potential. That the Gothic can support both conservative and transgressive readings, might seem to suggest that the Gothic monster will become safe and familiar, and the model of normativity will simply expand, rather than be deconstructed. As Christopher Craft notes, the queerness that Bram Stoker codes into his monsters reflects a twisted version of heterosexuality, and is defined utterly against socially dominant normativity which 'could not imagine such desire without repeating within their metaphor of inversion the basic structure of the heterosexual paradigm'.[9] Thus, as Judith Butler and Robert McRuer argue, there is a distinction between a text which is 'critically queer/disabled' in that it explores the socially constructed nature of the definitions of these terms, and one that is 'virtually queer/disabled' which are texts that present only the image of the not-normative.[10] This thesis asks, with Butler, 'what challenge does that excluded and abjected realm produce to a symbolic hegemony that might force a radical rearticulation of what qualifies as bodies that matter'?[11]

Previous studies that have approached Gothic texts from a queer perspective, such as Craft's and Harry M. Benshoff's *Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Film* (1997), fruitfully explore the possibilities of monsters as metaphorical representations of repressed identities. However, when physical anomaly is read as a metaphor for many minority identities, as David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder note, 'physical difference exemplifies

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[8] Xavier Aldana Reyes, *Body Gothic: Corporeal Transgression in Contemporary Literature and Horror Film* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014), p. 7.
[9] Christopher Craft, '"Kiss Me with those Red Lips": Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*', *Representations,* 8 (1984), 107-133 (p. 129).
[10] Judith Butler, 'Critically Queer', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 1 (1993), 17-32; Robert McRuer, 'Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence', in *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities*, edited by Sharon L. Snyder, Brenda Jo Brueggemann, and Rosemarie Garland-Thomson (New York, NY: Modern Language Association of America, 2002), pp. 88-99 (p. 95).
[11] Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: a Politics of the Performative* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1997), p. 13.

the evidence of social deviance'.[12] The result is that physical anomaly tends to be read as a metaphor for other minority identities, and so disappears as a question in its own right. In a telling reversal, Angela M. Smith's *Hideous Progeny: Disability, Eugenics, and Classic Horror Cinema* (2011) explores the reproductive politics of disability without engaging with the fundamental heteronormativity that structures the texts and their cultural milieu, and ends up reinscribing Benshoff's metaphorised model of queer representation. Further, Tabish Khair notes that the 'other' is often used as a 'gesture rather than a term'; it loses definitional specificity which impedes analysis.[13] The danger then becomes that 'the Other is seen as a Self waiting to be assimilated […] or the Other is cast as the purely negative image of the European Self'.[14] Thus, critical discourse may continue to re-enact Enlightenment structures of domination, hegemony, and universalization, even as they seek to challenge them.

In order to explore the alignment of queerness with bodily difference in the representation of monstrosity, rather than read queerness *into* and *over* physicality, by suggesting that physical abnormality is always a metaphorical representation, I draw upon Adrienne Rich's concept of *compulsory heterosexuality*, and McRuer and Alison Kafer's extensions of this analysis as *compulsory able-bodiedness*. Kafer defines compulsory able-bodiedness as a cultural presumption:

> Unless someone identifies herself as disabled, or is visually marked as disabled (for example, using a wheelchair or other mobility aid; carrying a white cane or accompanied by a service dog; or missing a limb or other body part), she is assumed not to be disabled.[15]

Compulsory heterosexuality, likewise, is the *a priori* assumption of heterosexuality until queerness is communicated through socially-coded dress or behaviour, or performed outright through romantic or sexual interaction. McRuer notes that these binaristic constructions depend on a discourse of normativity that marks the disabled and the queer as abnormal, and thus less desirable:

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[12] David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *The Body and Physical Difference: Discourses of Disability* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997), p. 5.
[13] Tabish Khair, *The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness: Ghosts from Elsewhere* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 11.
[14] Ibid., p. 4.
[15] Alison Kafer, 'Compulsory Bodies: Reflections on Heterosexuality and Able-bodiedness', *Journal of Women's History*, 15.3 (2003), 77-89 (p. 80).

to be able-bodied is to be "free from physical disability", just as to be heterosexual is to be "the opposite of homosexual"', and thus 'the most successful heterosexual subject is the one whose sexuality is not compromised by disability (metaphorized as queerness) […] not compromised by queerness (metaphorized as disability).[16]

However, Kafer argues that reading queerness and disability as metaphors, rather than embodied experiences, can fall into the practice identified by Mitchell and Snyder of eliding physical difference and social identity. The work of Ellen Samuels, exploring the incorporation of Judith Butler's analysis on gendered and raced 'bodies that matter' within critical disability studies, has been most helpful in locating these pitfalls.[17] Physical anomaly is often read as a metaphor for many minority identities, or read through a lens such as queer theory, however as Mitchell and Snyder note 'within this common critical methodology physical difference exemplifies the evidence of social deviance even as the constructed nature of *physicality itself* fades from view'(all italics are original, unless stated otherwise).[18] This implies that queerness and disability cannot be discussed simultaneously.

However, Kafer explores compulsory ablebodiedness as a social dynamic that intersects with, rather than simply echoing experiences of, compulsory heterosexuality. Kafer demonstrates that compulsory heterosexuality functions differently for differently embodied individuals, and that queerness of desire, constructed as a socially deviant trait, is culturally aligned with physical deviance from the putative norm:

> Under the logic of compulsory heterosexuality, lesbianism is not recognized as a valid choice […] for women with disabilities […]. They are perceived as being incapable of finding male partners and thus must have turned to lesbianism as a last resort; their same-sex desires are cast as signs of disability-related confusion; or their same-sex relationships are constructed as platonic due to their perceived asexuality.[19]

Even heteronormative desire, and the construction of a traditional family, is queered through perceptions of disability, Kafer suggests. Eugenic discourses present the reproduction of anomalous bodies as an undesirable act. Thus, social expectations about what constitutes

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[16] McRuer, p. 91, p. 94.
[17] Ellen Samuels, 'Critical Divides: Judith Butler's Body Theory and the Question of Disability', *NWSA Journal*, 14.3 (2002), 58-76.
[18] Mitchell and Snyder, p. 5.
[19] Kafer, p. 83.

appropriate behaviours differ greatly for differently-embodied identities. There is no single standard of deviance, or normativity, which can be applied to all bodies without qualification.

Thus, recognising that societal judgements are linked to readings of embodied attributes, and these attributes and the responses to them are central to an individual's identity formation, this thesis engages with ideas of the representation and response to collective identity. Steven Epstein has addressed essentialism versus social constructionism in identity formation and group politics using a model similar to the one I attempt here, connecting not disability but ethnicity to queerness 'as something that is neither an absolutely inescapable ascription nor something chosen and discarded at will' but something 'in the dialectics between choice and constraint, and between the individual, the group and the larger society'.[20] Epstein does not, however, project sexuality over ethnicity as he recognises 'the gay male movement's […] attempt to simply get its "piece of the pie" by appealing to hegemonic ideologies', that can gloss over the structural roots of inequality.[21] Epstein thus recognises that gay collective identity in America, its public expression dominated by white, middle-class male voices, risks 'affirming a distinctive group identity that legitimately differs from the large society, [whilst it] simultaneously imposes a "totalising" sameness within the group'.[22] Epstein's call to resist both defensive separatism and false homogeneity, recognising that difference can be synergistic to progressive cultural development, draws similar conclusions to Anna Marie Smith in her response to the parliamentary debates on the infamous section 28 of the UK Local Government Act 1987. Smith states that 'the incitement to closure must somehow be refused, and the difficult task of rethinking an approach to radical difference must somehow be explored'.[23] In this, I see also intimations of Butler's 'lost horizon of radical sexual politics'.[24] This thesis is, then, operating within a tradition of ongoing exploration about the meaning and purpose of collective identities in Anglo-American cultures, from the identification of the human subject, to the recognition of subsidiary characteristics such as queerness, (dis)ability, and race.

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[20] Steven Epstein, 'Gay Politics, Ethnic Identity: The Limits of Social Constructionism' in *Social Perspectives in Lesbian and Gay Studies: A Reader*, edited by Peter M. Nardi and Beth E. Schneider (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 134-155 (p. 151), (first publ. in *Socialist Review*, 93/94 (1987), 9-54).
[21] Ibid., p. 153.
[22] Ibid., p. 154.
[23] Anna Marie Smith, 'A Symptomology of an Authoritarian Discourse: the parliamentary debates on the prohibition of the promotion of homosexuality', *New Formations*, 10 (1990), 41-65 (p. 59).
[24] Judith Butler, 'Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?', *Differences*, 13.1 (2002), 14-44 (p. 40).

This thesis explores the (de)construction of the subject in Gothic fiction by taking a critical stance informed by both critical disability studies and feminist queer theory. In focusing on representations of the monstrous as a deviation from the norm of an able and reproductive body, I centre my analysis on the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, and disability. (Re)production is traditionally linked to heteronormative models of sexuality, almost by default, and to ideas of physical 'fitness'. In my attempts to recognise the important connections between the cultural construction of bodily norms and depictions of race and ethnicity, I draw upon work in post-colonial studies and critical race theory, and situate this analysis within an intersectional framework, thus seeking to resist universalization of experience. I have not explored black Gothic literature in detail in this thesis as I am aware of the examples set by previous white scholars; for example, Carol Margaret Davison's entry in the *Encyclopaedia of The Gothic* (2015), with its constant comparisons between black and white authors, the latter referred to as 'masters' of the art, develops ill-advised comparisons that reinforce, rather than critique, racial hierarchies.[25] By taking such a critical stance, my thesis aims to explore the intersection of queerness with bodily difference in the representation of monstrosity, rather than read queerness into and over other aspects of embodiment.

Generic Genealogies of the Gothic

This work engages with the critical discourse of the contemporary era that 'writes back' from the margins to the foundational texts of the Enlightenment project, such as the philosophies of thinkers such as John Locke, the Third Earl of Shaftesbury, and the works of Francis Hutcheson, to posit the Gothic as, perhaps, the pre-eminent fictional sphere in which these vitally important debates are made available for consideration by a wide audience. The Gothic, in its form as well as its content, refuses the imposition of rigid structures, boundaries, and endings; it is an ideal space in which to locate a radical potential and the refusal of closure. Angela Carter declared 'provoking unease' to be the 'singular moral function' of the Gothic.[26] As Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet observes, unease is 'a curious mental condition, both cognitive and emotional', linking the material, bodily experience of reading to the rational,

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[25] Carol Margaret Davison, 'African American Gothic', in *Encyclopaedia of the Gothic*, edited by William Hughes, David Punter, and Andrew Smith (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), pp. 7-11.

[26] Angela Carter, 'Afterword to Fireworks [1974]', in *Burning Your Boats: Collected Short Stories* (London: Vintage, 2006), pp. 459-460 (p. 459).

intellectual aspect. [27] The interplay between the body and the text is central to the considerations of this thesis.

The formal qualities of the Gothic echo its thematic concerns with the nature of subjectivity, and the possibility of monstrous transgression, as an *undead* genre that, I argue, endlessly deconstructs the defining subject of history, and then reconstructs it. The subject is, Foucault suggests in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), constructed through narrative: 'continuous history is the indispensable correlative of consciousness'.[28] Foucault argues, following Locke, that the construction of a teleological and continuous history centres human consciousness as 'the original subject of all historical development and all action'.[29] The Gothic narrative resists and/or over-extends this continuity of the subject in both form and content; it makes subjects of those who are not, or are no longer, human – monsters, ghosts, and revenants – and presents their histories through flashbacks and found narratives. Both form and content in the Gothic have familial overtones, as Soltysik Monnet and Steffen Hantke explore in a Bahktinian reading of the novel form which suggests in 'eschewing linear narratives in favour of complex nested, framed, and infinitely regressed narrative fragments, the Gothic novel is heterogeneity incarnate'. [30] Conceptualising the genre through Wittgenstein's concept of family resemblance, Soltysik Monnet and Hantke suggest that 'most texts have at least some recognisable family features but any two texts can seem wholly unrelated'.[31] Gothic is thus a genre steeped in ideas of heredity and productivity: engaging in meta-textual play with ideas of authorship, referencing past events in the genealogies of its characters, while exploring the genealogy of genre itself.

This study explores the construction of the idea of the subject in and through literary and creative cultural endeavour, which is linked to the creative expression of lived experience, but does not seek to define the living subject. A great deal of work has been done locating the roots of the modern construction of the subject in the eighteenth century, with particular focus on the family as a location for the development of the gendered, sexed, and racially-delineated

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[27] Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet, *The Poetics and Politics of the American Gothic: Gender and Slavery in Nineteenth Century American Literature* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 3.
[28] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002 [1989]), p. 18.
[29] Ibid., p. 13.
[30] Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet and Steffen Hantke, 'Introduction', in *War Gothic in Literature and Culture*, edited by Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet and Steffen Hantke (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p. xi.
[31] Ibid., p. xii.

subject, by scholars such as George E. Haggerty, Ruth Perry, and Mary Poovey.[32] Though Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick traces the development of some of these philosophies through the Gothic of the late-eighteenth century to the nineteenth century,[33] no study yet traces the Gothic's engagement with the normative model of subjectivity from these roots to the present day. This study draws upon and develops these historicising views of genre and gender, eschewing psychoanalytic readings and theorisations that are common in Gothic criticism, to focus on the depiction of embodiment.

As the boundaries of social and physical 'normality' altered over time, through philosophical debate or medical advancement, so the conception of the monster and the family change also. This, I suggest, is how Fred Botting can state that 'there are few families in Gothic fiction, a telling absence which suggests that the importance of the family lies as much in a symbolic dimension as in actual existence'.[34] I agree that the symbolism of family as a construct is the heart and hearth of the Gothic, but suggest that Botting perhaps 'misrecognises' the family within the Gothic, which points to the idea that there is a right and wrong way to 'do' family, that certain social structures do not fit within the boundaries of the definition. The representation of familial themes such as heredity, reproduction and miscegenation in the Gothic are currently under-theorised in relation to the development of the Gothic monster, the literary and cinematic contexts in which monstrosities develop, and their signification within the wider social concerns. Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall suggest that it is assumptive to view the Gothic as indicative and reflective of cultural anxieties, when, it is a genre whose *raison d'etre* might be described as to provoke anxiety.[35] Yet, why then, over time, are the same tropes and themes utilised to provoke this anxiety, and why would some be more popular at one time than in another? An answer can perhaps be found in Baldick's own definition of the Gothic: that it 'should combine a fearful sense of inheritance in time with a sense of claustrophobic enclosure in space […] to produce an impression of sickening descent

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[32] Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1985); George E. Haggerty, *Unnatural Affections: Women and Fiction in the Later 18th Century* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998); Ruth Perry, *Novel Relations: the Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture, 1748-1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
[33] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990).
[34] Fred Botting, 'AfterGothic: consumption, machines, and black holes', in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, edited by Jerrold E. Hogle, (Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 277-300 (p. 284)
[35] Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall, 'Gothic Criticism', in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, edited by David Punter (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 267-287.

into disintegration'.[36] I suggest that the Gothic allows us to fear the disintegration of boundaries and borders that a consideration of the 'lost horizons' of radical openness might necessarily entail, and to explore the past and the future of humanity itself in all its possible permutations.

The articulating of you, or the bones of the argument

Every era has its monsters, because every era has a different view of what constitutes normality, and I explore fictional Gothic narratives across the genre's history, from the late-eighteenth century to the present era, contextualising their presentation of the monstrous other with material from contemporary medical, philosophical, and social commentaries, through which the boundaries of the natural, the legal, and the social are articulated. These are categories that are constructed through and with each other, and Foucault's final category of the scriptural is a necessary correlate. However, this thesis focuses on the representation of the body, rather than the soul; though considerations of morality and moral norms are a compelling aspect of normativity, they fall largely outside the purview of this study. As science and medicine, psychiatry and philosophy, develop new ideas about how human physiology and psychology are constructed, the boundaries of the body are challenged and renewed. The relationship between the subject and the concepts that co-construct the social discourse by which the 'other' is recognised – namely sexuality, race, gender, and 'the body' – need to be constantly recalibrated. In the late-twentieth century, Angela Carter proposed that 'we live in Gothic times'.[37] I would suggest that this has always been true in the post-Enlightenment period, as the borders and boundaries established by Enlightenment philosophies of the subject create exclusion and otherness and label it monstrosity. I explore, then, the idea that the boundaries of the human subject, as a fictional and social construct, are radically unstable. I suggest that Gothic fictions critiquing these social dynamics regarding the body have long offered a site of resistance to the normative, and offer a rich and nuanced depiction of social marginalisation.

As Gothic itself is an unstable category, described by Anne Williams as 'broader than genre, deeper than plot, and wider than a single tradition', there is an enormous amount of potential

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[36] Chris Baldick, 'Introduction', in *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales*, edited by Chris Baldick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001 [1992]), pp. xi-xxiii (p. xix.).
[37] Carter, 'Afterword to *Fireworks*', p. 460.

material available for exploration.[38] To address the vast chronology of the Gothic genre, this thesis progresses through what can be termed an 'archaeological approach' inspired by Foucault, opening up a 'trench' to explore periods of disruption: 'at every turn it stands back, measures up what is before it, gropes towards its limits, stumbles against what it does not mean, and digs pits to mark out its own path'.[39] This thesis focuses on the literary cultures of the post-Enlightenment tradition in Anglo-American culture, and thus concentrates on publications written in English. Key texts are explored as 'nodes within a network' which construct and deconstruct the notion of the normative within society.[40] Texts that refer to one another, were published alongside one another, or materially influenced the production of one another have thus been prioritised in the selection. Also, texts that acknowledge their constructed nature as text, or as part of a Gothic literary tradition, are central to the exploration of the construction of genre as an ongoing meta-textual debate.

There are six chapters, each exploring a particular era of production. Chapter one situates the development of the Gothic as a genre alongside the rise of the philosophy and literature of Sentimentalism, which many critics view as constitutive of a modern subjectivity that is bound up with ideas of sexuality and kinship. Chapter two explores Gothic engagement with dominant norms of 'the cult of domesticity' in the mid-Victorian period, as a continuation of sentimental heterosexuality and an organising principle of empire. In chapter three, Gothic texts from the end of the nineteenth century and leading into the First World War are examined as engaging with the instability of the dominant conception self-subject, in the wake of Darwinian evolutionary science, sexological psychiatry, and political challenges to patriarchy and empire. Chapter four, focusing on pulp fiction and horror comics of the mid-twentieth century, explores how Gothic fictions and depictions of monstrosity, particularly in America, encoded the suppression of marginalised viewpoints as cultural unity was foregrounded after two World Wars. Chapter five explores the HIV-era queer Gothic of the 1980s and 90s; as cultural commentators declared an ongoing 'culture war' between progressive and conservative social commentators, queer lives and families, and the history of the suppression of 'otherness', came to be openly acknowledged. The final, sixth chapter, focuses on the depiction of contemporary masculinity and patriarchy in Gothic crime drama, in which the power of the normative position is openly acknowledged as monstrous.

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[38] Anne Williams, *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 241.
[39] Foucault, *Archaeology*, p. 18.
[40] Ibid., p. 26.

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Subjective Distinctions: first-wave Gothic and the modern self

The Gothic as a literary genre developed in the eighteenth century, the terminology contrasting the so-called Dark Ages and barbarism of the pre-Renaissance with the neo-classicism of the Enlightenment. The novels of the first wave Gothic in the mid-to-late eighteenth century form a distinct literary movement, their authors responding to each other's productions: Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* (1778) acknowledging the influence of Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764) in its preface, and Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1817 [1803]) providing its readers with a reading list of 'horrid novels'. The ghosts and castles that provided the genre with its atmosphere may hark back to the past, but the central characters more often than not evince a very modern sensibility, as Siân Silyn Roberts suggests:

> The early British Gothic normalizes and naturalizes a modern subject defined by its autonomy and interiority and so works hand-in-glove with the sentimental tradition to modernise kinship relations at the level of the individuated subject and the contractual household. […N]othing less than the definition of the individual and its claims to moral authority are at stake in the early British Gothic novel.[1]

In this chapter I explore contemporary Sentimental philosophies' influence on the construction of the subject in the Gothic novel, and how Gothic depictions differ from the Sentimental norm, as enabled by the transgressive potential of this new subgenre. I do not, however, suggest that Sentimental and Gothic fictions stand in clear opposition, the one utilising Romantic tropes of developing heteronormativity to champion a regulatory order and the domestic imprisonment of women, and the latter promoting an alternative through same-sex desire and unconventional family arrangements. However, if Sentimentalism problematized and explored the possibilities, and limitations, of the construction of masculinist heterosexual selfhood in Enlightenment culture, then I suggest that the Gothic was the space in which the queer, the other, the experience of not being a conventional subject, could be explored.

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[1] Siân Silyn Roberts, *Gothic Subjects: The Transformation of Individualism in American Fiction, 1790-1861* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), pp. 3-4.

Sentimental Heterosexuality: normativity for the modern age

The modern conception of heterosexuality, as 'an ideal, an ideology, an aggressively normalising fiction',[2] and the basis of identity, has long been established and explored in scholarship as originating in the eighteenth century. The arguments are summarised neatly by Ana de Freitas Boe and Abby Coykendall:

> The eighteenth century, in reconfiguring what counts as sex and sexuality, prescribed not only how, but with whom, people may have sex, bringing about a discursive regime from which not every subject benefits equally. […] Heteronormativity congeals into a fully fomented hegemony by the end of the eighteenth century, reaching its apex roughly midway through the nineteenth century; however, it never becomes so completely entrenched as to curtail dissent from its dictates or to prevent the materialisation of alternative sex/gender configurations – whether those resurfacing from earlier periods or those emerging in defiance of, or simply heedless to, its mandates.[3]

The performance of appropriately gendered behaviours is as important as the performance of an appropriately orientated sexual desire, for both men and women, as can be seen in the attacks on Horace Walpole by contemporaries who accused him of hermaphroditism, amongst other deviances of behaviour and body.[4] George E. Haggerty notes the difference between same sex attraction and same sex affection, in the 'striking contrast – between sodomitical behavior, which is punishable by death, and love, which is idealized'.[5] The difference, between that which is condemned and that which is celebrated, is grounded in Sentimental philosophy's construction of reason and natural emotion; that which promotes the 'natural' good is also reasonable and logical. And good is reproductive.

The moral good of reproductive sexuality is the sole topic of the anonymously authored *An Essay on Celibacy* (1753), which asserts direct equivalence between heterosexual desire and

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[2] Paul Kelleher, *Making Love: Sentiment and Sexuality in Eighteenth Century British Literature* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2015), p. 197.

[3] Ana de Freitas Boe and Abby Coykendall, 'Introduction', *Heteronormativity in Eighteenth Century Literature and Culture*, edited by Ana de Freitas Boe and Abby Coykendall (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), pp. 1-22 (pp. 14-15).

[4] William Guthrie, 'A Reply to the Counter Address' (1764), in *A Collection of Scarce and Interesting Tracts, Written by Persons of Eminence; Upon the Most Important, Political and Commercial Subjects*, 4 vols. (London: J. Debrett, 1787-88), I, pp. 343-365.

[5] George E. Haggerty, *Men in Love: Masculinity and Sexuality in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 5-6.

moral goodness: 'no wise or virtuous person has the prospect of doing so much good in any other way, as by discharging conjugal offices, and raising up a family, to support the interest of the great family of Earth'.[6] By the end of the century it was widely theorised and accepted that, 'to promote virtue is to preserve the species through sexual reproduction and vice versa'.[7] The key relationship between the self and society, and the self and the other, is thus determined by the ability to produce and reproduce; the key contribution to society the individual makes is the continuation of that society. As Foucault famously argues, 'it was around and on the basis of the deployment of alliance that the deployment of sexuality was constructed'.[8] What is important to this discussion about the construction of a modern concept of sexuality is its centrality to the debates about, and depictions of, the individual subject – as a representative of their species, nation state, class, and gender: it is the attribute that governs (re)production. The term reproduction itself was newly applied to human fertility in the latter half of the eighteenth century; as Ludmilla Jordanova notes, the more common term was generation.[9] Jordanova links the introduction of a new term to the wider implications of newly-minted versions of the human as a representative of the species as a whole, rather than a focus on the child as an individual soul. Hence, only certain bodies were positioned as uncritically reproductive: whilst the fertility of wealthy white families is celebrated, the fertility of black, disabled, and poor people is put up for public debate in works such as Robert Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798).

It is in this period that we can see medicine developing the field of what was to become eugenics. Physician William Buchan's popular *Domestic Medicine: or, a Treatise on the Prevention and Cure of Diseases by Regimen and Simple Medicine*, first published in 1769, posits the idea that healthy adults develop from healthy children, and links this to the wider idea of a healthy population for the nation state.[10] Buchan declares that 'no person who labours under an incurable malady ought to marry'; without regard to the quality or enjoyment of the life of the individual, his concern is wholly for heredity.[11] Yet what counted

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[6] Kelleher, *Making Love*, pp. 12-13.

[7] Ibid., p. 12.

[8] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: an Introduction*, translated by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1981), p. 107.

[9] Ludmilla Jordanova, 'Interrogating the Concept of Reproduction in the Eighteenth Century', in *Conceiving the New World Order: The Global Politics of Reproduction*, edited by Faye D. Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp (London: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 369-386 (p. 372).

[10] Ibid., p. 380.

[11] Ibid., p. 380.

as a malady was open to interpretation; the Parliamentarian William Hay, author of *An Essay on Deformity* (1754) states that he will 'leave it to better Naturalists to determine, whether Deformity, abstractedly considered, is prejudicial to Health'.[12] Hay had congenital dwarfism, and considered the limitations that his short stature conferred on his life as a benefit to his health, keeping him safer than those who engaged in vigorous sports or went to war. Hay married, and fathered five children. The judgement of deformity of the individual was also linked more widely to ideas of race, as well as health; whether by the scientific theory that white Europeans were more highly evolved versions of humanity than black Africans, or the religious belief that dark skin was imposed by the sin of Ham. In either system of thought, the black body is presented as a less perfect version of the white body: 'And I am black, but O! my soul is white; White as an angel is the English child: But I am black as if bereav'd of light'.[13] Lisa Foreman Cody thus argues that the naturalists of this era 'linked the categorisation of identities with reproductive biology', and that this was part of the construction of scientific racism that supported European, particularly British, imperialism.[14] Thus, the establishment of the norms of heterosexuality, an idealised conjugality, was structured within a framework of imperial ideologies of race and nationality.

The alignment of the increasingly professionalised field of medicine and so-called natural philosophy shaped and forged the norms that Foucault defines as 'reasoned' love and love 'governed by unreason'.[15] The alignment of reason with heterosexuality for the well-heeled European can be seen in the pages of the *Spectator*: 'A happy Marriage has in it all the Pleasures of friendship, all the Enjoyment of Sense and Reason, and, indeed, all the Sweets of Life'.[16] As Paul Kelleher notes:

> For Addison and Steele […] the reasonable subject par excellence is the
> conjugally orientated male heterosexual, a man whose moral and reasoning
> capacities are understood to be indissociable from his erotic attraction to and
> ethical investment in a virtuous woman. This woman, however, is not regarded
> principally as a reasoning subject in her own right but rather as a sentimentalized

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[12] William Hay, *An Essay on Deformity*, second edition (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1754), p. 22.
[13] William Blake, 'The Little Black Boy' [1789], in *The Complete Poems*, edited by Alicia Ostriker (London: Penguin, 2004 [1977]), p. 106.
[14] Lisa Forman Cody, *Birthing the Nation: Sex, Science, and the Conception of Eighteenth-Century Britons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 240.
[15] Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*, edited by Jean Khalfa, translated by Jonathan Murphy (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), p. 88.
[16] Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, 261, Saturday, 29 December (1711).

wife, who functions as 'the worthy object' of the male heterosexual's 'utmost affection'.[17]

This can be read as a reformulation of Milton's 'he for God only, She for God in him'.[18] Whether secular or religious, the quality that separates the human from the animal, variously constructed as the god-given soul or ability to reason, is thought to be apportioned to men in a greater capacity than women, and white people over black. It is such thinking that Mary Wollstonecraft challenges when she writes in *The Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) that women should be treated 'like rational creatures, instead of flattering their FASCINATING graces, and viewing them as if they were in a state of perpetual childhood, unable to stand alone'.[19] To be healthy and sane, to appropriately perform the role of subject and citizen, is to be heterosexual, European, and – it almost goes without saying – male.

The narrative of the development of hegemonic heteronormativity, and the importance of literature and print culture to this process, is widely accepted, but it is framed differently depending upon the perspective of the scholar. Kelleher suggests that this 'heterosexuality for the modern age' was created by and through British Sentimentalism, as an identity position and social order 'uniquely equipped to unify and stabilise a host of social, political, and economic transformations that characterise modernity, including the rise and spread of the public sphere, contract-based governance, interest driven sociability, [and] bourgeois self-empowerment'.[20] Todd Parker charts a similar progression, but through the imagery and rhetoric of 'the natural': 'purveying "natural" sexual difference as the meaning of earlier eighteenth century sexuality', he argues that this ideology works to 'restrict allowable forms of personal identity in a period of British history when sexual identity becomes the focal point of political and economic pressure'.[21] Yet, Ruth Perry notes that the family is often left out of analyses that places 'the individual directly in the field of immense national forces, such as imperialist ideology or new class formation'.[22] Thus, work on representations of kinship must be brought into dialogue with the analyses of the representation of sexuality in the tradition of

[17] Kelleher, *Making Love*, pp. 80-81.
[18] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 1674 Text, edited by Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008 [2004]), p. 93.
[19] Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women and The Vindication of the Rights of Men*, edited by Janet Todd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008 [1993]), p. 73.
[20] Kelleher, *Making Love*, p. 197.
[21] Todd C. Parker, *Sexing the Text: the Rhetoric of Sexual Difference in British Literature 1700-1750* (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000), pp. 2-3.
[22] Ruth Perry, *Novel Relations: the Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture, 1748-1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 12.

Foucault's *History of Sexuality* (1976); the reproductive subject-citizen cannot exist outside of an understanding of kinship.

Just as the novel is changing and developing as a literary form in this period, Perry argues that the family is also a social form and model going through a period of adjustment in the eighteenth century. Drawing from the work of social historians such as Bridget Hill regarding the history of the family and household and the role of women, and literary historians such as Nancy Armstrong, Perry explores the potential meaning of the family as a social unit and a structuring model for political and economic hierarchies, and kinship as an emotional and physical concept. The scope of kinship is so important that Perry asserts that 'family membership is the ground on which everything in these novels happens; characters' responses to their kin place them in a moral continuum'.[23] The delineation of family provides a literary character with a place in history and society, and a set of duties and responsibilities towards others. However, as Naomi Tadmor outlines in *Family and Friends in Eighteenth Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* (2001), category boundaries of terms such as family, kinship and household were in flux in this period. The changes in kinship models, the changes in the conception of sexuality, and the role of literature in engaging with, as well as disseminating, these are, I argue, fundamental to the construction of a modern subjectivity.

Sentimental literature explores the developing cultural connections between concepts of desire, love, moral goodness, and reason, in the establishment of heterosexual hegemony in Anglo-American cultures. The moral subject in the writings of the Sentimental philosophers such as Shaftesbury, and critics such as Addison and Steele, is constructed from a perspective of masculine authority, rooted in an idea that male desire and male rationality is of a superior form. The development of a sentimental heterosexuality thus attempts to reason, logically, for the social and systemic asymmetry of power by gender. The construction of heteronormativity depended upon the implementation of clear binaries: male and female, masculine and feminine, normal and abnormal, legitimate and illegitimate. The definition of the last was encoded into law with Lord Hardwicke's 1753 Marriage Act, which required a formal ceremony of marriage to be performed within a church. Yet, the practical incentives for women to marry were becoming fewer, as women and children increasingly worked outside of the home and the bastardy laws were available to enforce male obligations to their offspring, but the act transferred a woman's property, even her body, to her husband's

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[23] Ibid., p. 13.

ownership. These relations are summed up neatly in John Gillis phrase 'the social consequences of heterosexuality'.[24] Such consequences – social and legal – go further than simply defining property, to return to de Freitas Boe and Coykendall:

> Heteronormativity sets the conditions for who does – or who does not – count as normally and rightfully human by producing and policing three interwoven categories of difference: sex (dichotomous male/female embodiment), gender (asymmetrically socialized roles, characteristics, or behaviors), and sexuality (the expectation, even obligation. to form heteroerotic attractions culminating in marriage, reproduction, and kinship).[25]

If a woman marries, she ceases to be an independent being under the law, becoming instead part of her husband's household, like a child under the age of maturity. This legal death, termed coverture, is summarised in William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws on England* (1765-1769). Sentimental heterosexuality thus seeks to, in Kelleher's phrasing, 'speciously ameliorate, to make more "seductive" and thus more effective and efficient',[26] the disenfranchisement of women.

Perry posits this period's fictions as 'a series of problem solving scenarios and rhetorical responses to a disorienting change in the axis of kinship',[27] a view which accords with Kelleher's analysis that 'novelists put sentimental heterosexuality to the test'.[28] Sarah Fielding's novels *The Adventures of David Simple* (1744) and *Volume the Last* (1754) engage with the real lived experience of the heteronormative family: the reader's expectations of happily-ever-after, formed when the first novel resolves the traditional marriage plot, are pulled apart in the sequel, in which the couples formed through romantic companionate attraction face economic pressures, infant mortality, and deaths from infection and illness. Haggerty suggests this highlights the wider failure of literature to be representative:

> Camilla dies because she has been suspended in a romance structure that has proven its falseness […]. Camilla has entered her union with David with all the

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[24] John R. Gillis, 'Married but not Churched: Plebeian Sexual Relations and Marital Nonconformity in Eighteenth Century Britain', in *'Tis Nature's Fault: Unauthorised Sexuality during the Enlightenment*, edited by Robert Purks Maccubbin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 31-42 (p. 38).
[25] de Freitas Boe and Coykendall, p. 7.
[26] Kelleher, *Making Love*, p. 16.
[27] Perry, p. 13.
[28] Kelleher, *Making Love*, p. 199.

promise of a fictional resolution. In *Volume the Last*, she bears five children, loses four of them, and then succumbs herself.[29]

This echoes Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's suggestion that Isabella Linton in *Wuthering Heights* (1847) is similarly 'victimized by the genre of romance'.[30] Thus, it is not only in Gothic fiction, as Ruth Bienstock Anolik suggests, in which 'marriage leads to sexual behaviour, which leads to children; the consequence of this chain of causal actions is almost inevitably death'.[31] Fielding's novels demonstrate that no matter the inducements offered for women to marry by choice in Romantic models of companionate marriage, the realities of family life must be faced; a sympathetic husband is preferable to a cruel one, but the burdens of child bearing and rearing still fall predominantly on women, and the problems of poverty are not alleviated by love and affection alone.

The consistent focus of Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story* (1791) is patriarchal power, and the constant accommodations women must make for individual men's capricious wielding of that power. Terry Castle labels the novel a 'rhapsody of transgression in which masculine authority is […] demystified'.[32] The orphaned heroine, Miss Milner, falls in love with her guardian, who is a Catholic priest as well as a father-figure. Having married this man, Dorriforth, who gives up his orders, she fails to live up to his exacting standards for her behaviour and is accused of adultery. Dorriforth banishes his wife and child, Matilda, from his life and their home. Matilda's life is subsequently ruled by the idea of transgression; raised as she is in exile, attempting to reconcile with her father despite his opposition, and falling in love with his ward, Henry, who might therefore be viewed as her brother. The novel seems contradictory; the first volume champions its heroine's rebellious desires, but the last seems to support her daughter's reconciliation with the patriarchal structures of normative family life. Though a rebellious woman like Miss Milner presents a direct challenge to patriarchy, the demonstration that her daughter's continual conformity and obedience does not protect her

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[29] George E. Haggerty, *Unnatural Affections: Women and Fiction in the Later 18th Century* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), pp. 35-36.
[30] Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000 [1979]), p. 288.
[31] Ruth Bienstock Anolik, 'The Wages of Sanctity: Fatal Consequences of Marriage and Motherhood in the Eighteenth Century Gothic Novel', in *Sex and Death in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, edited by Jolene Zigarovich (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 29–48 (p. 29).
[32] Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilisation; the Carnivalesque in Eighteenth Century English Culture and Fiction* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986), p. 293.

from danger at the hands of men underscores that there is no safe position or action for women. Men control the parameters within which women's behaviours are judged.

Women are positioned as childlike in their ability to reason and denied the same status as adult men under the law. Yet, a woman must attain physical maturity to marry, and especially to assert her choice in the object of her affections. The dichotomy between women's positioning as simultaneously child and adult is explored in Charlotte Smith's Gothic novel *Emmeline, the Orphan of the Castle* (1788) and Sarah Scott's *Agreeable Ugliness, or The Triumph of the Graces* (1754), a translation of a French Sentimental novel about deformity. These novels both explore tension between a woman's emotional desire to marry for love, and the social pressure to obey her father in his choice of son-in-law. The women's choices are eventually fulfilled and lead to happy marriages, their parents' choices are shown to be ill-considered; emotion, which is aligned with ideas about the 'nature' of female biology, is shown to be an indicator of good judgement. These novels, playing out a vindication of maligned aspects of femininity, explore the conflicts women negotiate as adults not accorded full status as subjects. The highly uncertain, and unstable, basis for definitions of gender, family, and the origins of moral goodness, leave women in a position of definitional uncertainty. Thus, Haggerty suggests that, in these fictions 'female experience can be described only with tropes as taboo as they are sympathetic'.[33] Kelleher's assertion that 'women novelists are particularly eager to question the ideology of sentimental heterosexuality', thus suggests why the Gothic genre is dominated by female voices.[34] The Gothic, developing the transgressive themes of Sentimental literature to an apotheosis, is thus the space of the taboo by definition, if not default – a literary space in which to create and explore maligned subjects who are feminine, unreasoned, and unreproductive, or deformed (and thus inappropriately reproductive).

Contested Terms: friendship and love in *The Old English Baron*

Given that the boundaries of normativity are popularly understood to be in flux and under construction in this period, it thus follows that deviance from a putative norm is similarly open to renegotiation. Just as the boundaries of the term *family* were fluid in this period, so too was the meaning of terms like love and friendship. It is striking how similarly friendship

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[33] Haggerty, *Unnatural Affections*, p. 37.
[34] Ibid., p. 199.

and marriage are described in the eighteenth century, for example in the *Spectator* one finds the following in a paean to friendship:

> Friendship is a strong and habitual Inclination in two Persons, to Promote the Good and Happiness of one another. […] Love and Esteem are the First Principles of Friendship […]. There is something in Friendship so very great and noble, that in those fictitious Stories which are invented to the Honour of any particular Person, the Authors have thought it necessary to make their Hero a Friend as a Lover. Achilles has his Patroclos and Aeneas his Achates.[35]

These descriptions echo in fiction in which those who will later marry profess their friendship to one another, and those who cannot marry profess their love. And yet, the categorical overlap between the role of friend and lover, the acknowledgement of a loving dynamic between men (though distanced somewhat by its positioning as both fictional and ancient, though the exemplar from Homer's *Iliad*), does not necessarily challenge heteronormative values. As Haggerty suggests of this terminology, 'love has functioned in Western culture precisely because of the ways in which it euphemizes desire (lust), and a heteronormative culture has always been able to use it to short-circuit, as it were, questions of sexuality and/or same-sex desire'.[36] The author depends upon context to determine the precise nature of the relationship between the characters, relying on the reader to ascribe to social conventions of heteronormativity, or not. Deviance is thus, to an extent, in the eye of the beholder.

Though the possibility of category confusion between friendship and romantic love certainly enables queer readings, this can lead to attempts to categorise forms of affection or identity. I explore expressions of same-sex love and intimacy in the Gothic as potentially disruptive to heteronormativity, or displacing of heterosexual modes, without labelling these expressions with terms such as homosexual. Physical sexual desire or genital sexual expression, Haggerty argues, is not necessarily linked to emotional attachment nor to an identity founded upon a sexual orientation, in the current parlance, just as expressions of emotional attachment are not necessarily evidence of sexual desire. I use the term queer instead, to connote a broader difference from, and resistance to, the developing normative hegemony. However, though the terminology of affection and love may be used seemingly interchangeably, and are dependent on context for their interpretation, this should not be interpreted as in any way suggestive of

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[35] Eustace Budgell, *The Spectator*, 385, Thursday, 22 May (1712).
[36] Haggerty, *Men in Love*, p. 18.

an equality in the cultural standing of those who love and desire outside of heterosexual norms.

Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* (1777) foregrounds the relationships between men and, most particularly, love between men, differing from the contemporary Sentimental romances and Female Gothic texts that foreground heroines. Reproductive sex is acknowledged as important for creating future generations, yet there is no exploration of attraction towards women for romantic pairings, and no delineation of a female subjectivity that desires in return. The text functions as a key exemplar of the patterns identified by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick regarding homosocial male relations making women an object in a system of exchange.[37] Abby Coykendall goes further, to suggest that Reeve 'patently veils, if not purposely condones' the 'egregious power and privilege' of the patriarchal Baronial class.[38] As Coykendall echoes E. J. Cleary's comparison of the tale to the 'Cinderella antics' of *Pamela* (1740), and even calls Sir Philip Harclay a 'fairy godmother', it seems almost perverse that she insists upon a resolutely heteronormative interpretation of the homosocial world Reeve has constructed.[39] In an article that explores Reeve's depictions of genealogy and family romance Coykendall describes Reeve's novel as 'the first to rid the Gothic of its transgressive parody'.[40] Yet this analysis, I suggest, fails to recognise the transgressive possibilities in fictions exploring the potentials and freedoms that 'egregious' power bestows when negotiating boundaries of normativity. The power to define and reformulate what love and family means is with white, wealthy men, therefore it is those same men who have the greatest ability to renegotiate and expand those terms.

Kosofsky Sedgwick suggests that power is consolidated through the marital exchange of women, which enables the forging of alliances between men. In Reeve's novel, however, the strongest links between households are cemented not through the exchange of women, but of younger men. The dominant loving relationship explored in the text is that between the orphaned Edmund of uncertain parentage, and William Fitz-Owen, the titular Baron's son. This relationship is expressed in the most effusive manner: 'Edmund besought his beloved William not to leave him. The Baron said, he must insist on his being at his brother's

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[37] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1985).
[38] Abby Coykendall, 'Gothic Genealogies, the Family Romance, and Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron*' *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 17.3 (2005), 443-480 (p. 445).
[39] Ibid., p. 455, p. 457.
[40] Ibid., p. 444.

wedding, as a due attention to him'.[41] At the end of the novel multiple same-sex parental alliances are constructed for Edmund and his offspring. Firstly, Sir Philip Harclay and the Baron both lay claim to the role of Edmund's father, agreeing to share their responsibilities: 'The first step we take shall be to marry our Edmund'.[42] Yet Edmund, in a queer reading, is already married. When Edmund dreams of his future, it is not of his bride: 'he heard himself congratulated as a husband, and a father; his friend William sat by his side; and his happiness was complete'.[43] William and Edmund exchange vows which are repeated three times in the text; the first time is unmistakably like a marriage ceremony, as they kneel, 'with clasped hands, and uplifted eyes […] and they invoked the Supreme to witness their friendship and implored His blessing upon it. They then rose up and embraced each other'.[44] These vows are renewed at the time of Edmund's marriage to William's sister, Emma, a union that functions solely to provide another generation of sons who are exchanged between older men:

> A second son, who was called Philip Harclay; upon him the noble knight of that name settled his estate in Yorkshire […and] he took the name and arms of that family. The third son was called William; he inherited the fortune of his uncle of that name, who adopted him, and made the castle of Lovel his residence, and died a bachelor.[45]

Thus, love between men reconfigures the family, and binds together the upper echelons of society; as Sedgwick suggests, love between men is essential to the working of the social order, rather than disruptive to its ends.

Reeve's novel constructs a world in which women make no demands upon men, but men are constantly discussing the burden of honour that demands another man's agency be recognized and respected. That passivity, and a lack of agency, is traditionally expected of women is highlighted in brief scenes featuring Fitz-Owen's daughter, Emma, whom Edmund courts: 'I shall reserve my heart and hand for the man to whom my father shall bid me give them. […T]he man that hopes for my favour must apply to my lord for his'.[46] Emma offers the reader none of her own opinions, and she makes no active choices. There are several passages

[41] Clara Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, edited by James Watt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 133.
[42] Ibid., p. 130.
[43] Ibid., p. 38.
[44] Ibid., p. 32.
[45] Ibid., p. 134.
[46] Ibid., pp. 59-60.

in which Edmund's reliance on guidance from other men, and his prayers – 'I desire to be nothing but what thou, O Lord, pleasest to make me'[47] – suggest a passivity more commonly associated with women. Edmund is often positioned as a disempowered object of desire for other men, but he is granted agency, able to speak on his own behalf: 'for no man ought to be condemned unheard'.[48] It is thus possible to read Edmund's performance of gender as feminized, and queered, and yet for this to support rather than undermine normative social modes. In the negotiations regarding his family alliance Edmund takes an active part, on the insistence of those who otherwise have power over him: 'the lad shall have his option; for I would not oblige him to leave my service against his wishes'.[49] Yet, even after he regains the wealth of his family inheritance, Edmund's foster mother, Margery, remains in a hostile marriage with a violent man, when he has the means to remove her from that environment. Women's subjugation to men is important to key plot points in the narrative – arguably, Lady Lovel's role as a conduit to wealth through marriage, and inability to act as an independent subject and landholder, leads to her son Edmund's estrangement after her husband's murder. Women's lack of agency is constructed as normative; despite the evils that could have been avoided had Lady Lovel or Margery been able to access formal justice. Thus, the gendered imbalance of power is not recognised as problematic by characters within the tale, nor addressed.

The erasure of female agency in a novel written by a woman contrasts sharply with the contemporary eighteenth-century outpouring of novels, both Sentimental and Gothic, from the perspective of female characters by female authors. Robert Miles, attempting to achieve a 'defensible generalisation' of distinctly male and female trends within the early Gothic, suggests that 'female writers of the Gothic are primarily interested in rights for their class, for their sex' but male writers of the Gothic 'are more absorbed by the politics of identity'.[50] However, such divisions are artificial; as Coykendall observes, it is Walpole who 'puts stark emphasis on the violent detours that the homosocial order must take through the bodies of women',[51] whereas Reeve downplays this violence. The subjugation of women is not Reeve's theme in *The Old English Baron*, it is merely the necessary reality that underpins male power.

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[47] Ibid., p. 43.
[48] Ibid., p. 32.
[49] Ibid., p. 17.
[50] Robert Miles, 'Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis', in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, edited by David Punter (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), pp. 93-109 (p. 97).
[51] Coykendall, 'Gothic Genealogies', p. 450.

To explore the potential value and pleasure this homosocial text then provides for the female author and women readers, it is worth considering the possibilities explored by modern fan fiction authors who write same-sex relationships, known as slash fiction. I do not suggest that Reeve was explicitly coding her characters as homosexual, or that the relationships she depicts necessarily map on to any particular sexual identity or orientation. I suggest that labelling and categorising love is, following Haggerty, less important than recognising and exploring declarations of intense emotional attachment between men as the driving force behind the narrative of *The Old English Baron*. In an article exploring the modes and motives of slash authors, one writer states her reasons for identifying with, and creating stories about, male rather than female characters drawn from modern media fictions:

> He is usually the main character […] the one to whom the adventure happens and the one who makes it happen. […] A woman, having internalised the values of our culture, might feel that women are devalued *per se* […]. So you don't want to be her […]. The male hero is easier to 'feel' the adventure with.[52]

The option for creating new works about female characters, to counter the dominance of male-centric fictions, is deemed less attractive as the 'devaluing' of women is not only an emotional barrier to connection with a character, who is viewed as lesser in status, but affects the power dynamics of social interactions and perception of characteristics. Thus, male characters can explore a range of emotional and physical experiences, for example, states of vulnerability, without negative preconceptions: 'his weakness is not perceived as something that makes him in essence inferior or different [to another male character]'.[53] Thus, I suggest that Reeve's exploration of the bonds between William and Edmund, over and above those of Edmund and Emma, acknowledges that the homosocial provides narrative opportunities that the heterosexual does not.

Reeve's characters perform eighteenth-century models of masculinity, rather than conforming to the norms of the era in which her tale is set, as James Watt notes as a staple trait of early Gothic fiction.[54] Contemporary behavioural norms of the eighteenth century upheld

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[52] Shoshanna Green, Cynthia Jenkins and Henry Jenkins '"Normal Female Interest in Men Bonking": Selections from The Terra Nostra Underground and Strange Bedfellows' in *Fans, Bloggers and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture*, edited by Henry Jenkins (London: Duke University Press, 2006), pp. 61-88 (p. 67), (first publ. in *Theorising Fandom: Fans, Subculture and Identity*, edited by Cheryl Harris and Alison Alexander (New York, NY: Hampton Press, 1998), pp. 9-40).
[53] Ibid., p. 68.
[54] James Watt, 'Introduction', in *The Old English Baron*, ed. by Watt, pp. xii-xxiv (p. xvii).

heterosexuality as all-encompassing: the source of friendship, love, and even sanity. Yet, as noted before, this is most often promoted from a masculine perspective in which women are not reasoning subjects. As Helen Small observes, there is a marked difference in Sentimental literature between the 'man of feeling' and the 'woman deranged by feeling';[55] not only could women not adventure as knights, but they could not embody the full range of feeling and sentiment allowed to men. In relationships between men, both parties are able to occupy the position of subject. Thus, expressions of love, devotion, and loyalty could signify between men with richer import than contemporary social norms allowed for between men and women. When the language used by men about other men, and by men about women, is not differentiated, it is only context that governs our interpretation as readers.

The destabilizing potential of this lack of differentiation in the language of affection in *The Old English Baron* is evidenced by the repeated acknowledgement that Edmund's behaviour, which continually blurs class, sexuality, and gender divisions, is deviant, despite the narrative's best efforts to reconcile these inconsistencies. Edmund's uncertain class position leads to an uncertain gender position; he is, like a woman, dependent upon other men's good opinions of his virtue. Edward's valour and courage on the battlefield must be tempered by a domestic passivity and social deference towards men who, in other respects, would be his equals. Edward's role is thus similar also to that of the Greek Saracen, M. Zadisky, who is Sir Philip's friend and companion, but also his dependent. The revelation of Edmund's true parentage seemingly resolves the problem of worth inhering in bloodline in a highly hierarchical and formalized society. William is then free to align himself with Edmund's household, which marks this relationship publically as the most important in his life. Yet, the earlier chapters, in which a promising young man's career is threatened by jealousy and resentment, still work to suggest the problematic nature of a system that measures an individual's worth by birth, rather than talent and aptitude. Edmund's very presence, as a young man who excels at noble arts and virtues, but is not thought to be nobly born, challenges the status quo.

In the depiction of a society in which there is no barrier to affection between men being expressed openly, the closest relationships are still coded as deviant through class, race, and gender signifiers. There are rumours made against Edmund, expressed in the terms of the

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[55] Helen Small, *Love's Madness: Medicine, the Novel, and Female Insanity 1800-1865* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 12.

unspeakable: 'they make a great mystery of it; something of great consequence they say; but they will not tell me what'.[56] The insinuations are not overtly predicated upon his relationship with William being wrong in terms of gender, but in terms of class; the social success of a lower-born youth is resented. Toni Wein's colonial reading of Reeve's novel 'as a vision of national purpose that has been lost', notes that the narrative conflicts are 'not directed against external enemies, but against internal foes'.[57] Even the portion set during war against France focuses on the disruptive presence of Edmund within the English ranks, rather than on the external conflict. Thus, though the same-sex relationships within the narrative are essential to the normative order, there is destabilising potential in the identifications encouraged in the reader through Edmund's heroic role. As forms of affection are in flux, this problematises the relationships between subject and object, and between subject and subject and, thus, I suggest that Edmund and William's quasi-marriage, and Edmund and Emma's marriage, are both transgressive Gothic parodies of Sentimental norms.

Things as They Are: Godwin's defence of the effeminate

Whereas Reeve creates a near utopian Gothic past for her powerful male characters, William Godwin sought to expose the fallibility in the established system of inherited patriarchal power in contemporary society, carefully delineating the role of homosocial love as both a necessary binding agent and a potentially disruptive force. *Caleb Williams* (1794) shares many of the same thematic concerns as first-wave Gothic, and presages later works about the use and abuse of social and legal power such as Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* (1852-53) and Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1859). I suggest Godwin's text demonstrates the shared concerns of the Sentimental novel and its Gothic sisters. 'Things as They Are', as Godwin initially titled his novel, was intended to be a social and political critique on the structures of society, as stated in the preface:

> It was proposed, in the invention of the following work, to comprehend, as far as
> the progressive nature of a single story would allow, a general review of the

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[56] Reeve, p. 31.
[57] Toni Wein, *British Identities, Heroic Nationalisms, and the Gothic Novel, 1764–1824* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p 75.

modes of domestic and unrecorded despotism by which man becomes the destroyer of man.[58]

Unlike Reeve, Godwin opposed the idea that men should hold power based solely on 'birth right', and that social and economic class should allow certain men absolute power over others. He was fully aware of the destabilising possibilities of homosocial affection, suggesting that his readers locate the central same-sex relationship in the tradition of the Gothic romance, by making reference to a famous fairy-tale:

> Falkland was my Bluebeard […]. Caleb Williams was the wife who, in spite of warning, persisted in his attempts to discover the forbidden secret; and, when he had succeeded, struggled as fruitlessly to escape the consequences, as the wife of Bluebeard.[59]

The reading of the relationship between Falkland and his servant as a romance is encouraged through the language in which they express their affections, which echoes contemporary seduction scenes: 'from the very first moment I saw him, I conceived the most ardent admiration. He condescended to encourage me; I attached myself to him with the fullness of my affection'.[60] Godwin's queering of the relationship between master and servant, in which there is no mistaken identity, explicitly questions the patriarchal construction of the subject-citizen. The failures of heteropatriarchy are outlined in Godwin's novel in three ways: that it promotes the unprepared to power, that the rules about who can wield power are arbitrary, and these two truths promote corruption from both sides.

The most powerful men in Godwin's novel, landowners Tyrell and Falkland, are two sides of a problematic masculine coin: Falkland is an ideal landlord and magistrate by education and disposition, yet his behavioural 'passions' must be hidden making him a target for blackmail and susceptible to paranoia; Tyrell is unfit to wield power, inclined to tyranny by education and disposition, but his cruel 'passions' are legitimated by societal indulgence. These men were handed power by birth as their embodied identity, in terms of heredity and gender, legitimates their role. Tyrell is described as a 'true model of an English squire', he is 'muscular and sturdy' and his sexuality is appropriate also: 'every daughter regarded his

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[58] William Godwin, 'Preface', in *Caleb Williams or Things as They Are*, edited by Pamela Clemit (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009 [1794]), p. 312.
[59] William Godwin, 'Account of the Composition of *Caleb Williams*', in *Caleb Williams,* ed. by Clemit, pp. 347-352 (p. 351).
[60] Godwin, *Caleb Williams*, p. 298.

athletic form and his acknowledged prowess with a favourable eye'.[61] Yet, Tyrell is not a positive model but an under-educated megalomaniac who bullies his tenants, his household, and his relatives. Tyrell is monstrous in his performance of masculine power, whereas Falkland is pushed into monstrous behaviour precisely because his masculinity is questioned; he murders Tyrell, after the latter publically humiliates him. Though the local society is shown to prefer Falkland's company to Tyrell's, it is Falkland who would be hounded out of position if his 'secret' was known: the desperation to cover his passionate crime is what corrupts Falkland's personality, revealing his potential to become the echo of Tyrell in his persecution of Caleb.

Godwin, like Reeve, seemingly substitutes class for gender to explore conflicts of power. Caleb, like Edmund, finds himself in sympathy with a man of a higher caste, a man who raises him to a higher social station in his household. Caleb is aware of a likeness between himself and Falkland, and draws constant parallels between them despite the social barriers that separate them, claiming there is a 'magnetical sympathy between me and my patron', and they exchange a look 'by which we told volumes to each other'.[62] Caleb is thus 'ill-prepared for the servile submission [his patron] demanded', he has even grown used to considering himself 'much my own master'.[63] Caleb might be a worthy partner for Falkland, in personal or professional terms, but this is not a tenable position under the existing social structures. As Robert J. Corber suggests, 'the very qualities that Falkland admires in Caleb make Caleb an unsuitable object for his patronage'.[64] Caleb and Falkland are equals in this one respect, they both know the truth about the other's 'nature'; they know that they are both fitted for more than their society would allow them.

The dangers of a marginal social position are illustrated in the text by Tyrell's treatment of his niece, Emily, driven into a pauper's cell because her rich relatives deny her room and board when she refuses the unsuitable marriage chosen for her. Having no other reputable means of supporting herself, Emily dies of a fever as a direct result of this harsh treatment. This is the fate that later awaits Caleb; he is dependent on the good will of more powerful men, and once he loses his reputation he is confined to prison. Caleb is thus feminized both by Falkland's

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[61] Ibid., p. 15, p. 16, p. 17.
[62] Ibid., p. 109, p. 123.
[63] Ibid., p. 139.
[64] Robert J. Corber, 'Representing the "Unspeakable": William Godwin and the Politics of Homophobia', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 1.1 (1990), 85-101 (p. 90).

regard and by his persecution; once he has lost that regard, he is forced to act in ways that a 'man, who never deserves the name of manhood' might.[65] Yet, although Caleb's dependence upon another man echoes the lack of power that women experience under patriarchy, his status as a man is still suggested as warranting more. Thus, the novel does not uncritically support such gendered hierarchy; Godwin comments on the cultural association between femininity in men and queerness, and the negative associations of both.

Falkland and Caleb blur the boundaries and categories of identity that gender, class, and nation are supposed to sustain through social norms and structures. Caleb's aristocratic employer is coded as both feminine and queer; his manners are 'admirably in union with feminine delicacy', and he possess an 'extreme delicacy of form and appearance'.[66] Falkland's tastes are overly refined from a youth spent in Italy, described at some length in the book, becoming a 'foreign-made Englishman'.[67] Corber notes that both refinement and continental society held associations of queer desire in English society in the eighteenth century; he cites a 1749 pamphlet stating that homosexuality was 'imported from Italy amidst a train of other unnatural Vices'.[68] Daniel Defoe's popular satire on national identity, 'The True Born Englishman' (1701), speculates as to whether the 'original home' of sodomy was Turkey or 'the Torrid Zone of Italy, Where Blood ferments in Rapes and Sodomy'.[69] Such practices were popularly constructed as not 'English' and are, suggests G. S. Rousseau, an 'altogether genuinely "Gothic" vice'.[70] Thus, Parker suggests that:

> Reading sexuality off the ideal body is, in other words, simply a confirmation of the national identity inhering in that body as a necessary correlative of sexual difference. But for the rise of natural sexuality to succeed, reading – a differentiating act in itself – must appear to be only a form of transparent observation.[71]

For the body to be a legible text, meaning must already inhere within it. Corber suggests that Godwin's novel is part of this 'homophobic discourse in which the locus of guilt has already

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[65] Godwin, *Caleb Williams*, p. 230.
[66] Ibid., p. 18.
[67] Ibid., p. 19.
[68] Corber, p. 80.
[69] Daniel Defoe, *The True Born English Man, a Satyr* (publisher unknown, 1700), p. 6.
[70] G. S Rousseau, 'The Pursuit of Homosexuality in the Eighteenth Century: "Utterly Confused Category" and/or Rich Repository?', in *'Tis Nature's Fault*, ed. by Maccubbin, pp. 132-168 (p. 137).
[71] Parker, p. 4.

shifted from a specific act [sodomy] to particular individuals [men with certain recognizable traits]'.[72] This Enlightenment-era shift in thinking about homosexuality, from the act itself to the underlying sexual persuasion, also has the effect of naturalising characteristics of behaviour. I argue, however, that Godwin's deployment of markers of gender and class identity, which draws an equivalence between aspects of inherent or behavioural queerness and social limitations, is not leveraged *against* homosexuality, but as an exemplar of the failures of a social structure that uses bodily characteristics as markers of worth above and beyond demonstrable ability.

Godwin's text explores systemic power relations, rather than the individual as Reeve's did, through the depiction of the difficulties and differences between personal and judicial resolutions to injustices perpetrated by the powerful against the weak. Caleb's potential to ruin Falkland, by revealing his secret, could have been constructed as a blackmail plot, were Godwin working from a homophobic perspective in which Falkland's true 'nature' positioned as a liability to be exploited. However, knowledge about Falkland is, at least initially, a device through which Caleb can develop a greater intimacy with his employer, to overcome his own inborn 'deficiency' in the societal structure:

> I could never enough wonder at finding myself humble as I was by my birth,
> obscure as I had hitherto been, thus suddenly become of so much importance to
> the happiness of one of the most enlightened and accomplished men in England.[73]

Caleb does not relish the idea of taking his revenge: 'what chance could I ascribe to new exertions of a similar nature; which, if undertaken at all, must be undertaken with infinitely more unfavourable auspices?'[74] Indeed, as Caleb seeks to use the courts to prevent Falkland's continuing persecution, he recognises that he is in fact aligning himself with the same societal power structures that acted against him in Falkland's hands. Thus, the social structures are used to supress those who cause category confusion, in terms of class and gender identity, but cannot resolve these issues of identity; the citizen-subject is revealed to be a construct, and not an immutable, natural phenomenon.

The image of Caleb as Bluebeard's wife, linking ideas of subjectivity and selfhood to interpersonal relationships and the laws that govern them, enables a queer perspective on

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[72] Corber, p. 98.
[73] Godwin, *Caleb Williams*, p. 118.
[74] Ibid., p. 263.

both. The plot of *Caleb Williams* would be resolved easily through marriage, were Caleb a woman; a wife could not be compelled to testify against her husband in a court of law at this time. This legal loophole is, in itself, evidence of women's diminished status in society – as previously mentioned, under English law a wife was considered an extension of her husband as a legal entity, rather than an individual in her own right.[75] The tragedy of *Caleb Williams* is that an equal partnership is not possible; between two men of unequal social status, or between men and women. In Godwin's novel the initial murder, inspired by the unjustness of Tyrell's power, is the revenge of a maligned, queered, masculinity. All the violence meted out by Falkland centres on his inability to embody appropriate class and gender roles, to inhabit both the subject and the citizen position, as envisaged under heteropatriarchy. Yet, this man who recognizes his own potential for disempowerment based on embodied identity cannot bring himself to trust other maligned men in his society; both central characters end up perpetuating the very social structures of power that they despise. Just as Reeve's text demonstrates that individual power can enable a measure of non-conformity, Godwin explores how systemic power enforces conventionality; the consequences of losing power are severe enough to ensure that those adjudged queer act in support of the very systems that disempower them. What I am arguing, then, is that Godwin's novel contributes to the discourses naturalising the modern subject constructed in the Sentimental tradition, but does not uncritically accept the dominant normalisation of heteropatriarchy as a reasonable and good model for society. His work forms a bridging point between novels (predominantly Sentimental) that seek to expand the boundaries of the reasonable subject to include women and other currently excluded groups, and those (predominantly Gothic) that challenge the underlying philosophical construction of the subject from a fundamentally masculinist perspective.

Frankenstein: the sentimental archetype destroyed

Godwin's daughter drew on her parents' radical writings and the generic conventions of Gothic literature to create a radical critique of the Sentimental subject. *Frankenstein* (1818) differs from the previously-explored novels by adding another dimension to the interplay between its central protagonists; whereas class primarily governs Godwin and Reeve's texts, with race and gender touched upon through supporting characters, in Mary Shelley's novel

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[75] See Colin Manchester, 'Wives as Crown Witnesses', *The Cambridge Law Journal*, 37.2 (1978), 249-251.

the issues of bodily non-normativity are brought to the fore. Like *The Old English Baron*, *Frankenstein* is a novel written by a woman in which the relationships between men are foregrounded and female characters serve primarily to move the narrative onwards rather than proffer opinions or perspective. Likewise, the same interchangeability in the language of affection seen in all the novels explored here blurs the relationships of Victor Frankenstein and his friends, Henry Clerval and Robert Walton, shading them with the suggestion of romance. Just as Elizabeth is Victor's 'beloved' as his fiancée, so is Henry as his constant companion. The line between physical attraction and sympathy also blurs, as Walton repeatedly notes how 'attractive' Frankenstein is to him before devoting a whole letter to praising his guest's charms: 'if you will, smile at the warmth of my expression, while I find ever day new causes for repeating them'.[76] Walton's defensiveness clearly indicates that such effusive praise is not wholly normative and the danger of over-attachment is suggested when hero worship of Frankenstein threatens to lead his whole expedition to ruin. Once again, I stress that, with Haggerty, expressions of love between men are important irrespective of any sexual – or 'genital' – aspect. However, in Shelley's novel I would suggest that the blurring of boundaries in the relationships between men serves to blur the boundaries of individual identities, rather than to expand the possibilities of who can be identified as an appropriate object of desire or affection.

The central dynamic explored in *Frankenstein* is not the destabilisation of social boundaries through the inability to fully distinguish class and worth by appearance alone, which suggests an illegitimacy to distinctions between men, but the destabilisation of the category of man itself, and all it stands for. The creature's status as a man is indeterminate; he is never accepted as fully human. Thus, previous critics have suggested that the creature can be read in terms of race or gender, as representing those denied full subjecthood under the laws and customs of the era. Sandra M. Gilbert goes so far as to suggest that 'in the monster's revelation of filthy femaleness', Shelley is writing Eve back into the mythic frame of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1674).[77] Even further, in *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), Gilbert and Gubar claim that Shelley, as 'Milton's dutiful daughter', chooses to 'repeat and restate' the earlier poet's misogyny.[78] Though there is, of course, a great deal of rich significance to be

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[76] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus*, The 1818 Text, edited by Marilyn Butler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008 [1994]), p. 17.
[77] Sandra M. Gilbert, 'Horror's Twin: Mary Shelley's Monstrous Eve', *Feminist Studies*, 4.2 (1978), 48-73 (p. 70).
[78] Gilbert and Gubar, p. 252.

read into the 'missing mothers' of the text and Shelley's own biography, I suggest that to code the creature's experiences as female when he is specifically gendered male is unhelpful. Shelley was hyper-aware of her mother's literary output, constructing a post-mortem relationship with her through prose, and would have been cognisant of the critiques thrown at Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), such as the categorisation of it as 'scripture, archly fram'd for propagating w[hore]s', as Gilbert herself notes.[79] I suggest, then, that Shelley did not simply substitute a male monster for a woman, as though one could stand in for the other, to enable her to write about the denial of rights and avoid misogynistic repercussions. Shelley's creature is male precisely for the legitimacy this confers on his claim to subjectivity. The questions as to whether external form should govern one's ability to take part in society echoes those asked by disabled author William Hay, including 'is the carcass the better part of man?'[80] By destabilising the category of man based on the 'carcass', Shelley avoids the problem of challenging the rights granted to differing bodies by class, gender, ability, and race, piecemeal, going instead to the source of the problem: the idealised subject.

The tale of Victor Frankenstein and his creature explores the creation of the individual self through education and socialisation, by self-reflection as well as external stimulus, linking experience to embodied identity as well as to intellectual endeavour. In depicting childhood and education so thoroughly, Shelley engages directly with the dominant philosophies of the formation of the subject, particularly Locke's *tabula rasa* as the model for the creature's awakening to subjectivity. The model for Victor himself is the idealised Sentimental subject. As Kelleher suggests of this model, as depicted in Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* (1768), the emotions created within the self by observing another create 'the possibility that Yorick (and perhaps any sentimental subject) remains enclosed within the boundaries of the self […]. We are right to wonder if what Sterne calls "sentimental commerce" between self and other is merely another form of self-love'.[81] Haggerty goes further, declaring the protagonist of Harley's *Man of Feeling* (1771) 'vampiric', as he

> feeds on others, consumes them as it were, as a way of giving substance to his
> own responses. He is passive and self-involved for all his 'interest' in others, and
> his 'action' is a kind of unwitting aggression that emotionally 'commodifies'

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[79] Gilbert, 'Horror's Twin', p. 50.
[80] Hay, p. 5.
[81] Kelleher, *Making Love*, p. 5.

whomever he encounters. Out of this 'self' of pseudosuffering subjectivity emerges the 'man of feeling' […]. To witness the man of feeling, however, is like watching someone make his way through a hall of mirrors.[82]

This would serve excellently for a description of Frankenstein himself, who literally uses the bodies of others to create his science experiment, and then reflects on the sufferings the creature causes other people, which he always interprets through the lens of his own emotional response.

Frankenstein's constant centring of himself, perceiving the death and suffering of others only through their impact on him, merely exaggerates the attitudes of earlier sentimental heroes. When Victor visits the falsely accused Justine in jail, he suggests that his own sufferings should attract the greater sympathy: 'Despair! Who dared talk of that? The poor victim […] felt not as I did, such deep and bitter agony. […] I, the true murderer'.[83] An unreliable narrator, Victor admits to fault only when he can frame it as a noble admission, or extract sympathy from his listener. By the time he recounts his journey through England and Scotland with Clerval, seeking to position the creature's pursuit as persecution, he declares himself 'guiltless, but I had indeed drawn down a horrible curse upon my head, as mortal as that of crime'.[84] Frankenstein will eventually claim that 'no creature had ever been so miserable as I was; so frightful an event is single in the history of man'.[85] Victor's self-delusion, as to his unique place amongst the suffering of the Earth, is brought out in the text by contrast not only to characters such as Justine, but in his own observations of the living standards of many he encounters in his travels. On his journey to the Orkneys, Victor notes the 'miserable penury' of the inhabitants, whose bad manners he forgives as he recognises 'suffering [does] blunt even the coarsest sensations of men'.[86] I argue that, through Frankenstein's self-pity, Shelley comments on the social structures that posit only the masculine elite as full subjects; the physical sufferings of others are part of the natural social order, and dampen sensibility; only the sentimental subject is self-aware enough to suffer emotionally.

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82 Haggerty, *Men in Love*, p. 86.
83 Shelley, pp. 67-68.
84 Ibid., p. 135.
85 Ibid., p. 167.
86 Ibid., p. 136.

The idea that certain people, most usually women and particularly people of colour, are immune to pain has been used to justify slavery and other such horrors.[87] It is, thus, possible to read Frankenstein's lamentations as colonial satire; skewering the idea that the privileged, and 'civilised', European is superior, and thus responsible for enlightening and improving those further down the 'Great Chain of Being', or the Family of Man. Frankenstein dreams of being a patriarch: 'a new species would bless me as its creator and source'.[88] Yet, he fails to take responsibility for his 'child'; revolted by the physical existence of a man who is different from him. He is afraid that his own race will become subjugated: 'a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth, who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror'.[89] This reading is also suggested by the anti-colonial references made to the destruction of the indigenous American populations.[90] Whilst it is important to recognise that the definitions of physical monstrosity that Shelley was working with developed within an imperialist context, as H. L. Malchow and Allan Lloyd Smith have explored,[91] it is important not to read race over all the other descriptions of bodily difference that Shelley encodes. Anne Mellor suggests that the creature's skin being described as yellow marks him as of a different race from his creator, as not Caucasian,[92] yet it might instead symbolise illness and disease. Mellor notes that previous critics have explored the colonial contexts of the text, but states that 'none have accurately defined the Creature's race in the context of nineteenth-century racial science'.[93] I would suggest that accuracy here is both impossible and counter-productive; to reduce the multifarious impressions and suggestions that make up the 'monstrosity' of the creature to a single cause is to suggest that all bodies can be accurately categorised, and that the solution to the ideology of monstrosity is simply a better filing system.

The key term in describing the creature's physical presence is 'deformity', a term with particular connotations, moral, as well as physical, in Sentimental literature. Hay declared his

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[87] See Joanna Bourke, 'Pain Sensitivity: An Unnatural History from 1800 to 1965', *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 35.3 (2014), 301-319. DOI: 10.1007/s10912-014-9283-7
[88] Shelley, p. 36.
[89] Ibid., p. 138.
[90] Ibid., p. 38.
[91] H. L. Malchow, 'Frankenstein's Monster and Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Past & Present*, 139 (1993), pp. 90-130; Allan Lloyd Smith, 'This Thing of Darkness': Racial Discourse in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, *Gothic Studies*, 6.2 (2004), 208-222.
[92] Anne K. Mellor, 'Frankenstein, Racial Science, and the Yellow Peril', *Nineteenth Century Contexts*, 23.1 (2001), 1-28. DOI: 10.1080/08905490108583531
[93] Ibid., p. 25.

aim writing his essay to be 'to write of Deformity with Beauty' to 'atone for an ill-turned person'.[94] He makes apology for his physical difference because of the associations made in the dominant philosophies between aesthetics and other values; Shaftesbury makes overt the link between beauty and moral goodness:

> Will it not be found in this respect, above all, that what is beautiful is harmonious and proportionable, what is harmonious and proportionable is true, and what is at once both beautiful and true is, of consequence, agreeable and good?[95]

Thus, Hay can suggest that 'Men *naturally* despise what appears less beautiful or useful' [emphasis added].[96] As Kelleher suggests 'the pages of moral-philosophy treatises are replete with invocations – or more accurately, deprecations – of "deformity"'.[97] This is particularly true of Shaftesbury, for whom 'rhetorical invocations of deformity […] and human disability – be it mental or physical – always implicitly figure in the background of his philosophical discourse'.[98] This schematics of the body as part of a natural order based on harmony not only excluded the physically ugly or deformed as monstrous and aberrant, but could also be leveraged against those who were physically normative, but behaviourally divergent.

> In every creature and distinct sex there is a different and distinct order, set or suit of passions proportionable to the different order of life, the different functions and capacities assigned to each. […] The inside work is fitted to the outward action and performance. So that were habits or affections dislodged, misplaced, or changed, where those belonging to one species are intermixed with those belonging to another, there must be of necessity confusion and disturbance within.[99]

Thus, a man or woman who desires to behave in ways commonly ascribed to another gender is labelled in this framework as confused and disturbed: as the male and female bodies are conceptualized as distinct and different, so must be their social roles and functions. Thus,

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[94] Hay, p. 3.
[95] Anthony Ashley Cooper, 'Miscellany III', in *Shaftesbury: Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, edited by Lawrence E. Klein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999 [1711]), pp. 395-418 (p. 415).
[96] Hay, p. 34.
[97] Paul Kelleher, 'Defections from Nature: The Rhetoric of Deformity in Shaftesbury's Characteristics', in *The Idea of Disability in the Eighteenth Century*, edited by Chris Mounsey (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2014), pp. 71-90 (p. 72).
[98] Ibid., p. 78.
[99] Anthony Ashley Cooper, 'An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit', in *Shaftesbury*, ed. by Klein, pp. 163-230 (p. 215).

reason and nature are constructed as mutually sustaining, and that which is not considered reasonable, becomes unnatural, and vice versa.

Frankenstein is, consequently, determined to deny his unnatural creature the power of reason; refusing to accept that his creature's actions are rational, that is not to say justifiable, responses to experiences of injustice. The echoes constructed in the text between creature and creator destabilise seemingly binaristic categories, such as madness and sanity. Frankenstein himself loses his reason, passing through periods of insensibility and madness. Though initially nursed by his family, and friend Clerval, once they are dead Victor is confined by the authorities: 'during many months […] a solitary cell had been my habitation'.[100] Victor can draw on these periods of 'insensibility' to, ironically, prove his refinement of feeling; as Roy Porter notes of Boswell, he 'inclined, characteristically in the newer age of sensibility, to wallow and glory in it, as proof of membership of the fashionable culture of suffering and supersensitivity'.[101] Victor wishes that the monster would be as miserable as he, seemingly forgetting that his sufferings were inflicted for the express purpose of effecting the opposite: that Victor might become as afflicted as his creation. He is determined to root the creature's malignancy in his inherent being, constantly linking his 'deformity and wickedness', he reads his face as expressing 'the utmost extent of malice and treachery'.[102] Within the ordered universe of Frankenstein's philosophy the idea that ugliness aligns with evil is more acceptable than the notion that the deformed creature has superior reason: the latter challenges the dominant definition of the sentimental subject. Shelley's novel constructs the ultimate 'monster' of sentimental philosophy – a rational being, intent upon the destruction of the heteropatriarchal family from which he is excluded. The precise nature of his physical monstrosity is never declared; the creature is a rich metaphor available to all who have been labelled deformed within the constructs of sexist, ableist, colonialist narratives. The one point that is repeated is the monster's status as a giant; he is monstrous because of his excess.

Shelley also constructs an exaggerated, even excessive, sentimental hero in Victor Frankenstein. It is a feature of Gothic and sentimental fiction that the hero and heroine's superior natures, their suitability to be considered heroic, is marked by their vulnerability; they faint, they weep, they suffer endlessly. Frankenstein literally martyrs himself,

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[100] Shelley, p. 168.
[101] Roy Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason* (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 193.
[102] Shelley, p. 140, p. 139.

considering the key aspects of his actions to be 'devotion and heroism', he claims 'something, I doubt not, of that haughty fierceness, which the martyrs of old are said to have possessed'.[103] As the archetypal sentimental subject, Frankenstein assumes his role as the hero, an attitude that demonstrates his investment in particular social norms, for there is no other suitable candidate: Elizabeth is a woman, Clerval is bourgeois, and the creature is deformed. These characteristics exclude them from occupying the full subject position as theorised in Sentimental philosophy. Yet Frankenstein's status as the 'hero' of the narrative is continually problematized by Shelley.

Shelley's characterization of the Sentimental subject in Victor Frankenstein becomes progressively less sympathetic. Though he sometimes appears to realise his self-absorption, noting that 'bright visions of extensive usefulness' in his youth give way to 'gloomy and narrow reflections upon self',[104] Frankenstein yet appears to learn little, despite his introspective reflections. Willing to risk not only his own safety but that of others on bold adventures with uncertain outcomes, even as he lies dying, he tells Walton's crew that they are cowards if they retreat from the Arctic, praising them as heroes if they continue, though several have already died. Frankenstein then claims rapid change in the few short days he has been aboard Walton's vessel; on his second urging of Walton to murder the creature, Victor denies his former 'selfish and vicious motives, […] I renew this request now when I am only induced by reason and virtue'.[105] However, this is contradicted by his own admissions; Frankenstein still denies that his past actions are 'blameable'; though he admits that he 'was bound towards [the creature], to assure […] his happiness and well-being'.[106] This is as close as he will get to admitting culpability for abandoning his progeny. The creature, by contrast, gives an impassioned speech atoning for his crimes: 'no sympathy shall I ever find. […] when I die, I am well satisfied that abhorrence and opprobrium should load my memory'.[107] It is, thus, Frankenstein himself, and not his creature, of whose eloquence Walton and his reader should be wary; Victor will say whatever best suits his purpose, contradicting himself and destabilising meaning if necessary. The creature seeks true connection with other beings, his language acquisition is initiated specifically for the purposes of connecting with the De Laceys, but Victor uses reason and language to elevate himself and assert dominance. There

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[103] Ibid., p. 170.
[104] Ibid., p. 22.
[105] Ibid., p. 185.
[106] Ibid., p. 185.
[107] Ibid., p. 189.

is, thus, an implicit critique of not only the sentimental philosophies, but also the (auto)biographical literature that sustained and disseminated its ideology.

Shelley builds up a pattern in which the creature and his maker echo and reflect one another in their opposition, not only as protagonists working against each other within the narrative, but in the manner of their retellings of their tales. In contrast to his maker, Frankenstein's creature becomes more sympathetic. Though both seek to play upon their listener's sympathies, each declaring himself miserable and suffering unjustifiably, Frankenstein's tale revolves around his interactions with others and he, as Haggerty suggests, commodifies those he encounters as part of his own narrative. It may seem that his creature tells stories of the De Lacey family for the same reason, yet the creature does not attempt to co-opt their emotions – repeatedly stating those are 'not for me'[108] – nor does he negate them; instead, he takes measured steps to be of service and to earn their trust. At every stage before the first murder, the creature's tale is primarily composed of descriptions of action, rather than long passages of reflection; the creature takes the active part, and Victor is forced in to action to respond. Even Victor's positive actions, such as his marriage to Elizabeth, are put into motion by others; it is his father who pushes for the wedding to take place. Thus Shelley literalises the 'hall of mirrors' Haggerty invokes, surrounding Victor with reflections of himself: his monstrous vanity in his creature; his childhood dreams in Clerval; his over-arching ambition in Walton, his passivity in Elizabeth. As Gilbert and Gubar suggest, 'all characters in *Frankenstein* are in a sense the same two characters'.[109] Meeting the cultured and educated Frankenstein, Walton raves to his sister about the man's qualities, providing the reader with an idealized portrait of a 'noble creature' – an ironic foreshadowing – 'so gentle, yet so wise'.[110] Walton never relinquishes his admiration of Frankenstein, declaring him once again noble after hearing his tale, even 'Godlike'.[111] The inability of men to see the flaws in their models for success, their propensity to see God in themselves, and themselves in God, is at the heart of Shelley's critique of the rational, Sentimental subject she systemically takes to pieces on his own terms.

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[108] Ibid., p. 97.
[109] Gilbert and Gubar, p. 252.
[110] Shelley, p. 15.
[111] Ibid., p. 179.

Frontiers of the Self: emerging American Gothic

The sentimental subject so expertly critiqued by Shelley, was not merely a philosophical and literary idea existing on the page, but its ideology of an independent, rational subject provided political inspiration also. The guiding principles of the founders of the developing American states, as set down in the first constitution in 1789, were drawn from the same philosophies of thinkers such as Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson. However, as the French settler J. Hector St Jean de Crèvecoeur wrote, in his *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782), 'we certainly are not that class of beings which we vainly think ourselves to be'.[112] Crèvecoeur's farmer, John, makes this statement after coming across the gibbeted body of a black man in the woods of South Carolina, witnessing the horrors of slavery for the first time first-hand. As Maisha L. Wester notes, 'the very economic system of the country stood in defiance of those Enlightenment ideals. The constitution of the new republic offered equality and liberty to most by denying it to other groups'.[113] Wester notes that critics and historians of the American Gothic suggest a perversity and otherness in the national narrative of the developing continent, suggesting that perhaps 'Americans were concerned with a sense of inherent perversity that ever threatened their reason', again linking rationality to reproductive sexuality, through the contradictions written into the very identity documents of the newly formed nation.[114] Crèvecoeur's text is Gothically described by modern editor Susan Manning as 'the requiem for the new nation as it comes into being',[115] suggesting that the nation is, in a certain sense, still-born, or – as Frankenstein described his own creation – 'an abortion'; the offspring of the Sentimental subject that seemingly fails to live up to its high ideals in body or behaviour.

Siân Silyn Roberts claims that the American Gothic enabled 'a transformation in the cultural logic of British individualism […] over the course of the late-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries as U.S fiction writers adapted the rhetorical figure of the modern subject to an Atlantic Anglophone world'.[116] She notes that the central protagonists of American Gothic fictions, such as Charles Brockden Brown's *Arthur Mervyn* (1799), would not be considered

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[112] J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*, edited by Susan Manning (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998 [1782]), p. 159.
[113] Maisha L. Wester, *African American Gothic: Screams from the Shadowed Places* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 4.
[114] Ibid., p. 4.
[115] Susan Manning, 'Introduction', in *Letters from an American Farmer*, ed. by Manning, pp. vii-xxvii (p. viii).
[116] Roberts, p. 6.

an autonomous individual 'whose social value resides in its unique interiority, developmental progress, moral discipline, and capacity for critical reflection'.[117] Roberts's analysis suggests that British Sentimental fictions naturalised the Lockean model, yet does not account for the fact that many of the protagonists of Sentimental novels whose interiority is explored are also excluded from the Enlightenment ideal; such as John Cleland's Fanny Hill, Godwin's Caleb Williams, and Henry Fielding's Pamela Andrews. Thus, though I agree with Roberts' suggestion that the instability of the American context made clear the limitations of the Lockean individual, which had been formulated with the model of 'men who belonged to an English land-owning elite arranged within a traditional hierarchy of kinship relations',[118] I consider this an extension of trends within the tradition, and not a unique aspect of the American contextual engagement with the Sentimental and Gothic traditions.

Brockden Brown opens *Edgar Huntly, or Memoirs of a Sleepwalker* (1799) with a preface rejecting European Gothic literary norms, calling for a new literature for a new nation. This preface might seek to distance his creation from its European cousins, yet all the Gothic elements of the narrative are imported into the American setting from that very source. The life story of Clithero Edny, a serving man recently arrived from Ireland, is a Gothic tale involving the doubling of twins, mysterious sleep-walking, and, ultimately, he is revealed to be a madman. Even the clumsy 'red herring' introduced with the narrative of Waldegrave's friend and creditor Weymouth relies for excitement and drama on his adventures in Portugal. With the introduction of the Gothic, Brown also imports the unspeakable and transgressive.

Though there are no ghosts, no 'Gothic castles and chimeras', Brown's tale is not as lacking in 'puerile superstition' as he had hoped.[119] Clithero's former employer, Mrs Lorimer, is a twin described as the copy of her brother: 'nothing, to a superficial examination, appeared to distinguish them, but the sexual characteristics. A sagacious observer would, doubtless, have noted the most essential differences'.[120] The linked bodily identity of the twins is never utilised for plot purposes, for example, through mistaken identity and without clear narrative import, this gender-blurring description seems to be introduced purely to add transgressive potential to otherwise mundane passages. The goodness of Mrs Lorimer, and the evils of her brother Arthur Wiatte, are suggestive of the traditional 'old wives' tale' that twins are born

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[117] Ibid., pp. 10-11.
[118] Ibid., p. 10.
[119] Charles Brockden Brown, 'Preface', in *Edgar Huntly or Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker*, edited by Norman S. Grabo (London: Penguin, 1988), p. 3.
[120] Brown, *Edgar Huntly,* ed. by Grabo, p. 43.

with only one soul between them. Mrs Lorimer's belief that her life is irretrievably connected to her brother's also draws on these old myths:

> Were they linked together by a sympathy whose influence was independent of sensible communication? Could she arrive at a knowledge of his miserable end by other than verbal means? I had heard of such extraordinary copartnerships in being and modes of instantaneous intercourse among beings locally distant. Was this a new instance of the subtlety of mind? Had she already endured his agonies, and like him already ceased to breathe?[121]

The suggestion of shared consciousness, and the introduction of ideas undermining normative notions that nature formed men and women to be distinct in every way, sets up an observant reader to question other pairs and relationships in the novel: making suspect the links between Edgar and Clithero and their states of unconsciousness, and reframing Edgar's intention to marry Mary Waldegrave, the sister of his murdered friend.

Though the recently established American constitution declared all men equal, and Brown's depiction of Waldegrave as a self-sacrificing and principled educator of poor black children suggests an investment in these ideals, the narrative depends upon, and reinforces, many traditional social divisions in its tensions and mysteries. It is Clitheroe's indeterminate class status once he returns to the role of a serving man in America that causes suspicion and marks him as a suspect for sleep-walking. He does not belong to the community, or to any known family, and he is an incongruent element as a servant who is a 'pattern of sobriety and gentleness. His mind was superior to his situation […] and had enjoyed all the advantages of cultivation'.[122] As the son of the 'better sort of peasants',[123] Clithero is raised by a wealthy widow to be a companion to her son, becoming this Mrs Lorimer's steward. With his engagement to his employer's illegitimate niece Clarice, whom she has adopted, his class status becomes yet more complex, even as his future in a life of comfort seems more certain. Clithero reflects that, 'as my views were refined and enlarged by history and science, I was likely to contract a thirst of independence, and an impatience of subjection and poverty'.[124] Ultimately, being raised above his station is suggested to have caused Clithero's madness, and thus his violent attack on his benefactress: his education, once 'regarded as the most fortunate

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[121] Ibid., p. 74.
[122] Ibid., p. 14.
[123] Ibid., p. 36.
[124] Ibid., p. 37.

[event] of my life', is 'the scheme of some infernal agent, and as the primary source of all my calamities'.[125] Clithero is a character who crosses multiple boundaries, between madness and sanity, the civilised and the savage, the peasantry and the gentry, suggesting transgression of the social order is dangerous and unreasoned. It is similarly the cause of the hero's problems; Edgar and his sisters rely on their uncle to keep them from having to perform manual labour. His intended wife, Mary, earns her living as a seamstress, though her 'early education is at war with that degradation and obscurity to which your youth has been condemned; how earnestly your wishes panted after a state which might exempt you from dependence upon daily labour'.[126] Just as men were thought to be fitted for more than women, so were the middle- and upper-classes viewed as inherently superior. At the end of the novel, Clithero's transgression is punished, whereas Edgar's is alleviated; he is adopted by Mrs Lorimer and her new husband Mr Sarsefield in Clithero's stead. Edgar ultimately becomes Clithero's Gothic double, triangulated first by the murder victim Waldegrave then by Sarsefield, as Victor and his creature are linked through Walton: 'fate had led us into a maze which could only terminate in the destruction of one or of the other'.[127]

Kyle Joseph Campbell reads the relationship between Clithero and Edgar through a queer lens, suggesting that the novel's depiction of somnambulism forms 'a homoerotic core that reflects a change in American society, as secular discourse required additional justifications in order to maintain the perception that the act of sodomy was unnatural and by doing so reinforcing what we today call heterosexuality'.[128] Clithero sleepwalks to hide a text written by Mrs Lorimer, before hiding himself in the wilderness in an apparent suicide attempt. Edgar also takes up sleep-walking to hide a treasured manuscript, in his case the letters of Waldegrave, and then journeys into the wilderness. He first goes in search of Clithero, but he cannot account for his later sleepwalking with any clear aim or object. Campbell's reading re-places same-sex desire in interpretations that have often foregrounded political and social dynamics, such as western expansion. Clithero's half-naked nocturnal perambulations focus on his female lost loves, Mrs Lorimer and her daughter, however Edgar focuses upon other men. His reasons for hiding the letters are never made clear, though he is reluctant to transcribe them for the deceased's sister Mary. The contents are described as heretical and

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[125] Ibid., p. 36.
[126] Ibid., p. 148.
[127] Ibid., p. 249.
[128] Kyle Joseph Campbell, 'Walking with the Ghost: Sodomy, Sanity and the Secular in Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly*', *European Journal of American Studies*, 11.3 (2017), paragraph 1. DOI: 10.4000/ejas.11750 [accessed 17/01/2018]

secular philosophy, the few details given suggest the influence of Hume, and Edgar claims he is worried about their potential to corrupt Mary. Yet, previously Edgar has, like Frankenstein, championed knowledge at all costs: 'knowledge is of value for its own sake, and pleasure is annexed to the acquisition, without regard to any thing beyond. It is precious even when disconnected with moral inducements'.[129] Campbell thus suggests a link between illicit knowledge, sleepwalking, and desire for another man that can only be realised unconsciously: 'love propelled Edgar to search for both Waldegrave's assailant and for Clithero's body, but violence and turmoil only followed Edgar as he tried to embrace the men that he loved'.[130] In the exploration of the links between textual communication, bodily identity, and the reasonable, Brown's novel often explores the same ground as *Frankenstein*, but with a much less clear resolution.

The structure of *Edgar Huntly*, with its tales within tales, and the pursuit of a mad and murderous creature by a reasoned subject who succumbs to the same madness, presages *Frankenstein*. The main text purports to be a letter from Edgar to Waldegrave's sister, in which he tells her also Clithero's tale apparently in his own words. However, Shelley uses this structure to great effect, as through constructing a set of nesting dolls, as we move from Walton, to Victor, to the Creature, and then retrace that pattern back to the frame narrative. The letters in Shelley's novel read with a level of realistic structure, each dated in turn, and developing the narrative as it is recounted to Walton over the period of several days. In *Edgar Huntly*, however, it is unclear to the reader at what point in the timeline of the narrative the letters are being composed, and at what distance from the events. The letters repeat information that the addressed recipient would already know, in a manner blatantly intended to serve only the needs of the reader of the novel. Whereas Shelley's novel focuses on conscious intention and the construction of identity, and its construction suggests a linear Lockean model, Brown's narrative explores unconscious desire and the instability of identity. In Brown's text, the confused structure and the blend of Gothic and adventure stories – 'full of doublings and circuities'[131] – echoes the fractures in the construction of the American subject.

The second narrative thread, dominating the latter portion of the novel, centres on Edgar's attempts to return to his home after sleep-walking into the wilderness, and is best described as

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[129] Brown, *Edgar Huntley*, p. 16.
[130] Campbell, paragraph 19.
[131] Brown, *Edgar Huntly*, p. 247.

an adventure story. The murder of Waldegrave, the investigation of which prompts Edgar's involvement with Clithero, is finally revealed to have been part of an attack on his village from local 'Indians', resolving the original mystery. Though Waldegrave's profession as an educator enables Brown to introduce a brief and positive allusion to the black inhabitants of the emerging American nation, the depiction of the indigenous population is much more sustained, and confused. Edgar's attitude towards the Lenni Lenape people he encounters veers wildly between viewing them as hardly human antagonists to recognising them as fellow men with a right to the land he inhabits. In the former mood, he describes them as 'savages' a term he also uses for a panther he kills, suggesting the slippage between beast and man. Though the slippages between human and animal in Edgar's language often imply profound disrespect and animosity towards the indigenous inhabitants, in other passages Edgar seemingly includes himself within the continuity between man and beast:

> I disdained to be outdone in perspicacity by the lynx, in his sure-footed instinct by the roe, or in patience under hardship, and contention with fatigue, by the Mohawk. I have ever aspired to transcend the rest of animals in all that is common to the rational and brute, as well as in all by which they are distinguished from each other.[132]

Edgar here counts himself in with 'the animals', even as he desires superiority. Similarly, after waking disorientated in the wilderness, Edgar's hunger reduces him to savagery:

> I felt a strong propensity to bite the flesh from my arm. My heart overflowed with cruelty, and I pondered on the delight I should experience in rending some living animal to pieces, and drinking its blood and grinding its quivering fibres between my teeth. […] If this appetite has sometimes subdued the sentiments of nature, and compelled the mother to feed upon the flesh of her offspring, it will not excite amazement that I did not turn from the yet warm blood and reeking fibres of a brute.[133]

The oscillations in language between man and beast, savage and supposedly civilised, might suggest that Brown is drawing particular parallels, yet, the confused structure of the narrative, and the lack of self-reflection from the narrator, disrupt any clear conclusions rather than allow for a strong authorial perspective to emerge.

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[132] Ibid., p. 203.
[133] Ibid., p. 160.

The textual confusion is greatest in Brown's direct depiction of indigenous characters, though these figures hardly attain the status of individuals. As Edgar sees signs of land cultivation there is a double slippage; stating 'the residence of men was near',[134] there is an elision of gender and species. The closest home is that of a woman, not a man, and Edgar's familiarity with the homestead of an indigenous woman, Deb, demonstrates that he knows those he terms savages also farm. Edgar's relationship to Deb, his limited knowledge of her language and claim to her affections, is an example of the profound ambiguity in Brown's text regarding the status of the original inhabitants of America: 'these districts were once comprised within the dominions of that nation. About thirty years ago, in consequence of perpetual encroachments of the English colonists, they abandoned their ancient seats and retired to the banks of the Wabash and Muskingum'.[135] By the end of the novel, Deb is revealed to have been the instigator of the raid, having been denied the supply of essentials by the townspeople of Chetasco, which the people of Solesbury had previously provided her with seemingly good grace. Edgar notes previous suspicions that her presence in the neighbourhood had occasioned violence when she received visits by her people, but still displays no hatred or animosity towards her. There is no suggestion of looking for revenge when he wonders if she will remain living in the vicinity. However, Edgar struggles to reconcile his knowledge of Deb and her humanity, and his uncle's ownership of land previously belonging to her tribe, with his hatred of those who murdered his family in revenge for that land grab.

Edgar exhibits a deep ambivalence regarding indigenous cultures, as a challenge to his identity as a man and an American. In his encounters with a raiding party of indigenous men, Edgar's language veers between respect for the lives of others and vicious invective. At times he claims that these men are raised only for their skill as warriors 'to wage an endless and hopeless war', declaring them 'adepts in killing, with appetites that longed to feast upon my bowels and to quaff my heart's blood'.[136] Yet at other points, he offers long apologies for his attacks upon them:

> How otherwise could I act? The danger that impended aimed at nothing less than
> my life. To take the life of another was the only method of averting it. The means
> were in my hand, and they were used. In an extremity like this, my muscles would
> have acted almost in defiance of my will. […] Never before had I taken the life of

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[134] Ibid., p. 223.
[135] Ibid., p. 198.
[136] Ibid., p. 215.

a human creature. On this head I had, indeed, entertained somewhat of religious scruples. These scruples did not forbid me to defend myself, but they made me cautious and reluctant to decide. Though they could not withhold my hand when urged by a necessity like this, they were sufficient to make me look back upon the deed with remorse and dismay.[137]

However, we also see in Edgar's reflections a confusion between conscious and unconscious action; he excuses his violence as stemming from a natural instinct, even as he acknowledges his capacity for reason, and its influence in making his movements 'cautious'. Thus, as Justine Murison suggests, the somnambulist in Brown's work depicts 'the construction of a particularly violent and imperial – yet paradoxically inert – American identity during the early national period'.[138] The eponymous sleepwalker in the novel is another form of Gothic uncanny double; it is the subject, but not the self, suggesting a divided identity between the body and the conscious mind.

Brown's use of the newly named condition somnambulism, a 'disease or affection of the human frame',[139] which he also explores in his short tale 'Somnambulism. A fragment' (1805), is a Gothic device that engages with behavioural non-normativity and embodied selfhood. Murison explores Brown's sleep-walkers as an engagement with 'moral citizenship'; the idea that citizenship relies upon the development and continuity of subjectivity through memory, which is based on a Lockean model of consciousness. She suggests Brown questions the links between individual moral character and national identity, which would later come to the fore in the degeneration debates of the late nineteenth century, by undermining the idea that memory can be the basis of a stable identity position. As Emily Ogden notes, the charge of 'insensibility' was a challenge to one's subjectivity and fitness as a citizen.[140] Murison thus suggests that the descriptions of the mind provided by late eighteenth-century psychological theory engaged with sleep and sleep disorders are 'heavily freighted with political meaning peculiar to the issues of the revolutionary Atlantic world'.[141] However, consciousness shaped and moulded against the needs and desires of the occupied body is not, I would counter, a peculiarly colonial perspective. The ambivalent condition of

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[137] Ibid., p. 172.
[138] Justine S. Murison, 'The Tyranny of Sleep: Somnambulism, Moral Citizenship, and Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly*', *Early American Literature*, 44.2 (2009), 243-270 (p. 243). DOI: 10.1353/eal.0.0067
[139] Brown, 'Preface', p. 3.
[140] Emily Ogden, 'Edgar Huntly and the Regulation of the Senses', *American Literature*, 85.3 (2013), 419-445, doi.org/10.1215/00029831-2079278
[141] Murison, p. 244.

one not quite at home in their self is perhaps the condition of many modern subjects: a Gothic self – queer, female, disabled, or otherwise othered – is constructed at times in defiance of, and yet often modelled on, an Enlightenment mould that excludes the majority of the population.

Conclusion

It is unsurprising, I would suggest, that *Frankenstein*, above all other first-wave Gothic novels, should provide the most enduring myths and models for authors and filmmakers. As Sandra Gilbert suggests, Mary Shelley's classic is a 'Romantic novel about – among other things – Romanticism': its values, its dreams, and its philosophical weaknesses.[142] The primary preoccupation of Romanticism was the modern subject of Sentimental Enlightenment philosophies: who, what, and why he was as he was, and how he could reach his full potential through a heightened interiority. Fiction, and the newly emergent form of the novel particularly, was ideally suited to the exploration of selfhood, with its extended first-person narratives depicting interior subjectivity. Giving voice to multiple, competing perspectives highlights the fissures and displacements in the dominant ideology of heterosexual normativity. The literary Gothic is constructed as a space for monstrosity, but in turn becomes a space that enables 'monstrous' subjectivity to flourish and deviant voices to assert their differences from, but also their similarities to, the normative ideal. This is perhaps why so many authors and readers of the Romantic were resistant to the incursion of the Gothic, and other genres of 'women's fiction'; Gothic and Sentimental novels were popularly decried in the periodical press by terms such as 'noxious trash'.[143] Coleridge, complaining about the readers of popular novels, would not dignify

> their past-time, or rather kill-time, with the name of reading. Call it rather a sort of beggarly day-dreaming during which the mind of the dreamer furnishes for itself nothing but laziness and a little mawkish sensibility […] the trance or suspension of all common sense and all definite purpose.[144]

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[142] Gilbert, p. 49.
[143] *Lady's Monthly Museum*, 10 (January 1811), p. 8.
[144] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria; or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions* (London: Rest Fenner, 1817), pp. 49-50.

Coleridge's critique, like Brown's novel, thus links the semi-conscious state with moral laxity and fiction with the fashioning of the mind. Yet, as I have argued elsewhere, these genre fictions were a textual form through which young women, particularly, enacted agency.[145] These first-wave Gothic texts demonstrate how the creation of a literary space in which transgression was not only expected, but recognised to be thrilling, opened up possibilities for exploring alternatives to normativity.

The first-wave Gothic novels are fictions rooted in, even as many are resistant to, the philosophical and cultural norms of their era of creation. However, in these fictions suffering and exclusion are metaphorised and abstracted through a series of substitutions; class replaces gender, the past in place of the present, whiteness is written over black. As Toni Morrison says of writings about the violence of slavery, the beatings administered on the black body were not seen as the white man's own 'savagery' but a reflection of the slaves' supposed primitivism, 'repeated and dangerous breaks from freedom are "puzzling" confirmations of black irrationality; the combination of […] beatitudes and a life of regularised violence is civilised'.[146] The Gothic often performs a similar act of 'civilising' reflection and displacement; fictions of unjust incarceration, tyrannical rulers, and dictatorial patriarchs, are presented as both timeless moral fables and apolitical fantasies. Though the continuing popularity of the *Frankenstein* myth suggests the power and the possibilities that metaphors can provide, its many transmutations on the stage, and in later editions altered by the author, also suggest a near endless mutability that saps the original critique. Yet, the mutability of metaphor can also allow for multiple reading positions; Clara Reeve almost certainly did not intend her work to read as medieval queer masculine utopianism. These rich possibilities of the Gothic are thus a key reason why this sentimental subgenre developed into a broader aesthetic mode that endures to this day.

It takes more than one novel to unpack the limited conception of subjectivity established by the Enlightenment, and I argue that the Gothic has been engaged with exploring and expanding models of the subject-citizen since its inception, down to the present day. Though the popularity of monsters, and other genre conventions like castles and dungeons, waned in

[145] Evan Hayles Gledhill, 'Suitable Reading Material: Fandom and Female Pleasure in Women's Engagement with Romantic Periodicals', in *Women's Periodicals and Print Culture in Britian,1690-1820s: The Long Eighteenth Century*, edited by Jennie Batchelor and Manushag N. Powell (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), pp. 294-309.
[146] Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge, MS: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 45.

the mid-nineteenth century, the atmosphere and aesthetics of the Gothic continued, drawn on by authors working with realist conventions to depict the very real impact of 'the social consequences of heterosexuality' in Gillis' phrase, as explored in the next chapter.

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The Demon of the House: The Mid-Nineteenth Century

This chapter explores the British domestic Gothic novel and the American slave narrative as mutually constructive texts, engaged in a process of exploring the 'consequences of heterosexuality', in John Gillis's phrase. A wide range of texts, from the 'penny dreadful' monster tale *Varney the Vampire* (1845-1847) to Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848), explore systemic female disempowerment typified by the lack of access to divorce, but often set their Gothic nightmares of domestic abuse in the past. However, many novels used the Gothic mode to explore contemporary social evils, such as Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* (1853) which addressed the labyrinthine complexity of, and potential for exploitation within, the British legal system. White female authors, such as the Brontë sisters, often use metaphors of slavery and race to highlight the horror of women's legal and social situation, echoing earlier proto-feminists Mary Astell and Mary Wollstonecraft, the latter of whom asked, in *The Wrongs of Women* (1798); 'was not the world a vast prison, and women born slaves?'[1] However, when white women and black women are threatened with unwanted marriages and rape the consequences are narratively and thematically different; the significance of the 'tragic mulatto' born of a mixed-race union is central to understanding the sexual and reproductive politics of this period. The logic of nationalistic and ethnic constructions of subjectivity leads to ideas about appropriate reproduction, and thus to compulsory heterosexuality for the incorporation of the unreproductive queer, and to the development of the concept of miscegenation.

Heterosexuality, then, is not just the description of the relationship between individuals, but the context that frames our understanding of race and disability in the imperial age. According to Douglas Lorimer, 'the 1850s and 1860s saw [...] a change in English racial attitudes, as the imperialist project gathered support from scientific racism'.[2] The language of degeneration, utilising tropes of infectious disease and overwhelming invasion, begins to be seen in this period regarding not only the body of the racial and sexual other, but of their literary outputs

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[1] Mary Wollstonecraft, 'The Wrongs of Women', in *Mary and The Wrongs of Women*, edited by Gary Kelly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 63-178 (p. 73).
[2] Douglas Lorimer, quoted in Julia Sun-Joo Lee, *The American Slave Narrative and the Victorian Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 8.

and depictions also. Julia Sun-Joo Lee reports that an 1853 article about slave narratives and abolitionist tracts in *Graham's Magazine* 'complained that the "whole literary atmosphere has become tainted" with "those literary nigritudes"'.[3] The construction of the subject through narrative is dangerous; it provides a legitimacy to the claims of the other. The existence of an author such as former slave Frederick Douglass presented such a challenge, as John Stauffer notes, 'the self-evolution in his 1845 *Narrative* and 1855 *My Bondage* exemplifies his belief in "identity" as constantly changing and highly subjective, dependent upon time place, and circumstance' but most importantly, I would add, fashioned through language and narrative.[4] I suggest that recognising the family resemblances between the genres of the slave narrative and the Gothic enables a reconsideration of these texts as dangerous and subversive literatures, just as the family resemblances in the bodies of 'the other', as Stauffer suggests, challenged 'the idea of whiteness as a sign of superiority and a justification for racial aggression […] based in part on an understanding of character that was fixed and unchanging'.[5] The children born of rape under slavery soon undermined such stability; the existence of the slave 'octaroon', who was indistinguishable in appearance from their white blood relations, challenged the idea of a 'natural' and fixed inferiority of race.

Thus, not only do Gothic texts that explore captivity and subjugation display the body of the other, and demand that they be recognised as subjects, but they reveal the process by which the subject is constructed as a narrative process. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar summarise such a view neatly:

> Nineteenth-century literature repeatedly refers to the creation of the self; however, what it actually achieves – for post-structuralists – is the naturalisation of this historical concept. […] Since it is language that constitutes subjectivity, not vice versa, the split between the docile Victorian heroine and her mad double pales in comparison to the myth of an autonomous subject that drives the conceptualisation of both of these characters.[6]

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[3] Lee, *The American Slave Narrative*, p. 15.

[4] John Stauffer, 'Frederick Douglass's Self-fashioning and the Making of a Representative American Man', in *The Cambridge Companion to the African American Slave Narrative*, edited by Audrey Fische (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 201-217 (p. 214).

[5] Ibid., p. 214.

[6] Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000 [1979]), p. xxxviii.

However, Gilbert and Gubar's frustration with such an approach is based on an idea that such analysis is 'substituting "subjects" or "subjectivities" for people',[7] as though this were merely a question of terminology and the concepts were interchangeable. Such an epistemological sleight of hand ignores the historical contexts that have made careful distinctions between those recognised to be people and those accorded full subject status. It also does not allow for the important delineation between the governess and the madwoman; how one tells us her story in her own words, fully realising herself through narrative performance, and the other appears only as a body, an object defined and delimited by the words of others.

Where the Gothic differs from the Sentimental and Realist traditions of the Victorian period, is in its challenge to the idea of a fixed, stable, and temporally-bounded subject and their establishment through linear narrative. A key component of the post-Enlightenment conception of the subject-citizen is individualism; the ability for the body and the self to function in society as a coherent unit, not reliant upon anyone else. This aspect of Enlightenment humanism had a profound effect on literary Romanticism and political liberalism, and many Gothic texts of this era engage with such philosophies as narratives of individuals who successfully, or unsuccessfully, attempt to live up to its edicts of self-reliance. As Kenneth W. Warren observes, this is also 'a noticeable feature of the slave narrative as a genre […] it is primarily the tale of remarkable individuals […] against all odds'.[8] Douglass's three autobiographical works rarely even mention his wife, whose personal and professional support enabled him to maintain both his freedom, and his public-speaking career. The collective struggle against the social and state institutions that maintained transatlantic slavery and refused female emancipation are rarely depicted in Gothic novels, most of which focus on the solitary attempts of the hero or heroine to overcome their own disempowerment. However, the attempt to depict those who have been refused full subjectivity as individuals is often in direct conflict with the critiques that expose the normative model as an unrealised, and unrealisable, ideal.

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[7] Ibid., p. xli.
[8] Kenneth W. Warren, 'A Reflection on the Slave Narrative and American Literature', in *The Oxford Handbook of the African American Slave Narrative*, edited by John Ernest (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 183-195 (p. 184).

A Man's Home is his Castle: the British gentleman as Gothic subject

In its challenge to the construction of the normative subject, perhaps the most subversive aspect of the mid-century Gothic is the depiction of the gentleman, the supposed ideal, as a conflicted and potentially monstrous self. The Gothic often explores male anxieties about identity – for husbands, and heads of households, in particular. Kate Ferguson Ellis suggests that 'the Gothic is preoccupied with the home. But it is a failed home'.[9] In a genre 'directed towards women', Ellis sees this as enabling 'resistance to an ideology that imprisons them even as it posits a site of safety for them'.[10] However, despite the popular association between domesticity and femininity, these home environments are very often owned by, and ruled by men. The schedule of the home, its very existence, is run at a man's convenience and for his social needs: even Satis House, the bastion of Miss Havisham's twisted form of feminism, is a monument to its missing patriarch – the lost bridegroom. I concentrate on these patriarchal figures as representative of social power dynamics and the interrelation of class, race and gender in the experience of the domestic sphere, examining the authors' presentation of masculine attitudes to, and expectations of, the role of the gentleman. The question as to what it means to be a gentleman, I suggest, is central to our understanding of three key British Gothic novels of the mid-century; Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), and Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1860). As Robert Kendrick notes of *Jane Eyre*, such novels 'offer intriguing representations of how Victorian subjects lived at odds with the dominant cultural narratives of class and gender'.[11] I explore the representation of those who should have been, or desired to be, ideal subjects as wealthy, white men; Edgar Linton as a man who strives to maintain dominant narratives; Edward Rochester as a man who subscribes to the dominant narrative only as far as it benefits his own ends, and Philip Pirrip, who comes to despise the codes and conventions of the dominant order. I contrast these readings with the depiction of Heathcliff, a man who seems to set himself in determined opposition to normativity at every opportunity. While there are non-conforming male characters in *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*, such as the reformed criminal Abel Magwitch, none so consistently refuses all behavioural norms. Despite key

[9] Kate Ferguson Ellis, *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1989), p. ix.
[10] Ibid., p. x.
[11] Robert Kendrick, 'Edward Rochester and the Margins of Masculinity in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 30.3 (1994), 235-256 (p. 237).

differences, these characters all struggle to achieve the domestic arrangement that they desire, as befitting their social standing or romantic expectations.

The clearest portrait of a gentleman in these novels, I would suggest, is Edgar Linton. Yet Linton's story is told at twice remove – unreliably reported to the gentleman narrator, Mr Lockwood, via Nelly Dean, who often quotes other characters rather than Linton himself. Linton is thus an idea of a gentleman, a portrait by others of that idealised or despised role. He is introduced through the eyes of Heathcliff, in the domestic but 'splendid place' that is Thrushcross Grange, with its crimson carpets and chandeliers.[12] Inside this comfort and elegance, young Edgar is crying. The upper-class home is, in Heathcliff and Nelly's view, a place of idleness and 'softness' for gentlemen, who then embody these characteristics in turn. Nelly describes him, though pointedly for Heathcliff's benefit, as crying 'for mamma at every turn […] and sat at home all day for a shower of rain'.[13] Linton's behaviour is repeatedly linked to femininity and idleness: 'no mother could have nursed an only child more devotedly' than Edgar tends his sick wife; he sits 'hour after hour' beside her and picks her flowers.[14] Edgar Linton as a model gentleman, and Thrushcross Grange as a model of domestic elegance, are interlinked in the text. Linton is most comfortable when at home, his refuge from the world, where he retires from all social responsibility after his wife's early death. The home is a controlled space, where boundaries can be maintained, and boundaries are of the utmost importance to Linton.

However, in *Wuthering Heights* characters often cross class boundaries, by moving from one house to another, demonstrating the effects of nurture on nature, and the importance of the domestic environment for all. Cathy and Nelly both improve their situation by moving to the Grange, and Isabella lowers her situation by marrying Heathcliff and moving to the increasingly degraded space of Wuthering Heights; where her husband 'would certainly have struck a stranger as a born and bred gentleman, and his wife as a thorough little slattern'.[15] Yet Linton refuses to cross class boundaries, as is shown in his refusal to cross physical spaces; as a youth he objects to courting Cathy at her home, and he will not write to his sister after she elopes. Edgar's defining masculine characteristic in the text is inflexibility, a trait he shares with Heathcliff. When Linton suggests that the kitchen is an appropriate setting for

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[12] Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, edited by Helen Small (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 42.
[13] Ibid., p. 51.
[14] Ibid., p. 119.
[15] Ibid., p. 131.

'welcoming a runaway servant as a brother', Cathy turns his inflexibility against him; knowing Edgar's investment in the appearance of class will not countenance his wife debasing herself, she retaliates by suggesting they 'set two tables […] one for your master and Miss Isabella, being gentry; the other for Heathcliff and myself, being of the lower orders'.[16] Edgar's investment in appearance, arguably, costs Isabella her life as he refuses her assistance, and even contact, after her unwise marriage, despite knowing how cruel and unyielding Heathcliff is in turn. Yet, neither Cathy nor Nelly takes Edgar's authority seriously, and he fails to protect his sister, wife, daughter, and servants from Heathcliff's influence. Caught between the traditions of ancient patriarchy and the lived experience of modern domesticity, Linton's investment in maintaining class boundaries means he pronounces edicts like the paterfamilias of an older Gothic text, but his experience of gentlemanly living in comfort and elegance make him physically unable to enforce his rule. Nelly's physical expectations of Linton, as less independent and physically strong than labouring men and lower gentry, supports traditional thinking of the time that social status is in some way physically inherent through heredity. In her depiction of Linton, I suggest, Emily Brontë creates a clear example of the anxiety of class-based masculine identity for a 'modern' nineteenth-century gentleman.

Judith Wylie similarly suggests that Charlotte Brontë's Rochester 'embodies the struggle of a Victorian patriarch to adhere to a conventionally narrow and unified sense of self'.[17] Focussing on his relationship with Bertha, Wylie's argument is compelling, exploring how Rochester's relationship with his home highlights Thornfield's role as representative of his multi-faceted and contradictory nature. He is a landowner who never lives among his tenants, unlike Linton the local Magistrate. To his housekeeper Mrs Fairfax, a distant cousin, he is 'a gentleman, a landed proprietor – nothing more'.[18] Rochester is a married man, with an illegitimate daughter, who has no family. Contrast is repeatedly drawn between his home's 'snug, small rooms', which appear cheerful, and are maintained by Mrs Fairfax, and the 'dreary and solitary' front chambers with fine furniture – similar to Thrushcross Grange with contrasts of gleaming white, rich crimson, and crystal.[19] As Eugenia DeLamotte notes, the

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[16] Ibid., p. 85.
[17] Judith Wylie, 'Incarnate Crimes: Masculinity, Gendering and the Double in *Jane Eyre*', *Victorians Institute Journal*, 27 (1999), 55-69 (p. 56).
[18] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, edited by Richard Nemesvari (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Literary Texts, 1999), p. 173.
[19] Ibid., p. 162, p. 164.

house is both 'exotic Gothic mansion and ordinary, boring, domestic space', a 'female world', where the primary activities are 'raising a child and running an ordinary household'.[20] Yet all this activity is at the behest of, and benefiting, a man who is determined not to be part of its domestic sphere. The building also serves as a repository of his family's past, which he holds onto, even though his family history pains him. The home thus represents, I suggest, the tension between Rochester's desire to do and be as he pleases – as he feels befits his status as a gentleman – and the need to maintain this status, which ensures the relative freedom from scrutiny he enjoys; he does 'all that God and Humanity require', but little that women might want.[21]

There is ironic tension in that Rochester's ability to behave unconventionally whilst maintaining his social standing is because he is a gentleman, but the reason for his odd behaviour is the concealment of his wife precisely because her unladylike behaviour is perceived as a threat to that very status. Rochester, as a second son marrying into wealth, is not defined by an investment in traditional boundaries as is Linton. The appearance of normality and propriety are sufficient; he suggests living with Jane as man and wife in Italy or France where the truth would not be known.[22] Rochester recognises the arbitrary nature of patriarchal value systems and that the boundaries, which Linton thinks so important, are created by men; thus viewing their malleability as an exploitable feature, rather than a dangerous instability to be countered.

Throughout *Jane Eyre*, Brontë depicts individual men privileging their desires over and above the needs and wants of women, noting that this is socially acceptable: like Godwin, she demonstrates that the personal reflects the political. Mrs Fairfax keeps Thornfield Hall in a state of constant readiness to receive its master, as he has an expectation that the home is run for his benefit: 'though Mr Rochester's visits here are rare, they are always sudden and unexpected; and, as I observed that it put him out to find everything swathed up […] I thought it best to keep the rooms in readiness'.[23] Rochester acknowledges openly the power he holds over the women in his household, socially and physically, repeatedly stating how easy it would be for him to act violently, or unfairly, as though they should be grateful for his

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[20] Eugenia DeLamotte, *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth Century Gothic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 199-200.
[21] C. Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, p. 400.
[22] Ibid., p. 394.
[23] Ibid., p. 172.

leniency: 'Jane! Will you hear reason? […] because if you won't, I'll try violence'.[24] He is confident that it is his decision whether he can marry, and *his* reasoning that Jane should follow, not her own. The raising of women's status through marriage is an old tradition, in keeping with Rochester's belief that the boundaries set by men can be adjusted by men.

Jane and Rochester finally achieve harmony because the boundaries have changed at the will of women, and not men. It is Bertha who destroys the Hall – 'a home of the past: a shrine of memory' in Jane's description[25] – taking part of Rochester, quite literally, with it. Rochester's subsequent home, Ferndean Manor, is described in even more Gothic terms than the Hall; a 'desolate spot', a 'building of considerable antiquity, deep buried in a wood', so deep in fact that it is barely distinguishable from the trees 'so dank and green were its decaying walls'.[26] Yet it is here that Jane and Rochester begin a new life, a happier one. The Gothic home in *Jane Eyre* is not simply a terrifying location to escape from, but a liminal space in which new, perhaps monstrous, possibilities can be explored. Rochester is not simply the villain of the piece, a monstrous representative of patriarchy brought down by women's actions; as DeLamotte recognises, he is both 'hero and villain, egress and entrapment' bringing out the previous contradiction in Gothic literature that the marital home is both the threat *and* the reward offered to Gothic heroines.[27] When Rochester asks if he is hideous and Jane responds 'very, sir: you always were, you know',[28] the power dynamic has shifted; their happy ending incorporates a critique of his past behaviours. Brontë's novel suggests that men must be willing to accept their 'hideousness' for a new domestic paradigm to develop, one that is perceived as monstrous, and Gothic, by conventional standards.

I suggest that Rochester and Linton see their power as inherent in embodied gender and class identity, but Dickens's Phillip Pirrip challenges the idea that class is inherently embodied. The Gothic monster of *Great Expectations* is usually read into the corpse-like being of Miss Havisham, but it is Pip who repeatedly transgresses boundaries of space, class, and morality, and who rises from the graveyard with a secret inheritance. As in Iain Crawford's reading of the novel as a retelling of *Frankenstein*, I suggest that Pip can be described as a monstrous subject.[29] The traditional Gothic elements of a patriarchal usurper, a castle, and a lowly hero

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[24] Ibid., p. 392.
[25] Ibid., p. 172.
[26] Ibid., p. 392.
[27] DeLamotte, p. 221.
[28] C. Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, p. 540.
[29] Iain Crawford, 'Pip and the Monster: the Joys of Bondage', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 28.4 (1988), 625-648.

or heroine discovering their true (higher) place in the world are all inverted in Dickens's work: Pip unknowingly usurps Estella's fortune, replacing her in Magwitch's affections; matriarchal Satis House replaces the patriarchal castle; and Pip often reflects that he would have been happier accepting his place as a blacksmith than in attempting to become a gentleman. However, Pip is not unhappy because he is not able to fulfil the social role and expectations of the gentleman, the source of Linton and Rochester's troubles; Dickens instead suggests that the expectations of popular society make the role an unhappy one for all but a bully. This leads to the question as to whether the real monster is the gentleman himself, or the man who fails to become one.

The links between marital expectations, money, and high social standing are made apparent, as they are made awful, in the parodic scenes at Satis House where Pip finds a rotting wedding breakfast laid out for twenty years, and Miss Havisham still in her yellowing wedding dress. Pip is forewarned here that young gentlemen are bullies, and that fine living alone cannot make one happy. However, he has already absorbed the message that home life is all about status and power. The domestic atmosphere in his home at the forge is soured by the grasping nature of his sister – referred to almost exclusively as Mrs Joe, a symbol of her own gendered disempowerment. Pip's sister uses domestic chores, such as cleaning, to reassert her limited power; Pip and Joe only 'venture to creep in again' once she has calmed down after a vigorous cleaning bout.[30] It is therefore not surprising that there is nothing domestic in Pip's descriptions of Satis House: he refers to the old Brewery and the wild garden more often than the living quarters. Pip's experience of gentlemanly life is subsequently all about display and one-upmanship, and he learns to ape the codes of the members of the Finches of the Grove social club. Though indulging in a level of domestic comfort never previously experienced, Pip is more focused on the appearance than the practicality or use of his furnishings, noting that they were so fine as to occupy 'a few prominent pages in the books of a neighbouring upholsterer'.[31] Pip's attitude does not seem so different to Rochester, with his 'gentleman's tastes and habits' for interior design,[32] seeing Thornfield's symbolic utility but not treating it as a home. Pip's experience of gentlemanly attitudes is thus only different by degree, rather than kind.

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[30] Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, edited by Robert Douglas-Fairhurst (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008 [1994]), p. 91.
[31] Ibid., pp. 119-200.
[32] E. Brontë, p. 89.

Pip's primary motivation in trading gendered power negotiations for class-based is his romantic intentions towards Estella; yet his friend Biddy insightfully asks whether he wants to be a gentleman to court Estella or to 'gain over her', to 'spite her'.[33] His desire for Estella is mired in a power struggle, echoing the parings of Linton and Cathy, and Rochester and Jane, and is never resolved within the novel. Biddy and Joe's eventual happiness suggests, rather simplistically, that opting out of social ambition and accepting traditional gender roles is the answer to a happy home life – but this seems a rather defeatist approach to patriarchal status quo. Whereas Charlotte Brontë seems to suggest that spirited and educated women could lead hidebound men away from investment in patriarchal dominance, both her sister Emily and Dickens both depict women as being as enmeshed in the power dynamics of society as men. Estella is left in the same undetermined status as Pip at the end of the novel; unmarried, with some property, neither what she was nor what she was raised to become. Yet, beyond the exploration of class-implications in achieving a happy outcome to marriage and establishing a home, *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations* never really question the underlying social unit of marriage and family; the happiest endings are secured by those who marry within their own class and raise a family. *Wuthering Heights*, by contrast, questions everything about the social constraints placed upon love by class and gender, through the figure of Heathcliff.

With their dissatisfactory and unresolved class status disrupting the possibility for a domestic resolution in their respective texts, I argue that just as Pip and Miss Havisham can be read as the transgressive monster of *Great Expectations*, Heathcliff performs the same role(s) in *Wuthering Heights*. Heathcliff's desire for Cathy is never depicted as an urge for domestic normativity, or the establishment of a household in the model of either the Earnshaws or Lintons. Like Pip, he achieves the wealth that enables him to live like a gentleman, and this achievement is driven not primarily by his own wants or needs, but by those he perceives to be held by the object of his affections. Losing Cathy, Heathcliff is left with no direction for his passionate self-determination, and it turns to destruction against the institution that has no place for him as an adopted child of unknown origin: the stable bourgeois family. There are, then, also distinct parallels in characterisation between Miss Havisham and Heathcliff, with their passionate responses to romantic rejection and their desire to control the next generation. Heathcliff and Miss Havisham are both shown to be unwilling to move on in life from the role of the jilted lover; all their subsequent actions can be traced back to their view of what might have, or should have, been. For Miss Havisham, what should have been is gender normativity,

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[33] Dickens, *Great Expectations*, p. 118.

which she, in turn, attempts to disrupt through Estella. Stranded between the landowners and the workers of the rural community, Heathcliff's manner of rebellion is more obviously about class; he disrupts the chains of inheritance at Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, determined to have the heir of the previous landowner, Hareton, as his labourer.

However, Heathcliff's actions are also very much about gender, and his repeated failure to perform appropriate or successful domestic masculinity. Jamie Crouse reads the domestic spaces of the novel as spaces of confinement used as a control tactic, suggesting, through a rather essentialist psychological reading of gender, that Heathcliff's behaviour represents a traditional nineteenth-century masculinity.[34] However, I argue that his machismo is presented as performative, not some inherent aspect of self, and this is why it never quite coheres or succeeds. Heathcliff over-performs masculinity because, as Gilbert and Gubar suggest, 'if it is degrading to be a woman, it is even more degrading to be *like* a woman'.[35] Heathcliff's attempt to perform the role of provider for Cathy – unexpectedly leaving to seek his fortune, alone – leaves her vulnerable and unsupported within an abusive household. His brutality in performing as a father produces a sickly child, it is intimated through the abuse of the pregnant mother, in yet another failure to achieve his desired effect. Just as Cathy is too independent and forthright to fit neatly into the decorative, but idle, role of the upper-class mistress of the house, Heathcliff is too emotional and irrational to maintain Wuthering Heights as a functional household, or an income-generating investment.

Though Heathcliff is often compared to Rochester, and the descriptions of the two men are similar with Heathcliff's 'half-civilised ferocity'[36] matching Rochester as 'quite savage' though 'he never was a wild man',[37] Rochester, as Kendrick argues, 're-examines the ethical implications of the masculine prerogatives that he has enjoyed and abused'.[38] Heathcliff holds no prerogative but his own desires; the depiction of his character re-examines the implications of desire through gender and class, rather than ethics. Made constantly aware of his physical and behavioural non-normativity through the cruel and isolating actions of his foster family, Heathcliff is perhaps more like Jane Eyre. When Jane rails against the limitations placed upon women through the alignment of domesticity and femininity, she says that women feel 'just as

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[34] Jamie S. Crouse, 'This Shattered Prison: Confinement, Control and Gender in *Wuthering Heights*', *Brontë Studies*, 33.3 (2008), 179-191. DOI: 10.1179/174582208X338496
[35] Gilbert and Gubar, p. 277.
[36] E. Brontë, p. 85.
[37] C. Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, p. 528.
[38] Kendrick, p. 236.

men' do about the wider world and its opportunities.[39] Perhaps this is why Heathcliff has been repositioned as a romantic lead in film and television adaptations, and can appeal to a female audience despite his abuses; his experiences can be said to echo female experience. Unable to escape fully his oppression, and unable to wield successfully the role of oppressor and its rewards, he is always a figure of scorn: Heathcliff seems to feel just as women do about the home that is experienced as both a prison and a prize.

These Gothic novels all suggest that the image of the gentleman is precisely that, a two dimensional portrait that stands in for the real self; these men often present one image as a public face, and behave quite differently at home. They are, perhaps, the 'missing link' between the overtly monstrous patriarchs of the medieval romance in the first-wave Gothic, and the divided and damaged psyches of the *fin de siècle*, explored in the next chapter. The ideal subject is suggested to be a conflicted, divided, and uncertain self.

Disrupting the Domestic Ideal: monstrous women

The same novels that undermine the image of the gentlemen, also disturb the dominant image of the respectable woman: the 'Angel in the House', as immortalised by Coventry Patmore's famous poem. This idealisation has become known as the 'cult of domesticity' or 'true womanhood', after Barbara Welter's influential 1966 essay.[40] In nineteenth-century etiquette guides, home medical treatises, and books on raising children, the ideal wife and mother was constructed and instructed. George Burnap, in *The Sphere and Duties of Woman* (1848) says of the ideal woman:

> She feels herself weak and timid. She needs a protector. […] She is in a measure dependent. She asks for wisdom, constancy, firmness, perseveredness, and she is willing to repay it all by the surrender of the full treasure of her affection. Women despise in men everything like themselves except a tender heart. It is enough that she is effeminate and weak; she does not want another like herself.[41]

In books and tracts like these, we can see the continuance of compulsory sentimental heterosexuality: that is, the idea that woman and man are created as opposite, but

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[39] C. Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, p. 178.
[40] Barbara Welter, 'The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860', *American Quarterly*, 18.2 (1966), 151-174. DOI: 10.2307/2711179
[41] George W. Burnap, *The Sphere and Duties of Woman: A Course of Lectures*, 2nd corrected edition (Baltimore, MD: John Murphy, 1848), p. 47.

complementary, figures to form a natural pairing. The idea of two distinct sexes, and the gender-related behaviours and cultural norms connected to different bodies, are 'renaturalised' concepts, to repurpose a phrase from Elaine L. Graham. 'Renaturalisation' in Graham's sense encompasses the framing practices by which medical and human sciences abstract a biological process, reconstructing its functionality in scientific terms, and introducing these culturally-constructed narratives to the public as a 'natural' process. Graham states that it is most important to question who the beneficiaries are of this reconstruction; noting increasing rewards – both medical and economic – for manipulating nature, she asks 'whose representation of "nature" […] will stand as authoritative'.[42] As Graham suggests, following Foucault, 'knowledge delineating what it means to be human is rather a regulative ideal by which human societies are governed'.[43] Women's lack of individual agency within the institutions of the modern world, such as the law courts and governing bodies of the nation state, was re-naturalised through the framing of women's bodies and intellects as inherently weaker than men's.

Rather than addressing the wider systemic issues of power that William Godwin explored through a depiction of the machinations of the legal system, Brontë's *Jane Eyre* presents an individual response to the problems of systemic power differentials, a 'silent revolt' in Jane's term.[44] It is possible to read Godwin's *Caleb Williams* as being solely about power struggles between men, viewing Emily's story as merely a reflection on Tyrell's character rather than a central example of the alignment of femininity with disempowerment. However, in Brontë's story, the gender dynamics are central because the relationship is overtly a heterosexual romance, between a monstrous man and the woman who attempts to redeem him. Rochester's non-normative behaviour is, like Jane's, measured by his behaviour towards those of another gender. Rochester's monstrosity tacitly aligns with social norms; he justifies his behaviour towards Bertha by upholding dominant notions of appropriate behaviour according to class and gender norms. Jane's non-normativity is demonstrated thorough her resistance to men's social dominance; a rebellious refusal to accept a role subservient to Rochester, or even a viable proposal of marriage from St. John Rivers. Jane's resistance to patriarchal control is

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[42] Elaine L. Graham, *Representations of the Post/Human: Monsters, Aliens and Others in Popular Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), p. 123.
[43] Ibid., p. 41.
[44] C. Brontë, p. 178.

presented as stemming from a rational sense of her own worth as an individual, and a refusal to compromise her religious and moral standards.

Though Jane is, in many ways, a transgressive heroine, who challenges the limitations placed upon women in their pursuit of a life and career outside of the domestic arena, she is a model of idealised feminine behaviour in other respects. Jane's modest rebellion is contrasted against the violence of Bertha Mason and the presumption of Blanche Ingram. Bertha's transgressions against decorum are, the text suggests, perhaps to be expected; she is a woman of uncertain racial and family heritage, as explored in the next section. However Blanche is at first introduced as a paragon of contemporary English womanhood, described by Mrs Fairfax as 'the queen' of the local belles.[45] Blanche is as clever and educated as she is physically attractive, but Jane disapproves of the manner in which she displays her brilliance: 'her *trail* might be clever, but it was decidedly not good-natured'.[46] Miss Ingram's interests in botany and her intent on securing a rich husband, are appropriate for her rank and station in life, it is only her mode of going about her business that is censured. Blanche's commanding and predatory nature does not become the submission expected of women: 'she seems waiting to be sought; but she will not wait too long: she herself selects a mate'.[47] These are three varieties of monstrous women, who push cultural boundaries with their behaviours.

In Rochester's manipulation of Jane and her rival for his affections, Blanche, and in his treatment of his wife Bertha, his monstrous exploitation of gendered power relations within society is acknowledged at the heart of the text. In *Jane Eyre* the individual's ethical and emotional response is of primary importance as a means of foregrounding female agency. As a woman Jane cannot engage, officially, with the justice system, the government, or the church, thus the law of the land is from the outset supplementary to the ethical and emotional responses of the individual. Jane's aunt Mrs Reed is bound by her husband's promise to care for Jane and, though Mrs Reed feeds her and sends her to school, the judgement levied upon her is not for a breach of promise, but a lack of emotional engagement. As Brontë states in her preface to the second edition of her novel, 'conventionality is not morality'.[48] Jane's sole method of resisting co-option into the schemes of men – whether Rochester's illegal bigamy, or St. John Rivers proposal of a loveless but worthy marriage – is through her dedication to

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[45] Ibid., p. 235.
[46] Ibid., p. 250.
[47] Ibid., p. 254.
[48] C. Brontë, 'Preface to the Second Edition', in *Jane Eyre*, ed. by Nemesvari, pp. 557-558 (p. 557).

following her own ethical and emotional inclinations. Rochester is forced to acknowledge this:

> I could bend her with my finger and thumb; and what good would good would it do if I bent, if I uptore, if I crushed her? […] If I tear, if I rend this slight prison […] I could call myself possessor of its clay dwelling place. And it is you, spirit – with will and energy, and virtue and purity – that I want, not alone your brittle frame.[49]

In this passage, Rochester concedes that woman's identity is more than her physical body, that her interior subjectivity has value. I argue that this is central to Brontë's text and its resistance to the legacy of Enlightenment norms of subjectivity.

Yet, the arbiter of the correct behaviour is, ultimately, Rochester and other powerful men. As he states so simply of his first wife: 'since the medical men had proclaimed her mad, she had, of course, been shut up'.[50] Jane records, repeatedly, the power imbalance that exists between herself and Rochester; referring to him as her 'master', even as they are marrying. In outlining how few options she has available in escaping Rochester's household, she reveals how much power a man in a remote household can wield: 'her life was pale, her prospects were desolate […]. My hopes were all dead […] I looked at my love: that feeling which was my master's – which he had created'.[51] This emotional outpouring could indeed belong to Bertha Mason, were she given a voice within the text. Bertha's desperate acts – attacking her keepers, attempting to burn Rochester in his bed, finally destroying Thornfield Hall entirely by fire and committing suicide – seem more understandable, and less irrational, when a parallel is drawn between her and Jane. Gilbert and Gubar develop this analogous reading, but Gayatri Spivak warns us that such a critique, without acknowledging the wider imperialist context of Brontë's invocation of Bertha's Creole heritage, fails to engage with the underlying dynamics as to who is given a place to speak within the text. Reading Bertha through Jane, or Jane over Bertha, as though one were merely the dark 'other' of a joint expression of self, elides differences of ethnicity and nationality in the construction of the subject. As Spivak notes, 'the battle for female individualism plays itself out within the larger theatre of the establishment of meritocratic individualism', and thus 'no perspective critical of imperialism

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[49] C. Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, p. 394.
[50] Ibid., p. 398.
[51] Ibid., p. 383.

can turn the other into a self' retrospectively.[52] Jane demands that she be acknowledged and accorded a place within a particular representational order as a subject, but her failure to demand the same for Bertha, and the text's failure to make space for Bertha, demonstrates the limits of that very schema.

This is the tension at the heart of *Jane Eyre* that has troubled critics since its publication; it recognises the limitations of the existing social hierarchies, yet rather than using the underlying instability to demolish the house of privilege, it opens up a fissure just wide enough through which to insert its heroine. Rochester's acknowledgment of admirable aspects in Jane that he wishes to acknowledge in himself – such as courage, moral fortitude, intelligent reflection, passion – enables a suggestion of equality, despite their different gender and class backgrounds. However, there is no true equality; Jane does not represent a threat to Rochester's power in the way that Caleb Williams is a threat to Falkland. When Rochester offers to elevate Jane socially through marriage, she is still under the law his inferior, as demonstrated by the position of Bertha, whose marriage was arranged so that her money might be claimed by Rochester. Marriage consolidates the man's power rather than reduces it; one of the 'consequences of heterosexuality', as outlined in chapter one.

Thus, in Brontë's novel, her heroine only marries once the physical power of her intended husband is diminished. The idea that Rochester's blindness and impaired mobility is a punishment for his past sins, inflicted by Bertha, is a profoundly ableist but long-standing idea.[53] As previous scholars have suggested, Rochester is perhaps redeemed through his suffering, brought to embody the position of a better kind of masculinity, through the actions of two women[54]: Bertha's fire-setting renders him physically harmless, and Jane's willingness to love enables him to achieve the roles of father, husband, and head of household that he has always desired. Julia Sun-Joo Lee describes Brontë's choice of punishment as to 'abruptly strip Rochester of literacy',[55] yet this suggests the choice is unexpected. Unable to communicate on paper, Jane controls Rochester's social world, his finances, his household, and his access to culture, as he controlled his first wife. Thus, literacy is perhaps the ideal and

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[52] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism', in *The Feminist Reader: Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism*, edited by Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore (New York, NY: Basil Blackwell, 1997 [1989]), pp. 148-163 (p. 150, p. 156).
[53] See Essaka Joshua, '"I Began to See": Biblical Models of Disability in *Jane Eyre*', *Brontë Studies*, 37.4 (2012), 286-291.
[54] Dennis Porter, 'Of Heroines and Victims: Jean Rhys and Jane Eyre', *The Massachusetts Review*, 17.3 (1976), 540-552.
[55] Lee, p. 51.

logical manner of neutralising the individually monstrous man. However, Rochester's actions become a singular aberration, and Jane no longer rails against society's norms, but celebrates the birth of the son and heir. Jane's rather conventional success in no way disturbs the wider structures of power at work that enable the able-bodied, white male to perform monstrous actions in the first place, though the novel reveals them systematically.

Charlotte Brontë clearly demonstrates that the power to determine subjectivity ultimately lies with 'gentlemen'; that is, the power to decide who is free, whose reputation is considered good, who marries whom, who is considered 'sane' and normal. This recalls us to Burnap's etiquette guide, which does not just tell women how they should present themselves to the outside world, but how to regulate their internal emotions also. Comparing the mad women of the nineteenth century novel to the men of feeling depicted in eighteenth-century Gothic explored in the previous chapter, we might agree with Janet Oppenheim that 'unlike male nervous breakdown, the element of personal choice or responsibility was rarely granted much influence in women'.[56] In an awkward paradox, a woman's sanity is measured by her performance of social gender norms that are irrational and, often, counter to her own self-interest, as Shoshana Felman notes, drawing on Phyllis Chester's interviews with female psychiatric patients.[57] In *Jane Eyre* there is very little description of Bertha's madness, barring Rochester's own summary of her nature:

> I had marked neither modesty, nor benevolence, nor candour, nor refinement in
> her mind or manners […] her tastes odious to me, her cast of mind common, low,
> narrow, and singularly incapable of being led to anything higher, expanded to
> anything larger […] a nature the most gross, impure, depraved I ever saw.[58]

Rochester's verdict is moral, not medical, and the language of both is intertwined throughout this passage. As seen in Felman's analysis of Balzac's 'Adieu' (1830) madness is 'precisely what makes a woman *not* a woman'.[59] Insanity is diagnosed as a loss of identity, linked to a loss of memory; yet, though this suggests a Lockean model of subjectivity, Felman demonstrated that the female subject is in fact constructed as merely a reflection of the true subject, a man:

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[56] Janet Oppenheim, *'Shattered Nerves': Doctors, Patients and Depression in Victorian England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 181.
[57] Shoshana Felman, 'Women and Madness: the critical phallacy', in *The Feminist Reader*, ed. by Belsey and Moore, pp. 117-132.
[58] C. Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, p. 396.
[59] Felman, p. 127.

If the question of female identity remains in the text unanswered, it is simply because it is never truly asked: in the guise of asking, 'She? Who?' Phillipe is in fact always asking 'I? Who?' – a false question, the answer to which he knows in advance: 'It's Phillipe'. The question concerning the woman is thereby transformed into a question of a guarantee for men, a question through which nothing is questioned, whose sole function is to ensure the validity of its predefined answer 'You are *my* Stéphanie'.[60]

A woman's value is not in and of her self, but for what she represents and reflects back to a man, who is the true subject. This idea is also put forward by D. A. Miller regarding the sensation novel, Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audrey's Secret* (1862): 'the "secret" let out at the end of the novel is not […] that Lady Audley is a mad woman but rather that, whether she is one or not, she must be treated as such'.[61] A woman who displays independent subjectivity, who refuses to reflect men and their desires, is declared mad, and no longer a 'true' woman, as justification for her alienation or confinement.

The vitriol expressed towards *Jane Eyre* by contemporary critics echoes these judgements against women who declare their independence of thought and self:

Jane Eyre is throughout the personification of an unregenerate and undisciplined spirit […] there is a proud and perpetual assertion of the rights of man, for which we find no authority in God's word or in God's providence – […] the tone of mind and thought which has overthrown authority and violated every code human and divine.[62]

Elizabeth Rigby's review links female independence of mind to wider social structures of power, viewing Jane's personal rebellion as representative of other calls for independence, such as the contemporary Chartist demonstrations. Rigby's review continues on to address the issue of the social rank of the governess, and of those very social barriers that she wishes to reinforce, she is forced to admit that they are artificially constructed and maintained. After all,

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[60] Ibid., p. 129.

[61] D. A. Miller, '*Cage aux folles*: Sensation and Gender in Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White'* in *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Catherine Gallagher and Thomas Laqueur (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 107-136 (p. 121).

[62] Elizabeth Rigby, 'Vanity Fair – and Jane Eyre', *Quarterly Review*, 84 (December, 1848), pp. 153-185 (p. 173).

there is nothing upon the face of the thing to stamp her as having been called to a different state of life from that in which it has pleased God to place you; and therefore the distinction has to be kept up with a fictitious barrier.[63]

The problem with *Jane Eyre*, and for Jane Eyre, is that the text, its readers, and its heroine all acknowledge that the judgements of worth made between bodies in society are based on socially constructed categories; each appears willing to rail against specific instances of unfair judgement, but not to take on the system itself. In both Emily and Charlotte Brontë's novels the monstrous individuals are ultimately punished or brought within the boundaries of normativity: the legitimate marriage of Jane and Rochester is presented as their happy and successful integration into the kinship system; Cathy Earnshaw and Heathcliff are dead, but Catherine will marry her cousin Hareton and ensure succession. Likewise, having listed the peculiar problems that the governess faces in gender, class, and even nationalistic terms, Rigby insists 'all this cannot be altered with us […] all this must be continued as it is'.[64] Yet, the system is a house of cards; to challenge one unfounded judgement of bodily normativity, is to challenge them all.

Old Maids and Confirmed Bachelors – sensational queerness

Not all monstrous women in Gothic fiction are recuperated, or their deaths presented as an inevitable result of their disruptive ways. The gender-bending characters of Marian Halcombe in Wilkie Collins's *Woman in White* (1859) and Amante from Elizabeth Gaskell's 'The Grey Woman' (1861) are central to the resolution of the plots, securing the safe futures of other characters and their families. Marian is a woman with masculine physical characteristics, and Amante cross-dresses and presents as male. Marian is described explicitly in terms of boundary transgression: Walter Hartright exclaims, of Marian's blend of masculine and feminine features and behaviours, that he is 'almost repelled' and feels 'helpless discomfort familiar to us all in sleep when we recognise yet cannot reconcile the anomalies and contradictions of a dream'.[65] Though Marian and Amante are characters who we might expect to be consistently categorised as monstrous under the dominant gender regime, yet they are portrayed sympathetically by their authors.

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[63] Ibid., p. 177.
[64] Ibid., p. 178.
[65] Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White*, edited by Matthew Sweet (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 35.

The queerness in Gaskell's short story does not resolve neatly in support of the patriarchal familial order. The death of a masculine woman, living as a man, and supporting the eponymous grey woman as a loving partner, does not end nor negate the narrative of the women's relationship to each other. In fact, Amante's death at the hands of her partner's abusive husband is a clear example of injustice, and is presented as a tragedy. Gaskell demonstrates that the social norms of women's obedience and passivity force Anna into marriage with Monsieur de la Tourelle, and the respect and power accorded to men are clearly what enable him to get away with domestic violence and the murder of his first wife. In fact, de la Tourelle's violence against women is a signifier of his wider anti-social and violent behaviours, echoing a pattern now recognised in statistical and social research, but observable long before.[66] The consequence of a forced marriage is bodily and mental illness, as 'Anna Scherer lived in some state of life-long terror'.[67] Gaskell's story foregrounds Anne's desires, and how they are over-ridden repeatedly: 'I had no notion of being married, and could not bear anyone who talked to me about it'.[68] Though the cause of Anna's becoming the grey woman, looking so ill and frightened, is the central mystery that occasions the telling of the tale it is the least sensational aspect of Gaskell's plot; the answer is domestic violence, a wholly ordinary horror that Gaskell links to wider problems of power and violence in society.

Though heterosexual norms are presented as bringing nothing but misery to Anna and her family, same-sex love is presented as loving and even familial. Anna's partner, her 'dear, very faithful Amante', behaves toward her family just as the patriarchal provider she pretends to be in her working life as a tailor: 'She kissed you, yes! it was you, my daughter, my darling, […] Amante kissed you, sweet baby, blessed little comforter, as if she never could leave off'.[69] Amante's public façade as a man is motivated by very real emotional bond between women, a bond that enables Anna and baby Ursula to survive. Amante is the 'hero' of the middle portion of the tale, dealing with the women's escape from de la Tourelle's castle; she is ingenious in her plotting, brave, and physically strong. Much like Marian Halcombe, she is a transgressive figure who blends masculine and feminine traits of physical and behavioural

[66] See Jeffrey Fagan and Sandra Wexler, 'Crime at Home and in the Streets: The Relationship between Family and Stranger Violence', *Violence and Victims*, 2.1 (1987), 5-23, and Gerald T. Hotaling, Murray A. Straus; and Alan J. Lincoln, 'Intrafamily Violence, and Crime and Violence outside the Family', *Crime and Justice*, 11 (1989), 315-375. DOI: 10.1086/449157
[67] Elizabeth Gaskell, 'The Grey Woman', in *Gothic Tales*, edited by Laura Kranzler (London: Penguin, 2004 [2000]), pp. 287-340 (p. 289).
[68] Ibid., p. 293.
[69] Ibid., p. 337.

gender norms. By contrast, the good Dr Voss, who comes to befriend the women later, is simultaneously ineffective and demanding. Unable to reassure Anna of her safety, Voss insists she see the body of her dead husband: 'he bade me show him that I loved him by my obedience and my trust'.[70] Amante, by contrast, persuades a frightened and pregnant Anna to climb out of a cellar and hide in a cave by 'talking in a quiet, measured voice, unlike her own, so dry and authoritative'.[71]

Gaskell's story suggests that what is important in the formation and labelling of familial and loving relationships is not behavioural normativity, but mutually beneficial emotional and practical support. Even the love that Dr Voss provides Anna remains outside of the dominant cultural norms, as they are never legitimately married. Anna is careful to state that her Christian sect condones divorce, but she never obtains a legal separation from her previous abusive husband or remarries after his death. Given Anna's embrace of Voss is partially a matter of practical adaptation in her weak and frightened state after Amante's murder, it is reasonable to wonder if the same declaration as she makes after Voss's own death would have eulogised Amante, had she survived instead: 'we both mourned bitterly the loss of that dear husband and father, for such I will call him ever and as such you must consider him, my child'.[72] Gaskell presents a sensitive portrayal of non-normative familial relations, whilst subtly observing that what seems to be private has wider public repercussions, something that is obscured by Patmore's popular poem.

In exploring the depiction of Marian Halcombe as a similarly transgressive figure, Ardel Haefele-Thomas asserts that the very existence of such characters challenges 'a hegemonic Victorian construction of the patriarchal British family as upholder of gender, sexual, national and racial purity'.[73] I would argue, however, that, in the attempt to construct a monolithic image of the nation state, there is no 'outside' of the regulating order that constructs normativity. Even the monster exists within this representational order, categorised and labelled. It is the unspeakable and unthinkable that resists categorisation and, as the century progressed, terminology developed to ensure that this space beyond the recognisable shrank, as explored in the next chapter's discussion of the vocabulary of degeneration. Singular characters who model a form of positive otherness in Wilkie Collins' work – as respected and

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[70] Ibid., p. 340.
[71] Ibid., p. 316.
[72] Ibid., p. 340.
[73] Ardel Haefele-Thomas, *Queer Others in Victorian Gothic: Transgressing Monstrosity* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), p. 5.

respectable family and community members who happen to be different – do little to challenge the normative alignments of gender, sexuality, nationality, and race. His characterisations ensure the links between racial, gendered, and sexual disturbances to the norm. Marian, and the racially-ambiguous Ezra Jennings in *The Moonstone* (1868), both profess strong emotional attachments to people of the same gender, beyond what might be termed appropriate or normative; their behavioural oddities are matched to physical terms of otherness. These alignments suggest, I argue, that there is little that is truly subversive about Collins's depictions of anomalous bodies and behaviours.

Women's performances of masculinity can be excused because masculine attributes are figured as positive values, yet men's performance of femininity is not so easily incorporated. After gaining a masculine confidence in her decision-making and independence of mind, Marian returns to an appropriate role within the domestic sphere as a spinster aunt. Thus, a woman who defends her family can be fitted within a framework of 'natural' instincts. *The Woman in White* concludes with the traditional marriage plot and, though there is the possibility of reading Laura, Walter, and Marian as a queer *ménage a trois* in which Laura continues with two loves, the women's positioning as half-sisters would once again align queerness with perversity. In turn, men's performance of femininity unfits them for the supposedly natural role as a defender and provider; Frederick Fairlie's unfitness as a patriarch is aligned with his borderline hysteric 'state of nervous wretchedness'.[74] Descriptions of Fairlie's rather arch commentary on events codes him as effeminate, and his self- portrait as 'a bundle of nerves dressed up as a man',[75] also suggests his masculinity is performative. Though the 'man of feeling' was a positive model in the Romantic era, the emasculating potential of emotional instability must also be noted; Heathcliff's bride asks 'Is Mr Heathcliff a man? If so, is he mad?'[76] Fairlie's account is also co-written with his servant Louis, 'what I can't remember and can't write, Louis must remember and write for me. He is an ass, and I am an invalid, and we are likely to make all sorts of mistakes between us'.[77] Such a shared narrative is, I would argue, suggestive of linked subjectivity, and an example of Fairlie's failure to embody the individualist ideals for the effective gentleman patriarch. His relationship with Louis is coded as overly intimate and dependant, in class and gender terms. As his refusal of appropriate masculinity and responsibility endangers his niece Laura, and

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[74] Collins, *Woman in White*, p. 338.
[75] Ibid., p. 348.
[76] E. Brontë, p. 120.
[77] Collins, *Woman in White*, p. 338.

Marian's adoption of masculine-coded attributes such as confidence and bravery leads to her rescue, Collins's narrative reinforces binaristic hierarchies of value that code passivity and vulnerability as feminine, and activity and strength as masculine. Attempts to read Collins's coding of queerness in a positive light must acknowledge that his narratives try to reconcile a measure of queerness within heterosexist parameters, to contain the queer potential to challenge dominant norms.

The family is the idealised framework against which abnormality is measured, particularly though the performance of traditional gender roles. The queer other is a highly visible 'problem' within these texts that must be resolved for the narrative to reach resolution; Marian, like Jennings, is depicted as calling too much attention to herself for the comfort of others, simply by existing in contravention of norms that insist she appear and behave differently. Although Haefele-Thompson is right to suggest that, in creating central roles for 'monstrous' people, 'Collins calls into question the 'acceptable' notion that queer people […] are unimportant to culture and society',[78] their importance depends upon accepting their own liminal status and the primacy of the family. The family is often offered as a location that can contain and neutralise the disruptive effects of women's queerness, however queer men are more often depicted as unfit for familial responsibilities. While a subordinate position as a servant can position a man as disempowered and thus aligned to a feminised position, like Caleb Williams, the domestic sphere of their own household would provide men with more power, through the legitimacy conferred by the appropriate performance of patriarchy.

Queer and/or racially-othered men cannot so easily be incorporated into the family. Though Marian Halcombe is ultimately brought within the dominant familial structure, Ezra Jennings' hybridity of race and gender is too extensive to be resolved neatly, and thus he perishes of an unspecified medical complaint. Jennings is a man of uncertain racial and ethnic heritage and appearance, who describes himself in gender non-conforming terms: 'some men are born with female constitutions – and I am one of them'.[79] Gabriel Betteredge declares that Jennings' appearance 'is against him', linking his, at this point undescribed, difference to an uncertainty of identity: 'nobody knows who he is'.[80] However, Franklin Blake finds him 'the most remarkable-looking man that I had ever seen', and provides the first thorough description of

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[78] Haefele-Thomas, p. 5.
[79] Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*, edited by John Sutherland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008 [1999]), p. 369.
[80] Ibid., p. 320.

Jennings's features, his 'piebald hair' and 'gipsy' colouring.[81] Jennings's role in the story is certainly positive, and the negative judgments levied against him based on his appearance are shown to be unfounded, yet his death still suggests a proto-eugenic judgement of his worth, as a person unable to fit into the inflexible social structures of British society. The description echoes the pseudoscientific judgements of contemporary anatomists like Paul Broca, that 'the children of a European woman and a Negro are rarely vigorous'.[82] Jennings's mixing of racial and gender signifiers is linked to a weakened constitution; his death is suggested to be inevitable given his heredity.

Monstrosity of behaviour is linked to 'monstrosity' of features, and the norms by which the monstrous are judged are set in accordance with an imperialist world view that requires a 'healthy' national body. The 'problem' of miscegenation is not simply constructed through racial prejudice, but is fundamentally liked to ideas of (dis)ability. Lennard Davis notes, in *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* (1995), that 'the constellation of words describing this concept "normal", "normalcy", "norm", "average", "abnormal" – all entered the European languages rather late in human history', in fact, it was in the mid-nineteenth century.[83] Davis, further, links the standardisation of the body with the popular novels, which focus on 'the middleness of life, the middleness of the material world, the middleness of the normal body, the middleness of a sexually gendered, ethnically middle world'.[84] The Gothic and Sensation novels, positioned on the margins and interested in the abnormal, often attempt to reconcile the abnormal with the normal, and failing that kill off the unreconcilable body. However, both Gaskell's tale and Collins's novel were serialised in Dickens's magazine *All the Year Round*, around the same time as *Great Expectations*, and alongside articles about the transatlantic slave trade, creating intertextual links between socially challenging discourses. Once the queer, disabled, and racially-different have told their stories, enabled to present themselves as people, the imposition of the normative is that much more obviously a construct and not a pre-existent fact.

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[81] Ibid., p. 319.
[82] Paul Broca, *On the Phenomena of Hybridity in the Genus Homo*, edited by C. Carter Blake (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1864), p. 29.
[83] Lennard Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* (London: Verso, 1995), p. 24.
[84] Ibid., p. 42.

'This Nauseous Brood' – children of empire

Though women's Gothic predominates in histories of British literature of the mid nineteenth-century, narratives of female horror such as Mary Hayden Pike's novel *Ida May* (1854) or Harriet Jacobs's autobiographical *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), are rarely included in the main canon of American Gothic. Philip Smith suggests that nineteenth century American Gothic, with specific reference to Charles Brockden Brown, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Edgar Allan Poe, 'relocated the common forms of Gothic fiction. The castle, largely, was replaced by the old house, bringing horror into the home'.[85] Yet, as I suggest, the domestic environment has consistently been the primary source of horror for the Gothic subject. Tales of white women in adversity have always been at the heart of the Gothic and its sister genre the Sentimental novel, but the slave narrative is increasingly recognised as a significant influence on these mid-nineteenth century novels. It is thus, as Julia Sun-Joo Lee argues, that 'the fugitive plot is transformed into the master plot of the novel'.[86] I suggest that the slave narrative is, therefore, a key genre of the American Gothic; as a genre of national fiction in its own right, and as an influence on transatlantic literature. As Helen Thomas observes of the early Victorian period:

> debates over power, colonial government and systems of authority, freedom and equality crisscrossed the Atlantic […] challenges to slavery were not only presented within the slave narratives but also within Romantic Literature, with both genres centring around concepts of liberty, freedom and subjectivity.[87]

In this thesis, I argue that the Gothic is constructed through, and posits an exploration of, the depiction of marginal subjectivity. The transatlantic slave narrative, exploring the dangers and humiliations attendant on being judged as racially and sexually 'other', is thus a Gothic text co-opted by, and writing back to, a literary tradition. The links between American national identity and the English, particularly, come to the fore in these national narratives of the Gothic.

The Gothic relocated and adapted to a new setting in American literature in the early years of the nineteenth century, as settlers sought to explore their place in a landscape different to

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[85] Philip Smith, 'Re-visioning Romantic-Era Gothicism: An Introduction to Key Works and Themes in the Study of H. P. Lovecraft', *Literature Compass*, 8.11 (2011), 830–839 (p. 832). DOI: 10.1111/j.1741-4113.2011.00838.x

[86] Lee, p. 130.

[87] Helen Thomas, 'Slave Narratives, the Romantic Imagination and Transatlantic Fiction', in *Oxford Handbook of the Slave Narrative*, ed. by Ernest, pp. 371-388 (p. 372).

continental Europe. First-wave authors of American Gothic, such as Brockden Brown, noted the gap between expectations of an American setting and the European Gothic milieu. In his short story 'Somnambulism. A Fragment' (1805) Brown suggests the 'monster' Nick Handyside 'might contribute to realise, on an American road, many of those imaginary tokens and perils which abound in the wildest romance'.[88] Brown then lists the indigenous species that have fled before the approach of the settlers, such as the bears and the wolves, to 'more savage regions'.[89] In conjunction with the preface and plot of *Edgar Huntly* (1799), as explored in the previous chapter, Brown's work suggests that monstrosity is imported from Europe, and that savagery ought to be eliminated from America. The American Gothic of white male authors refers back to a European dark past, seeing America as a land that *should* be free of terrors, even if it is not in fact so.

The importation of Gothic narratives of capture, torture, and mistaken identity is, indeed, European; the settlers, colonists, and slavers projected their horror on to the body of the other. Before the rise of the slave narrative that peaked in the mid-nineteenth century, another uniquely American genre of captivity tales developed from those claiming to have been kidnapped by indigenous tribespeople, such as *Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs Mary Rowlandson* (1682). Yet, Nathaniel Hawthorne, apologising in *The Marble Faun* (1860) for setting his tale in Italy, opines:

> No author, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance
> about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no
> picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity, in
> broad and simple daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land […].
> Romance and poetry, ivy, lichens, and wallflowers need ruin to make them
> grow.[90]

Hawthorne had, in fact, written brilliantly about the gloomy wrongs of the American past in three Gothic novels and tales, such as 'Alice Doane's Appeal' (1835) about the Salem witch trials. Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet thus suggests that Hawthorne must be writing ironically,

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[88] Charles Brockden Brown, 'Somnambulism. A fragment', *The Literary Review, and American Register*, 3.10 (1805), 335-347 (p. 344).
[89] Ibid., p. 345.
[90] Nathaniel Hawthorne, 'Preface', in *The Marble Faun*, edited by Susan Manning (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008 [2002]), pp. 3-5 (p. 4).

that this preface is performative.[91] It would be an overtly political position at odds with much of Hawthorne's output to refuse to recognise that, as Roxanne Harde notes, 'the American Colonial period did offer its nineteenth-century descendants a dark history on which to base its Gothic'.[92] However, America is frequently conceptualised as continually invested in progress and looking to a future, as a nation of immigrants, settlers, colonised people, and slaves with multiple and competing histories vying for representation. Charles L. Crow thus suggests that 'the Yankee is only a Yankee because he has remembered to forget that he is a Creole'.[93] However, as Jennifer DeVere Brody suggests, 'the unspeakable cannot be rendered forever inexpressible, the most persistent mode of forgetting is memory imperfectly formed'.[94] The construction of an American national identity as predominantly white is a choice, a performance, 'preserved, restored, retained, contained, and "achieved" through repetition'.[95]

The privileged and predominantly European authors of the first-wave Gothic chose white, wealthy, and well-born characters as their protagonists, who then suffer the privations and humiliations that were all too real for black and impoverished people. Ruth Bienstock Anolik suggests that Gothic 'interrogates and demystifies the metaphor' of coverture, 'revealing the horror beneath the neutral language' of the legal treatises to reveal that 'the literal application of the law results in situations that are, indeed, unnatural, irrational and horrifying'.[96] Yet, the experiences of being buried alive or denied one's humanity was, for the most part, still a metaphor for middle-class white women's experiences. Transported from their home, cross-dressing for disguise, denied their rightful place within society, the Gothic protagonist's experiences are a literal depiction of the most marginalised member of society, such as the African-American slave.

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[91] Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet, *The Poetics and Politics of the American Gothic: Gender and Slavery in Nineteenth Century American Literature* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 55.
[92] Roxanne Harde, '"At rest now": Child Ghosts and Social Justice in Nineteenth Century Women's Writing', in *Transnational Gothic: Literary and Social Exchanges in the Long Nineteenth Century*, edited by Monika Elbert and Bridget M. Marshall (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016 [2013]), pp. 189-200 (p. 191).
[93] Charles L. Crow, *American Gothic* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p. 57.
[94] Jennifer DeVere Brody, *Impossible Purities: Blackness, Femininity, and Victorian Culture* (London: Duke University Press, 1998), p. 7.
[95] Ibid., p. 57.
[96] Ruth Bienstock Anolik, 'The Wages of Sanctity: Fatal Consequences of Marriage and Motherhood in the Eighteenth Century Gothic Novel', in *Sex and Death in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, edited by Jolene Zigarovich (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 29-48 (p. 32).

The influence of the slave narrative on the heroines of the Gothic and Sentimental novel is overt: many sentimental protagonists 'venture into the territory of the slave narrative only to find their way out and back into the genre to which they belong by racial fiat'.[97] As Miller suggests of Collins's *Woman in White*: 'Laura [...] follows a common itinerary of the liberal subject in nineteenth-century fiction: she takes a nightmarish detour through the carceral ghetto on her way *home*, to the domestic haven where she is always felt to belong'.[98] Many American novels of this era – such as *Hagar, the Martyr* (1854) by Harriet Marion Stephens, or Caroline Lee Hertz's *Marcus Warland* (1852) – contain passages Cindy Weinstein refers to as 'miniature slave-narratives', in which white women are captured and/or disguised through blackface.[99] There are also direct references to slavery in many texts seemingly unconnected to the American South: Jane Eyre likens her cousin to a 'slave-driver' and declares that, 'like any rebel slave, I felt resolved [...] to go all out'.[100] Jane teases Rochester with a reversal in their power dynamic in the same terms: 'you [...] shall in a trice find yourself fettered amongst our hands'.[101] Light-hearted word play about sexual slavery in 'seraglios' demonstrates Brontë's lack of real engagement with anything deeper than a superficial awareness of slavery.

The use of slavery as a metaphor for other injustices and problems reflects, I would suggest, an acknowledgement of slavery and its attendant horrors as a contemporary cultural touchstone, but framed by the desire to distance oneself from culpability. Douglass observed of Britain:

> I have found persons in this country who have identified the term slavery with that which I think it is not [...] It is common in this country to distinguish every bad thing by the name of slavery. [...] I think the term slavery is sometimes abused.[102]

As Lee notes, 'with the passage of the British Abolition Act, the country had refashioned itself into the world's anti-slavery policeman: the Royal Navy regularly patrolled the seas for slavers'.[103] Yet, England did not look to the speck in its own eye, and reform the abuses in its

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[97] Ibid., p. 118.
[98] Miller, '*Cage aux folles*', p. 122.
[99] Cindy Weinstein, 'The Slave Narrative and Sentimental Literature', in *The Cambridge Companion to the African American Slave Narrative*, edited by Audrey Fische (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 115-134 (p. 119).
[100] C. Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, pp. 67-69.
[101] Ibid., p. 355.
[102] Frederick Douglass, 'An Appeal to the British People' (1846), quoted in Lee, p. 19.
[103] Lee, p. 11.

many colonies, but rather '"the anti-slavery struggle [came to mean] simply the sectional controversy in the United States"'.[104] Slavery as a literary device, says Audrey Fische, provided the British reader with 'the excitement for which they were eager; graphic scenes of torture, murder, sexual violence, and the thrill of escape'.[105] All the pleasures of the Gothic, in other words.

Thus, the anti-slavery novel and the slave narrative are overtly Gothic texts – designed to instil unease in the reader. Mary Hayden Pike attempts to depict of the reality of slavery as a system, not just as a detour of horror for her white heroine, having slave-owning character Mr Maynard state that to participate in the system 'one must either think of the negroes only as brutes, and be perfectly careless of their feelings, or else one must shut one's eyes and ears, and let things slide'.[106] Though Pike repeats the anti-abolitionists' idea of black people as 'savage children, helpless and incapable',[107] rather than ascribe this as an inherent quality, she suggests that it is inculcated by the conditions of slavery. Maynard thus refuses to end the system, and free his slaves who, 'debased by generations of ignorance and ill usage',[108] he believes would not be able to function in the American republic. Maynard also reminds his future son-in-law Walter, and thus the reader, that to educate and free slaves is illegal in Carolina, and that he would be blamed with spreading discontent and destitution to neighbouring plantations also. He thus claims 'there is little freedom of action, and still less freedom of discussion […] – the negroes are not the only slaves'.[109] This rather echoes Gilbert and Gubar's analysis that Rochester's 'most serious crime' is against himself: 'the sin of self-exploitation'.[110] The idea that the self-inflicted pain or self-abnegation of these rich men, living comfortable lives at the expense of others, is in any way their greatest evil, that they should be interpreted as in any way living 'enslaved', is grotesque: possible only within the value system of white supremacist thinking. The influence of the slave narrative on the Sentimental and Gothic novel is perhaps best described, therefore, as often being only 'skin-deep'.

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[104] Howard Temperley, quoted in Lee, p. 11.
[105] Audrey Fische, *American Slaves in Victorian England: Abolitionist Politics in Popular Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 54.
[106] Mary Hayden Pike, *Ida May: A Story of Things Actual and Possible* (Boston, MA: Philips, Samson & Co., 1854), p. 172.
[107] Ibid., p. 408.
[108] Ibid., p. 174.
[109] Ibid., pp. 174-175.
[110] Gilbert and Gubar, p. 356.

The arguments of racial inferiority deployed by the anti-abolitionists and anti-suffragists often claim that the disempowered are already protected under existing laws, thus demonstrating, I suggest, the fundamentally Gothic social position of marginalised people; their subject status never agreed upon. In his *Treatise on Sociology* (1854), nineteenth-century American sociologist Henry Hughes seeks to simultaneously justify and deny the slaves' lack of self-determination. Hughes, who also served Mississippi as Senator, attempts to define slavery as anything other than what it actually is – the legal status of being property, an object to be traded. To do this, Hughes and his ilk are unable to acknowledge the full humanity of the 'simple-labourer'; he talks of their 'production' rather than their birth and education, as though they were merely economic units, and not people.[111] As Kenneth Warren points out, 'by ascribing natural inferiority to the nation's vast agricultural labouring population in the south, American statesmen permitted tyrannical repression in a nation proclaiming innate human freedom as its *raison d'etre*'.[112] Hughes argues that, due to the lesser intellectual and moral capacity he believed black people to possess, that it is the 'duty of the State' to deny 'the sovereignty of the black race'.[113] Though in practical terms Hughes was arguing for the enactment and continuance of the American slave trade, in theoretical terms he could not bring himself to use that terminology:

> It is not slavery. It is warenteeism. […] What is slavery? It is want, oppression, hatred, outrage, cruelty, and injustice. That is its realization. It is odious […]. 'A slave is a person who has no rights.' […] The warranted economic system of the United States South, is not slavery. […] The simple-labourer in that system, is not a slave […]. He has essentially all his rights.[114]

The rights that Hughes suggests the American system allocates do not include the right to self-determination, or to be considered a subject under the law. The only rights in fact recognised by Hughes's system are 'the right of existence, […] personal subsistence, and personal security', the last including the right to be free of rape, manslaughter, battery, kidnapping, and other crimes against the body.[115] However, to be a conscious being,

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[111] Henry Hughes, *Treatise on Sociology: Theoretical and Practical* (Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, Grambo & Co, 1854), p. 88.
[112] Warren, p. 185.
[113] Hughes, p. 240.
[114] Ibid., pp. 82-83.
[115] Ibid., p. 228.

acknowledged as human in kind, and yet not accorded the dignity of true self-determination and legal recognition as a self and subject, is at the heart of Gothic horror.

Depictions of slavery as a moral institution of benevolent patriarchy are common in the so-called 'Anti-Tom' or plantation novels of the 1850s and 60s, which responded to Harriet Beecher Stowe's anti-slavery bestseller *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). In Mary Henderson Eastman's *Aunt Phillis's Cabin; or, Southern Life As It Is* (1852), the eponymous slave protagonist rebuts an abolitionist, saying 'I am an honest woman, and am not in the habit of *taking* any thing. I'll never *take* my freedom. […] I am not going to begin stealing, and I am fifty years of age'.[116] Phillis's law-abiding nature, and her age, suggest agency and maturity, yet she acknowledges herself to be property. To preserve the white man's place at the head of the 'great chain of being' or the family of man, texts like Hughes' and Eastman's must justify the lesser status of women and other races, but not leave open the possibility that the white man himself may be enslaved by any justifiable philosophy. In the same text that dehumanises the labourer as a product, and subordinates all human interests to the needs of impersonalised 'capital', Hughes makes impassioned moral outcry: 'wrong to one, cannot be right to another; inhumanity to some cannot be humanity to others. […] There ought to be no tears. No blood'.[117] Hughes aligns the categories of people who are not entitled to full citizenship, linking embodiment, gender, and reason once again: 'to this class belong women, minors, criminals, lunatics and idiots, aliens, and all others unqualified or disqualified. […] A man represents his family […] he also represents the interests of other subsovereigns'.[118] Though a man is superior to a woman, a black man is not a man at all, and thus, he cannot be a subject-citizen. Hughes thus constructs a Gothic labyrinth of text, as he seeks to preserve the status quo of the 'peculiar institution' using philosophical Enlightenment ideals of individualism.

White male scientists and theorists did much to reinforce the boundaries of bodily normativity in the mid-nineteenth century, and link these physical norms to the individual subject, in the developing fields of medical and human sciences. The supposed inferiority of white women and people of colour are directly linked in the scientific literature of the period. Eminent psychologist Gustave le Bon, author of the influential study 'The Crowd' (1895), wrote in

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[116] Mary Henderson Eastman, *Aunt Phillis's Cabin; or, Southern Life As It Is* (Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, Grambo & Co, 1852), p. 103.
[117] Hughes,Ibid., p. 73.
[118] Hughes, pp. 237-238.

1879 that women 'represent the most inferior forms of human evolution and that they are closer to children and savages than to an adult, civilised man'.[119] Of distinguished women, Le Bon concludes that they are a 'monstrosity […] consequently, we may neglect them entirely'.[120] Le Bon, like Elizabeth Rigby before him, linked the existence of monstrous women to revolutionary potential within society, claiming that encouraging education in women meant that 'everything that maintains the sacred ties of the family will disappear'.[121] It is ironic that Le Bon's fearmongering in fact supports the readings of later queer theorists and feminists engaged in the project of exposing and exploring the biases and assumptions that underpin patriarchy: educating women does indeed destroy the systematic cultural structures that 'sanctified' the family. However, this is because gender roles and sex segregation are artificially maintained, and not because women are naturally fitted for domesticity only.

The idea that women were physically destined for domestic life, focused on the production of and care for children, and supporting men who were destined for manual labour or intellectual pursuits, echoes the claims made about the 'natural' attributes ascribed by race. The anatomist Carl Vogt provides a prime example of these parallels, writing in 1854 that 'the grown-up negro partakes as regards his intellectual facilities, of the nature of the child, the female, and the senile white'.[122] Stephen Jay Gould therefore suggests that:

> 'Inferior' groups are interchangeable in the general theory of biological determinism. They are continually juxtaposed and one is made to serve as a surrogate for all – for the general proposition holds that society follows nature, and that social rank reflects innate worth.[123]

Gould cites passages from many white, European, male founders of scholarly fields such as social psychology and anthropology who repeatedly compare the biological attributes of the body to justify their belief in their own superiority. As explored in the next chapter, conclusions about the inferiority of certain bodies based on physical characteristics of race and disability, enabled eugenicist theories to be deployed in the support of feminist

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[119] Quoted in Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, Revised & Expanded edition (London: W. W. Norton, 1996), p. 137.
[120] Ibid., p. 137.
[121] Ibid., p. 137.
[122] Ibid., p. 135.
[123] Gould, p. 135.

arguments. European female researchers, such as Maria Montessori, would challenge the conclusions drawn about women's intellects from data collected from phrenological and suchlike pseudoscience, without discarding the scientific racism.[124] Thus, Gould's conclusion 'that the battles of one group are for all of us', suggests a greater unity than has been demonstrated.[125]

The comparison between people of colour, white women, and children used to justify paternalistic attitudes towards white supremacy in fact highlights the disparities between judgments of diminished capacity. Novels such as *The Planter's Northern Bride* by Caroline Lee Hentz (1854) and *Aunt Phillis's Cabin* construct idealised portraits of family hierarchies based on these ideas of embodied nature. Phillis is the idealised slave – with enough intelligence to manage a household and other workers, but placid and willing to follow biblical injunctions to humility and obedience to an extreme. Phillis views herself and her children as elevated by proximity to white people: 'Miss Janet was, in her eyes, perfection. Her children were all the better for her kind instruction'.[126] White women, in turn, are elevated by their proximity to men, legitimated by their regard; the virtue of the (possibly) unwed mother Eliza Heywood is read into her face and her behaviour by her friends: 'I thought that only a wife could have endured as she did […] no word of impatience or complaint escaped her lips'.[127] White women are praised for their endurance of suffering induced by men's behaviours, yet black women are elevated by their refusal to endure: 'One of Phillis's chiefest virtues was, that she had been able to bring Bacchus into subjection […]. Her utter contempt for nonsense was too evident'.[128] As explored in the previous section of this chapter, women's adoption of masculine characteristics could be constructed as positive even as men's passivity is not to be countenanced, but the intersection of ideals of gender with those of race complicates gender categories, thus undermining the very boundaries upon which these novels seek to construct their norms of behaviour.

The 'Anti-Tom' novels attempt to deny the Gothic potential of the South's 'peculiar institution', by removing all suggestion of wrong doing and potential for fear; there is no horror in white women's submission, they are elevated by their spiritual forbearance; there is no terror in black women's subjugation, they are respected for their domestic leadership.

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[124] Ibid., p. 139.
[125] Ibid., p. 135.
[126] Eastman, p. 104.
[127] Ibid., p. 39.
[128] Ibid., pp. 104-105.

However, the sentimental and melodramatic novels of the nineteenth century, like those of the previous era, revealed the instability of normative constructions of gender: as Felman observes, 'the supposed instability of, plasticity, and variableness of the feminine "woman" generates contradictory narratives of her value and power, as well as prescriptive tracts detailing strategies for her control'.[129] The adoption of traditionally masculine values by black woman can be viewed in a positive light only in the sense that it accords value to Phillis as judged by white standards; it also imposes a double standard upon the black woman, as criticised by abolitionist Sojourner Truth. In her report of an 1851 speech she made, Truth states:

> I have as much muscle as any man, and can do as much work as any man. I have plowed and reaped and husked and chopped and mowed, and can any man do more than that? I have heard much about the sexes being equal. I can carry as much as any man, and can eat as much too, if I can get it. I am as strong as any man that is now. […] But man is in a tight place, the poor slave is on him, woman is coming on him, he is surely between a hawk and a buzzard.[130]

In her distinction between man, woman, and slave, Truth gets to the heart of the issue; noting the difference in the allocations of rights by expectations to different bodily classes, she highlights that it is those categorised as 'men' whose power is threatened by a demonstration that the categories are artificially constructed. In a later edition of the speech rendered in dialect, and now more famous, the lines are added: 'Dat man ober dar say dat womin needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted ober ditches, and to hab de best place everywhar. Nobody eber helps me into carriages, or ober mud-puddles, or gibs me any best place!'[131] This later version thus highlights the disparity in the categorisation of womanhood particularly. As DeVere Brody observes, 'because white men controlled miscegenation, they were the ones who made black women and women black'.[132] The paraphrasing of Shylock's phrase, Truth's refrain 'ain't I a woman', is, like the question of female sanity in Balzac's 'Adieu', unanswerable without destroying its subject and/or the dominant paradigm.

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[129] Felman, pp. 4-5.
[130] Sojourner Truth, 'Women's Rights Convention', *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, 21 June (1851), p. 160 (accessed online *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Library of Congress, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83035487/1851-06-21/ed-1/seq-3/> [accessed 20/04/2018])
[131] Quoted in *History of Woman Suffrage*, edited by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, 2nd edition, 6 Vols. (Rochester, NY: Charles Mann, 1881-1922 [1889]), I, p. 116.
[132] DeVere Brody, p. 54.

It is unsurprising that the boundaries of gender were increasingly explored in the context of race in the Victorian era, at the height of Empire; the association of blackness with deviance is well-established, linguistically, in British Gothic literature of the period. Heathcliff is described as 'dark almost as if it came from the devil'.[133] In *Jane Eyre*, Rochester is described as having 'dark eyes, swarth skin and Paynim features'.[134] In her observations of drawing room society, Jane interprets the mating rituals of the inhabitants, othering Blanche by turning her into a specimen of study, an anthropological step coded through bodily markers of race: Blanche's name is ironic, she is 'as dark as a Spaniard'.[135] Much like Collins's depiction of Ezra Jennings, Bertha Mason is depicted as a monstrous hybrid of race, gender, and species, as a Creole Caribbean woman:

> What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell. It grovelled, seemingly on all-fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal; but it was covered with clothing, and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face. [… T]he clothed hyena rose up, and stood tall on its hind feet. […] She was a big woman in stature almost equalling her husband, and corpulent besides.[136]

The same markers of monstrosity that Shelley applied to her Creature are present in Jane's description: suggestions of excess, animalistic terminology, indeterminate markers of race, and the inhumanity of the pronoun 'it'. Rochester's expression, in his desire to remarry, that he seeks 'something at least human' further dehumanises both Bertha and Jane;[137] both are 'things' for him to possess, merely shaped in human form. Even a first-person 'autobiography' declaring a woman's right to full subjectivity, like *Jane Eyre*, still makes its monsters from the very material that it purports to resist.

The uncertainty of the body's make-up suggests disease to a certain mind-set, but also disease as these bodies' very existence creates definitional instability in the legal and social demarcation of race. The mixed-race woman in particular is described as having an 'unstable constitution' by DeVere Brody, which, in turn, reflects a 'constitutional instability' in a specifically American context.[138] The legal status of the non-white person as subject, and the

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[133] E. Brontë, p. 31.
[134] C. Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, p. 262.
[135] Ibid., p. 250.
[136] Ibid., pp. 380-381.
[137] Ibid., p. 380.
[138] DeVere Brody, p. 16.

status of a woman as a citizen, were still in the process of legal challenge into the twentieth century. DeVere Brody explores the literature of the 'tragic mulatto' to this end, noting of Dion Boucicault's melodrama *The Octoroon, or Life in Louisiana* (1859):

> The law that labels Zoe literally black, possessing black blood, is undercut by its clearly figurative use. In appearance, manner, and form, she is not 'black', her blackness must be written onto her. […] The ontological assurance of what blackness 'is' is never guaranteed in the play.[139]

The character's blackness is not only undetectable by mere appearance, but is lacking in lived experience and heritage when played by a white actress, as was frequently the case. Eliza Harris in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, is also a woman of colour who 'passes' as white, and conversely the titular heroine of Pike's *Ida May* has her skin cosmetically darkened when she is kidnapped and enslaved. Thus, DeVere Brody suggests that 'Boucicault's drama signals a shift toward a marked concern with "white slaves" […]. The horror of slavery, therefore, was increasingly emblematized by the degradation suffered by "white" women'.[140]

The logic behind the stereotype of the 'tragic mulatto' character is that there can be no final resolution to her problems, and the problematic nature of her existence, except through death. In the plays and novels written by white men and women, mixed-race characters must express the dominant viewpoint, admit of their own monstrosity, and deny themselves as a desiring subject. As Zoe declares in *The Octoroon*, 'I am an unclean thing forbidden by the laws'.[141] Declared inhuman and monstrous under the anti-miscegenation laws that made her very existence evidence of at least one criminal act, her continued presence only compounds the guilt of her parents with her own; she cannot fulfil a feminine destiny, as she cannot marry and reproduce without again breaking the law. As Weinstein notes, 'Sentimental novels are committed to […] a coherent, domestic, middle-class world, where children know who their fathers are and husbands and wives know the make-up of one another's blood type. In the world the slaveholders made […] there were to be no such assurances'.[142] The problem for the black author in this era, Teresa Goddu tells us, is 'the difficulty of representing a Gothic history through Gothic conventions without collapsing the distinctions between fact and

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[139] Ibid., p. 50.
[140] Ibid., p. 48.
[141] Dion Boucicault, *The Octaroon, or, Life in Louisiana*, edited by Sarika Bose (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2014), p. 43.
[142] Weinstein, p. 121.

fiction'.[143] Reality has been reshaped by fiction; as real horrors are labelled too horrible to be real. The slave narrative, like Gothic horror, leaves open the possibility that escape from the labyrinth is impossible, or only temporary; that the division between the safe and the unsafe is not as fixed a boundary as the reader might hope.

I suggest that these narratives contribute to the discourse surrounding definitions of womanhood and race under imperial patriarchy, just as Sentimental novels a hundred years earlier played a role in establishing the companionate marriage and heteronormativity. Weinstein notes that previous scholars have explored how Sentimental traditions influenced the authors who wrote their life experiences of slavery, enabling black authors to connect with white readerships. Noted abolitionist, and author and orator of the slave experience, Frederick Douglass used the narrative and communicative patterns of the dominant group; learned from the same textbook used in schools.[144] Douglass's first biography was written to provide proof of his past, as there were claims that his style was so polished that he must be lying: Douglass did not conform to the stereotype of the childlike and savage. Weinstein observes that in slave narratives in general 'attestations of truthfulness seem to be required by narratives whose very plots are founded upon lies, secrecy and identity theft'.[145] Comparisons between American Sentimental novels and contemporary slave narratives, thus, 'illustrate elements of each genre, particularly how the categories of race are produced and challenged, how freedom is attained (or denied or limited)'.[146]

In the novels by white women a resolution to individual suffering is certain, it is legally sanctioned, and temporally-bounded; there is a fixed end to the protagonist's imperilment when she establishes her rightful identity, and race. Yet in many of these texts, though the dominant order is recognised to be flawed, the solution is to be resolved at the individual level. As Nina Baym pointedly observes 'the slave woman's problems were of another order of magnitude than the bourgeois heroine's',[147] an observation developed in work by bell hooks and Kari Winter.[148] The subject (matter) of all fiction dealing with slavery, however,

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[143] Teresa A. Goddu, *Gothic America, Narrative, History, and Nation* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 137.
[144] Stauffer, p. 205.
[145] Weinstein, p. 115.
[146] Ibid., p. 117.
[147] Nina Baym, *Women's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America 1820-1870* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), p. 286.
[148] Kari J. Winter, *Subjects of Slavery, Agents of Change: Women and Power in Gothic Novels and Slave Narratives, 1790–1865* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992).

though most often associated with melodramatic or Sentimental modes, is fundamentally Gothic: the unease they generate relies upon the recognition of the subjectivity of the 'other'.

Conclusion

The Victorian Gothic, I suggest, explores an impossible tension between a desire to conceive of the individual as self-sufficient, and self-constructed, and yet to fit him within the collective institutional narrative of nation state and ethnic heritage. As Nicholas Hudson observes of the eighteenth century, the 'emergent concept of the "nation" as a linguistic and cultural community was of considerable importance to the concurrent rise of a racial worldview'.[149] The development of national literary cultures is a definitive act of boundary making, in terms of geography, but also humanity; to have a distinctive culture is to be civilised. The influences and borrowings between the literary cultures of Britain and America are so clear that the English playwright and author Charles Reade wrote that 'an American is only an Englishman carried to excess'.[150] These authors continually compared their work to each other, their countries too, in their letters and diaries, and in their published works as they debated international humanitarian issues, such as the slave trade. Reade writes of America as though he were responding directly to Nathaniel Hawthorne's self-deprecation, when he states

> what new material has the English artist compared with that gold mine of nature, incident, passion, and character – life in the vast American Republic? Here you may run on one rail from the highest civilization to the lowest, and inspect the intervening phases, and write the scale of man. You may gather in month amidst the noblest scenes of nature the history of the human mind and note its progress. Here are red man, black man, and white man. With us man is all of a colour, and nearly all of a piece, there contrasts more piquant than we ever see spring thick as weeds.[151]

The mixing of classes, colours, and types of people was all very well, when it happened elsewhere and provided inspiration for narrative, but not when those people of mixed-heritage told their own stories. The other must be safely kept elsewhere, but this is no longer possible:

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[149] Nicholas Hudson, 'From "Nation" to "Race": The Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth-Century Thought', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 29.3 (1996), 247–264.

[150] Charles Reade, quoted by DeVere Brody, p. 99.

[151] Ibid., p. 99.

as DeVere Brody says, 'the idea of a land-locked island of Albion free from contact and contamination is an impossibly maintained fiction', in more ways than one.[152]

The monstrous other could not, however, entirely be projected away from England, as demonstrated in the literary outputs that, while entirely set in Britain, import both minor characters and monstrosity from elsewhere. DeVere Brody suggests that 'in the nineteenth century, […] metaphors of Europe, Africa, and the Americas, already catachrestically contained, could be narrativized […] as a family romance'.[153] Anne McClintock notes that 'Africa, the Americas, Asia – were figured in European lore as […] a fantastic magic lantern of the mind into which Europe projected its forbidden sexual desires and fears'.[154] The nation state relies upon its colonies and former colonies for trade goods, as for literary and salacious interest: the British Gothic is a colonial family romance, an international Gothic in as much as it is domestic.

Britain was reflecting on its Gothic past, as America was establishing a very Gothic present; full of deviant and queer potential, even as portions of the population were determined to supress such possibilities. As McClintock observes, of race, gender, and class as mutually constitutive categories of colonialism: 'normality […] emerged as a product of deviance'.[155] What came to be established as normative, and what deviant, had very little to do with what was, statistically, normal. As John Stauffer notes, Frederick Douglass was labelled a 'Representative American man' by a friend and contemporary: 'he passed through every gradation of rank comprised in our national make-up and bears upon his person and soul everything that is American'.[156] Yet, Douglass was never able to fully recover his subjectivity after the 'social death' that was slavery.[157] The legal emancipation of black and indigenous Americans did not fully occur until well into the twentieth century. The Gothic was the ideal form to explore the individual experience of the subject denied subjectivity, and the slave narrative was a popular tool of the abolitionist movement; these texts 'haunt back' against the dominant culture'.[158] The status of the American subject ends up profoundly unstable, and

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[152] DeVere Brody, p. 5.
[153] Ibid., p. 19.
[154] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995), p. 22.
[155] Ibid., p. 46.
[156] Stauffer, p. 201.
[157] Ibid., p. 207.
[158] Jason Haslam 'The strange ideas of right and justice': Prison, Slavery and Other Horrors in *The Bondwoman's Narrative*', *Gothic Studies*, 7.1 (2005), 29-40 (p. 35).

inherently monstrous, as either oppressor or oppressed. The Gothic text can, likewise, be regarded as a miscegenated monstrosity, with its hybrid narrative forms and racially-mixed characters, and its ability to cross boundaries, and this enabled its critiques to be dismissed; the 'pulp-as-flesh gets equated with pulp-as-trash, the emphatic physicality of thrills in such literature allows us to hold them cheap'.[159]

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[159] Miller, '*Cage aux folles*', p. 107.

3

(De)Generation: from the *fin de siècle* to the First World War

> They aren't human—they're just a pack of Fe-Fe-Females!
>
> […] The whole thing's deuced unnatural
>
> — Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland* (1915)

The nineteenth-century *fin de siècle* was a particularly productive period for Gothic fictions: from Arthur Machen's monsters made human to Robert Louis Stevenson's humans made monstrous, the genre critically engaged with the dominant cultural ideas about the body of the citizen. Classifications of health and physical ability intersected with sexuality, race and gender in the contemporary discourses of degeneration and perversity, which focus on reproduction and the family. This period saw a restatement of the central thematic developments of the Gothic's chief concern, as I argue: the construction and deconstruction of the human subject as a critical response to post-Enlightenment social theorisation. Kelly Hurley describes this generic theme as 'the loss of a unified and stable human identity, and the emergence of a chaotic and unstable "abhuman" identity in its place'.[1] The abhuman being is that which superficially resembles the human, in form or intelligence, but cannot, like the monster, 'unproblematically occupy the embodied subject position'.[2] However, as this thesis suggests, stable human identity was only ever an ideal of Enlightenment philosophies, and thus the identity that Hurley labels abhuman covers all who cannot occupy the modern subject position developed from this Eurocentric, masculinist position. It thus stands to reason that the abhuman did not 'emerge' at the end of the nineteenth century, but rose to prominence throughout the post-Enlightenment Gothic, as the narrow definition of the subject-citizen was challenged in literature as in law.[3]

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[1] Kelly Hurley, *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. i.

[2] Margrit Shildrick, *Embodying the Monster: Encounters with the Vulnerable Self* (London: Sage, 2002), p. 5.

[3] For example, people of African heritage achieved the legal right to naturalization in America in 1870, though Congress did not remove the 'white person' restriction from the naturalization laws until the Immigration and Nationality Act 1952. Ian F. Haney-López, 'The Social Construction of Race: Some Observations on Illusion, Fabrication, and Choice', *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review*, 29 (1994), 1-62 (p. 15).

The thematic links between the nineteenth-century developments in the human sciences and the concerns of first-wave Gothic fiction are readily apparent, particularly regarding 'the borders of human identity and culture' in Hurley's phrase. However, as Anne McClintock acknowledges in *Imperial Leather* (1995), 'if Enlightenment philosophy attempted to rewrite history in terms of the individual subject, the nineteenth century posed a number of serious challenges to history as the heroics of individual progress'.[4] Post-Darwin, the very fabric of this subject and their family, the body itself, became uncertain: discourses of heredity and evolutionary theory made even the most normative individual a potential time-bomb, whose abhuman nature could reveal itself in his own actions, or through his offspring. As Stephan Karschay notes, 'for [Thomas Henry] Huxley, seeing a great ape is an almost Gothic experience of uncanny familiarity. The animal triggers an upsurge of a weakly-repressed knowledge (or rather suspicion) that can no longer be covered up'.[5] Thus, more unsettling than the question as to where the boundaries lie for such categories as race, is the fundamental suggestion that any and all labels 'were only ever conventional signifiers, employed to contain the murky gradation'.[6] On reading Darwin's theories, entomologist William Sharp Macleay was prompted to ask 'what am I?' and 'what is man?'[7] Fulfilling the legacy of *Frankenstein* (1818) and the promise of monsters, *fin-de-siècle* Gothic texts reveal that monstrous potentiality is always already present on one's wedding night: the potential for 'otherness' lies within us all.

Turn-of-the-century Gothic explores this (de)construction of subject-citizen through the lens of embodied identity. Colonial ideas about race, and the developing medicalisation of sexuality and gender, were often deployed to reinforce the boundaries of the family through determinism in the biological, and emerging social, sciences. Familial norms in this period are very much tied to ideas about the nation state and the production of the citizen. Late nineteenth-century discussions about reproductive health, for the professional and lay audiences, focused on hereditary transmission of both physical and psychological attributes; eugenic ideas circulated within, and developed alongside, theories from fields as diverse as

[4] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995), p. 48.
[5] Stephan Karschay, *Degeneration, Normativity and the Gothic at the Fin de Siècle* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 37.
[6] Karschay, p. 34.
[7] Letter from W. S. Macleay to Robert Lowe (1860), quoted in Karschay, p. 38.

sexology, psychology, and 'racial science', and theologically-informed perspectives on evolutionary theory. Darwin's own writings supported such an approach:

> It is surprising how soon a want of care, or care wrongly directed, leads to the degeneration of a domestic race; but excepting in the case of man himself, hardly anyone is so ignorant as to allow his worst animals to breed.[8]

Queer theory and disability studies are therefore the ideal conceptual frameworks for historicising the degenerationist turn in the Gothic, due to the co-morbidity of physical disability and sexual perversity within these quasi-medical theories of 'the economy of the body and the social effects of its reproduction', in Daniel Pick's phasing.[9] By exploring *fin-de-siècle* representations of the reproductive body and the disabled body, and fictions that problematise the normative masculine ideal, I suggest that the links between the medicalised subject of degeneration discourses and the Gothic monster of fiction advance our understanding of the development of cultures of eugenics and their links to the ideal of the independent subject.

Degeneration in the *fin-de-siècle* body

The exploration of the boundaries of nation, subject, and citizen in Anglo-American cultures is a critically popular topic. McClintock develops a nuanced perspective on the construction of imperial rhetoric surrounding British identity, from the individual to the national level, acknowledging that 'race, gender and class are not distinct realms of experience, existing in splendid isolation […] they come into existence in and through relation to each other'.[10] McClintock's seemingly comprehensive list of 'circulating themes' in her study of the intersections between experiences of race, gender, and sexuality under empire, includes

> commodity racism and fetishism, the urban explorers, the emergence of photography and the imperial exhibitions, the cult of domesticity, the invention of the idea of the idle woman, the disavowal of women's work, cross-dressing and

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[8] Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1871), I, p. 168.
[9] Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder c.1848-c.1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 [1989]), p. 6.
[10] McClintock, p. 5.

gender ambiguity, the invention of the idea of degeneration, panoptical time and anachronistic space.[11]

The work of McClintock and Hurley thus overlaps in productive ways for describing and analysing the construction of the boundaries of the abnormal body, in terms of gender and race, in degenerationist theory. I would like to extend this work to acknowledge that health and/or ablebodiedness is not a distinct realm of experience either, but rather that it intersects with other aspects of identity.

Examining the monstrous subjectivities in the Gothic of this era, previous critics have recognised the triangulation of subject - identity - embodiment in these constructions. Hurley states that her project in *The Gothic Body* (1996) is to explore, in British Gothic fiction's depictions of the body, 'the ruination of traditional constructs of identity that accompanied the modelling of new ones at the turn of the century […] in place of a unitary and securely bounded human subjectivity, one that is fragmented and permeable'.[12] However, Hurley's study does not follow through on this reasoning in order to recognise that, if ideas about a unified and formally-bounded human subject are in ruins once the body has been taken to pieces, perhaps bodies that are not securely bounded and unified in the first place might always already trouble the subject category. Hurley acknowledges the work of critics like Nancy Armstrong and Regenia Gagnier in exposing

> [the] immense cultural labour required to produce and maintain that entity
> variously known as the liberal humanist subject, the modern bourgeois subject,
> and the autonomous individual, whose features include self-sufficiency, self-
> continuity, a complex yet self-contained interiority, and the potential for full self-
> knowledge.[13]

These key attributes indicate an able, cognitively normative body with clear boundaries, yet Hurley does not address how this construction excludes the disabled body or even the pregnant, and potentially-pregnant, body. This may be because the strain of Gothic on which Hurley concentrates, written by normative white men, perhaps unsurprisingly – through depictions of non-normative sexuality, gestation, and subjectivity – is 'training its readership systematically, underscoring that nausea is the proper response to a confrontation with

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[11] Ibid., p. 16.
[12] Hurley, p. 3.
[13] Ibid., p. 8.

abhumaness'.[14] There is, however, no closure in the Gothic text, no full resolution that enables authors and readers, or normative characters such as Prendick in *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1896), to carefully delineate themselves from the 'abhuman'.

At the turn of the century, alongside the overt racial and gender challenges mounted by the subaltern[15] and the suffragist, the idea of the unified nation state was undermined by the increasing instability in the construction of the normative subject himself. In the so-called 'racial science' of empire, the lesser-status of the child, the woman, and people of colour, was constructed along a continuum within the 'family of man', which placed white European men as the highest patriarchal power.[16] The development of the body, first in the womb, and then growing from child to adult, was thought to be replicating the development of the human as a species, expressed in Ernst Haeckel's construction 'ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny'. As Daniel Pick suggests, then, 'from such a notion it was possible to think of the individual as in quite a literal sense the summation and standard bearer of the history of the race'.[17] Thus, Pick suggests that 'the "aggression" of evolutionary discourses may have had as much to do with the perceived "terrors", "primitiveness" and fragmentation "at home" as in the colonies'.[18] From the discourses of degeneration, to the social theorising of economists and sociologists such as Friedrich Engels, whose study of the working class in Britain was published in English in the 1880s, the idea was well sown by the *fin de siècle* that the poor, and particularly those who by the absence of paid employment were even excluded from the 'working' class, were almost a race apart in the national taxonomy. McClintock, additionally, argues that through commercial displays, from the advertising hoarding to the Great Exhibitions, the 'Victorian metropolitan space became reordered as a space for the exhibition of imperial spectacle and the reinvention of race'.[19] Thus, degeneration theories triangulated markers of race, class, and space to delineate, even create, otherness.

As middle-class journalists, adventurers, and missionaries reported back on their safaris in the colonies to seek out the dangerous 'other' (otherness being what they expected to find), the 'Wilds of London' were often written about in the same manner. The titles of works like

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[14] Ibid., p. 49.
[15] I use this term in its postcolonial sense as developed by Ranajit Guha; 'there existed throughout the colonial period […] the subaltern classes and the groups constituting the mass of the labouring population and intermediate strata in town and county […] that is, the people'. Quoted in Swati Chattopadhyay and Bhaskar Sarkar, 'Introduction: The Subaltern and the Popular', *Postcolonial Studies*, 8.4 (2005), 357-363 (p. 357).
[16] McClintock, pp. 38-39.
[17] Pick, p. 28.
[18] Ibid., p. 38.
[19] McClintock, p. 16.

James Greenwood's *Low Life Deeps* (1876), George Gissing's *The Nether World* (1889), and Jack London's *The People of the Abyss* (1903) echo those of the science fictions that drew such ideas out *reductio ad absurdum*, such as Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* (1913) and Edgar Rice Burroughs' *The Land that Time Forgot* (1918). The latter fictions romanticise the survival of 'throwback' evolutionary forms, positing modern man as more than a match for the apex predators of a bygone era, celebrating the modernity of repeating rifles and telecommunications in adventures that take their protagonists far from the city. The front page of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in 1888, describes the urban Whitechapel murders in similar colonial language:

> [that the murderer] disposed of the viscera in a fashion recalling stories of Red Indian savagery […] will administer a salutary shock to the complacent optimism which assumes […] the progress of civilisation […]. The savage of civilisation which we are raising by the hundred in our slums is quite as capable of bathing his hands in blood as any Sioux.[20]

The atavistic danger is thus quite different at home and abroad; though the city-dwelling slum inhabitant might be considered the equal of the 'savage', the savage does not belong in the city: they are a threat out of place. The domestic safaris and fictional stories about urban degenerates are, as Robert Mighall suggests, 'not just a Gothic in the city, it is a Gothic of the city. Its terrors derive from situations peculiar to, and firmly located within, the urban experience'.[21]

The urban Gothic of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) critically engages with the philosophy of degeneration and of masculine normativity. I suggest that both tales employ the language of degeneration in order to critique the construction of the normal and the pathological that was put forward by degeneration discourses. Canguilhem argues that these terms are context dependent, defined by success for the individual and not by appeal to an arbitrary ideal: the monster is defined by convention, and has nothing to do with purpose. Darwin mingles definition by type and by functionality; his theory depends on linking these concepts, and thus defines monstrosity as 'some considerable deviation of structure, generally

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[20] 'Another Murder, and More to Follow?', *Pall Mall Gazette*, Saturday 8 September (1888), p. 1.
[21] Robert Mighall, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 30.

injurious to or not useful to the species'.[22] In the first edition the sentence continued 'and not generally propagated', but Darwin later acknowledges that some 'varieties' might survive for several generations. Darwin's argument thus prefigures Canguilhem on a key point: deviation from a type is not, by itself, pathological at an individual level. Yet, following Bénédict Augustin Morel's original definition, degeneration theory sees deviation as its own pathology; such thinking, says Karschay, 'presupposes the existence of a norm from which a deviation has occurred, and how this norm is defined bears important ramifications for the nineteenth century's understanding of normality'.[23] He concludes that the symptoms of degeneration were at once a threat to normativity and yet a form of normality: 'at the *fin de siècle*, degeneration was posited as the non-normative condition of a variety of Others, while simultaneously being perceived as socially 'normal' and, indeed ubiquitous'.[24] Stephenson and Wilde's tales, I argue here, utilise this fear of widespread 'non-normativity' and, anticipating Canguilhem, suggest that what is truly frightening is the enforcement of an arbitrary standard, rather than deviance itself.

Central to the tragic portrayal of Jekyll, and to understanding Dorian's ability to excuse his own actions, is a critique of the equivalence of non-normativity with pathology. Stevenson's tale rejects the central claim of degeneration philosophy, developed from earlier Enlightenment philosophy, that the healthy mind in a healthy body is a legible whole. Jekyll suggests that a fragmented self is the norm: 'I hazard the guess that man will ultimately be known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens'.[25] Jekyll perceives himself as an *ordinary* secret sinner, a perspective medicalised by Mighall as 'not a case for a Viennese medico-jurist'.[26] Stevenson's revisions to the tale prior to publication conscientiously removed any allusion to eroticism in the language describing Jekyll's behaviour.[27] Desire itself, says Stevenson, is not 'diabolic':

> The harm was in Jekyll, because he was a hypocrite […]. The hypocrite let out the
> beast Hyde – who is no more sensual than another, but who is the essence of

[22] Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, Fourth Corrected Edition (London: John Murray, 1866), p. 46.

[23] Karschay, p. 4. (Morel's original phrasing is '*comme une déviation maladive d'un type primitive*, Karschay, p. 222.)

[24] Ibid., p. 4.

[25] Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Tales of Terror,* edited by Robert Mighall (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 56.

[26] Robert Mighall, 'Diagnosing Jekyll: the Scientific Context to Dr Jekyll's Experiment and Mr Hyde's Embodiment', in *The Strange Case,* ed. by Mighall, pp. 143-161 (p. 156).

[27] Ibid., pp. 155-156.

cruelty and malice, and selfishness and cowardice: these are the diabolic in man –

not this poor wish to have a woman that they make such a cry about.[28]

The experience of desire being normative, Jekyll should have been able to live a normal life. It is Jekyll's interpretation of strict social mores that drives him to discomfort with himself, as he wishes to pursue 'undignified' pleasures, but 'would scarce use a harsher term' before Hyde's 'turn toward the monstrous'.[29] In *Dorian Gray*, Wilde links the multiplicity of the self to degeneration and heredity as Gray contemplates his ancestry: 'man was a being with myriad lives and myriad sensations, a complex multiform creature […] tainted with the monstrous maladies of the dead. […] Had some strange poisonous germ crept from body to body […]?'[30] This suggests that every privileged man has the potential to act just as Dorian or Hyde does, and it is implied that perhaps they do so.

What is damaging to the seemingly normative white, male individual who goes on to damage others is, in both tales, that which is (de)constructed as normative. Wilde and Stevenson both address the moral hypocrisy of the society of the time; the necessity of hiding one's true nature – personal or familial – for social advancement and propriety is an open secret: immorality is normal if not normative. Lord Henry Wotton, Gray's mentor in rejecting conventional morality while appearing to observe societal expectations, even mocks charitable attempts to improve the lives of the poor in the East End of London as superficial: '"the problem of slavery, and we try to solve it by amusing the slaves"'.[31] The racial inequalities of empire are used as a metaphor by Wotton to deflect attention from the norms of social hierarchies predicated on embodied identity. Wotton's preferred solutions hint at the possibility of eugenics: '"the nineteenth century has gone bankrupt through an over-expenditure of sympathy, I would suggest that we should appeal to science to put us straight"'.[32] Yet the manufactured fracturing of the self and society is revealed to be unsustainable; in both tales it is intervention, described in medical terms, into the mind and body that creates monsters, interventions made on false social premises. Wotton's actions are described as his 'vivisecting himself, as he had ended by vivisecting others'.[33] In Stevenson's

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[28] Letter from Stevenson to a friend, quoted in Paul Maxiner, *Robert Louis Stevenson: The Critical Heritage* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1981), p. 231.
[29] Stevenson, 'Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde', p. 60.
[30] Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, edited by Joseph Bristow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 121.
[31] Ibid., p. 37.
[32] Ibid., p. 37.
[33] Ibid., p. 50.

tale it is the scientist, Doctor Lanyon, who is convinced of the material body's legibility and thus unable to deal with the reality of a divided self – confronted by Hyde's transformation in Jekyll his 'mind submerged in terror'.[34] Basil Hallward's superstition that he can read evil onto the body may be a naïve belief, but so too is the scientist's that he can determine health the same way as exemplified by Cesare Lombroso's theory of criminal 'stigmata'. The visible/material is unreliable, but in part this is because those who have seen it cannot, or will not, talk about it; what is seen is (re)constructed through language and social performance.

The discourse of degeneration, so often employed in Gothic fictions, served as a useful shorthand for the normal but non-normative otherness, grouping everything from socially unacceptable behaviour to highly dangerous crime, and from discomforting physical difference to the frighteningly contagious disease. The nature of the unspeakable, as theorised in the work of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, demonstrates why such an imprecise term, gathering so much material under a single descriptor, would be useful. As Wilde's drawing room comedies and Gothic tales made much of, the topics considered appropriate for respectable conversation during the nineteenth century were few, and the possibilities for miscommunication proliferated. In both the above tales, when the author seeks to convey exceptional deviance of behaviour they employ the unspeakable; Jekyll says to his friend Utterson '"indeed it isn't what you fancy; it is not so bad as *that*"' [emphasis added].[35] In *Jekyll and Hyde*, what is unspoken but implied is variably blackmail, sexual deviance (of unspecified, but potentially multiple, kinds), drug use, and venereal disease. In *Dorian Gray*, when Lord Staveley is willing to discuss deviant behaviour, Hallward is shocked and will not repeat it: '"He told me. He told me right out before everybody. It was horrible!"'[36] The term 'degeneration' enabled much to be spoken of openly in polite society that was otherwise relegated to the euphemistic, but the imprecise nature of the terminology led to slippages; in the linking of three key terms – deformity, deviance, and degeneration – as judgments levied at the other, as Hurley observes, 'symptoms became increasingly confused with causes'.[37]

The decision as to whether to deal with the cause or the symptom is blurred, as the body itself can be both, and the eradication of symptoms thus becomes the eugenic eradication of bodies. The fundamental assertion of eugenic philosophy is rarely stated so baldly in popular fictions;

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[34] Stevenson, 'Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde', p. 54.
[35] Ibid., p. 20.
[36] Wilde, p. 127.
[37] Hurley, p. 71.

it is unspeakable. Even now, in current critical discussions, eugenics is often described in terms that frame it positively: Mighall defines it as 'the promotion of healthy populations by applying scientific principles to selective reproduction'.[38] Such definitions, without an immediate and commensurate investigation of terms such as 'healthy' and 'scientific', legitimate a philosophy that fundamentally declares certain people unfit to reproduce, and thus unfit to live. Both Jekyll and Gray are repeatedly said to be unmarried, and Dorian's increasing 'queerness' in his social milieu and crimes insulates him from the problem of hereditary transmission. In another of Stevenson's Gothic tales, 'Olalla' (1885), a healthy and intelligent woman refuses to marry in case hereditary traits – depicted through a want of intellect in her brother and viciousness in her mother – are spread through her descendants. Thus, the monstrous and the non-normative are brought into alignment through the potential for future pathology, rather than the individual's own experience. The conclusion of a Gothic adventure such as *Dracula* (1897), which ends with the execution of a monster that threatens the health of the community, demonstrates uncomfortably – or perhaps comfortingly, depending on the perspective – that the model for protecting, and promoting, the right kind of family is the destruction of abnormality: with its consent or without it.

Blood for Seed: the monstrousness of the generative body

Eugenic ideas promise a permanent solution to the 'problem' of human mechanical inefficiency, with scant regard for the cultural and familial value of the individual, though the problems it purports to eradicate are often social in nature. Marx suggests that poverty is the inevitable by-product of capitalistic supply and demand structures, which require surplus workforce and value. The individual who cannot be appropriately productive is figured under capitalism as a drain upon the nation, requiring the provision of resources but contributing no material gain. However, for those with a philosophical investment in the individualist subject, the solution to poverty and its related ills is not to be found in the socialistic programme of systemic changes. In 1913, the Bureau of Analysis and Investigation of the Department of State and Alien Poor in New York published *A Bibliography of Eugenics and Related Subjects*. The scope is considerable – containing full references for roughly 1750 individual works published since the 1830s, in three languages, including influential texts by William

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[38] Mighall, 'Diagnosing Jekyll', p. 152.

Alton, Cesare Lombroso, and Francis Galton. The foreword to the report sets out the aims of the organisation, which was

> established by the State Board of Charities in July, 1911 to investigate the condition of the poor seeking public aid in New York State and to analyse the data in the Board's archives bearing on the causes of poverty, delinquency, and defectiveness.[39]

This sentence reveals many of the assumptions circulating in society that legitimates an organisation, apparently concerned with causes, collecting eugenic texts, generally concerned with (final) solutions.

The links between the interests of the state and the health of the private individual are clear in the contents of the *Bibliography*; amongst the treatises and self-help guides by medics and scientists there is considerable nationalistic propaganda, with tracts and pamphlets like 'Race-betterment; the nation's duty'.[40] Such titles often invoke a Gothic threat: 'The Blood of the Nation; a study of the decay of the races through the survival of the unfit', and 'Human Harvest; a study of the decay of the races'.[41] As Courtney J. Andree notes, within a 'degenerationist framework disability is transformed from an accepted fixture of the everyday into an unfathomable horror'.[42] Such titles echo eighteenth-century pamphlets against depravity, and the imagery repeats English political cartoons of the nineteenth century, in which the body of the nationalist 'other' is depicted in Gothic terms. Although Ireland and the British Isles share much ethnic heritage, the monstrous imagery of the 'Irish Frankenstein' relies upon ideas of otherness heavily inflected with racial prejudice; a broad nose, prominent jaw and brow, and giant proportions denoting physical excess (see fig. 1). As Pick suggests, degeneration was 'at once a technical diagnosis and a racial prophecy'.[43] Colonialism is built on a belief in the superiority of white, European, able-bodied masculinity and thus, in imperial British literature, disability becomes a domestic threat in the late-nineteenth century. The compilation of the *Bibliography* suggests this was also the case across the Atlantic Ocean. The perceived threat is consistently expressed through supernatural or monstrous

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[39] Gertrude E. Hall, 'Foreword', in *A Bibliography of Eugenics and Related Subjects,* edited by Gertrude E. Hall (New York, NY: The State Board of Charities, 1913), p. 3.
[40] Hall, *A Bibliography of Eugenics and Related Subjects,* ed. by Hall, p. 12.
[41] Ibid., pp. 13-15.
[42] Courtney J. Andree, 'Reproducing Disability and Degeneration in the Victorian *Fin de Siècle*', *Literature Compass*, 13.4 (2016), 236-244 (p. 242). DOI:10.1111/lic3.12324
[43] Pick, p. 8.

terminology in fiction, non-fiction, and criticism, creating an overtly Gothic atmosphere for these ideological discourses. Pick draws on this when referring to 'this science of skulls, bodies and ancestors', and thematic 'ghosts' in degeneration and racial literature.[44] Bodily attributes that denoted physical weakness or impairment, and bodily behaviours that were considered symbolic of mental or moral weakness, were medicalised in official state publications and 'monsterised' in popular culture of the *fin de siècle*, as an implicit justification of the eradication of the 'other'.

Figure 1: 'The Irish Frankenstein', by John Tenniel, *Punch* (1882)

The eugenic sciences that developed in this period suggest an enormous confidence on the part of their progenitors regarding the future of the human race. For, if natural selection is determined by an organism's ability to adapt to its environment, eugenic scientists are

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[44] Ibid., p. 10.

assuming knowledge of the human's future environment in passing judgements of health and suitability to breed. Canguilhem's warning of the potential evolutionary impact from genetic interference – the 'paradoxical pathology of the normal man' – applies here.[45] Should normativity be enforced, through selective breeding or modern gene therapy, the resulting humans will depend upon a particular set of technological, social and cultural circumstances: the ones for which they have been bred. The scientific confidence of eugenicists echoes that of Victor Frankenstein, in form and expression, as Darwin praised man's 'god-like intellect'.[46] And, though it was typical practice in this period to universalise an inherently gendered epithet, very often, in the use of such terms, women were more than just tacitly excluded; women were not considered to have 'god-like' intellectual capabilities.

The value of a woman's intellect is really only measured in terms of how it is linked to her reproductive capabilities. In producing a healthy child the influence of the father is considered 'obscure' by medical practitioners, the body and mind of the mother are the foremost considerations in publications such as Sydney Barrington Elliot's American home medical text *Aedoeology: a Treatise on Generative Life; including Pre-natal Influence, Limitation of Offspring, and Hygiene of the Generative System* (1893).[47] In Stevenson's tale, Olalla's only valued production for society – her intellect, demonstrated by her multilingual reading and crafting of verse, notwithstanding – would be healthy children, and these she is denied by heredity. Olalla is thus described by Stevenson's unnamed narrator to be 'wise beyond the use of women' – beyond what use woman can find for wisdom, or beyond what use men have for women is a moot point: the judgment is derogatory.[48] Elliot's recommendations to give expectant mothers 'every intellectual opportunity. She must have recourse to literature, art, music', would seem in this light rather progressive.[49] However, the importance of a woman's mental acuity and cultural knowledge reveals the class implications at work. In a chapter on contraception, the practical content of which was bowdlerised after a Congressional act, Elliot demonstrates that he is not interested in women's liberation, unlike reformers such as Margaret Sanger, but simply considered it 'wrong to bring into the community […] a being

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[45] Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, translated by Carolyn R. Fawcett (London: D. Reidel, 1978 [1943]), pp. 275-287 (p. 285).
46 Darwin, *Descent of Man*, II, p. 405.
[47] Sydney Barrington Elliot, *Aedoeology: a Treatise on Generative Life; including Pre-natal Influence, Limitation of Offspring, and Hygiene of the Generative System* (Boston, MA: Arena Publishing Co., 1898), p. 4.
48 Stevenson, 'Olalla', in *The Strange Case*, ed. by Mighall, pp. 93-134 (p. 129).
[49] Elliot, p. 127.

impure, unhealthy, and incomplete'.[50] Clearly, there were too many children born to the poor and uneducated, and not enough to the middle classes. Herbert Spencer argued that support for those who are not 'naturally fitted' to support themselves, for example through state Poor Laws, 'favours the multiplication of those worst fitted for existence, and, by consequence, hinders the multiplication of those best fitted for existence'.[51] It is strongly implied in Stevenson's tale that, by remaining with her family, Olalla will die young; the resentful local villagers threaten to burn down their ancient mansion, in an image that has become a staple of Gothic films. Olalla's wisdom, demonstrated by her refusal to marry and escape, thus reflects dominant ideologies about women's role in the eugenic sciences: as theorists such as Spencer taught, it is better that 'unproductive' citizens die. Middle-class women who do not reproduce are also useless in this taxonomy.

The implicit view of women as adjunct to men, and the focus on their role as a vessel for a child, reflects prejudices regarding women's social role that are explicit in eugenic philosophies. Women are commonly addressed within medical textbooks as a category within '*man*kind' not as individuals, and as having a duty not only to their individual child, but to wider society. The market for published guides on physical health produced for middle-class families exploded in the late nineteenth century; William Acton's *The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs in Youth, in Adult Age, and in Advanced Life* (1857) went through at least six editions in London within twenty years, and eight subsequent editions in America. Developed for a wider audience from the professionally-oriented *Practical Treatise on Diseases of the Urinary and Generative Organs* (1853), the book contains advice on how to choose a bride by guessing her health and reproductive qualities from her physical appearance and family history. Acton clearly aims his work at educated men like himself, mentioning women and the health of the uterus only as relates to heterosexual reproductive sex, yet the title and contents page gives no clue to this masculine-focused approach. Even in a guide aimed at women, for example A. E. Newton's *Prenatal Culture* (1893), Dr Alice B. Stockham's introduction describes mothers as 'simply the guardian and director of the young life [… which] is and always must be a free life', and yet no freedom is offered to mothers, as 'mother love becomes an unselfish love. Her desire is to

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[50] Ibid., p. 149.
[51] Herbert Spencer, 'The Man Versus The State' (1884), in *Spencer: Political Writings*, edited by John Offer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 59-176 (p. 131).

be and do for the child without any thought of what he is to be or to do for her'.[52] It is no coincidence that in this text the free life belongs to a male child. Even feminist authors felt the need to frame their engagement with the topic of motherhood in terms of sacrifice; Antoinette Brown Blackwell states that 'the interests of their children *must not be sacrificed to her over-exhaustion*, even though she were willing and eager for the sacrifice of herself'.[53] Pregnancy is a duty to race, nation, and family: 'even if she has to sacrifice other things – her pleasure as well – it is nothing more than should be expected of her'.[54]

Just as Acton assumes a male audience, referring to women only by virtue of their relation to men, so too are disabled people figured only as relations to 'man' and not as viable subjects themselves. The reader of these texts is always addressed as though they are the ideal candidate for eugenic parenthood: able-bodied, white, middle-class. The disabled body is here hardly human: Elliot terms it 'a sickly organism, to be handicapped during its existence, to be a detriment to the world, a burden to its friends, and to hand on its own infirmities and weaknesses'.[55] The title page of Elliot's publication declares it 'a book for every man and woman', but clearly the disabled do not count among this number. The assumptions made about the reader, and their abilities, reflect not only the overt eugenicist principles of the 'improvement' of the human stock, but also reveal implicit beliefs about disability that underpin such a philosophy. The disabled body must necessarily be a burden and a detriment because 'it' is not imagined to be taking an active part in the life of society, nor the life of the mind – 'it' is not figured as a reader. The assumption of an able-bodied audience echoes the many Gothic fictions, such as those of William Hope Hodgson and Arthur Machen, in which deformed bodies are presented to be feared; aligned with evil and misery, with miscegenation, and with non-procreative sex. The non-reproductive body, or the body that produces disability, is always already abhuman.

The assumptions made by eugenicist authors about the normativity of their audience are implicit in the projection of a certain set of values regarding not only ability but also race and sex. Dr Martin Luther Holbrook states that:

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[52] Alice B. Stockham, 'Introduction', in A. E. Newton, *Prenatal Culture: suggestion to parents relative to systematic methods of moulding the tendencies of offspring before birth* (Chicago, IL: Alice B. Stockham and Co., 1893), pp. 5-7 (pp. 5-6).
[53] Antoinette Brown Blackwell, *The Sexes Throughout Nature* (New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1875), p. 115.
[54] Newton, *Prenatal Culture*, p. 101.
[55] Elliot, p. 107.

Woman being debarred from the hardest labour through maternity has found it useful, even in early times, to choose men who were strong, brave, courageous and capable of defending her […] and thus by sexual selection she has indirectly promoted health and vigor in man.[56]

Holbrook emphasises women's physical dependence on one hand and their active choice on the other, attributes that historically have proven to be in direct conflict, which is grudgingly acknowledged by Holbrook himself when reviewing Alfred Russel Wallace's suggestion that only fully emancipated women would truly have free selection in marriage.[57] Holbrook projects middle-class, nineteenth-century, western norms of both 'confinement' and seduction across time and space, displaying a distinct lack of interest regarding the lived experiences of women in other classes, cultures, and eras. The conflicts between so-called 'natural' desires, and preferred cultural norms, demonstrates that the 'natural' must be shaped, even created.

These texts attempt to reconcile the tensions between promoting child-bearing for the right kind of women, and suppressing it for others, and between promoting the idea that a desire for children is 'natural' for women, yet recognising that individual women's desires might need to be overcome: Elliot goads his readers, 'let no woman shirk the sacred functions of motherhood. Why should she? Are not children the greatest blessing, the greatest source of happiness bestowed on mankind?'[58] Exhortations to motherhood stand in stark contrast to the recognition of the high risk of infant and maternal mortality; Elliot flies in the face of statistical evidence to claim that, 'under favourable circumstances', child-bearing would improve the health.[59] Such claims require the manipulation of evidence that the reader could very likely see with their own eyes; for example, maternal and infant deaths are projected onto the diseased 'other', as reassurances of the right parents: 'one half of the human race perish in early childhood. Nor can this be wondered at when it is considered from what unsound seed they come and under what unfavourable circumstances many of them are conceived, born and reared'.[60] The rhetoric of eugenics relies upon diminishing the personal fears of the individual, and substituting fear of a greater danger posed to wider society. The

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[56] M. L. Holbrook, *Stirpiculture; or, The Improvement of Offspring Through Wiser Generation* (London: Fowler, 1897), p. 134.
[57] Ibid., pp. 135-138.
[58] Elliot, p. 134.
[59] Ibid., p. 134.
[60] Ibid., p. 150.

eugenicist author foments terror of a diseased future to encourage a sense of guilt that the reader is failing their race if they do not propagate.

It is essential, in the eugenicist schema, for women to have a desire to procreate: 'the mere fact of any woman having Mrs. prefixed to her name tells to all the world […] that she is a mother, or will be, if she is a true woman, unless diseased or deformed'.[61] Yet, the construction of this sentence suggests some ambiguity – is it natural that the diseased and deformed woman should want children, or is she excluded from the category of 'true' womanhood? If the woman who will produce the wrong kind of children still desires motherhood is this more evidence of her unsuitability, as she refuses to accept her limitations? After all, in this schema, surely a 'true' mother would recognise, with Elliot, that 'it is the right of every child to be well born, with a healthy body and a pure, healthy mind'.[62] Stockham suggests, of the unwilling mother, 'she *can* train herself […] let her quietly and trustingly say over and over again, 'I am spirit, and in the production of this child I am in harmony'.[63] The 'unnatural' woman must, literally, pray to be made more 'natural'. The conflict between what is assumed to be woman-as-object's natural role and inclinations, and what women-as-subjects really experience, are never wholly resolvable. The body that can become two-in-one through pregnancy can, in this formulation, only be incomplete alone. Having an individualized subjectivity is presumed everywhere to be antithetical to woman's 'nature', which centres on motherhood. Women are inherently monstrous subjects.

The *fin-de-siècle* domestic Gothic of Charlotte Perkins Gilman reflects her attempts to reconcile desire for an active intellectual career with these 'duties' as a wife and mother. Perkins Gilman's aunts, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Catherine Beecher, had been influential in establishing the domestic ideology of devotion to home and hearth in nineteenth-century America. Beecher's *A Treatise on Domestic Economy* (1842), and their joint publication *The American Woman's Home* (1869), promulgated the idea that domesticity gave women a measure of control, a sphere of the world in which their authority would be recognised. This was not Perkins Gilman's experience; she wrote about fearing a loss of identity, under 'an obligation […] binding with the force of natural law' that incarcerates her within a role and a

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[61] Ibid., p. 176.
[62] Ibid., p. 105.
[63] Stockham, p. 6.

building that cannot be escaped 'except by sin', in the Gothic poem 'In Duty Bound' (1880).[64] That she likens this experience to death, suggesting that in such a constructing circumstance, she would long 'for a grave – more wide', echoes earlier descriptions of the legal status of married women under coverture.[65] Perkins Gilman's most famous Gothic engagement with contemporary ideals of family life is her tale, 'The Yellow Wall-paper' (1892), about a woman driven to insanity by the actions of her own husband. This husband refuses to listen to his wife, continually asserting his version of the truth above her own: 'he does not believe I am sick! And what can one do? If a Physician of high standing, and one's own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one'.[66] Perkins Gilman repeatedly explores women's sense of self being excised; her characters are often told to surrender responsibility to men, for even their private thoughts and opinions. Perkins Gilman's tales demonstrate again the function of the Gothic as a reified expression of horrific lived realities.

Parallels between Perkins Gilman's reality and her fictions are often drawn out in readings through a psychological lens. The experiences of the central characters in 'The Yellow Wall-paper' echo the diaries of Perkins Gilman and her first husband, Charles Walter Stetson. She tried to mould herself into an idealised wife, as Stetson wrote 'she is very gentle and careful now' and, later, 'one sees little just now of the daring and independent manner of the Charlotte I first knew […] it has made her more like what is best in other women – more thoughtful, bland, gracious, humble, dependent'.[67] Thus, a psychoanalytic reading of the horror individualises what Perkins Gilman intended to be universal. Though her fictions draw on individual experience, Perkins Gilman aimed to speak to a wider truth; naming her poems 'tools', she wrote with a clear purpose of communication.[68] Robert Shulman suggests that it is only negative critics of 'The Yellow Wall-paper' who class it in the horror genre.[69] Yet its author asserts it was written to frighten, and to dissuade others from following a comparable

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[64] Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 'In Duty Bound', in *In this Our World and Uncollected Poems,* edited by Gary Scharnhorst and Denise D. Knight (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2012), pp. 21-22.
[65] Ruth Bienstock Anolik, 'The Wages of Sanctity: Fatal Consequences of Marriage and Motherhood in the Eighteenth Century Gothic Novel', in *Sex and Death in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, edited by Jolene Zigarovich (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 29-48 (p. 46).
[66] Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 'The Yellow Wall-paper', in *The Yellow Wall-paper and Other Stories*, edited by Robert Shulman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 3-19 (p. 3).
[67] Quoted in Robert Shulman, 'Introduction', in *Yellow Wall-paper*, ed. by Shulman, pp. vii-xxxii (p. x).
[68] Shulman, 'Introduction', p. xx.
[69] Ibid., pp. xiv-xv.

course of action: 'it has, to my knowledge, saved one woman from a similar fate – so terrifying her family that they let her out into normal activity and she recovered'.[70]

The central tragedy and horror of the fictions develops from the real demands placed upon women to relinquish their subjectivity. Though the unnamed protagonist's apparently disordered psychological state is the motor that drives the story, it is in the descriptions of physical behaviour that monstrosity occurs. Always lucid about her husband's belief in her psychological problems, it is when the narrator of 'The Yellow Wall-paper' begins to physically act in a non-normative manner – biting the bedstead and 'creeping' around the walls – that the reader recognises her thoughts have truly become disordered. In making herself so physically repellent that her husband faints, the narrator might finally have achieved freedom from his expectations; the door is literally open to her. However, she just steps over his prone body and carries on 'creeping': as one among 'so many of those creeping women' who require release.[71] The tale is a fantasy that reflects the reality of women's exclusion from the public position of the subject-citizen and their incarceration within the family.

Perkins Gilman's Gothic stories, such as 'The Yellow Wall-paper' and 'The Giant Wisteria' (1898) are about the damaging results of the pressures on women to conform to a norm she shatters in her more realist fictions. Karschay proposes that Victorian science and the *fin-de-siècle* Gothic novel 'unwittingly participated in the formation of modern notions of normality through the relentless dissection of biological and social deviance'.[72] I would argue that many authors working with Gothic generic conventions and degenerationist ideas were aware of their contribution to this discourse. Through her lecturing and advocacy work, as well as her fiction, Perkins Gilman actively engages with the tension between what is considered culturally normative and what is actually prevalent, and thus 'normal'. In 'Fulfilment' (1914), Mrs Elsie Maxwell pities her sister Irma for missing out on normativity: '"a woman who hasn't married, who isn't a mother – I don't care how successful she is – she hasn't *lived*"'.[73] Irma then asks Elsie to account for the hours in her day, as a middle-class housewife with self-sufficient teenage children and supporting servants: '"it's evident you never made a

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[70] Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 'Why I Wrote "The Yellow Wallpaper"?', in *The Yellow Wall-paper*, ed. by Shulman, pp. 331-332 (p. 332).
[71] Perkins Gilman, 'The Yellow Wall-paper', p. 18.
[72] Karschay, p. 5.
[73] Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 'Fulfilment', in *Yellow Wall-paper*, ed. by Shulman, pp. 244-252 (p. 246).

schedule in your life […]. Did you ever make a budget? […] Comparing other families of the same size – on a similar amount?"' Elsie is not only unable to account for her own actions, but neither can she, in fact, substantiate her assumed normativity: '"No two families are alike. Each one is a law unto itself"'.[74] Elsie's decision to be a homemaker, and her choices within that role, are never based on evidence or knowledge: 'for this sacred duty she had never prepared herself by either study or practice'.[75] Perkins Gilman thus asks the reader who compares Irma and Elsie to contemplate not only whether normative family models make the best use of women's time and talents, but also to acknowledge that social norms are constructed through assumption and belief rather than fact.

Fin-de-siècle cultural anxiety around the figure of the 'true' woman, often opposed to the 'new' woman who might want a career rather than a family, recognises – in the act of disavowal – the multiplicity of *women*: as subjects themselves, rather than as the object of male consideration. Perkins Gilman was, I suggest, aware of what Rita Felski terms 'competing myths of modernity', which were heavily gendered.[76] This competition pits an active, purposeful and rational social striving toward clear goals as masculine progress, against a 'passive, hedonistic, and decentered' modern subjectivity that links femininity to a stalled individualism and fragmentation.[77] Central to these concerns is reproductive politics, as Clare Hanson notes, 'eugenics was from its inception intimately bound up with concerns about the increasing complexity of modern civilisation and the pressures of industrialisation, (post)colonialism, and mass democracy: in short, modernity'.[78] Not only is the future of the family, and the modernity of that future, at stake in all the texts examined in this section, both fictional and medical, but so is the definition of womanhood, and by extension motherhood. Yet, progressive models of female individuality were often deployed in the service of eugenic ideals by middle-class white women, rather than as part of a broader liberationary movement.

Though Perkins Gilman's view of women's place in society was progressive, it was based on essentialist thinking about embodiment and female identity. Perkins Gilman's non-fiction acknowledges that maternal instinct is not necessarily natural: 'the record of untrained instinct as a maternal faculty in the human race is to be read on the rows and rows of little gravestones

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[74] Ibid., p. 248.
[75] Ibid., p. 247.
[76] Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 4.
[77] Ibid., p. 5.
[78] Clare Hanson, *Eugenics, Literature and Culture in Post-war Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 2.

which crowd our cemeteries'.[79] Yet, though recognising that socially-mandated gender roles are constructions – '"masculine" and "feminine" are only to be predicated of reproductive functions'[80] – Perkins Gilman nevertheless asserts a fundamental differential between men and women. As Li-Wen Chang points out, Perkins Gilman viewed her utopian Herlanders as 'in essence "more feminine"' than other women, through the centrality of child-raising and social care in their society.[81] Once again women are expected to want to be 'more natural', with nature equated to reproductive biology. As Ann Lane writes:

> [Perkins Gilman was] not as free from the conventional views of her age as she liked to think. Although Gilman's racist, anti-Semitic, and ethnocentric ideas are most apparent in her personal writings, in her letters and journals, these biases inevitably limit and scar her theoretical work as well.[82]

Perkins Gilman's writings about social evolution and the improvement of society elevated the right to independence for white middle-class women, sustained by the exploitation of working women and women of colour, which echoes other feminists who were also eugenicists.

The early feminist movement in England and America often insisted on its compatibility with eugenicist thought, as middle-class women used the desire for healthy, that is, normative, children as a bargaining tool for their own reproductive freedoms. As one feminist author, Mabel Atkinson, wrote in 1910:

> Society and custom place before the middle-class woman to-day two alternatives: independence, power and variety of experience, coupled with a barren celibacy; or marriage and maternity together with the narrow monotonous life of housekeeping, and in nine cases out of ten, subservience, social, intellectual and economic, to the views and opinions of her husband.[83]

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[79] Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Women and Economics: The Economic Factor between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution* (Boston, MA: Small Maynard and Company, 1898), p. 198.
[80] Ibid., p. 160.
[81] Perkins Gilman, quoted in Li-Wen Chang, 'Economics, Evolution, and Feminism in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Utopian Fiction', *Women's Studies*, 39:4 (2010), 319-348 (pp. 331-332). DOI: 10.1080/00497871003661711
[82] Ann J. Lane, *To Herland and Beyond: The Life and Work of Charlotte Perkins Gilman* (New York, NY: Pantheon, 1990), p. 255.
[83] Mabel Atkinson, 'The Feminist Movement and Eugenics', *The Sociological Review*, a3.1 (1910), 51-56 (p. 54). DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-954X.1910.tb02083.x

Atkinson argues for the legal rights of women to their own children, to her own property, and asks that society condemn a man who will not respect his wife's right to independence of thought on political or religious subjects. Yet, these rights were focused on the middle-class woman: described as the 'highly evolved woman' in language that links class to bodily predisposition.[84] These women are experienced at being independent without losing their 'natural womanly attractiveness', their 'natural instincts are alive and unspoiled' for motherhood.[85] Thus, Atkinson insists, 'let not our friends the eugenicists be alarmed. It is the nature of the finest and healthiest women to desire children. […T]he quality at all events of the children will improve enormously when compulsory and unwished for maternity becomes a thing of the past'.[86] Such arguments preserve the roots of the tree the feminists claim to want to fell: accepting the fundamental tenets upon which Enlightenment monstrosity was constructed – the monstrous body is still that which is non-reproductive, which reproduces disability, and/or is racially other. This, I suggest, demonstrates a failure to see beyond the Gothic labyrinth in which women become trapped, a failure to acknowledge the true monster. Perkins Gilman's attempt to construct a non-Gothic and less-patriarchal future through her social issue fictions, in contrast to the Gothic patriarchal horror she depicted in contemporary and past American society, remains, like her nameless narrator in 'The Yellow-Wall-paper', stuck in a rut: 'it is the pattern that keeps her subdued'.[87]

M. R. James and Haunted Masculinity

Anxious depictions of contemporary gender norms in this period were not limited to those written by or about women. Andrew Smith suggests that struggles around the cultural conception of gender roles and representations of masculinity in the *fin de siècle* developed not only through external threats to men's self-image, such as the rising feminist movement, but through a 'notion of crisis […] staged within the dominant masculine culture'.[88] According to Smith, the very proponents of the dominant model of Victorian English masculinity, figured as a 'muscular Christianity', had constructed 'a bifurcated model of masculinity, one that in its own way constitutes a crisis […] generated out of a male tradition

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[84] Ibid., p. 54.
[85] Ibid., pp. 52-53.
[86] Ibid., pp. 54-55.
[87] Perkins Gilman, 'The Yellow Wall-paper', p. 13.
[88] Andrew Smith, *Victorian Demons: Medicine, Masculinity and the Gothic at the fin de siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 1.

of writings on degeneracy, sexology, and self-help'.[89] This model, in which societal values of honour and valour kept in check 'natural' aggressive and/or sexual actions and desires, figured masculinity around expressions of power that legitimated domestic and colonial dominance, but proved a problem for civilisation when linked to criminality and excess. These debates once again reverberate in the fiction, as Karschay notes, 'virtually every single gentleman in [Gothic] novels has a latent dark side hidden behind a thin veneer of respectability'.[90] As seen in Stevenson and Wilde's Gothic tales of paragons brought low, 'the dominant masculine scripts came to be associated with disease, degeneration and perversity'.[91] Further, attributes that would be considered normative for middle- or upper-class men were labelled symptoms of degeneration in women or the working class; supposed lack of 'femininity' in women, linked to employment or physical exertion, is explored in Perkins Gilman's writings, and the urban Gothic safari of authors like Gissing ascribed excessive aggression and lack of family engagement to the working class. Thus, potentially problematic 'masculine' attributes were most troubling in the body of the 'other' who was thought to be lacking the positive 'masculine' attributes, such as intellect and self-restraint.

Degenerationist fears about appropriate models of masculinity, the nature of the body itself, and the structure of society come together in the prolific output of Gothic tales from M. R. James. James was a mediaeval scholar at King's College, Cambridge, becoming Provost in 1905 before taking up the same role at Eton, his *alma mater*, in 1918. James's stories were told to his friends and colleagues before publication, and his characters are often scholars, his settings universities, libraries and schools. It is, perhaps, surprising that social hierarchies are often disrupted in James's tales, as he was judged to be intellectually and socially conservative by friends and colleagues, most harshly by A. C. Benson who declared him 'so stubbornly Tory, so inaccessible to all ideas'.[92] Yet, the supernatural events of 'The Tractate Middoth' (1911) enable the disruption of class, as well as temporal, boundaries as a grasping gentleman is attacked by a dead ancestor while attempting to destroy an unfavourable will, and the fortune passes to his poorer cousin who previously had taken in paying guests. Though critics such as S. T. Joshi and Jack Sullivan claim it is not possible to develop a

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[89] Ibid., p. 4.
[90] Karschay, p. 28.
[91] Smith, p. 1.
[92] Michael Cox, *M. R. James: an Informal Portrait* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986 [1983]), p. 125.

strong sense of an underlying philosophy in James's work,[93] this is to deny the repeating themes in his settings and plotting, and ignores his attention to detail. James's characters are always clearly delineated by their class and occupation, yet his tales suggest that material as well as social boundaries are permeable, and the surface appearance of things is not always as it seems.

The majority of James's tales focus on characters acquiring dangerous knowledge or artefacts through scholarly pursuits, and express an appreciation for tradition and social convention. Yet, his educated scholars are rarely led by purely rational engagement, as Michael Cox notes, 'in the world of M. R. James's antiquaries, passions are aroused not by human contact, or even money or power, but by intellectual endeavour and discovery'.[94] The monster is most often summoned by the over-confident gentleman researcher, and though the encounter is rarely fatal, it provides a severe shock to the knowledge seeker. Darwin's confident claim for man's 'god-like' intelligence contrasts sharply with the broken scholars who encounter the bestial in James's stories. Perhaps, then, James is not so much reproducing Victorian science's 'assumption that history and civilisation are readable [and] human existence can be conceived of in levels of development', as Brian Cowlishaw claims.[95] This would suggest that modern man should be able to defeat the atavistic horror, as in the adventure tales of Conan Doyle. I would argue that James's sympathies, however, are often with the older order of folklore and unspoken truth, rather than the scholar pushing the boundaries of the known and eagerly speaking about that which should remain in the dark and quiet of the tomb.

The reading of silent signs into spoken language is the main source of fear in James's Gothic tales, linked to the revelation of the abhuman body. What threatens seekers of forbidden knowledge is very often a creature resembling the so-called 'missing link' of Victorian evolutionary theory, halfway between modern man and contemporary ape. The creature of 'Canon Alberic's Scrap-book' (1895) forms a model for these ghosts or demons of evolution: 'at first you saw only a mass of coarse, matted black hair […] the hands were of a dusky pallor, covered, like the body, with long, coarse hairs, and hideously taloned […] endowed

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[93] S. T. Joshi, *The Weird Tale* (Rockville, MA: Wildside Press, 2003), p. 140; Jack Sullivan, *Elegant Nightmares: The English Ghost Story from Le Fanu to Blackwood* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1978), p. 85.

[94] Michael Cox, 'Introduction', in *Casting the Runes and Other Ghost Stories*, edited by Michael Cox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009 [1987]), pp. xi-xxx (p. xxiv).

[95] Brian Cowlishaw, '"A Warning to the Curious": Victorian Science and the Awful Unconscious in M. R. James's Ghost Stories', *Warnings to the Curious: A Sheaf of Criticism on M. R. James*, edited by S. T. Joshi and Rosemary Pardoe (New York, NY: Hippocampus Press, 2007), pp. 162-176 (p. 163).

with intelligence just less than human'.[96] Such creatures reappear in 'A Episode of Cathedral History' (1914) and 'The Diary of Mr Poynter' (1919), alongside a leathery orang-utan-like being in 'The Treasure of Abbot Thomas' (1904). Cowlishaw reads James's engagement with the past as an issue of legibility through Freud – suggesting that where the psychoanalyst tries to uncover the past, the author seeks to repress it, which fits neatly within the view of James as the archetypal conservative, religious, and reluctant homosexual. Frightened of the results of releasing a long-buried truth, in this reading James represses what he views as baser human instincts, including queerness, and they reappear as atavistic monsters of the id. Whilst this approach situates the stories within a familiar queer narratology of symbolic coding and uncovering, comparing the public history with the private, it limits interpretation to the individual, irrespective of context, and serves to metaphorise the (almost always male) bodies on display in the text, both normative and monstrous.

Heredity and degeneration hold few fears for the non-reproductive who live within a single sex environment, unless it is the revelation of their inherent difference through the reading of the legible surface. For the scholars embedded within the institution, their freedom to live among their own is based on constructing a very particular and unworldly outlook, and a masculinity untainted by any form or suggestion of femininity or queerness. As Kosofsky Sedgwick suggests:

> Both the power relations between the genders and the relations of nationalism and imperialism, for instance, were in highly visible crisis. For this reason, and because the structuring of same-sex bonds can't, in any historical situation marked by inequality and contest between genders, fail to be a site of intensive regulation that intersects virtually every issue of power and gender, lines can never be drawn to circumscribe within some proper domain of sexuality (whatever that might be) the consequences of a shift in sexual discourse.[97]

James's stories of abnormativity are an engagement with the regulatory framework regarding what it meant to be a man in this fraught period. Mark Pincombe's analysis, which does not metaphorise the bodily experiences of the tales' protagonists, however, suggests that James

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[96] M. R. James, 'Canon Alberic's Scrapbook', in *Casting the Runes*, ed. by Cox, pp. 1-13 (p. 8).
[97] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 2-3.

seems remarkably free from any 'homosexual panic', in Kosofsky Sedgwick's terminology.[98] In this Pincombe echoes Julia Briggs's claim that, in his stories, 'James maintained an attitude of critical detachment […] as if the implications of what he wrote never disturbed him, and he enjoyed writing them purely as a literary exercise'.[99] Yet, the stories themselves suggest profound discomfort, particularly with the decoding of linguistic and visual signs to reveal a bestial 'other', and a failure to contain the possibilities of the homosocial within a 'proper domain'.

M. R. James's depictions of college life are convivial and steeped in tradition; bar a few love interests and female relations, women are largely absent from these stories. Homosocial bonding is alluded to in James's most famous tale, 'Oh, Whistle and I'll Come to You, My Lad' (1904), as the protagonist Parkins is teased by his colleagues. Pincombe suggests that Parkins is depicted as perhaps too modern and 'unmanly' and that, through the haunting, 'James seems to be punishing Parkins […] because he does not fit in with the collegiate culture James wished to preserve'.[100] James's depiction of collegial homosociality both reflects, and is at odds with, Oscar Wilde's brief allusions in *Dorian Gray*. Though Wilde suggests a social community based around youth in the same institutions, queerness can be read as an open secret, conveyed through visual codes and conventions:

> There were many, especially amongst the very young men, who saw, or fancied
> that they saw, in Dorian Gray the true realisation of a type of which they had often
> dreamed in Eton or Oxford days, […] to them he seemed to be of their
> company.[101]

The ideal scholar for Wilde is a beauty-worshipping aesthete, the very 'unmanly' and non-sporting youth rejected by James's model of homonormativity. As suggested by Ana de Freitas Boe and Abby Coykendall, 'establishments with the greatest stake in perpetuating […] homonormativity […] confer selective legitimacy upon a narrow range of queer experience'.[102] James is, perhaps, overly insistent that his homosocial world of scholarship

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[98] Mark Pincombe, 'Homosexual Panic and the English Ghost Story: M. R. James and Others', in *Warnings to the Curious*, ed. by Joshi and Pardoe, pp. 184-196.

[99] Julia Briggs, *Night Visitors: The Rise and Fall of the English Ghost Story* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977), p. 124.

[100] Pincombe, p. 190.

[101] Wilde, p. 108.

[102] Ana de Freitas Boe and Abby Coykendall, 'Introduction', in *Heteronormativity in Eighteenth Century Literature and Culture*, edited by Ana de Freitas Boe and Abby Coykendall (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016 [2014]), pp. 1- 21 (p. 10).

has no skeletons in its closets, writing his 'warning to the curious' to ensure it remains so – to warn of the risk of invasion by the outsider, the 'other', by painting them as monstrous interlopers.

'Appropriate' men in James's homosocial worlds, both fictional and real, are vigorous and active. Pincombe explores the diaries and published memoirs of James's contemporaries, in which there are frequent references to male bonding through horse-play; James's ex-tutor Luxmore, for example, describes how 'those played animal grab who did not mind having their clothes torn to pieces and their hands nailscored'.[103] In this era, athleticism and sports were considered an excellent physical distraction from sexuality and sensuality, however any oppositional construction always invokes its other, and J. A. Mangan thus claims that 'the elements of sexual identity and legitimate sensuality are inseparable from the worship of games'.[104] James's satirical digs at the players of golf are thus not merely humour at the expense of his peers, but reflections of a deeper view about a very specific type of sporting English masculinity fostered within certain social institutions, that brought the participants to physical contact, but with appropriate masculine levels of violence rather than sensuality. Terry W. Thompson claims that James 'deftly employs the genteel sport of golf – and the open, verdant courses upon which this supremely patrician and strictly ruled game is played – to foster a false sense of security, of quiet order'.[105] However, it is the ill-fated Parkins, and hen-pecked Mr Anstruther in 'The Rose Garden' (1911), who suffer under this illusion. James alludes to golfing in 'The Mezzotint' as an 'indulgence' of the University authorities, and links conversation about the sport to the unspeakable, as that 'which the conscientious writer has no right to inflict upon any non-golfing persons'.[106] Thus, golf represents not an ideal of tamed nature, as Thompson suggests, but a failure of 'natural' masculinity; it is the preserve of the fussy, the hen-pecked, and the ineffectual.

The ideals coded into James's Gothic fictions echo those expressed by contemporary educators: F. B. Malim stressed the utility of school sports to develop appropriate attributes of masculinity, such as strength and endurance, and considered golf and lawn tennis undesirable

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[103] Pincombe, p. 186.
[104] J. A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: the emergence and consolidation of an educational ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 111.
[105] Terry W. Thompson, '"I shall most likely be out on the links": Golf as Metaphor in the Ghost Stories of M. R. James', *Papers on Language & Literature*, 40.4 (2004), 339-352 (p. 340).
[106] M. R. James, 'The Mezzotint', in *Casting the Runes*, ed. by Cox, pp. 14- 25 (p. 16).

because they 'are not painful enough'.[107] Edward Lyttleton, headmaster of Eton from 1905-1916, 'bemoaned the removal of the element of pain from cricket' which, he claimed, made the game 'comparatively worthless'.[108] Though Thompson suggests that 'sweaty, raucous, and plebeian team sports, like rugby or soccer, are far beneath' proper gentlemen this was clearly not the case in the Edwardian era.[109] The links between improving the physical health and educational attainment of individuals, and ensuring the future of the nation state, are made clear as these private institutions provided a model for wider educational ideals.[110] Just as reproductive kinship was the source of degeneration and the proper heteronormative family the location for its extirpation, so homosocial masculinity was proposed as both a symptom – when figured as criminality and queerness – and also a cure, in its institutionalised forms of schooling and sport.

Thus, in M. R. James's model, the right kind of single sex culture must be protected, and the wrong sort punished. In his tale 'An Evening's Entertainment' (1925), two men live together, crossing at least class boundaries in their friendship. Their deaths, a gory axe-murder and a hanging, are not investigated but assumed to be a murder/suicide pact and their bodies are dumped at a cross-road, refused a Christian burial. In 'A School Story' (1911), 'something very curious in his past history' literally comes back to haunt Mr Sampson the Latin master; a man, whose body is described as 'beastly', is seen on his window ledge in the night.[111] Later, Sampson's body is one of two found in a well: 'a bad business, whatever the story of it may have been. One body had the arms tight round the other'.[112] In both tales, an inappropriate relationship between two men is suggested to have led directly to their deaths; the queer are, in fact, the walking dead, contagious and contaminate. It is the demonstratively 'unmanly', those who overtly call into question homosocial norms, and those who would uncover the secrets of others, who are 'punished'.

M. R. James's explorations of the haunting of the homosocial by the homosexual, and the threat of degeneration this posed in the very bastions of British society, I argue, most often

[107] F. B. Malim, 'Athletics', in *Cambridge Essays on Education*, edited by A. C. Benson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917), pp. 148-167 (p. 153).
[108] J. A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 187.
[109] Quoted in Mangan, *Athleticism*, p. 342.
[110] J. A. Mangan, 'Imitating their Betters and Dissociating from their Inferiors: Grammar Schools and the Games Ethic in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', in *The Fitness of the Nation*, edited by Nicholas Parry and David McNair (Leicester: History of Education Society, 1983), pp. 1-45.
[111] M. R. James, 'A School Story', in *Casting the Runes*, ed. by Cox, pp. 97-104 (p. 102).
[112] Ibid., p. 103.

replaces the heteronormative home with the college, school, or church, as the institution that must be protected from the queer/monster. The domestic family home is the reproductive unit of society that produces the physical body of the subject, where women's role is key, but the public sphere where the business of the citizen is conducted, is predominantly male. Barry Blade states that the hyper-masculine educational innovations of the nineteenth century – the cadet forces (the first being Eton College Rifle Corps formed in 1860), school uniforms designed to mimic the military, exercise drills, and war games – were 'intended to create a nation ready and willing to meet the demands of Britain and its Empire'.[113] Malim clearly felt that his role as an educator was to shape soldier citizens:

> For the security of the nation courage in her young men is indispensable. That it
> has been bred into the sons of England is attested by the fields of Flanders and the
> beaches of Gallipoli. We shall therefore give no heed to those who decry the
> danger of some schoolboy sport.[114]

Physical danger was greatly to be preferred to the spiritual dangers of perversion, and was directly connected to the imperial colonial project. I therefore draw parallels in the encouragement of young men into physical danger in the support of the nation state as analogous to the encouragement of young women into motherhood, through the invocation of the threat of degeneration. Thus, I argue, the Enlightenment project of hierarchical subordination of those persons viewed as less evolved than the European white man, in fact posed a Gothic threat not only to those declared less than full subject-citizens in its schema, but to all.

Modern Romantics: the fragmented soldier of the First World War

The Gothic, as explored in chapter one, is rooted in an exploration of subjectivity that is defined by the body and bodily experience. Gothic art fictionalises extreme somatic states, such as terror and disgust, and it is unsurprising, therefore, that the First World War is depicted in profoundly Gothic terms by many former soldiers. Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet suggests that Gothic

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[113] Barry Blades, *Roll of Honour: Schooling and the Great War 1914-1919* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2015), p. 15.
[114] Malim, p. 152.

offered writers of the American Civil War and the First World War a rhetorical toolbox for describing physical mutilation, fear, horror and the dissolution of boundaries (such as between the living and the dead, man and machine, real and unreal).[115]

This analysis relies upon the overt acknowledgement that these texts are part of a specific Gothic literary heritage, which has not been the case until very recently. Soltysik Monnet thus proposes a new sub-genre, War Gothic, so that works like William Faulkner's *Soldier's Pay* (1926) often subsumed within the Southern Gothic tradition, and the Trench Poets who are rarely discussed in terms of their Gothic imagery, can be recognised as texts working within a shared Gothic tradition. The horrors of the trenches inspired the imagination to ghosts and ghouls, and even angels at Mons.[116] However, though the piled bodies of Siegfried Sassoon's 'Counter-Attack' (1917) echo the etched bodies in Otto Dix's collection 'The War' (1924), which in turn recall Goya's reportage from the Peninsular War a hundred years earlier, poetic descriptions of the physical presence of the dead and dying are often explored as if wholly metaphorical. Soltysik Monnet focuses on the imagery used by authors who write about wartime experience to explore ideas of madness and unreality, with particular reference to World War I conceptions of shell-shock: the soldiers talk to the dead, and the dead talk back, to 'exteriorize the mind damaged in war'.[117] Instead, I explore the way Sassoon and Owen foreground the experiential body in their language and imagery, and also relations between bodies, in a profoundly Gothic, but also realist, manner.

These most lauded of Trench Poets approached their wartime art from a Romantic perspective which, I argue, enabled them to embrace the Gothic. It was less of a jump, perhaps, to supernatural imagery for poets still working in the traditions of the nineteenth century, with its dryads and nymphs of the countryside. Owen referenced Romantic poets often in his diaries and letters, and made direct reference to Shelley in his poetry, performing homage in phrases such as 'the Winter of the World'.[118] Sassoon's early poetry, influenced by Tennyson

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[115] Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet, 'Transnational War Gothic from the American Civil War to World War One', in *Transnational Gothic: Literary and Social Exchanges in the Long Nineteenth Century*, edited by Monika Ebert and Bridget M. Marshall (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016 [2013]), pp. 173-185 (p. 174).

[116] See Tim Cook, 'Grave Beliefs: Stories of the Supernatural and the Uncanny among Canada's Great War Trench Soldiers', *The Journal of Military History*, 77.2 (2013), 521-542.

[117] Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet, 'Transnational War Gothic from the American Civil War to World War I', in *Transnational Gothic: Literary and Social Exchanges in the Long Nineteenth Century*, edited by Bridget Marshall and Monika Elbert (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 173-188 (p. 176).

[118] Wilfred Owen, '1914', *Wilfred Owen: The Complete Poems and Fragments*, edited by John Stallworthy, 2 vols, revised edition, (London: Chatto & Windus, 2013), I, p. 116.

and Rossetti, was very earnest and he suggested to a friend in the 1960s, 'wasn't it better to be like that than to write the stuff most of the young do now – all cleverness, dissatisfaction and uncertainty?'[119] Cleverness, here used in the manner of the Modernists as described by David Earle, 'has negative connotations of empty posturing'.[120] However, Sassoon remained a Romantic; his inclusion of his lyrical poetry with his more celebrated war work in his *Collected Poems* (1917) demonstrates his commitment to the form. In their explorations of ideas of the 'natural' and 'normal', juxtaposed with the 'unnatural' experiences of war, Sassoon and Owen hark back to the first-wave Gothic and its engagement with the underlying philosophies of Romanticism.

Sassoon's situating of a potential for queerness within a natural, and naturalistic, setting may have been as unsettling to his contemporary reader as the murder and ghosts depicted in 'Haunted' and 'The Last Meeting' (1918). 'Together', 'The Last Meeting', and 'A Letter Home' (1918), written to Robert Graves, all foreground the poet's desire to reconnect with male companions.[121] When Sassoon declares 'I know that he'll be with me on my way | Home through the darkness to the evening fire' ('Together', 1918), the reader is unsure whether this is a longing for a future, or a poem of remembrance.[122] In 'Memory' (1918), Sassoon declares himself 'rich with all that I have lost'.[123] This loss, as so often detailed in his poetry, is the love of a particular man and the life he wanted to build with him. Images of the familial home in Sassoon's war poetry figure in two ways; as an abstract concept that can encompass all of Britain, and the individual household explored in great detail and specificity. The references to common habits and sights of English daily life – encounters with shopkeepers, experiences of fox hunting – provide particularity, to ensure that the reader situates the emotional and imaginative passages within a quotidian social setting. Through domestic and pastoral imagery, Sassoon situates his love for men as part of a naturalistic and unchanging order.

The betrayal of love – love that Sassoon presents as part of the natural order – creates the powerful contrast between expected social norms and the reality of lived experience. The repetitious power of the title phrase throughout 'I Stood with the Dead' (1918) forces a

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[119] Letter to Felicitas Corrigan, quoted in Paul Moeyes, *Siegfried Sassoon: Scorched Glory: a Critical Study* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), p. 10.
[120] David M. Earle, *Re-covering Modernism: Pulps, Paperbacks, and the Prejudice of Form* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016 [2009]), p. 39.
[121] Siegfried Sassoon, *The War Poems*, edited by Rupert Hart Davies (London: Faber and Faber, 1999), p. 24, p. 19.
[122] Ibid., p. 104.
[123] Ibid., p. 106.

confrontation with the scale of the slaughter, amplified by the sudden intrusion of a specific loss – 'Oh lad that I loved'.[124] The depth of individual feeling that one soldier's death provokes adds a weight to the otherwise faceless mass slaughter, and highlights Sassoon's guilt in complicity. Yet love between men is presented as a protective or absolving force. Reflecting on his time as a psychiatric patient, excused front-line duties, Sassoon writes: 'Love drove me to rebel. | Love drives me back to grope with them through hell; | And in their tortured eyes I stand forgiven' ('Banishment', 1917).[125] The ties of duty and bonds of love, which might traditionally be associated with family are, for Sassoon, exclusively the preserve of same sex relationships.

The biological family in Sassoon's poetry is, by contrast, an unnatural alliance of individuals with conflicting needs and desires. Love between men and women is often presented as a betrayal of the natural order: 'mothers, wives and sweethearts' have none of this 'natural' affection for their fellow man, only a callous interest in their own lover or child ('Their Frailty', 1917).[126] However, this is no mere disinterest, for if they consider their man safe then 'war's fine and bold and bright', suggesting that the status quo is actively supported by women without regard for the wider implications of conflict. Sassoon's sarcastic scorn, also expressed in 'Glory of Women' (1917), is easily read as an example of the misogyny that often occurs in writing by gay men who prefer homosocial environments.[127] However, men who are not at the front were no less abused for callousness, and are depicted as gleeful warmongers making suggestive innuendo: 'Arthur's getting all the fun, | At Arras with his nine inch gun' ('The Fathers', 1917).[128] Here, and in Owen's representations also, depictions of the family and home vary between an elegiac mode that yearns to recapture the past, depicting the home as a place of healing, to a realisation that this is irretrievably lost or was never quite what it appeared to be.

The past and the future are often represented by youth and family in Owen's war poetry, particularly those left behind or never to be born. 'A New Heaven' (1916) links the experiences of childhood to myth, and a form of immortality, as a mother's tears are given healing power, suggesting hope of reconciliation between the present and the past.[129] Such

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[124] Ibid., p. 112.
[125] Ibid., p. 97.
[126] Ibid., p. 90.
[127] Ibid., p. 89.
[128] Ibid., p. 82.
[129] Owen, pp. 82-83.

wholeness and wholesomeness are soon replaced by images of bodily damage and experiences of disability as the horrific reality of warfare is realised. Echoing earlier works, such as Shelley's 'Prometheus Unbound' (1820), 'A Terre (being the philosophy of many soldiers)' (1917) suggests a unity among all living matter, as the soul of the soldier will be replenished by returning to its source: 'I shall be better off with plants'.[130] Gory body horror mixes with beautiful descriptions of nature and the plants that will grow from the graves of the buried soldiers. The poem deals in bodily oppositions – youth and age, beauty and ugliness, nature and modern machinery – questioning such binaristic formulations, and noting the temporal disruption for a young man facing an early grave: 'We used to say we'd hate to live dead-old, ---Yet now… I'd willingly be puffy, bald'.[131] Owen connects the soldier's damaged body to his place within a family; 'three parts shell', a broken cyborg, the fingers he can no longer control are 'idle brats' like the children he will never father.[132] The traditional progression from child to parent has been destroyed, as have the soldiers' bodies, fracturing their identities; the disruptions undermine the social roles that set the boundaries for the modern self.

The domestic sphere, as an ideal of physical safety for men, becomes a philosophical bastion that represents ideas that are no longer tenable or useful; including both the idea of a productive future, and old ideas about the nation state:

> My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
> To children ardent for some desperate glory,
> The old Lie; Dulce et Decorum est
> Pro patria mori.[133]

In Sassoon's 'Remorse' (1918) the traditional roles and motifs of family life and relationships are reversed, with the irony that young soldiers feel protective of their parents' innocence:

> There's things in war one dare not tell
> Poor father sitting safe at home, who reads
> Of dying heroes and their deathless deeds.[134]

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[130] Ibid., p. 179.
[131] Ibid., p. 178.
[132] Ibid., p. 178.
[133] Owen, 'Dulce et Decorum Est', p. 140.
[134] Sassoon, p. 107.

As in much of Owen and Sassoon's work, these images highlight the distance between the soldiers' reality and the officially-sanctioned writings about the war in both fictional and journalistic publications, as well as the presentation of war when teaching history and politics to children. Owen sarcastically confronts the reader with their own safety in reading the experiential horror of war at one remove: 'My glorious ribbons? – Ripped from my own back | In scarlet shreds. (That's for your poetry book)'.[135] The body represents a truth that language obscures.

Not accorded the status of decisive subjects, having their perceptions of reality denied by those in positions of power over their bodies and language – doctors, politicians, fathers – the treatment of the war wounded also reinforces other traditional associations of femininity with wounding and related physical vulnerability. Sassoon contrasts the experiences of wounding, and becoming disabled, to the rhetoric of glorious victory surrounding the war in contemporary culture. In 'Does it Matter?' (1917), the rhetorical question highlights the distance between individual values and what is of importance in the course of history.[136] This questioning form also suggests emotional manipulation in which the victim is convinced to abandon their own certainties and opinions, a form of abuse termed 'gaslighting' after Patrick Hamilton's 1938 play 'Gaslight', and its popular 1944 Gothic film adaptation. However, this abuse is most often depicted as experienced by a female victim, as in Perkins Gilman's 'The Yellow Wall-paper' (1892) and the above film. In the Gothic poetry of war, then, bodily experience is explored as both empirical reality and experiential subjectivity, undermining the traditional post-Enlightenment dichotomies of rationality and sensation, masculine and feminine, exterior reality and interior imagination.

In both these Trench Poets' work, descriptions of the bodily sensations of war – sound, sight, smell, touch – are often raw and immediate, and central to conveying the message of unendurable horror. In Owen's most famous poem the immediate sensations of the body, expressed in the present tense, draw the reader into the action – 'Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!'[137] Adrian Caesar is at pains to 'demonstrate the absence of anything approaching "realism"' in Owen's work.[138] Yet this again privileges a limited idea of what realism is, in literary and

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[135] Owen, 'A Terre', p. 168.
[136] Sassoon, p. 80.
[137] Owen, 'Dulce et Decorum est', p. 140.
[138] Adrian Caesar, *Taking it Like a Man: Suffering, Sexuality, and the War Poets: Brooke, Sassoon, Owen, Graves* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 116.

philosophical terms, based upon a rationalist and materialist perspective. As Sassoon reflected on his own experiences later, 'I was immature, impulsive, irrational and bewildered […] only saved by being true to the experiences which I drew upon'.[139] Though Sassoon means this as a critical reflection on his earlier work, he highlights the disservice done by applying normative hierarchies, which privilege dispassionate rationality, to subjective art.

Contrasts between immediacy and reflection, reality and fantasy, the domestic and the martial, are expressed in Owen and Sassoon's poetry through a mix of classical myths and biblical allusions, the Gothic fantastic, and brutal modern imagism. Paul Goetsch suggests this is because 'war marks the return of the archaic and primitive, the negation of civilisation' but paradoxically, 'war is symptomatic of the crisis of modernisation'.[140] Thus, as Soltysik Monnet and Hantke suggest, war reminds us 'how closely civilisation operates on the margins of its own coherence, integrity and effectiveness'.[141] Paul Fussell suggests that these dialectic oppositions of the war – us and them, safety and danger – cannot be resolved along the Hegelian philosophies of synthesis explored by Romantic poets such as Wordsworth.[142] In response, Margot Gayle Backus productively reads Fussell's engagement with the Gothic through Sedgwick to suggest that the war itself, and No Man's Land specifically, can be read as 'the breach'; the liminal space in which unresolvable tensions create the uncanny. However, Backus is mostly concerned with Irish literature that reflected on the war at some remove, reading texts such as Yeats' 'An Irish Airman Foresees his Death' (1919), rather than, say, Patrick MacGill's work that depicts trench experience directly.[143] I suggest that many of these readings, exploring the war as a disruptive and disrupted event, support an Enlightenment model of rational subjectivity; suggesting that, without outside stimulus, there is a unified ideal self operating in normative society, and war has caused the fragmentation of identity. However, for Sassoon and Owen, identity was already accepted as fragmentary, or multi-faceted; their queerness was unspeakable to others, to Sassoon it was unacceptable even

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[139] Sassoon, 'Letters to a Critic' (1966), quoted in Patrick Campbell, *Siegfried Sassoon: A Study of the War Poetry* (London: Macmillan, 1997), p. 3.

[140] Paul Goetsch, 'The Fantastic in Poetry of the First World War', in *War and the Cultural Construction of Identities in Britain*, edited by Barbara Korte and Ralf Schneider (Amsterdam: Rodopi Press, 2002), pp. 125-141 (p. 126).

[141] Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet and Stefan Hantke, 'Ghosts from the Battlefield: a short historical introduction to the war Gothic', in *War Gothic in Literature and Culture*, edited by Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet and Stefan Hantke (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. xi -xv (p. xxiv).

[142] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 79.

[143] Margot Gayle Backus, *The Gothic Family Romance: Heterosexuality, Child Sacrifice, and the Anglo-Irish Colonial Order* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 154-155.

to himself.[144] This fragmented self is at the heart of the Gothic critique of Enlightenment models of subjectivity, but there is no established critical tradition of recognising the Trench Poets' critique as Gothic in form. Thus, the Gothic literature of those who experienced the war itself has largely gone unacknowledged; the focus has instead been on the modernity of the experience and its literary expression.

Ted Bogacz claimed that 'the most successful war poets became "Modernists" in spite of themselves'.[145] Yet, Siegfried Sassoon never abandoned his lyrical roots, nor Wilfred Owen his Romanticism and thus, I argue, it is essential to recognise their Gothic aesthetics. The Gothic is the preeminent mode for queerness, disability, femininity: the 'abhumaness' of those who cannot, or will not, occupy the subject position as it is constructed – and limited – by European Enlightenment philosophies. Bogacz situates the Gothic, by default, as an anti-Modernist stance: viewing 'the concrete imagery of Pound and Eliot' as an exemplar or parallel for Owen's own realisation 'that a poet "must be truthful"' he problematically aligns truth with Modernism.[146] To suggest that Ezra Pound's 'concrete' empiricism is superior opens up a conceptual can of worms given the associations between modernity, masculinity, and rationality, and between Pound and fascism. I argue that the refusal to acknowledge the deliberately Gothic subjectivity in these poems is an attempt to reduce the disruptive potential of texts that draw together and critique the links between conceptions of normative masculinity, violence, and the nation state.

Gothic Modernism: mechanised bodies and the dark side of efficiency

Modernism, David Ayers suggests, 'if such a hydra can be given such a name – is obsessed with the self'.[147] I would argue that this is a key point of connection with the Gothic, a genre continually engaged in the deconstruction and reconfiguration of the human, and its representation in textual form. Tim Armstrong suggests there is a tendency to think of Modernism as a 'reaction against modernity', a view that positions modernity as industrial, urban, and somehow inhuman though created by humans, and he proposes instead that

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[144] Sassoon wrote to Edward Carpenter, thanking him for helping him to acknowledge his homosexuality; letters quoted in Caesar, p. 66.
[145] Ted Bogacz, '"A Tyranny of Words": Language, Poetry, and Anti-Modernism in England in the First World War', *The Journal of Modern History*, 58.3 (1986), 643-668 (p. 645).
[146] Ibid., p. 645.
[147] David Ayers, *Wyndham Lewis and Western Man* (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 1992), p. 3.

Modernism and modernity are rather 'bound together in a relation which is homologous rather than antagonistic'.[148] This reflects language used by John Barth, who claims that Modernists carried 'the torch of Romanticism', and thus 'taught us that linearity, rationality, consciousness, cause and effect, naïve illusionism, transparent language, innocent anecdote, and middle-class moral conventions are not the whole story'.[149] Barth and Armstrong's words serve equally well for the Gothic, which allows its audience to critique the Enlightenment and, in Anne Williams's phrase, 'to confront and explore, and simultaneously to deny, [...] that the "law of the father" is a tyrannical *paterfamilias* and that we dwell in his ruins'.[150] There is, unsurprisingly, increasing critical interest in the thematic links between Modernism and the Gothic.

In exploring the relationship between Modernism and the Gothic, I want to explore the differences in the conceptualisation of the fragmented self between the African-American Modernist and the white European, who utilise Gothic imagery in quite different ways. Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall, in their exploration of Gothic scholarship, are concerned that too often critical consensus foregrounds an 'anti-Enlightenment rebellion and disregards the vital elements of modern rationality,' and suggest that the Gothic in fact 'witnesses the birth of modernity'.[151] As I attempt to demonstrate throughout this thesis, the Gothic responds to Enlightenment philosophies of subjectivity, and it is never wholly progressive nor conservative, in its rejection or embrace of these dominant ideals. For Daniel Darvay, 'the permeability of identity' is central to Gothic project, as it allows 'the perpetuation of the illusion that human subjectivity acquires the liberty to reinvent itself out of thin air precisely while recognising its defenselessness against and dependence upon external mechanisms of control.'[152] Thus, the Modernists seem to be Gothicists despite themselves; yet with Matt Foley, I want to resist the idea that the Modernist author utilising Gothic aesthetics or tropes is necessarily derivative, or drawing upon a specific generic tradition.[153] In Darvay's

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[148] Tim Armstrong, *Modernism: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), p. 1.
[149] John Barth, 'The Literature of Replenishment', in *Essentials of the Theory of Fiction*, edited by Michael J. Hoffman and Patrick D. Murphy, Third Edition (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), pp. 165-176 (p. 173) [first publ. *Atlantic Monthly*, January (1980), 65-71].
[150] Anne Williams, *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 24.
[151] Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall, 'Gothic Criticism', in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, edited by David Punter (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 267-287 (p.2 73, p. 278).
[152] Daniel Darvay, *Haunting Modernity and the Gothic Presence in British Modernist Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 23, p. 11.
[153] Matt Foley, H*aunting Modernisms: Ghostly Aesthetics, Mourning, and Spectral Resistance Fantasties in Literary Modernism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 11

monograph *Haunting Modernity*, he returns to a pre-eighteenth century origin, to the Reformation, for the underlying cultural threads that link Modernist and Gothic responses to ideas of fragmentary subjects, and thus 'seeks to illuminate the major role the Gothic plays in facilitating the formation of identity in broader contexts of modernity.'[154] I am not tracing a history back that far, but suggesting that the same imagery is used in both Gothic and Modernist responses to an ideal of unified Enlightenment selfhood because, following Robert Miles and Eve Sedgwick, the Gothic provides 'a coherent code for the representation of fragmented subjectivity.' [155]

European Modernism produced art and critiques that often expressed fear that the modern world might erase or deform the human, but without fully and critically engaging with the variety of human embodiment and identity. Dehumanisation is a term often used about Modernist works, foregrounding concerns about the harshness of the urban environment, and the integration of the human worker into the mechanised production line. Years before Fritz Lang's Gothic Modernist classic *Metropolis* (1927), the relationship between the exciting possibilities of technological advancement, and its potentially negative impact on individuals and individualism, was recognised by creative factions such as the Vorticists. Wyndham Lewis's painting 'The Crowd' (1915) replaces the human bodies suggested by the title with the harsh angular lines and geometric shapes of the skyscrapers and blocks of a cityscape, suggesting the erasure of a more traditional view of humanity. However, the basis of the self upon which Lewis develops his conception of subjectivity, as 'a Western or Aryan attribute' in Ayers' description,[156] is overtly traditional Enlightenment philosophy, and thus his prejudices – against women, homosexuals, Marxists, Jews, and the racially 'other' more widely – are also those of the bourgeoisie he claimed to resist. His philosophy rejects the selfhood of not only those who threaten the position of the 'Western man' as the subject-citizen politically, but also those whose mere existence undermines the very conception of the subject as an independent, formally-bounded, contained and stable self.

Though the Vorticists differentiated themselves from Futurists such as Marinetti, who celebrated technological advance less critically, they still explored human interaction with the mechanical through a limited view of what the 'human' might be, as Ezra Pound's turn to

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[154] Darvey, p. 26.
[155] Robert Miles, *Gothic Writing 1750-1820: A Genealogy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993) p. 2.
[156] Ayers, p.5.

Nazism, and wider fascistic sympathies, attest. Pound stated that the Vorticists did not 'desire to evade comparison with the past. We prefer that the comparison be made by some intelligent person whose idea of "the tradition" is not limited by the conventional taste of four or five centuries and one continent'.[157] This call for an historicised and global perspective, in an article referencing international art traditions, might suggest a challenge to a Eurocentric model, yet many Modernists still centred an image of the human developed uncritically from a European perspective. The Vorticist exploration of dehumanisation really only applies to able-bodied white men; everyone else already experienced the effects of being treated as animal labour, of being judged as having a 'mechanical' flaw, or being erased from the public sphere and thus 'disappearing' within the crowd.

The Vorticists' particular mode of exploring ideas about theoretical dehumanisation did not survive the war. As Richard Cork notes:

> When Lewis returned from the trenches, he hoped to revivify the Vorticist spirit, planning a third issue of *Blast* and regaining contact with old allies. But the whole context of pre-war experimentation had been dispersed by the destructive power of mechanized warfare, which persuaded most of the former Vorticists to pursue more representational directions thereafter. By 1920 even Lewis was obliged to admit that the movement was dead.[158]

I suggest that what this suggests is that their philosophy did not survive the experience having one's embodied identity damaged or denied, and/or experiencing being judged or treated as 'other'. Lewis himself described the immediate post-war period in a highly Gothic image: 'Then I buried myself. I disinterred myself in 1926'.[159] Yet, as Francesca Orestano notes, Lewis most frequently uses the Gothic, and the related grotesque, as a satirical mode, distancing himself and his semi-autobiographical heroes, such as the protagonist of the novel *Tarr* (1918), with 'a cool rational horror'.[160] Vorticism was a movement invested in exploring oppositional positions and boundaries, as seen in the published lists of the 'Blasted' and 'Blessed' in the two editions published of *Blast* magazine (1914-1915), but a playful

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[157] Ezra Pound, 'Vorticism', *Fortnightly Review*, [n.s.] 96.1 (1914), 461-471.
[158] Richard Cork, 'Vorticism', *Grove Dictionary of Art Online*, http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T090158 [accessed 03/03/2017]
[159] Wyndham Lewis, *Blasting and Bombadiering* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967), p. 5.
[160] Francesca Orestano, 'Arctic Masks in a Castle of Ice; Gothic Vorticism and Wyndham Lewis's *Self Condemned*', in *Gothic Modernisms*, edited by Andrew Smith and Jeff Wallace (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001) pp. 167- 187 (p. 172).

exploration of categorisation and condemnation often relies on distance from the threat of being judged oneself. For Lewis, invested in exploring oppositional constructs, the Gothic mode, Romantic subjectivism, and femininity are representative of a 'static bourgeoisie',[161] against which he constructs a mechanical, impersonal, and masculine aesthetic and ethics of art.

The Modernism of the African-American diaspora, including the artists of the Harlem Renaissance, often uses Gothic imagery and tropes to create comparisons and contrasts between different embodied experiences of citizenship and subjectivity. Jean Toomer's poem 'Portrait in Georgia' (1923) is Modernist Gothic; linking the bodies of a white woman and murdered black man, through the violent imagery of lynching:

> Hair—braided chestnut,
>> coiled like a lyncher's rope,
> Eyes—fagots,
> Lips—old scars, or the first red blisters
> Breath—the last sweet scent of cane,
> And her slim body, white as the ash
>> of black flesh after flame.[162]

In just seven lines, Toomer explores racist violence and racialized judgements of beauty that privilege whiteness as linked to ideas of purity and innocence. The protection of white women was a prevalent justification for the lynching of black men in American communities of this era, as Gunnar Myrdal's 1940s study of race relations in America suggests: 'a mob which makes the accusation of rape is secure from any further investigation; by the broad Southern definition of rape to include all sexual relations between Negro men and white women'.[163] This protection of women was, in fact, simply a reframing of the protection of the racially-distinct family. Categorising all inter-racial relationships as rape not only delegitimised the mixed-race family, but suggested an inherent criminality of black men, which acted as a terrorising check upon both men of colour and the women who viewed them as potential partners. Toomer's poem blends the boundaries between victims and perpetrators,

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[161] Ibid., p. 168.

[162] Jean Toomer, 'Portrait in Georgia', *Cane: Authoritative Text, Contexts, Criticism*, edited by Rudolph P. Byrd (New York, NY: Norton, 2011), p. 27.

[163] Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: the Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York, NY: Harper, 1944), pp. 561-562.

demonstrating that a black man and a white woman are both constructed as objects of the white male subjective position – yet only she is allowed to live on.

The actions and attitudes alluded to in Toomer's poem were an ideological defence of the traditional 'family of man', with the white European as the highest patriarchal power. Ralph Ellison's review of Myrdal's study also evokes the language of the Gothic to explore this construction of the black body as a 'problem' within the white American tradition. Ellison's critique states:

> It is not unusual for a Negro to experience a sensation that he does not exist in the real world at all. He seems, rather, to exist in the nightmarish fantasy of the white American mind as a phantom that the white mind seeks unceasingly, by means both crude and subtle, to lay to rest.[164]

Ellison writes from within a 'nightmare' in which he has lost embodiment and subjectivity, as someone else's phantom. In Ellison's most celebrated work, *Invisible Man* (1954), the protagonists' lack of even a name demonstrates his disenfranchisement from normative models of subjectivity, and echoes the monstrous subjects constructed in *fin-de-siècle* horror stories. In H. G. Wells's earlier tale of the same title, the invisible man loses his ability to behave like a rational subject once he can no longer see his own reflection; he becomes a monster, like Dorian Grey. For the privileged man, the lack of a mirror gives them a license for monstrosity, for those already considered monstrous, the lack of a mirror denies them their humanity. The 'American Creed', based on Enlightenment ideals of individualism, civil liberties, and equality of opportunity, was not extended to people of colour.

It could be argued that Black American authors frequently draw upon Gothic motifs for their critique, because within the post-Enlightenment tradition, as I have suggested, those outside the narrow limits that define the subject position under this ideology are automatically monstrous others. W. E. B. Du Bois's book of essays *The Souls of Black Folks* (1903) positions those excluded from full participation as 'the swarthy spectre […] in its accustomed seat at the Nation's feast'.[165] Alluding to Shakespeare's *Macbeth* suggests, without directly challenging, that a potentially hostile white readership should be aware of their guilt and complicity. Du Bois describes experiences of physical and spiritual experiences of

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[164] Ralph Ellison, 'An American Dilemma: A Review', in *The Death of White Sociology: Essays on Race and Culture*, edited by Joyce A. Ladner (Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1973), pp. 81-95 (p. 83).
[165] W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folks: Essays and Sketches* (Chicago, IL: A. C. McClurg, 1903), p. 6.

confinement: 'the shades of the prison-house closed round about us all: walls strait and stubborn to the whitest, but relentlessly narrow, tall, and unscalable to sons of night who must plod darkly on in resignation'.[166] However, to read these images of haunting and incarceration as an inevitable Gothicisation of the black experience is to ignore the call for a nuanced perspective sounded by Teresa Goddu, who warns against 'collapsing the distinctions between fact and fiction' when 'representing a Gothic history through Gothic conventions'.[167]

Just as earlier Gothic fictionalised horrors and made them palatable adventures, projecting slavery, torture, and imprisonment from the black body onto the white, an exploration of the depiction of dehumanisation within Modernist art highlights how Gothic motifs signify differently depending upon the characteristics of the body of the subject. The exclusion of the non-white and the disabled body was a fundamental aspect of the European Modernist manifestation of Enlightenment-influenced philosophy. Marius Turda goes so far as to suggest that 'eugenics should be understood […] as the emblematic expression of programmatic Modernism'.[168] Though Lewis declared 'we believe in no perfectibility but our own […] we only want the world to live',[169] in promoting the mechanistic properties of the human body, and valuing a body that is efficient or productive above all other attributes, the wider Modernist movement aligns with the materialist aspects of fascistic thought. In *Blast*, Pound wrote: 'the vortex is the point of maximum energy. It represents, in mechanics, the greatest efficiency. We use the words "greatest efficiency" in the precise sense – as they would be used in a text book of Mechanics'.[170] The linking of an enthusiasm for efficiency and mechanics, with exhortations to bring out the best of the human originator, presages the later propaganda of National Socialism in Germany and Italian fascism, philosophies which Lewis excused and Pound embraced. Mechanisation and efficiency, in the service of an idealism that privileges the able-bodied European above all other possible humanities, formed the basis of the mechanical death cult of the German Third Reich. Fascist philosophies privilege the production of the ideal citizen, and the family must therefore be regulated to serve the needs of the same. Thus, the Gothic appears in the early twentieth century, even within the heart of Modernism, to create a space for marginalised authors to explore and insist

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[166] Ibid., p. 3.
[167] Teresa A. Goddu, *Gothic America, Narrative, History, and Nation* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 137.
[168] Marius Turda, *Modernism and Eugenics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 2.
[169] Wyndham Lewis, 'Long Live the Vortex', *Blast*, 1 (June 1914), p. 7.
[170] Ezra Pound, 'Vortex', *Blast*, 1 (June 1914), p. 153.

upon the recognition of their subjectivity, but also for white European poets to express the fears generated by the fracturing of the ideals of masculinity.

Yet for the black author the Gothic is not an expression of the 'anxiety of fragmentation that threatens the fantasy of the integrated Enlightenment subject', that Alexandra Warwick identifies in the heart of the First Wave Gothic.[171] Those who are already excluded from the fantasy, such as the disabled and the ethnic minority, often see their figures invoked to provoke such anxiety as the 'other'. Nor does this match Warwick's reading of more recent Gothic texts, as exploring the anxiety 'of wholeness, the sense that subjectivity is in fact not complete *unless* it has been in some way damaged'.[172] It would be crude to suggest that texts drawing on the trauma of lynchings and trench warfare present a 'desire for trauma'. Instead, I suggest that this Gothic is, like Banquo's ghost at the feast, a mode for returning to the image of horror to bear witness; as a mode that disrupts linear narrative and the progression of time, that enables familial connections between generations though the ancestors are long dead, and is centred upon the production of unease.

Conclusion

The central concern of many Gothic texts from the turn of the century and leading into the First World War is the instability, the fantasy, of the dominant image of the self-subject. This was not a concern limited to the Gothic genre, as Ayers suggests of Lewis's Modernism:

> [His] work enacts the dilemma of a self which has discarded its integral selfhood when to do so seemed to be a challenge to the bourgeoisie, only to find that the self has become a dead term within the bourgeoisie. Lewis' crisis is exactly that he relinquished notions of the stable ego before he began to suspect that anyone wanted to take it away from him.[173]

The work of sexologists, psychologists, and evolutionary scientists had led the educated reading public to the point of questioning the very basis of human identity. If, as Jekyll claimed, man is a gestalt entity, can there be any such thing as a singular referent 'self'? Ayers's description of Lewis' anti-Semitism echoes, in form and content, readings of *Dracula*

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[171] Alexandra Warwick, 'Feeling Gothicky', *Gothic Studies*, 9.1 (2007), 5-15 (p. 12).
[172] Ibid., p. 12.
[173] Ayers, p. 14.

by critics like Jack Halberstam: 'the unstable or incoherent self projects anxieties about its own deficiencies onto the Jew, in a semblance of stability. In the process, the self develops a dependence on the rejected […] a kind of hated alter ego'.[174] The ramifications of the legible surface insisted upon by the criminologists and degenerationists, explored in Gothic fictions, perhaps suggest that it was safer to accept that which is seen, what is spoken of, as all inherently subjective. Man's 'god-like intellect' instead becomes a god-like ineffability. However, the Gothic tale refuses to resolve this neatly; insisting on exploring human bodily reality, examining the specificity of gender, race and other embodied experiences.

Insistence upon a distance between the embodied realities of experiences of 'otherness' and the horrors depicted in fiction became an important means of discrediting Gothic critique, after the domestic Gothic became something of a protest genre in the nineteenth century. As explored in the last chapter, Gothic novels were undermining dominant constructions of the idealised family and the family home, an influence which can be traced in the work of turn of the century authors such as Henrik Ibsen and Dorothy Scarborough, and in works as different as those of Perkins Gilman and the Trench Poets. However, as previously stated, the war poets are not often recognised as being part of a Gothic heritage. I argue that the urge to deny the underlying reality of Gothic horror is what leads to the labelling of Gothic as a degenerate art form and an unhealthy influence – particularly on people of colour, women, and all those marginalised by negative assumptions about their embodied identity – who might otherwise find a language for their experiences. The threat of Gothic monstrosity continued to be invoked in fiction and non-fiction to depict the disabled, the queer, and the foreign even as, increasingly in the twentieth century, Gothic fictions were parodied and denigrated, declared camp and immature.

After a period of intense public reflection upon the meaning of the subject, with the potential for an almost limitless redefinition of the norm, and social movements of inclusion – such as the women's suffrage movement – in the immediate post-war years of the twentieth century, there was a cultural movement towards the re-establishment of a stable norm upon a familiar model: the white, middle-class, patriarchal family. The World Wars were Gothic experiences of exclusion and marginalisation on many levels, as the literal machinery of war, directed by white men heavily invested in ideals of rational progress, ploughed over the ironically undifferentiated bodies of 'others', and created more 'otherness' from previously able-bodied

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[174] Ibid., p. 30.

white men. The continued refusal to grant the disabled, racial, and sexual other the same selfhood as the white bourgeois subject had profound implications for the development of the Gothic exploration of the human into the twentieth century.

4

Pulp Fiction and the Post-war Gothic

> The snigger from behind the covers of history?
>
> Emanuel Litvinoff, 'To T. S. Eliot' (1951)

In the mid-twentieth century, I argue, Gothic fiction and depictions of monstrosity, particularly in America, encoded the suppression of marginalised viewpoints. Horror films, and similar Gothic forms, became profoundly metaphorical about an increasingly paranoid culture that refused to openly acknowledge the existence of homosexuality, and built a political culture of suppression whilst preaching freedom. Even as the Gothic was increasingly integrated with less serious genres, as in the comedic Abbott and Costello monster movie cross-overs, serious topics such as domestic abuse, post-traumatic stress, and social alienation were being explored in other texts. This was a period of national prosperity, and an idealised image of white middle-class family life was promoted at home and abroad as representative of all-American values. However, the reality for many citizens was a continuation of discrimination and repression, as the rise of the Civil Rights movements – campaigns against systemic racial violence and oppression, and incorporating feminist and gay rights activism – attests. Though Britain did not have the same codified laws of segregation as the United States racism was rife, even as immigration from former colonies and commonwealth nations was essential to rebuilding the economy and staffing developing infrastructures such as the National Health Service. The UK post-war economy took longer to recover; the damage to infrastructure and European trade networks meant that rationing food and resources was common for at least a decade after the cessation of hostilities. Important to understanding mid-twentieth century Gothic, therefore, is to see it as very much Post-War Gothic.

War Gothic: rationality versus the shudder

Literary depictions of war, dealing with death, disruption and encounters with the other as explored in the previous chapter, have been explored by critics and authors as part of a Gothic

heritage, but only recently has a subgenre – War Gothic – been posited.[1] The editors of a recent collection of essays on this topic, Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet and Steffen Hantke, suggest that previous treatments have been 'partial and often focused on some other issue – no work up to now has examined the War Gothic in its thematic and aesthetic specificity'.[2] After the First World War there was a 'flurry of Gothicised war literature', although there was no contemporary recognition of these texts as a specific sub-genre of the Gothic. The subsequently labelled category of War Gothic includes literary examples such as *Soldiers' Pay* (1926) by William Faulkner, Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929), Frederick Manning's *Her Privates We* (1930), 'A Natural History of the Dead' (1933) by Ernest Hemingway, and William March's *Company K* (1933), and Abel Gance's film *J'accuse* (1919) depicting dead soldiers returning as zombies.[3] Soltysik Monnet and Hantke note that, by contrast:

> World War Two produced far fewer examples of War Gothic than one would
> have thought [… and] this collective denial of the trauma in many of the
> participating nations prepares a rich harvest of Gothic nightmares in literature,
> film and other emergent media.[4]

Whereas these recent explorations of the subgenre focus on the depiction of the soldier, to the exclusion of the civilian and wider social effects, this chapter suggests that all twentieth-century Gothic is, in some respects, Post-War Gothic.

Post-war genre fictions, from *film noir* to comic books, describe and explore the Gothic impact of domestic, crime, and war violence, and these representations were debated in the halls of governance. As the structures of power were deconstructed in fiction, and these fictions are deconstructed in turn by those in power, the links between the construction of the normative home and the nation state, between the subject and the citizen, are revealed. This is a profoundly Gothic doubling, I would suggest. The doubling of the individual subject is often theorised as a reflection of self and other, as Linda Dryden suggests, 'to be haunted by

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[1] For example, displaying the image of a soldier in a gas mask on its cover, Johan Höglund's *The American Imperial Gothic: Popular Culture, Empire, Violence* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016) explores the wider contexts of transnational and racialized violence.
[2] Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet and Steffan Hantke, 'Ghosts from the Battlefields: A Short Historical Introduction to the War Gothic', in *War Gothic in Literature and Culture*, edited by Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet and Steffan Hantke (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. xi-xxv (p. xix).
[3] Soltysik Monnet and Hantke, 'Ghosts from the Battlefields', p. xvi.
[4] Ibid., p. xvi.

another […] is uncanny enough, to be haunted by yourself strikes at the foundation of identity'.[5] The publishing industry and congress, engaged in exploring the relationship between the self-subject-citizen and the monstrous-alien-other, were locked in a similar doubling with their respective roles in creating and delimiting those categories. Anne Williams considers the Gothic as that which systematically represents otherness, not limited to literature, drama, or even to an aesthetic descriptor, and thus, 'we should not be surprised to see that it transgresses other cultural boundaries'.[6] Williams therefore suggests 'Gothic' can be applied to 'the concept of category as cognitive structure', identifying some of the 'principles of order' which 'predict the structure of a category but not its content'.[7] I argue, then, that aspects of the Gothic are imbricated across Anglo-American cultures, not only in art and literature, but in systems of governance and experiences of family life.

The confrontational nature of war and the practice of law are, it has been argued, fundamentally Gothic experiences; bound up with the notion of the other, and definition of the normative. Critics are increasingly exploring the thematic and cultural links between law and the Gothic which might both be described, in David Punter's term, as forms of 'cultural pathology'.[8] In describing the law as an abstract form of the Gothic, setting legal and contractual certainties against the hauntings of human psychology, Punter uses martial terminology to describe the forces massed behind these dominant ideologies:

> This might seem a grotesque statement, especially to those who have […] seen the vapour from the barrels of guns, who have heard the shell-shocked hills. […] [G]hosts too have – are – their armies […] as they come lurching out of the ground to reproduce the night of the living dead.[9]

Punter recognises that the seemingly oppositional stance between abstract legal and legislative clarity and somatic experiential uncertainty is fundamentally, in fact, a symbiotic Gothic relationship. This is the heart of my arguments about the relationship between the construction of the Gothic and the construction of the subject. Shoshana Felman, exploring the legal framework through which society regulates subjective experiences of violence and

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[5] Linda Dryden, *The Modern Gothic and Literary Doubles: Stevenson, Wilde and Wells* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 41.

[6] Anne Williams, *Art of Darkness: a Poetics of Gothic* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 241.

7 Ibid., p. 17.

[8] David Punter, *Gothic Pathologies: The Text, the Body and the Law* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p. ix. See also Sue Chaplin, *The Gothic and the Rule of the Law 1764-1820* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

[9] Punter, *Gothic Pathologies*, p. 3.

trauma, suggests a thematic link between the development of mass media communications, the rise of Civil Rights movements, and the development of 'new forms of organised enslavement, massacre, massive deception, and large-scale brutality and horror', in the televised or recorded courtroom trial.[10] She suggests that there is discrepancy between 'literary justice' and 'legal justice', arguing that literature refuses the closure that the law would seem to offer with its judgements and punishments, even as writers are often bound up within the process themselves. Fiction can be a space in which unresolvable aspects of subjective experience, such as trauma, can be replayed until they make sense, or until we can address their senselessness.

To investigate the ways writers bear witness to violence, and to the resulting legal processes, Felman explores the power of the unspeakable, focusing on the experience of the author K-Zetnik, who fainted during the trial of Adolf Eichmann when trying to give evidence. Nearly thirty years after the trial K-Zetnik wrote:

> I have neither word nor name for it all […]. Till 1942 there was no Auschwitz in existence. […] People have died of starvation before, and people did burn alive before. But that is not Auschwitz. What, then, is Auschwitz? I have no words to express it; I don't have a name for it. [….] I am that mute.[11]

Felman suggests that in K-Zetnik's act of silence, 'other silences became, within the trial, fraught with meaning […] something of the order of the speechlessness and of the interminability of art – was present in the courtroom as a silent shadow of the trial'.[12] The unspeakable in the Gothic, as theorised by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, is 'grounded in, is rendered visible in the colours of […] the obsession of the age.'[13] I suggest then that the power of the unspeakable, and the depiction of this gap in the representational order through Gothic art in the post-Enlightenment age, critiques the philosophies and institutions of regularity and order.

Theodor Adorno employs Gothic language, themes and fragmented narrative structure – particularly in *Minima Moralia* (1951) – as a contrast to the classicism that he had previously used to represent the Enlightenment and rationality. The events of the Second World War

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[10] Shoshana Felman, *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 2.
[11] Quoted in Felman, *Juridical Unconscious*, p. 154.
[12] Felman, *Juridical Unconscious*, p. 154.
[13] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, (London: Methuen and Co, 1986), p. 138.

were brought into effect, according to Adorno's analysis, by the discourse of instrumental rationality, which had its apotheosis in the Nazis' mechanical death factories. Enlightenment rationality underpins the horror of the fascist regime as much as it does the normative systems of justice that function within democracies. Instrumental rationality, what Adorno termed 'reified consciousness', seeks to rid itself of the 'shudder' of subjective response – to make everything known and thus to prevent encounters with the other – and in this way ends up exterminating the other with methodological efficiency. Adorno suggests that:

> Subjectivity, freeing itself from the blind anxiety of the shudder, is at the same time the shudder's own development; life in the subject is nothing but what shudders […]. Consciousness without shudder is reified consciousness. That shudder which subjectivity stirs without yet being subjectivity is the act of being touched by the other.[14]

The Gothic, as the artistic genre designed to provoke the shudder and to force the encounter with the other is, therefore a critical shadow created when instrumental rationality focuses on the model of the Subject to the exclusion of its other. The shadow is what brings depth and nuance to an image, that which is overly lit has no detail and delineation; post-Enlightenment rationality needs its critical Gothic shadow, just as the shadow would not exist without the contrast the light provides. K-Zetnik's experience is the recognition of the 'shudder' expressed as the unspeakable. Thus, through an exploration of the unspeakable, the trial of Eichmann can be viewed as a Gothic event: K-Zetnik's testimony, to the unspeakable nature of the crimes and experiences of war, evoking the shudder of a subjective response challenging the court's attempt to instil regularity and order through an objective, measured response.

Adorno declared writing poetry after Auschwitz to be 'barbaric', and for some scholars imposing the adjective 'Gothic' upon the poetry of Wilfred Owen, or reportage photography from concentration camps, is similarly distasteful. Matt Foley, referencing the performative meta-textual constructedness of Gothic works such as the *Castle of Otranto* (1764), states 'the Gothic is fiction. War is not'.[15] However, just as an argument has been made for recognising the Gothic aspects of nineteenth-century slave narratives as touched upon in the previous

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[14] Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, edited by Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, translated by Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: Continuum, 1997), p. 331.
[15] Matt Foley, 'The Horror of War', *The Gothic Imagination Blog*, 25 March (2009), <http://www.Gothic.stir.ac.uk/blog/The-Horror-of-War/> [accessed 12/04/2017].

chapter, I would suggest the same principles apply to the depiction of war. Teresa Goddu's description of the challenge facing the black author of narratives about slavery, of 'the difficulty of representing a Gothic history through Gothic conventions without collapsing the distinctions between fact and fiction', can be fruitfully explored in this context.[16] I do not believe that to explore the subjective experience in fiction, poetry or visual art, is necessarily to trivialise the reality. Adorno argued that the moral and physical response of repugnance to Auschwitz cannot be rationalised, and to try to do so serves no good purpose, but enacts the same instrumental thinking that led to the dehumanisation of thousands of victims: 'dealing discursively with it would be an outrage'.[17] I would suggest that the Gothic, as a genre that resists totalising rationality, and foregrounds the somatic, is well placed to depict such horrors. To insist upon an impermeable dichotomy between fact and fiction, to suggest that there is a quantifiable reality outside of human experience and narrative, is to privilege a distanced, rational and disembodied perspective – that dangerous reified consciousness. This study explores the fictional representation and the historical records as imbricated texts.

'Hans, are we the bad guys?' – normativity, national identity, and the Nazis

To situate this chapter's exploration of mid-twentieth century popular Gothic fictions within a contemporary constellation of ideas about queerness, the family, legality, and war, I want to turn to the 1952 United States *Congressional Select Committee Report on Current Pornographic Material*, which presents a complicated web of ideas about the economics of cultural production and the values of patriarchal society regarding sexuality, normativity, and artistic worth. This document provides a fascinating snapshot of the concerns of the governing class in America about popular culture's relationship with social change. The report states that the Select Committee's target was materials 'subversive of morals, allegiance or faith', and that which will 'exercise a debasing and degrading influence on susceptible youth'.[18] Though the title suggests that the Committee was focused on depictions of sex and sexuality, contemporary discussion of the terminology of the 'obscene' is highly revealing regarding wider ideas about normative behaviour and belief.

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[16] Teresa A. Goddu, *Gothic America, Narrative, History, and Nation* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 137.

[17] Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, translated by E. B. Ashton (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), p. 365.

[18] United States Congressional House, *Report of the Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials*, 82 Congress, 2nd Session, House Report 2510 (Washington D.C: Government Printing Office, 1952), p. 2.

A case for the broad interpretation of the obscene is made in Randolph Churchill's introduction to the British edition of Frederick Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent* (1955), regarding violence and sex in comic books:

> Those who have a correct knowledge of the English language would certainly regard horror comics as being obscene. Not so the English bench, the Law Officers of the Crown, and the Director of Public Prosecutions. […] If the magistrate or judge should prove to be so illiterate as to fail to punish the defendant.[19]

Churchill joins the Select Committee in disparaging commercial interests in the arts, whilst also seeking to support capitalist ideals about market forces: suggesting the need for a new law to 'confirm and guarantee the true freedom of the press while penalising those who seek money, whether in the Sunday Press or in the horror comic field, by gross depravity with no form of artistic or cultural pretension'.[20] These texts demonstrate the complicated intersections of government, judiciary, commerce, and culture in the attempts to establish an agreed upon 'normality' for the subject citizen.

Obscenity is a term implicitly linked to normativity, defined in the precedent-setting judgement 'United States vs. One Book Called *Ulysses* by James Joyce' (1934) as that 'tending to stir the sex impulses or to lead to sexually impure and lustful thoughts […] by the court's opinion as to its effect on a person with average sex instincts'.[21] This judgment was not popular with Select Committee members, who called it 'as elastic as rubber in its interpretative susceptibility […] and requires each and every book to be judged separately, an almost impossible task'.[22] Apart from asserting interesting assumptions about 'average sex instincts', to which I shall return later, this committee report directs readers' attention to the mass market, and the production capabilities of the modern entertainment industry. Profit margins are acknowledged as motivating the production and dissemination of sub-quality products: 'it stands to reason that no person or group of persons would continue to publish anything for which there is no market'.[23] Scorn is poured upon 'the products of commercial

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[19] Randolph S. Churchill, 'Introduction', in Frederic Wertham, *Seduction of the Innocent* (London: Museum Press, 1955), pp. vii-viii (p. viii).
[20] Ibid., p. viii.
[21] quoted in *Pornographic Materials*, p. 35.
[22] *Pornographic Materials*, p. 6.
[23] Ibid., p. 3.

exploitation, devoid of literary merit, and worthless as art or science'.[24] Though this suggests an anti-capitalist critique, the anti-socialist McCarthyism of the era allowed no proposed solution outside of its strictures; the market is the cause, but also the victim of pornography, which 'has become a serious menace to the social structure of the Nation' and '"a serious economic problem" for the legitimate publishers'.[25] The response to the *Ulysses* judgement from one Judge Goodman, included within the report, links the new media of the cinema particularly to capitalist exploitation: 'the filthy scatological portions are written in a bluntly different and distinct style […] the conclusion is justified that either the alleged literary ability of the author deserted him or that he had his eye on "the box office"'.[26] Setting aside the barbed use of 'alleged', Goodman makes clear the conceptual link between 'low media' and commercialism with the term 'box office'. The focus of the report is not the individual reader or text, but the broader social institutions and they norms they represent.

It is important to recognise how the normative (that which is held up as a standard) is separated from the normal (that which is statistically frequent); the ubiquity of mass media makes their products suspect, yet 'average' sexual instincts are to be lauded and defended. The average is never defined in these moralising texts, however, appropriate sexuality is overtly linked to the family and to the reproduction of white citizens throughout the report. As explored in previous chapters, the citizen subject of the Enlightenment philosophy that underpinned the founding of the American nation is a white man, and not in any way queer or disabled, because he must be productive in labour and in offspring. The very Constitution of the United States was composed by prominent Enlightenment thinkers who codified the lesser status of people of colour into the founding government of the nation. The 1952 report was compiled during the era in which racial segregation of public services had not yet been successfully challenged in the courts.[27] Eugenicist public health policies were regularly enacted against persons of colour, as well as those with hereditary physical and mental

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[24] Ibid., p. 3.
[25] Ibid.*,* p. 4.
[26] Ibid., p .9.
[27] Further, sexual rights were almost invisibly curtailed, as it was private rather than public actions that discriminatory laws targeted; it was not until 2003 that Supreme Court invalidated anti-sodomy laws with Lawrence *and* Texas, and it was in 2012 that the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission concluded that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 precludes discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation, though this has not been taken to the Supreme Court as yet.

disabilities.[28] Thus, this is an era in which whole swathes of the American population were not in fact 'average', but second-class citizens.

'Obscene' texts, I argue, are those that present a challenge to the value system that privileges white-supremacist heteronormativity by encouraging deviant reproduction and non-reproductive desire. This speaks to why powerful white male legislators were so concerned about obscenity, though conventional wisdom would suggest that they were the least likely people to be demeaned by pornographic productions, and the most likely to have their sexual preferences catered to by its content. Goodman opines that the acceptance of literature of a 'filthy scatological nature' endangers 'the dignity of the human person and the stability the family unit, which are the cornerstones of our system of society'.[29] The phrase 'human person' seems a tautology, but I suggest the report's language is a 'dog whistle': insinuating that 'person' and 'human' are not necessarily synonymous terms. The use of 'human person' seeks to discredit 'others' by reference to dehumanising ideologies, whilst maintaining a plausible deniability. There is, after all, a distinct inequality between those recognised as human and the subcategory of those declared to have full personhood under the law. The desires of, and for, those not considered full subjects and citizens – the queer, the disabled, and the racially other – are viewed as forms of miscegenation, considered dangerous, and must be suppressed.

Yet, to openly declare the producers and consumers of certain texts to be less than human would be to invite comparison to the Nazis, who had recently used this same language against sections of the European population, primarily Jewish citizens but also homosexuals, the disabled, and people of colour. It might seem counter-intuitive to suggest a link between ideas of cultural degeneracy and the fight *against* fascism; as Clare Hanson notes, 'we are not used to making connections between eugenics and the project of post-war reconstruction'.[30] In their cultural productions during, and since, the Second World War, the Allied Nations of Britain and America have sought to distance themselves from the cruelty and horror experienced in the concentration camps of the Third Reich. Though the lack of an overt regime in either Britain or the US for the categorisation and elimination of the 'other', as

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[28] See Nancy Ordover, *American Eugenics: Race, Queer Anatomy, and the Science of Nationalism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), and Randall Hansen and Desmond King, *Sterilized by the State: Eugenics, Race, and the Population Scare in Twentieth-Century North America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
[29] *Pornographic Materials*, p. 9.
[30] Clare Hanson, *Eugenics, Literature and Culture in Post-war Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 3.

implemented by the Nazis, provided a measure of plausible deniability to those who wished to present these nations in oppositional terms, these denials have been undermined. Recently, historians have asserted the profound influence of American and English eugenic practices and cultural segregation on Nazi Germany. [31] That the allied nations were not so very different from the Nazis in their treatment of their own citizens, or those of the countries they colonised, suggests that, faced with similar economic and cultural pressures, they might have enacted similar policies. The development, and the censorship, of Gothic fiction in the mid-twentieth century engages directly with tensions between the inclusive rhetoric of Western freedom, and the exclusive ideals upheld in American and British cultural identity that came to the fore in the cultural discourse around the war.

Thus, I argue, it is important to recognise that the Second World War and its aftermath as a profoundly Gothic influence for all citizens, not just those fighting on the front lines. The impact of conflict in the twentieth century is so great that scholars like Felman have suggested that it be termed a 'century of traumas […] and theories of trauma'.[32] Similarly, the influence and reach of Gothic fiction exploded into new media, reaching far greater audiences than ever before; it is in twentieth-century America that popular culture was first produced and disseminated on the industrial scale. One of the key tasks for this chapter is to set out the parameters for the twentieth century post-war Gothic text.

This chapter aims to bridge the seeming divide between the War Gothic, as envisaged by scholars such as Soltysik Monnet and Hantke, and the mainstream Gothic, particularly its manifestations in the pop culture of the comic book, pulp fiction and *film noir*, exploring the 'rich harvest of Gothic nightmares' seeded by the collective trauma of global war.[33] Post-war culture could no longer maintain an appropriate separation between that which haunts and that which is haunted, as Lucie Armitt notes:

> The real-life horror of two world wars takes over from the imagined horrors of the
> supernatural and/or superstition. […] Such is the length of shadow cast by world

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[31] See James Q. Whitman, *Hitler's American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017) and Edwin Black, *War Against the Weak: The Horrifying American Roots of Nazi Eugenics* (New York, NY: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2003); and Gerwin Strobl, *The Germanic Isle: Nazi Perceptions of Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
[32] Felman, p. 1.
[33] Soltysik Monnet and Hantke, 'Ghosts from the Battlefields', p. xvi.

events that tropes of haunting frame much of the twentieth-century literature of warfare.[34]

This focus on loss and haunting, however, does not take into account the disabled (monstrous) bodies that came home from the war, and were often figured as having brought the war home, or the traumatised on the so-called 'home front'. Although America, more so than those European nations involved in conflicts of the early-twentieth century, was able to construct a narrative in which the home nation and the physical location of the war were separated, this was not an accurate image. The Pearl Harbour attack brought active threat to the shores of the American continent; there were warships and refugee convoys docking at east coast ports, and the need to build and maintain war machines reshaped American industry. I therefore argue that the experiences of women and children, even those who never took part in combat or lived in the war zone, are war stories nonetheless. Thus, as we will see, domestic Gothic in pulp novels and comic books, aimed at women and children respectively, are post-war fictions, for an audience whose experiences and expectations have been re-shaped by conflict.

The 'Flagrantly Misnamed': comic books, communists, and cultural unity

The mid-twentieth century push towards cultural conservatism, as outlined above, was connected to ideas about the nation state and its ideal citizens. Of the censorship campaign in the UK targeting imported horror comics, Martin Barker suggests that the movement was 'not about the comics, but about the conception of society, children and Britain'.[35] Anti-comics campaigns in both the UK and USA used similar language against their targets, and much of their 'evidence' for the harm these publications were supposed to do came from the work of psychologist Frederic Wertham. Wertham frequently uses the term 'mental hygiene', with 'its essential meaning [having] to do with prevention', echoing overt ideas of social hygiene and other eugenicist expressions.[36] Eugenicist theories about inherent worth are tied to ideas of race but also of class, as Hanson's work explores, and this comes out in Wertham's text also: 'you'd be astonished at what these children from these good middle-class homes do nowadays', he reports a community leader saying.[37] To present any challenge to normativity

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[34] Lucie Armitt, *Twentieth Century Gothic* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p. 3.
[35] Martin Barker, *A Haunt of Fears: the Strange History of the British Horror Comics Campaign* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), p. 6.
[36] Frederic Wertham, *Seduction of the Innocent* (London: Museum Press, 1955), p. 3.
[37] Ibid., p. 12.

is to be labelled radical, as is recognised within the text itself: Wertham republishes critic Virgilia Peterson's declaration that "'the most controversial thing about Dr. Wertham's statements against comic books is the fact that anyone finds them controversial'".[38] The predominant concern is with the disruption of middle-class lifestyle norms.

For all the alarm about dangerous criminal acts, little concern is expressed for the victims of crime. This is revealed in a comment reported from the same concerned community leader: regarding the perpetrators of sexual violence against young girls, Peterson is quoted as saying "'one has to hush these things up as much as possible, but when it got too bad, of course, they were put away'".[39] The maintenance of community norms is more important than protecting the individual children. Wertham refers to 'modern mass delinquency', and suggests that crime is not only more widespread but also of a more serious nature than in previous eras – 'delinquencies formerly restricted to adults are increasingly committed by young people and children'.[40] Wertham, however, provides no evidence to support such allegations. As in the earlier degeneration debates, concern is expressed about the spread of undesirable traits, and this unease is grounded in fears about the fabric of society. Crime is a symbol of degeneracy, on the street and on the page.

That the campaigns chief concern is the social damage done by the comics is emphasised by Wertham's fleeting glances at their content, but sustained interest in their prevalence. The mass production of violent titles, and their domination and influence in juvenile markets, is described using language commonly deployed about immigration as Wertham depicts crime comics as a negative influence flooding society. Claiming that 'a crime comic book is printed in from 250,000 to 500,000 or more copies',[41] and tracing a rise in titles referencing crime and horror, he provides figures with no supporting evidence or sources. Wertham even admits 'as *Advertising Age* put it, "statistics in the comic book field are somewhat misleading"', but he does not provide a citation of the periodical in question for readers to follow up.[42] When Wertham engages with the content of the comics he takes panels and pages out of context, or relates basic plot outlines without nuance, whichever method of reading will best suit his purpose of discrediting the publication as having any artistic or moral worth. He even takes aim at educational comics, complaining that an adaptation of *Macbeth* is designed to resemble

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[38] Ibid., p. 16.
[39] Ibid., p. 13.
[40] Ibid., p. 25.
[41] Ibid., p. 24.
[42] Ibid., p. 29.

a crime comic as though this classic tale about terrible people becomes more corrupt in a new format, even as its plot and much of its language remains the same. The point, after all, was not the individual reader or comic, but what the genre might represent to or about an entire class of readers.

Despite his seemingly one-note view of reading practices and textual adaptations, Wertham is not blind to the divisions within society, as represented on the page or experienced by readers. He suggests that the home environment of under-privileged urban black children might make them more susceptible to crime comics than middle-class suburban children (whose race is assumed, but never explicitly stated, to be white), due to their proximity to problems of poverty, including drug abuse. While this ties into the degenerationist and eugenicist views about race and social class as predicting moral behaviour, Wertham is at least concerned about racist imagery on the page:

> The idea conveyed […] is that, there are fleeting transitions between apes and humans. I have repeatedly found in my studies that this characterisation of coloured people as subhuman, in conjunction with the depiction of forceful heroes as blond Nordic supermen, has made a deep […] impression on young children.[43]

It would be overly simplistic, then, to claim that Wertham acts in bad faith with all his readings. Even scholars critical of Wertham's methods, such as Carol Tilley, conclude that he had a 'genuine passion' for child welfare.[44] The inconsistencies he committed suggest that Wertham might sometimes be reporting second-hand on the comics' contents, rather than always drawing his own conclusions, as Barker also notices of British campaigners.

In America the social threat was depicted as predominantly class-based, with intersections of race and gender that were acknowledged but unexamined, but in the UK a Cold War-style invasion narrative developed. Ironically, as this narrative is often seen to be central to 'red scare' of the era's American b-movies, it was a narrative developed and propagated by the UK's own branch of the Communist Party. Barker reports that the whole issue of the official party journal, *Arena*, published after the 1951 Cultural Conference, 'is devoted to the American threat to British Culture, to all that is good and vital in our national tradition'.[45] The

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[43] Ibid., pp. 31-32.
[44] Carol L. Tilley, 'Seducing the Innocent: Fredric Wertham and the Falsifications That Helped Condemn Comics', *Information & Culture: A Journal of History*, 47.4 (2012), 383-413 (p. 407).
[45] Barker, *Haunt of Fears*, p. 21.

only variety offered by the culture of the USA, according to the reported conference speech of Peter Mauger, is in its depravity:

> It would be unfair to infer that the American-type comics deal solely in murder. These magazines, which boast of spreading the American way of life throughout the globe, also deal in sadism, whippings, torture, and a rather vulgar form of visual pornography.[46]

According to *Arena*'s reporting, the speakers at this conference made frequent reference to comics as representative of American culture, seeming to view the US as homogenized and unified, ignoring the local debates over violent comics as a sub-strata of a marginal form. British culture was, however, also depicted as unified, this time by a great historical tradition; Sam Aaronovitch claimed 'tradition has here become a thing of the past to which we must cling'.[47] This seems at odds with Marx's own declaration that 'the deadweight of the past hangs like a nightmare in the brains of the living': as Barker says, 'here were latter-day "Marxists" busily creating nightmares'.[48]

In promoting such unification, the terms of the debate were carefully separated from politics; not only did the Communist Party distance itself from promotional efforts, ensuring its symbols and representatives were absent from publicity, but the language of the campaign was judiciously chosen as well:

> "Heritage", "traditions" […] and the future are common property. […] They exist through undivided unity. […] Since the goal was to preserve something cultural, to safeguard an essential Englishness against outside corruption, […] the form and appearance of the campaign had to play on the unity of "our people" against this threat.[49]

Barker links this construction of a particular form of twentieth-century English identity directly to the cultural image of the war:

> There was an extremely powerful patterning of emotions and attitudes, much of it deriving from the Second World War […]. Already by the 1950s, […] the

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[46] Quoted in Barker, *Haunt of Fears*, p. 24.
[47] Quoted in Barker, Ibid., p. 22.
[48] Barker, *Haunt of Fears*, p. 22.
[49] Ibid., p. 26.

Dunkirk Spirit, and the Battle of Britain were becoming myths in the British consciousness […]. The war was being depoliticised into an opposition between the British spirit on one side; and, on the other, all things hostile to Britishness.[50]

This depoliticisation enables an image of national unity that was only possible by ignoring the influence and contributions of racial and religious minorities, and by excluding those who would not conform to 'the cultivation of mediocrity, of boredom, the deliberate and stifling maintenance of normality, conventional lack of passion' such as the queer.[51] In depoliticising the actual events of, and motivations for, the nation states involved in the war, the fact that Allied cultures shared eugenicist and exclusionary ideas with Axis cultures could be ignored, even as the same rhetoric informed these narratives of invasion and 'pollution' of post-war middle-class, white, homogenous family culture.

What these comics contain that so disturbed the middle classes, and caused fear of social disruption, is a challenge to traditional construct of the subject. One of the most effective tales of psychological horror, 'Whirlpool' (1953), deals with the fear of the power of institutionalised medicine, and the loss of subjectivity.[52] In a circular narrative, a young woman is questioned about who she is before being tortured but, seemingly rescued by a doctor, she finds she is a patient in an insane asylum and the 'tortures' are her interpretation of treatment. After this revelation, the doctors and nurses again start the questioning that opened the tale. As the vault-keeper narrator says 'right back where we started, eh? Round and round she goes, and where she stops who the devil cares?' The treatment designed to bring her out of dissociation is so traumatic that the memory causes more dissociation. This story cuts right to the heart of the Gothic experience, asking which is more horrible: to be left alone in a void of subjective experience that is untrue, or to experience an objective reality that can only be interpreted as torture, when the 'real' and the experiential are in conflict?

We see the medical process and experience it as many a patient must see it. Helplessly, she suffers what she knows are pointless, merciless, murderous assaults on what is left of her personality […]. No judgement is passed. But by

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[50] Ibid., p. 171.
[51] Ibid., p. 215.
[52] 'Vault of Horror' #32 (1953), Script: Albert B. Feldstein; Pencils and Inks: Johnny Craig; Colours: Marie Severin; Letters: Jim Wroten, in *Vault of Horror*, 4 vols. (West Plains, MI: Russ Cochran, 1981-82), IV.

using the woman's point of view it leaves me with a mindful of worries and queries.[53]

The parallels with real medical responses to 'hysteria', queerness, and forms of disability such as epilepsy, are all apparent; patients were tortured with electro-shock therapy and ice baths, the primary diagnostic criteria, as explored by Elaine Showalter, being their failure to conform to socially-mandated behavioural norms.[54]

Though many comics seemingly reinforced social ideals of submissive, beautiful women, and forthright and confident men in their imagery and plotting, many offered a challenge to the idea of the domestic home as a safe space, containing a cohesive family unit. One comic story vilified in these debates, 'The Orphan' (1954), has a twist ending revealing that a young girl has engineered the deaths of her abusive and neglectful parents so she can be adopted by her gentle aunt.[55] Horror, here, depends upon the surprise, the disruption of the preconceived idea that children are necessarily innocent. Tales like this, and '…So Shall Ye Reap!'(1953) – in which the reminiscences of a young man in the electric chair and his parents portray very different ideals of childhood – challenged family norms.[56] Thus Barker suggests that the hostility of the censors demonstrates an unwillingness to question the ideal of innocence, a refusal to acknowledge that this comic strip 'is in fact *about* the ideology of childhood' rather than about glorifying violence for shock tactics.[57] The choice of whiteness and femininity in the orphaned character must not be overlooked; Wertham was all too ready to believe that young black boys are capable of murder, so Lucy the orphan's presumed innocence is also about the idealisation of certain forms of white womanhood. These, and other, tales that came to the fore in the battle with the censors demonstrate the prejudices about bodily identity held by the middle-class social reformers, and the role that horror comics played in communicating to, and about, marginalised groups.

The Entertainment Comics bimonthly title *Shock Suspenstories* (1952-55) specialised in progressive political tales, tackling such subjects as the existence of the Klu Klux Klan

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[53] Barker, *Haunt of Fears*, p. 124.
[54] Elaine Showalter, *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Culture* (London: Picador, 1997)
[55] 'Shock Suspenstories' #14 (1954), Script: Albert B. Feldstein; Pencils and Inks: Jack Kamen; Colours: Marie Severin; Letters: Jim Wroten, in *Shock Suspenstories*, 3 vols. (West Plains, MI: Russ Cochran, 1981-82), III.
[56] 'Shock SuspenStories' #10 (1953), Script: Albert B. Feldstein and Bill Gaines; Pencils and Inks: Wally Wood, Colours: Marie Severin, Letters: Jim Wroten, in *Shock Suspenstories*, 3 vols. (West Plains, MI: Russ Cochran, 1981-82), II.
[57] Barker, *Haunt of Fears*, p. 160.

('Under Cover' #6), xenophobia ('The Patriots' #2, 'Confession' #4), racism and corruption within the police ('The Guilty' #3), and anti-Semitism ('Hate' #5) all in its first year. The managing editor at EC, William M. Gaines, was proud of the socially progressive messages he put out. He defended his publications by asking 'are we afraid of our own children? Do we forget that they are citizens too, and entitled to choose what to read or do?' asking if they are so 'simple minded that it takes a story of murder to set them to murder'.[58] However, his case was not helped by the fact that the business name of the company was Tiny Tot Comics, suggesting an audience for this fare that did not match his rhetoric. Barker suggests that comic critics aimed at the wrong targets because 'they were trapped in that assumption that things are horrible that *seem* horrible. And thus they could not pierce the darkness created by the *horrifying normality* of these narratives'.[59] Thus, the critics focus on the use of racial slurs, not the context. Yet, this analysis rather suggests that the critics would have been open to the progressive ideals had they been presented in a less 'horrible' manner or targeted at a mature audience. Though the ostensible reason for censoring the comics was the protection of children from corrupting influence, their content was often about recognising corruption, the true danger was that comics questioned the basis and implementation of the authority of powerful institutions and individuals.

These are tales about what and who is being judged as deviant by society, and thus were, almost inevitably, judged themselves as deviant narratives. 'The Whipping' (1954) was a tale brought into evidence at the senate hearings before the sub-committee to investigate Juvenile Delinquency, during the 83rd Congress. Wertham himself testified regarding the comic's use of racial slurs, yet he failed to note they are used only by the villains in a story that presents a lynching as an inherently horrible event, even before the victim is revealed to be a white woman in the twist ending deemed necessary by the format. The language and imagery of the 'The Whipping' in places powerfully echoes the work of Ralph Ellison and Richard Wright, utilising the same ideas of racism 'haunting' the American cultural imagination and history:

> And when they started to appear … the others … the angry men […] their
> bedsheet costumes, white and pure […] like this white and pure thing they were
> about to do […]. They moved through the deserted streets, like ghosts … phantom

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[58] Congressional testimony quoted in Bradford W. Wright, *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), p. 167.
[59] Barker, *Haunt of Fears*, p. 205.

figures on a phantom mission. For isn't the basis of most hatred and intolerance but fantasy? […] the conceptions out of darkness of those who would throw us *into* darkness as these men now probe in darkness.[60]

The alignment of terror and evil with whiteness and purity is a shocking challenge to the traditional iconographies. Horror of the treatment of the 'other', and the potential for horror behind the preconceptions of normativity is, as explored in the last chapter, fundamental to the development of the Gothic. The horrors of structural disenfranchisement and dehumanisation that are often displaced onto the bodies of privileged white women, were now also being realistically portrayed as contemporary social ills.

Horrifying Normality: the Modernist Gothic of pulp fiction

The potential for reshaping society though media was not simply decried as negative by powerful voices, but was harnessed by governments. Pulp fiction, in paperback as well as comic and magazine formats, had great cultural reach in the first half of the twentieth century. Paperbacks were distributed to American soldiers by the Council on Books in Wartime, issued as special Armed Services Editions in conjunction with Office of War Information. Paula Rabinowitz links these efforts with other forms of '"social engineering" through military health campaigns promoting inoculation, and industry alliances promoting personal hygiene'.[61] As Rabinowitz notes, 'the council on Books in Wartime appeared to be a thoroughly apolitical entity, an effort organised by the cultural and literary elite in New York, America's publishing centre, to aid the war effort'.[62] Yet, its posters in schools and libraries depicted book burnings as negative events, with the tagline: 'books are weapons in the war of ideas'. Further, it sent out lists of 'Imperative Books' to libraries, produced the NBC programme 'Words at War', and distributed promotional banners with 'books like these were burned in the slave countries', as its members spoke out against the censorship of novels like Lillian Smith's *Strange Fruit* (1944). The cultural worth of the book was tied not only into ideals of class and social improvement, but to the values – predominantly liberty and equality – espoused in the Allies' propaganda.

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[60] 'Shock SuspenStories #14' (1954), Script: Albert B. Feldstein; Pencils and Inks: Wally Wood; Colours: Marie Severin; Letters: Jim Wroten, in *Shock Suspenstories*, 3 vol. (West Plains, MI: Russ Cochran, 1981-82), III.
[61] Paula Rabinowitz, *American Pulp: How Paperbacks Brought Modernism to Main Street* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 109.
[62] Ibid., pp. 108-109.

The high-cultural value of the book form had long been established, thus critics of pulp fiction in paperback form had to carefully delineate their objections to the content. In criticism addressing the new technologies of television and film the medium was often considered the message – viewed solely as industrial productions of dangerous ideology, rather than simply as mediums of artistic and creative expression – even before the idea became codified by Marshall McLuhan. However, as McLuhan says, the medium 'creates an environment by its mere presence', a new physical form restructures society around it as consumption habits change and new demographics are recognised.[63] The new paperbacks and cheap magazines were books for airports and terminals, to be read on public transport: as Rabinowitz describes, 'a lowly yet somehow revered object, the paperback book […] was designed for maximum portability and could move seamlessly from private to public spaces'.[64] Ordered by post and arriving in anonymous packaging, they could be easily fitted into the pocket of a jacket. Though these attributes were not in and of themselves suggestive of subversive content or behaviours, they enabled the same; anyone could send away for books on any topic, and have them delivered privately to home, office, or post office box.

As the production of paper goods grew progressively cheaper, so the breadth of access to forms of literature and authorship steadily increased. Megan Benton has explored the changing role of the book as a marker of cultural identity specific to the 1920s, from an expensive 'agent and emblem of the cultivated intellect, soul, and life' to more of a status marker of 'one's wealth, education, and leisure'.[65] The concerns expressed around paperback genre fictions echo those of the Romantic era regarding women's authorship, and reading practices: 'it is a commonplace to say that nowadays everyone thinks he can write a book. It is a book writing age'.[66] A letter to the editor of the *New York Times* repeats the same faint praise offered to romance readers in 'On the Good Effects of Bad Novels' in the *Lady's Monthly Museum* (1798): 'it is a healthy sign that these magazines flourish. They are constantly recruiting book lovers out of the ranks of the illiterate movie fans, for they foster reading habits which, it is safe to assume, afterward crave better fare'.[67] The same concerns are thus expressed about the influx of authors, readers, and subjects from the ranks of those

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[63] Marshal McLuhan, *Understanding Media: the Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1994 [1964]), p. 8.
[64] Rabinowitz, p. 4.
[65] Margaret Benton, '"Too Many Books": Book Ownership and Cultural Identity in the 1920s', *American Quarterly*, 49.2 (1997), 268-297 (p. 268). DOI: 10.1353/aq.1997.0013
[66] Michael Joseph, *The Commercial Side of Literature* (New York, NY: Harper and Brothers, 1926), p. 2.
[67] *New York Times*, Wednesday, 22 March (1933), p. 16.

who were previously considered targets for improving works, or were assumed to be illiterate. Repeatedly, when social concern about new forms and formats is raised, the Gothic subgenres are the primary target for censure as seen from the first-wave Gothic novel to the comic book.

In the critiques of pulp, we see colonial ideas resurface. Margaret MacCullen's article 'Pulps and Confessions' (*Harper's Magazine*, 1937) draws on the same stereotypes regarding racial difference in intellectual and moral development as the *Pall Mall Gazette* referenced in the last chapter:

> It is not pleasant to think of the immature minds and mature appetites that feed on such stuff as their staple fodder, but there is no ducking the fact that sensationalism is the age old need of the uneducated. The steady reader of this kind of fiction is interested in and stirred by the same things that would interest and stir a savage.[68]

This language was used by the Select Committee: 'the so-called pocket-size books, which originally started out as cheap reprints of standard works, have largely degenerated into media for the dissemination of artful appeals to sensuality, immorality, filth, perversion, and degeneracy'.[69] Thus, though pulp is often viewed primarily as a Modernist mode, rather than Gothic, there are significant parallels in both their content and reception as genre fictions.

Just as the body that represents contagion and disfigurement must be excluded from the mainstream society, and from the family home, so too must material that might perform the same corrupting role. David M. Earle, acknowledging the arguments of Patrick Brantlinger, suggests that this reconstituted Gothic threat of degeneration 'resulted in an attitude of literary eugenics on the part of the critics'.[70] Of the 'eugenic anti-pulp and anti-paperback diatribes', Earle notes a 'tone of hysteria, a fear of literary fecundity'.[71] For example, Marcus Duffield writes, in 'The Pulps: Day Dreams for the Masses' (*Vanity Fair*, 1933);

> They swarm over the newsstands […] into this underworld of literature most of us never dive unless, like Mr. Hoover's Committee on Recent Social Trends, we are

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[68] Quoted in David M. Earle, *Re-Covering Modernism: Pulps, Paperbacks, and the Prejudice of Form* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016 [2009]), p. 88.
[69] *Pornographic Materials*, p. 3.
[70] Earle, *Re-covering Modernism*, p. 90.
[71] Ibid., p. 94.

curious about the reading preferences of those who move their lips when they read.[72]

Likewise, Paul Boyer quotes H. W. Van Loon describing the pulps in 1924 as: 'a putrid stream of the most despicable, the most iniquitous, and on the whole the most dangerous form of a degraded variety of literature'.[73] As in the criticism of the comic books, concerns about the popularity of the publications is expressed in the same language as racist anti-immigration diatribes, and condescending concern for the intellectual ability of the average reader.

The language of degeneration, and eugenicist ideas about race and the body, come together in these critiques. This is particularly evident in Malcolm Cowley's *The Literary Situation* (1954), where the bookselling spaces Cowley explores, and the readers he observes, are coded as 'foreign' and immigrant, which echoes earlier journalistic colonial adventurers. Earle, in his observation that 'there is something slightly noxious about [Cowley's] descriptions', recognises the traces of the Gothic.[74] It is therefore unsurprising that Earle himself uses the same discourse of infection and environmental dis-ease to add another lens, in a Gothic doubling in the critique:

> The picture that Cowley paints of the lower masses that feed upon the paperback is one of slovenly, alcoholic, fecund illiterates who cannot tell the difference between Sartre and Spillane, and the evil of paperbacks is that they don't draw such defining lines themselves.[75]

There is a repeated slippage between author, reader, and character in these discussions, as though one too easily becomes another; the 'other' is creating its own literature, depicting their interiority, and demonstrating subjectivity. When the boundaries between the subject and the object are overthrown, the potential for queerness and miscegenation is raised; the othered are reproducing.

In these debates, we can perhaps hear echoes of eighteenth-century debates about worth inhering in particular bodies; the location of moral and cultural value within embodied identities is central to the critique that the Gothic can offer. However, Modernist authors have been critiqued for their difficulties reconciling bodily identity with an investment in

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[72] Quoted in Earle, p. 94.
[73] Paul Boyer, *Purity in Print*: *Book Censorship in America from the Gilded Age to the Computer Age*, Revised Edition (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), p. 155.
[74] Earle, p. 154.
[75] Ibid., p. 155.

Enlightenment rational intellect. Rationality, as Adorno argued, is disembodied intellect, a supposed objectivity unmarred by reference to the potentially emotional and embodied perspective. Yet the experiences of living cannot be disconnected from the body. As David Ayers notes of Wyndham Lewis, 'the Aryan self, which notably never attains any sense of reality in Lewis' work […] if realised would represent true malehood and true national identity'.[76] Ayers thus claims that European Modernist rhetoric of selfhood is

> founded upon an absent centre, is the product of a psychological and political defensiveness of the essentially middle-class subject perceiving itself to be threatened by social change, forever poised before potential déclassement. […] Lewis' defence of the self is ultimately a defence of the privilege of intellect which leads him down a philosophical cul-de-sac, aspiring to stand 'Beyond Action and Reaction' in the no-man's land of the self, outside history and society.[77]

Within the philosophical systems underpinning post-Enlightenment normativity, to acknowledge that a white man has a bodily identity, a racial identity, is to acknowledge that he is not a putative norm, and undermines his special alignment with superior rationality. Lewis's work, Ayers argues, 'makes visible the essentially defensive nature of the movement to nationalist and anti-Semitic thought arising from anxieties about the nature of the self and society'.[78] Though Ayers views these anxieties as being rooted in the First World War and its aftermath, this thesis attempts to trace their roots further back. Post-Enlightenment rationality, in all its forms explored by the Gothic critique, I suggest, is like the European high Modernist movement, 'in defense of the self, racially organised around the concept of the "Western Man"'.[79]

Even Gothic Modernism is often seemingly ill-equipped to address its own concerns about the cultural position of white men and their lived experience. Rabinowitz notes that T. S. Eliot, working with Gothic forms in *The Waste Land* (1922),

> disparaged the 'unreal city' full of immigrants, workers, and prostitutes leading tawdry lives […]. His characterisation of the streets influenced subsequent literary

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[76] David Ayers, *Wyndham Lewis and Western Man* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), p. 220.
[77] Ayers, pp. 221-222.
[78] Ibid., p. 222.
[79] Ibid., p. 217.

criticism, which cast high-Modernist texts in an agonistic struggle to reclaim cultural authority from the unwashed masses.[80]

Those who are too visible, through their difference to the ideal Western man, are also too emotional; they are unreal, non-subjects, yet are also somehow almost too real, as they are too present. The body is brought into focus by the revelation of its vulnerability, demonstrated through its damage and disability, and its sexuality; its 'tawdry' reality. Modern technology is often explored in these texts as, in part, having created this awareness and this damage, through science and warfare, even as it also offers the solution through prosthesis and automation. Following Hal Foster, Earle also argues that part of the Modernist mission is to re-create 'the body', 'to re-create humanity, and specifically masculinity that had been destroyed/emasculated by first industrialisation and then the wholesale slaughter of World War I'.[81] Earle notes in the 'use of the body as a site of modernity's tensions by the Modernists, especially Marinetti and Wyndham Lewis, and the pulps […] the dichotomy of simultaneous fascination and abhorrence marks both the Modernist and pulp war fiction alike'.[82] In addition to all the recent scholarship on pulp fiction as a quintessential Modernist form, I argue that it is essential to note that those writings that critique the masculinist formula, and explore embodied identity, use the Gothic to do so.

Imitation of Life: monstrosity, romance, and domesticity

From depictions of the physical and psychological horrors of war itself, to the claustrophobic labyrinths of Cold War politics, post-war pulp fiction is intensely Gothic. The spy thriller and action stories obviously stem from conflict, but I argue that the rise in domestic Gothic fiction and Gothic romances set in castles and manor houses, aimed at a female readership, directly relates to women's experience of war and post-war society. In America, heightened prosperity led to increasing racial ghettoization in the inner-cities through 'white flight', and the promotion of a nuclear family model for white suburban households in which women were also disenfranchised as housewives dependent upon male earning potential. The civil rights and feminist movements of the mid-to-late twentieth century were, in many ways, the result of the changes brought about in a post-war society. In both America and Britain, women had been encouraged to return to the home, to give up jobs held during war-time, for the de-

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[80] Rabinowicz, p. 31.
[81] Earle, p. 132.
[82] Ibid., p. 132.

mobilised, male troops. Pulp fiction was as much an escapist mode for women as it was for men; one American woman wrote to a publisher, 'if you know how bored I get looking after two small children, doing housework, and seeing the same old neighbours day after day, you'd understand what a god-send your inexpensive books have been'.[83] Though much of the cultural output aimed at women in this period encouraged them to develop traditionally domestic interests, to be deferential to men, and to view their own interests and needs as inherently less important, the Gothic remained a liminal space in which these ideas could be challenged and explored.

Critical concentration on pulp has traditionally focused on hard-boiled and detective genres, privileging men and men's interests in subgenres that, as Earle says, 'most approach the obvious dynamics of Modernism', yet romance and true confessions titles outsold these forms regularly.[84] As scholars such as Rabinowitz note, the covers and content of the pulps aimed at both female and male readerships often depicted women as threatened or in peril:

> [T]he iconography of danger, especially for the female, is essential to conveying urban space as a zone of criminality [but likewise] the exposé covers […] depict domestic space as a zone of mayhem […]. They show how the startled look of the woman, either interrupted in her crime or frozen as its victim, is part of the iconography that both enabled and was enabled by modern woman's mobility.[85]

The implied threat was not always traditional patriarchal violence, tacitly acknowledged in previous popular forms of the Gothic: women were now increasingly depicted as combatants, as they advanced into traditionally male spaces. In *film noir* women beat men at their own game: in the boardroom in *Mildred Pierce* (Michael Curtiz, 1945), and as double agents and criminals in *Out of the Past* (Jacques Tourneur, 1947) and *Detour* (Edgar G. Ulmer, 1945). However, as Rabinowitz notes, violence and competition were not limited to male-dominated fields outside the home: 'typically, in the post-war movie and fiction plot, the domestic front appears almost as violent and unstable as the combat zone'.[86] This tension, developing in the

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[83] Richard J. Crohn, 'Good Reading for the Millions', in *The Wonderful World of Books*, edited by Alfred Stefferud (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1953), pp. 203-207 (p. 204). This letter was a popular example for promoting the benefits of mass literacy, also reported in Bertha Gaster 'A Coin in the Slot – and Out Pops Plato: the amazing growth of pocket books', *The UNESCO Courier*, 10.2 (1957), 22-23, cont. 34 (p. 34); and *Adult Reading*: *The Fifty Fifth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, part II (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 256.
[84] Earle, p. 78.
[85] Rabinowitz, pp. 13-14.
[86] Ibid., p. 140.

women's film, pulp and noir, reached a Gothic apotheosis in *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane* (Robert Aldrich, 1962).

Whereas the violent expression in most domestic Gothic literalised patriarchal aggression, Aldrich's film explores the violence that women do to each other in order to navigate and compete in a system that only values them in their youth. As a child, 'Baby Jane' Hudson (Judy Allred) is visually the epitome of innocence, the white female child, and her performances are intimately bound up with an image of the family that centres on patriarchy and a particular model of heterosexuality. Jane's greatest hit as a child is her performance of 'I've Written a Letter to Daddy', a song that stylistically echoes Cole Porter's 'My Heart Belongs to Daddy' (1938), the lyrics of which overtly sexualise the paternal relationship. In the Hudson family the father holds all the decision-making power, but their financial worth is invested in the daughters, first Jane and then Blanche. Their father rewards Jane's ability to earn, allowing her to dictate her wants above those of other family members. Although, as an adult, Blanche (Joan Crawford) seems to have escaped the domestic sphere through her acting career, the dynamics of competition and envy between women drag her down; she is paralysed in an automobile collision that she intended for Jane instead. The sisters' relationship to each other is entirely based around competition for the attentions of men, starting with their father, and influence over their limited household. Thus, culturally normative, though not necessarily usual, relationship models are exaggerated in their negative effects; they demonstrate how patriarchal sexual norms trap women within a suburban family dynamic that is just as competitive and cut-throat as any mob hierarchy or business empire.

The Gothic ruins in *Baby Jane* are the bodies, and more specifically the faces, of its leading ladies. The division between the idealised forms of the innocent little girl and the sexual young woman who have the illusion of power and choice, and the bodies of older and disabled women, who deal daily with their powerlessness and invisibility, is marked in the film. Aging Jane (Bette Davis) wears exaggerated make-up that mimics the beauty markers of her youth – rouged cheeks, light complexion, long lashes – but applied in a manner that draws attention to both the artificiality of the paint, and the aging of the wrinkled and sagging skin underneath. The home that the two women share is a large, plain and, externally, fairly normative villa. Blanche remains within her upstairs bedroom, or boudoir; what was once an intimate space, figured as the location of her powers as a sex symbol, is now a prison she cannot leave in her wheelchair. Like the women themselves, their home's interior surfaces and decorations hark back to earlier eras, with wall sconces, Victorian furniture, and wrought

iron scroll work. These sisters and their Gothic drama are depicted as out of time, compared to the contemporary styling of their neighbour and her daughter in their capri pants, which perhaps implies that the contemporary audience were 'safe' and insulated from the horror of an unenlightened past of restrictive gender norms – yet the Gothic threat always returns.

By the mid-twentieth century the generic *mise-en-scène* of the Gothic castle, with its heavy draperies and candle-light, became increasingly associated with the newly redefined historical romance – meaning a love story in an historical setting, rather than an adventure in the style of Walter Scott – yet never shedding its intimation of darkness and violence. In many ways this is a return to the roots of the genre, the Gothic Romance. Tracing the genre history of the Gothic Romance, Joseph Crawford notes that the modern conception of romantic fiction does not coalesce as a genre until the 1920s and 1930s.[87] In the 1960s a Gothic mansion as the backdrop to the image of an attractive young woman became the standard cover image of innumerable pulp romance novels, just as the dark Victorian street, poorly lit and haunted by a lone individual, became a standard cover design for pulp crime fiction. In horror cinema, the heroes and heroines' propensity to meet with danger in such settings became the basis for camp humour in films like *Carry on Screaming* (Gerald Thomas, 1966) and the Abbott and Costello parodies. The implication, in both forms of media, is that the choice to enter the mansion or walk the back streets at night leads inevitably to a Gothic experience. The self-referential trope, of recognising oneself as a Gothic heroine and acting accordingly, dates back to Catherine Morland in *Northanger Abbey* (1817). However, in the twentieth-century reconfiguration, the contextual significance of the literature of the past is often stripped away to develop a new perspective on the genre of Gothic Romance. As Crawford notes, these tales often effect 'a sort of ritualised absolution of the traditional Gothic villain'.[88] Reinforcing the agency of the individual woman is, in this iconography, substituted for an exploration of the systemic pressures and limitations placed on women culturally, in order to maintain the illusion that the normative is ultimately safe.

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[87] Joseph Crawford, *The Twilight of the Gothic?: Vampire Fiction and the Rise of the Paranormal Romance* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014), p. 39.
[88] Ibid., p. 46.
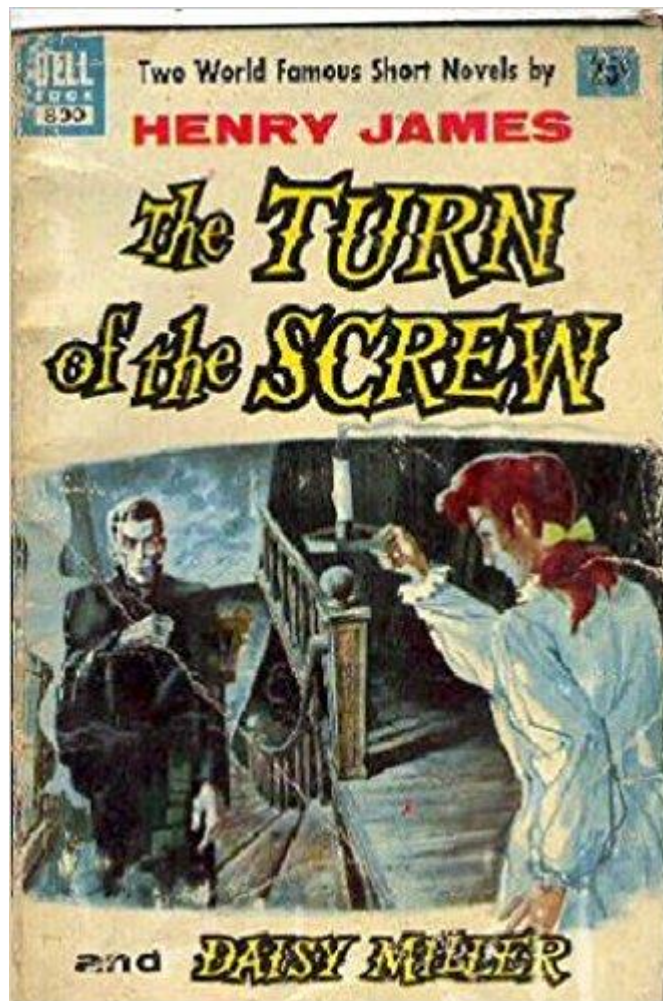
Figure 2: Cover Illustration by Walter Brooks, *Turn of the Screw and Daisy Miller*, Henry James (New York, NY: Dell, 1954)

Paperback publishers were repackaging older texts about the violence of the domestic space as though they were love stories that supported normative models of patriarchal power relations. *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) were packaged alongside the pulp of publishers like Ace, Signet, and Pan. Placing *Wuthering Heights* alongside the contemporary romance stories, published by imprints such as Avon Gothic, suggested that its plot and central theme is similarly romantic – that its monsters should be absolved. This reformulation is central to the Hollywood adaptation of 1939, and the television adaptations in the 1950s and 60s, by CBS and the BBC, which focus on the dynamics between Cathy, Heathcliff, and Linton, without depicting the damage done to the younger generation. The pulp repackagings are designed to lead the reader in their encounter with the text; for example, the cover for the 1954 Dell edition of *The Turn of the Screw*, drew on the modern horror film stylistically (see fig. 2). The image depicts the governess

encountering Quint, who resembles a cross between the looming threat of Karloff as the Mummy and Lugosi's pale and sinister Dracula. Even the title font echoes the style of Universal horror fare. The ghost in James's tale is thus made concrete, the ambiguity surrounding the children's role is thus lessened. However, this is not to suggest that the narratives themselves were necessarily read as the new covers suggested: as proposed by Janice Radway, there is a difference between 'the event of reading and the meaning of the text constructed as its consequence'.[89] The repositioning of *Wuthering Heights* as a romance in popular culture occurred alongside a de-queering of monsters such as Dracula, as I explore next, reflecting an attempt to 'defang' the Gothic's critique of the patriarchal family model, just as the 'Angel of the House' Victorian model was revived as an archetype for the mid-twentieth century nuclear family, particularly in America.

The transformation of Bram Stoker's vampiric Count serves as a highly visible case study of the transformation of the monstrous threat, from queer other to a romantic anti-hero. In 1931 Bela Lugosi's performance cemented an iconic image of the cinematic vampire in Anglo-American popular culture as a dapper and seductive figure. The threat posed by Lugosi's Dracula is overtly sexual and arguably queer, as he looms over both prone Renfield and supine Mina in their bedrooms. The depiction aligns with the source novel, in which Dracula declares Jonathan Harker to 'belong' to him, and Harker himself feels 'strange things which I dare not confess to my own soul' after meeting the Count.[90] Incest is also suggested in the novel, through the seductions of the three 'sisters' who accost Harker; though described in a manner insinuating a familial relationship – 'two were dark, and had high aquiline noses, like the Count, and great dark, piercing eyes'[91] – yet, having been seduced by the Count in the same manner as Lucy and Mina, these characters are often referred to in adaptations as Brides of Dracula. Ideas of incest, polyamory and same-sex desire are thus suggested in the novel and on screen, but never overtly depicted. However, by the time Lugosi returned to play the Count in *Abbott and Costello meet Frankenstein* (1948), the plot of which is no more ridiculous than the previous Universal monster amalgams, the genre already looked out-of-date. The opera cape soon became synonymous with camp, through characterisations such as Grandpa Sam Dracula (Al Lewis) of *The Munsters* sitcom (1964-66). By mid-century this

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[89] Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (London: Verso, 1987), p. 7.
[90] Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, ed. by Maurice Hindle (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 25.
[91] Ibid., p. 44.

iconic monster was transformed, partially, from a potentially infectious and corrupting queer, to a family member.

The changing representation of the monster thus echoes changes in the social understanding of queerness and difference, from moral corruption to mental illness. Peter Biskind suggests that, in thriller *Panic in the Streets* (Elia Kazan, 1950), when we see the substitution of 'illness for crime, and cure for punishment. […] It was one of the first films of the 'therapeutic society'.[92] Yet, this rather ignores the long history of psychiatry represented within Gothic cinema, from Dr Seward's failure to help Renfield, to Dracula's daughter's inability to follow the instruction of her psychiatrist. The relationship between the medical diagnosis and heredity is also made clear, as Harry Benshoff notes, 'in the mid-to-late 1930s, Universal's classic monsters had ostensibly taken *Brides* and had *Sons* and *Daughters*; in the 1940s they set up several *Houses* together'.[93] Films such as *Dracula's Daughter* (Lambert Hillyer, 1936) and *House of Dracula* (Erle C. Kenton, 1945), their plots revolving around psychiatric attempts to cure monstrosity, suggest that abnormality is not a choice, but an imposed medical condition that the monsters have to endure in an unforgiving society. Thus, monstrous representation in film echoes the psychiatric and medical advice available to homosexual and disabled patients, and especially to their parents.

According to Benshoff, by the early twentieth century the origin of homosexuality was popularly understood to be within the home: 'most psychoanalysts placed the etiology of homosexuality within the parent-child unit'.[94] Medical texts and advice manuals tended towards eugenicism as the family is, once again, positioned as potentially the source and the cure for abnormality; the medical advice published for parents focuses on 'how to avoid producing homosexual offspring'.[95] The advice promotes the idea of proscribed gender roles in parenting, drawing on psychiatric models that understood homosexual object choice in terms of gender 'inversion' as developed in the late-nineteenth century. The advice to parents to perform normativity for their children parallels the advice given to parents to 'give up' their disabled children, to have them incarcerated within an institution, before having more children. A popular American parenting manual by Dr Walter Sackett suggested that the

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[92] Peter Biskind, *Seeing is Believing: How Hollywood Taught Us to Stop Worrying and Love the 50s* (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), p. 21.
[93] Harry M. Benshoff, *Monsters in the Close: Homosexuality and the Horror Film* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 89.
[94] Ibid., p. 32.
[95] Ibid., pp. 32-33.

presence of a child with Downs Syndrome 'in the home tends to jeopardize the normal relationships between husband and wife, and their relations with other children'.[96] The practice of removing disabled children from the public realm began to be common during the degeneration panic of the *fin de siècle*, in which era the British government enacted the Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act of 1893, and the updated Defective and Epileptic Children Act of 1899. Though these acts ensured provision of schooling or 'facilities' suitable for disabled children, the location of these facilities did not have to be local to the families of the children concerned. Yet, the Act determined that 'it shall be the duty of the parent of any child who may be required by the school authority to be examined to cause the child to attend such examination', and failure to comply made them liable 'on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five pounds'.[97] This was, in effect, a licence to remove 'defective' children from their homes, into the newly widespread network of residential schools. The cultural focus is on maintaining the appearance of normativity, performing a normalcy that is supposed to be inherent but was often, in reality, absent. Sackett, echoing advice from the same era, suggested that physical 'malformations are becoming rarer every year', a 'problem' to be solved by modern medicine.[98]. Sackett suggests that his programme will restore 'the spirit of the colonists', and even defeat communism.[99] The family continues to be central to the vision of unified national cultures in Anglo-American post-war society, but once again the 'natural' family must be created by political and medical intervention.

The role of Gothic horror in the immediate post-war period has often been characterised as inherently conservative, presenting the audience with a need for social and political unity. Caitlin R. Kiernan suggests that:

> So much of horror has been given over to the business of defending middle-class
> Suburbia from its own guilty nightmares, sitcom Good and Evil, Stoker's
> Company of Light on riding lawnmowers. The protection of a way of life as
> vampiric and ultimately soulless as anything that Irishman ever imagined.[100]

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[96] Dr. William W. Sackett Jr., *Bringing Up Babies: A Family Doctor's Guide to Practical Child Care* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 259.
[97] Defective and Epileptic Children Act of 1899, section 1.4, p. 115.
[98] Sackett, p. 20.
[99] Ibid., p. xvii.
[100] Caitlin R. Kiernan, 'Afterword', in *Self Made Man*, by Poppy Z. Brite (London: Orion, 1999), pp. 173-180 (pp. 175-176).

Yet, as Mark Jancovich notes:

> In the fiction of Ray Bradbury and Richard Matheson, the films of Jack Arnold, and many of the films produced by AIP and its rivals, there is a recurring preoccupation with alienation, isolation and estrangement. In these texts, it is the norms of American life that become strange […] while the outsiders are presented as victims. In this way, these texts examine the dilemmas of those who are unable or unwilling to 'fit in' and so challenges the notions of 'normality' associated with the 1950s.[101]

This focus on isolation echoes the preoccupations of many major genres of pulp fiction also, with popular narrative themes of social deviance, disenfranchised ex-soldiers, and disillusioned private investigators. These novels, often written in the first person, were published alongside paperback editions of psychological and sociological works; authors like Sigmund Freud appeared in the same bindings as pulp fiction. There was a great deal of popular interest in the formation of the modern subject, couched in scientific and pseudo-scientific objectivity, and Gothic popular fiction provided a space to explore alternative subjective perspectives.

Narratives about the newly identified serial killer explored the idea of danger hiding in plain sight, as the popularity of the term 'psychopath' rose in both the professional psychiatric terminology and in popular culture. *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960), *The Boston Strangler* (Richard Fleischer, 1968), and *10 Rillington Place* (Richard Fleischer, 1971) drew for their horror on the very real activities of identified and captured murderers who had 'passed' as normative subjects. The same pattern of thematic change, towards normative settings and characters, can be seen in literature. The preeminent pulp magazine of science-fiction and horror that had launched authors such as H. P. Lovecraft, *Weird Tales*, ceased publishing in 1954. Popular tales of the macabre, by authors such as Shirley Jackson and Ira Levin, were increasingly set in the world of the normative middle-class household and wider suburban landscape. I argue that this suggests the horror genre was ready to embrace more straightforward examples of heteropatriarchal excess in terms of sexuality and violence.

When the vampiric Count returned to cinematic horror, as in European films *Dracula* (Terence Fisher, 1958) and *Count Dracula* (Jesús Franco, 1970), the theme of titillating

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[101] Mark Jancovich, *Rational Fears: American Horror in the 1950s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 3.

sexuality revived with debonair Christopher Lee in the starring role. Previous films having explored the integration of the monstrous within the family, Lee's Dracula returns to the lone predator model. These later films are relentlessly heteronormative; the objectification of the leading ladies in Hammer films was as much, if not more, of an attraction as the monster. Thus, the rise of the serial killer and psychopath as villains, and the return of Dracula, I suggest, are indicative of a post-war interest in Gothic fictions exploring, even exploiting, male violence, particularly against women.

Monsters and Masculinities for the Modern Era

I suggest that the image of men suffering under the ideals of normativity, through the social programmes instituted in schools, in colleges, on sports pitches and parade grounds as outlined in chapter three, underpins the Hollywood reconstruction of the great nineteenth-century Gothic monsters. Michael Roper suggests that a 'key consequence of the critique of manliness in the war literature', is 'an altered sense of men's place within patriarchal power […] what emerges from the war literature is a view of men primarily as victims'.[102] Roper suggests that previous studies of the effect of war on perceptions of men and masculinity focus on social ideals, expressed in official publications from public actors and medical professionals. Roper's study of men's life writings resists the idea that normative statements can be taken as evidence of subjectivity, and recognises the multiplicity of masculinities on offer: 'what emerges [is] a view of masculinity as a process in which social scripts are negotiated, one on another, within the self'.[103] Just as the memoir writers were engaged in a process of 'continuing identification with, as well as distancing from, the social codes of "manliness"',[104] I suggest that, so too were the makers of Gothic horror. Roper notes that the mechanised horrors of twentieth-century warfare have been addressed by critics as a disruption to nineteenth-century ideas and ideals of masculinity. Yet, in addressing the disruption to the norm, critics have not explored how this also disrupted the idea of the monster, which is always created in opposition to normativity.

The reconfiguration of men, as victims of the norms of patriarchy not only its enactors and beneficiaries, acknowledges those unable or unwilling to live up to the hegemonic masculine

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[102] Michael Roper, 'Between Manliness and Masculinity: The "War Generation" and the Psychology of Fear in Britain, 1914-1950', *Journal of British Studies*, 44 (2005), 343-362 (p. 360).
[103] Ibid., p. 360.
[104] Ibid., p. 360.

ideal. Explored as high art by dramatists such as Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller in this period, the pulp iteration of this theme appears in traditional horror cinema and *film noir* depicting the effects of the war on the returning soldiers. Though Soltysik Monnet and Hantke briefly mention the figure of the returning veteran in other formats, they particularly consider these genres 'prime formats for creating visions of the veteran as a Gothic figure of repression and its violently eruptive failure […] a figure of troubling violence'.[105] This is a reading echoed in Benshoff's exploration of the veteran as a source of disruption and danger in the horror cinema of the 1930s. Benshoff draws out the cultural links in this era between disability, conceptualised as the inability to perform normative gender and sexuality, and queerness, figured as the refusal to do so. The mass mobilisation of men and women into largely single-sex environments, as fighting forces, plus their industrial and administrative support systems, gave rise to concerns about the potential for the homosocial to become homosexual. The inference is that war has the potential to 'queer' a man, either through physical damage or exposure to some negative psychological influence.

That war produces Gothic experiences of disruption and encounters with the other has long been established and experienced in fiction, through ideas of the haunted battlefield and ghostly returning soldiers.[106] The tension between the artifice of Gothic genre conventions and the real horrors of lived experience is recognised within many texts about war: as the voice over to *Castle Keep* (Sidney Pollack, 1969) ironically observes: 'Once upon a time, eight walking wounded misfits of the American army entered a castle in Belgium. But this cannot be a Gothic tale because it was the Second World War'. In its concerns with family, normativity, history, and the centrality of art to all these considerations, *Castle Keep* is fundamentally engaging with the Gothic tradition. The film signals its generic position through meta-textual references; its title is not only the location of the action, but is also suggested as the title of a book one character will write. The temporal disruption that the Gothic traditionally performs is brought to the viewers' attention to highlight the 'horror' of the very real war that many of them had lived through. In fiction, when the veteran emerges outside the theatre of war itself in the domestic environment, it is often through a temporal

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[105] Soltysik Monnet and Hantke, 'Ghosts from the Battlefields', p. xvii.

[106] The reading of the returned soldier as representative of repression and 'its violently eruptive failure' is not limited to the Gothic text: Soltysik Monnet and Hantke propose the same reading for the veteran in the contemporary Western. In *Shane* (George Stevens, 1953) the potential for violent or queer disruption is limited by the expulsion of the damaged man who has encountered, and now embodies, otherness. Not every depiction of war, or the soldier, can fit into a Gothic reading, and *Shane* is not a Gothic text: normativity is unquestioned, homosocial life is naturalised as other to the domestic, and the heteronormative family remains a safe haven.

disruption – the haunting of the ghost, or the 'mad' veteran who cannot stop being a soldier. Overtly Gothic films thus recognise that, though the veteran's presence is a disruption to heteronormative culture and its base unit the family, this is not solely enacted through violence done to others, but also through the violence that has been done to the subject, and where a return to a past 'wholeness' is not possible.

Yet, the idea that the past, pre-war individual was ever 'whole' is also challenged in Gothic pulp fictions. Lou Cameron's *The Green Fields of Hell* (1964), in many ways a typical paperback war thriller, makes use of Gothic forms to tease out ambiguities of identification. Following the shifting perspectives of the narrative voice, the reader is asked to identify across gender, class, and nation. The narrators include a bourgeois French matron who has lost her sons and husband, a Welsh ex-miner in charge of a tank, an American medical orderly, and a born-to-rule German officer. Each has experienced loss and is struggling with their responsibilities towards others, whether in a society-wide sense or with regard to their immediate situation and fellow combatants. Delaying the revelation that the American, Dean Talbot, refuses a command rank because he believes he was responsible for his girlfriend's death builds narrative tension, and also encourages the reader to engage with ideas of the lingering effects of psychological trauma. The French matron, Lt. Vivian Chambrun of the resistance, becomes a self-sacrificing hero, able to do what Talbot cannot and overcome a personal loss to act for the collective good: 'c'est la guerre', she casually opines.[107] Neither his trauma nor hers is diminished by the comparison; Talbot's trauma occurred far from the front lines, he brought it with him from home, just as the war brought trauma into the Chambrun home. This narrative suggests that mental illness and trauma are legitimate difficulties, which is a considerable advance from the First World War when many of those unable or unwilling to perform their duties were executed for cowardice. The construction of fear as unmanly and shameful is depicted in the EC comic story 'Yellow!' (1952), in which a lieutenant who abandons his platoon in battle is court martialled, and appeals to his father, a Captain, for clemency.[108] The father promises his son he has rigged the firing squad with blank bullets, but has not; he lies so that his son will look confident and 'face his death like a man'. It is unclear who should be considered the more damaged, whose values the more corrupt; the son who cannot conform to violent norms, or the father who cannot uphold

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[107] Lou Cameron, *The Green Fields of Hell* (London: Coronet, 1964), p. 152.
[108] 'Shock Suspenstories' #1 (1952), Script: Ross Cochran; Pencils and Inks: Anon.; Colours: Anon.; Letters: Jim Wroten, in *Shock Suspenstories*, 3 vols. (West Plains, MI: Russ Cochran, 1981-82), I.

familial love. Post-War fictions acknowledge the influence of wartime events on families and relationships, but also the influence of kinship and emotional ties on an individual's war experiences.

However, Gothic pulp can be both conservative as well as progressive, promoting the thrill of deviance without any sympathy for non-normativity. The popular British writer of Post-War Thrillers Dennis Wheatley staunchly opposed the Satanism that suffused his books, to the extent that paperback copies of his Gothic novels contained a disclaimer distancing the author from any real knowledge or practice of such beliefs. Wheatley overtly links the actions of the villains to a belief system that his heroic characters despise and oppose: 'the people who direct these circles really are the henchmen of the Devil. The sexual excesses that take place under their auspices are only a means to an end [...] to cause the breakdown of good rule'.[109] Yet, Wheatley's many adventure novels, filled with Nazis, contain no such warnings about their dangerous ideologies and horrific actions. In fact, Wheatley describes the sexual exploitation of women interned in concentration camps with no moral outrage or real engagement with the victims' perspectives, but for titillation:

> All of them had been picked for their good looks for this form of slavery [...].
> Many of them had been only too glad to exchange hard labour and starvation for it; and all of them knew that unless they showed eagerness to please their many masters they would promptly be returned [...]. In consequence there were no holds barred at the party.[110]

Repeatedly, in *They Used Dark Forces* (1964) and other novels with war-time settings, Wheatley demonstrates that he does not comprehend how it feels to be the target of dehumanising rhetoric and ideologies, and repeats anti-Semitic tropes and stereotypes. In his Satanist thrillers, such as *To the Devil a Daughter* (1953), he suggests repeatedly that black people should be assumed criminals on sight, and that 'pederasts, lesbians, and over-sexed people' are of a moral equivalence.[111] Wheatley's novels thus show that he subscribed to many of the same beliefs about the fundamental inferiority of people of other races, abilities, and sexualities as the Nazis.

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[109] Dennis Wheatley, *To the Devil a Daughter* (London: Arrow, 1971 [1953]), pp. 82-83.
[110] Dennis Wheatley, *They Used Dark Forces* (London: Arrow, 1971[1964]), p. 336.
[111] Wheatley, *To the Devil*, p. 111.

In Wheatley's oeuvre, as in many other novels and magazines, Nazis are not figured as a specific threat to the values of contemporary Anglo-American society, and they thus become just another 'bad guy' of pulp fiction like the mobster or the corrupt aristocrat. This form of the Nazi-as-villain appeared throughout the 1950s to 70s, particularly in the pulp magazines such as *Man's Daring* (1959-66), *Man's Book* (1962-73), and *Man's Story* (1940-79), and in pulp fiction paperbacks by numerous authors. Nazi science as the source of horrors, and adventurous concentration camp escapes, became popular tropes in heroic fiction: exploiting imagery of the use and abuse of the body of the 'other', with little reflection upon the underlying horror of the ideology that enabled such acts. C. S. Forester's collection of short stories *The Nightmare* (1954) drew on evidence presented at the Nuremberg trials. Though 'To Be Given to God' is an effective psychological portrait of an unrepentant Nazi, exploring the chilling thought processes behind dehumanising philosophy, it can only be so effective when the original perpetrators of the horrors have been glamorised as powerful and exciting villains. As the endless recirculations of the characters of Frankenstein's creature and Dracula demonstrated, the most thrilling attribute of a fictional monster might be the possibility of their return; as representational myths, they cannot die. In the last tale of Forester's collection – its title 'The Wandering Gentile' making the absence of Jewish voices yet more obvious – the survival of Hitler himself is implied. This urge to resuscitate the criminal mastermind, as though the war itself were a Saturday matinée serial is, I argue, enabled by the movement of the monstrous from an isolated perspective aligned with queerness and contagion, to a powerful and masculine presence railing against the incursion of others.

Despite exploiting imagery of the camps and their inmates on the covers, and the rhetoric of condemnation in the introduction, the lived experience most often represented in pulp fictions is frequently that of the Nazi, or Nazi collaborator. In Forester's tales 'Evidence' and 'The Hostage' the victims of horror are the soldiers of the state, sacrificed for an unwinnable war. The ideology enacted by the nation that started the war is seemingly immaterial in such narratives, as it goes unremarked. The underlying horror of dehumanisation is projected back onto the white, male subject who elicits sympathy, as in the tales 'The Physiology of Fear' and 'The Unbelievable', and is directed away from the bodies of the 'other' who are used only as objects for horrifying display in the cover art.[112] This deflection echoes the philosophies of the pre-First World War Modernists; concerned with the dehumanising aspects of the modern industrial world's effects on the white male worker, yet still unengaged

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[112] C. S. Forester, *The Nightmare* (London: Pan, 1959).

with the problems for women and people of colour based on a legacy of dehumanisation. The victims of the Nazis were always already abhuman within the normative culture these privileged, conservative, male authors represent. The conservative Gothic is loath to interrogate Nazi ideology because it reveals the links between a popularly despised creed, which led to mass slaughter, and the normative belief systems that dominated the contemporary Anglo-American societies. A thorough and accurate depiction of the horrors of the Nazis would have, indirectly, indicted the contemporary British and American governments' actions in their colonies, and with regards to their own eugenic policies and treatment of people of colour. This is a Gothic not so much of the unspeakable, but the unspoken; a refusal to tell incriminating stories.

The American Modernist author Richard Wright uses the unspeakable and the unspoken to devastating effect in drawing out the uncomfortable parallels between allied and fascist societies. In *Native Son* (1940) he links 'the Nazi preoccupation with the construction of a society in which there would exist among all people (German people, of course!) one solidary of ideals' to the dreams of his black American hero, Bigger Thomas, and his desire for a homogenous racial unity movement.[113] Rabinowitz suggests that Wright 'plumbed America's history of crime as a crypt […] its corpse not dead but haunting us still', the crimes being those of slavery, Jim Crow laws, and systemic racism.[114] The crypt, following Nicholas Abrams and Maria Torok, is 'a repository, at once ever-present yet inaccessible, of that which fundamentally determines subjectivity' – in other words, the body and its identifiers.[115] It is the location of the unspeakable, which is 'a forgotten, untranslatable, encysted language, […] shaping consciousness that cannot be named or even felt directly; its access is circuitous, found in traces of materials gleaned elsewhere', and both raises the dead, and is also somehow undead itself.[116] (Un)dead bodies are a potent metaphor of the past and the family in Wright's novel: 'Say to yourself, Mr Dalton, "I offered my daughter as a burnt sacrifice and it was not enough to push back into its grave this thing that haunts me"'.[117] The metaphor of the haunting revenant, symbolising guilt and past actions, is a trope from the earliest of first-wave Gothic, and, in the image of the white woman blackened by fire, there are echoes of the more recent Modernist Gothic of Jean Toomer's *Cane* (1923). In Wright's fiction the sins of the

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[113] Richard Wright, 'Introduction: How Bigger was Born', in *Native Son* (London: Vintage, 2000), pp. 1-31 (p. 13).
[114] Rabinowitz, pp. 85-86.
[115] Ibid., p. 85.
[116] Ibid., p. 85.
[117] Wright, *Native Son*, p. 421.

fathers are visited upon the next generation; innocence, guilt and complicity depend not only on action but inaction, on the construction and recognition of embodied and familial identity. Mixing biblical imagery, myth, and the very real threat of lynching, Wright's Gothic is multi-layered in its allusions, disrupting linear time, traditional kinship models, and embodied identity. By speaking truth to power, black authors like Wright bring to life bodies and ideas that are supposed to be safely entombed in silence.

Native Son actively critiques the ideals of (dis)embodiment and silence upon which the rationalist eugenic and genocidal ideologies are based. The possibilities for multi-faceted readings, disrupting a single and unified identity for the text, destabilises also the legible surfaces of the bodies Wright describes. In a famous passage, Max's courtroom speech mixes together the imagery of the colonial 'savage' and urban jungle, the dehumanised Frankenstein's creature, the living and the dead:

> For the corpse is not dead! It still lives! It has made itself a home in the wild forest of our great cities, amid the rank and choking vegetation of slums! It has forgotten our language! […] It has developed a capacity for hate and fury which we cannot understand! […] By night it creeps from its lair and steals toward the settlements of civilisation![118]

Whose language has been forgotten? This speech turns the language of the colonisers from the *fin-de-siècle* urban anthropologists back on its originators as a critique, a device used also in the comic books where the perpetrators of racist violence are described as 'savage' and 'wild'.[119] In the novel these words are delivered in the form of a reported speech, heard through the ears of others, and will be transcribed in the court report. This Gothic, as Rabinowitz says of pulp, 'traverses theatres of war, the Congress and courts, writers' notebooks and journals, artists' studios, and the ordinary people who bought, traded, and read these books everywhere'.[120] The disruptions are part of the textual form, as Wright mixes form and context, reportage and courtroom drama, Gothic and Modernist, disrupting the idea of a simple unified and legible language or surface.

Yet, Max's speech also illustrates the construction of the Gothic aesthetic from the lived experience of the other, and the deployment of this aesthetic, in turn, to define, limit, explain

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[118] Ibid., p. 420.
[119] 'The Whipping', *Shock Suspenstories* #14.
[120] Rabinowitz, p. 27.

and even subdue otherness. Thus James Smethurst states that *Native Son* 'is not a Gothic novel, but an anti-Gothic', in which Wright as a Marxist recognises the Gothic as the dead weight of the past, as a product of the social relations of American capitalism, and thus something to be transcended.[121] The Gothic is an ideal set of representations for the marginalised to describe their reality, however 'the problem for Wright […] was not simply to represent the world, but to change it'.[122] As I have suggested in this thesis, many authors have used the Gothic to critique and challenge normativity, however Smethurst seems to suggest that the Gothic is perhaps no more than a set of metaphors that reflect and depict forms of reality, and is therefore ultimately a mode that 'mystifies the social system'.[123] However, I suggest that this once again sets up a division between the real and the fictional, between the rational and irrational/emotional, which reinforces the dominant binaristic and hierarchical value system.

Conclusion

I have argued in this chapter that the Gothic experience of war and conflict is not limited to those whose environment might be considered overtly Gothic – the soldier in the dug-out, and the victim of the state machinery of genocide – but extends to those who lived under the shadow of the ideological systems at work. By this I mean the gay man who, barred by law from serving in the military, must either avoid the draft by identifying himself as a criminal, or serve and fear the court martial. Or the disabled individual surrounded by a culture that equates national pride with productivity, in a war against an enemy whose eugenic ideology echoes state-sponsored controls imposed upon their own body. The Gothic potentiality for oppression and stagnation within the legal system had previously been explored in novels such as *Caleb Williams* (1794) and *Bleak House* (1852-53). However, these texts foregrounded the problems of white men and middle-class families, whereas the police corruption depicted in the horror comics supported the rights of those whom the state actively sought to suppress, particularly racial minorities. In the history of the censorship of comics, as much as in their content, the bureaucracy of governance and the judiciary is shown to be as oppressively Gothic in its labyrinthine applications as the open grave of the trench, lined with

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[121] James Smethurst, 'Invested by Horror: the Gothic and African American Literary Ideology in *Native Son*', *African American Review*, 35.1 (2001), 29–40 (p. 29).
[122] Ibid., p. 38.
[123] Ibid., p. 33.

the dead and dying, and that both experiences are central to twentieth-century depictions of war-time and post-war society.

The opportunity for the powerful individual to act monstrously has been a central theme in the Gothic, as explored in previous chapters, and the projection of the judgement of monstrosity onto the abnormative individual functions to preserve existing power differentials. Jim Thompson's pulp thriller *The Killer Inside Me* (1952) addresses these ideas: the central character, Lou Ford, uses his ability to fit into a rigidly defined norm to get away with serial murder, and frames women, people of colour, and those of lower socio-economic classes to take the blame. The 'default' identity of the white man is made visible as a construct, as Steven Cohen and Ina Rae Hark observe of Hollywood cinema: 'the apparatus puts him on screen, it hides him behind a screen, it uses him as a screen for its ideological agenda, and it screens out socially unacceptable and heterogeneous cultural constructions of masculinity'.[124] I argue that a key developing theme across popular Gothic of the mid-twentieth century is the monstrosity of normative power differentials; between parents and children, men and women, the dominant white Christian population versus everyone else. As Martin Barker notes:

> Children are wonderful. Brought up in a right, civilised, British way, they are innocent, adventurous, they are the future. But let bad influences get to them, and there will be the devil to pay. Why, they might even dare to think…[125]

Normativity not only hides monstrosity, but might also be its origin; both are essential for the system to function.

Thus, Soltysik Monnet suggests – echoing Susan Manning's introduction to *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) – that there is 'an essential Gothicness' to America itself, as a country defined by its attempts to simultaneously suppress otherness and promote an image of unity.[126] Those who held power, in a nation explicitly constructed upon philosophies of white men's superiority, considered Gothic works aimed at people of colour, women, and children as subversive. Critical work, as well as censorship, upheld this analysis; Irving Malin's *New American Gothic* (1962) uses the term in a distinctly pejorative sense, to decry the cultural influence of homosexuality and other forms of 'deviance' on national literature. As the

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[124] Steven Cohen and Ina Rae Hark, 'Introduction', in *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood*, edited by Steven Cohen and Ina Rae Hark (New York, NY: Routledge, 1993), pp. 1-9 (p. 3).
[125] Barker, p. 185.
[126] Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet, *The Poetics and Politics of the American Gothic: Gender and Slavery in Nineteenth Century American Literature* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 7.

damaging effects of forced normativity are increasingly revealed, on individual and state levels, the Gothic critique that had been developing for over a century was suppressed more steadfastly than ever, banned by government order, or repackaged and relabelled in an attempt to deflect its critiques. From representing a fear of queerness and contagion, Dracula became the model for seduction; the dangerous power of straight white men over their romantic partners is romanticised and fetishised. The damage sustained by Heathcliff and Cathy, and projected onto the next generation, becomes a tragedy about a love triangle in numerous adaptations, rather than a caustic reflection on the impositions of class and gender norms within family relations. The next chapter explores the late-twentieth century continuation of the romanticisation of the Gothic and the attempted domestication of the monstrous queer, but also the pushback against censorship panics and incorporation by openly queer authors in both Britain and America.

5

Culture Wars: the resistant spaces of Gothic queerness

> Won't somebody please think of the children!
>
> 'Much Apu About Nothing', *The Simpsons* (1996)

In the last decades of the twentieth century a Gothic aesthetic infiltrated science fiction, popular music, historic fiction, and television adaptations of classic novels; this 'cross-pollination' I suggest was due to the fact that the Gothic can represent both nostalgia and transgression. This era, labelled a period of 'culture wars' by critics, saw dissimilarities and conflicts between sections of society shaped by variations of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and social class, to be increasingly acknowledged within mainstream media. It steadily became less publicly acceptable to write about national cultures as homogenous, or to uncritically support a Whiggish view of historical 'progress'. Gothic fictions – featuring ghosts and undead revenants, family sagas crossing generations, and structural anomalies – similarly disrupted a linear view of identity and progress. Jarlath Killeen proposes this dislocation as one reason why the Gothic became academically politicised when, in the eighties and nineties, the neo-liberal policies of a Conservative government in the UK were at odds with the views of many in the academy: 'academics went on to write about Gothic almost as if it were a response to this feeling of disenfranchisement, thus promoting the values of the mode of writing they believed had been marginalised by Thatcher's ideological progenitors, the Victorians'.[1] Isabella van Elferen writes that contemporary goth subcultures were not 'passive' practices; seeking to transgress current cultural norms and reframe and reinterpret those of previous eras is 'an act [...] that intervenes with the nature of the thing remembered',[2] and thus Gothic reinterpretation is always a transgressive rewriting. Indeed, the creators and consumers of popular culture were as aware of the Gothic's potential as a space of political resistance as were the academics.

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[1] Jarlath Killeen, *Gothic Literature 1825-1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p. 8.
[2] Isabella van Elferen, 'Introduction', in *Nostalgia or Perversion? Gothic Rewriting from the Eighteenth Century until the Present Day*, edited by Isabella van Elferen (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), pp. 1-10 (p. 3).

Amorphous and emotive phrases such as 'family values' were popularly used in the eighties and nineties to advance campaigns mounted against horror films and other Gothic forms of popular media, which were declared to be corrupting influences. Elaine Showalter interprets this as a period of panic, even hysteria, 'which seems to peak at the ends of centuries, when people are already alarmed about social change'.[3] Showalter claims that the British press used the term hysteria to label intensity of expression on both sides of debates and, further, that the cultural panic she sees in America was absent in Britain.[4] Yet, Britain underwent a profound national bout of hysteria surrounding the protection of children from so-called 'video nasties', just as American media performed a similar response to certain forms of popular music. The campaigns against video nasties, hip-hop, and heavy metal music centred their rhetoric on the protection of children and, as Sarah Cleary notes, this is a Gothic narrative of harm in and of itself, utilising the tropes of viral transmission, perversion, and possession.[5] Moral campaigners targeted what they termed 'gratuitously' violent and sexual content though reforms and restrictions requested from the legislature, which often went far beyond the protection of unsuspecting children, attempting to prevent the very creation and dissemination of a broad range of media products. The domestic consumption of transgressive media became central to the culture wars debates, as rising access to home video, and satellite and cable television, provoked widespread debate about the 'safety' of the domestic environment.

I argue that the discourse of harm surrounding the 'family-friendly' cultural campaigns was inherently linked to concerns about the fracturing of national and cultural identities, through challenges to the patriarchal model of the family. Until the late twentieth century the rights of women and children within the family were severely curtailed: it was 1991 when UK law abolished the exception against marital rape; and the rights of a child to shelter and education, even to a name and to economic protections, were only established by U.N. Convention in 1989. Increasing acceptance of the idea of the family unit as composed of individuals with differing, even conflicting, needs and desires challenged the post-Enlightenment patriarchal ideal. Gay rights activists were increasingly challenging US law to recognise same-sex marriage and, thus, broader definitions of the family; but it was the AIDS epidemic that brought to national attention urgent decisions about end-of-life care, inheritance, and the

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[3] Elaine Showalter, *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Culture* (London: Picador, 1998), p. 19.
[4] Ibid., p. 27.
[5] Sarah Cleary, '"Horror in the Nursery": Exploring how the Horror Genre has been Regulated and Restricted Since 1931 in Response to its Alleged Influence on Children' (unpublished PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2015).

demands of the queer community to have their family groups accorded legal and social recognition. In response, the dominant ideology of heteronormativity was actively parsed into law; the now infamous Section 28 of the UK's 1988 Local Authorities Act stated that local authorities were not to 'promote homosexuality', or 'the acceptability of homosexuality as a *pretended* family relationship' [emphasis added].[6] In the US, the 1996 Defence of Marriage Act defined marriage as the union 'between one woman and one man' until it was overturned in 2013.[7] Although there is no single definition of 'family values' in modern Anglo-American culture, one thing was made absolutely clear by conservative campaigners and legislators alike – the family was heterosexual.

However, in accepting the very notion that the state can legitimate kinship, says Judith Butler, 'we have accepted an epistemological field structured by a fundamental loss', and I argue that the Gothic, as a liminal space, lends itself to the exploration of this 'lost horizon of radical sexual politics'.[8] As Butler notes, the legal legitimation of kinship arrangements, no matter how far those boundaries might extend, always 'constitute[s] a drastic curtailment of progressive sexual politics to allow marriage and family, or even kinship, to mark the exclusive parameters within which sexual life is thought'.[9] To seek out what is missing, what has been lost or silenced, is a tenet of queer reading practices that look for disjunctions and pry open the fissures in any text. The distinction, as made by Butler, between the 'critically queer' and the 'virtually queer' thus becomes vitally important when queerness is not just coded into monsters, but depicted outright.[10] As queer and non-normative people gain cultural visibility through representation in mainstream media fictions, and widely distributed cultural products, it becomes ever more important to analyse the construction of the monstrous as opposed to the normative; invoked as a bogeyman to warn against transgression, the representation of the other often supports the very system that excludes it.

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[6] 'The Local Government Act 1988', Section 28, *Legislation.gov.uk*, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/9/section/28> [accessed 22/05/2016]
[7] The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) (Pub.L. 104-199, 110 Stat. 2419, enacted 21 September (1996), 1 U.S.C. § 7 and 28 U.S.C. § 1738C) <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-104hr3396enr/pdf/BILLS-104hr3396enr.pdf> [accessed 01/09/2016]
[8] Judith Butler, 'Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?' *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 13.1 (2002), 14-44 (p. 40).
[9] Ibid., p. 15.
[10] Judith Butler, 'Critically Queer', *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies*, 1.1 (1993), 17-32.

New Romantics: the Gothic becomes big box office

Romantic Gothic became a marketing phenomenon towards the end of the twentieth century, from pop music to musical theatre. Kate Bush's 'Wuthering Heights' (1978) reinscribed the Hollywood adaptations' expressly romantic reading of Heathcliff and Cathy's mutual dependence. The longest running musicals that opened in the mid-eighties foreground heterosexual romance plotlines in adaptations of French novels from the Gothic tradition: Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Phantom of the Opera* (1986) and Claude-Michel Schönberg's *Les Misérables* (1985). Disney re-worked the fairy-tale *Beauty and the Beast* (Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise, 1991) into a Gothic fantasy full of castles, thunderstorms, and ravines, set in late-eighteenth-century France. The popularity of the film and its soundtrack was such that it became Disney's first animated film to be adapted into a Broadway musical. The same year, Bryan Adams's '(Everything I Do) I Do it for You' topped the sales charts in the UK, USA, and Canada, as the theme song to the film *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (Kevin Reynolds, 1991), which has all the trappings of the first-wave Gothic: castles, returning crusaders, a dastardly usurper of inherited power, a corrupt churchman, and even a wicked witch. Hollywood adapted several classic Gothic novels as love stories, though the titles – *Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights* (Peter Kosminsky, 1992), *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (Kenneth Branagh, 1994) and *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1992) – make a direct appeal to genre and authenticity by invoking authorial ownership. The commercial success of these productions supports my reading that the twentieth-century Gothic had been, to an extent, 'defanged': these are products designed to appeal to the widest possible audience, even a 'family audience'.

However, in the liminal space of the Gothic, the conservative heteronormativity of romantic narratives is tinged with the thrill of the forbidden. Meatloaf's chart-topping, Grammy-award winning single 'I Would Do Anything for Love' (1993) was promoted with a video mixing Gothic tropes such as the brides of Dracula, visual elements from *Phantom of the Opera*, and facial prosthetics reminiscent of the popular television series *Beauty and the Beast* (1987-1990). This was not the only music video taking cues from the same sources; Guns N' Roses' 'November Rain' (1992) and Celine Dion's 'It's All Coming Back to Me Now' (1996), are notable examples. Dion's video opens, like Meatloaf's, with a lightning storm and a motorcycle ride; set in a baroque mansion with halls full of mirrors, the singer's gold dress cut in an eighteenth-century style, it echoes Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*. In these music videos drawing on the Romantic Gothic trend, the male/female couples perform a

heteronormativity that is lacking in the lyrics, where the unspeakable again leaves space for the queer; Meatloaf would do anything for love, but he 'won't do that', and Dion sings of things she'd 'never do again, but then they always felt right', ending the song with the haunting whisper of 'and if we…', refusing to name the act.

As heteronormativity promises to rescue the hero or heroine from monstrosity, *vice versa*, the absence of physical normativity becomes, in this schema, a signifier of queerness. In traditional Gothic style, physical anomaly aligns with non-normativity; an exaggerated brow ridge and long pointed nails – overstated bodily norms of maleness and femaleness – combine to turn Meatloaf into a gender-fluid monstrosity. As in *Beauty and the Beast*, this video depicts a fugitive taking refuge in a candle-lit castle. He leaves the castle with his normative looks restored, redeemed by the love of a beautiful woman, just as the Beast returns to his 'true' form of the handsome prince to marry Belle. However, the often unsatisfactory nature of the romantic narrative resolution is recognised in cinema critic John Hartl's review of Disney's offering: 'you may feel the way Greta Garbo did when she emerged from Jean Cocteau's live-action 1946 version. "Give me back my Beast", she is reported to have said'.[11] As Celine Dion's ghostly lover leaves at the end of her video, she focusses nostalgically on past transgression, rather than seeming pleased that the supernatural aberration has past. The links between physical non-normativity, the Gothic monster, and queerness were reinscribed, but the damage has been done to the dominant mythos; the monster is transgressive, rebellious, and simply 'cooler'.

Gay for Pay: queer narratives for straight audiences

Best-selling authors of the Gothic in this period, such as Anne Rice and Stephen King – the 'dual monarchs, Hades and Persephone, of American Gothic Fiction' according to Mark Edmundson[12] – exploit this attraction to the monster/queer, and the romance of transgression. Horror novels are often structured around conflict between the safety of a middle-class family home and queer-coded loners who seek its disruption. Rice, however, does not simply deploy the bogeyman to threaten or destroy an unsuspecting family; instead she has her monsters

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[11] John Hurtl, 'A Classic Feel Already – Voices, Visuals Fit Superbly in Disney's "Beast"', *The Seattle Times*, Friday, 22 November (1991), <http://community.seattletimes.nwsource.com/archive/?date=19911122&slug=1318824> [accessed 23/03/2016]
[12] Mark Edmundson, *Nightmare on Main Street: Angels, Sadomasochism and the Culture of Gothic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. xii.

desire and create their own families. Rice's vampires make direct declarations of love and attraction, which seems to offer an insight into, and sympathy for, queer alienation. King depicts queerness though coding, and such characters are often incidental or villainous monsters. The vampire Kurt Barlow in *'Salem's Lot* (1975) moves to town with his business partner Richard Straker; the two share a house and are posing as antique dealers – a pose also adopted by demonic Leland Gaunt in *Needful Things* (1991). The cultural associations between antique and art dealers and homosexuality is part and parcel of the associations between effeminacy and queerness: fine art being considered an effete taste, and Wilkie Collins's Frederick Fairlie being a prime example. Coding a villain as socially isolated and sexually deviant always contributes to a negative alignment of monstrosity and queerness. Texts by these authors thus reinforce links between physical non-normativity, queerness, and monstrosity, I argue, even when they centralise queer characters.

The queerness of King's monsters seems to reproduce stereotypes to play upon readers' fears, and perhaps satirise them, alongside his critical depictions of homophobia. The ineffective police officers investigating the death of Adrian Mellon in *IT* (1986) express prejudice towards the victim and his boyfriend Don; declaring it 'impossible to take seriously [a man] if you want to call him a man […] wearing lipstick'.[13] King condemns this attitude through ironic narratorial asides; graffiti in a local park – 'stick nails in eyes of all faggots (for God)!' – is sardonically described as 'coolly logical anti-gay statements'.[14] That this representation is not critically queer, however, is underlined by King's confusion of the categories of gender expression, gender identity, and sexuality. King often equates femininity of expression in men with homosexuality, thus traditionally masculine presentation by gay men becomes pretence: George Nelson is revealed to be gay 'under his bluff, macho exterior'.[15] In his depictions of overtly feminine queer women, such as Dayna Jurgens in *The Stand* (1978) and Helen Deepneau in *Insomnia* (1994), King characterises the preference for female lovers as a mistrust of men, rather than simply sexual preference, in contrast to his representation of 'butch' lesbians.[16] King's use of such models demonstrates disengagement on his part with the vast literature about queerness and bodily identity that has developed since essentialist

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[13] Stephen King, *IT* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986), p. 29.
[14] Ibid., p. 31.
[15] Stephen King, *Needful Things* (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 485.
[16] This trope appears as late as *Doctor Sleep* (2013), with the character Andi.

modes were put forward by early openly queer authors, such as Radcliffe Hall.[17] King's exploitation of social fears for Gothic horror therefore risks replicating, rather than critiquing, the ignorance that is often the foundation of prejudice.

I would argue, however, that King's later incorporation of characters whose queerness is incidental to their narrative function moves these retrograde representations beyond a simplistic alignment of non-normativity with a menacing opposition to the family. Characters like the heroic Tom McCourt in *Cell* (2006), and community-focused gender-bending Freddi Linklatter in *Mr. Mercedes* (2014), begin to disrupt the politics of victimhood in horror – explored in depth in a later section of this chapter – despite King's occasional use of old-fashioned tropes. Likewise, Ramona Norville in 'Big Driver' (2010) is a figure of fear, but in allegiance with her son; her masculine self-presentation does not mark her as existing outside of traditional family structures. King's work thus echoes the positive developments in gay rights and representation that seek to complicate otherwise essentialist models; it would be overly simplistic to generalise his construction of monsters and/or queerness in an unconsidered manner. Thus, I would suggest King's work as neither entirely virtually nor critically queer: his openly queer characters are often subject to stereotype, and fall short of a developed critical awareness; however, his representation of issues like 'gay bashing' demonstrates conscious engagement beyond the level of trope and convention. Thus, overall, I would term King's oeuvre 'incidentally queer': queerness is present in his fictional world, as a reflection of the realism King strives for in his settings, but queerness is never a theme addressed within the text. King's monsters reflect fears of the other, while acknowledging that the other – at least in human form – is a subject in their own right; the subjectivity of the monstrous alien others of *IT*, and several other of King's novels, falls outside the scope of this study.

Though in King's novels the monstrous queer does not necessarily reject kinship, and queerness is not necessarily monstrous, Anne Rice maintains a polarisation in her work between queer monstrosity and familial normality, despite the fact that her novel series *The Vampire Chronicles* (1978-) focuses on the emotional lives of queer characters. The intersection of gender, race, and social class is central to the construction of Rice's seductive

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[17] Lois Kennedy has analysed every openly queer character in King's work and proposes they can be characterised by five types: the Mannish Lesbian, the Trauma Victim, the Weakling, the Predator, and the Well-Adjusted. '"As Gay as Old Dad's Hatband": The 5 Kinds of Gay and Bisexual Characters in Stephen King's Writings', *Horror Novel Reviews*, 15 December (2015), <https://horrornovelreviews.com/2015/12/16/as-gay-as-old-dads-hatband-the-5-kinds-of-gay-and-bisexual-characters-in-stephen-kings-writings/> [accessed 24/05/2016]

monsters. The romanticisation of powerful men is a long-standing Gothic trope, tied to exploring attraction to dangerous situations. However, by queering this conventional plot, and reinscribing popular cultural alignments of gay men with the exploitative, effete, and unproductive upper classes – particularly artistic patronage culture – Rice hints that homosexuality is inherently dangerous and corrupt, only valuable to society in specifically limited forms of cultural creativity. Rice depicts vampires, as many authors have before, as aristocratic parasites, not only in their preternatural after-lives but as humans also: the most successful converts, who thrive in monstrous form, are those willing to feed off the bodies and labours of others. Lestat de Lioncourt's human life started in genteel poverty in rural France, and he happily exploits the possibilities for long-term investment and property ownership born of an unnaturally extended life. Louis du Pont du Lac is the owner of a slave-worked plantation in French Louisiana who becomes increasingly uncomfortable with his exploitation of others, reflecting the changing discourse of settler colonialism in American culture over the course of his existence. Armand, advancing from humble origins as a monastic novitiate to the art scene of Renaissance Venice, makes sense of his supernatural power through religious iconography: finding excuses and explanations for his exploitations of others in a seeming parody of religious exceptionalism. The novels revel in the awfulness of the vampires' behaviours, betrayals, and transgressions as a loose collection of brutal, exploitative, self-regarding narcissists. It is thus important to ask, with George E. Haggerty, '"whose homoeroticism" is it that Rice so richly articulates?'[18]

The gay male vampire becomes at once a hero and a martyr to popular culture's construction of normativity in Haggerty's heavily AIDS-inflected reading: 'Rice's vampires express culture's secret desire for, and secret fear of, the gay man, the need to fly with him beyond the confines of heterosexual convention and bourgeois family life to explore unauthorised desires'.[19] A heterosexual author constructing alterity from a normative perspective, as Christopher Craft describes Bram Stoker, 'could not imagine such desire without repeating within their metaphor of inversion the basic structure of the heterosexual paradigm'.[20] Rice's constructions of queerness are always defined against socially-dominant heterosexuality; the queer vampire is the 'other' that only exists to define the 'self' of the legitimate subject and

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[18] George E. Haggerty, *Queer Gothic* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007), p. 186.
[19] Ibid., p. 187.
[20] Christopher Craft, '"Kiss Me with those Red Lips": Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*', *Representations*, 8 (1984), 107-133 (p. 129).

thus, Haggerty can assert that 'the gay man is sacrificed so the family can be preserved'.[21] However, in this reading Lestat is 'the passive, the bloodied, and the castrated male'.[22] I would argue instead that, as the predatory vampire-queer whose desire is solely to penetrate, Lestat's over-arching desire complicates a reading of passivity and castration anxiety in Rice's work, just as these characters' introduction in 1976 in *Interview with the Vampire* complicates a straightforward reading with regards to the cultural image of gayness in the post-HIV period. Therefore, while I agree that Rice reasserts the primacy of the heteronormative family at the expense of any alternative, to categorise the gay man as simply 'sacrificed' does not go far enough.

In Rice's work it is apparently too risky even to introduce the queer monster into the domestic environment for the purposes of threatening the normative bourgeois family. The ability to live as one chooses outside the constraints of the traditional *pater familias* is consistently presented as either a corruption through aristocratic indulgence in the form of the vampires, or a moral failing entered into through the necessities of poverty in the form of their victims – usually sex workers or street sleepers (those whose deaths will not be investigated by human authorities). Though the heteronormative middle-class home is conspicuous by its absence, the notion of family is, however, central to these novels. The devil Memnoch's report to God, in the fifth volume, reads as though it were lifted from Shaftesbury: 'I went down and I looked into the family […]. I saw the family as a new and unprecedented flower, Lord, a blossom of emotion and intellect'.[23] Haggerty suggests the critical reader of the Vampire Chronicles might 'consider how [Rice's] "savage garden" could be transformed into conservative urban, or rather suburban, American values'.[24] I contend that 'transformed' is the wrong word in this context, and the scholars' favourite term 'unpacked' is more fitting as Lestat and Louis repeatedly construct homes, families, and pair-bonded relationships. The normative family is unavailable for examination and critique, insulated from the monster and monstrosity in every way, yet invoked constantly by its negative reflection.

The failure of the vampires to maintain kinship ties is not presented as a tragic loss to create sympathy for these antiheroes, but as punishment linked to their transgressive nature. Haggerty reads Lestat's relationship to the family, as to masculinity, in terms of lack:

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[21] Haggerty, *Queer Gothic*, p. 199.
[22] Ibid., p. 188.
[23] Anne Rice, *Memnoch the Devil*, book five of the Vampire Chronicles (London: Arrow, 1996), p. 270.
[24] Haggerty, *Queer Gothic*, p. 185.

The 'Love of Men and Women for one another and for their Children' is the measure against which all the transgressive desire of these works must finally be measured [...]. This is all that Lestat has been missing for all his centuries of nightly ventures into the homoerotic.[25]

However, Lestat does not lack in companionship or love: what makes his desire monstrous is its excess – he demands to be queer and part of a family too. Creating a vampiric eternal child in Claudia, Lestat constructs a family unit with her and Louis. Lestat even turns his own mother into a vampire. Yet, every vampiric kinship structure fails, for reasons Rice constructs as fundamental attributes of the monstrous queer. In *Interview*, Louis and Claudia try to burn Lestat alive for acting as a traditional patriarch, suggesting his illegitimacy in the role, and Claudia and her nurse-maid companion are burnt to death – a child vampire is declared an abomination, as queer children are often considered. In *The Vampire Lestat* (1985), Lestat's mother initially goes mad after her transformation, then rejects the society of other vampires including her son, who is now also her father.[26] Yet, as Candace R. Benefiel notes, this is not in fact inevitable; unlike human families, which have biological limitations on their lifetimes and must 'metamorphose' as the children age and develop, theoretically 'the vampire family can exist for centuries without change'.[27] Louis, Lestat, and Claudia in fact do last a human lifetime, sixty-five years, before they separate. Thus, the queer family must be destroyed, or else alternatives to the suburban norm might seem viable: 'whether the nuclear family [...] remains a viable mode of existence',[28] is not a question that Rice wants to leave open to her readers. Families must only be for heterosexuals.

The central theme of Rice's repeating tropes is that the monster/queer must find their place outside of human/hetero normativity. When Armand reaches beyond vampire insularity to make friends with humans in the sixth book, *The Vampire Armand* (1998), the vampire Magnus transforms them – even though they are children – which is presented as an inevitable corruption.[29] Through this, Armand finally comes to accept his fundamental vampiric nature and its negative influence on others. Lestat embraces this lesson when he

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[25] Ibid., p. 199.

[26] Anne Rice, *The Vampire Lestat*, book two of the Vampire Chronicles (New York, NY: Knopf, 1985)

[27] Candace R. Benefiel, 'Blood Relations: The Gothic Perversion of the Nuclear Family in Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*', *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 38.2 (2004), 261-273 (p. 264).

[28] Ibid., p. 270.

[29] Anne Rice, *The Vampire Armand*, book six of the Vampire Chronicles (London: Chatto and Windus, 1998).

returns to vampirism, after taking human form briefly, in the fourth book *The Tale of the Body Thief* (1992):

> Being the watcher that I became that long-ago night in Paris, when I was forced
> into it. I lost my illusions. I lost my favorite lies. You might say I revisited that
> moment and was reborn to darkness of my own free will.[30]

Rice's antiheroes come to accept their inherent monstrosity and their 'rightful' place at the margins of society. Lestat then feels compelled to turn his only human friend David, who is a gay man, into a vampire: 'I knew the magnitude of what I'd done to him. I knew myself and all my evil to the fullest and I expected nothing back from the world now except the very same evil in kind'.[31] And yet David forgives him, and even describes the turn to vampirism as a 'new vision and life'.[32] Vampirism in Rice's novels is a preternatural extension of a gay man's supposedly inherent nature – constructed as narcissistic and artistic – an immoral, corrupting 'darkness', that is initially forced upon others against their will, and separates them from normative society. The seductive, rebellious vampire is permanently excluded from the home, like the subversive 'video nasty' explored in the next section.

The rise of Rice's attractive and titillating vampire-queers occurred alongside the slow mainstream acceptance of a specific model of gayness in the figure of the white, middle-class 'metrosexual' and the performative visibility of the drag queen. The Hollywood adaptation of *Interview with the Vampire* (Neil Jordan, 1994) was released a year after *Philadelphia* (Jonathan Demme, 1993), Hollywood's major engagement with AIDs and homophobia at that point in time, and two years before *The Birdcage* (Mike Nichols, 1996) which directly addressed gay families.[33] Demme and Jordan, however, are both directors with a history of making gender and sexuality into monstrosity: Jordan's IRA thriller *The Crying Game* (1992) and Demme's Gothic thriller *The Silence of the Lambs* (1992) exploit the bodies of gender non-conforming serial killer Jame Gumb (Ted Levine) and trans woman Dil (Jaye Davidson), both played by cis male actors, for titillation and shock. A certain type of queerness is

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[30] Anne Rice, *The Tale of the Body Thief*, book four of the Vampire Chronicles (London: Chatto and Windus, 1992), p. 412.
[31] Ibid., p. 423.
[32] Ibid., p. 428.
[33] Other widely-released and popular Anglophone films in this period starring well-known straight actors in queer roles were *My Own Private Idaho* (Gus Van Sant, 1991), *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar* (Beeban Kidron, 1995), and *The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert* (Stephan Elliott, 1994).

accepted in media productions, if performed correctly: elegant and louche, definitively other, and markedly separate from the domestic realm. As Anne-Marie Smith notes of the Section 28 debates, 'there is a distinction […] between homosexuality as a radical difference, which disrupts the social order, and homosexuality as a simple difference',[34] that can be incorporated within the existing social strictures. In an article that problematically fails to recognise the difference between representations of drag and lived trans experience, Nicola Evans nonetheless recognises the implications of fetishizing certain forms of normativity in otherwise queer performances: 'contemporary film drag reactivates a conservative desire for genteel ladies, those dated icons of the cult of true womanhood'.[35] Difference from heteronormativity is acceptable only if it can fit within, and echo back, certain heterosexist parameters; most crucially the power dynamic that places the patriarchal family as the microcosm of society. That which refuses the normative boundaries is coded as pornographic, 'gratuitous' and dangerous, suitable only for exploitation or expulsion.

The Mary Whitehouse Project: narratives of harm and the 'video nasties'

Having explored the exploitation of the queer and the Gothic, I now turn to the efforts towards its expulsion. Just as queerness was finding a measure of acceptance within mainstream popular culture, as long as the gays knew their prescribed place, a rising heterosexist conservativism was identified by critics such as Susan Faludi.[36] The moral panics of the era, namely the 'video nasties' debate in the UK and the hearings of the Parents' Music Resource Centre (PMRC) in the United States, focused on ideas of normativity and the nuclear family as the ideal social model. Tipper Gore, founding member of the PMRC, published *Raising PG Kids in an X-rated Society* (1987), in which she claims that 'heavy metal rock performers have expressly designed their concerts to display depraved, violent behavior that stimulates and inflames hostile emotions'.[37] The language here is designed to

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[34] Anna Marie Smith, 'A Symptomology of an Authoritarian Discourse: the Parliamentary Debates on the Prohibition of the Promotion of Homosexuality', *New Formations*, 10 (1990), 41-65 (p. 50).

[35] Nicola Evans, 'Games of Hide and Seek: Race, Gender and Drag in *The Crying Game* and *The Birdcage*', *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 18:3 (1998), 199-216 (p. 200). DOI: 10.1080/10462939809366224

[36] See Susan Faludi, *Backlash: the Undeclared War against Women* (London: Vintage, 1991); James Davidson Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1991); *The American Culture Wars: Current Contests and Future Prospects*, edited by James L. Nolan Jr. (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1996); Patrick Buchanan, *Republican National Convention Speech*, 17 August (1992),< http://buchanan.org/blog/1992-republican-national-convention-speech-148> [accessed 09/05/2016]

[37] Tipper Gore, *Raising PG Kids in an X-Rated Society* (Nashville, TN: Abington Press, 1987), p. 145.

establish only one legitimate side to the argument, positioning the opponents of censorship as defending depravity and violence, terms also used in the British video nasties debate. Gore acknowledges that her reading of the cultural productions she sought to regulate develops from a distinctly class-inflected position: 'maybe rock doesn't have to get civilized in a middle-class sense, but it doesn't have to promote barbarianism either'.[38] The class-based aspect of the debates around censorship and regulation, in both the USA and the UK, comes to the fore in debates over access as well as content..

Figure 3: 'Ban Video Sadism Now', *Daily Mail*, Friday, 1 July (1983)

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[38] Ibid., p. 52.

The links between class, national identity, and family normativity are explicit in the purpose, aim, and attitudes of the campaigners against so-called 'nasties'. All manner of films, previously available only in cinemas or through television broadcasts, could be watched on demand in the domestic environment by the eighties. The new technology of the Video Home System (VHS) and Betamax enabled an enormous rise in the sale of home entertainment products; and with rising demand came falling prices, resulting in a low bar to engagement. When new cultural technology is introduced there is often a class element to the criticisms and moral panics that accompany its arrival, as Geoffrey Pearson has identified, which becomes a powerful incentive to regulation.[39] The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) and Irish Film Classification Office (IFCO) are statutory bodies; the BBFC was granted authority for rating videos only after the Video Recordings Act 1984 (VRA), and the IFCO held cinematic and video categorisation to be different until the Irish VRA of 1989.[40] The UK Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 clarified the rules on the availability of certain types of video material to children. The extension of these regulatory powers was directly related to the calls for censorship. As Kate Egan notes, drawing on Martin Barker's contemporary explorations of the rhetoric in the newspaper reporting about the moral crusades, the unifying image around which the campaigners built their outrage was the family home. Yet this ideal 'space that binds and connects all Britons' was a fictional construct; 'removed, along the axis of time, from the contemporary world into the "golden age" of the past'.[41] The supposedly timeless domestic ideal is a construct of a very particular set of social circumstances, developed since the eighteenth century, as this thesis explores.

The language used by film reviewers and activists also echoed previous degenerationist panics; American horror films were decried as invading Britain, and even contaminating national culture. The language of commodification, and depictions of mass culture as monstrous, resurfaces in film reviews, with terms such as 'slick' and 'mindless' to describe Hollywood horror.[42] Demands for new regulations foregrounded catchphrases such as 'ban video sadism now' from the Daily Mail (see fig. 3), echoing the slogan 'ban this filth' from

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[39] Geoffrey Pearson, 'Falling Standards: a short, sharp history of moral decline', in *The Video Nasties: Freedom and Censorship in the Media*, edited by Martin Barker (London: Pluto Press, 1984), pp. 88-103.
[40] Since the 1960s, classificatory ratings for cinematic release in the USA have been provided by The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), a trade association with no legal standing under federal law. Thus, there was no barrier to MPAA ratings transferring to video or DVD releases.
[41] Kate Egan, *Trash or Treasure? Censorship and the Changing Meanings of the Video Nasties* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 84.
[42] Ibid., pp. 31-32.

Mary Whitehouse's earlier 'Clean Up TV' campaign.[43] One censorship activist claimed to represent 'the views of all sane and patriotic people, about the priority importance of sound family life […] the foundation of democracy and the rightful heritage of a Christian nation'.[44] Whitehouse and her ilk were thus not simply aiming to prevent material containing potentially damaging or offensive content from being accessed by the unsuspecting or unprepared, they wanted to stop it being created and disseminated at all. Whitehouse directly caused the jailing of an editor of *Gay News* on grounds of blasphemy, inspiring one young letter writer to ask her why, as a straight Christian woman, she was reading such material: 'the only reason you read *Gay News* is because there are things to complain about in it'.[45] There have been recent attempts to reclaim elements of these, now widely mocked, moral campaigns; Ben Thompson, who edited selections from Whitehouse's archive for publication, asserts that 'viewed from an anguished liberal perspective, the truly frightening thing about Mrs Whitehouse is not the nature of her opinions, but how many things she got right'.[46] I can only disagree. Abigail Derecho states that 'pro-censorship activists felt strong desires to achieve positive, constructive results, such as unity, cohesion, agreement, togetherness. In short […] commonality'.[47] I ask how constructive and positive a unity based on exclusion and silencing can be. The focus of nationalist fervour is, once again, the reproductive unit of the family that must be simultaneously constructed as safe, and defended as if under attack.

Delineating between the 'video nasty' and the general horror film is a difficult proposition; what made it into the newspapers as matter to be expelled from the family home depended on context as well as content. In 1979, before the 'nasties' rhetoric developed, the Secretary of the BBFC James Ferman listed 'things [that] are habitually cut or rejected' by the board: 'films glorifying rape, the torture of naked women, the degradation of adolescent girls, the infliction of serious bodily harm through easily copied weapons, the casual slaughter of animals'.[48] However, a list of seventy-two banned films believed to violate the Obscene Publications Act 1959, which was released to the public from the office of the Director of

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[43] Speech by Patricia Duce, quoted in Thompson, p. 68.
[44] Letter from an anonymous contact in the Moral Re-Armament campaign of 1963, to Mary Whitehouse, quoted in Ben Thompson, *Ban This Filth!: Mary Whitehouse and the Battle to Keep Britain Innocent* (London: Faber and Faber, 2012), p. 19.
[45] Quoted in Thompson, p. 339.
[46] Thompson, p. 406.
[47] Abigail T. Derecho, *Illegitimate Media: Race, Gender and Censorship in Digital Remix Culture* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Northwestern University, 2008), p. 69.
[48] Quoted in Julian Petley, *Film and Video Censorship in Contemporary Britain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), p. 18.

Public Prosecutions in 1983, included films already acquitted of obscenity in certain jurisdictions, highlighting differences between context and content. The depictions of abused and degraded women in *Cannibal Holocaust* (Ruggero Deodato, 1985) and *I Spit on Your Grave* (Meir Zarchi, 1987) in no way 'glorify' rape, but are a pertinent contribution to stories about the cultural positioning of women in society, as Martin Barker would agree.[49] Similarly, though scenes in *The Night Porter* (Liliana Cavani, 1974) and *The Gestapo's Last Orgy* (Cesare Canevari, 1977) might share imagery and offend viewers, the films cannot be considered equivalent; the latter is constructed purely for titillation, using the abuse and degradation of women to this end, the former explores the after effects of an exploitative relationship upon the participants. Thus, though obscene publications were amongst the movies that initiated the 'video nasties' panic, it was not only films that glorified violence that became the target for censorship. What it was the targeted films *did* do that made them so unacceptable was never made clear.

I argue that films that made the list, or gained tabloid column inches, often did so because they located monstrosity within the family home, and/or refused to destroy queer monstrosity. In 1993, *Child's Play 3* (Jack Bender, 1991) gained a level of notoriety in the UK as the last film rented by the father of Jon Venables, a child convicted of murdering a toddler.[50] In fact, the readers of the tabloid press were all but told the film played a part in the planning of the murder, and was banned as a result (see fig. 4). Liberal Democrat MP David Alton used the film's notoriety to campaign for a tightening of censorship and amendments to the 1984 VRA. Alton used the protection of children to suggest that censors gain extraordinary power to prevent certain fictions from being brought into the sacred domestic space of the home, insisting that:

> Either because it presents an inappropriate model for children, or because it is
> likely to cause psychological harm to a child, no video recording containing that
> work is to be supplied for private use, or viewed in any place to which children
> under the age of eighteen are admitted.[51]

Barker notes that the film itself is not in fact about the glorification of harm toward a child, but about his survival in a hostile home environment: 'misunderstood and maltreated by the

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[49] Martin Barker, '"Nasties" a problem of identification', in *The Video Nasties*, ed. by Barker, pp. 104-118.
[50] Petley, *Film and Video Censorship*, p. 88.
[51] Quoted in Petley, *Film and Video Censorship*, p. 91.

adults around him, he does the right thing, no matter what cost to himself'.[52] However, the dominant narrative insisted that harm within the home came from outside sources and over-indulgence, rather than neglect, as in Conservative MP Jerry Hayes's claims about 'those middle class people […] wearing Gucci accessories in their Hampstead flats […who] allow their children to see the type of video films with which we are dealing'.[53] In claims that the film inspired Venables to violence, the discourses of harm surrounding access to Gothic horror, and those addressed within the Gothic text itself, were set in contradiction to each other.

Figure 4: 'Banned', Daily Mirror, Wednesday, 13 April (1994)

[52] Martin Barker, 'The Newson Report: a Case Study in 'Common Sense', in *Ill Effects: the Media/Violence Debate*, 2nd edition, edited by Martin Barker and Julian Petley (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007 [1997]), pp. 11-27 (p. 18).
[53] Speech made in Parliament, 11 November (1983), quoted in Barker, 'Nasty Politics or Video Nasties?, in *The Video Nasties*, ed. by Barker, pp. 7-38 (p. 19).

The Gothic text recognises the potential for the alienation of the individual within the family, and of the home as a place of fear rather than sanctuary: in the *Child's Play* films the family does not believe the child when his doll starts to act violently, just as the parents fail to recognise their child's murderer in *The Last House on the Left* (Wes Craven, 1972). In a telling reversal, the eponymous Driller Killer of Abel Ferrara's 1979 film is a man seemingly driven mad because his home, disrupted by the band rehearsing downstairs and the desertion of both his girlfriends, is no longer a place of refuge. The film vulnerable to censorship exposes the faults with the idea of domestic unity: presenting the family as individuals who each have their own motivations, fears and, possibly competing, needs that are not served by the rhetoric of 'family values'. Previous explorations of the video nasties debate have often focused on the historical contexts whereas, in the next section, I develop close readings of the filmic texts themselves to argue that conservative and patriarchal censors seemed to insist that the home and the family were depicted as a place of safety where children, and certain ideologies, are protected.

Victim Blaming: the politics of survival in the horror film

The family values much vaunted in this period's political and cultural rhetoric were ill-defined, yet clearly referred only to specific kinds of families in terms of class, race and gender. As Faludi demonstrates, working mothers and single mothers have long been vilified in the press and in fictional media: '"Special" may sound like superior, but it is also a euphemism for handicapped [sic]'.[54] This modifier became a dog whistle in American conservative rhetoric for the portions of the population who statistically require the most state support, as Derecho outlines:

> The 'special interests' against which Reagan's common sense, and America's new found common ground, offered protection and defense […] served as a coded reference to racial and ethnic groups, to women, the disabled and ill, the elderly, homosexuals, and the poor.[55]

Instead of having to fight ideologically for the reduction of tax-funded support for many different programmes, these groups were conflated under the banner term and turned, *en*

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[54] Faludi, p. 360.
[55] Derecho, p. 81.

masse, into a monstrous legion of 'leeches'.[56] The recipients of social provisions, from pensions to sheltered accommodation, were coded 'special interest' groups who worked against national unity or, in the terms used by British censorship advocates, against the interests of 'sane and patriotic people' in a 'Christian nation'.

The monsters of 80s horror fiction, I argue, echo the monsterisation of certain groups in the popular press, whereas the victims reflect the assumed 'common ground' of the middle-class subject-citizen. Stephen King's 'Children of the Corn' (1977), *Pet Sematary* (1983), and 'Gramma' (1984) each reflect social fears surrounding the family; wayward children, overly indulgent parents, and elderly people extending the 'natural span' of life. Freddy Kruger in *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (Wes Craven, 1984) and the clown from King's *IT* represent cultural fears of the predatory paedophile. Clive Barker's popular Gothic horror deals with similar social issues: *Cabal* (1988), filmed as *Nightbreed* (Clive Barker, 1990), explores mental health and physical disability; and *Hellraiser* (Clive Barker, 1987), adapted from *The Hellbound Heart* (1986), explores the sadomasochistic and the queer. As proposed above, which horror films were targeted to be banned as 'nasties' and which were allowed general release depended upon their stance on social issues; whether they had the right politics of victimhood and heteronormativity.

Mainstream texts from white creators consistently constructed victimhood as a privileged position, inhabited by white women and their families, whose troubles garner sympathy, whereas other people's deaths are merely plot devices or backstory. The adaptation of Barker's tale 'The Forbidden' (1985) into *Candyman* (Bernard Rose, 1992) directly references intersections of race and class in the construction of victim and aggressor. However, though middle-class, white graduate student Helen (Virginia Madsen) observes that the police only take violent crime in a housing project seriously when she becomes a target, the film recreates this dynamic as black women, housing project tenant Anne-Marie (Vanessa Williams) and graduate student Bernadette (Kasi Lemmons), are still treated as disposable victims. As Robin Means Coleman has shown, there is a difference in perspective and representation between a 'black horror film' and a horror film with black people in it.[57]

From a corpse-like decaying body with jaundiced skin the 'colour of buttermilk' on the page, on screen the Candyman (Tony Todd) became a towering black man, and blackness itself a

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[56] Ibid., p. 81.
[57] Robin Means Coleman, *Horror Noire: Blacks in American Horror Films from the 1890s to Present* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), pp. 5-7.

source of horror and an experience of suffering for viewers to demonise. In the short story, fear of otherness itself is the source of the monster; it is a narrative about how monsters are created, and why stories about them are told. Barker's Candyman only desires to keep existing, feeding on fear: 'I am rumour […]. It's a blessed condition […] to live in people's dreams; to be whispered on street corners, but not to have to *be*'.[58] His physical presence amalgamates fears: the prosthetic hook suggesting the dread of physical difference, concern that becoming physically less whole might similarly reflect a mental instability or damage; his rottenness echoes old taboos about decay and putrefaction;[59] his association with sugar and the death of a child play on fears of the stranger and the paedophile, his motley clothes recalling the legend of the Pied Piper. The Candyman on film, however, does not represent the fears of those whose belief sustains him, even as Todd intones the same lines about existing as a rumour: the housing project residents fear gang violence and the retaliatory police, but create altars to the ghost. It is Helen – and, by sightline-positioning, the audience – who are menaced by the Candyman's looming physicality: the ghost of a lynched black man, his acquired disability making visible his last violent encounter with white supremacy. He 'infects' the sympathetic white woman; the final monster is Helen's ghost, who crosses the boundary from social housing to middle-class apartment, bringing the violence home. The film thus reinscribes the very hierarchy of racial privilege in the 'politics of victimhood' it had seemingly wanted to critique, drawing on fears of miscegenation and black revenge.

That *Candyman* and *Hellraiser* became popular cinema franchises was enabled by differences in their politics from the page to the screen, the latter explored in this chapter's final section, on overtly queer Gothic. Meanwhile, to focus on the construction of normativity, I explore the family and gender dynamics in case studies of two films that made it onto the DPP's list of banned films; *Driller Killer* and *The Last House on the Left*. I compare these so-called nasties' treatment of the concepts of the home and the family with those of Craven's later film *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, and its immediate sequel *Freddy's Revenge* (Jack Sholder, 1985), as representative of the 'slasher' genre popular in horror cinema in this period. Previous analyses have focused on the paratextual materials of the access debate: James Pitley investigated the process surrounding the distributor's negotiations with the BBFC over *Last*

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[58] Clive Barker, 'The Forbidden', *The Books of Blood*: *volume five* (London: Sphere, 1985), pp. 1-54 (p. 48).
[59] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: an Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1991 [1966]).

House, in which the disputed elements were termed 'harmful to society'.[60] Instead, I focus on a close textual reading of the film itself, drawing on Robin Wood's analysis that 'we are led to understand every [violent] act as the realisation of potentials that exist within us all, that are intrinsic to our social and personal relationships'.[61] I argue that the audience of a 'nasty' is specifically led to critique the idea that violent potential is missing from the white, middle-class, family environment.

Though the title of Craven's film recalls a cosy, domestic location, *Last House* depicts an overt challenge to the normative ideal of family relationships. At first, it seems to uphold the traditions of the 'slasher' genre, as teenagers are targeted whilst engaging in behaviour their parents would not sanction. The rebellious nature of Mari Collingwood (Sandra Cassell) is signified in traditional horror movie terms, through onscreen nudity and using illegal drugs. However, Mari and her parents, John (Richard Towers) and Estelle (Cynthia Carr) Collingwood, are shown to have a loving and supportive relationship. Though Mari leaves the supposedly safe domestic sphere, and buying drugs leads her into contact with her killer, the murderers' car subsequently breaks down near the Collingwoods' home, introducing an element of chance and danger into the suburban space. Though evil initially seems to come from the city, with the gang of murderous drug users, the suburbs not only provide no protection, but also harbour violent passions of their own. A second round of violence in the film is perpetrated by the Collingwoods in revenge, after they discover the raped and dying Mari in the woods. Previous critics, such as Roger Ebert and Peter Lehman, note that the film shares its basic plot with Ingmar Bergman's *The Virgin Spring* (1960).[62] Craven's interpretation of parental vengeance belongs in the horror genre in part due to the realistic portrayal of the sexual attack, as opposed to the framing of Bergman's beautiful but silent victim, or the titillating display of the victim's body in *Death Wish* (Michael Winner, 1974). *Last House* is not, however, focussed on the pain of the father, a perspective in the other films that reinforces heteropatriarchal values. In making the horror of the rape, and the subsequent murders, realistically visceral, Craven's film asks the audience to see the Collingwoods' actions not as a heroic revenge, but as part of a continuation of senseless violence.

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[60] Petley, *Film and Video Censorship*, pp. 178-179.

[61] Robin Wood, *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan… and Beyond*, revised edition (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003), p. 114.

[62] Roger Ebert, 'Review of *Last House on the Left*', *Chicago-Sun Times*, Friday, 6 October (1972), p. 58. (accessible at *RogerEbert.com* <http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/last-house-on-the-left-1972>) [accessed 13/05/2016].

The normativity of the suburban family, and the moral superiority of the middle classes, is further undercut by parallels between the criminals and the Collingwoods. The criminal gang act as a parody of a family: Krug (David Hess) tells Junior (Marc Sheffler) to 'listen to Daddy', even as he convinces the young man to kill himself. Differences of class are highlighted by differences in manners as they all share a meal, at which the two 'mothers' wear such similar outfits they would have been indistinguishable in the dim light of the subsequent night time fight scene without a change in costume. The film thus depicts the differences between the two groups as superficial; they share a fundamental desire to enact violence and degradation. The fighting depicted is brutal and desperate: Estelle castrates one man with her teeth. In the Collingwoods' frenzy of revenge their suburban home is destroyed; the film ends with a freeze frame of the blood-covered couple, in their devastated living room, the birthday banner for Mari hanging askew. There is no sense of victory, of normality resumed. There is no obvious course of action in this film that could have protected the central characters: if Mari had not gone into the city perhaps the killers would still have come to call. *Last House* thus suggests that suburban safety and normativity is merely a veneer over a shared, baser, humanity.

In *Driller Killer*, set amongst the struggling artists of urban, bankrupt New York City, young artist Reno Miller (Abel Ferrara) goes on a murder spree. I suggest a reading in which Reno enacts symbolic revenge upon a man whose appearance instigates a psychological breakdown, and posits sexual experience as the source of trauma. The murders start after Reno is asked to meet an old man in a church; loud, tense music dominates the scene, though no immediate threat is presented. Though Reno claims no knowledge of this 'degenerate bum', when the silent older man reaches out to touch his hand the younger man bolts out of the church, angry and disturbed. Reno subsequently starts killing 'degenerate bums', targeting rough sleepers, but never kills his main antagonists (a loud rock band in the apartment below who disturb his home environment and seduce his girlfriend/flatmate Pamela (Baybi Day)). The film offers no direct explanation for Reno's actions, yet a reading of a sexual element to the relationship between the older and younger man is suggested in the sudden purposefulness of his final murders. Reno invites his gay art dealer to his apartment, and this Dalton (Harry Schultz) offers to bring a bottle of wine, clearly implying a date rather than a business meeting. To prepare, Reno is seen selecting red lace underwear and applying lipstick, before buckling on the powerpack for his drill. Reno goes straight from the murder of Dalton to kill the husband of his other former girlfriend/flatmate Carol (Carolyn Marz), with whom he ends up in bed at

the film's end. Reno rejects the dealer, dominating him violently while cross-dressing, but then reasserts his heterosexuality by reclaiming Carol; these final murders thus seem indicative of Reno incorporating, and yet overcoming, some measure of queerness.

Violence alone does not make *Driller Killer* a video nasty, I argue, but the film's distinctly ambivalent relationship to heteronormativity and the idea of the home as a safe space. The lines between heterosexual and homosexual relationships are never clearly established on screen; Carol and Pamela have multiple sexual partners, and Reno's relationship status to both women remains ambiguous. The only nude and private sex scene is between Pamela and Carol, their female queerness associated not with violence but with sensual enjoyment. Yet, Dalton's homosexuality attracts only negative responses: Carol calls him a 'fucking faggot', and Pamela crudely suggests that Reno should 'let him stick it up your ass' to enable an art sale. Although queerness and non-traditional urban living arrangements are aligned with poverty, adultery, and murder in Ferrara's film, there is no clear moral ending that shuts the queer monster into a safe representational box. *Last House* and *Driller Killer* are thus both films of Gothic transgression in which there is no stable, normative world; the surviving characters did not pass through disequilibrium to regain normativity; disequilibrium is revealed to be the underlying reality.

Slasher movie *A Nightmare on Elm Street* quickly established links between non-normative family behaviour and danger, but was not linked to terms like 'depravity' in the press, gaining little tabloid coverage. Echoing themes in Craven's earlier film, the supernatural serial killer Freddy Krueger (Robert Englund) is a monstrosity created by parents: failing to achieve a conviction for paedophilic abuse, the victims' parents take the law into their own hands and murder the suspect, who returns as a ghost. Krueger does not wreak vengeance only on the parents but on their teenagers as well; Tina (Amanda Wyss) is killed while in bed with her boyfriend Rod (Jsu Garcia), who Freddy uses as a fall guy, before staging his murder as a suicide. Though tensions between the generations are much more apparent than in the earlier *Last House*, these teenagers are in fact less rebellious than marijuana smoking Mari; gruesomely murdered Glen's (Johnny Depp) only crime is deceiving his parents about a sleep-over. His girlfriend Nancy (Heather Langenkamp) appears to kill Krueger, positioning her as the 'final girl', in Carol J. Clover's term for the typical lone survivor of such films.[63] Yet, after Freddy's apparent defeat, the car in which the teens are driving to school develops a

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[63] Carol J. Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

life of its own; as her daughter is driven away screaming, Nancy's mother Marge (Ronee Blakely) simply smiles and waves before she is dragged back into the house by Kruger. The beautiful day continues outside, and small children play on the neighbouring lawn; normality, constructed as a middle-class white suburb, does not include vengeful, traumatised women nor teenagers who express sexual desire, and thus there is no 'final girl' in this slasher movie.

The first sequel in a series, *Freddy's Revenge* puts non-normativity front and centre. Jesse Thompson (Mark Patton) and his family move into Nancy's former home on Elm Street, five years after the events of the original film. Freddy soon appears, saying 'I need you Jesse, we got special work to do here you and me'; this work appears to be punishing queerness in Jesse and those around him. The relationship between Krueger and Jesse is constantly expressed through innuendo; Jesse says 'I'm scared, Grady. Something is trying to get inside my body', to which his friend responds, 'And you want to sleep with me?' When alone with other teenagers in sexually-charged situations, Jesse begins to physically transform into Freddy: 'he's inside me, and he wants to take me again'. The implication, that Jesse is being 'queered' by Krueger, reinforces the idea that queerness is a danger to youth imposed by perverse adults. Jesse's desires are implicitly presented as being as dangerous to the normative family as those of the predatory child molester, reflecting widespread cultural narratives of the era, in which homosexuality and paedophilia were linked, propagated by influential politicians and religious leaders.[64] Krueger represents an urge Jesse must fight, lest he end up like the school sports coach who threatens 'innocent' youth and is killed, symbolically, by his own perversions. Freddy punishes queerness in the coach, who attends bars dressed in BDSM (bondage, domination, sado-masochism) 'leather-daddy' fashion, by stripping him and whipping him to death in the school shower room. Thus, in a conceptual tangle often seen in earlier discourses of sexuality explored in previous chapters, queerness is presented as both introduced from outside by corrupting influences, and as inherent to certain bodies and behaviours.

The discourse of harm that surrounds the horror movie censorship panic positions the nuclear family as at risk and under attack, and thus, I argue, mainstream horror films avoided censorship by re-inscribing this model. As David Sanjek notes of the popular *Friday the 13th* franchise:

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[64] See William Dannemeyer, *Shadow in the Land: Homosexuality in America* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1989).

Nothing about Jason's behaviour leads the audience to question very much about themselves or the subjects of the narratives; the audience assumes that these characters will expire in a manner that proves little more than the innumerable ways sharp objects can penetrate soft flesh.[65]

Yet the murders follow a clear pattern; parents and kids who do not fulfil traditional domestic duties are the targets. In *Elm Street* Tina's mother, who wears heavy make-up and is sleeping with a man who is not Tina's father, enables a mixed-sex sleepover by casually 'taking off for two days'. Nancy's parents are on the verge of a divorce, her mother Marge descending into alcoholism as she faces the consequences of her murderous past. Clive Barker suggested that these film franchises made cult heroes of 'the man in the mask', such as Jason from *Friday the 13th Part II* (Steve Miner, 1981) or Michael Myers in *Halloween* (John Carpenter, 1978), claiming slasher films are therefore more 'unhealthy' than his own brand of supernatural horror.[66] I suggest these killers can be considered heroic leads for the same reasons these films were not targets in a moralistic campaign: their narratives overtly support and promote heteronormative 'family values'.

The narrative of harm is, at heart, a narrative of (social) purity, which is reflected in the conventional ordering of victims in terms of traditional patriarchal and eugenicist values. The recognised pecking order of on-screen deaths, as Clover notes, often results in the lone survivor being a white, middle-class girl. However, though the survival of the 'final girl' is proposed as progressive, breaking down binaristic gender representations, ultimately these films reinforce patriarchal heteronormativity. By contrast, Coleman frames the survivor in Blaxploitation horror as the 'enduring woman'; often older, and urban, she is not only fighting 'some boogeyman' but rather 'their battle is with racism and corruption'.[67] Though the 'enduring woman' survives because she is resilient and competent, a fighter in an on-going systemic battle, the 'final girl' survives an encounter with a singular boogeyman only because she is the last targeted, often through the circumstance of her unwillingness to engage in sexual activity. Whilst the black female stars have sexual agency, though many are often hypersexualised, the white women are, once again, positioned as that which is to be protected

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[65] David Sanjek, 'Same As It Ever Was: innovation and exhaustion in the horror and science fiction films of the 1990s', in *Film Genre 2000*, edited by Wheeler Winston Dixon (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000), pp. 111-123 (p. 117).
[66] *Open to Question: Clive Barker*, BBC2, 8 December (1987), 'VHS Video vault', *YouTube*, 22 September 2015, <https://youtu.be/ZOqaKgrbjfQ> [accessed November 2016].
[67] Means Coleman, *Horror Noire*, p. 132.

in society, as long as they are 'pure'; they must be protected from, or punished for, their own desires.

Working-class, rebellious, and non-conforming youths are coded as a danger to other youthful characters more often than as potential victims themselves, particularly by adult authority figures within the films. Sanjek's analysis assumes a target audience of straight, white, middle-class suburban teens reflecting the teenagers who generally survive horror movies; they wear colourful fashions and listen to mainstream pop music. The survivors are rarely those who wear ripped denim and leather jackets, like Rod Lane on Elm Street. Reinscription of fear of the juvenile delinquent appears in vampire movies *The Lost Boys* (Joel Schumacher, 1987) and *Near Dark* (Kathryn Bigelow, 1987); cultural and class alignments within the Gothic narratives of harm are clear in the division between the rock and roll fashions of the vampire gangs and the preppy styles of the family under threat. The parallels are still presented through familial models. In both films, the gang is led by a father figure, in *Lost Boys* Max (Edward Herrmann) who hopes to recruit mother Lucy (Diane Weiss) alongside her teenage sons. Lucy's family is vulnerable to his advances due to her divorce; Michael's (Jason Patric) resentfulness and rebellion lead him to join the gang. Lucy's father, the legitimate patriarch, kills Max and re-establishes safety in the family home. The 'wrong' sort of teenager and the wrong sort of family are excluded from normative domesticity, and even from participating in parallel familial structures, as in Anne Rice's novels. Thus we see that in the popular Gothic it is the safe future of the all-American (white) family that is celebrated, and shown to depend upon conformity and heteronormativity.

Monstrous Families: queer communities in Gothic horror

Gothic novels about heteronormative monstrous families during this period, such as Katherine Dunn's *Geek Love* (1989), Angela Carter's *Wise Children* (1991), and the film adaptations of the Addams Family (Barry Sonnenfeld 1991, 1993), are full of characters who revel in their non-normativity. In *Geek Love* Arturo Binewski, who performs as the circus act 'Aqua Boy', describes horror fiction to his hunchbacked dwarf sister Olympia as 'written by norms to scare norms. And do you know what the monsters and demons and rancid spirits are? Us, that's what. You and me. We are the things that come to the norms in nightmares'.[68] These families are predominantly white and wealthy; their ability to conform, should they wish to do

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[68] Katherine Dunn, *Geek Love* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), p. 46.

so, is rarely in doubt. Those who marry in from outside, who are not white or able-bodied, still struggle to achieve recognition as subjects in their own right. The members of the Addams family whose physicality precludes conformity, Cousin It and Thing, are not developed characters with an emotional backstory; their lack of names reflects their inability to occupy the subject position. The Binewskis created their children's physical non-normativity deliberately, through exposing the pregnant body of 'Crystal' Lil Binewski to toxic materials, to make money in the circus. The performative difference of the 'freaks' perhaps echoes the critical position of feminist scholars who use Aristotelian images of the female body as 'deformed' to critique female disempowerment, without engaging with the concomitant disempowerment of bodily disability. In these texts, the physically non-conforming body is frequently still essentialised as monstrous; the cultural construction of normativity remains in place.

Though the division between the 'norms' and the 'freaks' appears to be the fundamental dynamic that structures these narratives, the same considerations are seen to guide both groups: heteronormativity and class dynamics of wealth and power. Everything about the family dynamics of the Binewski clan is tainted by profit and loss; their physical monstrosity figured as the embodiment of their ugly grasping for money and status. The family also reinforces the normative gender roles of high capitalism, with the girls assigned caring and supportive roles, and the men active in the outside world. *Geek Love* reinforces traditional ideals of the family a safe and stable space through the depiction of monstrous otherness, as in Rice's *Vampire Chronicles.* The vampire Claudia lives a monstrous parody of her own desire for a family: existing for seventy years in a small child's body she longs for mature relationships, but is forced to live with a companion posing as a nursemaid and a nursery full of dolls. Claudia's desire to escape her role as child is shown to be as dangerous as Lestat and Louis' desire for a (queer) family. The men's desires are monstrous because they are queer, but Claudia's desires are queer because she is monstrous. The vampires, like the Binewskis, are monstrous because they do not function as a coherent unit; competing for resources rather than sharing, the children and parents vie for roles that are not fixed in a 'natural' hierarchy. These depictions appear in books about non-normativity by normative authors – a situation described by disability activists as 'about us, without us'.[69] The monstrous other is most

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[69] As used for the title of a key work of scholarship by James I. Charlton, *Nothing About Us Without Us: Disability Oppression and Empowerment* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998).

frequently deployed in the service of normativity: to patrol the borders of class, gender, sexuality, and physical ability.

In books by queer-identifying authors, queerness is addressed directly rather than metaphorically, and is often brought into sharp contrast with other categories of exclusion, enabling the exploration of the way these identity constructs 'come in to existence in and through relation to each other', in Anne McClintock's phrase. The depiction of the queer, disabled, racial other on their own terms, should open up new possibilities for conceiving of the body, the family, and kinship: Butler's 'possibility of savouring the status of unthinkability'.[70] Yet, historically, as disability scholars David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder, and Ellen Samuels, have addressed, queerness achieved a measure of normativity and/or acceptance by denying its construction as a medical pathology, and this position implicitly supports the stigmatisation of the mentally or physically abnormative.[71] How depictions of queerness as a radical alternative then negotiate physical disability and abnormality is central when considering such texts as critical perspectives on normativity.

Queer authors, like Clive Barker and Poppy Z. Brite, explore the 'unthinkable' boundaries of the body, as they strew its gore across their pages; the very genre term 'splatterpunk', coined by novelist David J. Schow, suggests its deconstruction of bodies and ideas of embodiment. Yet, on film, Clive Barker's *Hellraiser* franchise seemingly makes queerness monstrous, developing the alien Pinhead (Doug Bradley) along the lines of the slasher antihero Barker had previously reviled; the plots increasingly focus on his development as a threatening representative of 'evil'. However, in the original novella, *The Hellbound Heart* (1986), the mystical order of alien pleasure seekers, the Cenobites, are written to induce a more existential crisis in the reader, as opposed to a simple shudder of aversion or shock of titillation. The protagonist, Frank Cotton, thinks of himself as a jaded hedonist, summoning the Cenobites to 'redefine the parameters of sensation, which would release him from the dull round of desire, seduction and disappointment'.[72] Yet his wildest desires and expectations are consistently, even boringly, heteronormative:

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[70] Butler, 'Kinship', p. 18.
[71] David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *The Body and Physical Difference: Discourses of Disability* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997), p. 6; and Ellen Samuels, 'Critical Divides: Judith Butler's Body Theory and the Question of Disability', *NWSA Journal*, 14.3 (2002), 58-76 (pp. 69-70).
[72] Clive Barker, 'The Hellbound Heart', in *Night Visions*, edited by George R. R. Martin (London: Century, 1987), pp. 201-298 (p. 203).

> Oiled women, milked women; women shaved and muscled for the act of love:
> their lips perfumed, their thighs trembling to spread, their buttocks weighty, the
> way he liked them. He had expected sighs, and languid bodies spread on the floor
> underfoot like a living carpet; had expected virgin whores whose every crevice
> was his for the asking […]. He would be exalted by his lust, instead of despised
> for it.[73]

It is possible to read Frank's subsequent torment at the hands of the Cenobites as punishment for sexual desire generally, as in the slasher films Barker criticised, but I suggest that Frank is rather punished for his limited views on sexuality and subjectivity. Frank's desires are entirely in keeping with the exploitative power differentials of patriarchal society, and thus Barker's destruction of Frank, in body and spirit, can be read as the destruction of normative models of sexuality and kinship.

In Barker's tale the greatest threat to both familial love and the individual subject is the white middle-class male, rather than the 'monster' Cenobites: heteronormative masculine sexual aggression destroys both the desiring subject, and the object of desire. Frank views women as objects and his relationships with other people are all abusive; he seduces his sister-in-law Julia before her wedding, and then manipulates her to help his escape and recovery from the Cenobite realm. Through her role in Frank's recovery, as Lucie Armitt notes, Julia 'casts herself in the role of an incestuous mother and as Frankenstein, engaging in sexual relations with his (her) monster'.[74] Julia parodically dies in her defiled wedding dress. The rituals of family formation and marriage, viewed in terms of power and exploitation, are parodied as obscene and meaningless. Barker queers the parody, describing an attempt to obscure Frank's identity with his brother's face in terms of a marriage, consummated in violence: 'the usurped skin was now wed to his brother's body, the marriage sealed with the letting of blood […]. She saw Frank beside his brother, the knife buried in the dead man's buttock'.[75] The erasure of a bride's bodily sovereignty, in name and sexual agency, is monstrously – and incestuously – described. Frank is a monster not only for his violence against his brother's body, but against his identity:

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[73] Barker, 'Hellbound Heart', p. 206.
[74] Lucie Armitt, *Twentieth-Century Gothic* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p. 101.
[75] Barker, 'Hellbound Heart', pp. 293-294.

Somehow the theft of Rory's name was as unforgivable as stealing his skin; or so her grief told her. A skin was nothing. Pigs had skins; snakes had skins. […] But a name? That was a spell, which summoned memories.[76]

All Frank's transgressions against subjectivity thus form a critique of the violence of heteronormative masculinity, through the lens of queer alterity.

The Cenobites, by contrast, endanger bodily signification as a legible surface through disrupting our ideas of gender and dis/ability; yet, they fundamentally respect subjectivity. The 'Order of the Gash' require Frank's explicit consent for their quasi-religious ritualistic exploration of his form, in both physical and psychological terms. In 'The Hellbound Heart', as in the Gothic of another *fin de siècle*, the destruction of the physical form, and the false paradigms on which the boundaries of subjectivity are constructed, provide the central source of horror. Barker's Cenobites, though of alien species, are described so that the source of horror is their deliberate interventions into their bodies to cause sensation, and not their inherent physical difference to the human:

The scars that covered every inch of their bodies, the flesh cosmetically punctured and sliced and infibulated, then dusted down with ash […] clothes, some of which were sewn to and through its skin […] these sexless things, with their corrugated flesh.[77]

It is action, consciously entered into, that determines monstrosity in this tale and not inherent embodied characteristics. Ultimately, the aliens' bodies are their own: it is the loss of Rory and Frank's control over their own bodies that seems intended to horrify. The construction of monstrosity here suggests a non-essentialising view of sex, gender and subjectivity.

Though his explorations of queerness are rich and complex, however, Barker often struggles to address embodied alterity effectively, as the adaptation of 'The Forbidden', discussed earlier, demonstrates. Barker's novel *Cabal* deals with the stigma of physical non-normativity in a similar manner to *Candyman*, reflecting the same tensions between awareness of the problems facing a marginalised community, and the continuing desire to centre normativity. In the novel, Aaron Boone suffers from an unnamed mental health condition that leaves him sexually impotent, and with portions of missing memory, making him vulnerable to manipulation; he is framed for serial murders by his psychiatrist, Decker. Experiencing forms

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[76] Ibid., p. 293.
[77] Ibid., pp. 205-206.

of disability he goes to seek out the town of Midian, a haven for the abnormative, including shapeshifters and other traditional monsters. Midian functions as a ghetto that enables the practice of religious worship and community tradition, its separation from other settlements predicated on fear of the dominant society's violent rejection of a minority community that acts and looks differently. Their non-normative physicality is described in terms of horror, in a manner familiar to the readers of William Hope Hodgson's Gothic a hundred years earlier:

> The head of his questioner was not *solid*; it seemed almost to be *inhaling* its redundant features, their substance darkening and flowing through socket and nostrils and mouth back into itself. […] The thing had drunk its beast-face down. There were human features beneath, set on a body more reptile than mammal. […] That too was under review as the tremor of change moved down its jutting spine.[78]

Positioned throughout as an outsider to both normative and monstrous societies, Boone is not initially accepted by the residents of Midian, not considered a true freak. However, as the hero of Barker's story, his is the perspective from which the reader will approach the monster-as-other.

Boone's transformation into the undead and powerful being Cabal never prevents him from passing as an attractive white man, yet 'the human he'd been [was] repulsed by the thing he'd become'.[79] Though the ability to 'pass' in the normative world could make him an effective ally to those with greater knowledge, heritage and cultural legitimacy within their own community, Barker instead suggests that it imbues him with the sacred right of leadership. Traditional models of power – based on those nebulous 'family values' – underpin the narrative; the monstrous community is made sympathetic by appeal to heteronormative ideals about protecting women and children. Lori, Boone's girlfriend, has her first monstrous encounter with shapeshifting child Babette and her mother:

> [Lori] couldn't get what she held from her embrace fast enough, tipping it into the [mother's] outstretched arms like so much excrement […] but the scene of reunion before her – the child reaching up to touch her mother's chin, her sobs passing – was so tender. Disgust became bewilderment, fear, confusion.[80]

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[78] Clive Barker, *Cabal* (London: Fontana, 1989), pp. 50-51.
[79] Ibid., p. 209.
[80] Ibid., p. 93.

It is the urge to protect children that forges the link between monsters and normativity. Yet safety for the monstrous family is presented as rooted in a better understanding of their oppressors: 'their liberator would come eventually, if they could only survive the wait. […] They might not have prayed so passionately had they known what a sea change his coming would bring'.[81] Cabal, the voice of many, fulfils a prophecy to lead, to corral the monsters. The family dynamics of the monster are defined against the norm they hide from: 'keeping the children from the roofs at night, the bereaved from crying too loud, the young in summer from falling in love with the human'.[82] The shattered community of others from Midian are thus offered a reconstitution of 'separate-but-equal'; led by a man who understands, and privileges, the normative world and its rules.

Barker's oeuvre thus contains radically queer texts as well as stories that attempt to integrate normativity and monstrosity into a single societal model, still structured on binaristic oppositions and centring normative values. *The Hellbound Heart* productively questions the foundations of our assumptions about the family unit that produces the subject-citizen, and about the embodied identity of that subject. 'The Forbidden' sets up questions about the formation of community based on shared beliefs and assumptions, putting the emotive image of the mother and child at its centre to explore the interrelation of myth, rumour, and community gossip in our ideas about the safety of the family. Yet, in *Cabal*, Boone's initial insistence on staying in Midian directly leads to its destruction by fire, led by law enforcement and a coerced priest, in an overt echo of the 'social cleansing' of areas such as Greenwood, Ohio.[83] And yet Boone remains the hero of the text; the possibility of self-definition, of agency, and life on their own terms is ultimately denied the monstrous other.

Communal norms of monstrosity and queer family dynamics are explored in the work of another queer splatterpunk author Billy Martin, writing as Poppy Z. Brite.[84] In Brite's novel *Lost Souls* (1992) he constructs vampiric models of normativity and deviance, as set against human models. The vampires are a form of 'community'; a minority population within society sharing a history of marginalisation, their lifestyles variously restricted by physical difference. Three generations of vampire are introduced: four hundred year old Christian runs

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[81] Ibid., p. 251.
[82] Ibid., p. 251.
[83] See Scott Ellsworthy, *Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1992).
[84] Martin is a trans gay man. As his horror fiction is still published, and he maintains an online presence, under the name Poppy Z. Brite, this is the authorial name I refer to throughout.

a down-at-heel New Orleans dive bar, while Zillah, Molochai, and Twig – whose average age is just under one hundred – hunt the highways in a battered old van, and the novel opens with the conception of Zillah's son, Nothing. By inter-breeding with humans the vampires have evolved over time: the younger ones eat food, survive direct sunlight, and have no physical markers of difference such as fangs.[85] The younger vampires ape their older kin's physical characteristics, filing their teeth to points and living a mostly nocturnal existence, though neither of these physical adjustments are necessary. These visible, sometimes performative, differences mark them as outsiders from mainstream culture and as 'insiders' of the community. In Brite's vampire community compulsory disability and compulsory homosexuality are dominant features, their norms reverse human normative social dynamics: disability and queerness are constructed as separate and yet linked embodied identities.

The homosocial world of Brite's vampires is, at times, both a choice and a practical adaptation to their reproductive biology. Just as the continuation of a vampire's life traditionally depends on death, so too does their creation in Brite's retelling: vampire babies '*chew their way out… they kill, always they kill. Just as I ripped my mother apart*'.[86] Female vampires are unwilling to sacrifice their lives, which is why vampires are most often born of human mothers unaware they will perish during birth. For the vampire, heterosexual desire is queered by the deathwish, or lack of consent, that attends sexual congress given the limitations of their reproductive biology. Brite acknowledges and explores, in an extreme mode, the social dynamic identified by Kafer that for the body that is socially-defined as abnormal, desire is always-already somewhat queer: 'the sexuality of people with disabilities is understood as always already deviant; when queer desires and practices are recognized as such, they merely magnify or exacerbate that deviance'.[87] In fact, we might agree with William Hughes that Zillah, as the only male vampire depicted choosing human female partners, 'is, perversely, a closet heterosexual'.[88] Normativity, in Brite's fiction, is thus deconstructed as the social process by which community and kinship standards are created, based on embodied experience.

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[85] Poppy Z. Brite, *Lost Souls* (New York, NY: Dell, 1992), p. 59.
[86] Ibid., p. 123.
[87] Kafer, p. 82.
[88] William Hughes, '"The Taste of Blood Meant the End of Aloneness": Vampires and Gay Men in Poppy Z. Brite's *Lost Souls*', in *Queering the Gothic*, edited by William Hughes and Andrew Smith (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), pp. 142-157 (p. 151).

The difference between the freely-chosen performance of identity and embodied attributes is a central theme of Brite's novel. Brite is unforgiving of those who lay claim to an outsider status without fully understanding, experiencing, or accepting the negative implications of real marginalisation. The club kids Christian feeds upon and Nothing's teenage drop-out friends cultivate outsider status from the mainstream culture of their parents, but their disaffection is based on choice. Suburban teenagers perform queer sex acts without seeming desire or enjoyment merely to experience transgression; a fourteen-year-old boy is described by the narrator of *Lost Souls* as 'cultivating arcane talents', with the sarcastic clarifier 'the legend *Laine Gives Killer Head* inscribed on more than one bathroom wall at school'.[89] Laine, unsurprisingly, ends up being eaten – not content with remaining in the safe normative sphere, but not an outsider enough to join a community of otherness. The vampiric trio of Zillah, Molochai and Twig, use markers of queerness and bodily difference to demand access into what should be safe locations, further endangering already marginalised groups, and exploit dominant norms to hide in plain sight the danger they pose to all. In their ability to exploit the appearance of a marginal identity only when it suits them, both Zillah and his son Nothing revel in the luxury of choice. As in earlier Gothic horror produced by queer authors and other minority voices, the monster is not constructed as an isolated and physically disabled individual in Brite's work. Instead, it is the privileged and physically more-than-normative white man who embodies monstrosity. The author thus creates a fictional world that is critically queer and critically disabled, in which the monsters are shown to be virtually queer and virtually disabled – objectifying and fetishizing otherness-as-monstrosity to improve their ability to prey upon the marginalised.

Frontiers of the self: queer racial otherness

Though gay and trans authors of splatterpunk horror reclaim the Gothic as a space for queer self-expression, not merely titillating transgression constructed through heteronormativity, they often still replicate normative hierarchies of racial monstrosity and victimhood. Despite recognising that deviation from dominant cultural norms has negative social repercussions, Brite still glamorises normative, white, models of physical beauty. At the end of *Lost Souls*, Nothing forms a vampiric rock band, reinforcing images of the vampire as highly desirable

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[89] Brite, *Lost Souls*, p. 33.

and rebellious. As Hughes notes, the vampire's desire to maintain their physical identity, to remove the 'stigmata of hybridity' might suggest fears of racial degeneration.[90] There are, further, few central or supporting characters of colour in Brite and Barker's Gothic; those who are present most often serve as victims. Brite described serial killer novel *Exquisite Corpse* (1996) as exploring 'the seamy politics of victimhood and disease',[91] yet the novel ends up reinforcing, rather than re-examining, dominant discourse. The descriptions of sexual acts and gory violence present the body of the racial and sexual other to the reader, in a doubling of the objectifying gaze: Vietnamese-American Tran Vinh's main function in the narrative is to serve as fetish object of white men's queer sexuality. The novel ends with the cannibal serial killer Andrew Compton and Tran's ex-boyfriend, Lucas, reflecting on their dead partners, bringing a form of equivalence to Andrew's partial consumption of his lover Jaye Byrne and Luke's cannibalisation of Tran's death into his fiction. Tran's murder chiefly serves as a moment of realisation for Luke, inspiring him to resume his writing career and fight his HIV-related illnesses. In Brite's work, as in Barker's, the monsters are fully-realised subjects, the fully-realised subjects are monstrous, but people of colour are seemingly neither.

Black authors of the Gothic were often writing the real and horrible results of the continuation of this status quo, including Toni Morrison, whose *Beloved* (1987) won the Pulitzer Prize and was adapted by Hollywood in 1998. As Carol Margaret Davison notes, Gothic writers of colour 'resist its Romantic effects'; instead their work 'underscores the traumatic, terror-filled reality' of a racist society.[92] Though dealing with supernatural phenomena, novels such as *Beloved*, and Jewelle Gomez's *The Gilda Stories* (1991), focus on the real interpersonal struggles of queer and disabled people of colour, particularly black women. Gomez's story cycle about a black lesbian vampire's life, over the course of a hundred and fifty years foregrounds the role of agency in the formation of subject and community identity through the body as abhuman, disabled, and racially distinct.[93] Physical identity is important in terms of relationships to others, and to the sense of self, both of which are shown to be interlinked: 'her essence as an African still shone through her soft wide features. She saw not just herself but a long line of others who had become part of her as time passed'.[94] Gomez explores the

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[90] William Hughes, 'Fictional Vampires in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, edited by David Punter (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2012) pp. 197-210 (p. 206).

[91] Poppy Z. Brite, 'The Poetry of Violence', in *Screen Violence*, edited by Karl French (London: Bloomsbury, 1996), pp. 62-70 (p. 67).

[92] Carol Margaret Davison, 'African American Gothic', in *Encyclopaedia of the Gothic*, edited by William Hughes, David Punter, and Andrew Smith (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), pp. 7-11 (p. 8).

[93] Jewelle Gomez, *The Gilda Stories* (London: Sheba Feminist Press, 1992), p. 228.

[94] Ibid., p. 223.

interconnections of identity, family, history, and community, connecting bodies to their environments and social contexts in richly detailed ways, through depictions of many forms of communication. In the future of 2020 Gilda has become a romantic fiction author, her books 'a way of speaking with thousands of people', but the most important people she communicates with are her family defined as both the 'progeny' of her human friends and other vampires.[95] By 2050, when the ravages of the human impact on the environment have destroyed not only the Earth, but the societies built upon it, the vampires are hunted, their longevity sought to keep others alive. The horror for Gilda is the lack of consent, the demand implicit on bringing others into a family she holds 'sacred'; an echo of the co-opted role black women have played in white families as caregivers.[96] An ironic reversal of the usual depiction of the vampire as the ultimate desiring monster, Gomez's vampires' verdict on the human race is simple: 'dying of greed'.[97] Gomez fundamentally explores Hegel's idea that at the heart of the self-conscious Enlightenment subject is desire; but her character constructions critique this position as part of a very Western, masculinist, and white tradition.

The alignment of the desiring subject with a particular post-Enlightenment masculinist philosophy is very clear in fiction that seeks to explore queerness as an identity structured by desire. At the heart of Brite's novels is a fetishisation of power dynamics, though this is problematized in the monstrous form of serial killing couple Andrew and Jaye, and the vampire relationships' complications of consent. In Brite's heroic characters, however, dominance and aggression is linked to the desirability and sexual predation of white men; Lucas, a dominant top who 'loved Tran's passivity' that enabled him to control their interactions, is further labelled a 'rice queen' for his fetishized preference for Asian partners.[98] Throughout *Exquisite Corpse* Luke focuses on the loss of his power and status as a handsome white man; he finds the physical and social effects of HIV debilitating and humiliating, but never considers the lives of those who have always been excluded for their embodied identities. The same trend can be seen in Barker's work; though he literally takes the traditional desiring subject apart in 'The Hellbound Heart', and 'The Forbidden' explores the desire for a monster to blame for society's ills. Boone/Cabal has his ability to fulfil his sexual desires restored, even as the monstrous horde he has been sent to lead are told to repress and

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[95] Ibid., p. 220.
[96] Ibid., p. 235.
[97] Ibid., p. 241.
[98] Poppy Z. Brite, *Exquisite Corpse* (London: Orion, 1996), p. 95, p. 93.

confine their own desires. Barker demonstrates the whiteness of his perspective in 'Body Politic' (1986); he equates a disempowered young black man's sovereignty over his body to colonial power, and when a white character dreams of being a slave, his vision of slavery is parsed through a white lens, as 'B. de Mille exotica'.[99] Gomez's exploration of queer desire and embodied identity focuses on reciprocity and emotion, as well as physical and sexual urges, exploring family as community. However, in literature by white authors, although the patriarchal traditions of family may be physically taken apart for examination, the alternatives seem to be limited to insular relationships, dominated by sexual desire.

The contrast between these two definitions of family – by blood and birth aligned with heteronormativity, and by desire aligned with queerness – is particularly clear in Brite's work. In his haunted-house novel *Drawing Blood* (1993), the focus is the developing kinship between two lonely young men, Trevor and Zach: 'you came back looking for family. […] And who is this you hold in your arms now, if not family?'[100] Though Zach's friends, Dougal and Eddy, declare themselves 'his brudda an' sista',[101] in an embarrassing rendition of Patois, characters of colour are never initiated into the supernatural and emotional truths at the heart of the story. The white gay men rely on an Asian American sex worker and Rastafarian marijuana dealer to help them evade law enforcement, without providing any assistance in return, in an ironic restatement of patterns seen in civil rights movements. The needs, rights, and communities of racial others are often depicted as secondary to the desires of those who have the choice to 'pass' as normative. In *Exquisite Corpse*, Tran is not part of a wider gay community unlike Brite's white protagonists; his alienation from his parents initially explores their negative beliefs about homosexuality, but his isolation ultimately serves the plot in which he is abused. It is only after Luke hears his colleague Johnnie's tragic tale of incest, disease, and domestic violence, that he reflects that 'maybe there *were* some hells worse than his'.[102] It is no surprise, given the pattern established in Brite's work, that Johnnie is Cajun and a member of the rural working class, whereas his colleagues are middle-class and white, and one even jokes about being 'Aryan'.[103] In these texts, the suffering of those who are racially marked or socially othered is presented as spectacle, bearing more upon other

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[99] Clive Barker, 'The Body Politic', *The Books of Blood: volume 4* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1986), pp. 1-33 (p. 7, p. 33).
[100] Poppy Z. Brite, *Drawing Blood* (New York, NY: Dell, 1994), p. 289.
[101] Ibid., p. 358.
[102] Brite, *Exquisite Corpse*, p. 201.
[103] Ibid., p. 206.

characters' development than illuminating the nature of their own monstrous/queer subjectivity.

The perspectives expressed in these supposedly radically queer texts are summarised neatly in Tony Kushner's Gothic 'gay fantasia on national themes' *Angels in America* (1992-3):

> When the race thing gets taken care of, and I don't mean to minimise how major it is […] but it's like, well, […] in America […] race here is a political question, right? Racists just try to use race here as a tool in a political struggle. It's not really about race.[104]

Belize, a black gay man, calls this rant by his secular Jewish friend Louis a 'pale, pale white polemics on behalf of racial insensitivity'.[105] Kushner recognises that the ability to think of embodiment symbolically, as 'not really' about itself, is a position that 'does not exist for those […] whose lives continue to be structured by […] body-based discourses of discrimination'.[106] Belize links embodied identity, desire, and the nation state: 'I hate America […] It's just big ideas, and stories, and people dying, and people like you. […] I *live* in America, Louis, that's hard enough, I don't have to love it. You do that'.[107] Louis, by remaining in a safe space of the white gay community, or 'passing' as a normative white man outside, retains a belief in his place as a legitimated subject-citizen. Kushner recognises that Belize, by contrast, is unable to access a similar zone of safety: 'we black drag queens have a rather intimate knowledge of the complexity of the lines of [oppression]'.[108] However, Michelle Williams suggests that Kushner struggles to advance beyond Louis' limited view that race should not matter at all: 'the hegemonic view of race is that it really doesn't exist as a legitimate conceptual category'; from this perspective it can only have negative value supporting racism, rather than positive value in forging cultures.[109] Williams suggests that the limitations in Kushner's depiction of race, and the representation of counter-hegemonic arguments, could have been mitigated by introducing references to, or characters from, Belize's family. The lived experience of family for queer people of colour, as seen with

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[104] Tony Kushner, 'Part One: Millennium Approaches, *Angels in America* (London: Nick Hern Books, 2007 (1995)), III.2, pp. 96-98.

[105] Kushner, *Millennium Approaches*, III.2, p. 101.

[106] Sherryl Vint, *Bodies of Tomorrow: Technology, Subjectivity, Science Fiction* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2007), p. 8.

[107] Kushner, '*Part Two: Perestroika*', *Angels in America* (London: Nick Hern Books, 2007 (1995)) IV.3, p. 228.

[108] Kushner, *Millennium Approaches*, III.2, p. 100.

[109] Michelle Williams, *Dark Designs and Visual Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 440.

Gomez's *Gilda Stories*, stands in radical opposition to the heteropatriarchal anti-miscegenation model that defines the subject of the American nation state.

Conclusion

Though the explosion of queer Gothic in this period seemingly provided a no-holds-barred space for exploring bodies and the relations between bodies, the limitations of popular fictions as critical modes for queer liberation are clear. Jonathan L. Crane claims that Barker's 'post-holocaust' fiction goes beyond nihilism to claim 'nothing matters, and so what if it did', specifically suggesting it makes a response to eugenic violence that echoes Lee Edelman's 'no future' queer theory.[110] Crane states that in Barker's work, 'human life and the varied organisations that seem to support it (the Church, the State, the Body) explode in spectacular disarray whenever suitably threatened.[111] Yet, as the short story 'Body Politic' amply demonstrates, these three are not comparable organisations for sustaining life, in fiction or moral philosophy. The church and the state place limits upon bodies and force some sentient subjects into mere support roles for others: the title of the story refers directly to the metaphor in which the nation state is represented by corporeal form. Barker reveals, through a satire in which sentient hands decide they have had enough of being mere adjuncts to a body, just what John Locke got wrong about subjectivity within the body, and what is wrong with political philosophies that extract subjectivity from the constituent parts of the nation state and the household. In other words, a better categorisation of this work might be 'what if everyone matters, and maybe they do?'

Testing the limits of the subject and subjectivity itself has always been the 'justification' offered by the Gothic for its excesses, yet some limits are easier to cross than others. One of the publishers who refused Brite's *Exquisite Corpse* apparently called its subject matter 'too nihilistic, too extreme, a bloodbath without justification'.[112] The 'justification' is its radical queerness. What is important in the splatterpunk novel is that horror is experienced by a conscious, sentient being; whose pain is the reader sympathising with, and what cultural boundaries are they crossing to do so? Yet, this exploration of the Gothic modes of white

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[110] Jonathan L. Crane, 'Nothing Matters and So if it Did: Clive Barker and Splatterpunk', in *The Image of Violence in Literature, the Media and Society: Selected Papers*, edited by Will Wright and Steven Kaplan (Pueblo, CO: The Society for the Interdisciplinary Study of Social Imagery, 1995), pp. 410-416.
[111] Ibid., p. 414.
[112] Brite, 'The Poetry of Violence', p. 68.

cultural production demonstrates that, despite the best efforts of gay and/or trans authors to represent otherness as an embodied identity, and to complicate the cultural construction of kinship, certain hierarchies of worth that underpin normativity remain unacknowledged and, thus, uncritiqued. Though these authors pushed back against the censorship panics and heteronormativity of the dominant forms of Gothic horror in the movies, in queer Gothic literature persons of colour and the physically disabled often remain defined by their use to (and as) others, rather than by their own interiority and perception. As Mitchell and Snyder note, 'any attempt to distance disenfranchised communities from the fantasy of deformity further entrenches the disabled as the "real" abnormality from which all other non-normative groups must be distanced'.[113] The next, and final, chapter explores the twenty-first century Gothic about white male anti-heroes, as written by white creators: the much needed acknowledgement that, in terms of the true source of terror, the call is coming from inside the house.

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[113] Mitchell and Snyder, p. 6.

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Murder Husbands: the serial killer as family man in the 21ˢᵗ century

> The splinter in your eye is the best magnifying-glass.
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> Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (1951)

In the twenty-first century, the merging – or cross-pollinating – of Gothic with a variety of genres continues; there are Gothic political satires on the BBC, like *Black Mirror* (2011-) and *In the Flesh* (2013-2014); Gothic fairytales on film like *Maleficent* (Robert Stromberg, 2014); as well as traditional Gothic Romances such as *Crimson Peak* (Guillermo del Toro, 2015). In some ways, this can be seen as a return to the genre's roots in the eighteenth century as much as a new period of innovation: *Frankenstein* was revived to commercial and critical success on stage by directors Danny Boyle, at the National Theatre in 2011, and Liam Scarlett at the British Royal Ballet in 2016. The same theme that was central to Mary Shelley's novel and its first-wave Gothic literary influences is explored in the Gothic of the new millennium: the construction of the modern subject. The engagement with the experience of subjectivity is particularly clear in the forensic deconstruction of the Enlightenment models of the ideal subject and his role within the family as both an individual unit, and a social institution.

Previous Gothic (de)constructions of the subject suggested that the model of a whole, indivisible, bounded self was an illusion; to make a monster, authors exposed the 'flaws' that were denied by the ideal model, and projected onto the 'other'. However, this model still enables the elevation of wholeness, by those who desire it, by suggesting that the ideal exists even if it has not yet been achieved. And even when the Enlightenment model of subjectivity is extended to the monstrous other or flawed subject, it is still formulated on a fundamentally exclusionary basis; there is always something that is still 'beyond the pale'. To really explore the limitations of the Enlightenment model of subjectivity it is important to engage with the ideal and not only its other, as Sherryl Vint points out: 'the ability to construct the body as passé is a position available only to those privileged to think of their (white, male, straight, non-working class) bodies as the norm'.[1] The fictions analysed in this chapter explore the

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[1] Sherryl Vint, *Bodies of Tomorrow: Technology, Subjectivity, Science Fiction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), p. 8.

presentation of the white, non-working-class male as an embodied identity position. The monster is not revealed through fragmentation, these men do not fail to achieve a norm, instead they embody a norm that is revealed to be already monstrous.

Gothic television in the new millennium has increasingly focused on the seemingly normative white man: the father, the successful bourgeois businessman, the representative of law enforcement and the state. In *Men with Stakes: Masculinity and the Gothic in US Television* (2016), Julia M. Wright explores depictions of masculinity in Gothic television of the late-twentieth and twenty-first centuries. She frames these depictions within the Enlightenment tradition, interested in the challenge the Gothic presents to realism and scientific rationality as arbiters of truth. This chapter also explores the Gothic's challenge to rationality, but through a direct engagement with the representation of the body in the forensic-influenced detective series. I suggest that in the past ten years, one model of monstrous masculine power has come to the fore in televisual Gothic; the murderer who, aligned with legislative and structural power, and maintaining a personal image as a patriarch, conforms to dominant ideals of masculine self-presentation and behaviour. Series such as *Dexter* (2006-2013), the *Red Riding* trilogy (2009), *The Fall* (2013-2016), *Hannibal* (2013-2015), and season one of *True Detective* (2014) all foreground the idea that it is easy for a monster to be normative, to fit into the system. They also often suggest that perhaps this is because the norms the system imposes are monstrous. This chapter thus focuses on the particular monster of modern Gothic fiction hiding in plain sight; the serial killer.

In the two series explored in detail in this chapter, *Dexter* and *Hannibal*, the serial killer is the central character, and presented sympathetically. He is not only the subject of investigation, but performs a role within the forensic detection of crimes. His crimes are not only exposed through the investigative plot, but shown to the audience as they are committed. In the forensic detective serial, the same preoccupations of the Gothic – mutilated bodies, experiences of marginalisation, and taboo sensual and sexual practices – are often at the heart of the investigations into murder. Yet, by contrast to a horror novel, the perspective of the victim is largely irrelevant to the narrative that inevitably leads to the identification and punishment of a transgressor. Michael Arntfield notes that 'the revelation of the corpse as the climax of the cold opening […] signals the shift from the individual to the state, from the human to the machine'.[2] The body of the victim is no longer a human being whose emotions

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[2] Michael Arntfield, 'TVPD: The Generational Diegetics of the Police Procedural on American Television', *Canadian Review of American Studies*, 41.1 (2011), 75-95 (p. 88).

must be taken into consideration, but a referent whose function is to lead the investigation towards the abnormative criminal who must be detained. Further, as in *CSI* (2000-2015), the investigative characters are merely cogs within this narrative machine, and are easily replaced. A popular leading character, such as team leader Gil Grissom (William Petersen) can be replaced after nine seasons, first by Laurence Fishburne and then Ted Danson, and the series continues. In this model, each episode focuses on the resolution of a single crime, barring the occasional two-episode narrative that enables a mid-season cliff-hanger. The focus on resolution leads to a simple division between those who can be incorporated by the system – the innocent, the penitent, the wronged – and those who must be judged and locked away – the deviant, who is automatically coded as dangerous.

In *Dexter* and *Hannibal* the simplistic divisions collapse; the dangerous deviant is not judged and detained, but is judging and disposing of others, often with the tacit acceptance of the state machinery of justice. Dexter Morgan (Michael C. Hall) is a blood-spatter expert with the Miami Police Department, trained by his adoptive father, a police officer, to cover his murders and to seek out 'worthy' targets. Hannibal Lecter (Mads Mikkelsen) is not only a serial killer, but a psychiatrist to other killers, the subject of criminal profiling, and an expert profiler himself. Though they centre on the world of criminal investigation, as does the typical detective serial, the thematic focus of these Gothic series is an examination of monstrous subjectivity, locating it within, rather than outside, institutional power dynamics. The Gothic iteration of the forensic serial demonstrates how systemic norms enable the monstrous to integrate, rather than foregrounding the system and its workings to expel the abnormative.

Bright Lights and Ceramic Tiles – setting a new scene in the Gothic

The Gothic and the detective story have long been interlinked genres; recently, the former has incorporated the 'mediated forensics' that permeates popular culture, says Lindsay Steenberg, with the forensic detective genre developing an 'aesthetic deeply indebted to *film noir* and the Gothic mode for its sense of atmosphere'.[3] Yet the hyper-real scenic constants of the forensic laboratory, such as the bright lights brought to bear upon the body and the reflective surfaces that surround it on a metal gurney in a tiled morgue, combine to render such settings almost entirely devoid of shadow. *Dexter*'s murders generally occur at night, when the city of Miami

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[3] Lindsay Steenberg, *Forensic Science in Contemporary American Popular Culture: Gender, Crime, and Science* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 3.

is quiet, but the actions are brightly lit, the serial killer's victims secured, and his surroundings protected, with clear plastic sheeting, all depicted with sharp-focused clarity. With detailed focus on all aspects of the plot, characterisation, and the aesthetics of design, without turning away the camera or the light, what would once have occurred in the shadows, or even off-screen, often moves front and centre. As this thesis argues, an 'enlightened' perspective cannot exist without contrasting darkness, and it is the interplay of light and shadow that brings definition and depth to the image, but also suspense; as *Hannibal*'s lighting designer, James Hawkinson states 'it's not all there, bright and presented for you'.[4] What is revealed is not always the traditionally unspeakable, but the accepted 'unspoken' of that which is so normalised as to pass unseen.

The high-contrast framing of the forensic detective serial, and the literal exposure of the body, both inside and out, is designed to denote truth and clarity. The depiction of forensic authority as an appeal to a seemingly neutral scientific truth, Steenberg suggests, exhibits an 'investment in a postfeminist policing of bodies and gender roles'.[5] The supposed neutrality of the depersonalised science is often deployed in support of a cultural conservatism within the stories of law-breaking and punishment, and performed by diverse casts to promote an inclusive reactionary moralism. The forensic detective series, such as *CSI* and its many franchises, provide just enough insight into the lives of the scientists and mortuary workers to create continuity and character development in a format that relies upon a weekly case-by-case plot formula. However, the investigators, and their bodily realities, are now under the microscope and fully-illuminated also. As Arntfield, in his study of the diegetics of the procedural, observes that since the 1990s these series have been 'preoccupied by the "desire to overexpose" [in Paul Virilio's term…] a convention grounded in the tradition of neo-realist film – specifically, a tendency to unflatteringly reveal the underlying moral dimensions of class-anxious civil servants'.[6] As much attention as had been paid to the perpetrators' and the victims' stories, is increasingly being turned to the investigators themselves. However, by focusing almost entirely on the interior lives of the professionals involved in the science of forensic investigation, the more fantastic fictions reintroduce the very capacity for error, interpretation, and compromise that the more 'realist' depictions seek to minimise.

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[4] Quoted in Stacey Abbot, 'Masters of Mise-En-Scène: The Stylistic Excess of *Hannibal*', in *Horror Television in the Age of Consumption*, edited by Kimberly Jackson and Linda Belau (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), pp. 120-134 (p. 124).
[5] Steenberg, p. 1.
[6] Arntfield, p. 86.

I argue that the Gothic iteration turns the audience's attention to the issues of gender, sexuality – and less often, race – developing nuanced critiques of the ideas of truth and subjectivity upon which forensic authority is built. In most forensic fictions, bodily signifiers are positioned as reliable indicators of the subject, as acts of self-exposure produced on or by the body. The body is often said to 'speak' to its examiner, just as they then speak for the dead who no longer have their own voice; however, as explored by Ellen Harrington, this speech act may communicate less about the victim than the systems of knowledge that construct the body as capable of 'speech'.[7] Yet, in the Gothic iteration, the dead may literally speak, and they may not speak the truth. Those who work with the dead are haunted, not only by the specific people whose bodies they engage with, but sometimes seemingly by death itself. In *Hannibal*, FBI investigator Will Graham (Hugh Dancy) sees the serial killer Garrett Jacob Hobbs (Vladimir Jon Cubrt) post-mortem, at crime scenes and in his dreams. The act of dying, the trappings of death and funerary rituals, surround the living always; the decorative centre pieces on Hannibal Lecter's dinner table are often composed of dead flora and fauna, rather than more traditional flower arrangements. The conceptual boundaries between the living and the dead, between the subject and the object, become less distinct, their certainties undermined, in the Gothic form.

The concept of subjectivity itself, the construction of a coherent self from a linear history, is challenged even as it is central to our understanding, and experience, of horror. The onscreen representations of Will Graham's detailed visions of murder in *Hannibal* are screened with no clear delineation between his subjective perception and the camera's apparent objectivity; there is no way to know whether this is an artistic rendering of crime scene reconstruction, or a depiction of a man having visions. Given that Will's nightmares are also screened, and his suffering with encephalitis becomes a major plot point in the narrative, the line between reality and fantasy is as consistently unclear for the viewer as it is for the character. With special effects, lens flare and non-naturalistic lighting, and slow moving plots told from multiple perspectives, this televisual Gothic allows the audience to recognise a dialectic between enchantment and disenchantment, highlighting the role of choice in their suspension of disbelief.

In *Hannibal* and *Dexter*, the audience are made aware of their position as spectators, outside of the narrative structure, with no explanation for their voyeuristic position. There is no

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[7] Ellen Harrington, 'Nation, Identity and the Fascination with Forensic Science in Sherlock Holmes and *CSI*', *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 10.3 (2007), 365-382.

diegetic justification for Dexter's narration of his life. The 'bullet time' speed ramping techniques used in *Hannibal*, which allow the human eye to see differentiated moments in time that are imperceptible without the intervention of visual recording devices, also appear in *The Matrix* (Lana and Lily Wachowski, 1999), but the earlier film sets up a deliberate unreality to explicate audience awareness of the technological intervention into our perceptions; we are constantly told that we are experiencing a mediated reality within a computer simulation. The special effects in *Hannibal* are rendered as realistically as possible, especially in the many dream-like sequences of death or dying, at once utterly unreal and composed of hyper-reality. As the camera follows Dr Alana Bloom (Caroline Dhavernas) falling through a first floor window to the ground in the final episode of *Hannibal*'s second season, the audience watches in slow motion as the air currents blow her long hair around her face, and tiny shards of window glass sparkle around her. The viewer is, thus, simultaneously aware of the constructed nature of the fiction, and presented with the careful delineation of emotional realism in the complex characterisation. The acting is of a high standard, the casts composed of multi-award-winning actors, however the constructed nature of their intimate characterisations is made clear; these are often actors from a theatrical and film background, rather than prior television stars, now framed with extreme close-ups and lens flare to highlight the mediation of the form. These productions highlight any artificiality, by highlighting the perspective of the camera, and thus the audience's role as spectator.

The critique of the possibility of neutral rationality is implicit in the form, as well as the content, of these series, through sustained engagement with television's own unreliability as a medium. The constant theme of the third season of *Hannibal* is an oblique commentary on ideas of endorsement, engagement, and mediated perspectives, as psychiatrist Bedelia Du Maurier (Gillian Anderson) and Will debate their roles as victims of, spectators for, or participants in Lecter's murder spree. The 'implication' of the audience is heightened by the producers' intertextual references to fan practices; the journalist Freddie Lounds (Lara Jean Chorostecki) is revealed to have called Graham and Lecter 'murder husbands' in her publications ('And the Woman Clothed with the Sun'), a popular term in online fan discussions around the show. Lounds is an unscrupulous manipulator of source material, involved in tampering with evidence and the dissemination of false information; thus, it is perhaps suggested that fans and adaptors not only look for meaning and clues within texts, but sometimes manipulate those to produce their own outcomes. A suggestion that reflects on the production itself, as an adaptive work based upon a series of novels, which the series creator

224

Bryan Fuller has referred to as a version of fan fiction. With the on-screen examination of the distinctions between participation and observation, and detailed discussion of the responsibilities accorded each role, the series asks its audience to consider the divide between the enjoyment of spectacle and the endorsement of the actions on screen. Notions of self, subject, and identity, the processes through which these can be shaped by worldly events and, in turn, affect events and actions by individuals, is central to the investigative processes on screen in the Forensic Gothic. As Steenberg observes:

> Like the Gothic, the forensic is preoccupied with the past – with unravelling a violent act that lies hidden there. But where the Gothic story is haunted by its past, the forensic exhumes that past. Forensic narratives attempt excavation and reconstruction – depending on a Gothic charge but emptying it of its uncanny secrets.[8]

Gothic series refute the notion that the forensic investigation uncovers all the secrets; the uncanny is created in the subconscious, and even forensic psychology cannot be certain of accuracy in that space, it cannot be emptied of its Gothic potential.

In these forensic series, the critical stance that is part of the Gothic structurally and thematically, becomes the subject of Gothic study itself, as they explore and expose the 'workings' of psychiatrists and scientists, professionally and psychologically. Derek Kompare described the original forensic detective series *CSI* as a

> formally rich and rewarding text […], inhabiting a kind of extra-realism […] whereby the conventional codes of narrative realism apply, but are first worked through an expressive and eclectic palette of audiovisual styles. Scenes on *CSI*, as befitting the series' emphasis on investigation, are oversaturated with visibility: spaces are expressively lit and staged, details are crisp and to the point, and expository dialogue smoothly directs our attention and comprehension […] amplifying our own practices of looking.[9]

This description may be applied to the texts examined in detail in this chapter, though the 'expressive and eclectic palette' through which these elements are screened is that of the Gothic. The 'extra-realism' of the Gothic text takes the form of exquisite slow motion, allowing the audience to experience milliseconds of difference in action and reaction. The

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[8] Steenberg, p. 73.
[9] Derek Kompare, *CSI* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), p. 5.

dialogue is not expository, but poetic and reflective; it suggests to the listener that they pay attention to disjunctions, to what is left out, to silences. The camera lingers on not only the carefully prepared blood and body parts of the forensic laboratory, but on funerary-style flower arrangements, trappings of death and decay, even taxidermy, to situate the display of the body within a wider cultural understanding of death. An examination of their own interventions into form and content is thus central to these forensic Gothic texts; and I explore them 'as a set of representations', not least of which is that of their own mediation.[10]

Gothic has always been a self-referential genre; from eighteenth-century framed narratives and 'found manuscripts' to Jane Austen's humorous parody of Gothic audiences in *Northanger Abbey* (1817), these knowing winks to a genre-aware audience continued into the postmodern era. Postmodern Gothic developed to a peak in the mid-nineties, acknowledging a market saturation of horror tropes, such as the blonde girl, home alone, going to investigate a strange noise. A meta-Gothic generation of film makers represented themselves on screen as students and aficionados of genre fiction – the peak of this trend being *Scream* 2 (Wes Craven, 1997), in which film student characters have not only learnt and analysed the conventions, but have survived at least one round of their being played out in the 'real' world. These film-makers and writers made sub-text textual; the metaphors of examination became a parody of self-examination and self-awareness. Themes that were an ever present and knowing part of the genre are brought to the fore and made more distinct. The recent forensic television series take self-reflexivity to a new level: presenting case studies for the audience, as fellow students and connoisseurs of the art of the Gothic, but also the 'art' of murder.

In the Gothic iteration of the forensic turn, form and content are unstable carriers of multiple meanings that invite, even insist upon, audiences' contemplation of the nature of meaning itself, particularly as relates to the relationship between the subject and their body. The rise of forensic representations of the body, and bodily experience, suggests a cultural shift in the manner in which we approach ideas like reality and truth, and the body as a site for experiencing and examining both concepts. Through the incorporation of the 'forensic turn' in American popular culture, as identified by Steenberg, this most modern Gothic sub-genre focuses the audience's attention on form as much as on narrative content, and on the body as a mediator of experience, particularly through the exploration of gender and sexuality. Steenberg's examination of the feminist, or post-feminist, representation of women within the

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[10] Ibid., p. 6.

traditionally masculine crime genre concludes that mediated forensics in popular culture 'builds its truth-generating authority on a prurient fascination with the bodies of women (female criminals, female investigators and female victims), with the pathology of monstrous masculinities'.[11] The forensic turn in the Gothic, I argue, often focuses upon men as both the perpetrators and investigators of crime, suggesting that 'monstrous' masculinities are not always pathologised and excluded as deviant, particularly in contemporary American culture. In exploring non-traditional representations of traditional gender roles, this Gothic subgenre is more invested in unpacking representations of the body than 'policing' them. The (de)construction of the (ab)normative subject and his place in society is central to the narrative, as it is to the aesthetic, of these television shows.

High Concept on the Small Screen: gender and genre

Just as novel reading was initially looked upon as a passive, feminine pastime in the Romantic era, so too was the watching of serialised television, popularly linked to the domestic sphere and housewives watching at home in the twentieth century. Taking television seriously as an art form was critically rare until, as Michael Kackman notes, 'an influential generation of feminist television scholarship took the medium's low cultural value as a provocative starting poiunt, exploring the overt gendering of its pathologised, culturally subordinate viewers and its mediation of the public and private spheres'.[12] The recent application of the term 'quality television' to particular genres above others is telling; men's narratives are still viewed as universal, whereas stories about women are considered as representative only of the interests of women. Though increasing complexity developed within the serialised format, such as narrative arcs lasting across seasons replacing a series of stand-alone episodes, it would be naïve to suggest that the definition of quality television is directly and solely linked to technical improvements or more nuanced storytelling. In the US, it was only when television became an accepted form for middle-class masculine viewers that the era of quality television officially began; it was gritty dramas and police procedurals that first attracted the label in the 1980s.[13] I therefore argue that television, popularly perceived as a feminine cultural form, was

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[11] Steenberg, p. 1.

[12] Michael Kackman 'Quality Television, Melodrama, and Cultural Complexity', *Flow*, 9.1 (2008), <http://flowtv.org/2008/10/quality-television-melodrama-and-cultural-complexity michael-kackman university-of-texas-austin/> [accessed 27/09/2015]

[13] See Ashley Sayeau, 'As Seen on TV: Women's Rights and Quality Television', in *Quality TV: Contemporary American Television and Beyond*, edited by Janet McCabe and Kim Akass (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), pp. 52-

elevated in critical perception after its appropriation for male-dominated story-telling, just as the Gothic was initially a predominantly 'feminine' genre.

The series under examination, though they centre on male characters and masculine experience, share key attributes that are culturally aligned with ideas of femininity – an intense focus upon aesthetics, the centrality of the emotional lives of their characters, and an exploration of embodied identities. These are qualities shared with detective fictions that draw on the forensic sciences in which the central characters are female pathologists and medical examiners, such as the novels of Patricia Cornwall and Kathy Reichs, the latter's books becoming the popular NBC forensic serial *Bones* (2005-2017) which Steenberg examines. The crime genre, like the Gothic, has a strong history of female creative excellence, and stories that examine lived experience from a female perspective. As I have suggested, it can be argued that these are 'feminine' genres, elevated in critical perception after their adoption by men; the contributions of Edgar Allan Poe and Wilkie Collins to the development of the detective genre are frequently given more credit than those of female authors such as Mary Elizabeth Braddon. When the feminine traits of a pathologised form are retained by male creators and authors, or in narratives that centre on male perspectives and concerns, the cultural associations of femininity are often read as queer.

The role of the Gothic televisual text as a liminal, queer space between the fixities of genre and form is recognised by showrunner Bryan Fuller, who describing his series *Hannibal*, states 'we are not making television, we are making a pretentious art house movie from the 80s'.[14] Whilst humorous, this comment reveals the intersections at the heart of these forensic Gothic series: deliberately distancing of the production from the debased form of television whilst revelling in the transgressive idea that television is a worthy medium for visual art, and sending up the pretentions of the latter, but enjoying its rich aesthetics and symbolism, and marrying them to highly generic televisual formatting traditions and serial structure. Queerness in the Forensic Gothic, I argue, enables the acknowledgment and unpacking of the glorification of pathological masculinities in modern Anglo-American cultures. Just as I

61; and Geraldine Harris 'A Return to Form? Postmasculinist Television Drama and Tragic Heroes in the Wake of *The Sopranos*', *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, 10.4 (2012), 443-463. DOI: 10.1080/17400309.2012.708272

[14] Eric Thurm, 'Hannibal Showrunner: "we are not making television. We are making a pretentious art house movie from the 80s"', *The Guardian*, Wednesday 3 June (2015), <http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2015/jun/03/hannibal-tv-showrunner-bryan-fuller> [accessed 09/09/2015]

suggest that certainty is undermined, so are the prurience, pathologisation, and gender policing that Steenberg identifies in the deployment of forensic motifs.

In examining monstrous masculinities under the microscope, these series explore notions of nature versus nurture in the construction of normativity. *Hannibal*, ostensibly a drama about the identification and pursuit of a cannibalistic serial killer based on the novels of Thomas Harris, takes pathological relationship dynamics from the melodrama to the *Grand Guignol*. *Hannibal* is, in fact, a Gothic romance, in which Hannibal Lecter attempts to seduce criminal profiler Will Graham into *folie á deux*. With the seduction narrative transformed into a relationship between men, heteronormative expectations are de-naturalised, enabling a critique of the gender norms that regularise and excuse abusive behaviours. *Dexter*, an adaptation of novels by Jeff Lindsay, plays out a similar game of investigative cat-and-mouse mixed with homosocial relationship development. Dexter Morgan, a sociopathic serial murderer, working as a crime scene analyst, in almost every season forms a relationship with another man whose violence echoes or reflects his own. Dexter's seeming 'normality' is constructed through comparisons to other masculine norms and stereotypes. The ease with which the white, male serial killer can be made sympathetic, I argue, makes clear that American popular culture lionises a damaged and dangerous form of violent masculinity.

Not every production that potentially challenges the dominant order is produced from a site of deliberate resistance, however. The Gothic horror of contemporary series, such as *American Horror Story* (2011-) and *Bates Motel* (2013-), has inspired critical debates as to whether the portrayals of issues such as mental health, congenital disability, and sexuality are empowering and progressive, or exploitative and regressive.[15] Matt Foley, Neil McRobert and Aspasia Stephanou have argued that

> if the transgressive act, image or concept originates not from an organically
> developed testing of the edges, but from a calculated use of the idea of
> transgression to create allure or hype, the project has already failed to transgress
> before it has begun.[16]

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[15] For example, the sixth season of American Horror Story, 'AHS: Asylum', has been debated by representatives of the American National Alliance on Mental Health, <http://blog.nami.org/2012/10/is-american-horror-story-stigmatizing.html> [accessed 17/01/2017] and charities such as Art with Impact, <http://www.artwithimpact.org/node/1130> [accessed 17/01/2017]

[16] Matt Foley, Neil McRobert and Aspasia Stephanou, 'Introduction', in *Transgression and its Limits*, edited by Matt Foley, Neil McRobert and Aspasia Stephanou (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), pp. xii-xv (p. xii).

This tension between calculated transgression for effect, and an 'organic transgression', developed from affective storytelling, can be found at the heart of Forensic Gothic through its use of carefully constructed artistic death tableaux. Yet, the set pieces of the first-wave Gothic might be regarded as no less artificially constructed; as with previous iterations of the genre, this is fiction that autopsies its generic traditions as well as the conventions of the medium in which they find expression. Xavier Aldana Reyes states, in a discussion of so-called 'torture porn', 'co-option in literary or filmic texts does not compromise the transgressive nature of the material which can be sold as appealing precisely because it presents itself as excessive, bizarre and even countercultural'.[17] If we are shocked as an audience we are experiencing affect, and the calculation on the part of those who fund and produce the shocking material does not necessarily alter the nature of that affect, or its scope.

Aspects of the Gothic intended to be shocking include its depiction of the mutilated body, and its willingness to explore taboo sensual and sexual topics. Simon Brown and Stacey Abbott read the body horror development within the Gothic as linked to the changing modes of mainstream fictions of hospital dramas and crime shows, which 'co-opted' the traditional territory of the horror genre using 'the language of science to legitimize the fundamentally horrific', leading to creative new forms of Gothic horror as the genre adapted.[18] This suggests that the deconstructed body is not terrifying unless we are reminded that what is lying in pieces was once a subject, and is now displayed as though it were 'other' – a taxidermied person, a pile of gift-wrapped body parts without the ultimate identifier of the subject, a face. Though Catherine Spooner posits the contemporary Gothic as 'more obsessed with bodies than in any of its previous phases',[19] I would suggest that the Gothic is always obsessed with bodily forms, it merely approaches that topic differently. That each new iteration of the Gothic can appeal to an audience as 'shocking', whilst exploring many of the same themes is down to the *how* rather than the *what* of representation, I argue.

[17] Xavier Aldana Reyes, *Body Gothic: Corporeal Transgression in Contemporary Literature and Horror Film* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014), p. 17.
[18] Simon Brown and Stacey Abbott, 'The Art of Sp(l)atter: Body Horror in *Dexter*', in *Dexter: Investigating Cutting Edge Television*, edited by Douglas L. Howard (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), pp. 205-220 (p. 216).
[19] Catherine Spooner, *Contemporary Gothic* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), p. 63.

Your Friendly Neighbourhood Serial Killer, Dexter Morgan

Dexter is not a European-inflected arthouse production but, I suggest, heir to the tortured American masculinity of post-war detectives and Vietnam War movies. *Dexter* foregrounds a triangulation of the domestic ideals of the post-war years through the disillusionment of the so-called 'Boomer' generation that were the product of that suburban dream. The roots of the Gothic serial killer subgenre in post-war pulp fiction are suggested through the chiaroscuro shadows of *film noir* lighting and the Art Deco backdrop of Miami's older buildings. Though the bright interior lights of the laboratory and morgue suggest truth and clarity, the exterior brightness of the sun and the neon lights in Miami evoke precisely the opposite for Dexter: 'looking at a homicide scene in the daylight of Miami […] makes the most grotesque killings look staged, like you're in a new and daring section of Disneyworld: Dahmerland'[20] ('Pilot'). Abbott and Brown suggest that this reframing of brightness and frivolity, evoking popular holiday destinations, 'reconfigures for the television audience the Gothic aesthetic, the depiction of violence, and the mutilation of the body': the setting subverts Gothic expectations for the horror genre.[21] As Steven Peacock observes of the show's design, 'a play on surfaces binds the character of protagonist and program. This is a place of fakery, shallows, and hollows'.[22] This idea of fakery is interesting also in the idea of the series as imitative, in content as well as style; adapted from a set of novels, it was described entirely in terms of derivations by its cinematographer Romeo Tirone as a '*film noir* graphic novel with a Kubrick/Cronenberg/Scorsese influence'.[23] Sympathetic depictions of monstrous men become art in the work of the directors Tirone cites, particularly in *Taxi Driver* (Martin Scorsese, 1976), *The Shining* (Stanley Kubrick, 1980), and *Videodrome* (David Cronenberg, 1983). Dexter is another man made monstrous by violent impulses, like Travis Bickle or Jack Torrance, struggling to hold onto his humanity.

These post-Vietnam depictions of men searching for a way to express themselves effectively hark back to earlier Gothic considerations of aesthetic violence. In the urge for self-expression experienced by Torrance or Bickle, we can hear echoes of *Rope* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1948): 'I've always wished for more artistic talent, well murder can be an art too. The power to kill

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[20] This image also references the graphic novel Neil Gaiman's *The Doll's House*, containing issues #9-16 of The Sandman series (New York, NY: DC Comics, 1990).

[21] Brown and Abbott, p. 210.

[22] Steven Peacock, '*Dexter*'s Hollow Designs', in *Dexter*, ed. by Howard, pp. 49-58 (p. 50).

[23] Bryant Frazer, 'HD Cinematography on Showtime's *Dexter*: D. P. Romeo Tirone's Blood Work for a Morally Ambiguous Serial Killer', *StudioDaily*, 18 October (2006), <http://www.studiodaily.com/2006/10/hd-cinematography-on-showtimes-dexter/> [accessed 09/01/2015]

can be just as satisfying as the power to create'. However, earlier depictions of murder as self-expression have usually held queer overtones, from James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) and Oscar Wilde's 'Pen, Pencil, And Poison – A Study In Green' (1891), to the many fictional adaptations of the Leopold and Loeb murder. The suggestion is often of men creating together, or finding a form of release through another man's art or life, in a physical, often penetrative act of murder, or a spiritual bond through its artistic expression. The 'lone wolf' characterisations of the later films limit queer potentiality by isolating the protagonist and positioning a female victim as the body to be penetrated, and this also suggests that the protagonists' problems are individual rather than systemic or cultural. Dexter is not an alienated lone wolf, he deliberately engages with work colleagues and family life to appear normative. As a law enforcement professional, and as a murderer, he channels his urge to violence by policing the violence of other men, which often targets women and children. This series, in its exploration of the cultural links between masculinity, violence, and the social order, and its interest in a psychological origin for the serial killer, layers multiple previous iterations of the Gothic to attempt a satirical critique of social norms.

The pleasures of a normal man: performing normativity

Dexter's performative masculine normativity highlights the monstrosity hiding in plain sight in the codes of gendered behaviour that underpin normalised domestic and state-sanctioned violence. Dexter has inspired several critics to address the ways in which 'various forms of violence become recognizable, familiar, and (in some cases) acceptable'.[24] William Ryan Force addresses Dexter's normalisation of violence through his deliberate performances in the roles of boyfriend, brother, and work colleague, exploring difference and performativity through semiotic terminology of the 'marked' and 'unmarked':

> The mythology of 'deviance' vs. 'normality' – where the former is marked so as
> to result in institutionalization or social expulsion (as described by Foucault
> [1975/1978] and Butler [2004]), and the latter is typically an unmarked trait
> (Brekhus, 1996) – is part of a larger project of hegemony, whereby power
> coalesces to support dominant interests through a cultural equilibrium.[25]

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[24] Lisa Arellano, 'The Heroic Monster: Dexter, Masculinity, and Violence', *Television & New Media*, 16.2 (2015), 131-147 (p. 133).
[25] William Ryan Force, 'The Code of Harry: Performing Normativity in Dexter', *Crime Media Culture*, 6.3 (2010), 329-345 (p. 342).

Thus, Force argues, the differing treatment of those with marked and unmarked identity features demonstrates that social order is conceptualised as moral structuring, based on judgements of worth. Dexter passes for normal because he deliberately constructs an 'unmarked' identity; able to do so, in part, because of inherent or inherited attributes – race, gender, social class – and partly through the deliberate performance of learned behaviours, which he consciously chooses. Dexter constantly reminds the viewer that his father's first rule was 'don't get caught'; all other morality considerations are secondary to the judgement of deviance, as though difference is the worst thing that Dexter can embody or enact.

Dexter's running commentary on normative behaviours and social interactions unpacks 'normal' life for the viewer: 'he ethnomethodologically and interactively "marks the normal"'.[26] Watching Dexter's errors of interpretation – for example, answering a colleague's comment about his sister being 'hot' with a comment about the weather ('Pilot') – enables us to see the social structure more clearly. The audience watches a young Dexter learn to integrate, in flashbacks, under the tutelage of his adopted father Harry Morgan (James Remar). Perhaps, then, Dexter is not the 'practical sociologist' Force terms him, but is in fact the subject of someone else's study; a role he will repeat for the audience, the FBI, and Sergeant Doakes, among others. Force does note that *Dexter* encourages the audience to recognise that all 'human actors' must make an effort to achieve a socially acceptable persona, not just those labelled as 'deviant'.[27] After all, Dexter discovers that many of his colleagues are faking aspects of their normativity; Angel Batista (David Zayas) covers up the fact that his marriage is ending after his adultery to avoid social judgement and humiliation, whereas Vince Masuka (C. S. Lee) repeatedly fails to integrate into the working environment by socially alienating his colleagues with jokes in poor taste. Yet, this does not alter the fact that Dexter is both deviant and dangerous; he has the overwhelming urge to kill and feels little, if any, remorse.

That Dexter's colleagues perform 'unmarkedness' in a deliberate and systemic manner, as he does, challenges the idea of it being in any way natural. As Wayne Brekhus suggests:

> Although the 'unmarked' comprises the vast majority of social life, the 'marked' commands a disproportionate share of attention from sociologists. Since the marked already draws more attention within the general culture, social scientists

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[26] Ibid., p. 338.
[27] Ibid., p. 343.

contribute to re-marking and the reproduction of common-sense images of social reality.[28]

Though both are constructed categories, deviance becomes more and more visible and normalcy becomes invisible. However, it is also important to note that the characters presented as foils for Dexter's performance of normativity are overwhelmingly men of colour, linking deviance once again to 'otherness'. Thus, social maladaptation alone is not necessarily dangerous, but it aligns with divergence from the dominant norm, which in this series is associated with violence. Yet, this violence is often enacted for the public good, here commensurate with law and order. By forcing viewers to contemplate a murderers' use of his invisible unmarkedness to act as a blind for his actions, and to notice the deliberate construction of normativity, programmes like *Dexter* reveal the unnaturalness of social norms, and highlight that calculated exploitation of social convention is an open secret.

It is also important to note that Dexter's behavioural aberrations in other respects conform to idealised masculine norms; his performance of controlled violence echoes the state apparatus based on a rational investigation of evidence, and his refusal to act on aggression in the domestic sphere epitomises an ideal of chivalric protection of women and children. Dexter's anger at the unfairness of the justice system, and its failure to capture killers who murder society's outsiders, is a response based on reflection and moral consideration. Dexter's kills are neat, swift, clean, and controlled, echoing state-sanctioned trial and execution methods. Isabel Santaularia argues that, through murder, Dexter attempts to 'manage his inborn aggression', in an article that uses the terms aggression and violence interchangeably.[29] However, I argue that violence and aggression should be considered separately when assessing Dexter's quasi-normative masculinity: Dexter is violent, but rarely aggressive, because he prides himself on his lack of emotional response. That he justifies extra-legal executions by establishing guilt through scientifically tested evidence, and kills his own biological brother, the 'Ice Truck Killer', demonstrates his investment in justice above selfish or emotional motivations. The writer who first adapted Lindsay's novel for the screen, James Manos Jr., states that in his opinion 'the audience would have realized […] everybody else, all the satellite characters […] are infinitely more fucked up and more dysfunctional, that, in fact,

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[28] Wayne Brekhus, 'A Sociology of the Unmarked: Redirecting Our Focus', *Sociological Theory*, 16.1 (1998), 34-51 (p. 34).

[29] Isabel Santaularia, 'Dexter: Villain, Hero or Simply a Man? The Perpetuation of Traditional Masculinity in *Dexter*', *Atlantis*, 32.2 (2010), 57-71 (p. 62).

Dexter is the most sane of them all'.[30] Dexter's 'sanity', in this interpretation, is a hyper-masculine, rationalist privileging of detached contemplation over physical and emotional responses. Dexter Morgan the serial killer is an exaggeration of American masculine normativity, not its dark other. Unlike the Gothic doubling of Jekyll and Hyde, there is no split in this personality; the normal is pathological, and this pathology is observably normal.

The Great American Sociopath: normativity as national identity

According to David Schmid, '*Dexter* represents a turning point in the willingness of Americans to embrace the serial killer as one of their own, as the personification of essentially American values'.[31] Yet, American national identity has been identified and performed in the figure of the white, male killer more frequently than is perhaps comfortable to contemplate; from the cowboy to the cop, soldier to serial killer. This is not a new observation; Leonard Cassuto notes that serial killer fiction, depicting the lone wolf, 'transmogrifies American ideology into grotesque distortions of romantic individualism'.[32] Stephen King's recent introduction to a graphic novel edition of pulp thriller *The Killer Inside Me* (1952) states that 'in Lou Ford, Jim Thompson drew for the first time a picture of the Great American Sociopath'; linking the Great American Novel of the literary canon to the post-war pulp fiction focus on psychopathology.[33] *Dexter* is yet another example of Gothic fiction's role in the construction and (de)construction of the American subject, based in eighteenth-century philosophies of the individual subject, as seen in chapter one of this thesis.

The psychopathology of the serial killer narrative in the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries is not focused on deviance, but on normativity; the behaviours that American society has lauded as appropriate for men to exhibit are, in fact, pathological. The 'terrifying normality of the murderer', in Brian Jarvis' phrase, is a standard trope within the serial killer crime genre.[34] As the precursor to both Hannibal Lecter and Dexter Morgan, Lou Ford is aligned with the

[30] Douglas L. Howard, 'An Interview with *Dexter* Writer and Developer James Manos, Jr', in *Dexter*, ed. Howard, pp. 14-24 (p. 21).
[31] David Schmid, 'The Devil You Know: *Dexter* and the "Goodness" of American Serial Killing', in *Dexter*, ed. Howard, pp. 132-142 (pp. 132-133).
[32] Leonard Cassuto, 'The Cultural Work of Serial Killers', *Minnesota Review*, 58-60 new series (2002/2003), 219-229 (p. 221).
[33] Stephen King, 'Foreword', in Devin Faraci, *Jim Thompson's The Killer Inside Me* (San Diego, CA: IDW Publishing, 2017), pp. 4-7 (p. 4).
[34] Brian Jarvis, 'Monsters Inc.: Serial Killers and Consumer Culture', *Crime, Media, Culture*, 3.3 (2007), 326-344 (p. 329).

systemic structures of law enforcement, being a deputy sheriff, and his authority also comes from family; in this case, he inherits a measure of respectability from his father, rather than forging it as a father himself. Like his successors he deliberately uses his unmarked identity as a middle-class white man to hide his 'real' nature. Ford's first mode of attack, before he turns to murder, involves embodying an exaggerated mundanity so extreme it is painful for his neighbours and colleagues to interact with him: as David Ashen suggests, 'he […] pushes the image to unbearable limits, creating a nightmarish caricature'.[35] Anshen's reading Ford's use of cliché highlights the performance of normativity as both masking violence and enabling its enactment: 'Ford drags the obscured rules of social obedience into the light'.[36] The social norms governing white men, this suggests, are painful even to other white men when taken to the most extreme embodiment, whether this is the tedium of banality or the extreme of hypermasculine violence. This normativity is often interpreted by critics as over-conformity within Modernist and capitalist metanarratives, as in Jarvis's analysis of consumer culture and serial killer fiction, and Anshen's reading of 'commodity fetishism' in Thompson's novel. This approach to the serial killer finds its apotheosis in Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho* (1991), in which murderer Patrick Bateman constructs his identity through conspicuous consumption, of designer goods and human flesh. The interrelated, embodied characteristics of gender and race are thus often downplayed in favour of a critique of capitalist models.

However, as Lisa Arellano recognises, Dexter's 'legitimacy' as a believable citizen and as a representative of justice, both legal and extra-legal, is overtly gendered: 'an effect of his difference from the more conspicuously monstrous men around him'.[37] Force, likewise, describes Dexter's violence as less 'a radical departure from normal codes' of masculinity than as an exaggeration of their underlying mandates.[38] Illegitimate male violence is represented in this series by the criminals who appear each week in the police department where Dexter works, and as his regular victims. These (almost always) men are involved in human trafficking, dangerous drug distribution, child abuse, gang enforcement, and other anti-social crimes, as well as being killers themselves. These individuals pose a threat to the social order and the family, not simply because they kill, but because their goals are out of alignment with culturally-sanctioned behaviours. The variety of racial characteristics and

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[35] David Anshen, 'Clichés and Commodity Fetishism: The Violence of the Real in Jim Thompson's *The Killer Inside Me*', *JNT: Journal of Narrative Theory*, 37.3 (2007), 400-426, (p. 409).
[36] Ibid., p. 412.
[37] Arellano, pp. 135-136.
[38] Force, p. 330.

ethnic backgrounds for both Dexter's victims and their criminal targets might suggest that Dexter's crusade is free from prejudicial judgements based on marked identity signifiers. Yet, as recognised by Christen Hammock, 'Dexter's justifications – that his victims are barbaric, violent, diseased, irredeemable – evoke discourses of violence in slavery and colonialism'.[39] Set in America's southern-most major city, Miami's coastal location seems to operate like a Western's border town within the series: a city of immigrants, where the solve rate for murder cases is just twenty percent according to the pilot episode. *Dexter* thus functions, as Arntfield suggests, within a tradition of the 'myth of the American gunfighter, that is so essential to American hero folklore' and prefigures the modern iteration of the rebel cop that Morgan and his father embody.[40] Dexter's social conscience is very clearly a racialised and gendered concern, but is represented to the audience as part of an 'unmarked' all-American identity, an everyman addressing them directly through first-person narration, and thus seemingly neutral.

However, through forcing close comparison between Dexter himself, more traditional depictions of serial killers, and violent police, the series 're-problematises' its main character and his normativity. The first five seasons of the series each have a roughly similar narrative arc wherein the anti-hero comes into intimate contact, and conflict, with another man's violence: Dexter's own brother Brian (Christian Camargo), colleague Sergeant James Doakes (Erik King), District Attorney Miguel Prado (Jimmy Smits), the Trinity killer, and family man, Arthur Mitchell (John Lithgow), and the Doomsday Killer Travis Marshall (Colin Hanks). The later seasons see Dexter attempt to bond with women who kill; first a younger protégé Lumen Pierce (Julia Styles), and then potential love interest Hannah McKay (Yvonne Strahovski). The homosocial relationships, which this exploration will focus upon, pose two key questions: is Dexter's violence like the violence of other men, and is Dexter able to develop a normative bond – as a brother, a friend, or mentor.

As Dexter compares himself to these other middle-class men extensively, and the audience is encouraged to contemplate the difference between their differing statuses as perpetrators of violence, the structural inequalities of American society come to the fore. According to W. Scott Poole, the family is at the heart of Dexter's ability to represent what other killers cannot; his role as husband, father and brother do not 'humanize him so much as Americanize him,

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[39] Christen Hammock, 'Southern Monsters in Southern Spaces: transnational engagements in contemporary television' (unpublished masters thesis, University of Georgia, 2014), p. 60.
[40] Arntfield, p. 85.

giving [him] a traditional family unit that makes his other, secret life seem both comprehensible and compartmentalized'.[41] Yet, the racially 'other' Doakes and Prado both have similar relationship problems, in part due to their mistrust of women and desire for control. Prado is also willing to excuse the murder of his own brother, because he was a drug-addicted criminal. Without these longer narrative arcs, it would be easy to view Dexter Morgan more simply as a vigilante stepping in when the police are unable to act. As Arellano observes, 'the construction of normative masculinity serves to define, and sometimes legitimate, certain types of violence'.[42] Dexter certainly patrols a lawless border, between just and unjust, legitimate and illegitimate violence, and between monster and man, but always with an eye to American cultural normativity and embodied identity.

Bodies of Evidence: serial killers and the public image

Dexter's positioning within a tradition of violent heroes working outside the strict remit of the law, but also located within cultural traditions and myths regarding serial killers, positions the series tracking his exploits at the centre of what Mark Seltzer terms 'wound culture'.

> Serial killing has its place in a public culture in which addictive violence has become not merely a collective spectacle but one of the crucial sites where private desire and public space cross […] to make up a wound culture: the public fascination with torn and opened bodies and torn and opened persons, a collective gathering around shock, trauma, and the wound.[43]

Seltzer's analysis focuses on the interaction between increasingly mechanistic and informational model of society and the human body, but does not account for the race and gender dynamics at work, positing a universalised subject within social systems. Seltzer's analysis functions here as a jumping off point; Morgan, a white middle-class man, embodying multiple sites of privilege, is a serial killer allied to the state mechanisms of surveillance and regulation, and this Gothic 'wound culture' must be understood in terms of intersections of bodily identity construction. To explore the racial and gendered dynamics of family violence

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[41] W. Scott Poole, *Monsters in America: Our Historical Obsession with the Hideous and Haunting* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011), p. 164.
[42] Arellano, p. 131.
[43] Mark Seltzer, 'Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere', *October*, 80 (1997), 3-26 (p. 3).

in *Dexter* is to understand what kinds of bodies are opened up and exposed to the violent gaze of the public, for what purposes, and by whom.

The very visible screening of damaged bodies in entertainment and news media programming, as well as in high art and iconography, crosses the boundaries between the interior and exterior of the body, the private and public, and creates what Seltzer terms a 'pathological public sphere'.[44] Addressing 'the body', Seltzer does not record the particular gender and racial characteristics of publically displayed bodies (though he does note that serial killers themselves are predominantly white men), stating that 'the body increasingly appears as a model [for] the public sphere […] as a way of imagining and situating, albeit in violently pathologized form, the very idea of "the public"'.[45] Seltzer notes that this configuration of the public sphere stands in contradiction to a traditionally Habermasian understanding of the *ōffentlichkeit* as an '*alternative* to the sphere of public violence (the domain of the state and of the police)'.[46] I would argue that these two public spheres have always appeared to be one and the same from a marginalised and excluded perspective.

Certain (privileged) bodies when damaged represent an affront to, and thus a pathological version of, Habermas's *ōffentlichkeit*, but the public display of the body of the 'other' – most particularly the racial other – has always been positioned as wholly appropriate. The damaged black body is conceived as the proper domain of state and police violence, from the lynched body hanging as a warning after slave uprisings, to contemporary news media images of black men gunned down in the streets by police. These images have long been part of the sphere of state violence, their living counterparts thus excluded from participating fully in the public sphere. I would argue that the construction of the private sphere is no less pathological in that it condones, conceals, and co-opts the damaged body of the woman, of all races. Even the wounded, white, female body, or corpse, whilst an affront to the Habermasian public sphere if displayed outside the home, within a domestic setting is so wholly expected and usual within our fictions and realities that it cannot be considered as aberrant. It is so common for women to die in domestic environments that author Gail Simone has labelled its fictional representation 'fridging' – after the trope where the female bodies are found in household

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[44] Ibid., p. 4.
[45] Mark Seltzer, *Serial Killers: Death and Life in America's Wound Culture* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 34.
[46] Quoted in Seltzer, 'Wound Culture', p. 4.

settings, such as hidden in appliances.[47] Like the public sphere, the private sphere has, thus, always been pathological.

Repeatedly in *Dexter*, people of colour and white women are presented as the rightful target, not the wielder of state power. Legitimate state violence is represented by the police force and the FBI in the series and, tellingly, very little violence is enacted on screen by these characters pursing their goals. The leaders of the investigative machine are softly-spoken white men; FBI lead investigator Frank Lundy (Keith Carradine) is shown to have a love of Chopin's Nocturnes and a whimsical side, as he removes his shoes to sit with his feet in the warm Atlantic Ocean ('The Dark Defender'). When police brutality is shown, it is usually perpetrated by Dexter's adopted sister Debra (Jennifer Carpenter) a slim, traditionally attractive, white woman with strong emotions, rather than any of the male officers. However, male police representatives who use excessive force are presented as dangerous and deviant, to the point that their removal from a sphere of influence is essential. James Doakes's record in officer-involved shootings, and determination to find a resolution to cases quickly if not always accurately, serves to legitimate his death and subsequent framing for Dexter's crimes ('The British Invasion'). Doakes is the hyper-masculine aggressor; with a threatening way of talking to his colleagues, seemingly unfounded distrust of Dexter, and background in military special operations. Doakes's characterisation – stiff body language, invasion of others' personal space, frequently raised voice, and aggressive swearing – aligns uncomfortably with dominant stereotypes, of black men unable to control their violence, previously explored by critics such as bell hooks.[48] Though racial construction in the series thus accurately depicts the demarcations of legitimate and illegitimate violence in society more widely, the differences in treatment between characters of different races and genders remains uncritiqued within the series.

The body of the racially othered man is much more easily integrated into the public sphere of police investigation as victim and perpetrator of crime than as representative of justice. Miguel Prado, Dexter's protégé in delivering 'justice' during the third season, never fully gains his mentor's trust. Dexter constantly questions Miguel, in voice-overs representing his interior monologue, and in imagined conversations with his deceased father Harry. Dexter kills Miguel after a single woman is killed 'without good cause' ('I Had a Dream'), but Dexter does not act so swiftly against the Trinity killer in season four. Dexter's admiration for

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[47] Gail Simone, *Women in Refrigerators*, March (1999),<http://lby3.com/wir/> [accessed 11/02/2016]
[48] bell hooks, *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 47.

the older, family-oriented, white serial killer clouds his judgement, with tragic consequences – Trinity kills Dexter's wife, Rita (Julie Benz). Miguel's body is left on display in a public park, rather than disposed of in Dexter's usual manner ('Do You Take Dexter Morgan?'), just as Doakes dies in an explosion, his body parts collected and investigated by the Miami police ('The British Invasion'). The corpse of a white patriarch is much less easily explained, more rigorously investigated, and hidden to protect the public sphere. The dead body of a 'good' white man is thoroughly cleared away from view; as Debra notes, after Lundy's shooting, not even blood remains at the scene ('Dirty Harry'). The body of the 'bad' man of colour is displayed as an example that the system is working as it should. In many ways exemplifying the pathologised public sphere in the display of the victims, *Dexter* notes the intimate relationship between the 'domain of the state and the police' and the display of the body of the 'other' in American society.

Bodies that Matter: differing monstrous masculinities in *Dexter*

The racial boundary between legitimate and illegitimate violence is not quite as clearly drawn in *Dexter* as the above suggests. The state is responsible for Doakes's violence; it is military training and the experience of war that left him incapable of controlling his own violence, even at home. In this construction, says Arellano, women are fundamentally recognised as 'other', and thus threatening, to both the state machine and to the men who represent it: 'the militarized, putatively masculine killing machine […] has lost the capacity to distinguish between a battlefront and a bedroom'.[49] In a case where a fellow Special Forces veteran kills his own wife, Doakes attempts to bond with the gunman through a sympathetic understanding of his urge towards domestic violence ('Crocodile'). Doakes's approach to a man who has survived war zones trying to commit 'suicide by cop' should have been a moving indictment of state-sanctioned violence, and traumatised perpetrators as victims. However, the sight of two black men shouting at each other with handguns drawn has an overt history in American screen fictions, linked to criminality and social stereotypes, which overwrites other subtleties. Doakes embodies an expected type of masculinity: the angry black man. Integrated into the structures of power, his violence is useful; Doakes's performance of violent masculinity is successful until he meets Dexter, and directly challenges a white man for superiority.

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[49] Arellano, p. 141.

Differences in their masculinities are linked through violence against a shared other, predominantly women.

The expected target for masculine violence, the understandable target these fictions imply, is women: serial killers kill sex workers and husbands kill their wives. The body of the wounded woman that enters the public sphere is immediately suspect: it threatens to reveal the unequal gendered power dynamics of both private and public spaces. The body of the woman, wounded or whole, must remain within the domestic sphere if it is to retain legitimacy within this hierarchy of value. Concurrently, this ensures that the social structure can exclude women from participating and claim this is for their own protection. When, in the first series, the serial murderer known as the Icetruck Killer takes the female body into the public sphere it is not the damaged body of the woman that affronts the police, but the location. These sex workers are women without homes, outside the domestic sphere, and the violence done to their bodies is thus often culturally ignored: as Cassuto notes, 'real-life serial killers typically avoid capture by preying on society's isolated outcasts: prostitutes, hustlers, and the homeless'.[50] Fictional serial killers usually attack the family, to ensure that the sympathy of the reader is aligned with the victims, reinforcing normative values through the politics of victimhood. The Ice Truck Killer makes the overly public body of the sex worker matter to private citizens, by choosing public locations that are also private memories; he recreates Dexter's childhood photo album, linking the public and the private sphere. This is how the killer notifies Dexter that he is special; this killer is not just another man perpetrating a form of expected, and therefore quasi-legitimate, violence against women.

Dexter's key difference from other men can thus be read as his 'illegitimate' channelling of his urges, not only as a serial killer, but as a husband. It is possible to understand Dexter's monstrosity, Arellano suggests, as a 'type of social failure – specifically a failure to take up the forms of violence represented by the other men in his world'.[51] Dexter and Doakes share an inner urge to violence, inspired by very different traumas in their past, but, in contrast to Doakes and the 'sympathetic' perpetrators of domestic violence, Dexter constantly repeats, almost as a mantra, that he would never do anything to harm his wife and children. Given Dexter's inability to ultimately save his wife from male violence, Arellano argues that this failure symbolises 'the removal of Dexter's heroic potential', and is 'crucial to the show's

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[50] Cassuto, p. 228.
[51] Arellano, p. 133.

revisioning of the relationship between masculinity and violence'.[52] Citing Sarah Hoagland's identification of a 'predation/protection' dynamic in heteronormative models of relationships, Arellano notes that these two positions are symbiotic constructions – women would not need protection if man was not envisioned as a predator, and men would not be viewed as predators if women were not culturally positioned as vulnerable. Thus, Arellano argues that Dexter's failure to save Rita denies the logic of the dynamic, and critiques his potential to be read as heroic.

However, I argue that Dexter's 'legitimacy' and his monstrosity are intertwined in his role as the 'good bad man', as termed by Arntfield, archetype of American masculine heroism. As Lisa Cuklanz observes, in her work on rape in televisual detective fictions, often 'the role of male as savior (rescuer) [is used] to distract attention from the ideologically problematic role of male as privileged oppressor'.[53] Under the dominant predator/prey binary dynamic, to deny Dexter any potential for heroism as a protector leaves only the position of potential predator, with his misapplication of white masculine power. Rita's death is not, however, about Rita herself: the Trinity killer's motive for the murder has nothing to do with Rita, and everything to do with Dexter. Thus, I suggest, Dexter's failure to protect Rita is simply another 'fridging' – she is found in a bath, a regular domestic version of this trope ('The Getaway') – framed from Dexter's perspective: it is his voice over, his emotional, and murderous, response to the murder that is foregrounded. Dexter must subsequently remove the dangerous 'bad man', and the audience must overlook their similarities, to recognise that Dexter is not the one who harms Rita – in fact, he is positioned as the only one who could have saved her. Dexter's heroism may be brought into question, but his potential for heroism remains undisturbed. Dexter's quasi-legitimacy as the 'good bad man' is ensured by his ability to stand in the public realm as the body that enacts violence, rather than the body that displays the wound.

This show encourages sympathetic identification with a serial killing character, presenting his perspective through direct voiceover, comparing his actions to those of less socially acceptable killers. Though the Gothic aesthetic may be subverted, many of the genre's traditional trappings remain: women marry monsters unaware of their true nature; the family unit is as likely to be the source of monsters as a refuge from them; and the racialized and/or feminised body of the 'other' is made monstrous. As in the Gothic of previous eras, a

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[52] Ibid., pp. 143-144.
[53] Liza Cuklanz, *Rape on Prime Time: Television, Masculinity, and Sexual Violence* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), pp. 19-20.

monstrous patriarch produces a monstrous family: Harry Morgan is revealed to have been a corrupt cop. Dexter, in turn, leaves his own son with a woman as morally compromised as he is, and fakes his own death to escape the unmasking of his double life in Miami ('Remember the Monsters?'). However, in this most modern version, judgement is endlessly deferred away from the monstrous man himself – though the 'truth' about Dexter is revealed over and over again, to the audience, and to his family and colleagues, this patriarchal monster is not destroyed like Manfred, or punished and re-educated like Rochester. The horror of the normative man, enabled by the very system that is supposed to protect and serve victims, has no clear resolution.

Dexter's world does not disturb the hierarchical structure of society even as it acknowledges the constructed nature of social norms that are familiarly experienced as unpleasantly insincere. Jeff Lindsay's inspiration for writing Dexter Morgan was businessmen with 'phony smiles and pats on the back and talking with food in their mouths';[54] he envisioned Dexter's selection of targets as based on manners, an echo of Hannibal Lecter. The presentation of Dexter on screen and on the page, however, is quite different to the earlier character from Harris's novels. Just a year before the publication of Lindsay's first Dexter novel, *Darkly Dreaming Dexter* (2004), Cassuto wrote of Hannibal Lecter that:

> Harris never risks exposing us to the worst of Lecter: his attraction to random murder for the sheer joy of it. We can only identify with him when he's not a serial killer anymore. It's difficult, then, to cross the line into serial murder with one's identification intact.[55]

Critics, such as Douglas J. Howard, suggest that to take pleasure in the violence itself makes the audience 'complicit': 'if we watch, doesn't our watching amount to endorsement?'[56] Cassuto would agree that 'seeing the killing closes the gap between a repulsive killer and his audience, especially if we find ourselves a bit too interested'.[57] In their television adaptations, then, *Dexter* and *Hannibal* 'force viewers to confront amusement and pleasure in […] the repetition of orchestrated death', as Stephanie Green observes.[58] In Fuller's adaption of Harris's novels, murder – the destruction of the 'other' – is presented as beautiful, ironic, and

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[54] Douglas J. Howard, 'Interview with Jeff Lindsay', in *Dexter*, ed. by Howard, p. 3.
[55] Cassuto, p. 222.
[56] Douglas L. Howard, 'Introduction', in *Dexter*, ed. by Howard, pp. xiii-xxiv (p. xvii).
[57] Cassuto, p. 222.
[58] Stephanie Green, 'Dexter Morgan's Monstrous Origins', *Critical Studies in Television*, 6.1 (2011), 22-35 (p. 30).

amusing: it offers a viewing position of power and superiority, of full subjectivity. The intended tongue-in-cheek acceptance of this by the audience can be seen in the fandom's unofficial slogan, 'eat the rude'. Would such a playful series as *Hannibal*, in which the sole justification for murder is often bad manners, have been possible without *Dexter* having screened a reconsideration of the position of serial murder and the murderer within society?

A Forensic Fairytale: Bryan Fuller's *Hannibal*

Hannibal, I argue, offers a similar critique of masculine structures of power in its plotting, structure, and theme, to both contemporary adaptive text *Dexter*, and William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794). Hannibal Lecter escapes suspicion of his crimes for a long time, like Dexter and Falkland, because he exploits a certain image of a powerful, white man. Though in Godwin's text the bias of the justice system towards men with money is repeatedly stressed in a very direct manner, the influences at work within modern American investigative institutions are more subtly presented in Fuller's. It is never expressly discussed within the diegesis of the series, but law enforcement and the judiciary are male-dominated professions in contemporary American culture, and systemic racial bias that privileges white people is notable, discussed not only in scholarly forums but increasingly in the mainstream media.[59] This series acknowledges the importance of embodied identity in engaging with the structures of power, both interpersonal and institutional.

Just as I situated *Dexter* within the tradition of crime fiction to explore masculinity, I historicise *Hannibal*'s Gothic heritage to bring to the fore narrative themes and aesthetic tropes long present in tales of the recuperation or redemption of the monster, through empathy and love. I argue that *Hannibal* enacts a monstrous restatement of Godwin's themes of rationality and injustice, re-examined through an emotional love story. The monsters of the Gothic romance are usually male; through the 'making monstrous' we see the unequal power granted them by patriarchal society, and through the romance we often see the recuperation of a man we might then think of as being damaged by patriarchy, as much as enacting it. In

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[59] For example: Jeff Guo, 'Researchers have discovered a new and surprising racial bias in the criminal justice system', *The Washington Post*, Wednesday, 24 February (2016), https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/02/24/researchers-have-discovered-a-surprising-racial-bias-in-the-criminal-justice-system/ [accessed 12/12/2016]. For scholarly treatment of this issue, see Mark W. Bennett, 'The Implicit Racial Bias in Sentencing: The Next Frontier', *Yale LJF*, 126 (2017), 391-406, and Besiki L. Kutateladze, Nancy R. Andiloro, Brian D. Johnson, and Cassia C. Spohn. 'Cumulative disadvantage: Examining racial and ethnic disparity in prosecution and sentencing', *Criminology*, 52.3 (2014), 514-551.

Hannibal Will Graham and Hannibal Lecter begin as colleagues and friends working in criminal profiling for the FBI but, when Will suspects that Hannibal might be a serial killer himself, their relationship becomes a complicated legal game of cat-and-mouse. Will retreats, but is drawn back into Hannibal's orbit, and eventually into his murderous schemes. Exploring *Hannibal*'s Gothic influences, through comparisons to *Caleb Williams* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), enables us to trace a history of gendered power dynamics in the genre; *Hannibal* 'queers' an established pattern, in which love leads the wronged party to forgive their tormentor, and thus denaturalises the heteronormative model for interpersonal relationships. Marketed, and consumed, as a genre text, *Hannibal* is not simply restaging older stories for a modern era, bringing out concerns that a new audience finds exciting and relevant, but draws our attention to elements that have always been present in the Gothic romance.

Unspeakable and ungovernable – queerness, violence, and legitimacy

In choosing to centralise a same-sex relationship Fuller's production reveals the ideas of normativity that structure our narrative assumptions, and our expectations of the power dynamics that shape interpersonal relations. Fuller says his adaptation of Thomas Harris's novels, works in the tradition of 'slash fiction',[60] as Godwin himself suggested that his readers locate the relationship between Caleb Williams and his employer in the tradition of the Gothic romance, as explored in chapter one. The language Godwin uses to frame the relationship between Caleb and Falkland, such as Caleb's claim that there is a 'magnetical sympathy between me and my patron', and their exchanging a look 'by which we told volumes to each other',[61] prefigures similar language in *Jane Eyre.* Jane, regarding Rochester, describes 'that look which seemed to me so penetrating […] I understand the language of his countenance […]. I have something in my brain and heart, my blood and nerves, that assimilates me mentally to him'.[62] However, the dynamics of heterosexual desire in Brontë's novel and class tension in Godwin's, are disrupted in *Hannibal*; it is the more powerful monster, rather than

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[60] Ross Scarano, 'Bryan Fuller knows you're reading into *Hannibal*'s homoeroticism, and he thinks it's hilarious', *Complex*, 16 September (2014), http://www.uk.complex.com/pop-culture/2014/09/bryan-fuller-hannibal-interview-slash-fiction [accessed 09/09/2015].

[61] William Godwin, *Caleb Williams or Things as They Are,* edited by Pamela Clemit (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009 [1794]), p. 109, p. 123.

[62] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, edited by Richard Nemesvari (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2000 [1847]), p. 253.

his victim, who stresses the similarities and sympathies between the central characters in the modern iteration.

The movement of Hannibal and Will's interactions from the institutional offices of the FBI, to the psychiatrist's office, and then to the home, reflects the increasing intimacy of the relationship. From the cat-and-mouse use of the legal system, and extra-legal pursuit on the continent of Europe, the model of Godwin's novel is replicated as Hannibal first seeks to frame Will, before Will conspires with his boss Jack Crawford to frame Hannibal in turn. Lecter, unlike Rochester and Falkland, is very much in control of his crimes and the circulation of information; but he has in common with his forebears a lack of control over his emotions. Lecter is a lonely monster, who in Will Graham 'for the first time in a long while, [sees] a possibility of friendship' ('Fromage'). As his therapist Bedelia observes, Lecter maintains a controlled persona, wearing a 'person suit' throughout his interactions with other people ('Sorbet'). Will is the only one offered the opportunity to know Lecter's true self intimately and survive.[63] Will, like Caleb, sympathises with his tormentor, stating unequivocally 'I forgive you' ('Secondo') even after Lecter gutted him and left him for dead. Given an opportunity to evade capture by the FBI, Lecter turns himself in as, in prison, Will can 'always know where to find me' ('Digestivo'). The explanation suggested by Bedelia for such disinterest in self-preservation is a form of love: 'could he daily feel a stab of hunger for you, and find nourishment at the very sight of you? Yes. But do you ache for him?' ('The Number of the Beast is 666'). Though Will and Hannibal have formed an intense bond, the possibility of love is not spoken aloud until the penultimate episode of the final season. The same-sex relationship between Margot Verger (Katherine Isabelle) and Alana, though not accorded much screen time, is acknowledged by their friends and colleagues, and their sexual and romantic interactions screened. Hence my categorisation of the canonical relationship between Hannibal and Will as consistently queer, rather than gay, in comparison.

Many cultural references are made to alert a knowing audience to the possibility of a romantic or sexual attraction between Hannibal and Will, however, and the same signs and signifiers of queerness are deployed in both Godwin's text and *Hannibal*. Lecter, very much like Falkland, is refined and talented – composing music on both the old-fashioned harpsichord and the modern theramin, he is portrayed as a renaissance man of the modern era. Lecter's youth in Italy was similarly spent studying art, but also murdering and posing heterosexual couples in

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[63] Bedelia's survival is conditional, as Lecter will not kill her until he also has the opportunity to eat her, and he promises Alana that he would eventually kill her too ('Mizumono').

tableaux based on famous renaissance paintings, as the serial killer the 'Monster of Florence' ('Primavera'). Florence is directly linked in *Hannibal* with both murder and romance; it is the city in which Jack Crawford met his future wife Phyllis, and in which Lecter leaves Will an overtly queer 'valentine written on a broken man' ('Primavera'). As seen in the characterisation of the vampires in Anne Rice's fictions, and the 'lavender menace' villains of mid-twentieth century cinema, fine arts, and the cultural elite are aligned with deviance. Further, in *Hannibal*, Lecter and Will make reference to the classical pairing of Achilles and Patroclus ('Tome-wan'), as Caleb and Falkland discuss Alexander the Great; for an audience with a classical education these references to ancient heroes are suggestive of 'Greek love'.

Neither Godwin's text, nor Fuller's, overtly confirms a romantic relationship, and I argue that murder replaces queer sex, as the 'unspeakable' crime that represents intimacy in both. This substitution has a history in literary and cinematic representations of homosexuality that *Hannibal* draws on directly. B. Ruby Rich claims that often in cinema 'the proof' of a same-sex couple 'is precisely that they commit murder together [...] killing replaced sex as consummation'.[64] Likewise, D. A. Miller suggests that Hitchcock's film *Rope*, 'excites a desire to see, [whilst] it inspires a fear of seeing' by substituting the sexual with the fatal.[65] Just as Will and Lecter will consummate their relationship through the shared murder of serial killer Francis Dolarhyde (Richard Armitage), the 'great Red Dragon', when Falkland murders fellow land-owner Tyrell, he unleashes his 'ungovernable passion'.[66] In her description of the role murder plays in the depiction of intimacy in earlier films, Rich could easily be describing the central relationship in *Hannibal*:

> The audience enters into the 'friendship' and eventually recognises their crime as a frenzy of fulfilment, a commitment ceremony taken to an extreme [...]. The protagonists kill with and for each other, either to seal their bond, or to avoid being separated, or both. Murder is a joint activity [...] these are artisanal killings, handmade, and atavistic. [...] It is these scenes of bonding between the protagonists that are most interesting, not the scenes of violent murder that are mostly overdetermined.[67]

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[64] B. Ruby Rich, 'Lethal Lesbians: the cinematic inscription of murderous desire', in *New Queer Cinema: the Director's Cut* (London: Duke University Press, 2013), pp. 103-122 (p. 114).
[65] D. A. Miller, 'Anal *Rope*', in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, edited by Diana Fuss (New York, NY: Routledge, 1991), pp. 119-141 (p. 131).
[66] Godwin, *Caleb Williams*, p. 109.
[67] Rich, pp. 110-111.

With the artistic posing of corpses, and the making of gourmet cuisine and musical instruments from the bodies, murders in *Hannibal* are certainly 'artisanal', and characters kill with and for each other in a myriad of ways. The joint murder of Dolarhyde, as the act that seals the protagonists' bond, is an over-determined murder scene full of slow-motion graphic bodily wounding and CGI-generated blood. Eye-contact and body language between the killers is emphasised, as is the co-ordination in their attack; an 'atavistic' pack hunt. After the act, they cling together physically as the camera pans them, to an especially composed power ballad – the unsubtly titled 'Love Crime' by Siouxie Sioux ('The Wrath of the Lamb'). Physical intimacy between Will and Hannibal is projected, through violence, onto the bodies of others.

The male characters commit murder rather than sodomy, because the latter is literally unspeakable, and considered illegitimate, unreasonable, and ungovernable. However, as seen in *Dexter*, murder can be incorporated. Lecter's, by turns, violent and loving pursuit of Will becomes irrational, like Falkland's of Caleb, and thus a marker of non-normativity that leads to the suspicion of queerness. The true motive of Lecter's machinations is to lure Will closer to himself. His manipulation of reality is not primarily motivated by a desire to protect his own reputation, in fact it often embroils Hannibal more deeply in criminal activity; interference in the justice system to frame Will reveals Lecter's guilt, through his tampering with evidence. The text moves outside the boundaries of the traditional legal model because queerness represents a threat to the stable and legitimate institutional order; just as the woman and the racially-othered man are shown to be unsuitable to the wielding of power in *Dexter*, the ability of the queer man to exert masculine power is questioned in *Hannibal*, as his sexuality and his violence are directed at the wrong targets.

Queer(y)ing agency

Will's positioning throughout the third series of *Hannibal*, as emotionally compromised and manipulated by Lecter, introduces a moral ambiguity somewhat darker and more complex than *Dexter*'s comicbook inflected 'Dahmerland'. Will Graham's agency in the decision-making process has been circumscribed, if not entirely undermined; Jack Crawford and Hannibal each ask him 'whose man' he is ('Mizumono'). Traditional motifs of women's Gothic – gaslighting, hysteria, and 'forced seduction' – are experienced by a man who physically conforms to traditional masculine norms: Graham wears plaid shirts and is often

unshaven, his hobbies and skills include fixing mechanical engines. When a man like Will takes on the role, and personality traits, traditionally assigned to heroines within Gothic romance these signify very differently. Attributes often encouraged in women, even venerated, are pathologised: Will's ability to connect with others is labelled an 'empathy disorder'. Will's self-sacrifice for the good of others is essential to the working of the patriarchal order – to Crawford's success in catching criminals – but also makes Will vulnerable to abuse at the hands of the patriarchy's most powerful representatives. When a male character is feminised, gendered behaviour is no longer naturalised by essentialist assumptions about embodiment, but individualised. However, it is important that these feminine traits are recognised as such, in contrast to Hannibal and Jack's masculinity: that femininity makes one vulnerable to exploitation is shown to be the very design and function of patriarchy.

The manipulation of women to present feminine traits, framed as a self-determined process yet mediated by cultural expectation and historicised norms, is reified on screen in the interactions between Hannibal and Will. Will's relationship to Hannibal is mirrored in Bella Crawford's relationship to Jack, which is presented as a traditional, even positive, example of heterosexual romance and love. Yet, Bella is not really Bella Crawford at all. Hannibal asks 'Are you an Isabelle or an Annabelle?', and she answers that her name is in fact Phyllis ('Coquilles'). Jack tells the tale of his renaming her, in affection, 'beautiful woman' in Italian. Yet 'Bella' is the catcall she received in Italy where they met, inscribing the view that men's unsolicited opinions of women's appearance are both complimentary and worthy of notice by the woman herself. We never hear Phyllis's original, full name. This echoes Jean Rhys's depiction of Bertha Mason in *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), in which she suggests that Rochester renames his bride, who was originally Antoinette; these acts of re-naming signify profound shifts of identity influenced by interpersonal power relations. The role 'Bella' plays in the wider world, as a Peace Corps agent and representative of the UN, is not presented on screen, unlike the process of her transformation into Jack's wife. Intercut with the scene of Bella's funeral we are shown her wedding, bookending her life, which starts only at the moment she accepts her new role, title, and identity as defined by Jack. She is Mrs Jack Crawford. The traditional heteronormative romance, this suggests, leaves little space for a woman's individual identity.

In the transformation of Phyllis we see a normative model for the abnormal process experienced by Will in his developing relationship with Hannibal; a transformation into a

dependant half of a two-person unit of monstrous identity, which foregrounds and examines the disturbing side of a loss of identity. Will's hobbies are co-opted by Hannibal, who creates forensic evidence out of his fishing lures ('Savoureux'). Will is encouraged to view himself as damaged and abused, but his attention is (mis)directed towards the father figure, Jack ('Trou Normand'). Lecter always maintains that he is acting for Will's own good: 'I only want what is best for you' ('Tome-wan'). Finally, Will loses even physical sovereignty, as he is drugged and orally penetrated by Hannibal with a feeding tube ('Kaiseki'). Will's safety from the destructive megalomania of Hannibal's monstrous masculinity is his alignment with the greater systemic masculine power of patriarchal institutions; he is shown to be most vulnerable in the domestic realm. Lecter's actions thus all have the aim of distancing Will from the institutions of justice, rather than directly bringing him closer to Hannibal himself. Will becomes aware of the manipulation, noting that friendship demands an equality in position, but that the patient and psychiatrist relationship (subtextually, the predator/prey dynamic) denotes a power imbalance in their interactions ('Sakizuke'). This echoes twentieth-century feminist arguments that there can be no such thing as a fully consenting heterosexual relationship under patriarchy because of the imbalance of power between the genders.[68] An acquaintance of Hannibal's, Chiyoh (Tao Okamoto), declares to Will that 'if you don't kill him, you're afraid you're going to become him' ('Contorno'). By the end of the series, it is true Will Graham is no longer as he was at the start; he is, in effect, *Mr* Hannibal Lecter.

Hannibal's reformulation of seduction narratives can be read as a glamorized representation of the ultimate toxic masculinity, which continues in the tradition of *Jane Eyre*; it romanticises a relationship of profound inequality that, ultimately, does nothing to counter the dominant social norms. Though Will releases Hannibal ostensibly to defeat a serial killer, the Red Dragon, who is the traditional monster of heteronormative Gothic, targeting the patriarchal family from without, the destruction promised by the release of Lecter is clearly weighted in terms of race and gender. At the end of season three, several families have been destroyed or threatened, Bedelia and Miriam are maimed, and Beverley is dead. Will's manipulation of the justice system endangers the livelihood, if not the life, of Crawford, whose professional standing as a black man is never openly critiqued in the series, but whose skills are described in racially-othered terms as 'peculiar' by Miriam Lass, who links him to the Chesapeake Ripper's 'exotic' style of violence that makes her question the killer's race ('Entrée'). Hannibal poses a known threat to Alanna and Margot, his motive being revenge

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[68] Carole Pateman, 'Women and Consent', *Political Theory*, 8.2 (1980), 149-168.

against the indignities he has suffered through their machinations. One of the last shots of the series is a queer family driven from their home in fear; no matter how glamorous the presentation, with their designer clothes and helicopter escape vehicle, two mothers and their child are being threatened by the actions of men with physical power.

Alternatively, the series might be interpreted as the murderous revenge of a queered masculinity, the apotheosis of Lee Edelman's suggestion that the queer is inherently aligned with the destruction of normative society. After the credits roll on *Hannibal*'s final episode, a brief scene shows Bedelia apparently serving, or being served, her own leg as a roast dinner. The table is set for three. It is suggested that Hannibal is bringing Will, his 'final girl' and Bluebeard's last wife, back with him as a new monster. But what kind of monster is open to interpretation: Will may be a monster in the service of a patriarchal system that elevates men over women, and whiteness over people of colour, as a romanticised embodiment of the queer without a future. Or, he may be a monster produced by a patriarchal system that has crushed a feminine man, and marginalises women and people of colour. At the finale, Will sets the most powerful and dangerous white men, serial killers who threaten both normativity and queerness, family and individual, in opposition and has them destroy each other. That Will is willing to join in, and to kill himself, suggests that he is willing to take a measure of responsibility for his own role in white, male violence.

Yet, if the fall does not kill them, and Will is willing to let them both live, then, as Jane says of Rochester: 'I am my husband's life as fully as he is mine […] bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh'.[69] In this allusion to Genesis, Brontë demonstrates the change in the relationship that her heroine previously described in terms similar to those Captain Walton used to admire Frankenstein: 'I could not, in those days, see God for his creature: of whom I had made an idol'.[70] In Jane's initial infatuation with Rochester, Brontë revisits the idea that women are not independent individuals, but created 'for God in him', suggesting that this becomes a form of dangerous blasphemy. It also enables abuse:

> He had no such honeyed terms as 'love' and 'darling' on his lips […]. I now got
> grimaces; for the pressure of the hand, a pinch on the arm: for a kiss on the cheek,

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[69] C. Brontë, p. 554.
[70] Ibid., p. 361.

a severe tweak of the ear. It was all right: at present, I decidedly preferred these fierce favours.[71]

It is Jane's sense of self, her confidence in her own opinion of religious truth and morality, which saves her from total submission to Rochester's schemes. Yet, as explored in *Hannibal*, it can be no less dangerous to imagine oneself part of a symbiotic dyad. Jane ends up more secluded than she has ever been at Ferndean; her horizons narrow, just as Will ends up unable to choose between his own life, and that of his tormentor.

Men, Women, and Bandsaws: taking apart the gendered body

I suggest that, as in the earlier Gothic Romance, violence in *Hannibal* is aligned with masculinity, and thus Fuller's adaptation does not align violence with queerness as neatly as previous cinematic representations of same-sex relationships analysed by Rich. Alana downplays her femininity when her behaviour becomes pathological, adopting masculine styling as she directs her brother-in-law and his hired killers. The female same-sex couple ends up on the run from Hannibal and Will, after the women have attempted to coordinate the men's murders. When women plot violence in this series they often use male surrogates to enact their plans, except when they act in self-defence or in order to protect others, as when Miriam Lass (Anna Chlumsky) shoots the man she believes to be the serial killer the Chesapeake Ripper. An obvious manner in which to align violence with masculinity would be to exploit the dynamics of sexual violence, yet Fuller categorically refused to screen rape and sexual abuse from the original source novels, stating that these narratives are 'so overexploited, it becomes callous'.[72] The showrunner links this view directly to generic storytelling, 'all of the structural elements of how we tell stories on crime procedurals narrow the bandwidth for the efficacy of exploring what it is to go through that experience'.[73] Thus, Fuller's approach serves to focus the forensic gaze on a gendered critique of the perpetrators of violence, rather than on the victims. The heart of each of the series explored in this chapter is that the power that normal men can wield, both institutionally and inter-personally, is monstrous. Women, and men sympathetic to women, are drawn into this realm of violent toxic masculinity, not only as victims, but as accomplices.

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[71] Ibid., pp. 360-361.

[72] James Hibberd, '*Hannibal* showrunner criticizes TV's rape scene epidemic', *Entertainment Weekly*, 29 May (2015), http://www.ew.com/article/2015/05/28/hannibal-rape-thrones [accessed 24/11/2015].

[73] Quoted in Hibberd.

Gendered identity in *Hannibal* is recognised to be not only an embodied experience, but one that is structurally mediated. Intuition and emotional intelligence, coded as feminine on screen and off, are pitted against logic and deductive reasoning, coded as masculine. Will's only ally once accused of murder is the scientist Beverly Katz (Hetienne Park), who can be persuaded to set aside the scientific truths of forensics, to trust in his 'gut instincts' and then to follow her own. Though urged to take her evidence and suspicions to Jack, Beverly has lost faith in his leadership, and in pursing Lecter alone – at home in the domestic sphere – she ends up his victim also: like Miriam and Alana, she finds the systems of patriarchy let her down, and leave her open to the worst excess of toxic masculinity. Beverley's identity, not only as a woman but as a technician who dissects the body to uncover truth, is monstrously parodied in her murder: her body is displayed in slices between glass plates, toxic masculinity has taken her to pieces, as an example to others ('Mukōzuke'). The only character who truly knows what is going on, as both investigator and instigator of crime, is the monster – first Hannibal, then Will. Steenberg's analysis of the forensic opening of bodies demonstrated the conservative gender politics at work in the police procedural, a reading which highlights the queerness of *Hannibal* in its difference. Encounters with the monster are presented as determined in type by the victim's position within an explicitly gendered hierarchical environment, demonstrating how the conventional genre expectations are mediated by the power dynamics between men, women, and monsters.

In *Hannibal*, the body that encounters the monster will be permanently marked by the experience even if it survives the attack. Physical scarring, in this series, does not always detract from the individual's ability to present to the world as normative and conventionally attractive; prosthetic aids and make-up are shown to rebuild the individual's physical capacity, to 'pass'. Alana's limp, Margot's hysterectomy scar, Miriam's missing arm, do not mar their beauty. Yet, even once a normative appearance is achieved, the reality of physical and mental difference caused by embodied experience is always depicted as a disruption of identity. It is this disruption that makes previously institutionally loyal Inspector Pazzi (Fortunato Cerlino) and Jack Crawford pursue Hannibal in Italy outside professional channels; they have been made structurally incompetent by the same tormentor, losing their positions within the patriarchal hierarchy because they have recognised monstrous masculinity but have not convinced their colleagues. It is the disruption that turns Miriam from a calm investigative field agent to a panicked executioner, and sends gentle and rational Alana seeking violent revenge. Bodily damage is often, in *Hannibal*, a sign of individual

strength and overcoming of systemic injustice, as long as it is aesthetically minor or able to be hidden from view.

However, as in earlier Gothic eras, the disabled or ugly body is considered a mark of non-normativity aligned to evil. Those who actively pursue the rewards of masculine power, who inevitably corrupt the bodies and identities of others, are made physically monstrous if they fail to exert power effectively. Frederick Chilton (Raúl Esparza) is first gutted, then shot in the head, and finally partially cannibalised and set on fire. Chilton is shown to be ineffective in the role of patriarch; the staff of the psychiatric institution he manages are cruel and violent, and his prisoners escape. Chilton also appropriates Lecter's style of dress, his professional credentials, and even uses his crimes as source material for his own fame; thus he his punished. Chilton's unrestrained pursuit of power makes him susceptible to those who are more aware of the systems at work and thus more adept in their manipulation, which leads to increasingly destructive, and highly public, attacks upon his body. Hannibal also takes physical revenge on Mason Verger (Michael Pitt/Joe Anderson), whom he perceives to be behaviourally monstrous because he has bad manners; primarily, refusing to respect Hannibal's property. Hannibal feeds Mason his own face, making him a cannibal, before snapping his neck to paralyse him. Mason is rendered an impotent monster; physically marked as deformed, as well as unable to enact his horrific desires without assistance. The monstrousness of masculine power is written onto the body, though this negatively aligns with damaging ideas about disability being a form of punishment; the disruption of the body signifies the presence of the monster even after it has been apprehended and, apparently, contained.

Every me and every you: traumatic doubling and the family

Trauma becomes both nature and nurture; it motivates the monstrous individual – as an origin story and/or an anticipated outcome of their actions – and it is the physical legacy of their presence. Why the monster is motivated by trauma is openly explored in therapy sessions between Will and Hannibal, Hannibal and Bedelia, and Hannibal and the Verger siblings. Hannibal had some involvement in his sister Misha's death at an early age, the Verger family is portrayed as abusive and, perhaps, incestuous, as many of the serial killers pursued by Will are motivated by non-normative familial circumstances ('Trou Normand', 'Oeuf'). As befits a

Gothic romance, trauma is firmly located within the family in *Hannibal* and bodily damage is often positioned as a sign of familial belonging, or a brand of ownership.

Hannibal declares how he feels about individual people by how he treats their bodies; he destroys those beneath him, but he marks those whom he loves or admires, cutting them with surgical precision so that they will survive, marked but not disfigured, by the event ('Primavera'). Those whom Hannibal does not care for at all, he kills quickly and efficiently, and those he dislikes most, he tortures. Hannibal's ownership of those he regards as worthy, his declaration of the importance of family, and his view of the people he eats as animalistic, is all refracted through the monstrous figure of Mason Verger. Mason is Lecter's dark double: a rude, boorish, uncultured version of the same entitled and powerful white male ego. He is a sadist, depicted physically and emotionally abusing his family and small children. He is also a pig breeder, the wealthy heir to an extensive farming fortune and family history. Mason brands his pigs, as Hannibal brands his favourite victims, but ultimately both are a food source. For Mason, kinship and family identity is bound together in his pigs – he even declares a sow a suitable surrogate mother for Margot's unborn child ('Digestivo'). Hannibal declares Will to be his family, and repeatedly destroys any other familial relationships Will attempts to create, whilst also repeatedly attempting to eat him. The complicated inter-relationships between human and animal in the Verger family is a clear echo of Hannibal the cannibal's relationship to other humans; a satirical parody of the able-bodied, white man's position as the only fully-human identity within traditional enlightenment paradigms.

The links between physical difference and queerness of sexuality are also recognised, but are marked as monstrous in *Hannibal* only by reference to the power dynamics of heteropatriarchy. In an attempt to enact poetic revenge, Mason brings Hannibal into his family, branding him with their crest, and plans to eat him while wearing Will Graham's face as a transplant to replace his own damaged visage. As Mason threatened to eat Hannibal's penis with Will's face, in a grotesque parody of sexual desire, so Hannibal enables a parody of the incestuous desire that the series suggests lies behind Mason's abuse of his sister; in exchange for Will's release, Hannibal helps Margot to 'milk' her brother's sperm so that she can finally produce an heir with her partner Alana. All this supposedly bestial queerness results in the formation of the healthiest family depicted in the series: Margot, Alanna, and their son.

As masculinity and violence are linked in this series, so are families and trauma; a seemingly endless cycle of abuse all comes back to the exertion of power over the bodies and choices of others. A repeating pattern of disrupted family dynamics, built around the feminised 'heroine' Will Graham, is engineered by Hannibal in a parody of courtship. First, Hannibal endangers the family of serial killer Garrett Jacob Hobbs, and then manipulates the surviving daughter, Abigail (Kacey Rohl), into forming new familial bonds with her rescuer, Will. Lecter plays on Will's empathic instincts and Abigail's search for an ally as she is investigated by the FBI as her father's accomplice, to develop a kinship dynamic between the three of them: 'I gave you a child, if you recall' ('And the Woman Clothed with the Sun'). When Will refuses Hannibal's monstrous seduction, Lecter recreates the Hobbs's family trauma: incapacitating Will (the mother), he makes him watch as he slits Abigail's throat, literally stepping into her father's place. This pattern repeats when Will is seduced by Margot Verger, as she attempts to beget a legitimate heir to reduce her brother's financial power. Hannibal abuses his position as psychiatrist to all three to inflame Mason's jealousy, with violent results: he forces sterilisation surgery on his sister. All Hannibal offers to Will in return is himself:

> I bond with Abigail, you take her away. I bond with barely more than the idea of a
> child, you take it away. You saw to it that I alienated Alana, alienated Jack. You
> don't want me to have anything in my life that's not you ('Tome-wan').

Hannibal's destruction of the child Abigail, and his later attempted murder of Jack, are an attempt to destroy Will's limited, domestic sphere of influence, having already destroyed his public image through the accusation of murder. Finally, once he believes himself free of Lecter's influence, Will forms a normative relationship with Molly (Nina Arianda) and her son, but Hannibal again uses a surrogate to disrupt the family with violence. The family dynamics in *Hannibal* echo older Gothic texts, such as *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), in which the family and the home are figured a source of trauma for women and children.

Hannibal takes everything from Will that has meaning in patriarchal society: his children and home; the trust of the father-figure; his 'reputation' within systemic institutions; and his opportunity for heteronormative romance. Yet Will forgives him, pursues him, leaves his seemingly healthy reconstituted family with Molly for him. In the unhealthy attachment between Lecter and Graham we can see echoes of *Wuthering Heights* (1848), in their devotion despite physical distance and time apart, and promise of an alternative life abroad, *Jane Eyre*. As I noted in chapter four, these older texts have been repositioned as traditional

romance narratives, rather than specifically Gothic romances: of the many adaptations of *Wuthering Heights* on film very few depict Heathcliff's cruelty to his wife, his son, his niece, and nephew. He is usually portrayed by an attractive young star, and not shown as the monstrous older man who torments his family. In adaptations of *Jane Eyre*, Rochester is rarely depicted uttering his most terrifying lines from the book; his threats to 'try violence'.[74] Dominant cultural ideals about normative gender roles make it easy for textual signifiers of monstrosity to be reinterpreted, and repositioned. As stated above, the continued lure of the Gothic lies not in the 'what', but in the 'how' of the storytelling. I thus argue that the romance of the Gothic recovers a fresh power to shock when heteronormative views are disrupted.

Conclusion

The potential monstrosity of the apparently ideal modern American subject is a prominent theme of television crime dramas, in both the forensically- and psychologically-focused series. *Dexter* and *Hannibal* combine key elements of these popular genres with the self-reflexive critique of the Gothic. These fictions offer a sharp commentary on the genre's own history of exploring the normative and the monstrous: as Alexandra Carroll notes, 'despite this familiarity, society still struggles to identify the monster among us'.[75] The visuals, that take apart the human and subject them to forensic examination, can elevate the body to art and beauty, or denigrate them as produce, or even refuse. The central concern of the two series examined in this chapter is thus which bodies are considered to matter, to whom, and under what circumstances – who is the citizen-subject who holds the gaze, and who subjected to surveillance by the representative of the nation state. This is particularly important in the context of an American mainstream culture that has elected a man like Donald Trump to the Presidency; he demonstrates both the idealised attributes of the powerful white man, yet also the Gothic potential, in his dominance of his family, the subservience of his wife, and his monstrous self-presentation. How like an unreconstructed Rochester, to claim that power allows him to 'do anything', to 'grab' women.[76]

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[74] C. Brontë, p. 392.

[75] Alexandra Carroll, '"We're Just Alike" – Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, and the Monstrous-Human', *Studies in Popular Culture*, 38.1 (2015), 41-63 (p. 41).

[76] Ben Jacobs, Sabrina Siddiqui, and Scott Bixby, '"You can do anything": Trump brags on tape about using fame to get women', *Guardian*, Saturday, 8 Oct (2016) <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/oct/07/donald-trump-leaked-recording-women> [accessed online 03 March 2017]

The Gothic is now mainstream as a genre of narrative fiction, and as an aesthetic; available to small children in the form of Lego haunted houses as it is to elderly television viewers of the *Midsomer Murders* (1997 –). It is as familiar, one might say, as domestic violence and poor mental health, some of the negative aspects of reality it often reflects. In the twenty-first century, the Gothic returns to the same themes as were explored in the first-wave of its development, because the same issues in reconciling the ideals of subjectivity to the lived realities of the body inevitably remain, as the underlying basis of the formation of the subject has changed very little. The ironic, even arch, commentary the Gothic perspective now offers is only intensified by its critical awareness of its own history; its critique has been consistent, and yet remains largely unheeded. This was played for laughs in the postmodern nineties, when the teenage killers of *Scream* (Wes Craven, 1996) mocked their compatriots for not following the 'rules' of the horror genre. But, as the more modern iterations of gory screen horror suggest, the only true survivors, and those left laughing, will be the monsters. They will not, in the end, be rounded up by the plucky final girl, and handed over to the authorities; they are the authorities.

Conclusion

The history of the Gothic and the history of heterosexuality have become cultural preoccupations in recent times, with television documentaries, drama series, major exhibitions, and countless publications developed for a general audience. Sexological researchers and psychiatrists are made primetime stars in *Kinsey* (2004) and *Masters of Sex* (2013-2016), and reach the big screen in *A Dangerous Method* (David Cronenberg, 2011). The history of the Gothic has also been screened repeatedly, the creation of Frankenstein alone depicted in Ken Russell's *Gothic* (1986), *Haunted Summer* (Ivan Passer, 1988), and BBC dramatisations such as *Frankenstein and the Vampyre: a Dark and Gloomy Night* (2016). The British Library recently hosted the chronological exhibit *Terror and Wonder: The Gothic Imagination* (2014-2015). Such popular interest might suggest this cultural history is now familiar, that we understand how, as Foucault archly suggests, 'the conjugal family took custody of [sex] and absorbed it into the serious function of reproduction'.[1] However, we are still a society that 'takes great pains to relate in detail the things it does not say, denounces the powers it exercises, and promises to liberate itself from the very laws that have made it function'.[2] The Gothic likewise, says Xavier Aldana Reyes, 'insists that […] the stories we tell ourselves in our history books may leave out what is most important for us to understand'.[3] Thus, I would certainly agree with Charles L. Crow that all Gothic stories are family stories,[4] but suggest that this can be rephrased more fruitfully: the story of the family is a Gothic history. This is the contribution this thesis offers; it has explored the interwoven history of the development of the heterosexual norm alongside the Gothic monster, and the Gothic as a genre as a development of the rise of popular fiction, to demonstrate their interdependence as products of the post-Enlightenment.

The modern, Gothic, subject is constructed on the page or screen, but also through the act of reading. As Janet Oppenheim observes, 'the sentimental movement produced, as Wollstonecraft knew, not only a series of writing conventions but a habit of reading which

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[1] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: an Introduction*, translated by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1981), p. 3.
[2] Ibid., p. 8.
[3] Xavier Aldana Reyes, *Body Gothic* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), p. 2.
[4] Charles L. Crow, *American Gothic* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p. 15.

expected those conventions to be fulfilled'.[5] The act of reading is central to the construction of the subject: from Frankenstein's creature, to Jane Eyre; from Catherine Morland, to Hannibal Lecter. As Gayatri Spivak says of the use of reading as a metaphor or allegory in *Frankenstein*, 'the place of both the English lady and the unnameable monster are left open'.[6] The subject constructs themselves through reading, but certainty of identity is always denied. The recognition of this uncertainty is threaded through texts such as *The Woman in White* (1859), which D. A. Miller argues 'makes nervousness a metonym for reading, its cause or effect'.[7] Future studies are able to develop the research undertaken here by exploring the relationship between the text and the reader, as a bodily relationship affected by such characteristics as gender identity and ability. The weight of the codex has been a barrier to access for disabled readers unable to lift their arms or sustain their grip, as much as a female-coded name has often been a barrier to publishing for women authors; the relationship between the body and the text is physical as well as representational. The Gothic, as a genre that explicitly encourages reading as a somatic experience, is the genre through which to explore these connections. The uncertainty of the Gothic subject, the possibility for transformation through reading, is, perhaps, what makes this genre so profitable when exploring the 'lost horizons' identified by queer theorists such as Judith Butler.

The Gothic monster is central to understanding our rhetoric about ourselves, it is deployed in protest and in support of political positions, and by collective identity groups. In the image of Donald Trump as Baron Harkkonen from David Lynch's Gothic adaptation of *Dune* (1984) (see fig. five), cartoonist Paul Wee draws parallels between men who abuse their power, are suggested to be sexually deviant in their desires, and have lost touch with reality. Yet, to pick up on these nuances, the viewer must be familiar with the source material. Without context, and with no caption or speech incorporated into the design, the sketch says something else entirely; it discredits the body based on disgust with disease and corpulence. The intention is to critique power, yet those made monstrous by such imagery are, in fact, those least able

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[5] Janet Oppenheim, *'Shattered Nerves': Doctors, Patients and Depression in Victorian England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 31.

[6] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism', in *The Feminist Reader: Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism*, edited by Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore (New York, NY: Basil Blackwell, 1997 [1989]), pp. 148-163 (pp. 162-163).

[7] D. A. Miller, '*Cage aux folles*: Sensation and Gender in Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White*' in *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Catherine Gallagher and Thomas Laqueur (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 107-136 (p. 110).

traditionally to access power – primarily, here, the disabled and the sick. The motives maybe liberatory, to challenge leadership by dictators and their acolytes, but the effect is oppressive.
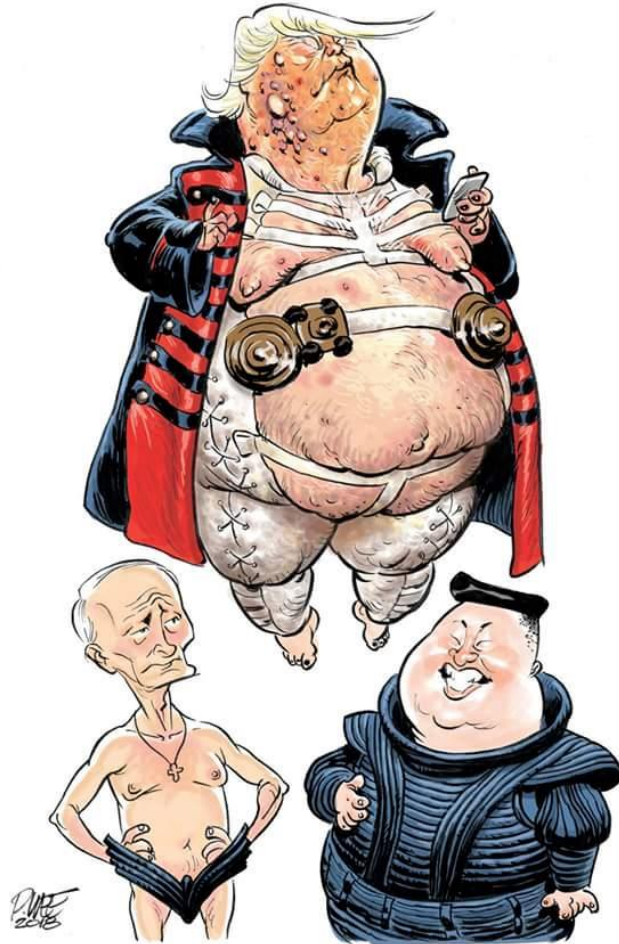
Figure 5: Donald Trump, Mike Pence, and Kim Jong-un, caricatured by Paul Wee as House Harkonnen

The same tension exists in the repurposing of the monster as a symbol of oppression. The titular monster from Gothic horror movie *The Babadook* (Jennifer Kent, 2014), was co-opted as a symbol for LGBTQ+ Pride marchers in 2017. The idea started on internet platforms, such as Tumblr and Twitter, in late 2016: users suggested the creature be a contestant on television show *Ru Paul's Drag Race* (2009-) due to his dramatic entrances, and iconic hat. By the time of the Pride celebrations six months later, the joke was established in queer communities and the monster moved offline and onto banners and costumes (see fig. six). The metaphoric parallels go further than a simple stereotype of queer people as overly-dramatic; the Babadook is a family secret, locked in a basement, and seemingly intent upon stealing children. This is

the negative reconfiguration of the 'predatory queer', as explored in chapter five of this thesis. The filmic Babadook is a metaphor for grief at the loss of a child, reflecting also the losses of those who are excluded by their families, and/or those who have experienced gender dysphoria and thus felt like they lost their childhood. Yet, in reclaiming the monstrous image of queerness, a marginalised group are once again accepting a liminal role. Is it possible to deploy the image of the monster without supporting the dominant process by which monstrosity is constructed? Can the signifier be overwritten, or rather, over-read? Once again, deviance is, to an extent, in the eye of the beholder.


Figure 6: Edinburgh drag queen Rayna Destruction dressed as the Babadook for Pride 2017

This thesis has explored the ways in which the Gothic interrogates the boundaries of kinship and its relation to normativity, positing the relationship between the individual and heterosexual norms as central to the philosophical understanding of the subject in the modern era. The Gothic is a literature of imperialism, like the novel form as described by Edward

Said,[8] whether written in support of, or as a challenge to imperialism's structures. The continuation of the Gothic, in form and content, as a genre of the margins – from pulp fiction to horror box set – demonstrates that deviation from the normative does not in and of itself disrupt the dominant norm; normativity requires an 'other' as a definitional opposite. The metaphors of the Gothic's monsters are endlessly adaptable, signifying many types of otherness, but always with an underlying bodily presence that cannot be ignored, or universalised. The terminal image of the monster is the visible presence of the process of making monstrous, and it is this process in individual texts, and more broadly in Anglo-American cultures, that the chronology of this thesis has sought to uncover. Yet, even contemporary analysts often fall into the trap of thinking of these as 'just a monster tale',[9] being surprised by the depth and resonances of the material once they come to study texts like *Frankenstein* (1818), or *Jekyll and Hyde* (1886). The metaphors of the tales, and the images of their adaptations, are so familiar that we skate past their surface, looking to what is below, forgetting the physical presence of the monster itself. Michael Arntfield champions Stevenson's well-known tale as being about 'what it means to be human' a century 'in front of contemporary discussions' of automatism, fugue states, and criminal responsibility.[10] Yet, in exploring the work of Charles Brockden Brown and William Godwin, this thesis has shown that the Gothic had addressed these concerns even a century before that, within the vital context of the Romantic debates about the nature of subjectivity. In placing the texts of differing eras within the context of on-going debates about bodily normativity, I have demonstrated how our contemporary ideas of monstrosity are shaped by, and in opposition to, the construction of a heterosexual, masculine, able-bodied norm of the self-subject that has been established, even as it was challenged, through fiction.

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[8] Edward W. Said, *Culture And Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994).
[9] Michael Arntfield, *Gothic Forensics: Criminal Investigative Procedure in Victorian Horror and Mystery* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 136.
[10] Ibid., p. 137.

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