LEABHARLANN CHOLÁISTE NA TRÍONÓIDE, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH Ollscoil Átha Cliath

TRINITY COLLEGE LIBRARY DUBLIN The University of Dublin

Terms and Conditions of Use of Digitised Theses from Trinity College Library Dublin

Copyright statement

All material supplied by Trinity College Library is protected by copyright (under the Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000 as amended) and other relevant Intellectual Property Rights. By accessing and using a Digitised Thesis from Trinity College Library you acknowledge that all Intellectual Property Rights in any Works supplied are the sole and exclusive property of the copyright and/or other IPR holder. Specific copyright holders may not be explicitly identified. Use of materials from other sources within a thesis should not be construed as a claim over them.

A non-exclusive, non-transferable licence is hereby granted to those using or reproducing, in whole or in part, the material for valid purposes, providing the copyright owners are acknowledged using the normal conventions. Where specific permission to use material is required, this is identified and such permission must be sought from the copyright holder or agency cited.

Liability statement

By using a Digitised Thesis, I accept that Trinity College Dublin bears no legal responsibility for the accuracy, legality or comprehensiveness of materials contained within the thesis, and that Trinity College Dublin accepts no liability for indirect, consequential, or incidental, damages or losses arising from use of the thesis for whatever reason. Information located in a thesis may be subject to specific use constraints, details of which may not be explicitly described. It is the responsibility of potential and actual users to be aware of such constraints and to abide by them. By making use of material from a digitised thesis, you accept these copyright and disclaimer provisions. Where it is brought to the attention of Trinity College Library that there may be a breach of copyright or other restraint, it is the policy to withdraw or take down access to a thesis while the issue is being resolved.

Access Agreement

By using a Digitised Thesis from Trinity College Library you are bound by the following Terms & Conditions. Please read them carefully.

I have read and I understand the following statement: All material supplied via a Digitised Thesis from Trinity College Library is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, and duplication or sale of all or part of any of a thesis is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for your research use or for educational purposes in electronic or print form providing the copyright owners are acknowledged using the normal conventions. You must obtain permission for any other use. Electronic or print copies may not be offered, whether for sale or otherwise to anyone. This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

'The Menstruous-Monstrous' Female Blood in Horror

A thesis submitted to the School of English at the University of Dublin, Trinity College, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2009

Maria Parsons



Declaration

This thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at any other university. I agree that the Library may lend or copy the thesis upon request, subject to normal conditions of acknowledgement.

Signed: Marga Janoons.

Date: 19/10/2009

Summary

This thesis examines the subject of menstrual blood in gothic and horror literature and film. It aims to map and locate negative constructions and representations of the menstrual body within the genre while also pointing to instances of anarchic transgression and vitalist, positive lines of flight. This thesis engages a trans-disciplinary, postmodern materialist approach that is anti-oedipal, vitalist, non-unitary and historically accountable. The structure is thematic and the chronological parameters are contingent on the area of study. However, for the most part this thesis spans the representation of menstrual blood and the bleeding female body in horror from the nineteenth century to the present.

Chapter One, explores myth-making practices and socio-cultural constructions of menstruation and female sexuality in the fairy tale. This chapter focuses on Angel Carter's The Bloody Chamber (1979) and the figure of 'Little Red Riding Hood'. In this chapter analysis also extends to contemporary cinematic representations of 'Little Red Riding Hood' and includes Neil Jordan's The Company of Wolves (1984), John Fawcett's Ginger Snaps (2000), and David Slade's Hard Candy (2005). Chapter Two examines the representation of menstruation in the vampire genre. Here the pathologizing of menstrual blood through bio-medical discourse and practice is explored. Female vampirism and its menstrual connotations are examined in Bram Stoker's Dracula (1897), Porter Emerson Browne's A Fool there Was (1909) and Frank Powell's film adaptation in 1915, starring Theda Bara; Whitley Strieber's *The Hunger* (1980) and Tony Scott's adaptation (1983); and finally Claire Denis' Trouble Everyday (2000). Chapter Three, looks at female puberty in 1970s horror according to the Deleuzian concept of 'becoming' and argues that the pubescent, female protagonists of these films indicate an anarchic menstrualmorphosis. However, cultural practices and interventions curtail, obstruct and control these bodies and identities. Thus, girl-becoming-woman is a becoming-menstruousmonstrous in 1970s horror, and one that inevitably results in 'becomes-monster'. Here, analysis includes an examination of William Peter Blatty's The Exorcist (1971), Stephen King's Carrie (1974), and John Farris' The Fury (1976), alongside their respective film

adaptations, William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* (1973) and Brian DePalma's *Carrie* (1976), and *The Fury* (1978). Chapter Four examines the slasher and rape-revenge genres, expanding the scope of this thesis from an exploration of the pubescent, menstrual body, to one which includes the sexually violated female body. This chapter explores a cultural history of rape and also examines the impact of psychoanalysis and the castration complex on female sexuality. This chapter also looks at cultural anxiety and ritual sacrifice according to the work of René Girard. The novel and film texts explored in this chapter, include Robert Bloch's and Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1950; 1960), *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974, dir. Tobe Hooper), *I Spit on Your Grave* (1978, dir. Meir Zarchi), *Last House on the Left* (1972, dir. Wes Craven) and *A Gun for Jennifer* (1996, dir. Jennifer Twiss and Todd Morris). Finally, this chapter also engages with the Deleuzio-Guattarian concept of the 'Minor' in an examination of the work of Virgine Despentes in both her novel and film adaptation *Baise-Moi* (1993; 2000).

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people for their continued support and generosity in the writing of this thesis:

To my supervisor Dr Darryl Jones for his belief, advice, patience and good humour throughout the completion of my thesis without whose support it would not have been possible. Also thanks to Dr Paula Gilligan whose enthusiasm and support was much appreciated.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to my proof readers, Dr Jenny Mc Donnell, Dr Elizabeth McCarthy, Dr Dara Downey, Dr Sorcha Ní Fhlainn, Dr Bernice Murphy and Dr Julie Rogers.

To Shona Parsons for her years of support and her help in the final hours of this thesis.

I would also like to thank the School of English, Trinity College and the Department of English, Media and Cultural Studies and all my colleagues and students in the IADT for their continued support over the years.

To my family who have provided huge support and unwavering belief.

Finally, a huge thank you to all my close friends who have kept me smiling throughout:

Aki Aro, Elaine Breen, Josephine Browne, Kathy Brown, Sorcha Burke, Peter Byrne, John Costelloe, Kelly Davidson, Grainne Elmore, John Exshaw, Declan Heneghan, Margaret Robson and Morgan Jones, Áine Larkin, Caroline Linnane, Mark Linnane, Kieran McBride, Cathy McGlynn, Aidan McNally, Conor McNally, Kevin McNally, Aoife Morris, Mary Mulchrone, Brendan O'Connell, William O'Kane, Eneas Parsons, Liz Parsons, Stephanie Rains, Sarah Rattigan, Emma Rothfusz, Louise Sweeney, Pádraic Whyte.

For my family

John, Noreen, Shona & Eneas Parsons, Max, Charlie & Buddy

My Grandparents
Eneas and Eileen McNally
&
Elizabeth and Martin Parsons

Contents

Declaration Summary Acknowledgements Dedication

List of Illustrations

Filmography

Introduction 'The Menstruous-Monstrous': Female Blood in Horror
The Mensiruous-Monstrous . Female Blood in Horioi
Chapter One 'Fairy Tales of Blood': Bloody Chambers and the Company of Wolves
raily Tales of Blood. Bloody Chambers and the Company of Wolves
Chapter Two
'Vamping the Woman': Pathologies of Blood and Female Vampirism
Chapter Three
'Leaky Bodies/Leaky Politics': Menstrual-Morphosis in 1970s Horror173
Chapter Four
'Cartographies of Blood': Re-Mapping the Body in the Slasher and Rape-Revenge Film
Afterword
301
References
Bibliography
Electronic Sources

Illustrations

- (All images sourced from *Google Images*, [http://images.google.ie/imghp?hl=en&tab=wi])
- Fig.1.1 Gustave Doré, 'Little Red Riding Hood', (1832-1883)
- Fig.1.2 'Little Red Riding Hood', Father Tuck's Little Folk Series, (London: Raphael Tuck and Sons Ltd., 1890s).
- Fig.1.3 'Little Red Riding Hood', Malena Booklet no.100 Warriors, (P.A.: Malena Company, n.d)
- Fig.1.4 'Little Red Riding Hood', Lydia L., *Very Red Riding Hood* , (Boston, MA: L Prang, 1863)
- Fig. 1.5 John (Donald Sutherland), Don't Look Now, dir. Nicolas Roeg, (1973)
- Fig. 1.6 Film Poster, Ginger Snaps, dir. John Fawcett, (2000)
- Fig. 1.7 Film Poster, Hard Candy, dir. David Slade, (2005)
- Fig. 2.1 Ferdinand Knopff, Istar, (1888)
- Fig. 2.2 Ferdinand Gueldry, *The Blood Drinkers*, (1898)
- Fig.2.3 Staking of Helen (Barbara Shelley), *Dracula Prince of Darkness*, dir. Terence Fisher, (1966)
- Fig. 2.4 Henry Fuseli On the Nightmare, (1781)
- Fig. 2.5 Theda Bara, film poster, A Fool there Was, dir. Frank Powell, (1915)
- Fig. 2.6 Ford Maddox Brown 'Take your Son, Sir', (1857)
- Fig. 2.7 Miriam Blaylock (Catherine Deneuve), *The Hunger*, dir. Tony Scott, (1983)
- Fig. 2.8 Coré (Beatrice Dalle), *Trouble Everyday*, dir. Claire Denis, (2000)
- Fig. 3.1 Regan (Linda Blair), The Exorcist, dir. William Friedkin, (1973)
- Fig. 3.2 Carrie (Sissy Spacek), Carrie, dir. Brian De Palma, (1976)
- Fig. 3.3 Gillian (Amy Irving), *The Fury*, dir. Brian De Palma, (1978)
- Fig. 4.1 Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins), *Psycho*, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, (1960)
- Fig. 4.2 Marion (Janet Leigh), *Psycho*, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, (1960)

- Fig. 4.3 Plug hole, *Psycho*, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, (1960)
- Fig. 4.4 Grinning Skull, Psycho, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, (1960)
- Fig.4.5 Jennnifer, (Camille Keaton), I Spit on Your Grave, dir. Meir Zarchi, (1978)
- Fig.4.6 Mari, (Sandra Peabody/Cassell), Last House on the Left, dir. Wes Craven, (1972)
- Fig. 4.7 Impalement, Cannibal Holocaust, dir. Ruggero Deodato, (1980)

Introduction: 'The Menstruous-Monstrous' Female Blood in Horror

Positive metamorphoses are indeed my political passion: the kinds of becoming that destabilize dominant power-relations, deterritorialize Majority-based identities and values, and infuse a joyful sense of empowerment into a subject that is in-becoming.¹

(Rosi Braidotti, Transpositions)

The bleeding female body is a core feature of gothic and horror literature and film. The trope recurs in the blood-lusting early female vampires of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Percy Bysshe Shelley; in Bram Stoker's Lucy Westenra who is eventually staked through the heart and beheaded; in the grotesque and leaky, pubescent female bodies of '1970s' horror', (for example, Peter Blatty's and William Friedkin's Regan in *The Exorcist* and Stephen King's and Brian DePalma's *Carrie*); in the slasher genre with its multiple murders of teenage girls; in rape-revenge and in the contemporary 'torture porn' trend, which intensifies the violence of both the slasher and rape-revenge movie in often unprecedented graphic depictions of the brutalised female body. Thus, gore and splatter, the spilling of blood, the body ripped apart, open and vulnerable, are as much a part of the machinery of gothic and horror as are the more conventional tropes of the hapless heroine and the sexually depraved predator or the architecture of castles, sepulchres, crypts, dark corridors and haunted houses. As Barbara Creed writes of the prevalence of blood in horror:

The modern horror film often 'plays' with its audience, saturating it with scenes of blood and gore, deliberately pointing to the fragility of the symbolic order in the domain of the body where the body never ceases to signal the repressed world of the mother.²

To date, it is this signalling of the repressed mother upon which most critical work on the bleeding body in horror has tended to focus upon. Woman, childbirth and its

¹ Rosi Braidotti, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), p.271.

² Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, (London: Routledge, 1993), p.13.

connotative leaky monstrosity has been extensively examined across the genre. However, in this thesis I would like to shift the emphasis from the maternal and the pregnant female body to the female body at puberty and menstruation. However, before an analysis of menstrual blood in horror literature and film can be undertaken it is important to take into account a cultural history of menstruation.

Menstrual Taboo and Prohibition

Culturally, menstruation has been overlaid with discourses of concealment and hygiene, from cultural and religious taboo to its pathologizing in health and medicine. Dominant cultural norms encourage a view of menstruation as negative and embarrassing, and for many it is seen as dirty and an overall nuisance. In fact, menstrual blood as a pollutant can be traced back to Greek and Roman antiquity and the writings of Aristotle and Pythagoras who believed that menstrual blood was in effect an excess of unwanted materials that were toxic to the body. As such, throughout the ages prohibition and taboo have been attributed to woman's periodic bleeding.

As Janice Delaney, Mary Jane Lupton and Emily Toth write in *The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation*: 'Greater than his fear of death, dishonour, or dismemberment has been primitive man's respect for menstrual blood. The measures he has taken to avoid this mysterious substance have affected his meal-times, his bedtimes, and his hunting season; and primitive woman, unable to separate herself from her blood, knew that upon her tabooed state depended the safety of the entire society.' Furthermore, they point out that 'Menstrual taboos are among the most inviolate in many societies. How did woman come to merit this dubious privilege? Fear of blood, says Freud, who states furthermore that the blood phobia may also "serve aesthetic and hygienic purposes." Thus, purity and impurity constitute one of the foremost aspects of menstrual taboo. For example, James Frazer in *The Golden Bough*, describes:

An Australian black-fellow, who discovered that his wife had lain on his blanket at her menstrual period, killed her and died of terror himself within a fortnight.

⁴ ibid., p.7.

³ Janice Delaney, Mary Jane Lupton and Emily Toth, *The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), p.7.

Hence Australian women at these times are forbidden under pain of death to use anything that men use, or even walk on a path that any man frequents.⁵

This aversion to menstruating women is also reflected in the culture of the Bribri Indians of Costa Rica. There a menstruating woman can only eat off banana leaves, which she must then appropriately dispose of because it is believed that if an animal were to stumble across the contaminated leaf and eat it they would perish and die. The same applies to the drinking vessels of the menstruating woman – if anyone else is to drink from the same cup after her they too would also surely die.⁶

Such taboos also extended to childbirth and agricultural fecundity, for example, some African Bantu tribes believe that if a woman miscarries and the blood is spilt on tribal territory, great fortune will befall the tribe. Frazer writes:

When a woman has a miscarriage and has allowed her blood to flow, and has hidden the child, it is enough to cause the burning winds to blow and to parch the country with heat. The rain no longer falls, for the country is no longer in order. When the rain approaches the place where the blood is, it will fear and remain at a distance. That woman has committed a great fault.⁷

In the Old Testament, Leviticus dedicates an entire section to taboo pertaining to genital fluids and menstrual blood. The book states:

And if a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days; and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even. And everything she lieth upon in her separation shall be unclean; everything also that she sitteth upon shall be unclean. And whosoever toucheth her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And if it be on her bed, or on any thing whereon she sitteth, when he toucheth it, he shall be unclean until the even. And if any man be with her at all, and her flowers be upon him he shall be unclean seven days, and all the bed whereon he lieth shall be unclean. And if woman have an issue of blood many days out of the time of her separation, or if it run beyond the time of her separation; all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation; she shall be unclean.

It continues:

⁵ James G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, (London: Macmillan, 1980), p.225.

⁶ ibid., p.225.

⁷ ibid., p.207.

⁸ Levicticus 19:25, Holy Bible, King James Version, (Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), p.78.

But if she be cleansed of her issue, then she shall number to herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. And on the eighth day she shall take unto her two turtles, or two young pigeons and bring them unto the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And the priest shall offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for her before the Lord for the issue of her uncleanness. Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness; that they die not in their uncleanness, when thy defile my tabernacle that is amongst them. This is the law of him that hath an issue and of him whose seed goeth from him, and is defiled therewith; And of her that is sick of her flowers and of him that hath an issue, of the man and of the woman, and of him that lies with her that is unclean.

In her examination of menstrual blood in Judaeo-Christianity, Marie Mulvey-Roberts also notes that the 'early Church fathers had a list of contraindications that included hunchbacked, one-eyed, malformed, feeble-minded, or club-headed children, while the sixth-century Archbishop Caesarius of Arles, who was eventually made a saint, warned: "Whoever has relations with his wife during her period will have children that are either leprous or epileptic or possessed by the Devil." 10

Furthermore, Mary Douglas argues that the components of primitive cultures offer a simplified version of more sophisticated and complex societies. She writes: 'It is only by exaggerating the difference between within and without, above and below, male and female, with and against, that a semblance of order is created.' She also states that:

The body can stand for any bounded system. Its boundaries can represent any boundaries which are threatened or precarious. The body is a complex structure. The function of its different parts and their relation afford a source of symbols for other complex structures. We cannot possibly interpret rituals concerning excreta, breast milk, saliva and the rest unless we are prepared to see in the body a symbol of society and to see the powers and dangers credited to social structure reproduced in small on the human body. 12

Thus, menstrual myth and taboo permeates cultural history and its practices and, although its functions vary, there is a recurring emphasis on purity and impurity as well as evidence of an over-arching fear of female sexuality.¹³

¹⁰ Marie Mulvey-Roberts, 'Menstrual Misogyny and Taboo, The Medusa, Vampire and Female Stigmatic' in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, eds., *Menstruation: A Cultural History*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp.152-153.

11 Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, (London: Routledge, 2005), p.5.

⁹ ibid., p.78.

¹² ibid., p.142.

¹³ For anthropological studies of menstruation see Chris Knight, *Blood Relations: Menstruation and the Origins of Culture*, (Bath: Bath Press, 1991); Thomas Buckley and Alma Gottlieb, *Blood Magic: The*

Menstruation: Health and Medicine

As Laura Fingerson rightly notes 'the health and medical industry is a powerful social institution that intersects the lives of all people.' At the same time she points out that although medical science can have positive effects it can also negatively impact on how we experience our bodies. Nowhere is this more evident than in its pathologizing of menstruation as an illness with its associated physical and psychological symptoms. The construction of menstruation as a medical object of knowledge can be traced from the ancient Greek *corpus Hippocraticum* to the early 21st century practice of menstrual suppression.

Within the *corpus Hippocraticum* there is a series of works relating to female physiology. Early physicians attributed much importance to the flow and its regularity. As Luigi Arata writes, physicians at this time 'regarded the condition of the menses as crucial to general health. As time passed, their claims about regular and irregular flows were adjusted in the light of new evidence. As these physicians had no notion of hormonal processes as the basis of menstruation, the physiological model carried the weight of explaining the event, an otherwise inexplicable phenomenon.' ¹⁵

For Aristotle menstruation was a sign of female inferiority. Menstrual blood figured in the same category of bodily fluids as sperm but differed only in warmth, energy and quality – in effect, it was essentially male but inferior. In *On the Generation of Animals* he explained:

The female always provides the material, the male provides that which fashions it, for this is the power that we say they each possess, and this what it is for them to be male and female.¹⁶

Or, as Gabrielle Hiltmann notes:

Anthropology of Menstruation, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

¹⁴ Laura Fingerson, *Girls in Power: Gender, Body, and Adolescence*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), p.45.

¹⁵ Luigi Arata, 'Menses in the *Corpus Hippocratium*' in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, eds., *Menstruation: A Cultural History*, p.21.

¹⁶ Aristotle, 'On the Generation of Animals', in Jonathan Barnes ed., *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation, Volume One*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p.1146

[...] this means that there is only one matter and this matter is male. Interestingly, Aristotle did not consider the possibility of neutral matter being able to develop into female and male shapes. His concept of reproduction, and of the relation between the sexes, is a striking example of an idiologic of the same. If, for Aristotle, the normal child was male, why were girls ever produced? He explained it is only be accident that girls are formed or rather de-formed, since they have no penis and less heat. The lack of male sex is a visible sign of women's monstrosity. This accident happens if the procreating man is too weak as the result of being too old or too young, or if the conception is influenced by cold winds. In these cases man cannot impose his form on the menstrual blood.¹⁷

Galen in the second century A.D. was hugely influential in his structural drawing of the male and female reproductive organs. He demonstrated at length that 'women were essentially men in whom a lack of vital heat – of perfection – had resulted in the retention, inside, of structures in the male that are visible without.' According to Galen's one-sex model, women who had testicles just like men did (inverted fallopian tubes) ejaculated during sexual climax. Thus, menstruation was not the sole maternal contribution to reproduction upon which the form of the new embryo was imprinted by the seed, as Aristotle had argued, but was for Galen a nutritive fluid which nourished the foetus during pregnancy, hence the lack of menstrual flow at this time.

Medieval medical science inherited both the Aristotelian and the Galenic lines of thinking which made the subject of menstruation unclear. As Monica H. Green notes, given the confusion surrounding the menses, it is not surprising that medical texts such as the *Secrets of Women* (c.1300) 'which draws on natural and medical traditions, should both be so obsessed with explaining the menses and so concerned about what effect they might have both on the foetus and on other people.' The *Secrets of Women* also engaged with the first-century Roman Naturalist tradition of Pliny. Pliny's work for the most part relayed local lore propagating the ill-effects of menstruation. As Marie Mulvey-Roberts writes: 'Pliny blasted menstruating women for having sexual intercourse, which he insisted would result in offspring that were stillborn, sickly, or afflicted with purulent

¹⁸ Thomas Lacquer, *Making Sex: From the Greeks to Freud*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), p.4.

¹⁷ Gabriell Hiltmann, 'Menstruation in Aristotle's Concept of the Person' in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, eds., *Menstruation: A Cultural History*, p.28.

p 4. ¹⁹ Monica H. Green, 'Menstruation in Medieval Western Europe', in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, eds., *Menstruation a Cultural History*, p.58.

blood serum.'²⁰ Although taboos surrounding menstruation were widespread during the Middle Ages, Pliny's influence on medical writing was minimal.

For the most part, it would appear that in medieval Europe there was an indubitable silence surrounding menstruation. Instead euphemisms abounded in discussions of the subject with 'flowers' being the most commonly used term to refer to menstruation. As Green also notes, in a later medieval French translation of the *Trotula* the advice offered to French practitioners is to name the female organs by other names in order to allow women to talk about their reproductive bodies without feeling ashamed. Terms suggested included 'les fleurs' as a substitute for the 'customary' name 'les maladies secrettes'. Green concludes that the 'deliberately opaque euphemism *les maladies secretes* as the normative French term for the menses says a great deal about the increasing layers of verbal and discursive enclosure of women's bodies and bodily processes in the late Middle Ages.'²¹

Medical theories of menstrual blood throughout the early modern period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were primarily concerned with humoural theory, and as Cathy McClive observes

[...] inherently linked in the hierarchical humoural economy of fluids (blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile). Early modern medical practioners were in agreement about the importance of blood – the most vital of all the humours and the source of life itself. Blood was not sexed with the humoural economy of fluids, but was held to ebb and flow in both male and female bodies. Excess humour caused ill-health in male and female bodies and a body naturally tended towards the evacuation of such superfluous matter. The production of blood, and indeed other bodily fluids such as menses, occurred during various stages of 'cooking'. The analysis of blood and bloody fluids provided an excellent means to diagnose health and the humoural equilibrium of the body. [...] Menstrual matter, like other bloody fluids, was not perceived as impure *per se*. [...] Rather, diagnoses depended on the health and condition of the menstruating individual.²²

Furthermore, medical practice in the early modern period tenuously drew the link between menstruation and reproduction. However, it was not until the decade 1750-1760,

²⁰ Marie-Mulvey Roberts,, 'Menstrual Misogyny and Taboo, The Medusa, Vampire and Female Stigmatic' in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, eds., *Menstruation: A Cultural History*, p.152.

²² Cathy McClive, 'Menstrual Knowledge in Early Modern France, c. 1555-1761' in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, eds., *Menstruation: A Cultural History*, p.80.

Monica H. Green, 'Menstruation in Medieval Western Europe', in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, eds., *Menstruation: A Cultural History*, p.80. Also notable in the transition from late medieval medical and cultural views of menstruation to Enlightenment Europe is the early seventeenth century translation of the Bible into English for James I and the translation of Leviticus with its litany of prohibitions relating to polluted states – primarily genital fluids and in particular menstrual blood.

which is often cited as pivotal in the history of menstruation, that a decisive shift in the understanding of the female reproductive body occurred. It was around this time that a tightening of anatomical and physiological definitions was undertaken, altering perceptions of the female body and menstruation. As Thomas Laqueur notes, at this time the 'reproductive organs went from being paradigmatic sites for displaying hierarchy, resonant throughout the cosmos, to being the foundation of incommensurable difference.'23 Organs that had previously shared the same name such as ovaries and testicles were now linguistically differentiated and it was not until around 1700 that a separate technical name was given to the vagina. However, this new two-sex model of human anatomy, and the associated naming of the reproductive female organs as distinguishable from the males was limited, and as McClive notes, it was still not until 'the discovery of ovulation in the 1870s and hormones in the 1930s that the biological function we recognise as menstruation was fully revealed.'24

The nineteenth century is exemplary for the focus it placed on menstruation and the female reproductive body with specialist branches of enquiry and practice emerging across the fields of gynaecology and obstetrics. From the 1830s onwards menstruation featured with intensified regularity in medical journals such as the Lancet and the British Medical Journal usually under the generic title of 'Diseases of Women'. For example the British Medical Journal, September 7th, 1861, contained an article entitled 'Lectures on the Diagnosis and Treatment of Diseases of Women' which was followed by a subtitle 'Disorders of Menstruation'. ²⁵ As Julie Marie Strange notes:

Within a model of professionalisation, nineteenth-century medical discourse maintained that it represented to the world accurately and used its empirical claims to assert that science had proven, and could even improve, the laws of nature. However, medical claims are inextricable from their cultural contexts and paradigms of menstruation were created, understood and interpreted in direct relation to perceptions of femininity.²⁶

²³ Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: From the Greeks to Freud*, p.149.

²⁴ Cathy McClive, 'Menstrual Knowledge in Early Modern France, c. 1555-1761' in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, eds., Menstruation: A Cultural History, pp.86-87. I will look at the history of ovulation and menstruation in more detail in Chapter Two.

²⁵ Graily Hewitt, 'Lectures on the Diagnosis and Treatment of Women/Disorders of Menstruation', British Medical Journal, Sept 7th, 1861. PubMed Central, Archive of Life Science Journals, [http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/picrender.fcgi?artid=2287899&blobtype=pdf], date accessed: 04/01/2009.

²⁶ Julie-Marie Strange, 'I Believe it to be a Case Depending on Menstruation: Madness and Menstrual Taboo in British Medical Practice, c. 1840-1930', in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie eds., Menstruation: A Cultural History, p.102.

Thus, nineteenth century medical enquiry and practice pertaining to menstruation was firmly located in a cultural matrix. Differences between the sexes in accordance with sociological theories and social Darwinism firmly relegated women to a position as both inferior to and more delicate than the male.

Central to the formation of woman as the 'weaker sex' was her reproductive cycle which now was viewed to impact on her entire existence. As Strange writes: 'Along with puberty, pregnancy, childbirth, and the menopause, menstruation represented a "sexual crisis", that is, a period of genital and reproductive excitement which intensified the inherent instability of the "feminine" body.'²⁷ Or, As Mary Poovey has observed, Victorian medical narratives condensed femininity into 'one enormous universal uterus'²⁸ which was perceived as pathological, uncontrollable and excitable. Menstrual instability became the inevitable cause of innumerable perceived female physiological and psychological ailments. I will discuss the nineteenth century medicalizing of menstruation in more extensive detail in Chapter Two.

However, the least that may be said of nineteenth century medical and scientific approaches to the female body and menstruation, is that they firmly located female biology within the domestic and procreative domains rendering the woman both feeble of mind and body. Nevertheless, as numerous cultural historians of medical history point out, the medical profession should not be viewed as an uncontested or uniform body of opinion. As Strange also notes: 'From the 1870s onwards, research into the character of menstruation, its relationship to ovulation, menstrual metabolic rates and the effects of social and environmental factors on menstrual experience all facilitated alternative ways of thinking and talking about periods.'²⁹ Furthermore, she makes the point that the 'proliferating uncertainty surrounding the relationship between menstruation, general well-being and menstrual health was inseparable from the movement towards campaigning for women's rights and political representation and the growing numbers of women entering the medical profession, not least because such women held a vested interest in proving that biology need not disable women's opportunities or rights to equality.'³⁰ Female physicians such as Elizabeth Garrett Anderson and Mary Putnam

²⁷ ibid., p.102.

³⁰ ibid., p.111.

²⁸ Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988.) p.35.

²⁹ Julie-Marie Strange, 'I Believe it to be a Case Depending on Menstruation: Madness and Menstrual Taboo in British Medical Practice, c. 1840-1930', in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, eds., *Menstruation a Cultural History*, p.111.

Jacobi in America began to interrogate firmly held beliefs relating to the debilitating nature of menstruation. These changes are evident in medical journals from this time: for example, the British Medical Journal ran an article on 'The Economics of Menstruation' alongside an article on the early female suffrage movement entitled 'Josephine Butler, Centenary Tribute' in 1928. The first article concluded with the following:

The general deductions from this report are of great economic importance, since the work tends to confirm the result of other recently published investigations on the menstrual cycle. It may now be asserted more definitely that this physiological phenomenon has, as a rule no noticeable effect on working capacity among normal healthy women, and such a statement will be of special interest in those interested in industrial matters.³¹

The second article is a tribute to Josephine Butler, an early suffragette, who was instrumental in the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts, 1863-1869. As the article states:

Sixty years ago it was unknown for women to speak in public; two years later, in 1870, Mrs Butler was addressing mixed audiences all over England on the subject of prostitution. During those years, when prolonged and furious controversy raged round the question of the 'State regulation of vice,' Mrs Butler was the central figure, not only in this country, but also on the Continent. It is difficult for us to realize the courage and intense conviction needed in those days for a woman to challenge public opinion on such a subject. ³²

With both articles placed consecutively in the journal it would appear that changing views of menstruation were unarguably connected to the female suffrage movement and a move by women into more public roles.

From the First World War on there was a flourishing of female-led clinical investigations into menstruation, in particular by the Medical Women's Federation (MWF), in an effort to reconstitute menstrual experience in a language of normality,

³² 'Josephine Butler, Centenary Tribute' in the *British Medical Journal*, April 7th, 1928. *PubMed Central*, *Archive of Life Science Journals*,

 $[http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/picrender.fcgi?artid=2455108\&blobtype=pdf],\ date\ accessed:\ 04/01/2009.$

³¹ 'The Economics of Menstruation', Industrial Fatigue Research Board, Report no. 45. London: H.M. Stationary Office. 1928, in the *British Medical Journal*, April 7th, 1928. *PubMed Central, Archive of Life Science Journals*, [http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/picrender.fcgi?artid=2455113&blobtype=pdf], date accessed: 04/01/2009.

hygiene and activity as opposed to passive and pathological terms.³³ However, it would be inaccurate to assume that 'new models of menstruation simply replaced the old or that notions of insanity were relegated to annals of superstition.'³⁴ Instead what was promoted was a newly sanitized, odour-free, clean menstruation. As Strange rightly observes: 'Whilst encouraging a new culture of rationality, hygiene, health and communication, organisations such as the MWF risked overlooking the complexities and internal rationale of older customs and forms of menstrual discretion; they were promoting one vision of femininity and experience, the modern, at the expense of another.'³⁵ This is most evident in advertisements for menstrual products. From the outset the menstrual product industry has sold its products according to 'hygiene'. As Laura Fingerson writes in her work *Girls in Power: Gender, Body and Menstruation in Adolescence*, 'Tampax reports from 1945 advise use of tampons to increase cleanliness and hygiene, and even discuss the pre-WWI era when "the life of the menstruating woman was a miserable one" because disposable pads and tampons had not been invented yet.'³⁶

Furthermore, the work of Kyusaku Ogino and Hermann Knaus in the 1920s established that ovulation was separate from menstruation thus inaugurating notions of the 'safe time' of the month. Also the discovery of hormonal influence in the menstrual cycle led to the formulation of pre-menstrual tension (PMT) in 1931. Overall, I would argue that, culturally, little has changed since early twentieth century developments in the understanding of menstruation. It is still viewed as something that needs to be concealed and hidden with the website of a contemporary menstrual product company *Always* describing its various sanitary pads accordingly:

Ultra thin – thinner than a regular menstrual pad it makes Always Ultra discreet yet effective.

Clean Feel – Keeps you feeling clean, dry and secure. We know that you always want to feel comfortably clean during your period – with the Clean Feel technology and the cotton like feeling.

Absorbent Core & side Barriers - Our innovative Absorbent Core absorbs menstrual fluid safely to help keep you protected and dry.

³³ The Medical Women's Federation (MWF) was founded in 1917 in Britain to advance and support female medical practitioners and their patients with a particular focus on the area of women's health.

³⁴ Julie-Marie Strange, 'I Believe it to be a Case Depending on Menstruation: Madness and Menstrual Taboo in British Medical Practice, c. 1840-1930', in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, eds., *Menstruation: A Cultural History*, p.112.

³⁵ ibid., p.111.

³⁶ Laura Fingerson, Girls in Power: Gender, Body, and Adolescence, p.42.

Odour Protection – The Always Core turns liquid into gel which helps lock odour away.

Double Curved Wings – Our Double Curved Wings wrap snugly around your underwear for extra side coverage and protection against period leaks.

Freshelle Wipe – each menstrual pad comes with an individually packed hygienic feminine wipe conveniently attached to the main pad pouch. The gentle cleansing wipe is alcohol-free and dermatologically tested to be suitable for feminine hygiene.

Dermatologically tested – skin compatibility of the topsheet confirmed in a dermatological test.³⁷

Such advertising continues to denote difference between the sexes. As Fingerson wryly notes in her work on menstruation, things would probably be very different if it was men who menstruated. She quotes an anecdote from an unknown source which clearly indicates the value, (or rather, the undervaluing) of the female body, both historically and socio-culturally:

Military men, right-wing politicians, and religious fundamentalists would cite menstruation ('men-struation') as proof that only men could serve in the Army ('you have to give blood to take blood'), occupy political office ('can women be aggressive without that steadfast cycle governed by the planet Mars?'), be priests and ministers ('how could a woman give her blood for our sins?') or rabbis ('without the monthly loss of impurities, women remain unclean').³⁸

One significant contemporary shift is towards promoting the suppression of menstruation. However, this is really more of a return in thinking as the suppression of menstruation was also suggested in the nineteenth century. Seasonale is currently the only FDA approved 'extended cycle' oral contraceptive where women who take it only menstruate four times a year. As Fingerson argues, this 'line of recent thought has used the medicalization of menstruation found in the dominant culture to support the extreme position of using medical technology to "cure" the body of menstruation. Furthermore, as she rightly notes, menstruation in medical discourse is still construed as a 'chronic

³⁷ Always Ultra and Freshelle, [http://www.always-info.co.uk/products/always-Ultra-And-Freshelle/], date accessed: 29/03/09.

³⁸ Laura Fingerson, Girls in Power: Gender, Body, and Adolescence, p.73.

³⁹ For more on menstrual suppression see: Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980*, (Virago Press, 1987), Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin de Siècle Culture*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁴⁰ Laura Fingerson, Girls in Power: Gender, Body, and Adolescence, p.73.

illness' from which women need to be cured. Again, I will discuss this in more detail throughout this thesis.

Critical Approaches to the Female Body in Horror

Since the early 1980s, a theoretical orthodoxy for the interpretation of gothic and horror literature and film has established itself in academic studies. Key theoretical approaches include culturalism, Marxism, gender theory, structuralism, genre theory and postmodernism. However, perhaps the most influential approach to the genre is that of psychoanalysis. As Stephen Jay Schneider writes in his work Horror Film and Psychoanalysis, a flourishing body of critical work has employed specific aspects of psychoanalytical theory to approach some aspect or convention of the horror genre. He writes 'included in these are articles and books by such influential scholars as Robin Wood, Carol Clover, Stephen Neale, Linda Williams, Barbara Creed, even Noël Carroll in an earlier incarnation.'41 Although approaches differ, Schneider argues that most depend on the Freudian notion of the 'repressed mental content – anxieties, fears, even fantasies and wishes that get relegated to the unconscious during childhood either because they are too unpleasurable in and of themselves or because they conflict with more acceptable/appropriate mental material.'42 Moreover, he also points to a strand which he describes as poststructuralist psychoanalysis which claims that at the heart of the horror genre resides a fear of female sexuality. This particularly refers to the work of Barbara Creed and her work on abjection where she holds that the genre defines and constructs female sexuality as monstrous, other, disturbing and in need of repression. Schneider also points to what he describes as a neo-Lacanian psychoanalytical critical approach, which includes the work of Joan Copjec and Slavoj Žižek. Furthermore, he points to the internal conflicts within neo-Lacanian psychoanalysis in terms of the gaze within horror cinema:

One need only consider the objections of neo-Lacanians such as Joan Copjec (1995) and Slavoj Zizek (2001) to earlier claims concerning apparatus theory and the suture effect; Constance Penley's (1989) critique of screen theory; Linda Williams on the problematic (because ambiguous) 'terms of perversion used to describe the normal pleasures of film viewing' (1984/1999:706) and the heated

⁴² Stephen Jay Schneider, Horror Film and Psychoanalysis: Freud's worst nightmare, p.1.

⁴¹ Stephen Jay Schneider, *Horror Film and Psychoanalysis: Freud's worst nightmare*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.1.

mid-1980s debate in *Cinema Journal* concerning *Stella Dallas* and the Mulvey-Metz model of female spectatorship. In fact the feminist inflected psychoanalytic theories of Horror proposed by Williams (1984/1996), Clover (1987/1992), and Creed (1986/1993) can all be understood as revisions, rather than outright rejections, of the Mulveyan paradigm. According to this paradigm, the threat of castration (absence and lack) posed by images of the female form in Hollywood cinema is constituted through sexualized objectification of that form, whether fetishistic-scopophilic (woman displayed as erotic spectacle, rendered unthreatening by the male look) or sadistic voyeuristic (woman investigated, demystified, and eventually controlled through punishment) in nature.⁴³

I will examine the gaze in more detail later in this thesis, further highlighting its limitations for feminist analyses of horror literature and film. Noël Carroll also draws a link between psychoanalysis and genre, whereby he states that if 'psychoanalysis does not does not afford a comprehensive theory of horror it remains the case that psychoanalytic imagery often reflexively informs work within the genre which, of course makes psychoanalysis germane to interpretations of the genre.'44 A further critique levelled at psychoanalytical approaches to horror criticism has been that of its ahistoricism. As Jonathan Lake Crane argues, 'in irrevocably linking horror to the unconscious we dismiss, all too hastily, the possibility that horror films have something to say about popular epistemology, about the status of contemporary community, or about the fearsome power of modern technology.'45

Such approaches as those noted above, from the cultural to the psychoanalytical, are substantive, perceptive and useful to the study of horror literature and film, and I consider my own position and analysis in this thesis as complementary rather than oppositional. Thus, in this thesis I intend to engage with orthodox critiques of the genre but also to engage more expansively with the 'body' in particular the menstrual female body. Furthermore, psychoanalysis will feature heavily as it is impossible in a study of menstrual blood in horror to ignore the work of Freud and Lacan on female sexuality. Also Kristeva's work on abjection and Barbara Creed's psychoanalytical study of abjection in her seminal work *The Monstrous Feminine* are crucial to such a study. However, I would like to point out that there has been a recent critical shift evident in the work of such commentators as Rosi Braidotti, Anna Powell and Patricia MacCormack who take a Deleuzian 'vitalist' approach to their analyses of horror literature and film.

⁴³ ibid., p.1.

Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror, Or, Paradoxes of the Heart*, (London: Routledge, 1990), p.168.
 Jonathan Lake Crane, *Terror and Everyday Life*, (London: Sage, 1994), p.29.

As such, in this thesis I will engage with and critique psychoanalysis to argue a Deleuzio-Guattarian poststructuralist/postmodern materialist approach to the bleeding, menstrual female body in horror. Where relevant this will include an examination of Freud's concepts of the Oedipus and Castration complexes and Lacan's work on lack, the mirror stage and the symbolic. Furthermore, as noted, I will also explore the work of Julia Kristeva and her concept of the abject. However, for the most part, in this thesis I will attempt to push beyond these paradigms by suggesting a critical approach to the female body in horror which moves beyond lack and alienation to one of an élan vital, one which will attempt to engage with the Deleuzio-Guattarian concept of 'becoming', the 'Body without Organs' and 'Schizo-Analysis/Anarchy'. As Anna Powell in her work Deleuze and Horror Film notes: 'Although they retain some elements of psychoanalytic insight, such as the role of fantasy in shaping our apprehension of the external world, Deleuze and Guattari mount a devastating critique of paternalistic Freudianism. '46

Psychoanalysis, Menstruation and Female Sexuality

Psychoanalysis has for the most part ignored the significance of menstruation in relation to subjectivity and sexual development. Freud's earliest works touch briefly on the subject but do not engage with it in any depth. 47 Instead, Freud shifted his emphasis in the 1880s to work on the Oedipus complex and later the Castration complex. The 1930s saw the emergence of challenges to Freudian psychoanalysis which attempted to reposition the figure of the mother in psychoanalytic theory and also to account for menstrual blood. Such theorists included Melanie Klein, Karen Horney, Claude Dagmar Daly and Otto Rank. However, although these critics argued vigorously for a shift in the phallocentric focus of psychoanalysis, they were for the most part unsuccessful in challenging the dominant psychoanalytical paradigm of female sexuality put forward by Freud. I will discuss this area of menstruation and psychoanalysis in more detail in Chapter Four with particular reference to the work of Claude Dagmar Daly on the 'Menstruation Complex in Literature' published in 1935.

⁴⁶ Anna Powell, *Deleuze and Horror Film*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p.3.

⁴⁷ I will expand on Freud's work on menstrual blood and the case of Emma Eckstein in Chapter Four.

For the most part, psychoanalytical readings of horror, as already noted, have been heavily dependant on Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis. As such, the work of Freud and Lacan has had a profound effect on how female sexuality is interpreted within the genre. In 1905 Freud ascribed the 'impenetrable obscurity' surrounding female sexuality partly to the 'stunting effect of civilised conditions' and partly to the 'conventional secretiveness and insincerity' of women. However, in the 1920s Freud's thinking on female sexuality began to shift which coincided with his revision of the Oedipus complex and revised emphasis on the centrality of the Phallic phase for both sexes and the importance of the Castration complex. Two texts which dealt specifically with femininity and the castration complex in girls emerged in the early 1930s, 'Female Sexuality' and the lecture on 'Femininity' in *New Introductory Lectures*. At this point Freud's original formulation of the Oedipus Complex as the 'desire for the parent of the opposite sex, coupled with the hatred for the parent of the same sex, is insufficient by itself to account for the difference between the sexes.' Thus, as Grigg, Hecq and Smith write:

[...] the accent in the Three Essays had originally been 'on a portrayal of the fundamental difference between the sexual life of children and of adults', while his later work emphasized 'the pregenital organizations of the libido'. This shift in emphasis is crucial because it throws into relief the castration complex. The problem from here onwards is to articulate the link between this castration complex and the Oedipus complex – an articulation which Freud only achieves in the mid-nineteen twenties. This in turn highlights the difference between the sexes, or rather, the fact that the difference between the sexes is inseparable from the question of castration.⁵²

Lacan's work draws heavily on the unfinished work of Freud on the Castration complex. Lacan argued that the child's desire for the mother does not refer *to her* but *beyond her* to an object, that is the phallus, whose status is first imaginary (the object presumed to satisfy her desire) and then symbolic (recognition that desire cannot be satisfied). Before the mirror stage, desire is subsumed by a few basic biological impulses where need and

⁴⁸ Sigmund Freud, 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: Volume VII (1901-1905)*, James Strachey, ed., (London: Vintage, The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 2001), p.151.

⁴⁹ ibid., p.151.

ibid., p.151.
 Russell Grigg, Dominique Hecq and Craig Smith, eds., *Female Sexuality: the Early Psychoanalytical Controversies*, (London: Rebus Press, 1999), p.11.
 ibid., p.11.

desire are equivalent and tension is satiated. However, when desire is experienced by the subject of the imaginary, demand becomes separated from need and desire becomes linked to absence.

This absence is based on the phallus. For Lacan, the Oedipus complex involves three terms: the mother, the child and the object of the mother's desire (the phallus). Both the Lacanian Oedipus and Castration complexes are predicated less on 'the possession by the subject of a phallus but whether the mother has one or not.' Therefore, in order for the child to leave 'the universe of the mother to take on a place in the larger universe of the symbolic world, the imaginary object of desire must take on the value of a gift, the object promised to the child for use in the future, it will become a pact [...] This promise supposes, of course, that what will be returned in the future has been taken away first. Assuming a sexual position thus supposes an initial loss or subtraction.'

The Oedipal operation and entry into the symbolic regime of language is called by Lacan the 'paternal metaphor' or the 'Name of the Father.' As Leader and Groves explain: 'It is a metaphor since it involves the substitution of one term for another, the name of the father for the desire of the mother [...] The result of the operation is a signification, that of the phallus as lost or negated.'55 For Lacan, the father is not the biological father rather, he is a symbolic function responsible for separation from the mother. Thus, castration is the renunciation of the attempt to be the phallus for the mother, that is, the object of her desire. Therefore, the Name of the Father is a function and refers to a law, the place outside of the imaginary dyad, that is, the symbolic cultural regime of language, where it enforces the cultural prohibition of incest. Lacan's writing gives an account of how the status of the phallus in human sexuality enjoins on the woman a definition in which she is simultaneously symptom and myth. For Lacan all desire is based on lack, and desire is at the origin of every human act. It is not a biological instinct in the manner of need; instead it is bound to the splitting of the subject resulting in a divided self.⁵⁶

Thus, Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytical theories of the Oedipal and Castration complexes render the woman as inherently 'lacking'. For Freud, the bleeding female genitals imply for the young male child that the woman is either castrated or is

⁵³ Darian Leader and Judy Groves, *Introducing Lacan*, (Cambridge: Icon Books, 2005), p.89.

⁵⁴ ibid., p.77.

⁵⁵ ibid., p.77.

⁵⁶ For further work on psychoanalysis and feminism see also: Jacqueline Rose and Juliet Mitchell, eds., *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the École Freudienne*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1995); Teresa Brennan, ed., *Between Feminism and Psychoanalysis*, (London: Routledge, 1989).

castrating (vagina dentata – the toothed vagina).⁵⁷ For Lacan entry into the symbolic implies the recognition of the phallus as the Name/Law of the Father, and as such, as already noted above, involves a split in the subject whereby all desire is constituted through 'lack'. Moreover, the psychoanalytical Oedipus and Castration complexes and their inferences of lack, absence and alienation have had an immense impact on how female sexuality and female monstrosity is read in the horror genre.

Also central to psychoanalytical studies of horror is the concept of the abject. Drawing extensively on Lacanian psychoanalysis, Julia Kristeva examines abjection and horror in her poststructuralist and psychoanalytical work the *Powers of Horror*. According to Kristeva, the abject is that which 'disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite.' Kristeva explains this as follows: 'There looms, within abjection, one of those violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable.' Yet at the same time 'It lies there quite close, but it cannot be assimilated. It beseeches, worries, and fascinates desire, which, nevertheless, does not let itself be seduced. Apprehensive, desire turns aside; sickened, it rejects.' Thus, 'the abject has only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to Γ.61

The most archaic form of abjection for Kristeva is food loathing such as the skin on the surface of milk which may produce a gagging sensation. This can also include unfamiliar foods, textures and so on. Other forms of abjection include bodily fluids such as a wound with blood and pus; the acrid smell of sweat; and excrement, (though vomit, snot, urine, tears, semen can also be included). However, the apex of abjection is the confrontation with the corpse, seen outside of science and outside of god and religion which threatens to unravel the subject.

Although abjection defies borders and boundaries and though it is expelled and removed from 'within', it still occupies a precarious frontier/border and there is always the possibility for that which has been rejected to be re-assimilated. This explains what Kristeva describes as one's repulsion against but also one's fascinated desire for the

⁵⁷ I will examine the castrated/castrating mother in more detail in Chapter Four with reference to Freud's case study the 'Wolf Man' (1918).

⁵⁸ Julia Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p.4.

⁵⁹ ibid., p.1.

⁶⁰ ibid., p.1.

abject. The 'I' is threatened, therefore: the abject is that which I fail to recognize (the abject is not a foreign extraneous other, we render it 'other' through abjection). For if I do recognize it, this may prove too much for the 'I' that is me. The threatened 'I' (self-identity) may disintegrate completely. Again the abject is not 'other' it is an unrecognized part of the self, albeit a 'part' that cannot be recognized or named because it quite possibly might unravel the 'self'. Therefore to safeguard the 'I' and identity 'I' expel what I am unable to assimilate or recognize. We experience the abject as endurance, Kristeva writes:

I endure it, for I imagine that such is the desire of the other. A massive and sudden emergence of uncanniness, which, familiar as it might have been in an opaque and forgotten life, now that harries me as radically separate, loathsome. Not me. Not that. But not nothing either. A 'something' that I do not recognize as a thing. A weight of meaninglessness, about which there is nothing insignificant, and which crushes me. On the edge of non-existence and hallucination, of a reality that, if I acknowledge it, annihilates me. There abject and abjection are my safe-guards the primers of my culture. 62

Moreover, because of its reproductive and maternal functions, the female body is more likely to be abjected. According to Kristeva

[...] whatever forms the dominant representation has taken, the bodies of women, whether all too present or disconcertingly absent, have served to ground the devaluation of women by men. What I am proposing is that it is the body itself, in whatever physical form it is experienced which positions women as both morally deficient and existentially disabled. Even the 'whole' body of phenomenology is instrinsically masculine, and women, by that token, are never in full existential health.⁶³

Or, as Barbara Creed writes in her work *The Monstrous Feminine*, which draws extensively on abjection:

In Kristeva's view the image of woman's body, because of its maternal functions, acknowledges its 'debt to nature' and consequently is more likely to signify the abject. The notion of the material female body is central to the construction of the border in the horror film.⁶⁴

⁶² Julia Kristeva, The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection, p.2.

⁶³ Margrit Shildrick, *Leaky Bodies and Boundaries: Feminism, Postmodernism and (Bio) Ethics*, (London: Routledge, 1997), p.14.

⁶⁴ Barbara Creed, The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis, p.11.

Kristeva further argues that a whole area of religion has assumed the function of tackling this danger, thus, abjecting menstrual blood through rituals of defilement (as I have already noted in the prohibitions of Leviticus). She writes:

This is precisely where we encounter the rituals of defilement and their derivatives, which, based on the feeling of abjection and all converging on the maternal, attempt to symbolize the other threat to the subject: that of being swamped by the dual relationship, thereby risking the loss not of a part (castration) but of the totality of his being. The function of these religious rituals is to ward off the subject's fear of his very own identity sinking irretrievably into the mother. 65

In a similar manner, Creed observes that:

Virtually all horror texts represent the monstrous-feminine in relation to Kristeva's notion of maternal authority and the mapping of the self's clean and proper body. Images of blood, vomit, pus, shit, etc., are central to our culturally/socially constructed notions of the horrific.⁶⁶

As such, the abjection of menstrual blood along with menstrual taboo and myth-making practices serve to construct/reinforce borders and limits of the female body. As Creed further states, it becomes apparent that:

[...] definitions of the monstrous as constructed in the modern horror text are grounded in ancient religious and historical notions of abjection – particularly in relation to the following religious 'abominations': sexual immorality and perversion; corporeal alteration, decay and death; human sacrifice; murder; the corpse; bodily wastes; the feminine body and incest.⁶⁷

Thus, Kristeva's abject can be experienced in various ways and one way which is central to this thesis is that relating to biological bodily functions in particular menstruation and female puberty which are linked to the functions of abjection in a symbolic (religious/cultural ritual, prohibition and taboo) economy. Furthermore, abjection highlights the 'fragility of the law' but abjection is not something of which the subject can ever feel free as it continuously beseeches and fascinates desire. If the abject

67 ibid., pp.8-9.

20

⁶⁵ Julia Kristeva, Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection, p.64.

⁶⁶ Barbara Creed, The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalyis, p.13.

is the place where meaning collapses, it is thus positioned on the edge of the symbolic, the space wherein the subject is tenuously constituted within the Law of the Father.

That which crosses or threatens to cross the 'border' is abject. As Creed again notes in relation to horror films, although 'the specific nature of the border changes from film to film, the function of the monstrous remains the same – to bring about an encounter between the symbolic order and that which threatens its stability.'⁶⁸ The leaky female body is thus dialectically opposed to the clean and proper male body. Culturally, blood, vomit, shit and piss are part of what is considered to be horrific. Bodily fluids signify the split or divide between maternal authority and the law of the father. As Creed writes 'these images of bodily wastes threaten a subject that is already constituted, in relation to the symbolic, as "whole and proper". Consequently, they fill the subject – both the protagonist in the text and the spectator in the cinema – with disgust and loathing.'⁶⁹ Thus, 'with the subject's entry into the symbolic, which separates the child from the mother, the maternal figure and the authority she signifies are repressed. Kristeva then argues that is it the function of defilement rites, particularly those relating to menstrual and excremental objects/substances, to point to the "boundary" between the maternal semiotic authority and the paternal symbolic law.'⁷⁰

Thus, Kristeva argues that, menstrual blood 'stands for the danger issuing from within the identity (social or sexual); it threatens the relationship between the sexes within a social aggregate and, through internalization, the identity of each sex in the face of sexual difference.'71 Or as Mary Douglas writes, menstrual blood is a viscous substance 'half-way between solid and liquid. It is like a cross-section in a process of change.'72 Thus, menstruation is liminal, a point of deviation, susceptible to overspill and a breaching of borders, wherein, as Douglas points out 'Framing and boxing limit experience, shut in desired themes or shut out intruding ones.'73 Creed writes that in 'general terms, Kristeva is attempting to explore the different ways in which abjection works within human societies, as a means of separating out the human from the non-human and the fully constituted subject from the partially formed subject.'74 Thus, menstrual blood is culturally abjected and as Kristeva writes:

_

⁶⁸ ibid., pp.10-11.

⁶⁹ ibid., p.13.

⁷⁰ ibid., p.14.

⁷¹ Julia Kristeva, The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection, p.79.

⁷² Douglas, Mary, Purity and Danger – An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo, p.38.

⁷³ ibid., p.63.

⁷⁴ Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, p.8.

If the object, however, through its opposition, settles me within the fragile texture of a desire for meaning, which, as a matter of fact, makes me ceaselessly and infinitely homolgous to it, what is abject, on the contrary, the jettisoned object, is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses.⁷⁵

Thus, existing on the borders of the semiotic and the symbolic the abject threatens to collapse symbolic meaning into chaos. However, as already noted there is always the possibility for that which has been rejected to be reassimilated and it is to this that Kristeva ascribes both our repulsion from and yet fascinated desire for the abject. This is indelibly linked to what she calls *jouissance*. Implicit in Kristeva's work is the issue of sexual difference and she differs from Lacan in placing sexual difference in the semiotic. Here I would like to draw a tentative link between Kristeva's theories of abjection and *jouissance* with Deleuzio-Guattarian 'Bodies without Organs' and 'Becoming'. I do not want to assert that they are the same but I would like to suggest some comparative aspects as well as to point to fundamental differences between their respective positions.

Foremost, Deleuze and Guattari scathingly dismiss the Lacanian symbolic in their work on schizoanalysis – thus rendering the psychoanalytic, normative subject within language redundant, whereas for Kristeva, the symbolic is essential to the self and to the concept of the abject. Thus, language is crucial, for the abject is that which is antithetical to the linguistic and grammatical structures of the symbolic and therefore poses a threat. However, for Deleuze and Guattari the schizoid is an anarchist who revolts against the paternalistic, phallocentric structures of sign, signifier and signified. As they state: 'you will be a subject, nailed down as one, a subject of the enunciation recoiled into a subject of the statement – otherwise you're just a tramp.'

For Deleuze and Guattari a move beyond the stratified layers of the symbolic self (both organic and inorganic) is an intensive line of flight which initiates the Body without Organs (I will explain these terms more fully in the next section). The line of flight and the Body without Organs are non-static they are dynamic becomings. Abjection, although a dynamic process ('I become I give birth to myself amid the violence of sobs of vomit'77) is a becoming predicated upon loss within the Lacanian symbolic 'such wastes

⁷⁵ Julia Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, pp.1-2.

⁷⁷ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, p.3.

⁷⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, (London: Continuum, 2004), p.177.

drop that I might live, until, from loss to loss, nothing remains'. However, if one's self assimilates or becomes abject within Kristevan theory one becomes both 'other' and 'self', which I would argue is a type of Deleuzian becoming, a type of desubjectification. Kristeva describes the 'one by whom the abject exists' as a deject, a stray. This stray is nomadic, one who does not ask, 'Who am I?' but 'Where am I?' The Kristevan deject/nomad is a cartographer, a 'devisor of territories, languages, works [...] and the more he strays the more he is saved.' As Deleuze and Guattari write, 'no signifier, never interpret' again the question is not 'Who am I?' but rather 'keep moving, even in place, never stop moving, motionless voyage, desubjectification.'

Furthermore, jouissance which is only briefly touched upon by Deleuze and Guattari appears to be congruous with Kristeva's interpretation. The term jouissance, a term which originated with Lacan and became imbued with sexual connotations (desire/sexual pleasure) for Kristeva is linked to the semiotic, a pre-oedipal state where there is undifferentiated experience both psychical and physical between the child and mother. For Kristeva jouissance is an expression or an intrusion of the semiotic into the symbolic. Similarly, for Roland Barthes in his work on literature and aesthetics, jouissance is an encounter between the semiotic and the symbolic, a gestalt, a gap where language is useless, and where the experience of jouissance is entirely affective and intensive. 82 For Deleuze and Guattari, the one time they engage with jouissance is in an attack on psychoanalysis and religion where both the priest and psychoanalyst are conflated as oppressive figures who control and repress desire through 'lack' and the linguistic function of the confessional. Thus, I would argue that jouissance is a joyous threshold, the point of departure or the initiation of a becoming, but one which may or may not result in a positive deterritorialization or a line of flight. Hence, throughout this thesis Kristeva's abjection will be employed, not as antithetical to the Deleuzio-Guttarian concepts of becoming and the 'Body without Organs', but as complementary to them. Monstrous-abject pubescent bodies are only such within a repressive symbolic regime. However, the abject self/body is a resistance, a revolt, a becoming, a disarticulation and disorganisation of the subject (a possible Body without Organs).

-

⁷⁸ ibid., p.3.

⁷⁹ ibid., p.8.

⁸⁰ ibid., p.8.

⁸¹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, p.177.

⁸² See Sarah Gamble, *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism*, (London: Routledge, 2001)

Deleuze and Guattari: Girl-Becoming-Menstruous-Monstrous

Here, I wish to return to the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari and to engage more fully with some of the theoretical terms that were raised in the previous section. Deleuze and Guattari have often been described as the 'enfants terribles' of post-structuralist philosophy. Their key collaborative text is the two-volume work *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* comprised of *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1977). In the view of Deleuze and Guattari, psychoanalysis combines with capitalism to channel and control desire, not to liberate it. Questioning the dominance of conceptual stability, organization and unity, Deleuze and Guattari position the body as a fluid assemblage as opposed to a solidified totality. Their work breaks from Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis which argues that desire is predicated upon lack. Instead they suggest a positive ontology which is not static but is instead vital, consisting of lines, flows and intensities. Central concepts in their work include 'becomings', 'lines of flight' and the 'Body without Organs' (BwO). Deleuze and Guattari draw their philosophical metaphor 'from fungal "rhizomes" – a network of threads that can send up new growths anywhere along their length, not subject to centralized control or structure', ⁸³ thus replacing the

[...] rooted tree (the western metaphor for knowledge par excellence) with the rhizome, conceived as an adventitious mode of thinking that grows between things and produces offshoots in unforeseen directions. They distinguish between the segment – that is, the official, 'molar' line that occupies a given social or political position – and another, 'molecular' line that begins to separate itself, and to disaggregate, from the first. Rhizomatic thinking promotes becoming, not being. 84

According to Deleuze and Guattari, the body (both organic and inorganic) consists of strata, molecular and molar creating a signifying totality. A stratum consists of diverse forms and substances, a variety of codes and milieus, possessing both different formal types of organization and different substantial modes of development. Furthermore, each stratum consists of territories and assemblages. Moving outside the strata is a 'becoming'. Becoming-woman is the first on a line of becomings. As Deleuze and Guattari note 'on the near side, we encounter becomings-woman, becomings-child (becoming-woman more

⁸³ Vincent B. Leitch, William E. Cain, Laurie A. Finke, Barbara E. Johnson, John McGowan and Jeffrey J. Williams, eds., *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), p.1595.

⁸⁴ ibid., p.1595.

than any other becoming, possesses a special introductory power ...). On the far side, we find becomings-elementary, -cellular, -molecular, and even becomings-imperceptible.'85 Moreover, Deleuze and Guattari note that becomings can only be minoritarian – woman, animal, insect – a move away from the normative position of centralised power (white, male, heterosexual, phallogocentric). As Patty Sotirin notes:

Becoming woman is the first threshold because becomings are always molecular deterritorializations, that is, effects destabilizing dominant molar forms and relations. The 'molar entity par excellence' is the man, the rational, white, adult male. Hence, there can be no 'becoming-man' because becomings resonated to the subordinate figure in the dualisms constituted around man as the dominant figure: male/female, adult/child, white/non-white, rational/emotional and so on. ⁸⁶

However, 'Becoming-Woman' is also, as Rosi Braidotti argues, problematic for feminist philosophy. She states:

The reference to 'woman' in the process of 'becoming-woman', however, does not refer to empirical females but rather to topological positions, levels or degrees of affirmation of positive forces, and levels of nomadic, rhizomatic consciousness. The becoming woman is the marker for a general process of transformation [...] I would like to point out bluntly the kind of difficulty Deleuze gets into with his theory of the becoming woman: it is as if all becomings were equal, but some were more equal than others. ⁸⁷

Braidotti observes three sets of inter-related problems with Deleuze's position:

(1) an inconsistent approach to the issue of 'becoming-woman'; (2) the reduction of sexual difference to one variable among many, which can and should be dissolved into a generalized and gender-free becoming; and (3) an assumption of symmetry in the speaking stances of the two sexes. ⁸⁸

Thus, in order to explore the transgressive and positive political aspect of 'becoming-woman' it is necessary to point to the 'significant evidence of gender specific

⁸⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, p.274.

⁸⁶ Patty Sotirin, 'Becoming-Woman' in Charles, J. Stivale, ed., *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, (Stockfield: Acumen: 2005) p.103.

⁸⁷ Rosi Braidotti, Nomadic Subjects, pp.114-115.

⁸⁸ ibid., p.117.

patterns.'89 Also significant to 'becoming-woman' is the position of the girl, a threshold in becoming-woman. Thresholds are the zones that exist in between two multiplicities and are what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as zones of proximity. Thus the self is only ever 'a threshold, a door, a becoming between two multiplicities.'90 I will explore this position of the girl in becoming-woman in more detail in Chapter Three. However, what is evident in gothic and horror literature and film is that girl Becoming-Woman, Becoming-Menstruous-Monstrous, invariably results in girl 'Becomes-Monster'. This occurs through a process of coding and recoding. Becoming-woman involves a process of deterritorialization but one which, although initially potentially positive is eventually reterritorialized. The function of deterritorialization is the movement by which 'one' leaves the territory. It is the operation of the line of flight. Deterritorialization can be either negative or positive. Negative deterritorialization is overlaid by a compensatory reterritorialization, obstructing the line of flight. The relations between territory, deterritorialization and reterritorialization are inseparable. Deterritorialization is negative or relative when it conforms to and operates either by principal reterritorializations that obstruct the lines of flight, or by secondary reterritorializations that segment and work to curtail them.

Therefore, I would argue that girl becoming-woman, menstruation and puberty can be read as positive lines of flight which become relative through secondary reterrorializations. One method by which secondary reterritorializations operate is through culturally inscribed discourses which can be described as apparatuses of capture. The theorist Alberto Toscano explains that 'Apparatuses of capture constitute the machinic processes specific to State societies.' It is these apparatuses of capture which I will explore in more detail throughout this thesis. Deterritorialization is absolute 'when it conforms to and is about the creation of a new earth, in other words, when it connects lines of flight, raises them to the power of an abstract vital line, or draws a plane of consistency.'

As Eugene Holland writes 'the drama between decoding and recoding take place on what Deleuze and Guattari call (borrowing from Antonin Artaud) the Body without

⁹⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, p.275.

⁹² Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, p.561.

⁸⁹ Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphoses: Towards A Materialist Theory of Becoming*, (London: Polity Press, 2007), p.182.

⁹¹ Alberto Toscano, 'Capture' in Adrian Parr, ed., *The Deleuze Dictionary*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), p.39.

Organs (BwO).⁹³ He further explains that the Body without Organs 'stages the struggle of desire to escape determination – whether instinctual, habitual or social; it thus designates the human potential for freedom.⁹⁴ As Rosi Braidotti explains:

Their theory of the Body without Organs (BwO) not only critiques psychoanalysis' complicity in repression but the functionalist approach to human affectivity as well. Instead, Deleuze and Guattari assert the positive nature of unruly desire in terms of schizoid flows. For Deleuze, the distinction between proper and abject objects of desire is implemented as a normative index to police and civilise behaviour. The more unmanageable aspects of affectivity have either to come under the disciplinary mechanism of representation or be swiftly discarded. Deviance, insanity and transgression are commonly regarded as unacceptable for they point to an uncontrollable force of wild intensity. These tend to be negatively represented: impersonal, uncaring and dangerous forces. Concomitantly, such forces are both criminalised and rendered pathological. The schizophrenic body is emblematic of this violent 'outside', one that is beyond propriety and normality. 95

Thus, in this thesis I wish to argue that the 'girl' is a schizophrenic body, a *jouissance*, occupying a threshold; her body is an encounter between girl and becomingwoman. Menarche and menstruation are the initiators of the line of flight for 'becoming'. Menstruation is a spilling forth of the body's 'within', an encounter or clash with phallocentric culture. However, according to cultural mores, this overflow, this breaching of borders, threatens the symbolic regime, and accordingly paternalistic culture recodes and reterritorializes the pubescent female body, constructing an anxious subject who is always ill at ease (or more precisely dis-eased) in her body. The menstrual girl-woman must conceal, hide and be embarrassed about her 'unclean' bleeding body.

Social Constructions of the Female Body & Postmodern Materialism: Menstrual Blood and (Dis)-Ease

Varying approaches have been used to account for gender and body-based differences. As Laura Fingerson writes, 'essentialism or biological reductionism, posits that differences between men and women can be reduced to the physical differences in their bodies.'96

⁹³ Eugene Holland, 'Desire' in Charles J. Stivale, ed., *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, p.58.
⁹⁴ ibid., p.58.

⁹⁵ Braidotti, Rosi, 'Schizophrenia' in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr, p.238.

Essentialism ultimately rejects the view that gender differences are socially constructed concepts that have been attributed to men and women and have become natural and fixed. For example, the idea that women are nurturing and passive and that men are active and aggressive are examples of biological determinism and essentialism. Essentialist notions of gender have been challenged by theorists who argue that gender is an effect of culture. This approach has been termed social constructionism and argues that gender is constructed through social interaction, socialization and culture. Another approach to gender studies is that of gender fluidity which posits that gender and sexuality is situationally oriented. Both social constructionism and gender fluidity also take into account the complexity of gendered experience including race, ethnicity, class, geography and sexuality.

Seminal to social constructionist theory is the work of Michel Foucault. As Sarah Gamble writes: 'Foucault argued that all subjectivity, however apparently "rational" was actually created and controlled through complex structures of power embodied in state apparatuses. Moreover, the discourses through which the subject is constructed are not universal, but are always universally specific.'98 Discourses, says Foucault in The Archaeology of Knowledge, are 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak.'99 Discursive formations also display a hierarchical arrangement. They reinforce already established identities or subjectivities, for example, in matters of sexuality, status or class. These dominant discourses are often reinforced by institutions such as medicine, law, education and the media. He outlines in his work the relationship between discourse, power and knowledge using what he termed a genealogical analysis. For Foucault, genealogy identifies the complexities of historical processes, pointing to the 'discontinuous, illegitimate knowledges.' These counter the 'centralising powers operating to stablise contemporary society.'101 Genealogy first emerged in Foucault's work Discipline and Punish where he identified a shift in how power is exercised from pre-modern to modern societies. This idea reached its fullest expression in his theory of Bio-Power a regime of practice from 17th century onwards, in which the state began to pay increasing attention to its population's health and growth, and thus began to focus on

⁹⁷ I will examine essentialism in more detail in Chapter One alongside the work of Roland Barthes on myth.
 ⁹⁸ Sarah Gamble, *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism*, (London: Routledge, 2001),

Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Alan Sheridan, ed., (London: Routledge, 2002), p.54.
 Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, Gordon Colin, ed., (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), p.80.
 ibid., p.80.

the management and administration of people and the control or 'discipline' of the human body. Thus, for Foucault the individual is always subject to history and its specific discursive formations which are exercised through modes of objectification and dividing practices, from the confessional to the secular pastoral.

Furthermore, Foucault widens the concept of power from the idea of economic or state power to a much more diffuse and complex operative, wherein power is everywhere. In modern societies he saw a shift from a reliance on punishment to (self) discipline as a form of social control. For Foucault, 'sex' is pivotal to the new mechanisms of control and regulation. These mechanisms operated in all the institutions and discourses of modernity. As Kathryn Woodward notes, for 'Foucault "sexuality" is neither some set of behavioural activities (ideally leading to orgasm) nor is it any inner essence out of which sexual differences emerges (however precariously). Rather it is a multiplicity of historically specific discourses, ways of mapping the body's surface. These ways dictate how we must describe and hence experience those bodies.' 102 Furthermore, he rejected any notion of an inner essence of sexual being, sexual drives or sexual identities. These he called regulatory fictions organised according to a heterosexual/homosexual binary. These fictions re-inscribe the masculine/feminine binary conception of gender. Thus, he saw sexuality as 'the name given to a historical construct.' 103

However, the most crucial aspect of Foucault's work is that he viewed the body as the locus of social control. Power serves to construct docile and useful bodies which are maintained through dividing practices, leading to patterns of control, self-regulation and discipline. These he termed 'technologies/techniques of the Self', by which, subjects constitute themselves within and through systems of power, or, as Margrit Shildrick writes:

Where Foucault was concerned primarily to deconstruct the power relations between the singular, but universalised, body and a series of institutional structures – the prison, the clinic, the school – and to expose the symbiotic links between the individual disciplinary practices and the manipulation of population, feminists have been constrained to emphasise that those economies are gendered. The interplay of power and knowledge produces difference in just such a way that the bodies of women are the ground on which male hegemony and, at least in part, the power of the state in the service of capitalism are elaborated.'¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Kathryn Woodward, ed., *Identity and Difference*, (London: Sage, 1997) p.209.

¹⁰³ Michel Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality: 1*, (London: Penguin, 1998), p.105. ¹⁰⁴ Margrit Shildrick, *Leaky Bodies and Boundaries: Feminism, Postmodernism and (Bio) Ethics*, p.62.

Shildrick importantly highlights the material practices of discourse and language introducing the concept of embodiment; she writes that what 'postmodernism had added to the primarily textual concerns of poststucturalism is a widening out of its focus to explore the implications of deconstruction and to trace its manifestations in a cultural context. If we take the notion of discourse in its Foucauldian sense to include not just the structures of language, but also the material practices which it produces and authorises, then there is no limit to the field of enquiry.'105

Thus, 'embodiment' theory is that which focuses on the body as a site of experience and, as Laura Fingerson explains, the focus is on the 'lived body (a concept from phenomenology) rather than only the physical body. It is a way of reconciling both the Cartesian dichotomous split between the mind and the body and the split between social constructionism and essentialism.' She also extrapolates that the 'lived body' is how we experience our world through our bodies. Furthermore, she writes that our 'realities are indeed socially mediated, but we experience reality by living in and through our physical bodies which are divided into notions of men, women, masculinity, and femininity.' Thus the body 'not only shapes human experience [but] the social environment reciprocally affects the body.'

The medical profession's interventions into the female reproductive body and the discourses surrounding menstruation all affect how that body is experienced and how it interacts in social settings. As such, the pathologizing of menstruation, as in the medical history I earlier outlined, renders the female body not only un-well in the medical sense but also as (dis)-eased both culturally and socially. As Margrit Shildrick and Janet Price write in their work *Vital Signs*, 'the overflowing of corporeal boundaries – through illness or impairment, and notably through being female, with its inherent potential for the leakiness of menstruation, lactation, and childbirth for example – characteristically signifies not just disruption of the unmarked but disqualifications from full personhood.' 109

A further approach to the body and one which incorporates both poststructuralism and embodiment theory is that of postmodern materialism. Postmodern materialism

¹⁰⁵ ibid., p.115.

¹⁰⁶ Laura Fingerson, Girls in Power: Gender, Body, Adolescence, p.80.

¹⁰⁷ ibid., p.80.

¹⁰⁸ ibid., p.80.

¹⁰⁹ Margrit Shildrick and Janet Price, *Vital Signs: Feminist Reconfigurations of the Bio/Logical Body*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p.5.

according to the Deleuzian philosophy of Rosi Braidotti is 'anti-oedipal, post-humanist, vitalist, non-unitary and yet accountable.' As Braidotti writes:

We have moved from the bio-power that Foucault exemplified by comparative anatomy to the sort of molecular bios/zoe power of today. In postmodernity, under the impact of the technological revolution, the political economy of the Panopticon is no longer adequate and has been replaced by the molecular informatics of domination. By extension it follows that the classical others are no longer the necessary point of reference for the organization of a symbolic division of labour between the sexes, the races and the species. Today, they have been transformed in the spectral economy of the dematerialization of difference.¹¹¹

However, she is clear to point out that this is not to say that the function performed by difference is over. Instead she points out that the collapse of the former system of demarcating difference makes it ever more necessary to 'reassert the principle of alterity, of not-One, as constitutive of the subject and to elaborate nomadic forms of ethical match it.'112 Furthermore, she explains accountability to that: woman/animal/insect is an affect that flows, like writing, it is a composition, a location that needs to be constructed together with, that is to say in the encounter with, others.'113 She also points out that becomings push the subject to his or her limits, in the encounter with external different others; and all becomings are minoritarian. Moreover, she argues for a cartography and politics of location in her analysis of becomings, writing that 'sexual difference continues to play a role in the ways in which contemporary culture tries to live with and represent the fast changes it is going through.¹¹⁴

Aims and Structure of Thesis

In this thesis I want to apply a trans-disciplinary approach to an analysis of the menstrual female body in gothic and horror literature and film. Transposition, according to Braidotti, refers to 'mobility and cross-referencing between disciplines and discursive levels.' Furthermore, transposable concepts are 'nomadic notions that weave a web

¹¹⁰ Rosi Braidotti, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*, p.270.

¹¹¹ ibid., p.270.

¹¹² ibid., p.269.

¹¹³ ibid., p.118.

¹¹⁴ Rosi Braidotti, Metamorphoses Towards A Materialist Theory of Becoming, p.120.

¹¹⁵ Rosi Braidotti, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*, p.7.

connecting philosophy to social realities; theoretical speculations to concrete plans; concepts to imaginative figurations. Trans-disciplinary in structure, transposable concepts link bio-technology to ethics and connect them both with social and philosophical philosophy. Therefore, my analysis of the bleeding, menstrual female body in gothic and horror literature will move in and out of and across the theoretical frameworks I have outlined in my Introduction, will encompass cultural, psychoanalytical, gender, poststructuralist and postmodern materialist approaches to the body.

Moreover, although the bleeding, menstrual, female body in horror is representational, as Sarah Projansky notes, representations are a type of discourse and discourse is 'functional, generative, strategic, performative and real.' Thus, representational discursive practices 'embody and make way for, future actions, even physical ones.' As such, my concerns in this thesis are the ways in which the female body has been historically embedded and embodied through menstruation in both representational and real ways. It is my aim to locate and point out strategic, negative constructions and representations of the menstrual body in horror but also to indicate instances within the genre where there are anarchic transgressions and vitalist, positive lines of flight. The structure of this thesis is thematic and the chronological parameters are wholly dependent on the area of study. However, for the most part this thesis spans the representation of menstrual blood and the bleeding female body in horror from the nineteenth century to the present.

In Chapter One, I will examine menstruation in the oral folk tale and the fairy tale. I will trace the history of the fairy tale and gender constructions within the genre according to poststructuralism and the work of Roland Barthes on myth-making practices. Also, where relevant, I will employ a Deleuzian critique of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis. For the most part, this chapter will examine the gothic fairy tales of Angela Carter in *The Bloody Chamber* (1979). The emphasis will be placed on the 'Little Red Riding Hood' tale and its menstrual connotations. I will also attempt to trace the trajectory and the varying manifestations of the figure of the pubescent, menstrual, Red Riding Hood figure within horror cinema. Here, I will examine Neil Jordan's *The*

116 ibid., p.7

¹¹⁸ ibid., p.2.

¹¹⁷ Sarah Projansky, *Watching Rape: Film and Television in Postfeminist Culture*, (New York: New York University Press, 2001), p.2.

Company of Wolves (1984), John Fawcett's Ginger Snaps (2000), and David Slade's Hard Candy (2005).

In Chapter Two, I will specifically discuss vampirism and menstruation and will take a poststructuralist, bio-medical approach as a means of exploring nineteenth century medical practice and the female reproductive body and early twentieth century economic constructions of the reproductive body as a machine, which becomes a threatening failed, degenerate economy through menstruation. I will also examine menstrual blood and youth in conjunction with menopause according to ageing menopausal female vampires; and finally I will engage in an exploration of the bio-ethics and the Deleuzian anti-economy of desire in contemporary vampire cinema. In this chapter I will focus on Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897); Porter Emerson Browne's *A Fool there Was* (1909) and Frank Powell's film adaptation in 1915, starring Theda Bara; Whitley Strieber's *The Hunger* (1980) and Tony Scott's adaptation (1983); and finally Claire Denis' *Trouble Everyday* (2000).

In Chapter Three, I will explore leaky menstrual, female puberty in 1970s horror. The main emphasis in this chapter will be on William Peter Blatty's *The Exorcist* (1971), Stephen King's *Carrie* (1974), and John Farris' *The Fury* (1976), alongside their respective film adaptations, William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* (1973) and Brian DePalma's versions of both *Carrie* (1976), and *The Fury* (1978). In this chapter I will examine the menstrual female body according to the Deleuzian concept of becoming and argue that the young girls of these films indicate an anarchic menstrual-morphosis. However, through the intervention of apparatuses of capture, the bodies of these young girls are obstructed, curtailed and recoded. Thus, girl-becoming-woman is a becoming-menstruous-monstrous in 1970s horror, and one that results in negative terms as 'becomes-monster'.

In Chapter Four, I will engage in an analysis of the slasher and rape-revenge genres, expanding the scope of this thesis from an exploration of the pubescent female body, to one which includes the overwhelming brutality of sexual violence exacted on the female body in horror. Here I will culturally and historically examine rape, and will also engage with psychoanalysis and the castration complex in order to examine fears of the femme castratrice. I will also employ René Girard's work Violence and the Sacred to explore cultural anxiety and ritual sacrifice in the rape-revenge genre. The novel and film texts under discussion include, Robert Bloch's and Hitchcock's Psycho (1950; 1960), The Texas Chain Saw Massacre (1974, dir. Tobe Hooper), I Spit on Your Grave (1978, dir.

Meir Zarchi), Last House on the Left (1972, dir. Wes Craven) and A Gun for Jennifer (1996, dir. Jennifer Twiss and Todd Morris). Furthermore, I will also engage with the Deleuzio-Guattarian concept of the 'Minor' in an examination of the work of Virgine Despentes in both her novel and film adaptation Baise-Moi (1993; 2000).

Overall, this thesis marks an attempt to engage with 'menstrual blood', a subject matter that is, for the most part, absent in critical and philosophical thought. Thus, this thesis opens up the possibilities for mapping new cartographic locations for minored bodies and identities in particular that of the menstrual, pubescent, girl-becoming-woman.

Fairy Tales of Blood: 'Bloody Chambers and The Company of Wolves'

Weaving in and out of the mythmaking imaginations of centuries are those symbols of the eternal feminine: blood, flowers, the witch, the moon. When these images appear in poetry, fiction or mythology, critics are reluctant to associate them with that most female of attributes, the menstrual cycle. The same neglect has applied to the menstrual themes that seem to fill the universe of folktales. ¹

(Delaney, Lupton and Toth, The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation)

Although most national fairy tales are attributed to men, notably Charles Perrault, the Grimm Brothers and Hans Christian Anderson, the original tellers were women. As both Maria Tatar and Marina Warner explain, fairy tales have been considered a 'domestic art' since at least the time of Plato who in the *Gorgias* referred to old wives tales which nurses told to amuse and frighten children. Tatar also writes that 'As early the second century A.D., Apuleius, the North African author of *The Golden Ass*, had designated his story of "Cupid and Psyche" (told by a drunken and half-demented old woman) as belonging to the genre of "old wives tales."" She further notes that:

The Venetian Giovanni Francesco Straparola claimed to have heard the stories that constituted his *Facetious Nights* of 1550 'from the lips of ... lady storytellers' and he embedded those stories in a narrative frame featuring a circle of garrulous female narrators. Giambattista Basile's seventeenth-century collection of Neapolitan tales, *The Pentamerone*, also has women storytellers – quick-witted, gossipy old crones who recount 'those tales that old women tell to amuse children.' The renowned *Tales of Mother Goose* by Charles Perrault were designated by their author as old wives' tales 'told by governesses and grandmothers to little children.' And many of the most expansive storytellers consulted by the Grimms were women – family friends or servants who had at their disposal a rich repertoire of folklore.³

The association of fairy tales with women and old wives tales has led to a failure to take them seriously. As Warner writes, 'On a par with trifles [...] mere old wives' tales carry connotations of error, of false counsel, ignorance, prejudice and fallacious nostrums –

³ ibid., p.x.

¹ Janice Delaney, Mary Jane Lupton and Emily Toth, *The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation*, p.162.

Maria Tatar, The Classic Fairy Tales, (New York, W.W. Norton & Company: New York, 2002), p.x.

against heartbreak as well as headache; similarly "fairy tale," as a derogatory term, implies fantasy, escapism, invention, the unreliable consolations of romance.' However, the lasting presence and popularity of the fairy tale suggests, according to Tatar, 'that they must be addressing issues that have a significant social function – whether critical, conservative, compensatory, or therapeutic. [...] Fairy tales register an effort on the part of both women and men to develop maps for coping with personal anxieties, family conflicts, social frictions, and the myriad frustrations of everyday life.' 5

One of the maps developed in the fairy tale for coping with crisis is that pertaining to puberty and female sexuality. Numerous early versions of the more familiar fairy tales deal explicitly with these issues. For example, 'Beauty and the Beast', a version of 'Cupid and Psyche' written in the eighteenth century by Jeanne-Marie LePrince de Beaumont, has been described as a tale which prepared young women for the anxieties which arose from fears of arranged marriages and the marriage bed. Also, one of the earliest versions of 'Snow White' called 'The Young Slave' by Giambattista Basile and recorded in his collection of stories *The Pentamerone* (1634) tells of a young girl's persecution by a sexually jealous aunt. Subsequent stories continue to play upon the theme of sexual jealousy, albeit, of an aunt or a mother figure. Another example is that of 'Cinderella', a story which has been reinvented in almost every culture. It has been argued that the tale exists in two types – the first, the more familiar story of a dead father and a wicked stepmother, and the second, found in 'Donkey Skin' or 'Catskin' tales which tell of a father's incestuous desire for his daughter. As Maria Tatar writes:

In tales depicting erotic persecution of a daughter by her father, stepmothers and their daughters tend to vanish from the central arena of action. Yet the father's desire for his daughter in the second tale type furnishes a powerful motive for a stepmother's jealous rages and unnatural deeds in the first tale type. The two plots can be seen as conveniently dovetailing to produce an intrigue that corresponds to the oedipal fantasies of girls. Psychoanalytic criticism has indeed seen 'Cinderella' and 'Catskin' as enactments of oedipal desires, with each tale suppressing one component (love for the father or hatred of the mother) of the oedipal plot.⁷

⁵ Maria Tatar, *The Classic Fairy Tales*, p.xi.

⁴ Marina Warner, From the Beast to the Blonde, (London: Chato & Windus, 1994), p.19.

⁶ Jeanne-Marie LePrince de Beaumont (1711-1780), between 1750 and 1755 she published a series of anthologies of stories, fairy tales, essays and anecdotes these included *Le Magasin des enfants* (1757), *Le Magasin de pauvres* (1768) and *Le Mentor moderne* (1770). Her best know story *Beauty and the Beast* appeared in *Le Magasin des enfants* (translated into English as *The Young Misses Magazine* in 1759). She based her story on a much longer story by Madame de Villeneuve published in 1740. Her works were designed as social tracts to instil both social and moral values in children. She continued to publish until her death in 1780.

⁷ Maria Tatar, *The Classic Fairy Tales*, p.103.

Tatar also comments on how such stories are disappearing from the contemporary telling of fairy tales. She notes that this is not surprising given the theme of incest as perhaps inappropriate subject matter for a bedtime story but additionally she draws attention to the story's questioning of paternal authority and its endorsement of filial disobedience. She writes: 'What are we to make of a story that positions a father as the agent of transgressive sexuality and the daughter as the enforcer of cultural law and order?'8 Another fairy tale which deals with sexual transgression is 'Bluebeard'. The story made its literary debut in Perrault's collection of fairy tales Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passé, published in 1697. Folklorists have discovered three distinctive features of the 'Bluebeard' tale - a forbidden chamber, an agent of prohibition, who also metes out punishments and a figure who violates the prohibition. Thus, since the time of Perrault the tale has come to signify excessive curiosity and transgression, focusing primarily on the actions of the young woman. The murderous crimes of her husband are rarely the subject of critique or analysis. Bruno Bettleheim has also read 'Bluebeard' as the alternative version of 'Beauty and the Beast.' According to Bettelheim, 'Beauty and the Beast' is a wonderfully reassuring story that relieves the 'anxious sexual fantasies' to which children are prey: 'While sex may at first seem beastlike, in reality love between woman and man is the most satisfying of all emotions, and the only one which makes for permanent happiness'10. Perrault's 'Bluebeard' by contrast, confirms a child's 'worst fears about sex,' for it reveals marriage as charged with life-threatening perils.

As Tatar, also points out, 'Bluebeard' presents a message with a social logic which was compelling for Perrault's day and age. She also notes that anxieties pertaining to sex and marriage in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries would not have been unusual. At this time women married early, mortality rates in childbirth were high and a move away from home and family after marriage was likely to be fraught with fears of isolation, loneliness, violence and marital abuse. Furthermore, the blood-stained key has been read as a metaphor for marital infidelity, the irreversibility of the loss of one's virginity and also defloration (here, I would also include menstrual bleeding as both were often mistaken or conflated over the centuries). The link between marriage and sexual

⁸ ibid., p.106.

⁹ ibid., p.139.

¹⁰ Bruno Bettelheim, quoted in Maria Tatar, *The Classic Fairytales*, p.139.

anxiety has also been established by the French folklorist Paul Delarue who recorded that in earlier versions of the tale the heroine staves off her execution by donning her wedding gown. As numerous critics have argued, the fairy tale pre-figures the horror genre, with Tatar concluding her analysis of 'Bluebeard' by comparing it with the 'slasher' genre. She writes that:

In 'Bluebeard,' as in cinematic horror, we have not only a killer who is propelled by psychotic rage, but also the abject victims of his serial murders, along with a 'final girl' (Bluebeard's wife), who either saves herself or arranges her own rescue. The 'terrible place' of horror, a dark, tomblike site that harbours grisly evidence of the killer's, derangement, manifests itself as Bluebeard's forbidden chamber.¹²

Another notable aspect of the fairy tale is the prevalence of young girls who prick their fingers on spindles or thorns. The pricking of the finger is highly significant, often symbolising menstruation or sexual intercourse. According to Bruno Bettelheim, in 'Snow White' the mother pricking her finger, whereby three drops of blood fall on the snow, implies sexual innocence and sexual desire. He continues, stating that 'Fairy tales prepare the child to accept what is otherwise a most upsetting event: sexual bleeding, as in menstruation and later in intercourse when the hymen is broken.' Or as Delaney, Lupton and Toth note:

Red is the most prevalent color in the stories and frequently appears as a rose. The rose or any other flower is a dominant menstrual image in literature and folklore. A flower is also an image for the hymen. Because the old beliefs associated the menarche with the breaking of the hymen, these correspondences persist. Thus, the briar roses that grow around Sleeping Beauty's castle and cause the death of the would-be penetrators may be allusions to the fear of defloration prevalent among primitive peoples and their association of defloration with the dangerous properties of menstrual blood.¹⁴

Another fairy tale highlighted by Delaney, Toth and Lupton for its references to menstrual taboo is 'Rapunzel.' They write that that there is an 'extensive fear among all people that witches and menstruating women are the archetypal castrating females.' 15

¹³ Bettelheim, Bruno, *The Uses of Enchantment, The Meaning and Enchantment of Fairy Tales*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), p.202.

¹² Maria Tatar, The Classic Fairytales, p.140.

Janice Delaney, Mary Jane Lupton and Emily Toth, *The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation*,
 p.167.
 Janice Delaney, Mary Jane Lupton and Emily Toth, *The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation*,

Furthermore, they point out that various 'anthropological studies claim that the extensiveness of menstrual taboos in a society reflects that society's degree of castration anxiety'. 16 Thus, they note that castration anxieties were particularly rife in the Middle-Ages which saw numerous Church decrees issued against witches directly accusing them of causing impotence. This is then reflected in fairy tales of young men who are mutilated as they try to reach a young woman under the influence of a witch; for example, 'Rapunzel's lover is blinded when the witch throws him from the tower, and [...] all princes who tried to penetrate the briar roses around Sleeping Beauty's castle before the hundred years were up perished.'17 Finally, a story which I will examine in more detail later in this chapter is the iconic tale of 'Little Red Riding Hood', a story which is particularly indicative of pubescent sexuality.

Thus, fairy tales are built on ritual and myth and function as social maps which help individuals to navigate and negotiate the complexities of life. The recurrence and repetition of symbols and motifs, according to Delaney, Lupton and Toth, reveal these tales to be 'rooted in common experience, fears, and misconceptions.' As such they also point out that it is only logical that 'the terror of menstrual blood, one of the most profound imprints on the collective unconscious should occupy a prominent place in these tales.' Furthermore, James B. Twitchell argues that the 'primary concern of early adolescence is the transition from individual and isolated sexuality to pairing and reproductive sexuality.' 19 He also notes that:

[...] the stuff of sexual initiation inheres in all major horror myths and informs the audience of important knowledge whether it be told in comics, on television, or especially now, on the screen. What the gothic novel carried via ink on paper to our grandparents, the horror film carries via images on a screen to us. The myth informs because, as we have seen in the bedtime routine of telling the fairy tale, the pubescent audience needs its message and we acknowledge, perhaps unconsciously, its power. However, much we would like them to be quiet and 'join the scouts' we know that they have interests elsewhere – just as we had and our parents had before us.²⁰

p.167. lbid., p.167.

¹⁷ ibid., p.163.

¹⁸ ibid., p.162.

¹⁹ James B. Twitchell, *Dreadful Pleasures*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p.68.

²⁰ James B. Twitchell, *Dreadful Pleasures*, p.89.

Thus, there is an implicit relationship between the oral folk tale, the fairy tale and gothic and horror literature and film. Furthermore, it is important to note that the literary history of the fairy tale also demonstrates myth-making practices. As Northrop Frye argues, the meaning of myths like the meaning of any literature lies 'Inside them, in the implications of their incidents.' According to Roland Barthes the very principle of myth is that:

[...] it transforms history into nature. We now understand why, in the eyes of the myth-consumer, the intention, the abomination of the concept can remain manifest without however appearing to have an interest in the matter: what causes mythical speech to be uttered is perfectly explicit, but it is immediately frozen into something natural; it is not read as a motive, but as a reason.²²

This confusion between nature and history is emitted in messages through popular culture. The critic Michael Moriarty explains that:

[...] this is partly in virtue of the etymology of 'myth' (the Greek mythos, meaning speech, therefore 'message') and partly because many of these message are myths in another sense, mystifications [...] What the myth tries to do is to pass off an arbitrary sign as a natural, analogical one.²³

Myth hides nothing; its function writes Barthes, is to 'distort not to make disappear.'²⁴ It is a second-order semiological system: 'That which is a sign (namely the associative total of a concept and an image) in the first system, becomes a mere signifier in the second.'²⁵ Moreover, 'there is no fixity in mythical concepts: they can come into being, alter, disintegrate, disappear completely. And it is precisely because they are historical that history can very easily suppress them.'²⁶ Myth is also depoliticized speech and operates by emptying reality in a ceaseless flowing out and thus, creating a perceptible absence. As Barthes explains:

²¹ Northrop Frye, quoted in David Adams Leeming, *The World of Myth*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.14.

²² Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, (London: Vintage Classics, 2000), p.129.

²³ Michael Moriarty, *Roland Barthes*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press,), p.23.

²⁴ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, p126.

²⁵ ibid., p126.

²⁶ ibid., p126.

Myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact. If I state the fact of French imperiality without explaining it, I am very near to finding that it is natural and goes without saying: I am reassured. In passing from history to nature, myth acts economically: it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essences, it does away with all dialectics, with any going back beyond what is immediately visible, it organizes a world which is without contradictions [...] Things appear to mean something by themselves.²⁷

Thus, the cultural historian Jack Zipes writes of fairy tales that:

These literary stories have become mythic, not in the old sense of the term, but in the sense that they have naturalized particular and formulaic ways of thinking about individuals and social relationships. In other words, they have become the bearers of grand cultural narratives [and] constitute a mythic matrix constructed around three assumptions: gender and sexuality, and hence male and female behaviour are ordered according to a patriarchal hierarchy; good will always conquer evil; and the meritorious individual will rise in the world, winning prestige, riches, and power.²⁸

According to Zipes, the social standardization in the fairy tale is generally gender biased, operating according to patriarchal demands. As such, there was nothing childlike or desexualised about the early folk tales; instead they acted as warning tales and presented pictures of perils and possibilities. The realism of the early folk tales showed young girls as conscious and aware of their position in society and the perils implicit in their femaleness. Stories such as 'Donkey Skin', describing an incestuous father, or 'Little Red Riding Hood', a story of sexuality and rape, were instructive, warning tales for young pubescent girls. The realism and brutality of the original folk tales were lost during the transition from their oral roots to the literary tradition. During the middle-ages and up until the sixteenth-century, life was hard, mortality rates were high and people's life spans were short. As soon as children could walk they worked the fields or streets alongside their parents. Sexuality was open and not hidden, poverty did not afford the luxury of privacy and parents and children shared the same bed in cramped housing conditions. As Michel Foucault writes:

²⁷ ibid., p.143.

²⁸ Jack Zipes, Jack, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.331.

It was a time of direct gestures, shameless discourse, and open transgressions, when anatomies were shown and intermingled at will, and knowing children hung about amid the laughter of adults: it was a period when bodies "made a display of themselves.²⁹

Or as Robert Darnton describes, a period when

Whole families crowded into one or two beds and surrounded themselves with livestock in order to keep warm. So children became observers of their parents sexual activities. No one thought of them as innocent creatures or of childhood itself as a distinct phase of life, clearly distinguished from adolescence, youth and adulthood by special styles of dress and behaviour. Children laboured alongside their parents almost as soon as they could walk, and they joined the adult labour force as farm hands, servants and apprentices as soon as they reached their teens. ³⁰

It is important to note that in the above examples, both Foucault and Darnton are referring to the lower classes. However, a general disregard for childhood as a unique and important phase in the development of an individual was observed across the social classes.³¹ Thus, the creation of an idealised state of childhood did not occur until the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and when it did it was more a middle and upper-class phenomenon. The construct of childhood during this period was also tied to the new concept of *civilité*. Numerous books and pamphlets were printed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries dealing with social etiquette in relation to natural functions, table manners, sexual relations and correct speech. One of the main reasons for the rise of a "state of childhood" by the end of the seventeenth-century is explained by Jack Zipes as the result of the historical transition during the period 1480-1650, in which

[...] the Catholic Church and the reform movement of Protestantism combined efforts with the support of the rising mercantile and industrial classes to rationalise society and literally to exterminate social deviates who were associated with the devil such as female witches, male werewolves, Jews and gypsies. In particular, women were linked to the potentially uncontrollable natural instincts, and as the image of the innocent, naive child susceptible to wild natural forces arose, the necessity to control and shelter children became more pronounced.³²

³⁰ Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.29.

³² Jack Zipes, Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion, (London: Heinemann, 1983), p.22.

²⁹ Michel, Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, (London: Penguin, 199), p.3.

³¹ The construct of childhood is a contentious area; however, there does appear to be a consensus that there was a shift in how childhood was viewed in the 16th century and subsequently. For further research in this field see also: 'Social Construction of Childhood' in Ian Marsh and Mike Keating eds., *Sociology Making Sense of Society*, (London: Pearson Education, 2006).

Norbert Elias describes this controlling and censoring of individuals as part of a civilizing process, which is fundamental to society:

[...] no human being comes into the world civilized and ... the individual civilizing process that he compulsorily undergoes is a function of the social civilizing process. Therefore, the structure of the child's effects and consciousness no doubt bears a certain resemblance to that of 'uncivilized' peoples, and the same applies to the psychological stratum in grown-ups which, with the advance of civilization, is subjected to more or less heavy censorship and consequently finds outlets in dreams, for example. But since in our society (in the course of history) each human being is exposed from the first moment of life to the influence and the molding of civilized grown-ups, he must indeed pass through a civilizing process in order to reach the standard attained by his society in the course of history but not through the historical phases of the social civilizing process.³³

Thus, the birth of the literary fairy tale in the late 1600s, with for example, Charles Perrault's Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passé, coincided with a particular phase in the course of this 'civilizing process' which aimed to separate and categorise childhood from adulthood. The association of children with 'uncivilized people' suggests both chaos and that which threatens. The juncture between childhood and adulthood is puberty, an unstable state where both the body and identity are in transition (often depicted as metamorphosis in the fairy tale). Children and particularly individuals on the border of puberty are not fully socialized. As uncivilized individuals they are potential deviants, non-conformists or disrupters of the socio-cultural status quo. As such, it was considered crucial to begin social and civic instruction at as early a stage as possible. The young mind during childhood was both vulnerable and tractable; therefore, it was society's duty to intervene in order to ensure its proper development. Nonetheless, social and civic instruction for children was irrefutably gender biased. Thus, the fairy tale acted as a powerful operative in conveying patriarchal ideas of gender. Girls became vulnerable and in need of rescue by a handsome prince, and the 'blondeness' of the young female protagonist is according to Marina Warner, 'one of the most potent and recurrent symbols within the genre.'34 It is this mythic blondeness signifying light, vitality and virginal purity, which has been constructed to circumscribe femininity. The classic fairy tales of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have changed very little in modern

³⁴ Marina Warner, From the Beast to the Blonde, p.xxv.

³³ Norbert Elias, quoted in Jack Zipes, Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion, p.19.

culture. The main audience is still children and at times the modern fairy tale is more didactic and moralistic than its predecessor.

Therefore, this chapter will explore myth-making practices, social constructions of identity and the subversive potential of transgression in fairy tales and in gothic and horror literature and film. In the first section I will examine Angela Carter's sustained interest in fairy tales throughout her career and her inquiry into the social construction of identity through myth-making practices. In the following section I will explore the menstrual and pubescent aspects of Carter's stories in The Bloody Chamber according to metamorphosis and the change from human to animal states. Furthermore, this section will explore socio-cultural fears of change and transformation, highlighting some of the techniques used to subject and control female sexual identity from surveillance and the power of the gaze, to Lacanian theories of the imaginary and symbolic. In section three, I will focus on the central figure of 'Little Red Riding Hood' and her importance to both constructions and subversions of female identity. Here, I will also examine the possibility of positive transgression in Carter's story 'The Company of Wolves' through metamorphosis, multiplicity and consumption. The final section of this chapter will look at the figure of 'Little Red Riding Hood' in gothic and horror cinema from Nicolas Roeg's Don't Look Now (1974) to Neil Jordan's adaptation of 'The Company of Wolves' (1984), to the contemporary films Ginger Snaps (dir. John Fawcett, 2000) and Hard Candy (dir. David Slade, 2006). I will also extend the analysis of metamorphosis explored in the previous section to include the work of Rosi Braidotti and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari on 'becoming-wolf'.

'New Wine, Old Bottles': Angela Carter and the Fairy Tale

To be the *object* of desire is to be defined in the passive case.

To exist in the passive case is to die in the passive case – that is to be killed.

This is the moral of the fairy tale about the perfect woman.³⁵

(Angel Carter, The Sadeian Woman)

45

³⁵ Angela Carter, The Sadeian Woman, (London: Virago, 2006), p.88.

Angela Carter's collection of re-imagined fairy tales, *The Bloody Chamber*, was published in 1979. Her earlier work included her first novel *Shadow Dance* (1966) which was followed by two other novels *The Magic Toyshop* (1967) and *Several Perceptions* (1968); both works explored the dimensions of sexual fantasy and also employed fairy tale motifs. *Several Perceptions* won the Somerset Maugham Award and Carter used the money she won to travel across America. On her return she parted from her first husband and went to live in Japan for three years. In 1969 she published *Heroes and Villains* and wrote two avant-garde fairy tales for children *The Donkey Prince* (1970) and *Miss Z, the Dark Young Lady* (1970), which were to anticipate her translation of Perrault and her own feminist fairy tales in *The Bloody Chamber*. She published her first collection of short stories *Fireworks* in 1974 and *The Passion of the New Eve* in 1977. It has been argued that this period of her writing career was one of her most creative.

Carter then commenced work on the translation of the fairy tales of Charles Perrault alongside writing her own stories which were to culminate in the publication of The Bloody Chamber in 1979. While writing The Bloody Chamber Carter also wrote her feminist tract The Sadeian Woman. As Jack Zipes observes, 'Much of the philosophy in The Sadeian Woman is fully developed in The Bloody Chamber, in which classical tales, such as "Bluebeard," "Cinderella," "Little Red Riding Hood," "Beauty and the Beast," and "Puss in Boots," are given unusual twists that open up the possibilities for sexual play and social transformation. At the very least, the tales are feminist provocations written in a terse metaphorical language that is often stunning.'36 Carter's later works include Nights at the Circus (1984) and Wise Children (1991). However, as Zipes again notes, perhaps more important 'is that her interest in fairy tales never wavered throughout the period 1977-1992. In fact, Carter wrote more books for children with fairy-tale themes, Comic and Curious Cats (1979), The Music People (1980), and Moonshadow (1982), and edited two important collections for adults, The Virago Book of Fairy Tales (also known as The Old Wives' Fairy Tale Book, 1990) and The Second Virago Book of Fairy Tales (also know as Strange Things Still Sometimes Happen: Fairy Tales from Around the World, 1992).'37 In 1992 Carter died of cancer, prompting her close friend, the writer Salman Rushdie to comment, 'English literature has lost its high sorceress, its benevolent witch queen,' and Margaret Atwood, the Canadian writer, to state, 'The amazing thing about

³⁷ Jack Zipes, 'Introduction' in Angela Carter, *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault*, p.xi.

³⁶ Jack Zipes, 'Introduction', in Angela Carter, *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault*, (London: Penguin Classics, 2008), p.x.

her for me, was that someone who looked so much like the Fairy Godmother ... should actually be so much like the Fairy Godmother. She was the opposite of parochial. Nothing, for her, was outside the pale: she wanted to know about everything and everyone, and every place and every word. She revealed life and language hugely, and revelled in the diverse. '38

Carter's stories in The Bloody Chamber have also been described as prowling 'around the fringes of the proper English novel like dream-monsters - nasty, exotic, brilliant creatures that feed off cultural crisis.'39 Carter rewrites the story of 'Bluebeard' as well as the more familiar fairy tales of 'Little Red Riding Hood', 'Beauty and the Beast', 'Puss in Boots', and 'Snow White' creating a lugubrious and erotic atmosphere of hypnotic seduction. Although The Bloody Chamber is structured as a collection of short stories, there is a cohesive quality to it. The quality of the writing and the strategic structure of the chapter layout give the impression of a single narrative. Lucie Armitt describes this quality 'as one of the major problems facing the reader of these ten stories [as] they always seem to be dissolving into each other. '40 This narrative technique focuses on universal history and the situational rather than the individual. Carter is less concerned with individual sexuality than in the genealogy of patriarchal history and myth-making practices.

Her use of the fairy tale format also points to historical changes in the definition and construction of female identity. The female protagonist of the early folk tale was a pubescent female on the cusp of menstruation or who had just begun her monthly bleed. As the oral folk tale was appropriated into the literary medium of the fairy tale, the central protagonist became younger and less sexualised as I have already noted. The aim was rigorously to enforce gender definition and construction as comprehensively as possible during childhood before the individual reached the volatile and unpredictable phase of puberty. By re-introducing the pubescent menstruating female to her revised fairy tales, Carter highlights both the social reality and the threat posed by the bleeding female body. The pubescent young girls of these stories defy gender constructions. As Lucie Armitt states in her interpretation of frameworks and enclosures within *The Bloody Chamber:*

³⁸ Salman Rushdie and Margaret Atwood, quoted in Jack Zipes, 'Introduction' in Angela Carter, *The Fairy*

Tales of Charles Perrault, pp. xi-xii.

Sage, quoted in Joseph Bristow and Trev Lynn Broughton, eds., The Infernal Desires of Angela Carter, (London: Longman, 1997), p.4.

⁴⁰ Lucie Armitt, 'The Fragile Frames of *The Bloody Chamber*' in Joseph Bristow and Trev Lynn Broughton, eds., *The Infernal Desires of Angela Carter*, p.97.

But what if we read the word 'chamber' not as a room but as a vase or vessel for carrying liquid? In this case the blood is the liquid with which the vessel is filled (indeed the substance that gives the vase its definition). The associated excesses are those of overspill, not those which threaten containment. In this case it is not the chamber that contains and thus constrains the woman (who then becomes a terrified victim), but the woman herself who takes control as the body of excess. [...] We are therefore dealing with an interrogation of boundary demarcations particularly relevant to corporeal (re)definitions It can equally signify their menstrual flow, which continues to threaten to breach the limits of restrictively enclosing patriarchal representations (including its taboos, its silences and its secrets). Hence, Carter's utilization of enclosure imagery need not deny positive assertions of female sexuality or autonomy.⁴¹

According to Armitt, the enclosure imagery of *The Bloody Chamber* from rooms to castles need not solely signify the negative. By juxtaposing the words 'bloody' and 'chamber', the possibility for exceeding containment and entrapment is suggested. It is also evident that her use of the fairy tale as a medium through which to explore femininity is both tactical and self-conscious. Marina Warner has noted that between the early works of *The Bloody Chamber* (1979) and her later writing from *Nights at the Circus* (1985) 'something occurs in Angela Carter's sensibility, and it is bound up with her change of attitude to the fairy tales.' Warner points out that Carter, in an introduction to *Fireworks*, published in 1974, aligns herself with Gothic writers like Poe, E.T.A. Hoffman, and other tellers of fantastical tales. Carter describes her own stories as:

Cruel tales, tales of wonder, tales of terror, fabulous narratives that deal directly with the imagery of the unconscious – mirrors; the externalized self, forsaken castles, haunted forests; forbidden sexual objects. Formally, the tale differs from the short story in that it makes few pretences at the imitation of life. The tale does not log everyday experience through a system of imagery derived from subterranean areas behind everyday experience, and therefore the tale cannot betray its readers into a false knowledge of everyday experience [...] Characters and events are exaggerated beyond reality, to become symbols, ideas, passions. Its style will tend to be ornate, unnatural – and thus operated against the perennial human desire to believe the word as fact. Its only humour is black humour. It retains a singular moral function – that of provoking unease.

According to Warner, Carter's change in sentiment is evident from the omission of this afterword in subsequent editions and also from her introduction to *The Virago Book*

⁴¹ Lucie Armitt, 'The Fragile Frames of *The Bloody Chamber*' in Joseph Bristow and Trev Lynn Broughton, eds., *The Infernal Desires of Angela Carter*, pp.92-93.

⁴² Marina Warner, 'Angela Carter: Bottle Blonde, Double Drag', in Lorna Sage, ed., *Flesh and the Mirror*, (London: Virago, 1994), p. 244

⁽London: Virago, 1994), p.244.

⁴³ Angela Carter, quoted in Marina Warner, 'Angela Carter: Bottle Blonde, Double Drag', in Lorna Sage, ed., *Flesh and the Mirror*, p.244.

of Fairy Tales written sixteen years later, where, discussing the relationship between fairy tales and reality, she states: 'So fairy tales, folk tales, stories from the oral tradition, are all of them the most vital connection we have with the imagination of the ordinary world.' As she noted herself of Perrault's fairy tales:

What an unexpected treat to find that in this great Ur-collection – whence sprang the Sleeping Beauty, Puss in Boots, Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, Tom Thumb, all the heroes of pantomime – all these nursery tales are purposely dressed up as fables of the politics of experience. Here all the stories are – sprightly and fresh, and so very worldly. It is the succinct brutality of the folk tale modified by the first stirrings of the Age of Reason. The wolf consumes Red Riding Hood; what else do you expect if you talk to strange men, comments Perault briskly ... Archaic patterns of ritual initiation; forbidden thresholds; invitatory incantations to pubertal rites ... all the elements that our more barbarous times rejoice in for their own sakes as part of the rarest show of the unconscious, are subsumed by Perrault into a project for worldly instruction ... If there is something odd about a grown man who devotes most of his time on the *qui vive* for the horns of elfland faintly blowing, I don't think its too good for children, either. Rather let them learn enlightened self-interest from Puss; resourcefulness from Tom Thumb; the advantages of patronage from Cinderella, and of long engagements from the Sleeping Beauty ... Ban Tolkien. Ban Anderson. Too much imaginative richness makes Jack a dull boy; and no good at killing giants.

Furthermore, Carter's storytelling in *The Bloody Chamber* draws extensively on the gothic, and as Lucie Armitt contends, 'rather than being fairy tales which contain a few Gothic elements, these are actually Gothic tales that prey upon the restrictive enclosures of fairy-story formulae ...' Moreover, Stephen Benson in his essay 'Angela Carter and the Literary Märchen' points to the 'usefulness of a knowledge of folk and fairy tales as a means of avoiding unmediated readings of the more overt elements of Carter's rewritings' and states that her narratives require:

[...] a reading of their timelessness in all its aspects: a detailed contextual overview or genealogy, along the lines of Sheet's⁴⁸ account of the pornography debate, of the role of *The Bloody Chamber* in the renaissance of the interest in the

⁴⁴ ibid., p.245.

⁴⁵ Angela Carter, *Shaking a Leg: Journalism and Writings: The Collected Angela Carter*, Jenny Uglow ed., (London, Chato & Windus, 1997), pp.452-454.

⁴⁶ Lucie, Armitt, 'The Fragile Frames of the Bloody Chamber', in Joseph Bristow and Trev Lynn Broughton, eds., *The Infernal Desires of Angela Carter*, p.89.

⁴⁷ Stephen Benson, 'Angela Carter and the Literary Märchen: A Review Essay' in Danielle M. Roemer and Cristina Bacchilega, eds., *Angela Carter and the Fairy Tale*, (Michigan: Wayne University Press, 2001) p.36.

⁴⁸ Benson is referring to Robin Ann Sheets article 'Pornography, Fairy Tales, and Feminism: Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*' in John C. Fout, *Forbidden History: The State, Society and the Regulation of Sexuality in Modern Europe*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), pp.335-361.

fairy tale that has occurred over the past three decades...⁴⁹

Carter's stories examine puberty and menstrual bleeding as points of transition and liminality. Her revisions of fairy tales in *The Bloody Chamber* are also a part of the historical progression of the fairy tale. She exploits the historicity of the genre and her rendering of time, history and myth suspect gives us an insight into her own personal response to the sexual revolution and women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s. How this period shaped her creative and intellectual development is described by Carter as follows:

[...] it felt like Year One, that all that was holy was in the process of being profaned and we were attempting to grapple with the real relations between human beings. So writers like Marcuse and Adorno were as much part of my personal process of maturing into feminism as experiments with my sexual and emotional life and with various intellectual adventures in anarcho-surrealism. Furthermore, at a very unpretentious level, we were truly asking ourselves questions about the nature of reality. Most of us may not have come up with very startling answers and some of us scared ourselves good and proper and retreated into cul-de-sacs of infantile mysticism; false prophets, loonies and charlatans freely roamed the streets. But even so, I can date to that time and to some of those debates and to that sense of heightened awareness of the society around me in the summer of 1968, my own questioning of the nature of my reality as a woman. How that social fiction of my 'femininity' was created, by means outside my control, and palmed off on me as the real thing.⁵⁰

Femininity and her reality as a woman were not innate or essential. Instead, her reality was a socio-historic, mythic construct designed to sustain a white male, bourgeois, heterosexual paradigm. 'Our flesh arrives to us out of history, like everything else', declared Carter. This echoes the work of Barthes, who writes that myth is 'constituted by the loss of the historical quality of things: in it, things lose the memory that they once were made.' Furthermore, he argues that:

The world enters language as a dialectical relation between activities, between human actions; it comes out of myth as a harmonious display of essences. A conjuring trick has taken place; it has turned reality inside out, it has emptied history and has filled it with nature, it has removed from things their human meaning so as to make them signify a human insignificance. The function of myth

⁴⁹ Stephen Benson, 'Angela Carter and the Literary Märchen: A Review Essay' in Danielle M. Roemer and Cristina Bacchilega, eds., *Angela Carter and the Fairy Tale*, p.49.

⁵⁰ Angela Carter, quoted in, Joseph Bristow and Trev Lynn Broughton eds., *The Infernal Desires of Angela Carter*, p.10.

⁵¹ Angela Carter, The Sadeian Woman, p.9.

is to empty reality: it is, literally, a ceaseless flowing out, a haemorrhage, or perhaps an evaporation, in short a perceptible absence.⁵³

The Bloody Chamber, as a personal response to the women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s, is thus multi-faceted, engaging with both feminist and anti-feminist debates. She achieves this through her interrogation and re-imagining of the stories of 'Bluebeard', 'Snow White', 'Puss in Boots', 'Beauty and the Beast', 'Sleeping Beauty' and 'Little Red Riding Hood'.

Furthermore, the self-conscious, historicizing aspects of Carter's fairy tales are also evident in her use of the contemporary. The set pieces and characters, as well as the gothic tropes of castles and forests, all suggest the 'Once upon a time, in a land far away' timeless quality of the fairy tale. Then, suddenly a telephone will ring or a car will arrive at the door. This non-linear deployment of history and time disconcerts the reader. It highlights how myth transforms history into nature. Carter is, as she puts it herself, 'all for putting new wine in old bottles, especially if the pressure of the new wine makes the old bottles explode.' Her tracing of history, through the medium of the fairy tale questions the construction of femininity, myth according to Carter, 'deals in false universals.' Folk tales and fairy tales she writes, assist 'the process of false universalising. Its excesses belong to that timeless, locationless area outside history, outside geography, where fascist art is born.'

Thus, Carter's *Bloody Chamber* parallels poststructuralist analyses of myth-making practices and socio-cultural constructions of identity. Furthermore, her stories demonstrate the centrality of the body within the paradigm of sexual power relations. As such, the abjected, liminal menstrual female body at puberty becomes a potentially trangressive vehicle for the deconstruction and interrogation of socio-cultural constructions of femininity. Therefore, in the following section I will explore Carter's subversions of the 'false universalising' fairy tale of the passive, idealised woman.

'Fairy Tales of Blood': Controlling the Borders and Metamorphic Cross-Over

⁵⁴ Angela Carter, quoted in Merja Makinen, 'The Bloody Chamber and the Decolonisation of Feminine Sexuality', in Alison Easton, ed., *Angela Carter: Contemporary Critical Essays*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p.20.

⁵³ ibid., pp.142-143.

⁵⁵ Angela Carter, quoted in Merja Makinen, 'The Bloody Chamber and the Decolonisation of Feminine Sexuality', in Alison Easton, ed., *Angela Carter: Contemporary Critical Essays*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p.12

The body can stand for any bounded system. Its boundaries can represent any boundaries which are threatened or precarious. The body is a complex structure. The function of its different parts and their relation afford a source of symbols for other complex structures. We cannot possibly interpret rituals concerning excreta, breast milk, saliva and the rest unless we are prepared to see in the body a symbol of society and to see the powers and dangers credited to social structure reproduced in small on the human body. 56

(Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger)

As already noted the title *The Bloody Chamber* makes reference to the bleeding female body, with the central pubescent protagonists of her stories further indicating menstruation. For the most part the fairy tale genre positions control of the female body and female sexuality precisely at the moment of her transition from childhood to adult sexuality. As such, Carter's re-imagined tales skilfully manipulate and subvert the moral appendices and warnings dictated by the original tales. Thus, in this section I will examine Carter's use of menstrual symbol and imagery and her interrogation of the metamorphic transition from sexual innocence to sexual initiation; human to animal. Furthermore, I will explore how Carter exposes socio-cultural practices employed to control female sexuality and desire, from the male gaze, to woman as automaton and fetishized in death to Lacan's theories of subjectivity based on the mirror phase and entry into the symbolic.

Throughout the stories of *The Bloody Chamber*, images of menarche and menstruation abound, with the obvious colours of red and white permeating the stories – for example, snow covered landscapes where '...the road is white and unmarked as a spilled bolt of bridal satin;'⁵⁷ and red in the form of 'red berries as ripe and delicious as goblin or enchanted fruit' [BC, 85]. The red and white imagery suggest menarche, the first menstrual bleeding of the young virginal woman, or the breaking of the hymen and virginal sex. These female characters are not children nor are they sexually mature women; instead they are on the cusp of sexual initiation. Thus, Carter directly engages with the menstrual female body and its signification.

⁵⁶ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 5. (As quoted earlier)

Routledge, 2005), p.5. (As quoted earlier).

The Bloody Chamber, (London: Vintage, 1995), p.44. (Any subsequent references to The Bloody Chamber in this chapter will be referenced as BC along with page number in the text).

Furthermore, the physical bodies of the young girls in *The Bloody Chamber* are described as in-between states, they border childhood and adulthood. The young female of the titular first story describes herself as 'I, the poor widow's child with my mouse-coloured hair that still bore the kinks of the plaits from which it had so recently been freed, my bony hips, my nervous, pianist's fingers' [BC, 10] or the description of the female character in 'The Lady of the House of Love' – '...he saw how beautiful and how very young the bedizened scarecrow was, and he thought of a child dressing up in her mother's clothes...' [BC, 100] In 'The Company of Wolves' the narrator explicitly states:

Children do not stay young for long in this savage country. There are no toys for them to play with so they work hard and grow wise but this one, so pretty and the youngest of her family, a little late comer, had been indulged by her mother and the grandmother who'd knitted her the red shawl that, today, has the ominous if brilliant look of blood on snow. Her breasts have just begun to swell: her hair is like lint, so fair it hardly makes a shadow on her pale forehead; her cheeks are an emblematic scarlet and white and she's just started her woman's bleeding, the clock inside her that will strike, henceforward, once a month. [BC, 215]

Also demarcating liminal sexuality in these stories is the virginal status of the pubescent, menstrual young girl. Before sexual penetration Carter describes the female body as a 'cave full of echoes', 'a system of repetitions', 'a closed circuit', where, the young girl 'stands and moves within the invisible pentacle of her own virginity. She is an unbroken egg; she is a sealed vessel; she has inside her a magic space the entrance to which is shut tight with a plug of membrane; she is a closed system; she does not know how to shiver.' [BC, 114] However, it is a place of echoes and repetitions which cannot be sustained. The womb will expel its lining at menstruation and the young girl will bleed periodically signifying her sexuality and her femaleness. In turn she will be sexually penetrated and her hymen broken.

Thus, female bleeding from the genitals occurs at two specific points in these stories; it either occurs at the menses or else it is the breaking of the hymen. Sexual intercourse for the virginal protagonist of these stories is a distinct and precise moment of liminality. The borders/frontiers are opened and penetrated. The *within* and *without* spill forth: 'I heard him shriek and blaspheme at the orgasm; I had bled.' [BC, 18] Menstrual blood and the breaking of the hymen are further suggested in Carter's version of the 'Beauty and the Beast' story 'The Tiger's Bride', where the 'tear-beslobbered' father who has prostituted his daughter asks her for a rose to show that she forgives him. However, as

she picks the rose to give to him she pricks her finger and 'so he gets his rose all smeared with blood' [BC, 55] The pricking of the finger is highly significant in fairy tales; as already pointed out, it often symbolises menstruation or sexual intercourse. In 'The Lady of the House of Love', the menstrual, sexually active young girl is described as both 'death and the maiden' [BC, 93]. As such, female blood (menstrual or the breaking of the hymen) is a nexus for multiple interpretations and signification.

Thus, I would argue that menstruation and puberty are forms of metamorphoses (I will explore menstrual-morphosis in further detail in Chapter Three). Furthermore, Carter aligns menstruation and puberty with metamorphosis from human to animal states. As Caroline Walker Bynum writes in her work *Metamorphosis and Identity*:

We are surrounded, as even medieval commentators on Ovid knew, by metamorphosis. We do see change of species; we grapple with change of self. Caterpillars turn into butterflies; dead sticks flower in springtime; beloved children change into killers when schizophrenia erupts; healthy cells become cancer; people die. Change is a staggering fact — one ancient philosophers struggled to explain. It is possible to argue that the great intellectual breakthrough of the centuries before Ovid was that of Aristotle, whose fundamental contribution to Western culture was to speak of what he called generation and corruption — coming to be and passing away — as not mere fluctuations of appearance, the adding and subtracting of qualities or 'skins,' but the replacement of one existing substance by another. Real change. Without it there is no story; nothing happens. ⁵⁸

Most notable in Carter's stories is the metamorphosis from human to wolf. One of the earliest werewolf tales is Ovid's 'Lycaon', which tells of the Arcadian King Lycaon whose savagery and greed led Jove to destroy all but two humans in a great flood. As Jove brings down the house of Lycaon he flees in terror:

He fled in fear and reached the silent fields
And howled his heart out, trying in vain to speak.
With rabid mouth he turned his lust for slaughter
Against the flocks, delighting still in blood.
His clothes changed to coarse hair, his arms to legs —
He was a wolf, yet kept some human trace,
The same grey hair, the same fierce face, the same
Wild eyes, the same image of savagery. 59

54

⁵⁸ Caroline Walker Bynum, Metamorphosis and Identity, (New York: Zone Books, 2001), pp.176-177.

It has been argued by Bynum that the metamorphosis of Lycaon consists of three main points. The first is that Lycaon is a cannibal who also transgresses and violates the division between human and god by preparing to kill Jove. Secondly, he really changes and becomes a wolf. The third point is that Lycaon is what he was before.

Another notable werewolf story is the medieval tale 'Bisclavret' (the Breton name for werewolf) written by Marie de France. 'Bisclavret' tells of a husband who would disappear for three days a week at a time and when asked of his disappearances by his wife explains that he becomes a werewolf who goes stark naked. However, he leaves his clothes neatly folded and hidden because without them he cannot return to his human self. His wife, both afraid and horrified, steals his clothes while he is in his werewolf state and as a consequence her husband is unable to return to his human state. One year later as fate has it he encounters the king who is out hunting and he grovels and humbles himself at his feet. The king marvels at the beast and takes him back to the court. However, unexpectedly encountering his wife who has come with gifts for the king, the werewolf erupts in a furious rage, attacking her and tearing the nose from her face. The king, now suspicious, tortures the wife until she confesses to what she has done; her husband's clothes are returned and he is restored once more to his human form. The wife is then banished with her lover and the husband remains to serve the king dutifully. In this case, Bynum writes, Marie de France's tale is distinctly different to that of Ovid. 'Bisclavret', unlike Ovid's tale is about transformation and return; the 'bisclavret is not left to howl forever in silent meadows. Having performed like a well-behaved dog at court, he becomes a well-beloved knight to a just and wise king.'60

Thus, Bynum sees Carter's werewolves and metamorphoses in her stories as clearly heirs to Ovid's and Marie de France's tales, with one telling of change and transformation, but essentially a tale of remaining the same; the other, a tale of transformation and return. She writes that:

Like Marie's, Carter's stories deal with sexual fulfilment and betrayal, although hers are more overtly erotic. Like Ovid's, her werewolves eat people [...] Most important for my purposes is Carter's clear sense – paralleling Marie's and Ovid's – that skin both *overclothes* and *is*. The 'wise child' wears her own virgin skin, through which the firelight shines. Using the Latinate word 'integument,' which possessed in Marie de France's day the technical definition of 'a story which covers and conveys meaning,' Carter writes 'now she was clothed only in her untouched integument of flesh'. The wise child' flaunts the nakedness of which

⁶⁰ Caroline Walker Bynum, Metamorphosis and Identity, p.172.

the bisclavret was ashamed, but that naked skin *is* as well as *covers* self. Has she realized or lost a skin-self, been devoured, raped, or sexually fulfilled? What lies there when 'she' (but it is, Carter insists 'she') sleeps in the arms of a wolf?⁶¹

Werewolf stories in Carter's The Bloody Chamber include the brief tale called 'The Werewolf' where the good young child who sets out for her grandmother's house encounters a wolf and manages to defend herself by cutting of its paw. When she reaches her grandmother's, she discovers that her grandmother is missing her right hand and all that remains is a bloody stump. In 'The Tiger's Bride', a version of the 'Beauty and the Beast' story, the young girl has been sold to the beast by her father. As the beast approaches the young girl in what Bynum describes as 'one of the most beautiful descriptions I know of sexual arousal and yes of love, '62 the tiger licks his bride into his own species: 'And each stroke of his tongue ripped off skin after successive skin, all the skins of a life in the world, and left behind a nascent patina of shiny hairs. My earrings turned back to water and trickled down my shoulders; I shrugged the drops off my beautiful hair.' [BC, 67] Carter's other werewolf stories include 'Wolf-Alice' and 'The Company of Wolves' which I will examine in more detail later in this section. In this section I will also attempt to answer the questions posed by Bynum – has the young girl of these stories realized or lost a skin-self, been devoured, raped, or sexually fulfilled? Undoubtedly, metamorphosis and its meanings are both varied and complex. Moreover, change is often met with fear and anxiety, and what is demonstrated in the stories of *The* Bloody Chamber is how the very threat of change is impeded through the intervention or employment of cultural practices. Thus identities which threaten to transgress acceptable social boundaries are brought under control.

As such, the circumscription of female identity through the gaze, experienced as surveillance and control, is examined by Carter. As David Macey writes of the 'gaze', 'Insofar as it is being looked at, the for-itself exists as an object like any other and is alienated from its potential freedom because it is no longer in control of the situation.' 63

. .

⁶¹ ibid., pp.175-176.

⁶² ibid., p.175.

⁶³ David Macey, 'Gaze' in the *Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory*, (London: Penguin, 2001), p.154. See also for varied debate on the gaze Laura Mulvey's 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (1975) and *Visual and Other Pleasures* (1989). For psychoanalytical approaches see Freud and Lacan or Foucault's poststructuralist theory of the Panopticon. In Carter's work she skilfully plays with the notion of the gaze for most part disrupting the power dialectic of subject/object. In Chapter Four, I will return to the subject of the gaze, challenging orthodox interpretations and suggest that constructions of the menstruous-monstrous also reside in a fear of the vagina not only as a devouring mouth but also as destructive eye (The Medusa's Gaze). Furthermore, I would also like to suggest that Deleuzian 'becomings' which dissolve the

In the opening story of 'The Bloody Chamber' the young virginal, pubescent girl is 'reborn in his unreflective eyes, reborn in unfamiliar shapes.' [BC, 20] She is objectified through the subjective lens of the Marquis' gaze. Her first sexual encounter with the Marquis is described as 'a formal disrobing of the bride, a ritual from the brothel.' [BC, 15] Similarly, the eyes and gaze of the Erl-King dominate the story of the same name. They are dangerous and potentially lethal to female identity and self-definition – 'There are some eyes can eat you.' [BC, 86] His eyes are 'green as apples. Green as dead seafruit.' [BC, 89] The young girl acknowledges the dangers of seeing herself through his eyes:

Your green eye is a reducing chamber. If I look into it long enough, I will become as small as my own reflection, I will diminish to a point and vanish. I will be drawn into that black whirlpool and be consumed by you. I shall become so small you can keep me in one of your osier cages and mock my loss of liberty. I have seen the cage you are weaving for me; it is a very pretty one and I shall sit, hereafter, in my cage among the other singing birds but I shall be dumb, from spite. [BC, 90]

Carter continues her commentary on the male gaze and its devastating effect on female identity in 'The Snow Child'. This story deals solely with the sexual objectification and desire of the female body through the male gaze and demonstrates the numbing effect this gaze has on female sexuality. The female protagonist is sexually cold and detached because female desire and sexual arousal is non-existent. The Countess is merely a scopophilic sex toy or prop, there to satisfy the sexual appetites of her husband. 'The Snow Child' is a version of the 'Snow White Story', the core of which is easily identifiable and stable. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, pointing to this 'core struggle' between Snow White and the Wicked Queen describe the relationship as indicative of patriarchal hegemony in Western culture:

As the legend of Lilith shows, and as psychoanalysts from Freud to Jung onward have observed, myths and fairy tales often both state and enforce culture's sentences with greater accuracy than more sophisticated literary texts. If Lilith's story summarizes the genesis of the female monster in a single useful parable, the Grimm tale of 'Little Snow White' dramatizes the essential but equivocal relationship between the angel-woman and the monster-woman.⁶⁴

object/subject dialectic renders the concept of the gaze redundant within a power paradigm. ⁶⁴ Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), p.36.

According to Gilbert and Gubar the male figures in the 'Snow White' narrative are indicative of the male gaze through which female identity and sexuality are defined and constructed. The king is described as the 'voice of the looking glass, the patriarchal voice of judgement that rules the Queen's – and every woman's self-evaluation.'65 The wife of the Count is described as dressed in 'the glittering pelts of black foxes; and she wore high, black shining boots with scarlet heels, and spurs' [BC, 91] and the landscape which surrounds her is snow-covered and white. The count's wife is an embodiment of his desires, the motifs of white/red/black - 'I wish I had a girl as white as snow ... I wish I had a girl as red as blood ... I wish I had a girl as black as that bird's feather.' [BC, 91] The young girl who manifests herself naked by the road is simply the reflection of his constructions of femininity (that is his sexual desire for his wife). Furthermore, this doubling effect allows the Count's wife to abject herself and thus, she constructs an exorbitant outside – the naked girl by the side of the road, stripped bare of the material masks donned to fulfil the appetite of the count. The young girl is stripped bare of the pelts and the shiny boots, she is 'white skin, red mouth, black hair and stark naked.' [BC, The Countess can vent her frustrations at this inane manifestation of female sexuality: 'she was the child of his desire and the Countess hated her.' [BC, 92]

In Gilbert and Gubar's interpretation of the 'Snow White' story the Countess is 'a plotter, a plot-maker, a schemer, a witch, an artist, an impersonator, a woman of almost infinite creative energy, witty, wily and self-absorbed as all artists traditionally are.' The Countess in 'The Snow Child' schemes to get rid of this shadowy, unreal phantom of desire who

[...] in her absolute chastity, her frozen innocence, her sweet nullity, [...] represents precisely the ideal of contemplative purity [...] an ideal that could quite literally kill the Queen. An angel in the house myth, Snow White is not only a child but (as female angels always are) childlike, docile, submissive, the heroine of a life that *has no story*. 67

The game played out in the snow as the Countess attempts to eradicate the young girl is impeded at every move by the Count. She is locked within the patriarchal looking glass of

⁶⁵ ibid., p.38.

⁶⁶ ibid., p.38.

⁶⁷ ibid., p.39.

the Count's visual desires and demands. The Countess fails to extricate herself from his patriarchal dominance: '...the girl picks a rose; pricks her finger on the thorn; bleeds; screams; falls...the Count got off his horse, unfastened his breeches and thrust his virile member into the dead girl.' [BC, 92] Sexual intercourse from the outset – that is, during the pubescent phase of burgeoning sexuality – is associated with death of the female. As in the 'Sleeping Beauty' story, once the young girl pricks her finger she falls into a deep sleep for a hundred years. The Countess' sexuality is as cold as the landscape that surrounds her; there is no emotion, no feeling, or sensation. The Countess stands removed and detached from her body during the act of penetration:

The Countess reined in her stamping mare and watched him narrowly; he was soon finished. Then the girl began to melt...Soon there was nothing left of her ...Now the Countess had all her clothes on again. With her long hand, she stroked her furs. [BC, 92]

As Gilbert and Gubar have pointed out the 'angel in the house' is a 'heroine of a life that has no story.' Carter describes the female heroine without a story as doll-like, an automaton. In 'The Tiger's Bride' the young girl contemplates her state and describes herself and her circumstance as reminiscent of the 'clockwork girl who powdered my cheeks for me; had I not been allotted only the same kind of imitative life amongst men that the doll-maker had given her?' [BC, 63] Female existence is portrayed as imitative and reflective. In 'The Tiger's Bride' the young girl resolves to dress the automaton in her own clothes and 'wind her up and send her back to perform the part of [her] father's daughter.' [BC, 65] Such instances of empty, mechanical young girls recur throughout *The Bloody Chamber*, indicating Carter's critique of culturally constructs of femininity.

Throughout the collection, the male gaze demonstrates both its power to destroy and its power to imprison. In 'The Bloody Chamber' the male gaze is murderous and in 'The Tiger's Bride' the young girl realises that her body is a commodity – 'I cosily titillated with superstitious marvels of my childhood on the day my childhood ended. For now my own skin was my sole capital in the world and today I'd make my first investment.' [BC, 56] In the 'Erl-King' the young girl does not wish to be caged and kept as a song-bird by the central male protagonist. As Carter explains, 'The tiger will never lie down with the lamb; he acknowledges no pact that is not reciprocal. The lamb must learn to run with the tigers.' [BC, 64] Nevertheless, the lamb who lies down with the tiger/wolf is still in a position of danger. The male seducer is still described as a butcher: 'He is the tender butcher who showed me how the price of flesh is love; skin the rabbit,

he says! Off come all my clothes.' [BC, 87] The rabbit is skinned, her body is meat, an objectified reflection in the male gaze of sexual desire. Historically, the *mythological* lamb running with the *self-elected* tigers or the rabbit refusing to be skinned has proved difficult to achieve. The sexual female is the vamp or the whore, a reductive, binaristic and essentialist designation of female sexuality.

In 'The Lady of the House of Love', female identity is caged and non-reflective; she is removed from the social field of vision and exists only by night. The young, sexually vampiric female is socially isolated and ostracised. Although the castle is haunted by mirrors and shadows, she is not granted a reflection; she is an abjected anomaly, a 'revenant', a creature of the night, a whore 'where a cracked mirror suspended from a wall does not reflect a presence.' [BC, 93] Society renders behaviour that deviates from the norm invisible. As a prostitute, the young girl resides on the darker edges of social existence, since she cannot be incorporated into the social paradigm she is instead relegated to the marginalised sidelines of an almost non-human existence. She is caged within the castle and removed from the reality of the outside world. The caged bird in this story is also a metaphor for caged femininity and female sexuality. Sometimes the Countess will wake the bird 'for a brief cadenza by strumming the bars of its cage; she likes to hear it announce how it cannot escape.' [BC, 94] This masturbatory and autoerotic scene illustrates how restricted and imprisoned the young Countess' sexuality is. It is a sexuality which can only be indulged in the darkness of night, specifically 'moonless' nights; she is described as a predator, a 'poor night bird, poor butcher bird. [BC, 102]

Furthermore, her early sexuality is described as precocious – 'When she was a little girl, she was like a fox and contented herself entirely with baby rabbits that squeaked piteously as she bit into their necks with a nauseated voluptuousness, with voles and field-mice that palpitated for a bare moment between her embroidress's fingers.' [BC, 96] However, her mature sexuality emanates danger because 'now she is a woman, she must have men' [BC, 96] and the Countess wants 'fresh meat'. [BC,96] She bleeds the young men to death, 'shepherd boys and gipsy lads ... ignorant and foolhardy.' [BC, 96] Her sexual experience renders the young men helpless 'She sinks her teeth into the neck where an artery throbs with fear; she will drop the deflated skin from which she has extracted all the nourishment with a small cry of both pain and disgust.' [BC, 96] The exchange is impersonal, although, at times the Countess would like to caress their lean brown cheeks and stroke their ragged hair.' [BC, 96]

'The Lady of the House of Love' epitomizes the paradox inherent in constructions of female identity, both social and sexual. In contrast to the virginal figures of the other stories, the young Countess is sexually active. However, this does not allow her freedom and instead society intervenes, enforcing the myth of the 'monstrous feminine'. Both the virgin and the whore are equally polarised, essentialist mythologies. Furthermore, the 'monster woman' of the 'Lady of the House of Love' is also described as an automaton/ventriloquist's doll, a clockwork victim of her sex and gender. The young English soldier sees her as

[...] a doll, he thought a ventriloquist's doll, or, more, like a great, ingenious piece of clockwork. For she seemed inadequately powered by some slow energy of which she was not in control; as if she had been wound up years ago, when she was born, and now the mechanism was inexorably running down and would leave her lifeless. This idea that she might be an automaton, made of white velvet and black fur, that could not move of its own accord, never quite deserted him; indeed, it deeply moved his heart. The carnival air of her white dress emphasized her unreality, like a sad Columbine⁶⁸ who lost her way in the wood a long time ago and never reached the fair. [BC, 102]

The myth of the vampiric, sexual woman is further deconstructed by Carter as the young man in the story is in fact a portrait of the vampirologist Christopher Frayling who lived next door to Carter in Bath at the time she was writing *The Bloody Chamber*. Frayling's *Vampyres* dates from 1978 and is in part the fruit of this reciprocal relationship with Carter. He recalls that

[...] in 1976, I had the strange experience of having my research trip Gothicised before my very eyes. The central character in the play *Vampirella* and *The Lady of the House of Love* is a dashing young public-school chap called Hero who rashly decides to go on a tour of the land beyond the forest, Transylvania, on his bicycle. Angela's story was very loosely based on my escapade – and it grew out of the many midnight conversations we had at that time about the attraction of Gothic metaphors for female writers and readers, the Gothic Aesthetic, and the Marquis de Sade's contention that the craze was a by-product of the French Revolution ... ⁶⁹

Thus, the young Englishman (Frayling) in the story deconstructs myth and superstition pertaining to the vampiric young girl. He is described as a product of modernity; he rides

⁶⁹ Christopher Frayling, 'Introduction', in Christopher Frayling and Martin Myrone, eds., *The Gothic Reader: A Critical Anthology*, (London: Tate Publishing, 2006), p.15.

⁶⁸ Columbine – the sweetheart of Harlequin in English Pantomine.

a bicycle which 'is in itself some protection against superstitious fears, since the bicycle is the product of pure reason applied to motion. Geometry at the service of man!' [BC, 97] He sees before him a young menstruating, 'inbred, highly strung girl child, fatherless, motherless, kept in the dark too long and pale as a plant that never sees the light, half-blinded by some hereditary condition of the eyes.' [BC, 104] By demythologizing her vampiric qualities, the young girl is humanised but still remains objectified. The modern scientific approach of the young man dispels myths of vampirism and fairy castles. He plans to take her to

Zurich, to a clinic; she will be treated for nervous hysteria, then to an eye specialist, for her photophobia, and to a dentist to put her teeth into better shape. Any competent manicurist will deal with her claws. We shall turn her into the lovely girl she is; I shall cure her of all these nightmares. [BC, 107]

The modern approach is to dispel myth and superstition with science. However, the medicalizing of the female body, particularly the female menstrual cycle has for the most part been negative. As Margrit Shildrick and Janet Price in their work *Vital Signs: Feminist Reconfigurations of the Bio/logical Body* state, 'inherent to all such approaches has been an implicit acceptance of the binary structure of biomedical practice, such that doctor/patient for example is recognised as the locus of a regulatory power relationship without being deconstructed as such.'⁷⁰ Furthermore, the female body occupies a particular position in the relationship between medicine and health. Thus, Shildrick and Price further note that

In contrast, the overflowing of corporeal boundaries – through illness or impairment, and notably through being female, with its inherent potential for the leakiness of menstruation, lactation and childbirth, for example – characteristically signifies not just disruption of the unmarked, universalised body, but disqualification from full personhood.⁷¹

Thus, what Carter's story demonstrates is the discursive shift from superstitious belief to rational, scientific advances in thought and medical intervention in matters of health. Gone were the superstitions of vampires, the moon and madness; no longer did people believe in armies of shadows

⁷¹ ibid., p.5.

⁷⁰ Margrit Shildrick and Janet Price, Vital Signs: Feminist Reconfigurations of the Bio/logical Body, p.5.

[...] who camp in the village below [...] who penetrate the woods in the form of owls, bats and foxes, who make the milk curdle and the butter refuse to come, who ride the horses all night on a wild hunt so they are sacks of skin and bone in the morning, who milk the cows dry and, especially, torment pubescent girls with fainting fits, disorders of the blood, diseases of the imagination. [BC, 95]

Instead, here, was a more invasive medical and scientific approach to the female body and female menstruation but one equally as controlling and circumscriptive. I will discuss this link between medical discourse, menstruation and vampirism more extensively in the next chapter.

Another example of femininity which exists beyond the limits of socio-cultural history is evident in the final story 'Wolf-Alice'. The female protagonist in 'Wolf-Alice 'inhabits only the present tense, a fugue of the continuous, a world of sensual immediacy as without hope as it is without despair.' [BC, 119] She is described in the following terms: 'Nothing about her is human except that she is *not* a wolf; it is as if the fur she thought she wore had melted into her skin and become part of it, although it does not exist.' [BC,119] She is a young girl who discovers her individual identity removed from any concept of femininity or what it means to be a woman. She is raised by wolves and rescued by humans; her natural state is described as wild and impatient of restraint, she is un-tempered by the socializing process. As the critic Kimberley J. Lau writes, 'It is only Wolf-Alice's coming-of-age, her first menses, that shifts her world, that brings her in contact with a mirror, though – importantly – not one that heralds an identity in the symbolic.'⁷² Furthermore, Lau also points out that

Wolf-Alice recognises herself in the mirror not as the ideal coherent self of Lacan's mirror stage (for Lacan, a misrecognition) but rather as shadow, as reflection, and it is this different recognition that keeps her from entering into the symbolic, maintains her subjectivity outside of language. As Bacchilega writes about this scene, Carter's critique of Lacan's theory of the mirror stage and its implications for women implies an alternative 'subjectivity that does not rely on visualization and language to the exclusion of the body' (163n34).⁷³

According to Lacanian theory the human infant enters the world as fragmented – that is, without a sense of a unified self or the capacity to differentiate between self and

Kimberley J. Lau, 'Erotic Infidelities: Angel Carter's Wolf Trilogy, in Donald Haase, ed., *Marvels and Tales*, volume 22, issue 1., (Michigan: Wayne University Press, 2008) p.90.
 ibid., p.91.

other – and thus experiences the world as a bundle of impulses. It is not until the child discovers itself either reflected in the unity of another, as in the mirror, or else as reflected in the mothering figure taken as a whole, that it begins to distinguish between self and other and gains a sense of a unified self. It is thought that the 'mirror phase' usually occurs between the ages of six and eighteen months. As Lacan states, 'We have only to understand the mirror stage as an identification, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation takes place in the subject when he assumes an image – whose predestination to this phase-effect is sufficiently indicated by the use in analytic theory of the ancient term imago.' However, the image the child sees is a fiction because, as Jacqueline Rose notes, 'it conceals or freezes, the infant's lack of motor coordination and the fragmentation of the drives. But it is salutary for the child since it gives it the first sense of a coherent identity in which it can recognise itself.' However, the mirror phase is only a part of the process of subjectivication. As Rose further writes of Lacan's theories of becoming-subject:

For Lacan the subject is constituted through language – the mirror image represents the moment when the subject is located in an order outside itself to which it will henceforth refer. The subject is the subject of speech (Lacan's 'parle-être'), and subject to that order. But if there is division in the image [...] there is equally loss and difficulty in the word. Language can only operate by designating an object in its absence. [...] Lacan termed the order of language the symbolic, that of the ego and its identifications the imaginary (the stress, therefore, is quite deliberately on symbol and image, the idea of something which 'stands in'). The subject is constituted through language – the mirror image represents the moment when the subject is located in an order outside itself to which it will henceforth refer.

Furthermore, entry into the symbolic also marks the moment of rupture between the mother and the child. The position of the phallus is crucial to the symbolic order. In Lacanian theory the place of the phallus refers to the Law of the Father which stands for a place and function not reducible to the real father. It is the cultural voice of prohibition. As Rose points out 'the phallus stands for that moment when prohibition must function, in the sense of whom may be assigned to whom in the triangle made up of mother, father and child, but at that same moment it signals to the subject that "having" only functions at the price of a loss and "being" as an effect of division.' Thus, Carter's young

⁷⁴ Jacques Lacan, 'The Mirror Phase' in Paul du Gay, Jessica Evans and Peter Redman, eds., *Identity a Reader*, (London: Sage, 2007), p.45.

⁷⁵ Jacqueline Rose, 'Feminine Sexuality' in Paul du Gay, Jessica Evans and Peter Redman, eds., *Identity a Reader*, p.51.

⁷⁶ ibid. p.52.

⁷⁷ ibid., p.51.

protagonist refutes symbolic law through entry into language. Division and loss (lack/castration) are omitted from her subjectivity. Furthermore, Wolf-Alice suggests the possibility of desire that is not predicated on 'lack'. She is symbolic of how "the bitten apple" of female history may "flesh out its scar again." [BC, 121] Thus, her sexuality, unfettered by external forces, easily recognises itself within the sexual embrace. In the final scene she goes to the Duke:

She prowled round the bed, growling, sniffing at his wound that does not smell like her wound. Then, she was pitiful as her gaunt grey other; she lept upon his bed to lick, without hesitation, without disgust, with a quick, tender gravity, the blood and dirt from his cheeks and forehead. [...] Little by little, there appeared within it, like the imagery on photographic paper that emerges, first a formless web a tracery, the prey caught in its own fishing net, then in firmer yet still shadowed outline until at last as vivid as real life itself, as if brought into being by her soft, moist, gentle tongue, finally the face of the Duke. [BC, 126]

In licking the Duke into being, the young wolf-girl stabilizes both her own identity and subsumes the violent contrasts of his. Or, as Kimberly J. Lau, concludes in her analysis of 'Wolf-Alice', 'Carter's final description of Wolf-Alice's licking is slow and sensual, an erotically charged literary tumescence, building, ultimately, to the Duke's presence in the mirror. Wolf-Alice has ushered him into existence, escorted him into the symbolic, but it is her symbolic, a world outside of language though still shaped by the tongue.'⁷⁹ Here, however, I would go further and instead suggest that the mirror and the gaze are distinctly anti-symbolic. There is no division between subject and object. Wolf-Alice is a 'becoming' and neither the nuns, the Duke, nor the mirror, are successful in socializing or subjectifying her. Instead the subject-in-becoming blurs the concept of the gaze as the image (object) refutes conceptual stability within the symbolic regime. Thus, Carter's interrogation of the gaze moves towards a Deleuzian dissolution of the subject/object dialectical.

However, perhaps the most iconic and lasting of the fairy tales is the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood.' The tale has been reincarnated in many different forms over the centuries and has been particularly reinvigorated by the gothic and horror genre which adheres to the original brutality and sexual violence of the original oral folk tale. Thus,

⁷⁹ Kimberley J. Lau, 'Erotic Infidelities: Angel Carter's Wolf Trilogy, in Donald Haase, ed., *Marvels and Tales*, volume 22, issue 1., p.91.

⁷⁸ I will examine castration, lack and sexual identity in chapter 4 in an analysis of the slasher and raperevenge genres.

the fairy tale figure of 'Little Red Riding Hood' exemplifies socio-cultural and historical shifts in the construction of female sexual identity. In the next section, I will therefore examine Carter's most explicit 'Little Red Riding Hood' tale, 'The Company of Wolves.'

'The Company of Wolves': Little Red Riding Hood

Early images of Red Riding Hood stem mainly from book illustrations. What these images say about the sexual nature of the story and the implied sexuality of the young girl is easily detected. Although, not as sexually explicit as its oral folk tale, the Perrault version of the young girl at risk from wolfish, sexual advances is evident in Gustave Doré's illustrations of Little Red Riding Hood:



Fig.1.1

Little girls, this seems to say
Never stop upon your way.
Never trust a stranger-friend;
No one knows how it will end.
As you're pretty, so be wise;
Wolves may lurk in every guise.
Handsome they may be, and kind,
Gay, or charming – never mind
Now as then 'tis simple truth
Sweetest tongue has sharpest
tooth!⁸⁰

Secondly, there are the completely sanitized versions which desexualise both the young girl and the wolf. One publishing company, Raphael Tuck and Sons (1860s-1920s) published a series of children's books under the name 'Father Tuck'. Contrary to the Doré illustration of the imposing wolf and the young girl is the 'Father Tuck' book cover, depicting the wolf as dog-like, domesticated and harmless. Another publication goes one step further and completely effaces the image of the wolf and instead substitutes him with

⁸⁰ Charles Perrault, trans., A.E. Johnson, *Perrault's Fairy Tales*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), p.29.

a non-threatening picture of a small cow. Also within this category is the portrayal of the young girl as virginal, ostensibly a modern 'Virgin Mary' figure.

Concurrent with the preservation and continued censorship of the fairy tale as a literature for children is a general obsession with revising the fairy tale for both adult and child audiences. Wolfgang Meider in his article 'Survival Forms of 'Little Red Riding Hood' in Modern Society' traces revisions of the fairy tale in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. According to Meider

Disregarding the happy solution of all problems in the original tales, modern interpreters concentrate more on the actual problems depicted in the tale. As a result, the fairy tale is transfigured into a reflection upon a troubled society, a critical view of the belief in perfect love, a concern with sexual matters, and so on.⁸¹

He begins with an American poetic version of the 'Little Red Riding Hood' story dating from 1879, followed by a version by the American writer, James Whitcomb Riley (1849-1919) in which the bed scene is missing; next is a prose version by Beatrix Potter where the sexual undertones of the Perrault tale are absent and both the grandmother and Red Riding Hood are devoured by the wolf. In the short fable by James Thurber entitled 'The Little Girl and the Wolf' (1940), the young girl is not fooled or deceived by the wolf and takes matters into her own hands

[...] for even in a nightcap a wolf does not look any more like your grandmother than the Metro-Goldwyn lion looks like Calvin Coolidge. So the little girl took an automatic out of her basket and shot the wolf dead.⁸²

This independent young 'Little Red Riding Hood' can also be found in Roald Dahl's *Revolting Rhymes* (1982). As in Thurber's version, the young girl 'whips a pistol from her knickers'⁸³. Chandler Brossard's version in 1978, 'The Costume That Made It', goes so far as to replace the wolf with a male seducer:

Horst, dressed in the wolf costume he's swiped from a costume warehouse, was

⁸¹ Wolfgan Meider, 'Survival Forms of 'Little Red Riding Hood' in Modern Society', in *International Folklore Review*, (Vol.2, 1982) p.23.

⁸² James Thurber, quoted in Wolfgang Meider, 'Survival Forms of 'Little Red Riding Hood' in Modern Society', in *International Folklore Review*, (Vol.2, 1982), p.26.

⁸³ Roald Dahl, Revolting Rhymes, (London: Penguin Books, 2001), p.40.

cosily tucked where the grandmother had been before he'd choked the living shit out of her just a few minutes ago [...] 'And, mercy! Your eyes. They're so bloody red.' 'The better to ...oh shit!' And Horst, tired of the routine, leaped out of bed and tore Little Red Riding Hood to pieces. 84 and tore Little Red Riding Hood to pieces. 8

Anne Sexton (1928-1974) in her poem 'Red Riding Hood' (1971) depicts the wolf as a deceiver and a cross-dresser 'Long ago/ there was a strange deception: / a wolf dressed in frills, a kind of transvestite.'85







Fig.1.2 Fig.1.3 Fig.1.4

The Bloody Chamber, with its core emphasis on the unveiling of despotic myths pertaining to female sexuality can be located within a particular strand of revised fairy tales which occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. Zipes divides critical thinking in relation to Red Riding Hood during the period 1950-1965 into three distinct strands. Firstly, he points to the portrayal of Little Red Riding Hood coming into her own and achieving independence without help from men. The second strand of thinking seeks to rehabilitate the wolf and the third experiments artistically with traditional narrative forms and the conventional fairy tale aesthetic. This area of discourse and experimentation seeks to free readers and listeners 'so that they can question the conventional cultural patterns.'86

In the 1970s, feminists like Susan Brownmiller in 'Against Our Will' criticized the traditional version of 'Little Red Riding Hood' as a 'parable of rape',87 pivoting around

⁸⁴ Chandler Brossard, quoted in Wolfgang Meider, 'Survival Forms of 'Little Red Riding Hood' in Modern Society', in International Folklore Review, (Vol.2, 1982), p.28.

⁸⁵ Anne Sexton, quoted in Wolfgang Meider, 'Survival Forms of 'Little Red Riding Hood' in Modern Society', in International Folklore Review, (Vol.2, 1982), p.30.

⁸⁶ Jack Zipes, ed., The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood, (New York: Routledge, 1993), p.59.

Susan Brownmiller, Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975),

male dominance and female victimization. A 1972 version by a group of four women who called themselves the Merseyside Fairy Story Collection ended with Little Red Riding Hood stabbing the wolf to death with a sewing knife, then skinning the animal and turning his fur into a lining for her red cloak. The cloak then becomes endowed with a special power and the tale ends with the revised moral/appendix: 'Whenever you meet another child who is shy and timid, lend that child the cloak to wear as you play together in the forest, and then like you, they will grow brave.'88

The 'wolf stories', in particular 'The Company of Wolves' exemplify Carter's revisionist demythologizing of the fairy tale. In 'The Company of Wolves,' Carter juxtaposes the fairy tale figure of the young girl in the woods with darker elements of the oral folk tale. The earliest versions of the story include the highly symbolic motifs of cruelty, the eating of the flesh and blood of the grandmother, and the ritual of undressing. The most popular telling of the tale is Paul Delarue's "The Story of the Grandmother" recorded in Niévre in 1885. The ritual of undressing in Delarue's recorded folk tale goes as follows:

Then the wolf said, "Undress and get into bed with me."

"Where shall I put my apron?"

"Throw it on the fire; you won't need it any more."

For each garment - bodice, skirt, petticoat, and stockings - the girl asked the same question; and each time the wolf answered, throw it on the fire; you won't need it any more.89

Carter rewrites Delarue's version almost word for word in 'The Company of Wolves':

"What shall I do with my shawl?"

"Throw it on the fire, dear one. You won't need it again."

She bundled up her shawl and threw it on the blaze, which instantly consumed it. Then she drew her blouse over her head; her small breasts gleamed as if the snow had invaded the room. "What shall I do with my blouse?"

"Into the fire with it too, my pet." [BC, 117]

p.310.

88 Jack Zipes, ed., *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood*, p.255.

⁸⁹ Paul Delarue, quoted in Jack Zipes, ed., The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood, p.4.

The potency of 'Little Red Riding Hood' and its pivotal position within Carter's collection of short stories resides in the central character's sexuality. She is a young girl who has begun to menstruate and who has in turn become aware of her own sexuality. Hence, Carter's melange of elements from both the folk tale and the fairy tale highlight the historically vacillating and undulant nature of how we define and construct gender. The fairy tales of Perrault demonstrate how perceptions of sexuality changed during the late-seventeenth century. The element of undressing is omitted from Perrault's rendering of the story. In the attempt to create a state of non-sexual childhood important elements of the folk tale version were eliminated. This is also evident in the fairy tales promotion of the docile, inane female character, usually a kind and good daughter or princess above the wily, self-gratifying evil of the wicked stepmother or the witch.

Furthermore, in the final chapter of *The Sadeian Woman*, Carter investigates the function of the flesh and sexuality. She states:

But if flesh plus skin equals sensuality, then flesh minus skin equals meat. The skin has turned into rind, or crackling; the garden of fleshly delights becomes a butcher's shop, or Sweeney Todd's kitchen. My flesh encounters your taste for meat. So much the worse for me. 90

Masculine, meat-eating carnivores dominate the stories of *The Bloody Chamber*. According to Margaret Atwood '... the distinctions drawn are not so much between male and female as between "tigers" and "lambs", carnivores and herbivores, those who are preyed upon and those who do the preying.'91 She continues by stating that:

As with all of Carter's would-be steaks and chops, this wise child wins the herbivore-carnivore contest by refusing fear, by taking matters into her own hands, by refusing to allow herself to be defined as somebody's meat, and by 'freely' learning to – if not run with the tigers – at least lie down with them. Whether she has become more wolf-like or he has become more human is anybody's guess, but in this story each participant appears to retain his or her own nature. A consolatory nonsense, one that tries for the kind of synthesis Carter suggested in *The Sadeian Woman*: 'neither submissive nor aggressive'. 92

Atwood is referring to 'The Company of Wolves' in which the wolf utters the famous maxim 'All the better to eat you with' and the young girl just

⁹² ibid., p.130.

⁹⁰ Angela Carter, The Sadeian Woman, p.162.

⁹¹ Margaret Atwood, 'Running with Tigers', in Lorna Sage, ed., Flesh and the Mirror, p.118.

[...] burst out laughing, she knew she was nobody's meat. She laughed at him full in the face, she ripped off his shirt for him and flung it into the fire, in the fiery wake of her own discarded clothing. The flames danced like dead souls on Walpursignacht and the old bones under the bed set up a terrible clattering but she did not pay them any heed. Carnivore incarnate, only immaculate flesh appeases him [...] Midnight; and the clock strikes. It is Christmas day, the werewolves' birthday, the door of the solstice stands wide open; let them all sink through. See! sweet and sound she sleeps in granny's bed, between the paws of the tender wolf. [BC, 118]

Atwood distinguishes between 'consumer and consumed' and comments upon the potential for a kind of synthesis in male and female relations. She describes this 'synthesis' as 'neither submissive nor aggressive'. However, she fails to see the eroticism of the scene and how this relates to consumption. The young girl's laughter is particularly significant. Bataille describes laughter as comparable to the erotic. He states:

What the hearty laugh screens from us, what fetches up the bawdy jest, is the identity that exists between the utmost in pleasure and the utmost in pain: the identity between being and non-being, between the living and the death-stricken being, between the knowledge which brings one before this dazzling realization and definitive, concluding darkness. To be sure, it is not impossible that this truth itself evokes a final laugh; but our laughter here is absolute, going far beyond scorning ridicule of something which may perhaps be repugnant, but disgust for which digs deep under our skin. ⁹⁴

Her laughter is uncomfortable; it emanates from her conflicting response to the eroticism of the situation. She is both attracted and repulsed by what the wolf signifies. There is no escaping his sexual intentions. Bataille in his work on eroticism goes on to describe the pinnacle of eroticism as a type of consumption: 'if we do not make *consumption* the sovereign principle of activity, we cannot help but succumb to those monstrous disorders without which we do not know how *to consume* the energy at our disposal.' Thus, consumption becomes central to escaping dissolution and the disappearance of the self during the sexual act. The sexual embrace is a consumable energy which if not recognised threatens to destabilize or ultimately unravel the subject.

⁹³ ibid., p.130.

Georges Bataille, in Fred Botting and Scott Wilson, eds., *The Bataille Reader*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p.225.

⁹⁵ ibid., p239.

According to Mikita Brottman, 'many people have described the incorporation of the lover in penetrative sexual intercourse as a kind of ritualized cannibalism'. ⁹⁶ Therefore in a close analysis of femininity at puberty and the encounter between the young girl and the wolf in 'The Company of Wolves', I wish to draw a connection between puberty, menstruation and virgins; orality and consumption; and link these to sexuality, the erotic and the stability of the self. In her work *Meat is Murder*, Brottman discusses the four main types of cannibalism – dietary, hunger, symbolic and psychotic. According to Brottman, cannibalism is

[...] an immensely complex phenomenon with a wide variety of meanings. As a practice, it may represent simply a response to famine or a transformation and social formulation of psychic energy. As a ritual, it may represent the enactment of a cultural tendency for humans to regulate desire and to govern their social order. Depicted as a symbol, it represents all that must be repressed, regulated and controlled in the establishment of a stable social order. And of course, these various significances merge and intertwine in a variety of complicated ways.

At the core of all types of cannibalism is the 'self'. Both dietary and hunger cannibalism involve the preservation and survival of the 'physical self'. In symbolic and psychotic cannibalism it is the 'psychological self' which is at stake. All acts of cannibalism are acts of defining the 'self' against the 'other'. For example, magico-religious rituals often involve or make reference to cannibalism. In such rituals there is almost always a transformation of the psychological self. One believed that, through the consumption of another, one could ingest the character and attributes of the other. According to Brottman, 'as full-blown religions evolved so did the idea that one could become spiritual oneself by literally eating the godhead, as in the mystic ritual of the communion service in Christian liturgy.'98 In Catholicism congregants are invited to drink the blood and eat the body of Jesus Christ so that they may become both con-sanguineous and con-corporate with him and thus become Christophori. Through the belief in transubstantiation the wine and bread become the actual body and blood of Christ. Therefore by refusing to become prey, the young girl in 'The Company of Wolves' emasculates the desire for cruelty and possession; thus, the exchange becomes consensual rather than predatory or rape-like.

⁹⁶ Mikita Brottman, *Meat is Murder: An Illustrated Guide to Cannibal Culture*, (London: Creation Books, 1998), p.22.

⁹⁷ ibid., p.7.

⁹⁸ ibid., p.10.

Firstly, the young female protagonist is described as 'immaculate', a term of reference for the Virgin Mary. The 'Immaculate Conception' is the belief that Mary was, from conception by the grace of God and because of the merits of Jesus, free from all stain of original sin. Concordantly, the wolf is a Christ-like figure – he is born on Christmas day. Caroline Bynum Walker in *Metamorphosis and Identity* also draws this connection. She writes: 'Like Ovid's, her werewolves eat people, although athropophagy in her tales is usually the identity violation of rape whereas Lycaon's cannibalism is also impiety – the ontological violation of the boundary between human and god. (Is there a hint of this in Carter's suggestion that Christmas – the day of Christian metamorphosis of god to human is the werewolf's birthday?)', Thus, the sexual interplay between these two characters is both culturally and religiously symbolic.

Julia Kristeva in her essay 'Stabat Mater' discusses the evolution of the cult of the Virgin Mary and her all encompassing nature and multiplicity of selves (her embodiment of the ascetic and voluptuous). She describes how essentially the cult of the Virgin Mary evolved along three lines of thinking. The first sought to establish an analogy between the Mother and Son. The second sought to grant Mary letters of nobility and so she became 'Our Lady', 'Queen of Heaven' and 'Mother of the Church'. And thirdly, as Kristeva observes, she was

[...] revealed as the prototype of the love relationships and followed two fundamental aspects of Western love: courtly love and child love, thus fitting the entire range that goes from sublimation to asceticism and masochism.¹⁰⁰

It is the first and last of these lines of development that I will focus upon. Firstly, by developing a history a history for Mary that paralleled that of Jesus she was both freed from sin and the corruption of death. The council of 451 A.D. declared her Aeiparthenos 'forever virgin' and her 'Immaculate Conception' was eventually declared as dogma by Pope Pius Ix in 1854. Her Assumption (Koimesis, or Dormition in The Eastern Orthodox Church)¹⁰¹ into heaven was declared dogma in 1950. Thus, Perpetual Virginity,

00

99 Caroline Bynum Walker, Metamorphosis and Identity, p.175.

¹⁰⁰ Julia Kristeva, 'Stabat Mater' in Toril Moi, ed., *The Julia Kristeva Reader*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p. 165

p.165.

For further clarification between Dormition and Assumption see Stephen J. Shoemaker's, *The Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Shoemaker states that: 'For instance in many Dormition narratives, the Virgin's body and soul are only temporarily separated, usually for three or four days, after which she is like her son, resurrected and taken bodily into heaven, where she presently exists as a living witness to the reward that awaits all the just at the

Immaculate Conception and 'Assumptionist' traditions all constructed an image of Mary which reflected and paralleled that of Jesus. Thus, it can be said that the relationship between parallels the wolf as Christ figure they are both equals. Furthermore in Medieval Christian theology there is also a feminizing of Christ and a doubling with the Virgin Mary. As Caroline Bynum writes:

As we have seen, John of Capistrano argued for the high ontological status of *sanguis Christi* by stressing the formation of Christ's body entirely from the pure menstrual blood of his mother's womb. This sense of Christ's body as formed from – *as being* – Mary's blood had theological ramifications for Christology and Mariology (especially the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception). In a striking phrase from a decree of Abbot Berthold of Weingarten concerning the Saturday mass in honor of the Virgin, Christ's body and the stuff of Mary's womb are so completely assimilated that Christ's body almost becomes blood – his mother's blood! The pretium of redemption (we should note here the technical soteriological language) is the uterine blood Mary offers. ¹⁰²

Furthermore, Bynum also draws attention to the connectivity of incarnation, resurrection and ascension which parallels Warner's reading of the Virgin Mary. She writes:

Medieval hymns and sermons had long stressed that all birth is in blood. As early as the eight century, Bede, in commenting on the Song of Songs, drew a parallel between the incarnation and the resurrection/ascension, arguing that Christ came into the world *de sanguine* (i.e., from his mother's womb) and left also in the blood of the cross. By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, not only is Christ understood to be born and born anew in blood; he himself gives birth. The blood of the passion is the blood of birthing. Hence the fertile, separated blood from Christ's side is female blood.¹⁰³

The question then is not one of dominance – consumer and consumed – but one of what happens to the self during the encounter and sexual act itself.¹⁰⁴ There is in fact a 'double consumption' at play; there are two consumers. The wolf is described as 'carnivore incarnate' he will consume the young girl's immaculate flesh and virginal innocence. In

end of time. Since this conclusion more or less with the modern dogma of the Virgin's bodily Assumption, I will occasionally refer to traditions representing this view as 'Assumptionist'. p.3. As such, I will also refer to both Dormtion and Assumption as 'Assumptionist' traditions.

¹⁰² Caroline Walker Bynum, Wonderful Blood, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), pp.158-159.

¹⁰³ ibid., p.159.

¹⁰⁴ See also Caroline Walker Bynum's work on the importance of food, eating and fasting in the histories of female saints in the middle ages in her work *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* (1988). What is again interesting in Bynum's work is the feminizing of Christ through food, feeding and lactation.

turn the young girl who is penetrated will consume the wolf. 105 (The vagina is often described or depicted as a mouth – for example – the vagina dentata).

However, 'double consumption' and mutuality is a paradox. Perpetual virginity demands that the female body remains closed and stable. The classical, static, monumental body does not leak or ooze and its borders and frames are stable and defined. Penetration implies a breaking and opening of the female body. Carter's young virginal protagonist - menstrual and pubescent defies the idealized, closed parameters of the Virgin's body. Even before penetration her body, unbeknownst to her seducer, is already opened – it bleeds. She is already a threat or in socio-religious terms defiled and impure. Marina Warner in Alone of All Her Sex describes the closed body of the Virgin Mary. She explains that the Virgin Mary did not menstruate because it was believed that sexual intercourse precipitated menstruation:

The biblical images the fathers applied to the birth of Christ reveal that they conceived of a virgin's body as seamless, unbroken, a literal epiphany of integrity. The Virgin Mary is a "closed gate", a "spring shut up", a "fountain sealed". Her physical virginity post partum was as important a part of orthodoxy in the early church as her virginal conception by the power of the Holy Ghost [...] The symbolism was, of course, dependent on inexact medical knowledge, which has proved remarkably tenacious. Until modern times, the hymen was thought to seal off the womb completely, and in many parts of the world, cruel ceremonies of defloration are performed on young girls in order to "open" them so they can become fertile - that is menstruate. The confusion perhaps arose and persisted in Europe because girls were married off at a nubile age, so that penetration might have seemed the cause of menstruation. 106

Carter's Virgin and Christ defy convention and religious, patriarchal dogma. The menstrual young girl is virginal but she is not seamless, unbroken or closed. Thus, it is ironic that Carter mentions the young girl's menstrual bleeding and her virginity one after the other highlighting the closed, yet leaky, body. As previously noted:

She has just started her woman's bleeding [...] She stands and moves within the invisible pentacle of her own virginity. She is an unbroken egg; she is a sealed

105 Caroline Walker Bynum in Metamorphosis and Identity also notes the orthodox reading of the Eucharist as a transformation in which the metamorphosis occurs at the level of substance or nature while the

appearance endures, (p.17).

106 Marina Warner, *Alone of All her Sex*, (London: Picador, 1985), pp.73-74. However it is important to note that this is a contested subject and it is argued that menstrual blood or uterine blood was in fact viewed as sacred in medieval Christianity and was not seen as a pollutant unless defiled by semen - see Caroline Walker Bynum's Wonderful Blood, p.180; however I would suggest that there is a distinction between uterine and menstrual blood.

vessel; she has inside her a membrane; she is a closed system; she does not know how to shiver. She has her knife and she is afraid of nothing. [BC 114]

This statement is self-conscious, with Carter demonstrating the symbolic power of idealised femininity in the construction of femininity. It also suggests Bataille's synthesis of the range within the human spirit from the ascetic to the voluptuous. The Virgin Mary exemplifies the instability of idealising femininity in terms of binaries such as asceticism and voluptuousness. The paradox of the Virgin Mary resides in the actual impossibility of the convergence of her asceticism/chastity (virgin) and her voluptuousness/sexuality (mother). Reference to eggs, vessels, shivering and knives all points to sexual pleasure. I would suggest that the sexuality of the young girl at this point is burgeoning and developing; she is a multiplicity of sexual selves, at puberty she is both the passive, docile virgin and also the active, virile seducer. Therefore, in a bizarrely cloaked manner, Carter points to the paradoxes of virginity, menstruation and sexuality. The idealized virgin — The Virgin Mary — does not menstruate, whereas, the young girl/virgin at puberty does; with one we have an example of the religious idealisation of the female body, and the other an example of patriarchal socio-cultural embodiment.

Both the young girl and wolf are amalgamations of multiple selves. Both belong to trinities (if not multiples). The young girl as a Virgin Mary figure is interchangeable as daughter, wife and mother. Kristeva makes this connection in reference to the Eastern Orthodox tradition of *Koimesis*, or Dormition. Its Western equivalent is Assumption – the ascension of Mary, body and soul, into heaven. The Virgin Mary during Dormition is often depicted as

[...] a little girl held in the arms of her son who henceforth becomes her father; she thus reverses her role as Mother into a Daughter's role [...] Indeed, mother of her son and his *daughter* as well, Mary is also besides, his *wife*. She therefore actualizes the threefold metamorphosis of a woman in the tightest parenthood structure. ¹⁰⁷

Thus, the virgin figure of the young girl in Carter's story is daughter, wife and mother. As the 'mother-figure' she is the 'Virginal Maternal' who gives birth to the wolf/Christ on Christmas day – 'It is Christmas day, the werewolves' birthday'. She is the wife who stands before him, when 'she knew she was nobody's meat. She laughed at him full in the

¹⁰⁷ Julia Kristeva, 'Stabat Mater', in Toril Moi, ed., *The Julia Kristeva Reader*, p.169.

face, she ripped off his shirt for him and flung it into the fire, in the fiery wake of her own discarded clothing.' [BC, 118] And finally, she is the daughter who 'sleeps in granny's bed, between the paws of the tender wolf.' Similarly, the wolf contains a multiplicity of selves. As a Christ-like figure he belongs to the holy trinity of the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost (also the Eucharistic and feminized Virgin mother).

However, both are only metaphoric representatives of the Virgin Mary and Christ. Thus, the complexities of the self and identity are multiplied in the characters of the young girl and wolf. The young menstrual virgin is a liminal creature and, as Kristeva points out, the 'peculiarities of the maternal body make a woman a creature of folds', whereby identity is a multiplicity of selves, 'a catastrophe of being that cannot be subsumed by the dialectic of the trinity or its supplements.' Similarly, Carter's depiction of masculinity is equally as oscillating and fragile. This is evident in the individual shifts of male characters between animal and human states. Masculinities are defined in terms of lycanthropy and the metamorphosis of man to wolf mimics the relationship between the moon and menstruation. Thus, Carter's wolf and menstrual virgin are both examples of the quasi-unstable self. By consuming each other they controvert the object/subject dialectic. According to Freud, 'We say that a human being has originally two sexual objects – himself and the woman who nurses him – and in doing so we are postulating a primary narcissism in everyone ...' 109

This primary narcissism is connected to orality. He states 'the ego wants to incorporate this object into itself, and, in accordance with the oral or cannibalistic phase of libidinal development in which it is, it wants to do so by devouring it.' However, as Brottman points out, 'This emerging postmodern validation of the conceptual fluidity of identity and interactive role-playing is in many ways a cover for the creative production of a series of situation determined, sequential, borderline-pathological selves. ¹¹¹ Thus, the psychotic cannibal or modern consumer of human flesh is a narcissist personality who gravitates towards the other, that is, the self who they themselves lack. As such, the narcissistic personality becomes a 'borderline pathology', 'seeking the ecstasy of

108 ibid., p.183

¹⁰⁹ Sigmund Freud, James Strachey, ed., *The Complete Works of Sigmund Freud Volume XIV (1914-1916)* On The History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works, (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1981), p.88.
¹¹⁰ ibid., pp.249-250.

¹¹¹ Mikita Brottman, Meat is Murder: An Illustrated Guide to Cannibal Culture, p.24.

boundary loss - the blur between the self and other - through the ancient practise of cannibalism., 112

In The Bloody Chamber cannibalism or consumption during the sexual act is a similar ecstasy or jouissance of boundary loss and the pre-symbolic (Kristeva's semiotic). Myth and the historical socializing processes lose their power to contain and control. Or, as Bataille writes

The totality of what is the (universe) swallows me (physically), and if it swallows me, or since it swallows me, I can't distinguish myself from it; nothing remains, except this or that, which are less meaningful than this nothing. In a sense it is unbearable and I seem to be dying. It is at this cost, no doubt, that I am no longer myself, but an infinity in which I am lost ... No doubt this in not entirely true; in fact, on the contrary, never have I been closer to the one who [...] but it's like an aspiration followed by an expiration: suddenly the intensity of her desire, which destroys her, terrifies me; she succumbs to it, and then, as if she were returning from the underworld, I find her again, I embrace her ... This too is quite strange: she is no longer the one who prepared the meals, washed herself, or bought small articles. She is vast, she is distant like that darkness in which she has trouble breathing, and she is so truly the vastness of the universe in her cries, her silences are of truly the emptiness of death, that I embrace her inasmuch as anguish and fever throw me into a place of death, which is the absence of bounds to the universe. But between her and me there is a kind of appearement which, denoting rebellion and apathy at the same time, eliminates the distance that separated us both from the universe. 113

Thus, in Bataille's work on the erotic there is an immanence, a totality, which breaks down the lines demarcating self and other. 114 As Bataille also notes, 'Erotic activity can be disgusting; it can also be noble, ethereal, excluding sexual contact, but it illustrates a principle of human behaviour in the clearest way: what we want is what uses up our strength and our resources and, if necessary, places our life in danger.'115 As Achile Mbembe writes in an article on 'Necropolitics', 'Life exists only in bursts and in exchange with death.'116 He also notes that Bataille withdraws 'death from the horizon of

Georges Bataille, in Fred Botting and Scott Wilson, eds., *The Bataille Reader*, p.267.

¹¹² ibid. p.24.

¹¹⁴ I would like to insist here in terms of consumption that I am not attempting to enter into a Hegelian dialectic. What is of interest here is boundary loss. As Deleuze has stated, 'What I most detested was Hegelianism and dialectics.' (Letter to a Harsh Critic, Negotiations, p.6). In Bataille's work there is both Hegelian and anti-Hegelian thought but his later work goes beyond Hegel's concepts of totality and meaning, the limit becomes impossible and what emerges in his work on consumption and the erotic is a type of anti-economy.

Georges Bataille, in Fred Botting and Scott Wilson, eds., The Bataille Reader, p.259.

¹¹⁶ Achille Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, trans. Libby Meintjes, *Public Culture*, volume 15, issue 1,(Duke University Press, 2003.) p.15.

meaning', stating that 'death is the very principle of excess – an anti-economy.' Or as Patricia Mac Cormack observes there is a distinction between Deleuzian and Bataillian economies of desire. Or, as Rosi Braidotti explains:

Deleuze's becoming is rather the humble apprenticeship to not being anything/where more/other than what one is capable of sustaining and tolerating. It is life on the edge, but not over it; [or against its perpetuation, as Deleuze and Guattari point out in their discussion of becoming in the drug-addicted or suicidal mode] it is excessive but not in the sacrificial sense. 118

Therefore, erotic consumption dissolves the binaristic power dialectic of self/other, masculine/feminine, and is itself an anti-economy of exchange, excessive but not suicidal. It is this danger of metamorphic, erotic cross-over and excess that challenges the strictures of normative socio-cultural constructs of identity and self in Carter's work.

Thus, Carter's retelling of fairy tales in *The Bloody Chamber* embodies what Tatar describes as their dissemination 'across a wide variety of media, ranging from opera and drama to cinema and advertising' to becoming 'a vital part of our cultural capital. What keeps them alive and pulsing with vitality and variety is exactly what keeps life pulsing: anxieties, fears, desires, romance, passion, and love.' In 1984 Carter collaborated with the Irish writer and director Neil Jordan to bring her short story 'The Company of Wolves' to the screen. Indeed, horror cinema is one medium that has attempted to interpret the deeper symbolic meaning of the fairy tale. In particular the 'Little Red Riding Hood' story has proved a potent vehicle for the exploration of the darker aspects of pubescent sexuality. Numerous films have revisited the tale of the young girl in a red hood and her encounter with the big bad wolf. Thus, in the final section I wish to explore the darker aspects of the Red Riding Hood tale in horror cinema.

'Cinema and Fairytales of Blood': The Company of Wolves, Ginger Snaps and Hard Candy

Each century tends to create or re-create fairy tales after its own taste. 120

Rosi Braidotti, 'Meta(1)morphoses'. *Theory, Culture and Society*, volume 14, issue 2, (London: Sage, 1997), p.68.

¹¹⁷ ibid., p.15.

Maria Tatar, 'Introduction' in Maria Tatar ed., *The Annotated Classic Fairy Tales*, p.xix. Angela Carter, 'Afterword' in Angela Carter, ed., *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault*, p.76.

(Angela Carter, The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault)

Across the cinematic genres from children's film and animation to the thriller and horror both writers and directors have sought to bring the character of a young girl and her wolfish encounter to the screen. In the early 1960s María Gracia starred as Little Red Riding Hood in a trilogy of Mexican films by director Roberto Rodriguez, which were then re-dubbed into English and released in the United States by the often labeled 'King of the Kiddie Matinée' K. Gordon Murray, as Little Red Riding Hood; 1960; Little Red Riding Hood and Her Friends/Little Red Riding Hood and Her Three Friends, 1961; and Little Red Riding Hood and the Monsters, 1962. In total Murray released over twenty fairy tale films to weekend matinée audiences. He is also noted for his numerous B-Movie releases, many of them horror features with titles such as Swamp of the Lost Monsters (1956), The Robot Vs The Aztec Mummy (1957) and Curse of the Doll People (1968). In 1965 Liza Minnelli starred in the 1965 television film The Dangerous Christmas of Red Riding Hood, a revisionist tale told from the wolf's perspective and more recently Christina Ricci starred in a 1997 short film based on the tale entitled Little Red Riding Hood. Another notable mention outside of cinema is the 1998 Chanel No.5 perfume advertisement, directed by Luc Besson, with music by Danny Elfman and starring Estella Warren as the girl in the red hood. Warren plays a contemporary Red Riding Hood who is preparing for a night out on the town in Paris much to the chagrin of her household wolf. Also in the world of action figures and dolls, Todd McFarlane's collection entitled 'Twisted Fairy Tales' includes a voluptuous Little Red Riding Hood holding a dead wolf with its entrails and the grandmother spilling from its stomach. The figure was reproduced in part four of his Monster Series in 2005, the collection also included, Gretel, Hansel, Peter Pumpkin Eater, Little Miss Muffet and Humpty Dumpty. Unsurprisingly, given the graphic depiction of the tale, the packaging carries the label for 'Ages 17 & Up', – the audience deliberately targeted in this instance being teenage or adult – and, given the excessive sexualization of Little Red Riding Hood's body, most probably male.

However, it is horror cinema that has been most inventive in its retelling of the classic Red Riding Hood fairy tale bringing to teenage audiences what the original folk tale intended. As Carter writes of Perrault's tales, to reiterate:

[...] the book is intended for children but these children are seen as apprentice adults and the succinct brutality of the traditional tale is modified by the application of rationality. The wolf consumes Red Riding Hood; what else can you expect if you talk to strange men, comments Perrault briskly. Let's not bother our heads with the mysteries of sado-masochistic attraction. We must learn to cope with the world before we can interpret it.¹²¹

It is these children, once apprentice adults who now as teenage horror consumers are

introduced to the darker underbelly of the tale. For, example, although based on a Daphne Du Maurier short story, Nicolas Roeg's red-hooded young protagonist Christine and her murderous double in *Don't Look Now* (1974) cannot fail but to invite comparisons with Little Red Riding Hood.



Fig.1.5

Roeg's attraction to Du Maurier's story centred on what he felt was its illustration of the lack of control one has over one's own fate. The film recounts the tale of grief-stricken couple John and Laura Baxter (played by Donald Sutherland and Julie Christie). Following the death of their young daughter Christine in the opening sequence, they travel to Venice where John has been given the job of restoring an old church. There, they encounter a pair of elderly sisters; one is a blind psychic who tells Laura that she can see Christine and also warns that John is in imminent danger if he continues to remain in Venice. John, a sceptic and disbeliever in ESP, ignores the warning and so the tension builds as he moves towards his own death at the hands of the red-hooded dwarf-crone whom he mistakes for Christine.

The images of Christine in her red raincoat, and the red-hooded figure that John sees in Venice, provides the horror genre with one of its most chilling doubles. Little Red Riding Hood in this case becomes a type of murderous daughter and I would suggest that perhaps there is an incestuous aspect to John's obsession with his dead daughter. As such, the film could be read as a type of 'Donkey Skin' narrative, wherein the father is the agent of transgressive sexuality and the daughter the enforcer of cultural law and order.

¹²¹ Angela Carter, 'Afterword' in Angela Carter, ed., *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault*, pp. 76-77.

Thus, Sutherland – wearing a wig which he donned for the role of John in the film – becomes the wolf character pursuing the red-hooded figure through the dark, lugubrious, labyrinthine, alleyways of Venice, a substitute geographic space for the fairy tale 'woods'. It is John's straying from the main thoroughfares of Venice into the portentously threatening back streets, which suggests a move as in the original tale from culture to nature. Order is restored by his daughter's doppelgänger who murders him with a knife. It is impossible to ignore the phallic connotations of John's murder – however, this is a subject I will explore in more detail in Chapter Four.

Furthermore, I would also like to point out the sexual inversion of Christine and her double. Christine in her red raincoat suggests pubescent sexuality, whereas part of the shock of seeing the face of her double is that it belongs to an old woman devoid of both youth and sexuality. Similarly, as in the 'Donkey Skin' tale where the daughter disguises herself literally in a donkey skin to avoid the sexual advances and desires of her father, in Roeg's film puberty and menstruation are replaced by an old menopausal crone. Thus, Don't Look Now, with its constant folding of time and space, highlights the underlying fragility of life and the fragile boundaries of existence and sexuality.

More recent horror films continue to engage in the retelling of the Little Red Riding Hood tale. As the film critic Mark Lawson writes in an article entitled 'Cape Fear' in *The Guardian* in 2006 on the release of a Weinstein Company animation called *Hoodwinked*:

'You probably think you know the story', says the sardonic voiceover at the start of *Hoodwinked*, as we see a leather-bound volume of classic fairy tales lying open at the legend of Little Red Riding Hood. The movie then dresses up this old granny of a fable in the vulpine comedy of post-Shrek, multilayered family entertainment, tailored to an audience fully aware that the word 'hood' denotes not only a type of head-covering but also urban territory disputed by gangs. ¹²²

It is this mutability and openness to interpretation which continues to sustain the story's popularity over the centuries. As already outlined in the previous section, from the 1970s onwards there was a discernible attempt to retrieve the tale from its moral strictures warning young girls to beware of the big bad wolf. Writers from James Thurber to Anne Sexton and Angela Carter repositioned the young girl in relation to the wolf. As Lawson observes, it is possible to see 'the woman's encounter with the wolf being both a

¹²² Mark Lawson, 'Cape Fear', *The Guardian*, Wednesday, 27 September, 2006. *The Guardian* online: [http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2006/sep/27/classics], date accessed: 12/07/2008.

necessary and a liberating experience. This retelling and interpretation is explored in Jordan's film adaptation of Carter's short story and is also evident in the Canadian film horror film *Ginger Snaps* (2000). However, more recently there has been a return to the previous dictum of 'beware of the big bad wolf' with a number of films warning against predatory masculinity. Thus, over the past ten years three films in particular have aligned the tale with paedophilia. In Mathew Bright's *Freeway* (1996) Reese Witherspoon plays a young runaway who is intercepted by a predatory psychologist played by Kiefer Sutherland. In *The Woodsman* the climactic scene sees a paroled sex offender played by Kevin Bacon follow a young girl into the woods. Perhaps the most explicit retelling of the tale is the more recent horror film *Hard Candy* where a teenager (Ellen Page) wearing a red hoodie follows an online ephebophile home. What follows is a bizarre twist on the original tale and also a strange homage to the rape-revenge genre. Thus, in this section I wish to focus on Neil Jordan's *The Company of Wolves* (1984), *Ginger Snaps* (2000) and *Hard Candy* (2006). Each film in its own unique way continues to engage with the darker and more serious aspects of the original folk tale.

¹²³ ibid.

In 1984, Angela Carter in collaboration with Neil Jordan brought The Company of Wolves to cinema audiences. They had previously met when Cater was an judge on the Guardian Fiction Award committee in 1978, the year Jordan went on to win the top prize for his collection of short stories *Night in Tunisia*. They met subsequently at the centenary

of Joyce's birthday in Dublin in 1982. At this point Carter had been commissioned by Channel 4 to adapt the story into a thirty-minute screenplay; however, after speaking with Jordan she changed her mind and decided to make it into a full-length feature film. 124 The film has been described as 'a series of surrealist vignettes' 125 presented as the dreams of a young girl played by Sarah Patterson. The film deals with the complexity of female sexuality against the backdrop of Perrault's moral ending to his seventeenth-century version, which warned that wolves may 'lurk in many guises' and that 'sweetest tongue has sharpest tooth'. 126 Angela Lansbury playing the



Fig.1.6

grandmother, warns that there are wolves who look like men but who are in fact hairy on the inside. However, women are also potential wolves in Jordan's film, with the young girl's mother offering the following advice to her daughter: 'if there's a beast in men, it meets its match in women too.' As such, the film explores the complex nature of pubescent sexuality and the anxieties that accompany the progression from childhood to adult sexuality. As Barbara Creed writes:

The heroine's grandmother warns her never to trust a man whose eyebrows meet in the middle and to avoid all men who are 'hairy on the inside'. Rosaleen, however, is emotionally drawn to the wilds and when she meets a huntsman whose eyebrows do meet in the middle she discards her human shape for that of the wolf. Werewolfism offers a perverse metamorphosis from human to animal, a rehearsal of the death of the proper subject and an intimation of the end of the civilized self. Rosaleen was more than happy to discard her hood for a hirsute hero, even if his ears were too big and his hands too hairy. 127

¹²⁴ Source: Carole Zucker, *The Cinema of Neil Jordan: Dark Carnival*, (Wallflower Press, 2003), p.59.

¹²⁵ Victoria Large, 'Hairy on the Inside: Surrealism and Sexual Anxiety in Neil Jordan's *The Company of Wolves*', *Bight Lights Film Journal*, November 2006, Issue 54. Online archive:

[[]http://www.brightlightsfilm.com/54/wolves.htm], date accessed: 12/07/2007. Charles Perrault, trans., A.E. Johnson, *Perrault's Fairy Tales*, p.29.

¹²⁷ Barbara Creed, *Phallic Panic*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2005), p.152.

Thus, it is this move away from the so-called civilized female subject of the phallic law of the father into a realm of psycho-sexual lawlessness which underpins the narrative. The film interrogates the move from childhood to adult sexuality, the nature of both male and female sexuality and the collapse of normative sexual standards and prohibitions. It opens with a contemporary setting foregrounding the water well which will recur as a symbol throughout the film. The camera then pans to a discarded doll hidden in the undergrowth next to the well as it is sniffed out by a large loping dog. Critics have also drawn attention to Rosaleen's first dream sequence which is dominated by childhood toys. As the film critic Victoria Large writes:

Childhood playthings are one of the symbols of greatest significance in *The Company of Wolves*. One of the first images in the film is that of a discarded doll, and Rosaleen is seen sleeping in the room of a child — surrounded by teddy bears and more dolls — but her lips bear the telltale traces of experimentation with lipstick, and on numerous occasions in the film there is an insistence on the putting away of childish things, the necessity of maturing and moving on. ¹²⁸

Furthermore, prior to the first part of her extended dream we are told by her sister Alice as she greets her parents that Rosaleen has locked herself in her room complaining of stomach cramps. Although no direct reference is made to menarche or menstrual bleeding, this comment does prefigure the symbolic references to female menstruation that follow in the film's narrative. Also, the naming of the central protagonist references 'roses', a recurrent symbol in fairy tales and is, as previously noted, indicative of both menstruation and sexual intercourse. Furthermore, Rosaleen is an Irish name meaning 'little rose', and the naming of the central character as such, I would suggest, was a conscious appropriation by Carter and Jordan of 'Little Red Riding Hood'.

Thus, as Rosaleen sleeps, unresponsive to her sister Alice's banging on her bedroom door, she begins to dream what will become the film's narrative. This macabre dream sees her sister terrorized by a giant teddy bear, a doll in a sailor suit and a dollhouse overrun by rats before she is chased and killed by a pack of wolves. Victoria Large suggests that 'attacking playthings suggest that hanging on to childhood, and subsequently facing adulthood unprepared, is a dangerous thing indeed.' Also the

 ¹²⁸ Victoria Large, 'Hairy on the Inside: Surrealism and Sexual Anxiety in Neil Jordan's *The Company of Wolves*', *Bight Lights Film Journal*, November 2006, Issue 54. Online archive: [http://www.brightlightsfilm.com/54/wolves.htm], date accessed: 12/07/2007.
 ¹²⁹ ibid.

oversized toys and her sister's name 'Alice' would appear to reference Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*. In fact, the mirror/looking glass features throughout and fulfills a purpose similar to Gilbert and Gubar's reading of the mirror in Snow White; it constructs female identity through the male voice and gaze and it is not until Rosaleen throws it away towards the end of the film that she becomes liberated and free from patriarchal law and socio-cultural restraints.

The contemporary setting in which the film opens dissolves in the following scene in which her sister is buried. At this point it would appear that the dream is now taking place in the late seventeenth-century the time at which Perrault penned his Little Red Riding Hood story. From here, Jordan's film engages with the dialectic of nature versus culture and civilization. This is established through the oppositional stories told by the grandmother and the mother. As the critic Carole Zucker points out, one view of sexuality on offer to Rosaleen comes from her mother, 'who is associated with natural phenomena and the cycles of nature, as opposed to the superstitious Granny.' She writes:

For the mother, wolves are dangerous because they are predators, nothing more. Rosaleen witnesses her parents making love, and asks if her father has hurt her mother to which her mother replies, 'No, no, not at all. If there is a beast in men, it meets its match in women too.' Granny on the other hand, tells Rosaleen, 'Men are nice until they've had their way with you, then the beast comes out.' Rosaleen, poised on the brink of womanhood, must choose between these competing attitudes to determine her sexual and social roles. ¹³⁰

Grappling with the conflicting advice she receives from the two prominent female figures in her life, Rosaleen begins to meditate on and negotiate her own awakening sexuality. She both refutes and engages the advances of a local village boy. While accompanying him on a walk through the woods, she deliberately loses him by straying from the path. In this scene the focus is almost solely on Rosaleen and her discovery of a nest at the top of a tree which she has climbed. In the nest lie eggs which begin to hatch, revealing not baby birds but figurines of human babies.

In a surreal and symbolic scene we see Rosaleen return to the village cradling one of the baby figurines to be greeted knowingly by her mother. This ambiguous scene could perhaps be interpreted with reference to the red shawl knitted by her grandmother and which she has now begun to wear. The red hood which has frequently been read as

¹³⁰ Carole Zucker, *The Dark Carnival of Neil Jordan*, p.63.

symbolic of menstrual bleeding and her cradling of the hatched baby could thus indicate the release of eggs from the ovaries; while the hatching can be read as a symbol denoting female reproductivity. It is at this point in the film, I would argue, that Rosaleen's awareness of female sexuality is realized and it is from here that her questioning of sex and libido becomes more forthright. With her enquiries pertaining to her parents' sexual relations and the wolf stories demonstrating a curiosity about the nature and construction of sexual desire and sexual relations. As the critic Maria Pramagiorre writes:

The Company of Wolves acknowledges the threat posed by proximity and mutuality as well as the problems associated with distance and domination. Rosaleen rejects the presumption of sexual sameness – for example, the notion that all women share certain affinities – along with the supposedly radical otherness of the werewolf. She responds to the danger of assimilation into a homogeneous ideal of femininity by generating violent wish-fulfilment dreams: a werewolf dispatches her sister Alice in the first dream, and the huntsman/werewolf consumes Granny in the final dream story, in a partial endorsement of the traditional conclusion to the Riding Hood tale. Within the stories, Red challenges traditional categories by exploring which differences matter. ¹³¹

Furthermore she notes that in 'Jordan's film, Rosaleen's dream world has eliminated distinctions between self and other and Red's embrace of the eroticized monster places her in a liminal position where her identity eludes representation.' Sexual exchange and mutuality of desire occurs with Rosaleen's straying from the path on her way to visit her grandmother. In the woods she encounters the huntsman/wolf played by Mischa Bergese. Bergese was chosen by Jordan for the part of the huntsman because he was a dancer with a dancer's body and the muscular capacity to enact the metamorphosis of man to wolf. Ignoring her grandmother's warning to be wary of men with eyebrows that meet in the middle, Rosaleen engages flirtatiously with the huntsman and is fascinated by his compass which allows him to stray from the path. It is here that Rosaleen chooses between the mirror and the compass. Symbolically she throws away the mirror, having taken up a bet with the huntsman to win the compass by reaching her grandmother's house before he does.

Thus, I would argue that 'the patriarchal looking glass' – that is, the prohibitive voice of the Lacanian symbolic law of the father – is rejected, opening the possibility for alternative identities which can only be achieved by straying from the dictates of the

¹³² ibid., p.34.

¹³¹ Maria Pramagiorre, Neil Jordan, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), p.31.

socio-cultural path. Of course the huntsman reaches her grandmother's house before she does and adhering to the familiar trajectory of the fairy tale narrative, he quickly dispatches with the grandmother, beheading her and throwing her into the fire. As Large writes:

Toward the close of the film, Rosaleen dreams of herself as Red Riding Hood willfully seducing and being seduced by a stranger in the woods (one who is both the huntsman and the wolf combined). Soon the doll imagery comes into play again. At Rosaleen's grandmother's cabin, the huntsman/wolf knocks off the old woman's head, and — in a moment foreshadowed by the fact that one of Rosaleen's dolls resembles the grandmother — it shatters just like a porcelain doll's head would. The grandmother's one-sided warnings are equated with the world of childhood that doomed Alice, and are cast aside in favor of the more complex understanding of sexuality presented by Rosaleen's mother. 133

As Rosaleen approaches her grandmother's house Jordon layers the scene with symbol upon symbol – the moon turns red and the red drops of blood upon the snow recalls both the original Snow White fairy tale and Angela Carter's reworking of the tale in 'The Snow-Child'. Rosaleen, upon entering the house and realising what has transpired, goes through the familiar ritual, stating, 'what big eyes you have' to 'what big teeth you have' at which point the huntsman pounces upon her. Holding his shotgun she shoots, thus momentarily staving off his advances. However, further advances lead the young girl to shoot him, upon which, the injured huntsman begins to change from man to wolf. Rosaleen watches in fascination, concluding, in response to his howls of pain, 'I didn't know that wolves cry'. The wolf becomes as passive and domesticated as a household dog and is stroked gently by Rosaleen.

The camera then cuts to the next morning and the frantic search for the missing girl and her grandmother by her parents and the local villagers. On approaching the grandmother's house they see the huntsman as wolf jump through the window and run into the woods. When Rosaleen's mother enters the house she finds before her a she-wolf, whom she immediately recognises as her own daughter. However, Rosaleen, now a wolf turns from her parents and, like the huntsman, leaps through the window to join the

¹³³ Victoria Large, 'Hairy on the Inside: Surrealism and Sexual Anxiety in Neil Jordan's *The Company of Wolves*', *Bight Lights Film Journal*, November 2006, Issue 54. Online archive: [http://www.brightlightsfilm.com/54/wolves.htm], date accessed: 12/07/2007.

'company of wolves'. As Carole Zucker observes in her work on Jordan's film, the wolf in both oral and written tradition is symbolically a sexual and lustful creature. She goes on to point out that it is 'not coincidental that in Italian the word for male wolf is lupo, and lupa, the word for female wolf, also means vulva.' However, she also point out that it was not until the end of the fifteenth century that the wolf became associated with evil. She writes that in medieval times werewolves were looked on with positive feelings, and even sensations of awe, as being capable of integrating both the wild and cultural elements, beings at the intersection of nature and civilization. Or as Marie-Louise Franz writes of the anthropomorphic manifestations of animal archetypes:

We say the animal is the carrier of the projection of human psychic factors. As long as there is still archaic identity, and as long as you have not taken the projection back, the animal and what you project onto it are identical; the are one and the same thing. You see it beautifully in those animal stories which represent archetypal human tendencies. They are human because they really do not represent animal instincts but our animal instincts, and in that sense they are really anthropomorphic. ¹³⁵

Furthermore, this scene could also be read according to Deleuze's theories of becoming. In her critical work *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming*, Rosi Braidotti, in an analysis of becoming woman/animal/insect, dedicates an entire section to becoming-wolf. She writes:

The case of the wolf is emblematic of Deleuze's theory of becoming-animal. It contains the basic elements of his quarrel with psychoanalytic notions of the unconscious, the ethics of affects and his literary and cultural theories. In the fast track of processes of becoming, one metamorphosis leads to, or melts into, another without much restraint. Thus, the figure of the wolf, werewolf or she-wolf can also be rendered in classical Gothic mode, as demon, vampire or satanic lover. 136

She also describes the process of trans-species metamorphosis or hybridity as 'loaded with sexuality in that it entails the erasure of and the transgressing of bodily boundaries.' Furthermore, again returning to the argument which suggests that Rosaleen's lycanthropic metamorphosis is a move from culture to nature, she states:

¹³⁷ ibid., p.128.

89

¹³⁴ Carole Zucker, Dark Carnival: The Cinema of Neil Jordan, p.61.

¹³⁵ Marie-Louise von Franz, Archetypal Patterns in Fairytales, (New York: Icon Books, 1997), p.36.

¹³⁶ Rosi Braidotti, Metamorphose: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming, p.128.

The 'explosion' of the civilized confines of one's 'self' re-asserts some raw corporeality of the subject, which is often rendered in the mode of orgasm, of the ecstatic encounter with radical otherness. The topos of the wolf incorporates a great deal of these elements, with speed, fur, blood and violence thrown in for extra thrills.¹³⁸

However, Braidotti is clear in her focus on female desire and jouissance in relation to the topos of the female werewolf and refutes any commonality between Deleuzian becoming-animal/wolf with symbolic or archetypal meanings of the wolf. According to Jung the unconscious contains recurrent archetypes of images that recur ahistorically. As Braidotti notes, perhaps, one of the best examples of a contemporary Jungian inspired analysis of the wolf and femininity is Clarissa Pinkola Estès' *Women who Run with the Wolves* (1992). Braidotti describes Estès' approach:

[...] a quantitative accumulation of common traits between women and wolves, such as complicity with the wild; familiarity with wilderness; pleasure in the outside, especially the forest; hunting; bleeding and the taste of blood; copulating in the moonlight and other forms of wild sexuality. Represented through various art-forms and present trans-historically in a variety of cultures, they constitute a cultural constant.¹³⁹

Braidotti notes that this in effect is antithetical to Deleuze's work on becoming-animal. Where the Jungian approach to the unconscious as collective is a 'quantitative plurality within a one-dimensional and mono-directional system', Deleuze's theory of becoming is a 'qualitative multiplicity in an open-ended set of complexities.'

Furthermore, Chris Baldick in his work on the gothic writes that 'the Jungian myth is granted anteriority over its own literary and cultural manifestations and consequently it enjoys a higher authority over modern scientific culture, in so far as it pertains to a more ancient, timeless rhythm of nature. This results in an over-emphasis on the authority of the myth itself, which over-invests "mythic consciousness" with greater importance than modern-day living and in distinct opposition to the experiences of history.' Thus, Braidotti concludes:

¹³⁸ ibid., p.128.

¹³⁹ ibid., p.129.

¹⁴⁰ ibid., p.129

¹⁴¹ Baldick, Chris, *In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity and Nineteenth Century Writing*, (Clarendon Press, 1990), p.54.

It is this essentialism and the opposition to historical change that makes the Jungian archetypes into a disturbing dogmatic methodology. By assuming that all myths belong to the same timeless sphere and psychic plane, the most banal interpretations of these myths are being circulated [...] History does matter, as do the historical manifestations of any locations, positions, meaning or beliefs. 142

Thus, if we read Rosaleen's transformation into a she-wolf at the close of her dream according to Deleuze's work on becoming and desire, it is a positive transgressive move away from a masculine majoritarian position to one of nomadic multiplicity and immanence. However, the close of Jordan's film is quite odd and has baffled both viewers and critics alike. In her bedroom Rosaleen awakes and in a scene that suggests the invasion of reality by her dream world we witness a pack of wolves make their way towards her. They stop at her bedroom door with one lone wolf smashing through her bedroom window as she screams hysterically. The camera then cuts from Rosaleen, to the wolf, to the crashing and breaking of her childhood toys. The horror critic Paul Wells expresses his dissatisfaction with the scene, arguing that

The girl at the beginning of the film is a direct homage to Hammer films. I wanted it to be a lyrical romance in the style of Powell and Pressburger. The difficulty for me is the fact that the film has been about a girl coming to terms with her libido, and yet when confronted with the pure 'libido' of the wolves, she screams! She could have just smiled, that would have been all right. I also disapproved of the eighteenth-century moralité at the end. It didn't seem at all suitable. She could handle the wolf.¹⁴³

However, I would be more inclined to agree with the remarks made by Maria Pramagiorre on the conclusion of Jordan's film. She writes:

In her liminal state, Rosaleen simultaneously experiences dream and reality, pain and pleasure, fear and desire. Rosaleen's monstrosity has turned her inside out, deforming the rules that organize sexual identity and that police the borders of reality and fantasy.¹⁴⁴

Furthermore, it is impossible to ignore the similarities of this scene to Freud's case study the 'Wolf Man'. The 'Wolf Man' written in 1914 and published in 1918 refers to the twenty-three year old Russian aristocrat, Sergei Pankeieff, who came to Freud for a

¹⁴⁴ Maria Pramagiorre, Neil Jordan, p.35.

¹⁴² Rosi Braidotti, Metamorphose: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming, p. 129.

¹⁴³ Paul Wells, *The Horror Genre: From Beelzebub to Blair Witch*, (London: Wallflower, 2004), p.39.

consultation in February 1910. Psychological consultations continued for a number of years without success until Freud decided in the spring of 1913 to set a termination date for their sessions. It was this threat which prompted The Wolf Man/Pankeieff to open up and to produce new material which Freud documents in his case history. It was Pankeieff's recollection of a childhood nightmare of six or seven wolves perched in a tree which opened up the possibility for new analysis. Pankeieff described his dream as follows:

I dreamt that it was night and that I was lying in my bed. (My bed stood with its foot towards the window; in front of the window there was a row of old walnut trees. I know it was winter when I had the dream, and night-time.) Suddenly the window opened of its own accord, and I was terrified to see that some white wolves were sitting on the big walnut tree in front of the window. There were six or seven of them. The wolves were quite white, and looked more like foxes or sheep-dogs, for they had big tails like foxes and they had their ears pricked like dogs when they pay attention to something. In great terror evidently of being eaten by the wolves, I screamed and woke up. 145

Freud interpreted Pankeieff's nightmare as depicting the primal parental sex act. He concluded that at around the age of 18 months Pankeieff/The Wolf Man had witnessed his parents having 'coitus a tergo', sex from behind. The young wolf man witnessed this 'coitus a tergo, three times repeated; he was able to see his mother's genitals as well as his father's organ and he understood the process [of their intercourse] as well as its significance.' The boy retroactively understood that in order for his father to make love to him he would have to become like his mother, castrated, and therefore saw his father whom he both loved and feared as the castrating parent. However, in Jordan's film the central figure of the narrative is a young pubescent girl which renders the castration reading suspect. I will explore psychoanalysis and castration more expansively in Chapter Four, however, what I would like to include here, following on from Braidotti's reading of becoming-wolf, is Deleuze and Guattari's analysis and reinterpretation of the Wolf Man's dream.

In a chapter entitled '1914: One or Several Wolves?' in their collaborative work *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari argue that Freud is insistent in his interpretation

146 ibid., p.404.

¹⁴⁵ Sigmund Freud, 'From the History of an Infantile Neurosis ('Wolf Man')', in Peter Gay ed., *The Freud Reader*, (London: Vintage, 1995), p.404.

of the Wolf Man's dream to reduce the multiplicity of the six or seven wolves to a unitary one of the 'Father'. They state:

Who is ignorant of the fact that wolves travel in packs? Only Freud. Every child knows it. Not Freud. [...] The wolves will have to be purged of their multiplicity. This operation is accomplished by associating the dream with the tale, 'The Wolf and the Seven Kid-Goats' (only six of them get eaten). We witness Freud's reductive glee; we literally see multiplicity leave the wolves to take the shape of goats that have absolutely nothing to do with the story. Seven wolves that are only kid-goats. Six wolves: the seventh goat (the Wolf Man himself) is hiding in the clock, and the roman numeral V is associated with the erotic spreading of a woman's legs. Three wolves: the parents may have made love three times. Two wolves: the first coupling the child may have seen was the two parents more ferarum, or perhaps even two dogs. One wolf: the wolf is the father, as we all knew from the start. Zero wolves: he lost his tail, he is not just a castrator but also castrated. Who is Freud trying to fool? The wolves never had a chance to get away and save their pack: it was already decided from the beginning that animals could serve only to represent coitus between parents, or, conversely, be represented by coitus between parents. 147

Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari write that in becoming-wolf, the important issue is the position of the mass and the position of the subject in relation to the pack or what they term 'wolf-multiplicity'. 148 Thus, they go on to discuss a dream by a person named Franny who dreams that she is in a desert which is only a desert 'because of its ocher colour and blazing shadowless sun. Furthermore, she describes that in it there is 'a swarm of bees, a rumble of soccer players or a group of Tuareg: I am on the edge of the crowd, at the periphery; but I belong to it, I am attached to it by one of my extremities, a hand or foot.'149 Deleuze and Guattari describe Franny's dream as a very good 'schizo' dream, stating that what is significant or important in terms of pack/wolf-multiplicity is 'To be fully a part of the crowd and at the same time completely outside it, removed from it: to be on the edge to take a walk like Virginia Woolf (never again will I say, "I am this, I am that"). 150 Thus, I would argue that it is possible to read Jordan's ending to The Company of Wolves not in its Freudian suggestiveness but rather according to Deleuze and Guattari's theories of positioning within the pack. The lone wolf jumping through the window as multiple wolves circle outside Rosaleen's bedroom door indicates the positioning of both individual and multiple subjectivities.

¹⁴⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, pp. 31-32.

¹⁴⁸ ibid., p.32.

¹⁴⁹ ibid., p.32.

¹⁵⁰ ibid., pp.32-33.

However, stepping outside the rules that organize and police sexual identity does not necessarily signify ultimate liberation in the horror genre. Joining 'the company of wolves', that is becoming-wolf and positioning oneself in a wolf-multiplicity, is in fact a dangerous choice, whereby woman is constructed as the 'monstrous-feminine' or moreover the 'menstruous-monstrous.' Thus, in horror cinema the liberated expression of female sexuality is more often that not punishable by death. The sexual female (she-wolf, becoming-other) must be eliminated so that there can be a return to orthodox, Oedipal equilibrium.

An interesting example of the punishment of women who choose to join 'the company of wolves' is a Canadian film *Ginger Snaps*, released in 2000 and directed by

John Fawcett. The film was both a critical and box office success, however, two follow ups failed dismally, a sequel *Ginger Snaps: Unleashed* (dir. Brett Sullivan, 2004) and a prequel *Ginger Snaps: The Beginning* (dir. Grant Harvey, 2004). The original film is both a powerful and interesting example of horror's fascination with the subject of menstruation and female sexuality. The film is set in a small town called Bailey Downs and centres upon two sisters Brigitte (Emily Perkins) and Ginger



Fig.1.6

(Katherine Isabelle). In this somewhat non-eventful small town a werewolf is terrorising the local community, primarily killing household pets. Both Ginger and Brigitte are late menstrual starters with neither girl at fourteen or fifteen having yet commenced their menstrual cycles. It is only when Ginger begins to menstruate that the true horror begins.

As the critic Bianca Nielson writes, 'By (re)-articulating and modifying horror conventions, *Ginger Snaps* depicts the experiences of young women coming to terms with their sexuality. In many respects *Ginger Snaps* contributes to dominant discourses of reproduction, however the film also demands feminist scrutiny.' Indeed, the film does engage with elements of transgressive and subversive sexuality but for the most part adheres to orthodox constructions of femininity. The film opens with a montage of images depicting female suicide victims. These images of impalement, hanging, slit wrists and drowning are portrayed in gruesomely realistic photographs which Ginger and Brigitte have taken of each other for a school project entitled 'Life in Bailey Downs.'

¹⁵¹ Bianca Nielson, "'Something's Wrong, Like More Than you Being Female': Transgressive Sexuality and Discourses of Reproduction in *Ginger Snaps*", *thirdspace*, volume 3, issue 2, March 2004, pp.55-69. Online archive: [http://www.thirdspace.ca/articles/pr_3_2_nielsen.htm], date accessed: 04/06/2008.

Thus, from the outset, suburban, small town life is shown as boring, monotonous and oppressive to the point of encouraging suicide. It is this alignment of femininity with boredom, monotony and death upon which the film pivots. Social misfits, the two sisters do not fit into the mould of high school teenage femininity which they describe as a 'mindless little breeder's machine, a total hormonal toilet'. Dressed in dark clothes and almost gothic in appearance, these two sisters are marked from the outset as marginal figures as they promise each other never to be 'average'. Their level of dissatisfaction with their female roles and small town existence is further expressed in the pact that they have made to commit suicide together once Ginger reaches sixteen. This dissatisfaction with both femaleness and small town life is further echoed by their mother Pamela in the closing scenes as she too plans to escape from Bailey Downs with her daughters.

However, this pact between the sisters and their mutual dissatisfaction with small town suburban existence and female identity changes when Ginger begins to menstruate and is bitten by a werewolf. Ginger's first menstrual bleeding coincides with being attacked by the 'Beast of Bailey Downs', when, she is dragged off into the woods and bitten before being rescued by Brigitte. As they run frantically from the woods, they stumble across a highway and the beast is run over by a van. From this point in the film's narrative, Ginger's metamorphosis is not only from child to adult sexuality but also across species from female to she-wolf.

From the outset, femaleness and femininity are pathologized. Ginger's onset of menarche is described as 'the curse'. Ginger also refers to her back pain which she suffers from just prior to the onset of her first period as perhaps 'cancer of the spine' or, as Brigitte suggests 'tuberculosis or spondylosis'. Thus, menstrual symptoms manifest as unnatural alongside her lycanthropic transformation. Ginger bleeds profusely, sprouts hair and begins to grow a tail. The following conversation between the two sisters indicates the fear and anxiety surrounding Ginger's transformation:

Brigitte: Ginge, what's going on? Something's wrong like more than you being

female. Can you say something please?

Ginger: I can't have a hairy chest, B, that's fucked. Brigitte: Bitten on a full moon, now you're hairy.

Ginger: Well, thank you for taking my total fucking nightmare so seriously ... oh

shit, what if I'm dying or something?¹⁵²

¹⁵² Ginger Snaps, dir. John Fawcett, (2000).

Menstruation as abnormal is also alluded to in a documentary screened in their biology class. The documentary focuses on disease and the destruction of healthy cells by aggressive, infectious, unhealthy cells. As the voiceover in the documentary states 'Preying upon normal healthy cells, the intruder gradually devours the host from within. Eventually the invader consumes the host completely and finally destroys it.' This trope of contamination and invasion is also evident in the description of the menstrual cycle in medical texts and can also be seen in numerous vampire texts. I will examine this aspect of menstruation in more detail in the following chapter. Moreover, in *Ginger Snaps* the link between normal and abnormal sexuality and menstruation as disease is further expressed when the two sisters visit the school nurse who assures them both that Ginger's symptoms are normal.

Nurse: I'm sure it seems like a lot of blood ... it's a period.

Brigitte: Geyser.

Nurse: Everyone seems to panic their first time. Neither of you have had a period before and you're how old?

Ginger: I'm almost sixteen, she just turned fifteen – she skipped a grade.

Nurse: A thick, syrupy, voluminous discharge is not uncommon. The bulk of the uterine lining is shed within the first few days. Contractions, cramps, squeeze it out like a pump. In three to five days you'll find lighter, bright-red bleeding. That may turn to a brownish or blackish sludge, which signals the end of the flow.

Ginger: Ok, so it's all normal.

Nurse: Very, expected every twenty-eight days, give or take, for the next thirty years.

Ginger: Great.

Brigitte: What about hair that wasn't there before, and pain?

Nurse: Uhuh, comes with the territory ... you'll have to protect against both pregnancy and STDs now, play safe! 154

However, this is immediately subverted by the film's predominant lycanthropic narrative.

Brigitte, the younger sleuth sister, is less convinced and engages in werewolf research.

Thus, aided by the pharmaceutical knowledge of the local drug dealer, Sam (who incidentally ran over the first 'Beast of Bailey Downs'), she attempts to find a cure for Ginger's condition. Furthermore, the nurses exhortation to 'play safe' turns out to be ironic given Ginger's subsequent murderous sexual appetite.

It has also been argued that Ginger and Brigitte are doubled in the film and that the emergence of Ginger's sexual self and metamorphosis into a wolf is a type of re-working

⁵³ ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ginger Snaps, dir. John Fawcett, (2000).

of the Dr. Jekyll and Hyde story. It is suggested that Ginger's beastly transformation is an expression of the shadow self or the self's dark, transgressive, animalistic, desires. As Robin Wood writes 'the doppelgänger motif reveals the Monster as normality's shadow.' Again as in previous re-workings of the Little Red Riding Hood story there is a conflict between reality and fantasy, normal and abnormal, socialized sexuality and lawless, liberated, female desire.

Thus, as Ginger's sexuality and sexual desire emerge the bond she shares with her sister begins to break. However, Ginger does not revert to stereotypical constructions of female sexuality. Pubescent, menstrual and neither fully human nor animal she occupies the Kristevan abject, that is, 'the composite, the ambiguous, the in-between' thus threatening and subverting 'position, borders, rules.' As Bianca Nielson writes:

Brigitte does not understand her community's sexual double standards as well as her sister does, and is noticeably appalled that Ginger is abandoning her in order to partake in heterosexual rituals. She does not initially realise that Ginger's aggressively sexual behaviour is in fact in opposition to the kinds of socially constructed gender roles they had sworn to rebel against. 158

Thus, Ginger's sexual encounter with Jason the local jock subverts traditional gender roles. Ginger takes the traditional dominant position which leads to Jason repeatedly asking her to 'take it easy' to which she responds 'lie back and relax.' Confused and unsure of this sexual reversal of roles he asks her 'who's the guy here?' The camera cuts away and the next time we see Jason he is cut and bruised, suggesting that he has been sexually assaulted by Ginger. Furthermore, when discussing her liaison with Brigitte, she admits that sex was not how she expected and that it was 'just all this squirming and squealing.' Ginger further demonstrates the sexual double standards for women by stating that Jason is more than likely bragging about their encounter, commenting, 'he got laid, I'm just a lay.' It is this awareness of the socio-cultural restrictions placed on female sexuality that makes Ginger's entry into sexual relations an interesting comment on sexual roles.

Female desire, libido and masturbation are also conflated with Ginger's murderous acts. After killing the school janitor, she explains to Brigitte, 'it feels so good, B. It's like

¹⁵⁵ Robin Wood, 'The American Nightmare' in Mark Jancovich, ed., *Horror: The Film Reader*, (London: Routledge, 2002), p.32.

¹⁵⁶ Julia Kristeva, Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection, p.4.

¹⁵⁷ ibid., p.4.

¹⁵⁸ Bianca Nielson, "'Something's Wrong, Like More Than you Being Female': Transgressive Sexuality and Discourses of Reproduction in *Ginger Snaps*", *thirdspace*, volume 3, issue 2, March 2004, pp.55-69. Online archive: [http://www.thirdspace.ca/articles/pr_3_2_nielsen.htm], date accessed: 04/06/2008.

touching yourself, you know, every move right on the fucking dot, and after, you see fucking fireworks, supernova, goddamn force of nature. I feel like I could do just about anything.' However, as Nielson points out, the linking of violence to masturbation is a 'sexual activity where men are not necessary.' She also notes that:

It is Ginger's description of the hyper-exhilaration that she feels while inhuman forces are raging through her that implies her utter difference from Brigitte. Ginger's suggestion that they are 'not even related anymore' is the catalyst that pushes Brigitte towards justifying killing her sister.¹⁵⁹

Thus, the final severing of all familial ties at the films close coincides with Ginger's total transformation into a wolf and could be read as her complete rebuttal of the symbolic law of the father – the socialized world of dominant patriarchal order. Again, it could also be read according to Deleuze's theories of 'becoming.' With her severing of all family ties as in Jordan's *The Company of Wolves* suggesting anti-oedipal sexual desire. Ginger moves from the world of order, hierarchy and taboo into the realm of lawlessness and liberated libido. As Nielson writes:

The reasons behind Brigitte's murder of Ginger are ambiguous. On the one hand, Brigitte kills Ginger because she has lost her both to normality – menstruation and heterosexuality – and abnormality – her inhuman animality and disengagement with their sisterly bond. On the other hand, Brigitte kills her sister because she has become a grotesque representation of all that their community loathes about female sexuality. In this wider sense Ginger is killed because she has challenged her communities sexual taboos (and also, perhaps, the prohibitions that surround incest). When Brigitte kills Ginger because she has become infectious, she emphasizes the sexual nature of her monstrosity [...] Ginger is not simply monstrous because a werewolf bites her and infects her, but also because she begins menstruating for the first time during the scene where she is attacked. The sisters' confused reaction to Ginger's sexual development suggests our culture's ambivalent attitude towards female reproductive processes. 160

Thus, I would argue that *Ginger Snaps* incorporates the varied and vascillating historic constructions of female sexuality. From the outset neither sister is comfortable with the versions of femininity they are presented with either through the figure of their mother, or the girls in their local high school. There is an almost totalising view of femininity and femaleness as a negative in the film. Thus, it is not until Ginger's menstrual/wolf-metamorphosis that constructions of femininity and taboos surrounding female puberty,

¹⁵⁹ ibid.

¹⁶⁰ ibid.

menstruation and sexual desire are challenged because its only then that they are seen as conflicting and multiple. However, her eventual total transformation into a wolf cannot be accepted, not even by her own sister, who in the final scene, instead of injecting her with the solution of monkswood, an antidote to her wolfishness, instead stabs her with a knife and kills her. Ginger's transgression has been too great and poses too much of a threat to the sexual status quo.

Finally, I want to comment briefly on a different type of Red Riding Hood film that has emerged in recent years and which constructs the wolf as ephebophile. David Slade's *Hard Candy* released in 2006 is the story of fourteen year-old Hayley (Ellen Page) who meets an older guy called Geoff (Patrick Wilson), who is in his early thirties, in an internet chat room. They arrange to meet and Hayley goes back to his house which is tucked away in the Hollywood hills overlooking the city. They chat, listen to music and drink until it becomes evident that Hayley has spiked Geoff's drink and it is at this juncture that the film's complex thematic emerges. Hayley has plotted and planned her

encounter with Geoff, whom she knows to be a ephebophile and who she then proceeds to torture and fake castrates. Thus, the Little Red Riding Hood character reverses roles with the wolf. She is reminiscent of Roald Dahl's or James Thurber's young protagonists who come armed with pistols or automatics. Moreover, the film's opening credits also evoke the title of Carter's collection of short stories *The Bloody Chamber* as multiple red boxes are placed inside one another, dissolving in and out of the screen.



Fig.1.7

The film has provoked strong reactions both positive and negative. As the film's writer Brian Nelson states in the documentary *Controversial Confection*, 'Some other people feel that it is a film about vigilantism, some other people feel that it is a film about sexual justice and about gender issues.' Indeed, the film engages with all of these issues. The film replaces the woods with the internet and online chat rooms and the wolf with the ephebophile, an online huntsman. The opening sequence focuses on a computer screen and the following online chat:

162 Hard Candy, dir. David Slade, (2006).

¹⁶¹ The use of the term 'paedophile' to describe Geoff in Hard Candy is inaccurate. Although that is what Hayley calls him, Geoff is actually an ephebophile.

LENSMAN319: So we should finally hook up?

THONGGRRRL14: maybe maybe

LENSMAN319: Baby Baby.

THONGGRRRL14: Not a baby, I keep telling you

LENSMAN319: I'll have to see for myself

THONGGRRRL14: think a baby reads zadie smith

LENSMAN319: Dunno. Babies pretend to read.

THONGGRRRL14: and you know this? you study babies?

LENSMAN319: Only one I study is you.

THONGGRRRL14: guess it depends on the kind of baby

THONGGRRRL14::)~

LENSMAN319: Be still, mahh heart! =)

THONGGRRRL14: whatcha doing now?

LENSMAN319: Besides fantasizing over you? Nada.

THONGGRRRL14: you oughta film me with that video

THONGGRRRL14: then you wouldn't have to fantasize

LENSMAN319: This is very doable

THONGGRRRL14: Like me – KIDDING!

LENSMAN319: Tease.

THONGGRRRL14: okay, let's do it

THONGGRRRL14: hook up i mean

LENSMAN319: for real? where?

THONGGRRRL14: my big sister could drop me at Nighthawks

THONGGRRRL14: give me an hour to shower

LENSMAN319: i'll picture it

THONGGRRRL14: i'll picture you picturing it

THONGGRRRL14: 11am

LENSMAN319: done. go shower. now.

THONGGRRRL14: get a little bossy when you're hot, do ya?

LENSMAN319: pleeeease

LENSMAN319: that's better. see ya soon! xxxxooo¹⁶³

Both characters meet and Geoff is surprisingly handsome and unassuming; however, their interaction does leave the viewer uncomfortable as the age gap between the two is striking. Thus, once the narrative shifts and Geoff becomes the victim the central theme of the film emerges – we wonder whether Geoff is a ephebophile because at this point nothing has happened and it is not conclusive. Thus, the film's dialogue engages in a discussion of ephebophilia and the online stalking of young girls. After Hayley has drugged Geoff, he asks her what she is doing and why she has been stalking him, to which she responds 'Let's get this straight Geoff. You've been stalking me. I went into chatrooms using other screen names and watched as you'd get to know other women – then drop the chats when you realized they were older than me. You took your sweet time sniffing out some one my age.' She continues, stating that: 'You know, it's funny.

¹⁶³ ibid.

I'd like mention some obscure singer or band, and you'd know such a lot about it. But not right at the moment, just a few minutes later. After you had a chance to look it up on the net, maybe? You used the same phrases to talk about Goldfrapp as they use in the reviews on Amazon.com. Busted. 164 She concludes,

'Of course you're not the first guy to lie to a girl. The operative word here, though: girl. You know how old I am. What makes someone who's barely past her first period worth all that research? I gotta wonder about a grown man who goes to such trouble to charm a girl. Hey! There's that word again! GIRL. Maybe it's the camera thing. Computers, cameras, they let you hide a little, don't they? So safe. I heard how your voice changed when you got this between us.'165

The conversation continues with Geoff attempting to defend himself claiming that Hayley was coming on to him. She responds: 'They always say that Geoff', answering his question of who? with:

'Who? The paedophiles'. 'She was so sexy. She was asking for it. She was only technically a girl, she acted like a woman. So easy to blame a kid, y'know? But just because a girl knows how to imitate a woman doesn't mean she's ready to do what a woman does. You're the grownup. If a kid's experimenting and says something flirty, you ignore it, you don't encourage it. If a kid says let's make screwdrivers, you take the alcohol away, you don't race them to the next drink.'166

It is this direction of argumentation that sets up the horror sequences that follow and the performative (not actual) castration of Geoff. Are Hayley's actions justified is what the film is asking of the viewer. The film argues that if Hayley does 'a little preventive maintenance, 167 people will be safer. It is at this point in the film that the narrative moves from the Little Red Riding Hood tale to another sub-genre of horror 'rape-revenge'. In fact the 'Little Red Riding Hood' subtext of the film was an inadvertent accident by the visual director who by chance chose the red hoodie that Ellen Page's character wears throughout the film. Furthermore, when asked during the casting process if the film reminded her of any historic stories or characters, Page responded 'Joan of Arc'. 168 Thus,

¹⁶⁴ ibid.

¹⁶⁵ ibid.

¹⁶⁶ ibid.

¹⁶⁷ ibid. Hayley castrates Geoff in the film.

¹⁶⁸ Ellen Page in Controversial Candy (special features documentary), Hard Candy, dir. David Slade, (2006).

the film perhaps suggests that the character of Hayley is a feminist, a crusading, pubescent girl who is doing society a service by ridding it of an evil ephebophile. However, this is a complex subject matter and one that is explored in more extensive detail in Chapter Four of this thesis which specifically examines the sub-genre of raperevenge.

Whatever the answers may be to the questions posed by *Hard Candy*, what is both interesting and problematic is the recurrent tendency of cultural narratives to pathologize sexualities which exist outside the dominant paradigm of male, heterosexual normativity. The scientific discourse shifts within the film from the pathologizing of menstruation and female sexuality to an interrogation of ephebophilia, with the focus centring on the male genitals rather than the female sexual organs. As Foucault has shown once sexuality came under scrutiny the focus was placed on all non-male heterosexual practices, he writes:

[...] what came under scrutiny was the sexuality of children, mad men and women and criminals; the sensuality of those who did not like the opposite sex; reveries, obsessions, petty manias, or great transports of rage. It was time for all these figures, scarcely noticed in the past, to step forward and speak, to make the difficult confession of what they were. No doubt they were condemned all the same; but they were listened to; and if regular sexuality happened to be questioned once again, it was through a reflux movement, originating in these peripheral sexualities.' 169

However, I would not like to suggest that this argument in anyway condones ephebophilia, yet it does raise the question as to what types of sexualities are constructed and vilified through popular cultural narratives.

Overall, this chapter has attempted to trace the coded and often not so coded theme of female puberty and menstruation in fairy tales. The primary focus has been on the dominant presence of the 'Little Red Riding Hood' story across the media since its oral folk tale days to the present. The story demonstrates myth-making practices in the historic constructions of female sexuality. Fairy tales and in particular the 'Little Red Riding Hood' story have over the centuries been both used and appropriated as warning tales, moral fables and feminist vehicles for expressing liberated female sexual desire. Thus, in the next chapter I will continue to explore socio-cultural constructions of female sexuality and menstruation, moving from fairy tales of blood to the uses of scientific discourse and

¹⁶⁹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol 1: The Will to Knowledge*, (London: Penguin, 1994), pp.38-39.

medical practice in the depiction of women in vampire narratives. As this chapter has demonstrated, joining the 'company of wolves' is a dangerous move and one which is often violently punished.

'Vamping the Woman':

Pathologies of Blood and Female Vampirism

The most characteristic feature of the vampire is its horrid thirst for blood. By blood it sustains and nourishes its own vitality, it prolongs its existence of life in death and death in life. Blood it seeks and blood it must have.

(Montague Summers, The Vampire in Europe)

What emerges in tracing the female vampire from her origins to the present day is the continued emphasis on her threatening sexuality. From Coleridge's nineteenth-century serpentine Lady Geraldine and Shelley's Medusa invoking a 'tempestuous loveliness of terror' to the explicit lesbianism of Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, to the femme fatale and vamp of the early twentieth century, to the highly eroticised female vampire of the 1960s and 1970s, or the immortal Miriam Blaylock of the 1980s and Claire Denis' contemporary carnivorous vampire, the emphasis is continually placed upon the imminent sexual danger posed by the female vampire.

The female vampire, like all manifestations of the monstrous-feminine in popular culture tends to emerge at moments when there are particularly violent shifts in gender politics. Furthermore, the female vampire is particularly susceptible to historical shifts in science and medicine pertaining to female sexuality. Thus, this chapter will explore the medical pathologizing of female sexuality through the figure of the female vampire. Throughout history there has been a continuous and systemic pathologising of female sexuality and the female reproductive body with both the medical and psychiatric professions diagnosing women, often with little evidence, of illnesses ranging from madness to nymphomania, neurasthenia to pre-menstrual syndrome to the hot flushes and decrepitude of menopause and old age. Thus, the female body with its threatening and vampiric corporeality has been a continuous site of violent encounter in both literature and cinema. As Barbara Creed writes:

The female vampire is abject because she disrupts identity and order; driven by her lust for blood, she does not respect the dictates of the law which set down the

¹ Montague Summers, *The Vampire in Europe*, (London: Bracken 1996), p.17.

rules of proper sexual conduct. Like the male, the female vampire also represents abjection because she crosses the boundary between the living and the dead. ²

Therefore, this chapter will examine examples of female vampirism from the nineteenth-century to the present. Overall, what I aim to demonstrate in this chapter is the socio-cultural, medical embodiment of female sexuality through gynaecological discourse and practice, and then to show how this is evidenced in popular cultural representations of the female vampire. As Margrit Shildrick writes of embodiment in relation to health and medicine:

As the concept of health was both established as a recognisable regulatory norm, and progressively narrowed to mean simply the absence of disease, the specialism of medicine became the dominant form of health care. At the same time, medicine expanded its remit as the potential location of disease was broadened to encompass such areas as that of sexuality or the emotions. Practitioners were increasingly seen as men of science, acting as skilled technicians, whose expert knowledge could lead to the elimination of the disease state wherever it might occur. On a formal level, then, the institution of modern medicine is firmly rooted in the idea that health is some kind of given: a normative state which can be restored by defeating the abnormality of disease. Not surprisingly, this dualist model has clear implications for what kind of morality might be appropriate to the practice of medicine, and by extension to health care as a whole.³

She also makes the following point:

That the reproductive body stands for something essentially female, and that to be valorised as a life-giver just is to be valorised as a woman, has been taken as a biological given. Nonetheless, that body has no stable history, and the valuation put on it has been consistent only in so far as it has been consistently less than that given to the male body. Moreover, whichever conception of the self is privileged – as either a transcendental attribute of mind or as fully embodied – the selfhood of women, whether it is characterised as deficient or excessive, is always inferior, incapable of full independent agency.⁴

Thus, cultural constructions of the body form part of what Foucault describes as the symbiotic relationship between power and knowledge. He writes. 'The exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of

⁴ ibid., p.22.

106

² Barbara Creed, The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis, p.61.

³ Margrit Shildrick, Leaky Bodies and Boundaries, Feminism, Postmodernism and (Bio) Ethics, p.17.

power'. Furthermore, as I already noted in the 'Introduction' to this thesis, Foucault describes historical enquiry as 'genealogy', its task to 'expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body.' This deployment of biopower indicates, according to Foucault, how society's, 'control over individuals was accomplished not only through consciousness or ideology but also in the body and with the body. For capitalist society, it was biopolitics, the biological, the somatic and the corporal, that mattered more than anything else. The body is a biopolitical reality; medicine is a biopoliticial strategy.' It is precisely these biopolitical strategies that this chapter will attempt to explore by tracing the female vampire alongside shifts in medical discourse pertaining to the female body and female sexuality. As Shildrick points out this 'is no abstract question for, although perception and knowledge *are* always mediated, and bodies themselves are discursive formations, what is done as a result of those truths has of course real material effects which have direct bearing on our lives as women.'

Thus, medical constructions of the female body directly impact upon perception and knowledge and have real material effects on lived experience. As such, the main focus of this chapter will be on the pathologizing of menstruation in women and the impact of medical practice. The menstrual woman has inherent connections with the myth of the vampire and as such representations of female vampirism have evolved in accordance with shifts in how medicine has perceived and constructed menstruation.

Therefore, in the first section of this chapter, I will draw a direct connection between vampirism and menstruation examining the nineteenth-century's obsession with the female reproductive body through Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, a novel indicative of its time. In section two, I will explore degeneracy theory and the femme fatale in relation to a negative menstrual economics which emerges in medical texts of the early twentieth century, focusing on Porter Emerson Browne's 1909 play *A Fool There Was*, its novelization in the same year and its film adaptation in 1915 by Frank Powell, and also commenting on Fritz Lieber's short story, *The Girl with the Hungry Eyes*, published in 1949. The final section will focus on the female vampire examining the pervasive

⁵ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, Gordon Colin, ed., (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), p.52.

⁶ Michel Foucault, 'Nietchze, Genealogy, History', in Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, eds., and trans., *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p.148.

⁷ Michel Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault: 1954-1984, volume 3*, James D. Faubian, ed., (London: Penguin, 2000), p.137.

⁸ Shildrick Margrit, Leaky Bodies and Boundaries, Feminism, Postmodernism and (Bio) Ethics, p.15.

obsession with eternal youth and beauty. Here, I will begin with Arabella Kenealy's *A Beautiful Vampire* (1896), before examining the resurgence in the Countess Bathory story in the 1960s. However, the main focus will be on Whitley Strieber's *The Hunger* (1981) and Tony Scott's (1983) film adaptation. I will conclude this chapter by looking at the satiric postmodernism of Claire Denis' film *Trouble Everyday* released in 2002. Overall, I hope to demonstrate what Foucault describes as bio-power, that is, as Shildrick explains, 'the power over life' which 'operates by reaching into the private pleasures of individuals to liberate new public practices which constitute in effect systems of control. In other words, the local relations of sexuality emerge as the basis of new strategies which shape the social body by acting on the bodies of individuals.'

Menstrual Pathologies in Bram Stoker's Dracula

To destroy the vampire, suppress the menstruating woman and to look away from the Medusa, the embodiment of dangerous looking, are all responses to the masculine fear of the female. ¹⁰

(Marie Mulvey-Roberts, 'Menstrual Misogyny and Taboo: The Medusa, Vampire, and the Female Stigmatic')

The polarised dialectic of the idealised, perfect woman and the demonised, sexual woman has dominated separatist Western cultural ideology for centuries. In terms of the body, it reaches a significant impasse in the nineteenth century. During the Victorian period, scientific and medical advances developed alongside a resurgence of feminist activism, particularly so from the 1860s onwards. The female activist was embodied in the concept of the 'New Woman'. According to Lyn Pykett:

[...] the New Woman was a representation. She was a construct, 'a condensed symbol of disorder and rebellion' (Smith-Rosenberg), who was actively produced and reproduced in the pages of the newspaper and periodical press, as well as in novels.¹¹

⁹ ibid., p.46.

¹⁰ Marie Mulvey-Roberts, 'Menstrual Misogyny and Taboo: The Medusa, Vampire, and the Female Stigmatic' in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, eds., *Menstruation: A Cultural History*, p.159.

¹¹ Lynn Pykett, *The 'Improper' Feminine: The Woman's Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing*, (London: Routledge, 1992), pp.137-138.

The New Woman not only posed a threat to the social order but also to the natural order, she was represented as 'simultaneously *non-female*, *unfeminine*, and *ultra-feminine*.' Incorporated into varying depictions of the New Woman was a consistent perception of her as over-sexed and unduly interested in sexual matters. Correspondingly, scientific and medical discourses began to mirror public opinion. As such, female sexuality became the locus of attention in the medical world with the womb, the reproductive organs, and obsessively so, the menstrual cycle, becoming primary sites for medical inquiry and pathologising.

Prior to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the one-sex model dominated medical thinking in relation to the human body. For years it was commonly accepted that male and female genitals were the same. In Latin or Greek, or in the European vernaculars until around 1700, there was no separate term 'for vagina as the tube or sheath into which its opposite, the penis fits and through which the infant is born.' It was not until the late eighteenth century that the common discourse about sex and the body changed. Organs that had shared a name – ovaries and testicles – were now linguistically distinguished. The context for the articulation of two distinct sexes was, however, according to the historian Thomas Laqueur, neither a theory of knowledge nor a reflection of advances in scientific knowledge; instead, he attributes reinterpretations of the body to

The rise of Evangelical religion, Enlightenment political theory, the development of new sorts of public spaces in the eighteenth century, Lockean ideas of marriage as a contract, the cataclysmic possibilities for social change wrought by the French Revolution, post-revolutionary conservatism, post-revolutionary feminism, the factory system with its restructuring of the sexual division of labour, the rise of a free market economy in services or commodities, the birth of classes, singly or in combination – none of these things caused the making of a new sexed body. Instead, the remaking of the body is itself intrinsic to each of these developments.¹⁴

One of the foremost exponents in medical developments and theorizing of the female reproductive organs and particularly menstruation in the nineteenth century was Dr Edward Tilt, who published extensively on the subject in the latter half of the nineteenth century. His work included titles such as *The Change of Life in Health and*

¹² ibid., p.140.

¹³ Thomas Laqueur, Making Sex: From the Greeks to Freud, p.5.

¹⁴ ibid., p.11.

Disease, The Elements of Health, and Principles of Female Hygiene, On the Preservation of the Health of Women at the Critical Periods of Life to A Handbook of Uterine Therapeutics and of Diseases of Women. According to Tilt, regulation of the menstrual cycle was imperative to both the physical and mental health of women. As Laqueur notes

All in all, the theory of the menstrual cycle dominant from the 1840s to the early twentieth century rather neatly integrated a particular set of real discoveries into an imagined biology of incommensurability. Menstruation, with its attendant aberrations, became a uniquely and distinguishingly female process.¹⁵

A nineteenth century medical text by Adam Raciborski entitled *Traité de la menstruation*, ses rapports avec l'ovulation, la fécundation, l'hygiène de la puberté et l'âge critique, son rôle dans les différentes maladies, ses troubles et leur traitement, 16 made the connection between menstruation and heat. Writing in an early section on heat in dogs and cats he draws an analogy between the menses and heat in women. He states: 'We will see that the turgescence – the crisis – of menstruation (l'orgasme de l'ovulation) is one of the most powerful causes of over-excitement in women. Trom the 1840s on menstrual bleeding became the sign of swelling and explosion whose corresponding behavioural manifestations were aligned with sexual excitement and animals in heat. Thus, the menstruating woman was rendered as out of control and in need of containment.

Practical developments in obstetrics and gynaecology also contributed to the focus on the menses as the primary cause of physical and mental ill-health in women. In particular, the redevelopment of the speculum and the curette revolutionised gynaecological practice. Furthermore, menstrual out-flow was measured and its consistency and colour recorded in order to determine normative points of reference. This both allowed and contributed to the diagnosis and treatment of a wide ranging number of female ailments as menstrual. Fig.2.1



Concomitant with the medical fixation on the menstrual cycle in the Victorian period is the cultural obsession in art and literature with women and snakes and/or women and vampires. The alignment of women with snakes and vampires reinforced notions of

¹⁵ Thomas Laqueur, Making Sex: From the Greeks to Freud, p.217.

¹⁶ English translation: Treatise on menstruation and its relationship to ovulation, fertility, hygiene at puberty and the critical age, its role in different illnesses and its symptoms and treatment.

¹⁷ Adam Raciborski, quoted in Thomas Laqueur, Making Sex: From the Greeks to Freud, p.220.

female sexuality as lascivious and licentious. Bram Dijksta appraises this obsession as a logical leap from the myth of Eve and her temptation by the serpent in the Garden of Eden to modern womanhood in the nineteenth century. He states:

In the evil, bestial implications of her beauty, woman was not only tempted by the snake but was the snake herself. Among the terms used to describe a woman's appearance none were more over-used during the late-nineteenth century than 'serpentine', 'sinuous', and 'snake-like.¹⁸

He continues, linking Lamia and late-nineteenth century feminism, and claiming:

The link between Lamia and the late nineteenth-century feminists, the viragoes – the wild women – would have been clear to any intellectual reasonably well versed in classical mythology, since Lamia of myth was thought to have been a bisexual, masculinized, cradle-robbing creature, and therefore to the men of the turn of the century perfectly representative of the New Woman who, in their eyes, was seeking to arrogate to herself male privileges, refused the duties of motherhood, and was intent upon destroying the heavenly harmony of feminine subordination in the family. The same was certainly true of Lilith, who, in her unwillingness to play second fiddle to Adam, was, as Rossetti's work already indicated, widely regarded as the world's first virago. 19

The analogy of women and snakes, as well as having obvious roots in Genesis and Classical mythology, is also located in menstrual myths. In many cultures it is believed that a girl's first menstrual bleeding occurs when a snake descends from the moon and bites her. According to Mircea Eliade, the moon-animal par excellence has been the snake. He states:

All over the East it was believed that woman's first sexual contact was with a snake, at puberty or during menstruation. The Komati tribe in the Mysore province of India use snakes made of stone in a rite to bring about the fertility of women. Claudius Aelianus declares that the Hebrews believed that snakes mated with unmarried girls and we also find this belief in Japan. A Persian tradition says that after the first woman had been seduced by the serpent she immediately began to menstruate. And it was said by the rabbis that menstruation was the result of Eve's relations with the serpent in the Garden of Eden. In Abyssinia it was thought that girls were in danger of being raped by snakes until they were married. One Algerian story tells how a snake escaped when no one was looking and raped all

¹⁸ Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.305.

¹⁹ ibid., p.309.

the unmarried girls in a house ... Certainly the menstrual cycle helps to explain the spread of the belief that the moon is the first mate of all women. The Papoos thought menstruation was a proof that women and girls were connected with the moon, but in their iconography (sculptures on wood) they pictured reptiles emerging from their genital organs, which confirms that snakes and the moon are identified.²⁰

This connection between snakes, the moon and menstruation is further observed by Penelope Shuttle and Peter Redgrove, who pose the question 'Why snakes?' In response they point out that

during an eclipse of the sun (during which time it was thought by Pliny to be particularly dangerous), the moon's shadow rushing towards you across the land ripples with the refractions of the earth's atmosphere like snakes round the moon's shadow, if you use smoked glass. However, we have also seen that it is a common cultural image of menstruation that a woman is bitten by a snake-god who comes from the moon. The moon sloughs herself and renews, just as the snake sheds its skin, and so does the sexually undulant wall of the womb renew its wall after one wave-peak of the menstrual cycle: the woman renews her sexual self after shedding blood as the snake sheds its skin. The wavy waters of the tidal sea are comparable to swimming snakes, and a good vaginal orgasm can feel to one's penis like a sea undulant with such snakes: a sea which is, of course, tidal with the monthly period.²¹

Ancient languages also gave the serpent the same name as Eve, a name meaning 'Life' and according to the most ancient myths the original primal couple was not a god and goddess but a serpent and a goddess. Also the legendary Basilisk is said to be born of menstrual blood and is derived from the classical myth of the serpent-haired Gorgon.²²

The nineteenth-century lunar-influenced, fanged vampire exploits age-old links between serpents, female sexuality and menstruation. The most famous vampire text of the Victorian period is undoubtedly Bram Stoker's *Dracula* described by Marie Mulvey-Roberts as

[...] Far more than a novel about pathologies. [...] its gendering of male blood as good and female blood as bad signals that it is menstrual blood and its pathologies that provoke a sense of horror. [...] Stoker's attention to the relationship between women and blood is a surrogate for menstrual taboo, which is also eroticized

²² Barbara G. Walker, *The Woman's Encyclopaedia of Myths and Secrets*, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), pp.642-644.

²⁰ Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1979), pp.165-166.

²¹ Penelope Shuttle and Peter Redgrove, *The Wise Wound: Menstruation and Everywoman*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), pp.263-264.

haemofetishism. At the same time, it is a reinforcement of the Victorian conservative medical view that menstruation should be morbidified.²³

Although Mulvey-Roberts' seminal essay 'Dracula, and the Doctors: Bad Blood, Menstrual Taboo and the New Woman' comprehensively explores menstrual pathologies in Dracula, I depart from her reading of the vampire as merely a metaphor for menstruation or as a 'surrogate for menstrual taboo' and will argue instead that the vampire in Stoker's text functions as a displaced embodiment of female sexuality and menstrual blood, demonstrating stratifications of power and the interaction of a multiplicity of (pseudo)-medical and moral discourses, focusing on the character of Lucy Westenra as an example of Victorian socio-cultural and psycho-sexual anxieties pertaining to women. From her first encounter with Dracula to her final beheading and staking, Lucy is an exemplary case study in the pathologising of menstruation and the control and containment of female sexuality.

From Jonathan Harker's initial moonlight journey to Castle Dracula, to his moonlight encounter with the three vampire wives of his host, the motif of the moon dominates the narrative.²⁴ Lucy's nocturnal, sleepwalking nightmare through the streets of Whitby, her ascent to the graveyard and her encounter with the vampiric Count are illumined by a full moon:

There was a bright full moon, with heavy black clouds, which threw the whole scene into a fleeting diorama of light and shade as they sailed across [...] Whatever my expectation was, it was not disappointed, for there, on our favourite seat, the silver light of the moon struck a half-reclining figure, snowy white. The coming of the cloud was too quick for me to see much for shadow shut down on light almost immediately; but it seemed to me as though something dark stood behind the seat where the white figure shone, and bent over it. What it was whether man or beast, I could not tell [...] When I got almost to the top I could see the seat and the white figure, for I was close enough to distinguish it even through the spells of shadow. There was undoubtedly something, long and black, bending over the half-reclining white figure. [...] When I came into view again the cloud had passed, and the moon light struck so brilliantly that I could see Lucy half

23

²³ Marie Mulvey-Roberts, 'Dracula and the Doctors: Bad Blood, Menstrual Taboo and the New Woman' in William Hughes and Andrew Smith, ed., *Bram Stoker: History, Psychoanalysis and the Gothic*, (London: St. Martins Press, 1998), p.78.

²⁴ See Nina Auerbach for a lengthy analysis of the significance of the moon to 19th century vampires. Auerbach traces the motif of the moon and its significance from its dominance in Polidori's *Vampyre* to *Varney* and its upstaging in LeFanu's *Carmilla* (1872) to Stoker's *Dracula* and the 20th century vampire where she notes that 'what the early nineteenth-century moon bestowed, the mid-twentieth sun destroys.' Nina Auerbach, *Our Vampires Ourselves*, (Chicago University Press: Chicago, 1995), p.122.

reclining with her head lying over the back of the seat. She was quite alone, and there was not a sign of any living thing about.²⁵

The supine posture of Lucy in this scene is undeniably sexual and her nocturnal sleep-walking and encounter with Dracula reeks of illicit sexuality. Her sexual defilement or moreover her own expression of innate sexuality augers her eventual demise and descent into an uncontrollable blood-thirst, described by Stoker in terms akin to a nymphomania. From the outset, Lucy is an example of the discontented Victorian woman uneasy with her prescribed role. Her coquettish sexuality, flirtatiousness and flaunting of idealised, Victorian womanhood are evident in her response to a series of received marriage proposals. In a letter to her friend Mina Harker, she writes:

My dear Mina, why are men so noble when we women are so little worth of them? Here I was almost making fun of this great-hearted, true gentleman. I burst into tears – I am afraid, my dear, you will think this a very sloppy letter in more ways than one – and I really felt very badly. Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble? But this is heresy, and I must not say it.²⁶

'Marriage' has a double meaning in this extract, on a superficial level it means exactly what it suggests but on another level it is a codified expression for sexual relations. This is explicitly acknowledged during the blood transfusion by Van Helsing and the other men who see their blood-giving as a type of sexual act and do not mention it to Arthur Holmwood. Or, as Dr. Seward and Van Helsing later comment:

'Just so. Said he not the transfusion of his blood to her veins had made her truly his bride?' 'Yes, and it was a sweet and comforting idea for him.' 'Quite so. But there was a difficulty, friend John. If so that, then what about the others? Ho, ho! Then this sweet maid is a polyandrist, and me, with my poor wife dead to me but alive by Church's law, though no wits, all gone – even I, who am faithful husband to this now-no-wife, am bigamist.'²⁷

Thus, Lucy, from the outset discontented and uneasy with her restricted role as 'woman', has no choice but to suppress any desire to explore her sexuality and is compelled to fulfil her duty as a middle-class Victorian woman. Masochistic self-

²⁷ ibid., p.187.

114

²⁵ Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, (London: Penguin Classics, 2003), p.100.

²⁶ ibid., p.67.

abnegation is her only option in a society which rigorously denies any expression of female sexuality. In fact, her physical and mental deterioration commence when she accepts Arthur Holmwood's marriage proposal. From this point of submission, to her nocturnal encounter with Dracula, it becomes apparent that she is incapable of fulfilling her required role. It is therefore unsurprising and indicative of the cultural period that Lucy's encounter with Dracula coincides with a physical deterioration in her health. Mina describes Lucy as 'ill; that is she has no special disease, but she looks awful, and is getting worse everyday'28 and Dr Seward describes her condition as 'bloodless' but lacking the usual anaemic signs. He continues:

In other physical matters I was quite satisfied that there is no need for anxiety; but as there must be a cause somewhere, I have come to the conclusion that it must be something mental. She complains of difficulty in breathing satisfactorily at times, and of heavy lethargic sleep, with dreams that frighten her, but regarding which she can remember nothing. She says that as a child she used to walk in her sleep, and that when in Whitby the habit came back, and that once she walked out in the night and went to the East Cliff where Miss Murray found her; but she assures me that of late the habit has not returned.²⁹

Furthermore, Dr Seward is a psychiatrist and notably the most common approach to treating any signs of female sexual transgression in Victorian England was psychiatric. As Elaine Showalter points out in her work on women and madness, *The Female Malady*:

Victorian psychiatry defined its task with respect to women as the preservation of brain stability in the face of almost overwhelming physical odds. First of all, this entailed the management and regulation, insofar as possible, of women's periodic physical cycles and sexuality ... Nineteenth-century medical treatments designed to control the reproductive system strongly suggest male psychiatrists' fears of female sexuality. Indeed, uncontrollable sexuality seemed the major, almost defining symptom of insanity in women.³⁰

The treatment of Lucy's illness (blood transfusions) obviates the Victorian obsession with treating female mental illness (sexuality) by regulating the menstrual cycle. The symptoms from which she suffers are blatantly sexual and blood related. Blood loss is a significant indicator of menstruation and her lethargy and heavy sleep is, as Bruno Bettelheim notes, symptomatic of puberty. According to Bettelheim in his work

-

²⁸ Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, (London: Penguin Classics, 2003), p.120.

²⁹ ibid., pp.121-122.

³⁰ Elaine Showalter, The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980, p.74.

on fairy tales, 'During the months before the first menstruation, and often also for some time immediately following it, girls are passive, seem sleepy, and withdraw into themselves.' Perhaps more relevant, and more than likely known to Stoker in the 1890s, however, is the work of Dr. Edward Tilt, who documented numerous case studies of what he called *Pseudo-Narcotism* in a number of his menstrual patients. He describes Pseudo-Narcotism as:

A great tendency to sleep, an uneasy sensation of weight in the head, a feeling as if a cloud or a cobweb required to be brushed from the brain, disinclination for any exertion, a diminution in the memory and in the powers of the mind.³²

Furthermore, he describes Pseudo-Narcotism as 'very intense when the menstrual flow is either very painful, deficient, or completely absent.' His case study no.25 bears a striking resemblance to the description of Lucy's physical health subsequent to her attacks from Count Dracula. The patient is described as of a

delicate complexion, drowsy look, and when roused, looks as if she expected to see something dreadful [...] She sleeps all night, wakes unrefreshed, often falls asleep during the day; some times feels stunned, and loses her senses for an hour.³³

He also quotes the case of a patient who 'at menstrual periods, could almost sleep while walking, and once remained sixteen hours in a state of stupor, from which she awoke quite well.' Another patient 'at menstrual periods, would remain for hours in what she called her "quiet fit", a state of self-absorption, unaccompanied by hysterical phenomena, or by convulsions.' 35

Lucy's burgeoning sexuality in conjunction with her prior thinking on sexual mores and behaviour are opposed to and threaten the established sexual politics of the day. In no uncertain terms, Lucy must be appropriated into the fold of Victorian womanhood, or if not must face total annihilation of the self. Stoker's Lucy is at a defining point in sexual development, the influence of the moon and the arrival of Dracula is an embodiment of

35 Ibid., p.169.

³¹ Bruno Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales, p.225.

³² Edward Tilt, *The Change of Life in Health and Disease: A Practical Treatise on the Nervous and Other Afflictions Incidental to Women at the Decline of Life*, (London: John Churchill and Sons, 1870), p.199. ³³ ibid., pp.167-168.

³⁴ ibid., p.168-169.

menstruation and the maturation of female sexuality. Showalter, further, makes the point that

Although a relatively small percentage of women patients were committed to asylums during their adolescent years, doctors regarded puberty as one of the most psychologically dangerous periods of the female life-cycle. Doctors argued that the menstrual discharge in itself predisposed women to insanity. Either an abnormal quantity or quality of the blood, according to this theory could effect the brain; thus psychiatric physicians attempted to control the blood by diet and venesection. Late, irregular, or 'suppressed' menstruation was regarded as a dangerous condition and was treated with purgatives, forcing medicines, hip baths, and leeches applied to the thighs.³⁶

Specific examples, again from Dr Edward Tilt, include instructions that the

labia should be fomented every two of three hours with a lotion containing half an ounce of acetate of lead, and two drachms of laudanum to four ounces of distilled water [...] A tepid bath or hip bath, should be taken daily, or every other day, warm water being added, so that the patient may remain in it for an hour, or more if possible. After the full effect of a saline purgative, a sedative rectal injection should be given once or twice a day.³⁷

Other notable examples involving purgation, as Showalter has noted, include the leeching of the labia, described by Tilt in case 42, whereby leeches were applied frequently to the labia of a young patient to induce menstruation. Much medical advice and many of the cures for anaemia in the nineteenth century often verged on the macabre. One suggested remedy for anaemia recommended to women was to ingest a daily cup of ox-blood. It was reasoned that drinking the blood of a strong animal would strengthen one's own blood. In consequence, abbatoirs began to attract 'blood drinkers' – anaemics who came to drink a daily cup of blood. This medical trend is recorded in the literature and art of the day. Rachilde (the pseudonym of Marguerite Eymery-Vallette), a French writer, penned a short story 'The Blood Drinker' in 1900 which explored themes of the Eternal Feminine, blood-lust and the degenerative affect of female sexuality alongside contemporary medical cures for anaemia. Dijkstra surmises:

_

³⁶ Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p.56.

³⁷ Edward Tilt, *The Change of Life in Health and Disease: A Practical Treatise on the Nervous and Other Afflictions Incidental to Women at the Decline of Life*, p.238.

Rachilde, in her emphatically symbolist story 'The Blood Drinker,' positions herself in the interstices between the reality of the late nineteenth-century cures and the psychological fascination of her contemporaries for the notion of the bestial vampire woman. Her blood drinker is none other than the moon – the feminine principle – beamed in upon herself in 'the eternal desperation of her own nothingness.' 38

The trend for blood-drinking was also captured in a painting by Ferdinand Gueldry exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Français in 1898. The painting caused a sensation and a review in *The Magazine of Art* reported that

One of the most popular pictures of the year is undoubtedly Monsieur Gueldry's gorge raising representation of 'The Blood-Drinkers.' In which a group of consumptive invalids, congregated in a shambles, are drinking the blood fresh from the newly-slain ox lying in the foreground – blood that oozes out over the floor – while the slaughterers themselves, steeped in gore, hand out the glasses like the women at the wells. What gives point to the loathsomeness of the subject is the figure of one young girl, pale and trembling, who turns from the scene in sickening disgust, and so accentuates our own.³⁹

The cultural visibility of horrific and gruesome solutions for anaemia only fuelled the period's preoccupation with the degeneracy of women. Consequentially, it is by no means a huge leap to acknowledge how paintings and short stories recounting such practices served to promote suspicions that vampires actually existed, especially vampire women. The blood transfusions in Stoker's novel can, thus, be read as either a morbid

example of a cure for anaemia, or as an attempt to regulate the menstrual cycle. A further possibility suggests that the transfusions act as a type of reverse menstruation. Van Helsing and his band of morally upstanding specimens of Victorian manhood appropriate menstruation through

repeated blood donations (periodic loss of



Fig.2.2

similar to Lucy's. Yet for the sake of Victorian womanhood, they continue in their weakened state to replace the blood she loses during her nightly visits from Dracula. The

³⁹ ibid., p.338.

³⁸ Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*, p.338.

replacement of blood can also be read as an attempt to halt or delay menstruation, a method which was widely promoted in Victorian society. Showalter, once again referring to Dr Edward Tilt, notes that:

Menstruation was so disruptive to the female brain that it should not be hastened but rather be retarded as long as possible, and he advised mothers to prevent menarche by ensuring that their teen-age daughters remained in the nursery, took cold shower baths, avoided feather beds and novels, eliminated meat from their diets, and wore drawers. Delayed menstruation, he insisted, was 'the principal cause of the pre-eminence of English women, in vigour of constitution and soundness of judgement, and ... rectitude of moral principal.⁴⁰

However, when most attempts to regulate and bring female sexuality under control had been exhausted, all that remained was the final frontier in treatments, clitoridectomy. It was first conceived as a treatment by Dr. Isaac Baker Brown, who practiced the operation on women in his private London clinic for seven years between 1859 and 1866. Brown was convinced that female masturbation was responsible for female madness and recommended the removal of the clitoris, if not the labia, as a cure. According to Showalter

As he became more confident, he operated on patients as young as ten, on idiots, epileptics, paralytics, even on women with eye problems. He operated five times on women whose madness consisted of their wish to take advantage of the new Divorce Act of 1857, and found in each case that his patient returned humbly to her husband. In no case, Brown claimed, was he so certain of a cure as in nymphomania, for he had never seen a recurrence of the disease after surgery. 41

Van Helsing, Dr Seward, Arthur Holmwood and Quincy Morris fail in their attempts to prevent Lucy from changing into a nymphomaniac, blood-fiend whose sweetness has turned to 'adamantine, heartless cruelty, and the purity to voluptuous wantonness.' Therefore, as in the treatment of incurable insanity in Victorian women, Lucy finally succumbs to the most horrific and nightmarish of ends. She is staked and beheaded:

_

⁴⁰ Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p.75.

⁴¹ ibid., p.76.

⁴² Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, p.225.

Arthur took the stake and the hammer, and when once his mind was set on action his hands never trembled nor even quivered. Van Helsing opened his missal and began to read, and Ouincy and I followed as well as we could. Arthur placed the point over the heart, and as I looked I could see its dint in the white flesh. Then he struck with all his might. The thing in the coffin writhed; and a hideous, bloodcurdling screech came from the opened red lips [labia/clitoris perhaps]. The body shook and quivered and twisted in wild contortions; the sharp white teeth champed together till the lips were cut, and the mouth was smeared with a crimson foam. But Arthur never faltered. He looked like a figure of Thor as his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper and deeper the mercy-bearing stake, whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it. His face was set, and high duty seemed to shine through it; the sight of it gave us courage, so that our voices seemed to ring through the little vault. And then the writhing and quivering of the body became less, and the teeth ceased to champ, and the face to quiver. Finally it lay still. The terrible task was over ... Arthur bent and kissed her, and then we sent him and Quincey out of the tomb; the Professor and I sawed the top off the stake leaving the point of it in the body. Then we cut off the head and filled the mouth with garlic. We soldered up the leaden coffin, screwed on the coffin-lid, and gathering up our belongings came away. When the Professor locked the door he gave the key to Arthur.4

The critic Darryl Jones describes the power and imagery of the scene as

[...] one of traditional masculinity, the god Thor with his mighty hammer, and the tableau is that of a violent gang-rape.⁴⁴

I agree with his interpretation of this scene but would expand upon the metaphor of rape. Rape is both a violation and a play of power, and can metaphorically be extended to

include more covert forms of control over the female body. On a broader cultural platform, I would suggest that in the case of Lucy Westenra, her staking and beheading is a displaced of clitoridectomy. rendering References to the lips (labia), heart and head (clitoris) to the stuffing of her mouth with garlic (closing the vagina) are analogous to barbaric treatments prescribed to cure 'female insanity'.



Fig. 2.3

⁴³ ibid., pp.230-232.

⁴⁴ Darryl Jones, *Horror: A Thematic History in Fiction and Film*, (London: Arnold, 2002), p.88.

This is glaringly so in vampire films where the most visually disturbing and lasting image is generally the staking and beheading of the female vampire. The scene in Hammer's *Dracula - Prince of Darkness* (1966) where Helen (the wanton female vampire) is staked through the heart by a priest on what can only be described as a sacrificial alter, is, although dated, both shocking and unsettling. Even more terrifying is the post-staking image of docility and serenity where Helen, like Stoker's Lucy, is violated into submission. Moreover, S.S. Prawer in his work *Caligari's Children* dedicates a whole chapter to this one scene. ⁴⁵ Or, as Barabara Creed writes:

The female vampire is sometimes decapitated (e.g., *The Vampire Lovers*). In this context it is worth noting that there are some mythical connections between the Medusa and the female vampire. According to Philip Slater, the glance of a menstruating woman, the glance of the Medusa or Gorgon, was one thought to turn men to stone. The origin of the word 'Gorgon' is from the phrase 'the moon as it is terrible to behold' (Shuttle and Redgrove, 1978, 262). The moon was associated with snakes and vampires for the reasons discussed above. Freud argued that the Medusa's head represented the terrifying genitals of the mother. How much more terrifying would the Medusa's head appear were her two long boar's tusks were covered with blood! Hers would take on the appearance of the bleeding female genitals; in its horrifying aspect this would resemble not the castrated female genitals but the castrating genitals, the terrifying *vagina dentata*.

However, Creed's analysis resides in reading the bleeding vampire mouth as castrating, a vagina dentata and moves from her initial connections to menstruation. I would maintain that more than castration, the anxiety resulting in decapitation is the continuing attempt to control female sexuality through violent, barbaric, surgical/medical intervention.

Furthermore, as I have already demonstrated, vampires in literature revolve around the motifs of the moon and blood. In addition the moon compels the blood-parched figure of the vampire to blood-drinking or, in other words, initiates puberty, menstruation and a sexual appetite which demands to be sated. The novel itself, perhaps merely by coincidence, gives further credence to this argument by including a blatant symbol of female sexuality. Dracula arrives in Whitby on a boat called the Demeter. According to Barbara Belford in her biography of Bram Stoker, on a visit to the lighthouse at Whitby he was told about the Dmitry:

⁴⁵ S.S. Prawer, 'An Image and its Context', in *Caligari's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror,* (New York: Da Capo, 1980), pp.241-269.

⁴⁶ Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, p.66.

a Russian Brigantine out of the port of Narva, ballasted with silver sand from the Danube – which ran aground on October 24, 1885. At the library Stoker read the Whitby *Gazette's* report of the event [...] ⁴⁷

Thus, it is established that Stoker's change of the ship's name was a conscious decision. It is also more than credible to assume that Stoker was knowledgeable of the Classical Greek Goddess Demeter and what she signified. The definition of Demeter given by Barbara G. Walker is as follows:

Greek *meter* is 'mother'. *De* is the delta, or triangle, a female genital sign know as 'the letter of the vulva' in the Greek sacred alphabet, as in India it was Yoni Yantra, or yantra of the vulva. Corresponding letters – Sanskrit *dwr*, Celtic *duir*, Hebrew *daleth* – meant the Door of birth, death, or the sexual paradise. Thus, Demeter was what Asia called 'the Doorway of the Mysterious Feminine ... the root from which Heaven and Earth Sprang.⁴⁸

The implications of Count Dracula's arrival into Whitby on a ship called the Demeter are manifold. Firstly, it reinforces the argument that the figure of the vampire is essentially feminized (an embodiment of female sexuality and menstrual blood). The whole scene, including the harbour and the convulsing waves suggest the spasming walls of the uterus prior to menstruation:

Then without warning the tempest broke. With a rapidity which, at the time, seemed incredible, and even afterwards is impossible to realise, the whole aspect of nature at once became convulsed. The waves rose in growing fury, each overtopping its fellow, till in a very few minutes the lately glassy sea was like a roaring and devouring monster.⁴⁹

The Demeter, a symbol of the female genitals, contracting in a spasmic sea, expels Dracula onto the shores of Whitby. Boundaries, both social and physical, are breached as he is bled and birthed from the Demeter. At this point Dracula *is* menstrual bleeding, infective and invasive, inciting female sexuality. The infection of his victims when it does not involve death is the giving of life, immortality in the realm of the undead. Similarly, puberty is a rebirth, a metamorphosis from one stage of sexual development to the next

⁴⁹ Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, pp.86-87.

⁴⁷ Barbara Belford, *Bram Stoker: A Biography of the Author of Dracula*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1996), p.222.

⁴⁸ Barbara G. Walker, *The Woman's Encyclopaedia of Myths and Secrets*, p.218.

and the arrival of the vampire is 'usually expressed with the juxtaposition of repressed with uncontrollable sexuality.' Furthermore the vampire has been described as 'A perfect embodiment of eros and thanatos, an archetype of the unconscious whose coming augurs all manner of erotic deliria. Dracula's female victims become deranged psychosexual cannibals.' 51

The significance of the 'Demeter' also reverberates in the nightmarish quality of Dracula's nightly visits to his victims. As Walker points out in her explanation and history of the term 'Demeter' like the majority of Asiatic Goddesses in their oldest forms, Demeter was a triadic figure appearing as Virgin, Mother and Crone, or Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. One aspect of her crone phase is echoed in the legendary medieval Night-Mare. ⁵² Walker elaborates

The legendary medieval Night-Mare – and equine Fury who tormented sinners in their sleep was based on ancient images of a Mare-headed Demeter. 53

The equine association of the nightmare is also explored by Ernest Jones in his work entitled *On the Nightmare*. ⁵⁴ After exhausting the etymological origin of the term nightmare, he argues:

The present point is this. It might readily be supposed that the assimilation of the second half of the word Nightmare to the English word for a female horse, a mare, is a matter of no special significance. But psycho-analysis has with right become suspicious of manifestations of the human spirit that are easily discarded as meaningless, and in the present case our suspicions are strengthened when we learn that in other countries the ideas of night-hag and female horse are closely associated, although there is not the linguistic justification for it that exists in English. ⁵⁵

Dictionary, (Oxford: Oxford University, 2003), p.448.

⁵¹ ibid., p.95.

⁵⁰ Allen Eyles, Robert Adkinson and Nicholas Fry, eds., *The House of Horror: The Complete Story of Hammer Films*, (London: Lorrimer, 1981), p.95.

⁵² The Oxford Classical Dictionary gives the following definition: 'In Arcadia Demeter was worshipped with Poseidon. The Black Demeter of Phigaleia and Demeter Erinys of Thelpusa were both said to have taken the form of a mare and to have been mated with Poseidon in Horse shape, and at Phigaleia she was shown as horse-headed.' Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth eds., *The Oxford Classical*

 ⁵³ Barbara G. Walker, *The Woman's Encyclopaedia of Myths and Secrets*, p.218.
 ⁵⁴ It is worth noting that that the frontpiece of Jones' *On the Nightmare* is Henry Fuseli's painting *The Nightmare* (1781).

⁵⁵ Ernest Jones, *On the Nightmare*, (London: L. & Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press, and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1931), p.247.

Furthermore, Jones draws a link between the horse and the vulva which reinforces the connection between Demeter, the horse, and the nightmare. Giving examples of horses and women he quotes an old Prussian saying 'If the bridegroom comes on horseback to the wedding one should loosen the saddle girth as soon as he dismounts, for this ensures his future wife an easy childbirth. 56 The footnote attached to this anecdote explains that this 'symbolic equating of the horse's saddle-girth and harness with the female vulva is commonly met with in folklore.'57 Thus, the female horse or mare, her saddle and girth, like the Demeter, has a symbology rooted in the female genitals, specifically indicating the vulva. Furthermore, a connection can also be drawn with the mythical 'Mara' of Nordic mythology. The Mara is a type of incubus or succubus, who it is also believed rides horses leaving them exhausted the following morning. Mara has also been etymologically traced to the English word nightmare.⁵⁸

ibid., p.249.
 ibid., p.249.
 See Ernest Jones, *On the Nightmare*, (London: L. & Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press, and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1931), p.240.

This connection, whether, emanating from the psyche, or else an example of folkloric memory, is further evidenced in the Victorian preoccupation with the figure of the 'Fallen Woman'. The Fallen Woman in Victorian art and literature generally denotes the prostitute or the woman who has fallen prey to her sexual appetites. Her fall is frequently connected with horses. The critic Nina Auerbach refers to 'the symbolic use of horses in novels about fallen women from three different countries' referencing Leo Tolstoy's Anna Karenina, Émile Zola's Nana and George Moore's Esther Waters. According to Auerbach, 'In their sensuous celebrations of triumphant horses both Tolstoy and Zola commemorate their heroines' animality and the poignant glamour of its fall.'60 The most famous example of the Fallen Woman and her association with horses in British literature, however, has to be, Thomas Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles. The eponymous heroine's fall is precipitated by the death of the family horse and perhaps the most sexually charged moment in the novel occurs while she is being driven in a horse drawn cart to Tantridge by Alec D'Urberville. Furthermore, her eventual sexual encounter (or fall) with Alec is preceded by a journey on horseback. Thus, the connotations of female sexuality contained in Stoker's naming of the ship the 'Demeter' are many. Vampirism,

nightmares and horses meet at a point of cathexis denoting female sexuality, sexual appetite, and sexual transgression. As such, Lucy in Stoker's *Dracula* can also be categorized as an example of the fallen woman who has transgressed the codes of accepted morality. Finally, it is impossible to ignore the possible influence of Henry Fuseli's painting *The Nightmare* (1781), depicting a supine woman



Fig.2.4

oppressed by a ghoulish incubus-type demon who squats profanely upon her chest, while a wild-eyed horse glares on. The link between horses and sexuality here is explicit. I would also go as far as to suggest, that Stoker's scene of the Demeter entering Whitby Harbour and Lucy's same night sleepwalking episode with its implication of an incubus type sexual encounter replicates Fuseli's painting.

60 ibid., p.179.

⁵⁹ Nina Auerbach, Woman and the Demon, p.178.

It is also notable that the birth and development of psychoanalysis as a field of study more or less coincided with developments and advances in psychiatry, obstetrics and gynaecology. Auerbach notes that

Stoker might conceivably have known of Freud's work. In 1893 F.W.H. Myers reported enthusiastically on Breuer and Freud's 'Premliminary Communication' to *Studies on Hysteria* at a general meeting of the Society for Psychical Research in London. Stoker's alienist, Dr Seward, indefatigably recording bizarre manifestations of vampirism, mentions the mesmerist Charcot, Freud's early teacher; Dr. Seward's relentless attempt to make sense of his patient Renfield's 'zoophagy' is a weird forecast of the later Freud rationalizing the obsessions of his Wolf Man and Rat Man. Seward's meticulous case histories of Renfield, Lucy, and Dracula's other victims introduce into the Gothic genre a form that Freud would raise to a novelistic art; his anguished clinician's record makes Lucy both the early heroine of a case history and an ineffable romantic image of fin-de-siècle womanhood.⁶¹

The characteristic symptoms described by victims after a night-visit from a vampire correlate with similar descriptions of the nightmare. Jones, Freud's disciple, describes the three cardinal features of a typical nightmare as

(I) agonizing dread; (2) a suffocating sense of oppression at the chest; and (3) a conviction of helpless paralysis. Less conspicuous features are an outbreak of cold sweat, convulsive palpitation of the heart, and sometimes a flow of seminal or vaginal secretion or even a paralysis of the sphincters. 62

Lucy Westenra's first encounter with Dracula is most definitely depicted as nightmarish. In a supine position, the most common posture of a nightmare sufferer, she is described as having

Her lips parted, and she was breathing – not softly, as usual with her, but in long, heavy gasps, as though striving to get her lungs full at every breath. As I came close, she put up her hand in her slip and pulled the collar of her nightdress close round her throat. Whilst she did so there came a little shudder though her, as though she felt the cold. I flung the warm shawl over her, and drew the edges tight round her neck, for I dreaded lest she should get some deadly chill from the night air, unclad as she was.⁶³

_

⁶¹ Nina Auerbach, Woman and the Demon, p.23.

⁶² Ernest Jones, On the Nightmare, p.75.

⁶³ Bram Stoker, Dracula, p.102.

According to Jones, the latent content of the nightmare consists of a representation of a normal act of sexual intercourse. He describes the exaggerated symptoms exhibited by sufferers of the nightmare as indicative of those experienced in some degree when fear of coitus is present. He also observes the prevalence of the nightmare amongst premenstrual women. He describes the case history of a young woman of about fifteen who was, according to his account,

Seiz'd with a fit of this Disease, and groan'd so miserably that she awoke her Father, who was sleeping in the next room. He arose, ran into her chamber, and found her lying on her Back, and the Blood gushing plentifully out of her Mouth and Nose. When he shook her, she recover'd and told him, that she thought some great ceremony, stretched himself upon her. She had heard moaning in sleep several nights before; but, the next day after she imagin'd herself oppress'd by that Man, she had a copious eruption of the Menses, which, for that time, remov'd all her complaints. ⁶⁴

Jones interprets the occurrence as the coming to pass of what she both dreads and desires. He also makes the point that erotic feeling is in most cases more ardent in the days preceding the catamenial period, giving the following example:

A robust servant Girl, about eighteen years old, was severely oppress'd with the Nightmare, two or three nights before every eruption of the Menses, and used to groan so loudly as to awake her Fellow-servant, who always shook or turn'd her on her Side; by which means she recover'd. She was thus afflicted periodically with it, 'till she took a bed-fellow of a different sex and bore Children. 65

In his appraisal of the occurrence of nightmares prior to the menses, he concludes that these examples arise during a time when 'Paracelsus stated that the menstrual flux engendered phantoms in the air and that therefore convents were seminaries of nightmares.'

Or finally, to quote the eminent Victorian sexologist Richard Von Krafft-Ebing, who in his work, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, reports the case of a married man who presented himself with cuts on his arm. When questioned as to the origins of the marks, he responded:

66 ibid., p.45.

⁶⁴ Ernest Jones, *On the Nightmare*, p.45.

⁶⁵ ibid., p.45.

When he wished to approach his wife, who was young and somewhat 'nervous', he first had to make a cut on his arm. Then she would suck the wound and during the act become violently excited sexually.⁶⁷

Nineteenth-century medical science, macabre, barbaric and often downright ludicrous, served to construct female sexuality and sexual desire as diabolical and vampiric. Lucy's transformation into a bloodthirsty vampire reifies a case study in the practice simultaneously; medical, gynaecological, psychiatric and psychoanalytic of menstrual pathologising and its concomitant control and suppression of female sexuality. Or, as Margrit Shildrick writes of medical intervention into female health and the female body:

That so many 'healthy' changes to the female body are nevertheless brought under medical control, and that matters such as weight, comportment and appearance are the object of intense scrutiny, speaks to a deep cultural unease with the embodiment of women. Moreover, the inherent threat of internal disruption in sickness is paralleled by the ever-present reality of potentially hostile external intervention into their body spaces, and into the space of their bodies. The relationship between the (broken) body as other and the feminine as other, both in relation to the masculine subject, is a highly complex one, and suggests again that those defined as sick are en-gendered as female. What both seem to encompass is the paradox that what is devalued is also the most threatening.⁶⁸

As Shildrick astutely notes 'what is devalued is also the most threatening', which leads me into the next section of this chapter, which will again deal specifically with latenineteenth century medical discourses pertaining the female body and sexuality as well as an examination of early twentieth-century capitalism which pivoted on the previous century's theories of utilitarianism, degeneracy theories and social Darwinism. As such, I will examine degeneracy theories and the symbiotic interchange between cultural and medical discourse. Theories of capitalism and its language of systems, exchange and finance are replicated in perceptions of the body at the turn of the twentieth-century. The body as a machine, that needs to be controlled and must be productive, is thus reiterated in medical texts. More precisely, the female body and its reproductive system becomes a focus of early capitalism. I will explore this through an examination of the language used in medical texts to demonstrate a continuing topography of pathologized female sexuality. The sexual vampire of the nineteenth-century thus evolves, and added to her repertoire of

⁶⁷ Richard Von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, (London: Staples Press, 1965), p.85.

⁶⁸ Margrit Shildrick, Leaky Bodies and Boundaries, Feminism, Postmodernism and (Bio) Ethics, p.170.

ill-repute is 'gold-digging'. The female vampire becomes a financial harlot out to ruin the economic well-being of middle-class men across the globe.

'Menstrual Economics': Financial-Vampirism

Every woman, this new generation argued, contained within herself the destructive potential of the woman-vampire, the sexual woman, the woman of death, who had allowed the animal inside her womb to roam free and become a devouring vagina dentata. Artists and illustrators inevitably rushed in to document the link between woman and the devouring maw of reproductive nature in a wide variety of apposite juxtapositions that were to become a standard feature of twentieth-century pop-culture iconography. ⁶⁹

(Bram Dijkstra, Evil Sisters)

The continuing drive for women's economic and social equality in the early decades of the twentieth century saw the emergence of a new type of female vampire who was not only a sexual predator but also a potential economic threat. This new female vampire came to be known as a 'vamp'. As the critic Janet Staiger writes:

Women had occasionally, been represented as leading men to their ruin, but the gold digger was quite different from the middle-class woman who might 'fall' into sin. The gold digger was working class and thus had 'little' if any 'reputation' to lose. Her motivation was that of the Cinderella myth – the fantasy of a rise in class with the concomitant rewards in an improved standard of living. She was a woman who lived off the man with whom she was attached. Ironically of course if the woman is a wife and of the same status as the man, such a representation did not apply. Rather, for the gold digger to be perceived as the parasite, it required her to be calculating, intelligent, and wilful rather than the object of a man's choice for elevation. In both cases – the vampire and the gold digger – what most scholars [...] assume is that minimally these bad women implied a threat to contemporary representations of masculinity.⁷⁰

Thus, the gold-digging, parasitic antics of this new vampire was an all-encompassing affair, as Staiger points out:

⁷⁰ Janet Staiger, *Bad Women: Regulating Sexuality in Early American Cinema*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), pp.149-150.

⁶⁹ Bram Dijkstra, Evil Sisters, (New York: Henry Holt and Company Inc., 1998), p.64.

The pleasure loving woman would also destroy male identity. For those who adhered to the nineteenth-century conception of masculinity contained in the selfmade man, passionate women would lead men away from self-control toward a life of sensual expressiveness. Men's concentration would be broken, their money lost, and their business affairs ruined.⁷¹

The vamp 'was a woman gone astray, a parasite woman who could feed off the solid stock of America, destroying the vital future it should have.'72 As such, the female vampire or vamp came to embody male, patriarchal, hegemonic, social and economic ruin. Thus, in this section I wish to suggest a link between this new degenerate, golddigging vamp and gynaecological advances in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century which constructed the female body as a failed economy. As Angelique Richardson notes, 'No science operates in a social or value-free vacuum. This is especially pertinent for biology. As ideas in biology shift, they have a direct impact on how we see ourselves.'73 Thus, I will first explore the female reproductive body as a dangerous economy, one that is out of control, before examining Porter Emerson Browne's stage production A Fool There Was in 1909, its novelization in the same year and its screen adaptation by Frank Powell in 1915.

As already established the nineteenth century medical profession placed an unprecedented emphasis on the female reproductive body, particularly so upon menstruation. In turn this led to an entire cultural politics of sexual difference which centred on the female body. As Thomas Lacqueur writes:

From little-known doctors to the giants of nineteenth-century medicine – Charcot, Virchow, Bischoff – came the cry that claims for equality between the sexes were based on profound ignorance of the immutable physical and mental differences between the sexes and that these, not legislative whim, determined the social division of labour and rights.⁷⁴

Nineteenth and early twentieth century constructions of sexual and social difference between the sexes can also be located in the discovery of sperm and eggs in the lateseventeenth century. As already noted in the Introduction, the ovaries were discovered in

⁷¹ Lewis A. Erenberg, quoted in Staiger, Janet, Bad Women: Regulating Sexuality in Early American Cinema, pp.149-150.

⁷² Janet Staiger, Bad Women: Regulating Sexuality in Early American Cinema, pp.147.

⁷³ Angelique Richardson, 'Biology in the Victorian Novel' in Francis O'Gorman ed., A Concise Companion to the Victorian Novel, (Blackwell Publishing: Oxford, 2005), p.208.

74 Thomas Lacqueur, Making Sex: Body and Gender from The Greeks to Freud, p.207.

ancient times possibly in the fourth century B.C. and were called the female testicles or didymi (twins). In the second century A.D. Soranus of Ephesus, who practiced in Rome, documented their shape, size and position. However, very little further investigation occurred until the sixteenth century due to the rigorous proscription of dissection by the authorities. The first anatomist to display the ovaries was Andreas Vessalius, the father of modern anatomy. At this time it was still not known that the ovaries produced eggs, they were still seen as types of male testes and attempts were made to find semen which was believed to be stored in them. Aristotelian teaching was the main influence at this time and the human egg was believed to be formed in the uterus. This changed in 1672 when the Dutch physician Regnier de Graaf discovered the ovarian follicle, however, he assumed that the entire follicle was the ovum. In 1674, with the development of the microscope, Anton van Leeuwenhoek discovered spermatozoa in semen and the term corpus luteum was introduced around 1681. It was around this time that it was also posited by Hermann Boerhave, a professor at Leiden, that the egg on leaving the ovary left a corpus luteum behind and that sperm fertilized the egg before its entry into the uterus. His ideas were initially rejected, however, they were influential and the search for the human ovum continued. The search concluded in May 1827 when the German physician Karl Ernst Von Baer discovered an ovule while dissecting the ovaries of a dog.

Nonetheless, the supposed discovery of the egg (graffian follicle) and sperm at the end of the seventeenth century continued to uphold the binary of the masculine as active and the feminine as passive and nurturing. Thus, as Lacqueur, argues 'Social sex projected downward into biological sex at the level of the microscopic generative products themselves.'

The discovery of the egg and sperm in human biology also saw a correlated exploration of sexuality in the plant world which led to Linnaeus' famous classificatory system, one which directly influenced nineteenth century utilitarian political economy. Similar to Linnaeus' classificatory model, utilitarian ideology focused upon statistical categorisation, from demographics to state management of health for labour and economic purposes, as well as furthering theories of breeding and degeneracy. Moreover, gynaecological intervention in the social and sexual control of women, as already argued in the previous section in relation to menstruation, was extended to discourses and practices pertaining to the female ovaries. Although the link had not yet been fully

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.207.

established between the ovaries, menstruation and conception, the removal of healthy ovaries became common practice in the nineteenth century. Battey's Operation, named after the gynaecologist who initiated its practice in 1872, became a 'fashionable treatment of menstrual madness, neurasthenia, nymphomania, masturbation and 'all cases of insanity. In an article by Robert Battey in the *British Medical Journal* in 1880 he outlines the summary results of fifteen cases. According to Battey the object of the operation was fourfold:

First, to obviate the effects upon the system of a vicious ovulation, secondly, to obviate the effects of unrelieved menstrual molimen; thirdly, for the control of exhausting uterine haemorrhages incident to ovulation; fourthly, to produce the vascular and nervous revolution in the system which attends upon the change of life.⁷⁸

Furthermore, with reference to menstruation he observed that:

Without exception when but one ovary was removed, or both ovaries incompletely removed, the menses have continued as before; and without exception, when both ovaries were completely removed, the menses have ceased entirely. In one case, the patient did not menstruate prior to the operation, and had repeatedly and at long intervals uterine haemorrhages for several years after the operation. These haemorrhages have not ceased. It is curious to note, in some of the cases of partial removal of both ovaries, how small of fragment of ovarian stroma may keep up regular menstruation.⁷⁹

A list of morbid conditions treated successfully by ovariotomy included; amenorrhoea and hystero-epilepsy, ovaralgia, threatened insanity and violent menstromania. Battey further listed in his results the following case studies – 'Case I. – This patient states personally that she is now in the enjoyment of health as she has never known before. Case III. – is in comfortable health. She does regularly her cooking and

_

⁷⁶ It was not until the 1930s that a more comprehensive hormonal medical understanding of the role of the ovaries and the eggs in the reproductive process was established.

⁷⁷ J. Studd, 'Ovariotomy for menstrual madness and premenstrual syndrome--19th century history and lessons for current practice', *Gynecol Endocrinol*, 2006 Aug, 22(8):411-5, *PubMed Central, Archive of Life Science Journals*, [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/1701210], date accessed: 11/03/09.

⁷⁸ Robert Battey, 'Summary of the Results of Fifteen Cases of Battey's Operation', *The British Medical Journal*, April 3rd 1880, p.510. *PubMed Central, Archive of Life Science Journals*,

[[]http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/picrender.fcgi?artid=2240106&blobtype=pdf], date accessed: 18/03/09. ⁷⁹ Robert Battey, 'Summary of the Results of Fifteen Cases of Battey's Operation', *The British Medical Journal*, April 3rd 1880, p.510. *PubMed Central, Archive of Life Science Journals*, [http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/picrender.fcgi?artid=2240106&blobtype=pdf], date accessed: 18/03/09.

housework, but is still at times a little hysterical. Case IX. – In consequence of imperfect removal of the ovaries, this patient continued to menstruate, and was not benefited.'80 What is notable in the cases listed by Battey in his article, is that the success of the operation was dependent on the cessation of menstruation. This again implies as already argued in the previous section of this chapter that female menstruation was viewed as the prime factor and contributor to all forms of female illness and madness. This practice was supported by distinguished gynaecologists and psychiatrists, becoming one of the great medical scandals of the nineteenth century.⁸¹ Thus, it is again evident that the female body and biological suppositions about its functioning in the role of sexual desire and reproduction had if not a direct influence, then a close relationship with the construction and formation of social relations and social hierarchies.

Thus, the language, metaphors, fears and anxieties of industrialisation, the expansion of early capitalism, systems of production, economic and biological, found its way into the imagery and narrative of the vampire. Karl Marx famously described capitalism as a vampire in his 1867 publication, *Das Kapital*, stating, 'Capital is dead labour, which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks.'⁸² The female vampire in particular came to represent both the ultimate consumer but also the notion of unregulated desire and control.⁸³ It has also been argued that early twentieth century vampires were 'in their blatant sexuality, clearly masculinized creatures, predators hiding in women's bodies, social degenerates: socialists.'⁸⁴ However, I would argue that in the early twentieth century construction of the female vampire there is nothing to suggest a socialist politic other than her destruction of the capitalist male. As I will argue in this chapter she is instead an exemplary capitalist, an insatiable financial consumer.

The link between the female vampire and political economy can also be located in woman's menstrual cycle, whereby, the unpregnant female body was seen as failed production. Or, as the critic Emily Martin writes in her article 'Medical Metaphors of Women's Bodies: Menstruation and Menopause':

80 ibid., p.510.

⁸² Karl Marx, Ben Fowkes, trans., *Capital, Critique of Political Economy, vol. 1.*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1976), p. 342

84 Bram Dijkstra, Evil Sisters, p.24.

⁸¹ J. Studd, 'Ovariotomy for menstrual madness and premenstrual syndrome--19th century history and lessons for current practice', *Gynecol Endocrinol*, 2006 Aug, 22(8):411-5, *PubMed Central, Archive of Life Science Journals*, [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/1701210], date accessed: 11/03/09.

⁸³ One of the most explicit references to the female body as the economic machine out of control is the automaton vamp in Fritz Lang's masterpiece *Metropolis* (1922).

Menstruation not only carries with it the connotation of a productive system that has failed to produce, it also carries the idea of production gone awry, making products of no use, not to specification, unsalable, wasted scrap. However, disgusting it may be, menstrual blood will come out. Production gone awry is also an image that fills us with dismay and horror. Amid the glorification of machinery common in the nineteenth century were also fears of what machines could do if they went out of control.⁸⁵

Furthermore, the pathological nature of menstruation was extended to economic metaphors. According to Martin:

The Rev. John Todd saw women as voracious spenders in the marketplace, and so consumers of all that a man could earn. If unchecked, a woman would ruin a man by her own extravagant spending, by her demands on him to spend, or, in another realm, by her excessive demands on him for sex. Losing too much sperm meant losing that which sperm was believed to manufacture: a man's lifeblood. ⁸⁶

Martin goes on to observe how the language in medical text books describes menstruation. She notes how the menstrual cycle is generally divided into two major phases, the preparation of the female body for conception and gestation, and secondly, the period of gestation itself. Thus when impregnation does not occur, the language of medical texts describes the non-event as a failure. The female unproductive body is negatively described in terms similar to those of economics. Common words used to biologically describe menstruation include words and phrases such as a 'fall in progesterone', 'diminished supply of oxygen and nutrients', 'the disintegration of the walls of the uterus', 'blood vessels in the endometrium haemorrhage', to eventually 'menstrual flow'. The menstruating female body is one that is not in control, one that is not producing, thus Martin writes 'I think it is plain that the negative power behind the image of failure to produce can be considerable when applied metaphorically to women's bodies.' ⁸⁷

Emily Martin, 'Medical Metaphors of Women's Bodies: Menstruation and Menopause' in Katie Conboy,
 Nadia Medina and Sarah Stanbury, eds., Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory,
 (New York: Columbia Press, 1997), p.29.
 ibid., p.20.

⁸⁷ Emily Martin, 'Medical Metaphors of Women's Bodies: Menstruation and Menopause' in Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina and Sarah Stanbury, eds., *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, p.30.

Moreover, the nineteenth century's intersection and merging of statistics, mathematics, political economy and sociology with medicine was also extended to the male body and male sexuality. As Susan Sontag writes 'early capitalism assumes the necessity of regulated spending, saving, accounting, discipline – an economy that depends on the rational limitation of desire.'88 Thus, theories of breeding promoted the preservation of the male vital essence, his semen. It was held that each human being was sent into the world with a carefully measured allotment of this 'vital essence' and its quality was dependent on inheritance. As science progressed this essence often came to be described as a quasi-electrical current. How one used this essence was up to the individual, however wasteful use meant a short life and conversely its preservation ensured a long and prosperous life for oneself and one's family. According to Bram Dijkstra, by the second decade of the twentieth century speculative science had determined how the body distilled its vital essence for productive use. The highly successful work The Science of Sex Regeneration by A. Gould and Dr. Franklin L. Dubois, first published in 1911, and in its tenth edition by the 1920s described the process in detail:

Certain arteries carried away the blood that had 'been drained of its vital essence' and was therefore no longer of use. The authors emphasized that since this distillation process 'requires a great deal of the vitality of the body as well as its richest blood, the great danger of wasting this precious material will be at once understood. 89

They continued:

Normally, up to the time a boy is twelve years old, not a drop of this semen has passed from the spermatic cord into the urethra ... because the child needs every particle of his material forces to build up and strengthen his growing body; the semen secreted is therefore re-distributed throughout the body to nourish brain, muscles, bones, and sinews. It will thus be seen that secretions of the testes have other and more important functions besides propagation. In full maturity, when not used for purposes of procreation, this important fluid, a true elixir of life, should never be wasted, but allowed to be reabsorbed by the system as fast as it is secreted. It will readily be seen how weakening any practice would be which would cause a waste of this material. If the vital essences are drawn from the blood and brain and body, deprived of their natural nourishment, they become

⁸⁸ Sontag, Susan, Illness as Metaphor, (London: Penguin, 2002), p.64.

⁸⁹ Bram Dijkstra, Evil Sisters, pp. 57-58.

weakened in proportion to the waste. The reabsorption of the semen strengthens the boy; as its waste causes weakness and degeneration. ⁹⁰

Scientific theories of the early twentieth century also spurred Ezra Pound to take it upon himself to translate from French into English Gourmant's 1903 treatise on the subject, writing:

It is more than likely that the brain itself is, in origin and development, only a sort of great clot of seminal fluid held in suspense or reserve. Moreover, he continued, the 'species would have developed in accordance with, or their development would have been affected by, the relative discharge and retention of the fluid'. 91

The inevitable corollary of such theories implied that female sexuality was no less than vampiric and brain-draining. As such, Dijkstra concludes that all women were in essence doomed to be 'brain vampires'. A discovery he suggests was 'itself to be a logical extension of the seminal-continence theories that had led to the idealization of 'muscular virility' as the outward indicator of evolutionary superiority.' He continues:

It was a foregone conclusion that within such a social environment love and sex would come to be seen as forms of deadly vampirism. The men of the early twentieth century considered it their birth right to do the incorporating. If the woman refused to become a passive subject, or if she used strategies of her own to make the male emotionally dependent on her, she was branded an engulfer, an incorporating vampire [...] The origins of modern vampire imagery in the latenineteenth century imagination were very precise. The primitive male inside the eternal female was baring his invasive fangs. Dracula was on the move. 93

Thus, women as brain vampires constructed a very particular type of relationship between the sexes and indeed Dracula and his cohorts were on the move and infamous in

the annals of the history of the 'vamp' and the changing nature of the vampire is the actress Theda Bara who came to fame in Frank Powell's film *A Fool There Was* in 1915. As an article in the Chicago Tribune in October 1945 noted:



Fig.2.5

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp.57-58.

⁹¹ ibid., p.73.

⁹² ibid., p.73.

⁹³ ibid., pp.80-81.

'Theda, when she played the character for the movies, became so popular that she made the verb 'to vamp' a much used American slang term. But the old Fox company made Theda vamp in all her films thereafter, and in each one she literally ruined dozens of men.'94 Thus, Theda Bara (an anagram for Arab death) became the ultimate screen vamp, starring in films such as, *Carmen*, *Her Double Life*, *The Vixen*, *The Price of Silence*, *The Tiger Woman*, *Cleopatra*, *Her Greatest Love*, *Heart and Soul*, *Camille*, *The Rose of Blood*, *When a Woman Sins*, *The She-Devil*, *The Siren's Song* and *The Lure of Ambition*. Although Bara failed to make the transition from the silent era to that of sound, such was her indelible link with the vamping roles that made her famous she was often invited as a main attraction for the opening of films about vampish, *femme fatales*.

A Fool There Was, the film which catapulted Bara into the limelight was an adaptation of the previously successful stage production of the same name written and directed by the playwright and novelist Porter Emerson Browne. Browne's stage production in 1909 owed much to the art and literature of the previous decades. Early influences ranged from paintings such as Henry Fuseli's *The Nightmare* (1781) to Arthur Symon's poem *The Vampire* (1896). In Symons' short poem woman is described as an 'intolerable', creature of the night who:

Would fain pity, but she may not rest
Till she have sucked a man's heart from his breast,
And drained his life-blood from him, vein, by vein,
And seen his eyes grow brighter for the pain,
And his lips sigh her name with his last breath,
As the man swoon ecstatically on death.⁹⁵

However, most influential was Philip Burne-Jones' painting *The Vampire* (1897)⁹⁶ which unusually included a set of verses written specifically for the painting by his cousin Rudyard Kipling, also entitled 'The Vampire'. Kipling's poem opened with the line which was to become the title of Browne's play 'A fool there was'. In Kipling's poem the

[http://ezp1.harvard.edu/login?url=http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=475788612&Fmt=10&clientId=11201&RQT=309&VName=HNP], date accessed: 18/12/2008.

⁹⁴ 'A Good Way to be Bad', *Chicago Daily Tribune*, (1872-1963); Oct 21st, 1945; ProQuest Historical Newspapers, *Chicago Tribune* (1849-1986).

⁹⁵ Arthur Symons, *The Vampire*, in David J. Skal, 'Fatal Image: The Artist, the Actress and the 'Vampire', in David J. Skal ed., *Vampires: Encounters with the Undead*, (New York: Blackdog & Levanthal, 2006), p. 248.

⁹⁶ The model for Philip Burney Jones painting was the actress Mrs Patrick Campbell.

woman is a gold-digging, merciless harlot, who 'To a rag and a bone and a hank of hair/ (we called her the woman who didn't care)/But the fool he called her his lady fair.' The poem concludes with the fool 'stripped to his foolish hide'. ⁹⁷

Browne added plot to the painting and poem and Americanized the setting. He opened the play on a cross-Atlantic liner where a cold and beautiful woman dismisses a young man grovelling at her feet and upon whose death she laughs gleefully, sprinkling rose petals over his corpse. Next enters a young married man, devoted to both his wife and child. He too becomes enamoured with this seductive, alluring and mysterious woman, with his love and infatuation bordering on a compulsive obsession and addiction. He becomes helpless to her wiles, leaving his wife, whereby, his business and financial affairs begin to fall into ruin and he takes to the bottle. The play ends with the woman who has left him a shadow of his former self mocking him, 'Kiss me, my fool' as he falls lifeless to the floor.

The actor Robert Hilliard played the central male character, with the actress Katherine Kaelred playing 'the woman'. All the characters in the play were unnamed and held only the archetypal titles of, the Man, the Wife, the Woman (whereas, in the novel and film they are given names, except for the Woman who continues to be referred to as simply Vampire). The critic David J. Skal describes both the reception of the play and the cultural climate as follows:

Despite some condescending reviews, *A Fool there Was* was an unqualified hit, an unvarnished morality play that played cannily to popular tastes. Though Carrie Nation was nearly at the end of her life in 1909, the temperance movement she symbolized were gathering momentum, and soon would merge into the disastrous judgement of prohibition. On another level, the vampire woman of *A Fool there Was* embodied anxieties about women's growing independence. As in the hit film *Fatal Attraction* released eight decades later, the unattached ('loose') woman was represented as a mortal threat to the middle-class family, its security and property. It also reflected a barely-concealed backlash (by men and women) against the swelling movement for female suffrage. 98

The *Chicago Tribune* in an interview with Hilliard also asked if there was in his opinion 'such women in the world as are depicted in Kipling's poem and Burne-Jones' painting? To which he replied:

⁹⁸ David J. Skal, 'Fatal Image: The Artist, the Actress and the 'Vampire', in David J. Skal ed., *Vampires: Encounters with the Undead*, p. 250.

⁹⁷ Rudyard Kipling, *The Vampire* in *Rudyard Kipling The Complete Verse*, (London: Kyle Cathie Limited, 1990), p.180.

'Yes, Many of them. Strange women who slink through the world, bringing corruption to everything they touch. Women who are not beautiful – many of them are homely – but who possess a power of attraction that never fails to enchant when and wherever directed.' Hilliard called this power 'impossible to analyze,' but capable of imparting in even the most emotionally detached male a 'thrill which takes him ... as a terrier does a rat, never again leaving him alone until all the life and sense have been shaken from him ...'

It was the success of the stage production of *A Fool There Was* which led first to its novelization and then its adaptation for the screen. Across its manifestations from the stage to the screen the success of Browne's work reflected the cultural climate and the insatiable public appetite for popular representations of financially ruinous women in these opening decades of the twentieth-century. Thus, in the novel the gold-digging woman is physically described according to traditional representations of the female vampire, she is sinuous and serpentine, a 'hell-snake'. The worldly, ambitious, family man John Schuyler's first proper glimpse of this woman is as she reclines in her chair onboard the ship, with:

[...] long, lithe limbs covered with a rug of crimson and black and dull, dull green. She was dangling gently, sensuously, the great cluster of scarlet roses that she held, now and again bringing them to where there fragrance would reach her delicately – chiselled nose., imperious, haughty ... They looked startlingly red against her cheek like blood upon the snow ... she was looking at him ... There was no movement, save the even, languorous swing of the crimson blossoms. Lips, vivid red, were motionless, half parted in a little inscrutable smile ... She was looking at him ... ¹⁰⁰

Browne's description of his vampire encapsulated at this point nineteenth and early twentieth-century aesthetics and conceptions of the female vampire, seductive, languorous and her lips a bloody vivid red which in the final kiss will lead to John Schuyler's ultimate demise. Browne's vampire also evokes the 'wily, scheming, plotmaker' of the Queen in 'Snow White' - the woman who transgresses the patriarchal voice of the looking glass. She also exemplifies in her overt sexuality progress in the female

⁹⁹ Robert Hilliard, 'Are There Real Vampires? Lots of 'Em, Says Hilliard.' *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct 31, 1909, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, *Chicago Tribune* (1872-1963).

[[]http://ezp1.harvard.edu/login?url=http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=404687151&Fmt=10&clientId=11201&RQT=309&VName=HNP], date accessed: 18/12/2008.

¹⁰⁰ Porter Emerson Browne, A Fool there Was, (Kessinger Publishing, 2004), p.59.

suffrage movement as well as the attempts of Marie Stopes to educate women on contraception which led one particular gentleman to bewail:

'What have you done? You have let women know about things which only prostitutes ought to know; once you give women a taste for these things, they become vampires'. A brood of sexual women, he claimed could only lead to 'a race of effeminate men. ¹⁰¹

Effeminacy in this sense is closely connected to worldly, financial ruin. Furthermore, the background of Browne's vampire is also indicative of breeding and degeneracy theories of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Degeneracy and breeding theories can be traced back to theories of social science and political economy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. For example, Thomas Malthus' *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, first published in 1798, referred to the natural tendency of the labouring classes of society to increase beyond the demand for their labour, or the means of their adequate support and his work is often cited as strongly influencing Darwin's work on natural selection. As Angelique Richardson notes 'Malthus introduced into popular circulation the idea that nature was excessive and wasteful, producing life forms in far greater quantity than the environment could sustain.' 102

In 1851, the year of the great exhibition, Herbert Spencer published his sociological work, *Social Statics or the Condition Essential to Human Happiness Specified*, mapping out eugenic solutions for dealing with poverty and disease and denouncing all forms of charity. As early as 1844 Darwin had commenced work on the mutability of species which led to the publication of *The Origin of Species* in 1859 and *The Descent of Man* in 1865. Also notable is Karl Pearson, a mathematician, and Britain's first appointed Professor of National Eugenics whose work on statistics led to collaborative work with those interested in social policy and medicine. In 1901 in conjunction with W.F.R. Weldon and Francis Galton he founded *Biometrika*, a journal for the statistical study of biological problems. In 1907 Pearson took over a research unit founded by Galton which he spearheaded as the Francis Galton Laboratory of National Eugenics. 'The laboratory

¹⁰¹ Bram Dijkstra, Evil Sisters, p.4.

¹⁰² Angelique Richardson, 'Biology in the Victorian Novel' in Francis O'Gorman ed., *A Concise Companion to the Victorian Novel*, p.208.

researched human pedigrees but it also produced controversial reports on the role of inherited and environmental factors in tuberculosis, alcoholism and insanity. 103

Thus, I would argue that quite self-consciously Browne established the Vampire's origins as foreign, impoverished and illegitimate in order to explain her later depraved, gold-digging nature. 104 As her mother lies dying in a hut on the Breton coast she is visited by the man who fathered her child and who disingenuously enquires as to the child's father only to be berated by the dying woman who responds 'You ask that? ... You?',105 Then 'with the agility of the brute, she thrust toward him the little, puling thing that lay on her lap. 106 I would suggest here that this scene is also demonstrative of the nineteenth century fallen woman and perhaps references Ford Madox Brown's painting Take your Son Sir (1857) which depicts a Madonna like woman presenting her son whom she holds in her arms to the man (not present in the painting) who illegitimately sired him. Furthermore, the studio biography of Theda Bara also claimed that the actress was of foreign birth. She was said to have been born in the Sahara to a French artist and his concubine. She was also said to possess supernatural powers, with Bara herself contributing to the myth by wearing an Egyptian head piece and allowing herself to be photographed with snakes and skulls. However, Bara's actual origins were much less exotic than her studio persona – she was born Theodosia Goodman in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1885.

10

¹⁰³ ibid., p.208

¹⁰⁴ See also the novels of Thomas Hardy or Emile Zola which also demonstrate late nineteenth and early twentieth century naturalism and biological determinism.

¹⁰⁵ Porter Emerson Browne, A Fool there Was, p.7.

¹⁰⁶ ibid., p.7



Fig.2.6

Thus, given the cultural preoccupation with 'breeding' Browne's novel opens with obvious references to heritage. He writes:

John Schuyler came from a long line of clean-bodied, clean-souled, clear-eyed, clear-headed ancestors; and from these he had inherited cleanness of body and of soul, clearness of eye and of head. They had given him all that lay in their power to give, had these honest, impassive Dutchmen and women – these broad-shouldered, narrow-hipped English; they had amalgamated for him their virtues, and they had eradicated for him their vices; they had cultivated for him those things of their that it were well to cultivate and they had plucked ruthlessly from the gardens of heredity the weeds and tares that might have grown to check his growth. And, doing this, they had died, one after another, knowing no what they had done – knowing not what the result would be – doing that which they did because it was in them to do it; and for no other reason save that. For so it is of this world.

Biological determinism, a corollary of Darwinian theory, also posited that shared behavioural norms and social and economic differences between human groups, that is

¹⁰⁷ Porter Emerson Browne, A Fool there Was, p.3.

races, classes and sexes arise from inherited, inborn distinctions and that society reflects biology. ¹⁰⁸ Thus, the able bodied, healthy, handsome John Schuyler is also described as:

Forty years of age now, his hair, by the habit of thought, was tinged with gray at the temples; yet skin and complexion were those of a boy. Quick in movement, agile, alert thrilling with vitality and virility, his pleasures, were as they had always been, the pleasures of the great out – of – doors. A yachtsman, his big yawl, the 'Manana,' was known in every club port from Gravesend to Bar Harbour. He motored. He rode. He played tennis, and golf, and squash and racquets. He was an expert swimmer, a skilful fencer, a clever boxer. And, more wonderful than the combination of these things was the fact that he found time away from his work to do them all, and to enjoy them with the youthful, contagious, effervescent enthusiasm of a man half his age. 109

Browne in his depiction of Schuyler creates a prime specimen of biological determinism through the careful distilling of inheritable traits. However, if one could evolve it was also possible to regress or recapitulate. Recapitulation theory was another of the nineteenth century's most influential ideas and involved the reconstruction of evolutionary lineages. For example the gill slits of an early human embryo represented an ancestral adult fish; at a later stage, the temporary tail revealed a reptilian or mammalian ancestor. Thus, echoing recapitulation theory by the novel's close, John Schuyler, has been physically reduced to a mere spectre of his former self. With the final chapter of Browne's novel entitled 'The Thing That Was A Man' aptly describing his physical, mental and financial degeneration. Browne writes:

This was not John Schuyler. It could not be John Schuyler. It was not possible. John Schuyler was at least a man – not a palsied, pallid, shrunken, shrivelled caricature of something that had once been human ... John Schuyler had hands – not nerveless, shaking talons ... This sunken-eyed, sunken-cheeked, wrinkled thing was not John Schuyler – this thing that crawled, quivering – from the loose, pendulous lip of which came mirth that was more bitter to hear than the sobs of a soul condemned. ¹¹¹

In the final paragraphs before his death he is further described:

110 Stephen J. Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, p.114.
111 Porter Emerson Browne, *A Fool there Was*, p.125.

¹⁰⁸ Stephen J. Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, (New York; Norton, 1983), p.110.

¹⁰⁹ Porter Emerson Browne, A Fool there Was, p.38.

He was not a man, now. He was a Thing, and that Thing was of her Hands hung slack and loose, at his sides; jaw drooped; lips were pendulous. Only, in his eyes was that light that she, and she alone knew how to kindle He was hers, soul, and body, and brain. 112

Thus, by the novel's close John Schuyler has regressed to a 'thing', resembling a primordial creature that crawls and is not even recognizably human. His degeneration is directly linked to his relationship with the woman in the novel known only as the Vampire and who is held wholly responsible for his downfall. The Vampire of dubious origins - female, sexually depraved, lower even than the working class, foreign and illegitimate, threatens to pollute, contaminate and ultimately destroy the progression of mankind. Once seduced, John Schuyler's life begins to fall apart and he implores of her:

'You do love me, Lady Fair, don't you?' he almost pleaded. 'You must love me, knowing as you do all that I have given up for you.' He pointed to a heap of carelessly-tossed letters upon desk-top. 'Do you see those?' he demanded. 'The first from Washington - the President - demanding my resignation. Following that, curt requests that I withdraw from positions of trust that I held. My wife crushed - my child disgraced - my friends gone - ! God in heaven! What haven't I given you, Lady Fair!' 113

This culminates in the loss of his job and completes his fall, eliminating any hope of salvation, with his old friend Blake in desperation, exclaiming: 'Haven't you any spark of manhood left? no brains? no bowels? nothing a man can appeal to?'114 Schuyler, has nothing left, it has all been taken by his serpentine, vampire mistress, who to the very end continues to take from him, her desire for more as insatiable as ever. Thus, with 'eyes heavy lidded, white arms extended, white teeth glowing, white shoulders shimmering. She hissed sibilantly: 'A kiss, My Fool! [...] 'Kiss me, My Fool!' Merciless to the last, she eventually leaves him for dead,

Her skirt-hem lay beneath his body. She stopped, lithely disengaging it. His fingers clutched torn petals of crimson roses ... She looked ... Then vivid lips parted, and she laughed a little. 116

ibid., p.140. ibid., p.94.

¹¹⁴ ibid., p.129.

¹¹⁵ ibid., p.139.

¹¹⁶ ibid., p.141.

The film adaptation closely adheres to both Browne's novel and script with the male protagonist's degeneration faithfully visualized onscreen. However, the film does include further examples of the vampire's gold-digging ruthlessness and moral degeneracy which do not appear in the novel, from, the opulence of Bara's attire, to her frivolous and extravagant spending and most evidently in the scene where a lover, 'Parmalee', who precedes her affair with John Schuyler, is seen grovelling and pleading with her, eventually leaving her presence but without his wallet, which she has stolen from him. However, the lasting impact of the film is most definitely located in the powerful onscreen realisation of the infamous 'kiss', with Dijkstra describing the scope of its signification as follows:

Theda Bara's contemporaries knew that they were watching the social vampire of female sexuality depredate civilized society. Once we know this was the movie's immediate subtext as a social document, the scene of Theda Bara's predatory kiss is restored to its original function as the visual dramatization of a central test of manhood essential to the survival of evolutionary civilization a test, it is worth emphasizing, to which late-twentieth society still adheres to a disturbingly large extent, although we have forgotten its direct ideological justification. That is why we still register the episode as of emblematic force; that is why it still has a special capacity to shock us. As a dramatic illustration of the ongoing battle between capitalism and social degradation, the scene has perhaps no equal in the annals of the silent film.¹¹⁷

Thus, the financial vampire, the menstrual-monster, unmarried, childless, sexually depraved, a body out of control, an imminent threat to society (manhood, economics, middle-class family life) had a sustained presence in both the literature and cinema of the following decades. In cinema her obvious counterpart is the working-class, gold-digging femme fatale of film noir. In vampire literature, she is found in the offerings of short story writers from the turn of the century to mid-century. In Mary E. Wilkins Freeman's 'Luella Miller' published in 1903, a social-climbing vampire marries repeatedly, bringing death to her spouses and their loved ones. E.F. Benson's eponymous vampire Mrs Armsworth terrorises the men of an English middle-class village and Marion Crawford's 'The Blood is the Life' contemporaneous with the release of *A Fool There Was*, tells the tale of the vampire Christina, a penniless girl of gypsy heritage who comes to haunt a buried treasure. In Crawford's tale the young girl of gold-digging nature falls in unrequited love with the son of a wealthy villager and who is murdered when she

¹¹⁷ Bram Dijkstra, Evil Sisters, pp.45-46.

intercepts two thieves stealing his inheritance. Here the gold-digging, lower class girl who does not succeed in her social climbing while alive becomes in death the female vampire linked to money and sex.

Yet, perhaps one of the most indicative tales of capitalism and female sexuality is Fritz Leiber's *The Girl with the Hungry Eyes*, published in 1949. The Girl is an amalgamation of the 1920s 'It' girl and Theda Bara's Vamp. What she embodies so completely is female sexuality. As Nina Auerbach notes, Lieber's America embraces the cult of the star. Her power is one that reduces men so completely they become impotent and emasculated in her presence, in the process losing everything. The Girl's sexuality in Lieber's story is directly linked to modernity and capitalism: not thirsting for blood; she is instead an entirely murderous, economic, financial vampire. Lieber writes:

Oh, these are modern times, you say, and the sort of thing I'm hinting at went out with witchcraft. But you see I'm not altogether sure myself what I'm hinting at, beyond a certain point. There are vampires and vampires and not all of them suck blood. And there were murders, if they were murders.¹¹⁹

Vampirism in Lieber's story has become a type of commercial lure. And, as Auerbach, writes:

[...] post-World War II America lived among photographic images of its native supremacy and wealth. MGM films and *Life* magazine flourished by showing a victorious country pictures of its own incessant happiness; whether they were giggling movie stars or wives grinning in photographs on successful men's desks, women reinforced the achievements of American men by looking blissful in pictures. The 'poisonous half-smile' of the girl with the hungry eyes, the girl who strikes all her assigned poses, the girl who is always and only seen, is one of twentieth century America's commonplace urban landmarks. Leiber's psychic vampire is so familiar in her time and place that she seems worlds away from those weird Victorian women in foreign castles who infected only one victim at a time. ¹²⁰

Leiber's short story concludes with the photographer spending an evening with the Girl, her hungry eyes, dark smudges, in the pink glow of the evening light. He almost succumbs to her charms before making a narrow escape. He concludes:

¹¹⁸ Nina Auerbach, Our Vampires, Ourselves, p.105.

¹¹⁹ Fitz Leiber, *The Girl with the Hungry Eyes*, in David J. Skal, ed., *Vampires: Encounters with the Undead*, p.417.

Nina Auerbach, Our Vampires, Ourselves, pp.106-107.

But I realized what I was up against while there was still time to tear myself away. I realized that wherever she came from, whatever shaped her, she's the quintessence of the horror behind the billboard. She's the smile that tricks you into throwing away your money and your life. She's the eyes that lead you on and on, and then show you death. She's the creature you give everything for and never really get. She's the being that takes everything you've got and gives nothing in return. When you yearn toward her face on the billboards, remember that. She's the lure. She's the bait. She's the Girl. 121

Thus, Lieber's 'Girl with the Hungry Eyes' is the ultimate financial vampire. She is the girl in the magazines, the girl on the billboards, a terrifying embodiment of modern capitalism, the move to mass marketing and the use of sex to sell on an unprecedented scale. At the mid-century the vampire's powers of mesmerism had moved beyond the parameters of singular encounters, here was a female vampire who feeds on the consumerist and sexual desires of an entire nation of men. She is the ultimate trader in sexuality for money. As Auerbach remarks, the 'horror of Leiber's story is the realisation that all adored girls exist as shadows hungering after the vivid lives of men.' However, by the mid-twentieth century in an ever expanding capitalist and consumerist society, representations of the female vampire had again started to shift in order to reflect these cultural changes. Thus, in the next section I want to examine how the expansion of cosmetic surgery alongside mass-marketing, impacts upon representations of the female vampire.

'The Blood is the Life': Menopausal Vampires and Cosmetic Youth

From the mid twentieth-century onwards the financial vamp becomes less prevalent but does not disappear entirely from view, instead money and female vampirism is conflated with a preoccupation with 'youth' and 'beauty'. There is a return to the historical 'Blood Countess' – Elizabeth Bathory, a sixteenth-century noblewoman who became known for her multiple murders of young women. She was convinced that the blood of young virgins contained restorative powers that would maintain her youth. The exact number of her victims varies; however, some accounts put the figure as high as 610. Bathory's

¹²¹ Fritz Leiber, *The Girl with the Hungry Eyes*, in David J. Skal, ed., *Vampires: Encounters with the Undead*, p.428.

¹²² Nina Auerbach, Our Vampires, Ourselves, p.106.

crimes were eventually discovered and she was arrested and left to die, walled up in her bedroom at castle Csejthe. Thus, in the 1960s and 1970s from the films of Hammer Studios in Britain to the work of European and American directors, the quest for female youth and beauty becomes essential to the representation of female vampirism. However, this mid-century focus on the female vampire, youth, age and decay can also be traced to the late nineteenth-century and the intense focus on female sexuality and the reproductive female body. Thus, the ageing female vampire who yearns for her lost youth can be directly linked to menopause; she is sterile and dry, the antithesis to the fertile young woman, robust, ruddy and periodically blood-letting. The critic Kristine Swenson discusses the emergence of a new type of female vampire in the late-nineteenth century, one who differs from her more common counterpart. She writes that:

The focus here has shifted away from the predatory reproductive woman who seeks bodily fluids and who will injure the race by her unclean progeny, to the post-reproductive woman who sucks energy from those around her in order to appear reproductively fit.¹²⁴

Swenson writes of menopause, that:

The medicalization of menopause, however, is relatively recent. Though references to what we now call 'menopause' can be found in many ancient and classical texts, menopause as a 'disease expression' an identified collection of symptoms, was not defined until 1816 in France. Nineteenth-century medical indexes contain many French and German references to menopause, the climacteric, and related conditions; however, very few references in English appear until the 1880s when a sort of menopausal crisis was identified in Britain and the USA. Current representations that seek to portray menopausal women as retaining vitality and sex appeal – if only to persuade them to buy nutritional supplements, libido enhancers, or new youthful wardrobes - face strong cultural biases established long before hormone therapy and cosmetic surgery made sexy sexagenarians practicable. Many of these biases are as old as Western culture, which has long figured the ageing woman as the butt of sexual jokes. But we have also internalized and taken as 'natural' some relatively new stereotypes of ageing women, including those backed by the medical authority of the Victorian and 'Progressive' eras. 125

¹²³ See Valentine Penrose, *The Bloody Countess*, (London: Calder and Boyars, 1970) and Tony Thorne, *Countess Dracula*, (London: Bloomsbury, 1997).

¹²⁴ Kristine Swensen, *The Menopausal Vampire: Arabella Kenealy and the boundaries of true womanhood*, in *Women's Writing*, Volume 10, Number 1, 2003, pp.27-28.

¹²⁵ ibid., pp.27-28.

This menopausal crisis in the 1880s, which led to the extensive medicalization of female sexuality in the interests of eugenics, is evidenced in the literature of the period. For example, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, as I have already argued, and its obsession with female blood and female sexuality and Arabella Kenealy's, 'A Beautiful Vampire' published in *Ludgate Magazine* in 1896, recounting the tale of a vampiric ageing woman, a story I will discuss in more detail later in this section, exemplify the cultural obsession with the female reproductive body. It is also unsurprising that vampirism becomes the veiled medium in literature through which to explore anxieties surrounding ageing and sterility as the vampire was a common metaphor in medical texts at the fin-de-siècle. For example, in her article Swenson observes that the prominent American physician J. Robinson used the term to describe the 'hypersensual woman'. He wrote:

Just as the vampire sucks the blood of its victims in their sleep while they are alive so does the woman suck the life and exhaust the vitality of her male partner – or victim. Further, Robinson warns that such vampirism does not end with the cessation of reproductive capacity: 'no age is exempt, sexual vampires may be found among girls of twenty as well as among women of sixty and over'. ¹²⁶

Furthermore, the language used in medical texts to describe menopause from the nineteenth century to the present day is largely negative. For example, Edward Tilt as I have previously pointed out, in his tellingly-titled *The Change of Life in Health and Disease: A Practical Thesis on The Nervous and Other Affections Incidental to Women at the Decline of Life* (1857) pathologizes both the onset of menstruation and its cessation at menopause. In an extensive comparative table he outlines the 'Morbid Liabilities at Puberty and at Cessation.' He lists the presence of diseases such as headache, hysteria, delirium, fainting, chlorosis, cutaneous eruptions to gout and rickets in women at both reproductive phases. He writes in relation to sudden stoppage of the menstrual flow that: 'It was logical to suppose that a drain, lasting for thirty-two years, could not suddenly cease without causing serious illness.' The most common afflictions at cessation he notes are 'diseases of the ganglionic system, the cerebro-spinal system, nerves; diseases of the reproductive organs; gastro-intestinal affections and cutaneous affections.'

-

126 ibid., p.32.

Edward Tilt, The Change of Life in Health and Disease: A Practical Treatise on the Nervous and Other Afflictions Incidental to Women at the Decline of Life, p.82. ibid., p.89.

Evident from Tilt's work is that he mainly viewed illness at cessation as related to the nervous system. Swenson points out that the reason Tilt's theories worked well in the 1880s and 1890s is that they 'corresponded to the new preoccupation with nervous energy. Tilt, who had rejected the traditional French 'blood theory of diseases of the change of life' with its treatment of bleeding and purging, asserted that menopause was a nervous disorder and advocated sedating sufferers.' 129

Emily Martin, in her article on the subject also notes the negative language used in medical texts to describe menopause. In medical discourse the female reproductive system functions as a hierarchical communication system. Martin writes:

What I want to show is how this set of metaphors, once chosen as the basis for the description of physiological events, has profound implications for the way in which a change in the basic organization of the system will be perceived. In terms of female production, this basic change is of course menopause. Many criticisms have been made of the medical propensity to see menopause as a pathological state. I would like to suggest that the tenacity of this view comes not only from the negative stereotypes associated with aging women in our society, but as a logical outgrowth of seeing the body as a hierarchical information-processing system in the first place. (Another part of the reason menopause is seen so negatively is related to metaphors of production ...)

Examples of negative language usage include the ovaries becoming 'unresponsive', and as a result 'regressing'. Or as Martin observes:

In both medical texts and popular books, what is being described is the breakdown of a system of authority. The cause of ovarian 'decline' is the 'decreasing ability of the aging ovaries to respond to pituitary 'gonadotropins'. At every point in this system, functions 'fail' and falter. Follicles 'fail to muster the strength' to reach ovulation. As functions fail so the members of the system decline; 'breasts and genital organs gradually atrophy,' 'wither', and become 'senile'. Diminished atrophied relics of their former vigorous, functioning selves, the 'senile ovaries' are an example of the vivid imagery brought to this process.¹³¹

She also writes:

¹³¹ ibid., p.27.

¹²⁹ Kristine Swensen, 'The Menopausal Vampire: Arabella Kenealy and the Boundaries of True Womanhood', in *Women's Writing*, volume 10, issue 1, 2003, p.33.

¹³⁰ Emily Martin, 'Medical Metaphors of Women's Bodies: Menstruation and Menopause' in Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina and Sarah Stanbury, eds., Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory, p.26.

Ovaries cease to respond and fail to produce. Everywhere else there is regression, decline, atrophy, shrinkage and disturbance. The key to the problem connoted by these descriptions is functionlessness. Susan Sontag has written of our obsessive fear of cancer, a disease that we see as entailing a nightmare of excessive growth and rampant production. These images frighten us in part because in our stage of advanced capitalism, they are close to a reality we find difficult to see clearly: broken-down hierarchy and organization members who no longer play their designated parts represent nightmare images for us. One woman I have talked to said her doctor gave her two choices for treatment of her menopause: she could take estrogen and get cancer or she could not take it and have her bones dissolve. Like this woman, our imagery of the body as a hierarchical organization gives us no good choice when the basis of the organization seems to have changed drastically. We are left with breakdown, decay, and atrophy. Bad as they are, these might be preferable to continued activity, which because it is not properly hierarchically controlled, leads to chaos unmanaged growth, and disaster.

132

A recent website reiterates the ubiquitous use of negative language in the construction of the ageing female woman. The site states:

It's no secret that older American women have long been chided by a deafening chorus of "U's": unattractive, unhappy, useless, and so on. The message here is loud and clear, and it comes at us from all directions — television, advertising, people at work, strangers on the street, even members of our own families. It may feel like a sign that follows us everywhere we go, or like some kind of loudspeaker announcement:

Menopausal women: You have served your purpose. Now PLEASE STEP ASIDE. 133

The menopausal woman, failing to respond or produce, a no-longer-viable system or economy, is further reflected in fears of the woman who disguises her age through cosmetic enhancement, either through beauty products or surgery. This is a particular aspect of the late-nineteenth century menopausal vampire: she is a fake, a fraud, not young or productive but in fact old and sterile. Cosmetics and make-up had very specific connotations during the nineteenth-century, whereby, a painted woman became a synonym for a whore or (just as bad) an actress. Moreover, the ageing female vampire is often conflated with issues of money and social class. Therefore, before moving on to discuss the female vampire and the pursuit of youth and beauty in popular literature and film from the mid-century to the present, I want to begin by looking at Arabella Kenealy's significant but largely overlooked short story 'A Beautiful Vampire' (1886).

_

¹³² ibid., p.27

Dixie Mills, M.D., 'A Look at Menopause Across Cultures', *Women to Women.com*, [http://www.womentowomen.com/menopause/menopauseacrosscultures.aspx], date accessed: 06/03/2009.

Kenealy's tale of an older vampiric woman insistent on maintaining her youth through sucking the life-force of others is the precursor to numerous renderings of female vampirism. The story recounts the tale of Lady Deverish, whose staff become ill while in her employ, losing their health and vitality. The story is framed by medical discourse, unsurprising given that the author was a qualified doctor and a practicing G.P. who only gave up the profession following a severe attack of diphtheria. It opens with a young doctor attempting to strangle Lady Deverish and closes with his diagnostic opinion on the case:

'If I were to write that story in the *Lancet*,' Dr Andrew said, 'I should be the laughing stock of the profession. Yet it is the very key-note of human health and human disease, this interchange of vital force which goes on continually between individuals.' ¹³⁴

Christine Swenson in her insightful article on Kenealy's Lady Deverish as a menopausal vampire, writes that:

In this light, Lady Deverish's vampirism is an extreme case study of an important social health issue, the protection of human vital forces. But more specifically, placed in the context of Kenealy's intense interest in eugenics and female sexuality, 'A Beautiful Vampire' becomes a tale of female ageing or, rather, the dangers of women who refuse to age 'naturally' – menopausal vampires. ¹³⁵

Lady Deverish, a widow is described as 'beautiful and brilliant' who 'never tired'. After, her young fiancé commits suicide she becomes fraught and Kenealy writes:

Next day she was better, and suggested getting up, but she changed her mind after having seen a mirror. 'Gracious!' she said, with a shudder, 'I look like an old women.' She broke into feeble weeping. 'He ought to have thought of me, she cried angrily. She demanded wine and meat-juices, taking them with a curious solicitude, and carefully looking into the mirror for their effect. But she saw little to comfort her. ¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Arabella Kenealy, A Beautiful Vampire, p.23.

152

¹³⁴ Arabella Kenealy, *A Beautiful Vampire*, in Peter Haining, ed., *The Vampire Hunters' Casebook*, (London: Warner, 1996) p.32.

Kristine Swensen, 'The Menopausal Vampire: Arabella Kenealy and the Boundaries of True Womanhood', in *Women's Writing*, volume 10, issue 1, 2003, pp.30.

Her physique only regenerates once she has sucked the life force from a young child who is described as a 'chubby, rosy little fellow.' In the scene she 'held her arms hungrily for him, and strained him to her breast. Her spirits rose. Her eyes brightened: she got colour. Soon she was laughing and chatting in her accustomed manner.' Again as Swenson has noted:

Lady Deverish's is the sexuality of the ageing woman, no less dangerous despite its sterility. She is a sort of female Dorian Gray who maintains youth not by expelling sinful essence onto a portrait but by consuming the healthy, youthful essence of those around her. Because the actual 'vamping' that Lady Deverish does is so indirect, so bloodless, it becomes easier to see this as a story 'about' the inappropriate sexuality of ageing women. ¹³⁸

Swenson also observes that there is a strong class element to Lady Deverish's vampirism. Thus, it is notable that Kenealy wrote in her 1920 *Feminism and Sex-Extinction* that the 'most notable types of parasite-women, selfish, slothful, worthless, venal, vicious ... are found among the aristocratic and plutocratic orders.' Similarly, Swenson points out that 'doctors conjectured that menopause, which obviously affected all women at some point created the greatest problems for women who deviated from 'natural' (middle-class) living.' She writes:

As early as 1777, John Leake blames disorders at the change of life upon 'many excesses introduced by luxury, and the irregularities of the passions.' In his *Advice to a Wife* (1868), Chavasse notes that the woman who has eschewed fashionable society, and who has simply, plainly and sensibly' will 'during the autumn of and winter of life' enjoy good health. 140

Cosmetics and a yearning for youth are also expressed when she demands of Marian a nurse in her employ, who is secretly spying on her for Dr Andrew: 'Give *me* some of it,' she cried ravenously. 'You have so much vitality. Let me drain some of that rich health and colour.' In fact, Marian has been using make-up, rouge specifically to add colour, youth and vitality to her complexion. Cosmetic accoutrements from hair dye to blush

¹³⁷ ibid., p.24.

¹³⁸ Kristine Swensen, 'The Menopausal Vampire: Arabella Kenealy and the Boundaries of True Womanhood', in *Women's Writing*, Volume 10, Number 1, 2003, pp.32.

¹³⁹ ibid., p.35.

¹⁴⁰ ibid., p.35.

¹⁴¹ Arabella Kenealy, A Beautiful Vampire, p.26.

function as apotropaics in Kenealy's short story replacing the traditional garlic, holy water and crosses. Lady Deverish is not killed by a stake through the heart but instead is rendered powerless by the youth and beauty of a younger woman. The Bathory story is directly alluded to, when Lady Deverish pleads:

'I have heard of transfusion,' she said faintly; 'if you will let me have some of the rich red blood run out of your veins into mine I will settle £500 a year on you.' I shook my head. 'A thousand', she said. 'Fifteen hundred'. 'I should be cheating you,' I insisted, 'even if I were willing the operation has never been successful.' She broke into raving and tears. 'I cannot die' she said; 'I love life. I love being beautiful and rich; I love admiration. I must have admiration! I love my beautiful, beautiful body and the joy of life! I cannot, cannot die. 'What nonsense!' I said. You are not going to die.' 'If I could only get it,' she raved, 'I would drink blood out of living bodies rather than I would die.' 142

The story reaches its climax with Lady Deverish claiming 'I have lost my power. I am a dead woman.' Until finally fixing her eyes on Marian she cries 'I have had ten years more of life and pleasure than my due,' she chuckled in her shrivelled throat – the throat now of an old, old woman.' Her thirst and hunger for youth prevail until the end with Marian recalling that: 'Once when I arranged her pillows, she seized my hand and before I could withdraw it she had carried it to her mouth and bitten into it. I felt her suck the blood voraciously. She cried out and struck at me as I wrenched it away.' In her third week of isolation she dies, still fighting for immortality and the power of youth and beauty:

Then in the moment wherein life left her she made one supremest effort. It seemed as though my heart stopped. My head took on my chest, my hands dropped at my side. Then I swayed and fell headlong across her bed. They found me later lying on her corpse. I am convinced that had she been a moment earlier, had she nerved her powers the instant before, rather than on the instant life was leaving her, she would be alive to this day, and I – As it was, I did not leave my bed for a month. 146

Kenealy's vampire maintains a quiet presence throughout the first half of the twentieth century, with her financially draining counterpart more visible in popular culture, for example film noir's *femme fatale*. However, with new technological shifts in

_

¹⁴² ibid., p.28.

¹⁴³ ibid., p.29.

¹⁴⁴ ibid., p.31.

¹⁴⁵ ibid.,p.32.

¹⁴⁶ Arabella Kenealy, A Beautiful Vampire, p.32.

the cosmetic surgery industry after two World Wars the ageing female re-emerges in the 1960s. This 'menopausal' cosmetic vampire encompasses both anxieties pertaining to women wishing to participate in the sexual economy beyond what is considered appropriate, while at the same time fulfilling a genuinely required economic function – as already noted in previous sections – the body as a system within capitalism is required to be productive. Thus, from the mid-twentieth century onwards there is no place for economically unviable bodies. The female vampire in her quest for eternal youth is both sexually threatening while at the same time an exemplary consumer. Her 'hunger' evolves from gold-digging in the first decades of the century to yuppie, materialist consumerism in the 1980s. There is also a return to class politics with the working class femme-fatale replaced by the more familiar middle-class to aristocratic, high-earning vampire.

The resurgence in the Elizabeth Bathory myth in the mid-twentieth century as I have already mentioned was coextensive with the growth in cosmetic surgery and cultural shifts in relation to demographics. In the post-war years 'plastic surgeons led what would become a widespread trend toward marketing medical techniques and technologies to particular groups. The first problem they targeted was ageing and the first audience they targeted was female – specifically middle-aged, middle-class women.' Those who came of age during World War II had married and had families younger and lived longer than previous generations. For the first time a large proportion of the population were healthy and affluent and finished with the task of raising a family. As Elizabeth Haiken writes, this new generation

[...] found, however, that the nation's attention was riveted on the generation they had created. Beauty, in America, meant youth; while aging gracefully continued to hold sway as a popular ideal, many Americans saw little grace in the reality, and no category comparable to the intriguing, attractive older woman the French so descriptively termed the 'femme d'un certain âge' had developed in the United States. As the baby boomers bestowed cult status on Twiggy and the Beatles and vowed not to trust anyone over thirty, their mothers found the transition to what some were beginning to call the 'second half of life' was more difficult than they had anticipated. Postwar abundance enabled them to carry traditional notions of female responsibility for looking one's best to their logical, or perhaps, illogical conclusion, while the new emphasis on youth invested these notions with fresh significance. [...] At this crucial juncture, plastic surgeons found that the social

-

¹⁴⁷ Elizabeth Haiken, *Venus Envy: A History of Cosmetic Surgery*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997), p.134.

and psychological justification for cosmetic surgery they had developed before the war gave aging a whole new look, while many middle-class Americans, most of them women, found it easier to change their own faces than to alter the cultural norms and expectations about aging that confronted them. Together, surgeons and their patients forged a new image of the face-lift as a sensible, practical and relatively simple solution to the social problem of aging. In doing so, they became both producers and products of the modern 'culture of narcissism' and created powerful incentives toward cosmetic surgery that are still in place today.¹⁴⁸

One striking evocation of the ageing woman in mainstream cinema from this decade of deliberate and strategic marketing by the 'new' cosmetic surgery industry is Vivien Leigh as Blanche Dubois in Elia Kazan's A Street Car Named Desire (1951). Leigh's portrayal of Blanche epitomizes Kenealy's sexually inappropriate, ageing woman. Furthermore, the scene in which Brando's Stanley Kowalski grabs her and reveals her face in the harsh intensity of light from a lamp is striking in its similarity to numerous scenes of dying vampires in horror films which follow. Blanche once revealed as older than she is, shrivels up and collapses hysterically. In horror this is replicated over and over again throughout the 1960s and 1970s. For example, in Dracula (1958) Christopher Lee's Dracula in what were innovative special effects for the time, is killed with sunlight by Peter Cushing's Van Helsing. Lee's Dracula in the harsh glare of daylight, shrivels, dries-up and turns to dust. Another notable example is the more explicit Countess Dracula (1971), with Ingrid Pitt playing the infamous Elizabeth Bathory, who throughout the film oscillates between youth, beauty and old age. Each time she reverts to middle-age she is more aged, wrinkled and ravaged by time than before, until in the final marriage scene she suddenly ages so extensively she becomes a hysterical, old Medusa-crone. In fact the tag lines for the film's original theatrical trailer play directly on the use of cosmetics by women to maintain youth, stating 'Mirror, Mirror on the wall, who's the ugliest of them all? Mirror, Mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all? Mirror, Mirror on the wall, who's the most terrifying of them all? [...] There once was a Countess young and fair with tender skin and flaxen hair. Oh Countess how do you keep your looks? [...] Do your lovers know how you cling to youth. Dare you tell them the dreadful truth?'149

However, perhaps the most deliberate comment on cosmetic surgery and scientific approaches to ageing is Whitley Strieber's vampire novel *The Hunger* published in 1981

14

¹⁴⁸ ibid., pp.134-135.

¹⁴⁹ Theatrical Trailer, *Countess Dracula*, dir. Peter Sasdy, (1971).

and adapted for the screen by Tony Scott in 1983. Strieber's *The Hunger* is the tale of Miriam Blaylock an age-old vampire, whose lovers all eventually begin to age. In Scott's film adaptation Miriam is played by Catherine Deneuve with Susan Sarandon playing her unsuspecting victim, Dr. Sarah Roberts. The plot pivots on the scientific experiments of Dr. Roberts on ageing. Miriam, now facing the reality that another of her companions and lovers has begun to age is left with no option but to contact Sarah and seek her help. Strieber writes:

Miriam would have to approach Sarah Roberts much more quickly now. The research she had done already into the woman's work and habits would have to suffice. If anybody on this planet could discover what went wrong with the transformed it would be Dr. Roberts. In her book *Sleep and Age* Miriam had seen the beginnings of a deeper understanding that Roberts herself could possibly realize. The work that Roberts had done on primates was fascinating. She had achieved extraordinary increases in life-span. Given the proper information, would she also be able to confer real immortality on the transformed?¹⁵¹

From these musings of Miriam, it is possible to read Dr. Roberts as a type of cutting edge 'cosmetic surgeon', on the extreme edges of science. Miriam is a also a type of cryonic surgeon, however, her talents are limited and she can stave the signs of ageing for only so long before her vampire companions begin to grow old and become trapped in the decrepitude of an old-age from which they cannot be released. Instead of eternal life, youth, beauty and vitality they become the forever old, infirm and immobile. Miriam, with no other option, makes contact with Sarah in an attempt to halt the aging process in her current vampire lover and companion John (played by David Bowie in the film). In the film version it is John who approaches Dr. Roberts and as Barbara Creed writes:

Although Miriam promises immortality, she knows that none of her lovers will live for ever. John seeks the help of Sarah Roberts (Susan Sarandon), a scientist who is researching the ageing process. All his attempts fail and he begins to age rapidly. When he turns into an old decrepit man, Miriam carries his crumbling body upstairs to the attic where she keeps the coffins of her undead lovers. ¹⁵²

Creed continues, pointing out that:

¹⁵⁰ Another film from the late seventies to explicitly play on themes of cosmetic surgery, youth and the ageing body is an Australian film *Thirst*, dir. Rod Hardy, (1979), where the central female character is told she is a direct descendant of the Countess Elizabeth Bathory.

Whitley Strieber, *The Hunger*, (New York, Pocket, 2007), p.48. Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine*, p.67

Miriam is fully aware of the fate of her lovers. She is the cruel mother, the parent who nurtures her lovers/children in life and then keeps them in a state of living death. She represents the suffocating mother – the mother who refuses to let go. When John finally becomes a grotesque old man, he begs her to let him die. Miriam tells him that there is no release, no rest. Carrying him upstairs to the attic, she places him in a coffin with her other past lovers, now members of the undead. The attic is the antithesis of the conventional vampire's crypt in the cellar. Whereas the cellar is dank and cold, the attic of *The Hunger* is dry and dusty. Miriam represents the dead face of the archaic mother, the maternal figure whose fertility has dried up. She has no nourishment to offer. Miriam's vampire lovers exist in a limbo of decay. Blood can no longer keep them alive. The horror of such a state which has no boundaries, no end, is forcefully represented in the scene where the undead begin to crumble. 153

Again, Creed, points to the menopausal aspect of Miriam Blaylock's vampirism, describing her as the cruel 'archaic mother, the maternal figure whose fertility has dried up'. However, it is also possible to argue that Miriam's keeping of her undead lovers in coffins in the attic is reflective of another advance in science which is marketed from the 1960s onwards, that is, cryonics. Cryonic preservation is attributed to Robert Ettinger, although the term was coined by Karl Werner. In 1964, Ettinger published the controversial The Prospect of Immortality and also founded the Cryonics Institute and the Michigan Cryonics Society and made plans for his own suspension. Also Evan Cooper (writing as Nathan Duhring) privately published Immortality: Physically, Scientifically, Now, which also presented the possibility of immortality as a real and viable option after death. Furthermore, Cooper founded the Life Extension Society (LES), which became the locus throughout America for those interested in cryonics. It is generally accepted that the first person frozen with the intent to be resuscitated and brought back to life at a later date was a Dr. James Bedford, a 73-year-old psychology professor, in 1967. The case made the cover of a limited print run of Life Magazine before the presses were stopped to report the death of three astronauts in the Apollo 1 fire instead. Cryonics continued to make headlines throughout the 1970s, suffering a major public relations setback in 1979 when nine bodies were discovered thawed in a cemetery in Chatsworth, California due to a lack of funding. Also interesting, and notable is the American Cryonics Society where two researchers as well as developing models to induce hypothermia after death also went

¹⁵³ ibid., p.68.

on to pioneer blood substitutes for use in both cryonic suspension and in mainstream medicine. 154

From this perspective Miriam could be described as a cryogenic surgeon rather than a cosmetic surgeon having progressed beyond merely the maintanance of youth to the quest for immortality. In either case, the importance of life and its corresponding association with youth and beauty remain. Miriam's lovers in their coffins are the vampire equivalent of cryonically suspended patients, useless until they can be revivified. Wrinkles, lack of physical energy and the general signs of old age are pathologized throughout the novel. Dr. Sarah Roberts in her work on aging describes it as 'nothing more than a disease, potentially curable'. 155 Ageing is described in language similar to that used in describing the menopause. Strieber writes:

At the molecular level the buildup of lipofuscin is responsible for the loss of internal circulation that leads to cellular morbidity. Thus, it is the prime factor in the overall process called 'aging,' being responsible for effects as subtle as the reduction in the responsiveness of organs to hormonal demands and as gross as senile dementia. 156

Blood as central to the aging process is also underlined throughout the novels fictional scientific meta-narrative. The primate upon whom Dr. Roberts is conducting most of her experiments is called Methuselah (for obvious reasons), with continuous references to 'blood composition' and statistics. The continuous assessment of blood continues with an analysis of Miriam's blood which she voluntarily allows to be drawn from her. Its composition is immediately pathologized. A colleague of Dr. Roberts exclaims to her, that:

'You got the wrong blood.' 'What wrong blood? What're you talking about?' The blood you gave me marked 00265 A- Blaylock M.? It isn't human blood. 'Of course it is. I took it out of that patient right there.' Sarah pointed at the monitor. Geoff pulled out his computer printout. 'You'll note from the machine's attempt to analyze it that something is amiss.' The sheet showed the blood's ID and then a list of zeros where the component values should have been. 157

¹⁵⁴ Christine Quigley, Modern Mummies: The Preservation of the Human Body in the Twentieth Century, (Jefferson, North Carolina: Mc Farland & Company Inc., 1998), pp.141-147.

¹⁵⁵ Whitley Strieber, The Hunger, p.53.

¹⁵⁶ ibid., p.68.

¹⁵⁷ ibid., pp.172-173.

Thus, Miriam, the blood drinker, the Countess Bathory figure is the embodiment of health, youth and immortality but inhuman (not surprising given that her blood is problematic: super-menstrual, perhaps). Her blood is described in these terms:

It's a better blood than ours. Very similar, but more disease resistant. The cellular material is more dense, the plasma less. It would take a strong heart to pump the stuff and there might be some minor capillary clogging but whoever had it in their veins could forget about sickness if their heart was strong enough to pump the stuff.' 158

The narrative continues:

This blood sample is exceptionally resistant to morbidity. I suspect it would even cause such diseases as virally induced cancer to be self-limiting and transient events in the life of the organism. If this blood was following in the veins of a mortal being, subject to time and accident, it might itself be immortal.¹⁵⁹

Sarah's vampire bite is also described in medical terms as a 'transfusion'. This is confirmed in the gerontology laboratory where she works. Strieber writes:

Miriam's blood was actually running through Sarah's veins. 'The eosinophilelike cell is present. Pseudopodial activity is high the cell is thriving. 'What is the concentration in Miriam's own bood?' Sarah asked. Her tone was clipped. She was forcing calm. 'Eighteen percent.' 'You mentioned pseudopodial activity. What's taking place?' Geoff leaned back from his microscope. The fluorescent lighting overhead there his face into shadow. His forehead glistened. 'It appears to be consuming your blood,' he said carefully,' and reproducing cells of its own kind.' 160

Furthermore, there is a continuous linking of age, youth and sexuality in the novel. Strieber writes that Miriam 'chose Sarah as the recipient because Sarah knew so much about aging. There was brilliance in such a choice.' This is immediately followed in the novel by a scientific colleague of Sarah's commenting on Miriam's abnormal blood sample. He says that:

_

¹⁵⁸ ibid., p.173.

¹⁵⁹ ibid., p.196.

¹⁶⁰ ibid., p.258.

¹⁶¹ Whitley Strieber, The Hunger, p.297.

The sexual component presents another sort of problem. I would doubt that the sexual functioning of this species parallels our own, or the rest of the primates for that matter. The ambiguity of the sixty-six, XXY tripartite structure certainly implies both male and female components in the same personality. I would recommend a thorough examination of the sexual organs as the next step in this study. ¹⁶²

In this scene Strieber conflates the female body with what Foucault describes as a 'Scientia Sexualis'. Science and the medical profession, as I have already demonstrated in this chapter, has since the nineteenth-century maintained an over-interest in the female body, her reproductive system and particularly the menstrual cycle and sexual organs, which have been consistently measured, probed and analysed. For Sarah this is the last straw, for to witness science so barbarically subject the female body to invasive examination is too close to both the historical and lived reality of women; thus, she concludes: 'That did it. She could not abide the idea of Miriam strapped to some table with this bastard examining her sexual organs.' 163

Moreover, the embodiment of female subjectivity in both the novel and film is directly linked to 'capital'. As Nina Auerbach observes:

Scott's Miriam is far from timeless. She epitomizes the glamour of the 1980s, subordinating history to seductive objects: jewelry, furniture, lavish houses in glamorous cities, leather clothes. Responding to the success stories of her consuming decade, Miriam lives through her things. She kills, not with her teeth, but with her jewelry, an ankh that hides a knife. She preserves her desiccated former lovers, who age eternally once their vampirism wears off, as carefully as she does her paintings. These things, alone with the music and the cityscapes over which she presides, make us envy Miriam's accoutrements instead of her immortality. Vampires in *The Hunger* are not their powers, but their assets. 164

Although, Auerbach draws attention to Miriam's financial assets as enviable and embodying the glamour of the 1980s, I would extend her argument and suggest that her wealth and accourrements are further elements in the matrix of immortality, youth and beauty which underpins the narrative. As Chris Shilling writes of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction, which has as its core a concern with the body as a bearer of symbolic value, that:

¹⁶³ ibid., p.298.

¹⁶² ibid., p.298.

¹⁶⁴ Nina Auerbach, Our Vampires Ourselves, pp.57-58.

Bourdieu's analysis of the body involves an examination of the multiple ways in which the body has become commodified in modern societies. This refers not only to the body's implication in the buying and selling of labour power, but to the methods by which the body has become a more comprehensive form of *physical capital*; a possessor of power, status and distinctive symbolic forms which is integral to the accumulation of various resources. The production of physical capital refers to the development of bodies in ways which are recognized as possessing value in social fields while the conversion of physical capital refers to the translation of bodily participation in work, leisure and other fields into different forms of capital. Physical capital is most usually converted into economic capital [money, goods and services], cultural capital [for example, education] and social capital [social networks which enable reciprocal calls to be made on the goods and services of its members]. ¹⁶⁵

Youth and beauty have always been a form of physical capital, but increasingly so from the 1950s onwards, as I have already pointed out. Furthermore, Elizabeth Haiken in her work on the history of cosmetic surgery writes that 'in the marketplace of consumer culture beauty is a commodity whose worth may be quantified.' She continues:

Yet the idea that beautiful people have a leg up on success is not exactly news. The finding that appearance may determine income could not have come as a surprise to America's women, whose beauty expenditures scandalized commentators as early as the 1920s and who now spend more \$20 billion annually on cosmetics alone and many billions more on diets, clothes, hair care, and surgery.¹⁶⁷

She concludes sardonically, with a quote from Mary Lou Weisman's 1984 essay 'The Feminist and the Face-Lift', 'I do not think ... that too many men worry that their wives will leave them for a younger, smooth-skinned man.' Thus, as Shilling notes, 'As people age, their capacity to produce and convert physical capital into other resources tends to decline.' Therefore, it is almost inevitable that youthful looks and beauty have stood Miriam well in terms of their conversion into both economic and cultural capital. She collects antiques, her house is expensively decorated and she plays classical music on a grand piano.

Strieber's novel and Scott's film differ in their respective endings. In Strieber's novel Dr. Sarah Roberts commits suicide rather than become immortalised, whereas, in

¹⁶⁸ Elizabeth Haiken, Venus Envy: A History of Cosmetic Surgery, p.9.

¹⁶⁵ Chris Shilling, *The Body and Social Theory*, (London: Sage, 206), p.111.

¹⁶⁶ Elizabeth Haiken, Venus Envy: A History of Cosmetic Surgery, p.8.

¹⁶⁷ ibid., p.9.

¹⁶⁹ Chris Shilling, *The Body and Social Theory*, p.121.

Scott's version it is Miriam who dies and falls from a window in the attic, as her past lovers rise from their coffins seeking release from their perpetual old age. Whatever the differences in endings may be, Nina Auerbach commenting on both Scott's film and Streiber's novel concludes:

The Hunger ends with an opaque shot of Sarah and a female lover looking down over another city; her distinctive style, her rhythm, her décor, all have turned into Miriam's. The vampirism that meant sharing in the 1870s adapts to the competitive business ethos that reigned over America in the only room for one at the top. Strieber's provocative novel features an omnipotent Miriam who continues to reign at the end, but in the novel too, the triumph of vampirism is the failure of sharing. 170

Therefore, both Strieber's novel and Scott's film both encompass the consumerism of the 1980s, the competitive business climate, and moreover, feminism and the ageing female body. The feared menstrual vampire gives way to another fear of the feminine, the menopausal woman. The body as a system, a machine, an economic entity, one which needs to be maintained and controlled is again disrupted by the female reproductive organs. The sterile, infertile female body is equally problematic to capitalist, western, society. Thus, what emerges in narratives of female vampirism is control of the female body throughout its reproductive life. Medical discourse reflects, interacts and becomes interchangeable with broader cultural discourses pertaining to the female body. The pathologized embodiment of female sexuality is captured in the figure of the vampire and its connection to blood and reproductive anxieties. From menstruation to menopause the figure of the female vampire is both sexually and economically threatening.

'Love Bites' in Claire Denis' Trouble Every Day

Look into my eves You see trouble every day It's on the inside of me So don't try to understand I get on the inside of you You can blow all away

(*Tindersticks*, 'Trouble Every Day')

¹⁷⁰ Nina Auerbach, Our Vampires, Ourselves, pp.58-59.

A more recent film to satirically capture these specific bio-medical embodiments of female sexuality and desire is French director Claire Denis' vampire film *Trouble Every Day* (2001). Denis' film plays with the conventions of the horror genre, subtly using overcoded generic elements of the gothic and suspense. Although not overtly a vampire film, the critic Douglas Morrey writes:

Shane and Coré resemble that most over-determined of generic figures, the vampire. Although the word is never mentioned in the film, a number of discreet references are made to the conventions of the vampire movie: the blood smeared around Coré's mouth after a kill; the camera that, from Shane's point of view, lingers in close-up on the neck of a chambermaid; a bite mark glimpsed on the upper arm of Shane's young bride; Shane's complaint about the bright lights in a laboratory; a shot in which Coré raises her coat like bat-wings behind her shoulders as she gulps the night air; and, finally, in the film's one concession to genre that comes across as a little facile, Coré's body consumed by flames after her death.¹⁷¹

Trouble Every Day is the story of a scientific experiment gone wrong and pivots on the after-effects on two central characters, Dr. Shane Brown (Vincent Gallo) and Coré Semenau (Béatrice Dalle). Since Coré's scientist husband Léo Semenau's illegal neurological experiments and testing on humans went wrong, his wife has been ill, necessitating her imprisonment in their home. Her sickness is an uncontrollable sexual and cannibalistic desire for human flesh. The film tracks Shane's attempt



Fig.2.8

find Léo while honeymooning in Paris, as he is beginning to experience the same desires.

What is striking in Denis' film is the continuous cutting between both tender and brutal scenes of blood and violence with those of science. The laboratory, scientists in white coats, beakers and test tubes containing a myriad of liquids dominate the screen. In one of the ambiguous opening scenes of the film we encounter a blood-drenched Coré on the outskirts of Paris; she is returned home by her husband and administered pills. The

164

to

¹⁷¹ Douglas Morrey, 'Textures of Terror: Claire Denis's Trouble Every Day', *Littérature Populaire et Culture Médiatique*, volume 3, issue 2, April 2004, p.44.

camera then cuts to Shane in his hotel room and the viewer is again presented with the image of a bag containing bottle upon bottle of pills. The body, sexuality and desire are conflated with scientific intervention which is indeed redolent of what has already been discussed in this chapter. I would argue that Denis' film is a deliberate examination of the biomedical embodiment of sexuality, whereby, intervention and experimentation are shown to have potentially uncontrollable results.

Furthermore, it has been argued that the cannibalistic elements play on the cultural cathexis of love, desire and consumption. Thus, in *Trouble Every Day* love does literally bite. The film opens with a kiss between newly weds Shane and his wife June. This is followed by a scene onboard their flight to Paris where he kisses her arm, to a scene in the hotel room where the viewer is presented with a bite-mark bruise on her arm. As Sebastian Scholz and Hanna Surma write of the opening scene:

For Jean-Luc Nancy, it is the first kiss in the film's first scene that could be seen as an allegoric instant of *Trouble Every Day*, as the nucleus of what the film will be circulating around later, the nucleus everything arises from: the sexual cravings the greed for blood, the tearing and opening of bodies and finally the tearing and opening of the screen. [...] And, indeed, it is the first and *last* time we witness a kiss in the common sense, as a touch of skin, of lips and mouths that meet without wounding each other, as an exchange of breath and saliva, not of blood. It is the only kiss that respects boundaries before kissing crosses over and exceeds them, penetrating and piercing the skin – cruel kisses, kisses of bleeding flesh. Subliminally, the way the first sequence presents the kiss marks the trail that will lead to the radical suggestion the film hints at: that the kiss is the origin of biting, of the stigmata of flesh on flesh, and of the greed for blood. 172

Or, as Jean-Luc Nancy, writes

What is a kiss? This is the question posed by Claire Denis's film. Or rather: what is fucking? It has long been accepted and repeated that kissing is a kind of devouring. It belongs to a core of imagery and metaphor that includes fairy tales (Little Red Riding Hood, ogres), the fascination with cannibalism, the symbolism of Christian communion and that of the lacerations of Dionysos, Osiris or Acteon, together with ghouls, striges and vampires, werewolves, incubi and succubi. This entire carnivorous breed is concealed within the film. It is recalled in its entirety, evoked by the gesture of Coré, the sick woman (if we can put it like this), standing on a bank, filmed from a low angle raising her coat above her shoulders to bring to mind for a moment the silhouette of Murnau's Nosferatu. The vampire's true formula is only revealed when one says 'the kiss of the vampire'. That is what is at stake here, allowing for the fact that we are no longer in the era of vampire stories:

¹⁷² Sebastian Scholz, and Hanna Surma, 'Exceeding the limits of Representation: screen and/as skin in Claire Denis's *Trouble Every Day* (2001)' in *Studies in French Cinema*, volume 8, issue 1, 2008, pp.10-11.

the kiss as vampire. It is not a question of any particular kiss, but rather that the kiss, in itself, opens on to the bite, and the taste of blood. And consequently it is a question of another well known coupling, that of Eros and Thanatos: not in a dialectic of opposites, but in a mutual excitation and exasperation, each asking the other to go further, to go all the way to the end, to get completely lost.¹⁷³

Indeed, Denis' film confronts desire face on without turning the camera away from the brutal form it often takes. Thus, the viewer is compelled to look. The two most infamous scenes in Trouble Every Day are Coré's sexual encounter with a teenage boy whom she literally consumes and Shane's at first consensual sexual advances towards a young chambermaid in his hotel which quickly turns into a violent, cannibalistic rape. What is striking is the inversion of the familiar generic representations of sexual violation in these scenes. In the scene where Dalle's Coré has sex with the young male teenager she is the penetrator. She bites through him and then fondles her fingers in his opened viscera, experiencing intense sexual pleasure, a scene which has led to comparisons with Cronenberg's Crash. Conversely, in Shane's violent sexual encounter the viewer's genre literacy is deliberately played upon. In horror, the viewer is familiar with the recurrent figure of the 'femme castratrice', that is, the castrating woman and the vagina dentata. Indeed, the mouth of the female vampire is often read as a displaced version of the vagina dentata, as such I would argue that Gallo's Shane is feminized (or, de-gendered) in the scene in which he performs oral sex on the young chambermaid before performing the more familiar female act of male castration (see Craven's Last House on the Left) in biting and eating the female genitals. Furthermore, as Jean-Luc Nancy writes:

It is about kissing, or about fucking: but precisely in so far as fucking, here, or if you will 'sex', is related to the kiss, rather than the reverse. Sex becomes a metonymy of the kiss: the kiss is broader, deeper, more encompassing than sex. We must understand that the bite of the kiss, here, devours the sexes (their organs), not by castration, but by an absorption which opens on to a kind of horrific sublimation: not that of sex in which a body takes pleasure, but that of an entire body in which sex bursts out and is spattered with the body's blood, with its life/death and with that which explodes it: that which exposes it in splashes, drops, streams and stains, clots and ribbons that will never again be restored to a form. We might say that the film's entire story is the allegory, and its entire image the literality of this: the unbearable tearing apart of orgasm.

 ¹⁷³ Jean-Luc Nancy, 'Icon Fury: Claire Denis' Trouble Every Day', *Film-Philosophy*, volume 12, issue 1, pp.1-2.
 ¹⁷⁴ ibid., p.2.

He also argues that:

The screen is torn into a wound streaming with blood. The image becomes an image of a torn image: no longer an image, or a figure, but an icon of access to the invisible. The invisible, that is sanguis, the blood nourishing the body, life itself, pulsating beneath the skin. Once the skin has been bitten to draw blood (to the depth of the blood and at the level of the blood), the blood becomes cruor, spilled blood, a jet which no longer irrigates but which spurts out like one or other of the sexual liquids, male or female cum. The spilled blood of sacrificial cruelty, the revelation of a raw life which serves not to live but to grant access to that which is more than life in a splash of blood, of meaning, of presence. Spilled blood, spurting blood, blossoming into the icon, gives us to see that which should only be seen through the transparency of the skin over the vessels. 175

I concur with Nancy's arguments of the metonymy of the kiss and the screen as a bleeding wound which tears open the gap between the viewer and the image. However, this spattering of the body's blood is more than just male or female sexual ejaculation; I would argue that it is a menstrual type of embodied revolt. Spilled blood, which should only be seen through the transparency of the skin over vessels, is transgressed in menstruation, something that is overlooked by Nancy. Thus, Shane's consumption of the female genitals and the image where he lifts his blood covered mouth and face to the screen can be seen to suggest oral sex during menstruation – obviously vampiric in its associations. This is explicitly evoked in Michael Almereyda's Nadja (1994), in a scene where the eponymous vampire performs oral sex on a female victim who begins to menstruate during the act. In Trouble Every Day this scene has been carefully prefigured throughout the narrative with a conscious focus by Denis on the female body and the female genitalia. In a soft, meditative scene, Shane's wife bathes in the bathtub and the camera pans slowly over her body focusing on her pubic hair floating in the water. 176 Unaware of her husband's gaze until she is suddenly startled, she sits upright to see him watching her, whereby, he asks 'did I scare you'. Shane's intentions and desires are evident given his previous visceral fantasy of his wife covered in blood whilst lying provocatively in a bed.

¹⁷⁵ ibid., p.6.

¹⁷⁶ In an interview Denis explains: 'You know in *Trouble Every Day* there is this scene where Vincent Gallo is looking at his wife taking a bath, and you can see pubic hair moving in the water. That's one of Stuart's (Tindersticks) songs. On his second CD there is a song called Sea Weeds and the story is just that. I truly wrote the scene because of the song. There is a lot of criss-crossing in my films.' Source: Claire Denis: An Interview by Aimé Ancian, trans. by Inge Pruks, originally published in Sofa, issue 17. Republished with permission in Senses of Cinema:

[[]http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/02/23/denis interview.html], Date accessed: 08/10/2008.

This link between desire, consumption, blood and violence is followed by a wide shot of the outlying Parisian wastelands. In an almost pastoral scene, long blades of grass gently blowing in a soft wind are shown to be dripping in blood. The image itself almost replicates the scene in the bathtub. This scene, I would again argue, references the menstrual female genitalia and pubic hair. Furthermore, this scene is followed by Léo digging a grave for another of Coré's victims while she sits hysterically in their van with a blood smeared face. Denis concludes this segment of the film with a tender exposition of husband and wife, with Léo carefully washing the blood from Coré's body in an almost biblical scene. Thus, Coré becomes the victim, a Christ-like figure and the blood, though not her own, appears to bleed from her skin as she implores of her husband 'I don't want to wait any longer, let me die', the only lines that Dalle speaks in the entire film.

The bleeding of blood from the entire body is also a reference to the scientific experimentations of her husband in the rainforests of Guyana. Sexuality, disease, and pathologies of blood are evoked. The bleeding, leaky, menstrual female body is totalised. Denis exposes what has always been the case of the bleeding female genitalia through science, it becomes a totalized embodiment. Denis demonstrates this in repeated scenes which show the entire female body covered and dripping in blood (another deliberate inter-textual play on genre as well as perhaps a comment on the misogyny of King's and De Palma's *Carrie*). Nancy asserts that the bleeding, open body of Denis' film is a broken skin:

Killing, breaking the skin: the film is made entirely on and about the skin. Literally: exposed skin. Not only is the skin present in the image in extreme close-ups, in sections and expanses, with its textures, blemishes and bristles, with its hollows and bumps, navel, nipples, pubis, body dismembered in the image, cut up, marked off, a neck, a cheek, a belly, but this skin is also everywhere emerging from a camera in its fury to capture this fragile access to a force unleashed. It is also the image itself, the film, its skin, that caresses and ravishes and tears its luminous chemistry in red and black until, when the furious Coré lights the fire, what we see is the burning of the film itself, rather than any décor. The fury reaches the soul and the image – the substance of vision – at the same time: a vision like livid, exposed flesh. Eyes full of blood, eyes injected with blood, plunged into a scene where the only thing to see is unbearable, invisible excess, where screams and groans disgorge the saturated colour, the screen like a sponge. 177

He concludes his article with the following:

¹⁷⁷ Jean-Luc Nancy, 'Icon Fury: Claire Denis' Trouble Every Day', *Film-Philosophy*, volume 12, issue 1, p.4.

This film is shattering. It risks going behind the film, shutting out the gaze by opening it onto a wound, a bite mark. It is the kiss, it is love that bites – just as the cold can bite, or acid, or flames. It is that which pierces, drives a sharp point into the flesh with repeated, rough blows. Love – that by which we are bitten (as colloquial language would have it). Not an anatomical dissection but that which bursts and destroys the flesh leading not to death but to something that resembles it: to an irradiation causing a stabbing jolt to the heart, a contraction that at once freezes the blood and spills it out. This – this thing or this beast –, this chilling heartbreak, love, the transfixion or transfusion of that which (of he or she who) thought itself alone with itself, the breakdown of the specular and of the resembling image: the image bleeding, blinding. 178

Thus, I would argue that Clair Denis' *Trouble Every Day* is vampirism without economy, beyond economy. Menstrual blood is membranous, clotted, the Kristevan semantic abject of the without that is always within. Menstrual blood is the ultimate *jouissance*, an encounter between the symbolic and the semiotic. Or, the Deleuzian fold of interiority and exteriority. As Deleuze writes of Foucault in his chapter on 'Foldings':

It is like Melville's line, whose two ends remain free, which envelops every boat in its complex twists and turns, goes into horrible contortions when that moment comes, and always runs the risk of sweeping someone away with it; or like Michaux's line 'of a thousand aberrations' with its growing molecular speed, which is the 'whiplash of a furious charioteer'. But however terrible this line may be, it is a line of life that can no longer be gauged by relations between forces, one that carries man beyond terror. For at the place of the fissure the line forms a Law, the 'centre of the cyclone, here one can live and in fact where Life exists par excellence'. It is as if the accelerated speeds, which last only briefly, constituted 'a slow Being' over a longer period of time. It is like the pineal gland, constantly reconstituting itself by changing direction, tracing an inside space but coextensive with the whole of the line of the outside. The most distant point becomes interior, by being converted into the nearest: life within the folds. This is the central chamber, which one need no longer fear is empty since one fills it with oneself. Here one becomes a master of one's speed and, relatively speaking of one's molecules and particular features, in the zone of subjectivation: the boat as interior of the exterior. 179

Thus, Denis goes beyond the traditional orthodoxies of gender subjectivation, wherein, the corporeality of desire is neither masculine, nor feminine. Indeed her previous films have interrogated precisely this from the sexual corporeality of the female body in *Chocalat* (1988) to the male legionnaire body in *Beau Travail* (1999). Denis controverts

¹⁷⁸ ibid., p.9.

¹⁷⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, (London: Continuum, 2006), pp.100-101.

and exposes the boundaries of embodied subjectivity, medical and cultural, to the point of becoming immanent, the line of 'a thousand aberrations'. The vampirism of *Trouble Every Day* is pure visceral orgasm, desire beyond the sexual and consumption beyond the dictates of capitalist consumerism.

Overall, this chapter has attempted to trace a socio-cultural medical history of menstruation and representations of female vampirism. From its inception in myth and folklore through its literary and cinematic representation, the figure of the female vampire is reflective of shifts pertaining to the social construction of femininity. The nineteenthcentury's obsession with pathologizing female sexuality as a means of control is extended into the early twentieth century's preoccupation with degeneracy theories and capitalist economics. Thus, the early decades of the twentieth century sees the female vampire as gold-digging concomitant with a menstrual economics in medical discourse. From the mid-century onwards as cosmetic surgery is marketed and promoted, the ageing female body is again pathologized, evident in the resurgence in representations of the historic figure of Elizabeth Bathory in vampire narratives. More recently, as I have demonstrated in the final section of this chapter, is a focus on desire and bio-ethics in Claire Denis' Trouble Every Day. What is unique about Denis' film is its self-conscious and reflexive approach to genre. Science and medicine is central to the narrative but the body itself steps outside the boundaries of embodiment. The body is ungendered yet sex specific in Denis' film. The organism becomes disembodied, desire becomes productive. As Shildrick writes: 'When Deleuze, for example, uses the signifier of the 'becomingwoman', he refers not simply to the ongoing process of inscription on a Body-without-Organs, but to a body that is sexually undifferentiated (Braidotti 1991a: 116). 180 However, she also makes the point that:

In contrast, what has seemed important to many feminist postmodernists is that the body that becomes as it is inscribed has substance as well as surface, and moreover is always lived as sexed. It is not that there is any wish to reclaim the feminine as an essentialist quality, or even to mark it as belonging only to women, but to resist a male-authored recuperation of the feminine that either reiterates its incalculable otherness or occludes the sexed specificity of the body. For that very reason then, postmodern feminist theory, in its project to integrate the excluded without losing touch with specificity, places new emphasis on reclaiming the body in both its corporeality and its desires. [81]

¹⁸⁰ Margrit Shildrick, *Leaky Bodies and Boundaries, Feminism, Postmodernism and (Bio) Ethics*, p.172.¹⁸¹ ibid., p.172.

Thus, the body's corporeality, its desires and sexed specificity leads directly into the next chapter, which will focus on 'menstruous-monstrous' embodiment at puberty in 1970s horror.

'Leaky Bodies/Leaky Politics': Menstrual-Morphosis in 1970s Horror

Where the feminist agenda somewhat shifts the parameters of postmodernist enquiry, however, is in the refusal to read the body only as text. It is both the surface of inscription and the site of material practices, each of which speaks to a sexed specificity. Although intending to deconstruct the essentialism of the highly damaging historical elision between women and their bodies, postmodernist feminists might see, nevertheless, the embodiment of the feminine as precisely the site from which new forms of knowledge could emerge.

1

(Margrit Shildrick, Leaky Bodies and Boundaries, Feminism, Postmodernism and (Bio) Ethics)

The 1970s saw a significant number of horror novels and films exploit the nature of the menstrual pubescent female. William Peter Blatty's *The Exorcist* (1971) tells of the possession and exorcism of twelve year old Regan MacNeil. Stephen King's *Carrie* (1974) is the ubiquitous high school narrative that descends into to a violent bloodbath caused by the supernatural powers of its menstrual, teenage protagonist. John Farris' *The Fury* (1976) again places puberty and menstruation as central to the narrative and tells of the horror that befalls a psychic teenager Gillian Bellaver. Each of these novels was further adapted for the screen with *The Exorcist*, directed by William Friedkin in 1973, and both *Carrie* and *The Fury* directed by Brian de Palma in 1976 and 1978, respectively.

Blatty's *The Exorcist* can be traced to the author's own Catholic upbringing. Born into a Catholic family in New York in 1928, he attended the local Catholic Grammar School, and then attended a Jesuit high school. From there he went on to attend Georgetown University, also a Jesuit school. In 1949, whilst a student at Georgetown University, Blatty became acquainted with the case of a fourteen year old boy in Rainier, Maryland who was said to be possessed by the Devil. An exorcism was performed during which it was reported that he was subjected to up to thirty readings of the Roman Ritual of exorcism. In the course of the exorcism he continually broke into a violent tantrum of screaming, cursing and the voicing of Latin phrases – a language he had never studied. At the same time as Blatty became acquainted with the case he was entered into an oratorical contest on campus and with one day to go he still had not decided upon a subject matter. His one-time tutor from his Jesuit highschool, Father Thomas Birmingham, who appears in Friedkin's film, and who was visiting at the time suggested the topic for his debate, and

¹ Margrit Shildrick, Leaky Bodies and Boundaries, Feminism, Postmodernism and (Bio) Ethics, p.10.

the next night he won the contest. Blatty himself expressed his own feelings on the subject as follows:

I thought, well, my God, if this could be researched and written about, and some of these details could be corroborated, it would seem to substantiate certainly the existence of intelligences that can survive without a body, namely spirits. And if bad spirits, why not good? But at any rate it would certainly suggest the possibility of God and definitely suggest the probability of some form of after-life.²

From this time the seed had been planted in Blatty's mind. However, it would take twenty years before it came to fruition. When Blatty eventually came to write his novel his friend Father Thomas Birmingham agreed to work with him on the condition that he took the subject seriously and demanded that he study the subject for at least a year before attempting to write his story.

When it eventually came to filming the novel Blatty's primary concern was still authenticity and he was anxious to get the backing and support of the Catholic Church. Overall, both the book and the film were well received by the Church. In fact Blatty garnered some of his best reviews in religious publications such as the Vatican Literary Journal *Civilta Cattolica*. The critic Bob Mc Cabe describes the great strength and one of the keys to the novel's success as lying in the 'expert juxtaposition between the real and the unfathomable.' He also posits that:

Blatty's book was never a tale of shock and excess. Despite the use of graphically strong language and such vividly unnerving moments as the twelve-year-old Regan masturbating with a crucifix (surely the first time anywhere, in the mainstream, such a potent religious symbol had been forced into physical, and more importantly, intellectual contact with the female vagina), *The Exorcist* set out to present the mysteries of faith in a rational world.⁵

The novel tells the story of Regan MacNeil, a twelve year old girl who is possessed by a demon who calls himself Captain Howdy, an ancient evil also known as Pazuzu. Her mother, Chris Mac Neil, explores all the rational medical routes available as her daughter's health begins to deteriorate as the demon takes hold of her body. Regan is first prescribed the drug Ritalin for what the doctors describe as 'a common nervous disorder'

² Bob Mc Cabe, *The Exorcist*, (London: Omnibus, 1999), p.16.

³ ibid., p.39.

⁴ ibid., p.26.

⁵ ibid., p.26.

in adolescents. She is x-rayed, undergoes an EEG brain scan and in the film version she undergoes the more modern treatment of an arteriogram. Furthermore, she is prescribed extremely high dosages of librium and thorazine to keep her sedated. At her wits end her mother eventually seeks the help of the Catholic Church. She pleads with a Catholic priest, Fr. Karras: 'She needs a priest! [...] I've taken her to every goddamn fucking doctor, psychiatrist in the world and they sent me to you; now you send me to them.' 6

The film adaptation of Blatty's novel, directed by William Friedkin, was released in the US on 26th December, 1973, and for the first time in mainstream cinema, audiences were assailed with the desecration of everything that was held sacred and wholesome in American if not also in Western society: the home; the family; the church; and perhaps most shockingly the child. Here were images of a white suburban American family, even if the absent father does point to the breakdown of the traditional family, where the young pretty all-American girl Regan MacNeil played by Linda Blair becomes a depraved monster who urinates on the carpet of her home, vomits on the clergy, batters and humiliates her mother (Ellen Burstyn), spouts tirades of obscenities and blasphemes religious artifacts.

Carrie was Stephen King's first published novel and the book which was to launch his career. In 1972, after graduating from the University of Maine, he took a job in an industrial laundry which was followed by a teaching job at Hampden Academy. It is during this period that Carrie was written, as King recalls in 'the furnace-room of a trailer.' As George Beahm notes 'Doubleday paid the author an advance against royalties of \$2,500 and published the book in 1974 as a trade hardback with a cover price of \$5.95. New American Library bought the rights to publish it as a mass-market paper back, paying \$400,000, split fifty-fifty between Doubleday and King. And the film version, released in 1976, was a critical and financial success.'

Carrie tells the tale a high school girl called Carrie White, the daughter of a religiously fanatical mother. A social outcast at school because of her strange beliefs and dowdy clothes she is the target of constant bullying by her classmates. However, she also possesses mild telekinetic powers which re-emerge more powerfully with the onset of menstruation. Carrie's alienation and victimisation culminates with her using her powers to destroy her fellow students at her high school prom, wreaking havoc on the town on

⁶ William Peter Blatty, (London: Faber, 1998), *The Exorcist*, p.192.

Stephen King, (London: Warner Books, 19930, Danse Macabre, p.448.
 George Beahm, The Stephen King Companion, (New York: Andrews & McMeel, 1992), p.253.

her way home, and lastly the murder of her mother. The film version was released in 1976, directed by Brian de Palma and starring Sissy Spacek as Carrie, Piper Laurie as her fanatical mother and Amy Irving as her classmate Susan Snell. The film was an instant success with King describing DePalma's approach as 'lighter and more deft' than his own. He further describes the subtext of both the novel and film as located in the women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s, noting that 'In Carrie's destruction of the gym (and her destructive walk back home in the book, a sequence left out of the movie because of tight budgeting) we see a dream revolution of the socially downtrodden.'

Another novel of its time is John Farris' *The Fury* published in 1976. Farris' career began immediately after his graduation from high school with the publication of his first novel The Corpse Next Door in 1956. At the age of twenty-three he had his first bestseller with the first of his *Harrison High* series, a disturbingly prescient series of novels, for as David J. Schow notes 'Farris was writing about students planting bombs in high schools in 1962.'11 Many of his novels are thrillers with elements of the occult and the novel he is probably best known for, The Fury, is precisely that. 12 The novel is one of assassins, psychic twins and military black operations. Peter Sandza's psychic son Robin has been abducted by a secret military organisation which is conducting experiments on the use of psychic powers as a weapon in warfare. As Peter searches for his son he discovers Gillian Belaver, Robin's psychic twin, who is also under threat of abduction by this covert military organisation. The Fury was adapted for the screen in 1978, again directed by Brian DePalma, with the screenplay written by Farris. Kirk Douglas starred in the film as the renegade father in search of his son, with Gillian, the central character of the film, played by Amy Irving who also appeared in DePalma's Carrie. Since the publication of the novel and the film's release Farris has followed up with three sequels to the original novel, The Fury and the Terror (1999), The Fury and the Power (2003) and Avenging Fury (2008).

-

⁹ Stephen King, Danse Macabre, p.200.

¹⁰ ibid., p.201.

¹¹ David J. Schow, quoted in Stephen King, Danse Macabre, p.200.

¹² It has also been suggested that *The Fury* inspired Stephen King's 1980 novel *Firestarter* as the similarities between the two novels are significant. King's *Firestarter* tells the story of a psychic and pyrokinetic young girl called Charlie Mc Gee who is subjected to numerous experiments by a government agency known as 'the shop'. The novel was also adapted for the screen in 1984, directed by Mark L. Lester and starring a young Drew Barrymore as Charlie.

Critical approaches to these texts generally read the horror as residing in the monstrous rendering of the female body. Critics argue that the embodiment of horror in these young girls is indicative of a patriarchal fear of female sexuality or else they read the monstrosity as evidence of a male 'reproductive anxiety'. ¹³ Such critical approaches, while relevant, reduce the horror to what has been termed the 'monstrous feminine'. Culturally, the containment of the female body through her sexuality is not a new mode or concept of control, however, the function of the body in these texts I would argue is more expansive than is usually considered.

Almost universally agreed upon by theorists of the body is its political significance. Particularly disruptive to cultural inscription and embodiment is the abject and grotesque body. Mikhail Bakhtin explores the complexities of the 'grotesque body' in his work *Rabelais and His World*, demonstrating how boundaries between 'high' and 'low' culture and class divisions interact, merge and exist simultaneously in carnival pageants. Or, as Mary Russo in her work *The Female Grotesque*, writes in relation to Bakhtin:

The images of the grotesque body are precisely those which are abjected from the bodily canons of classical aesthetics. The classical body is transcendent and monumental, closed, static, self-contained, symmetrical, and sleek; it is identified with the 'high' or official culture of the Renaissance and later, with the rationalism, individualism, and normalizing aspirations of the bourgeoisie. The grotesque body is open, protruding, irregular, secreting, multiple, and changing; it is identified with non-official 'low' culture or carnivalesque and with social transformation.¹⁴

The bodies of Blatty's Regan, King's Carrie and Farris' Gillian, aged twelve, sixteen, and fourteen, respectively, are in the throes of puberty. Their bodies are in a process of change and transformation correlating to the Bakhtinian concept of the grotesque, and can be seen politically to embody the changing, uncertain landscape of America in the 1970s. Furthermore, these young girls are menstrual and as Mary Douglas notes, menstrual blood is a viscous substance, 'half-way between solid and liquid. It is like a cross-section in a process of change.' Or as the post-feminist critic Margrit Shildrik argues 'the female sex

¹³ c.f. Robin Wood, *Hollywood: From Vietnam to Regan* (New York: Columbia Press, 2003); William Paul, *Laughing Screaming* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine* (London: Routledge, 1993).

¹⁴ Mary Russo, *The Female Grotesque*, (London: Routledge, 1994), p.8.

¹⁵ Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger – An Analysis of Pollution and Taboo, p.38.

stands in a different relationship to embodiment than does the male.' What she has in mind, she explains, is

[...] both the especial immanence of the female body, as it is frequently represented in ontological theory, such that it enmeshes women themselves; and its putative leakiness, the outflow of the body which breaches the boundaries of the proper. Those differences — mind/body, self/other, inner/outer — which should remain clear and distinct are threatened by loss of definition, or by dissolution.¹⁷

Kristeva makes a similar point, as already noted in the 'Introduction,' stating that identity is threatened by the outflow of menstrual blood; it threatens 'the identity of each sex in the face of sexual difference.' 18

The abjection of Regan's, Carrie's, and Gillian's menstrual bodies can therefore be seen to reify a crisis of both cultural and sexual identity. Boundaries, which should remain distinct and clear, become blurred and lose definition. Even more applicable to an analysis of the leaky bodies in these texts is the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari who question the dominance of conceptual stability, organization and unity. Deleuze and Guattari position the body as a fluid assemblage as opposed to a solidified totality. This involves a philosophy of becoming and exteriority, wherein the outside is never a given, challenging the notion that representation posits the self-identity of the thinking subject. They state:

A book is an assemblage of this kind, and as such is unattributable. It is a multiplicity – but we don't know yet what the multiple entails when it is no longer attributed, that is, after it has been elevated to the status of a substantive. One side of a machine assemblage faces the strata, which doubtless make it a kind of organism, or signifying totality, or determination attributable to a subject; it also has a side facing a body without organs, which is continually dismantling the organism, causing asignifying particles or pure intensities to pass or circulate, and attributing to itself subjects that it leaves with nothing more than a name as the trace of an intensity. ¹⁹

The rhizomatic philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari promotes molecular becomings as opposed to the official molar line of social or political positions. Similarly, menstruation and the pubescent body are processes in becoming rather than acts or states

¹⁶ Margrit Shildrick, *Leaky Bodies and Boundaries, Feminism, Postmodernism and (Bio) Ethics*, p.17. ¹⁷ ibid., p.1.

¹⁸ Julia Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror*, p.79.

¹⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, p.4.

of being. 'Becoming' is central to Deleuzio-Guattarian philosophy and involves a move away from majoritarian positions of power and normativity. Traditional philosophy's emphasis on a dialectical and dialogical model of either/or, self/other, positive/negative, male/female, mind/body are deconstructed and reconfigured. Instead, multiplicity and non-totalitarian subjectivities, where desire is productive, challenge orthodox structures of control.

The female pubescent bodies of 1970s horror can, thus, be read as lateral and rhizomatic, indicative of the socio-political and cultural instability of the period they inhabit, where the subject or 'I' is just beginning seriously to mutate and multiply challenging the orthodox verticality of epistemology or as Deleuze and Guattari maintain, the canonical Western concept of the rooted 'Tree of Knowledge'. Frederic Jameson in his work *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* writes of postmodernism that 'the precondition is to be found (apart from a wide variety of aberrant modernist 'experiments' which are then restructured in the form of predecessors) in the enormous social and psychological transformations of the 1960s which swept so much of tradition away on the level of mentalités.'²⁰ However, on the level of infrastructure and superstructure he writes that 'the economic system and cultural structure of feeling – somehow crystallized in the great shock of the crises of 1973 (the oil crisis, the end of the international gold standard, for all intents and purposes the end of the great wave of 'wars of national liberation' and the beginning of the end of communism)'²¹ which left in its wake a strange new landscape.

Jameson's analysis of identity, private temporality and history in this strange new landscape of postmodernity draws on Lacanian theories of schizophrenia and significantly differs from Deleuzio-Guattarian philosophy. For Lacan schizophrenia is a breakdown in the signifying chains. Lacan uses the Oedipal paradigm not in the biological sense but rather in terms of linguistic function. As Jameson explains 'Lacan transcodes into language by describing the Oedipal rivalry in terms of not so much of the biological individual who is your rival for the mother's attention but rather of what he calls the Name-of-the-Father, paternal authority now considered as a linguistic function.' He continues, noting that Lacan's

_

²² ibid., p.26.

Frederic Jameson, Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, (London: Verso, 1990), p.xx.
 ibid., pp.xx-xxi. See also David Harvey's The Condition of Postmodernity (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1989).

[...] conception of the signifying chain essentially presuppose one of the basic principles of Saussurean structuralism, namely the proposition that meaning is not a one-to-one relationship between signifier and signified, between the materiality of language, between a word or a name, and its referent or concept. Meaning on the new view is generated by the movement from signifier to signifier. What we generally call the signified – the meaning or conceptual content of an utterance – is now rather to be seen as a meaning effect, as that objective mirage of signification generated and projected by the relationship of signifiers amongst themselves.²³

Thus, when the relationship breaks down and ruptures occur in the signifying chain what remains is a type of schizophrenia in the form of unrelated signifiers. Jameson explains: 'The connection between this kind of linguistic malfunction and the psyche of the schizophrenic may then be grasped by way of a twofold proposition: first, that personal identity is itself the effect of a certain temporal unification of past and future with one's present; and second, that such active temporal unification is itself a function of language, or better still of the sentence, as it moves along its hermeneutic circle through time.'²⁴ Therefore, if there is no unity of time – past, present or future –in the use of language and the sentence, then similarly there is no unity in the biographical or psychic experience of life; or as Jameson explains 'With the breakdown of the signifying chain, therefore, the schizophrenic is reduced to an experience of pure material signifiers, or, in other words, a series of pure and unrelated presents in time.'²⁵

For Jameson and Lacan schizophrenia is the failure to successfully enter into the symbolic realm of language. The schizoid personality, therefore, is one whose 'experience is an experience of isolated, disconnected, discontinuous, material signifiers which fail to link up into a coherent sequence. The schizophrenic thus does not know 'personal identity in our sense, since our feeling of identity depends on our sense of the persistence of the "I" and the "me" over time. '26 Thus, Jameson relates schizophrenia to postmodernism and postmodernism to consumer capitalism, whereby, capitalism, as the critic Jonah Peretti writes 'extended the symptoms of schizophrenia to the masses in the form of postmodern culture.' For Jameson, in a schizophrenic, fragmented culture,

.

²³ ibid., p.26.

²⁴ ibid., pp.26-27.

²⁵ ibid., pp.26-27.

²⁶ Jonah Peretti, 'Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Contemporary Visual Culture and the Acceleration of Identity Formation/Dissolution', in *Negations*,

[[]http://www.datawranglers.com/negations/issues/96w/96w_peretti.html], date accessed: 10/09/2008. ²⁷ ibid.

capitalism can thrive unopposed. For, postmodern culture is 'rootless, separated from history, and outside of "human time." 28

In their two volume work *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (*Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*) Deleuze and Guattari also explore the connections between capitalist culture and schizophrenia. However, their analysis pre-emptively opposes that of Jameson, a Marxist with modernist sympathies. Instead, Deleuze and Guattari, poststructuralist postmodernists, counter Freudian and Lacanian analyses of schizophrenia and schizophrenics. They warn against Freudian interpretation, stating:

For we must not delude ourselves: Freud doesn't like schizophrenics. He doesn't like their resistance to being oedipalized, and tends to treat them more or less as animals. They mistake words for things, he says. They are apathetic, narcissistic, cut off from reality, incapable of achieving transference; they resemble philosophers – "an undesirable resemblance". ²⁹

As Jonah Peretti explains:

According to Deleuze and Guattari, Freud does not like the schizophrenic because s/he is a direct affront to Freud's psychoanalytic system. The schizophrenic has not developed an ego, or gone through the Oedipal process of individuation. Thus, the schizoid is "somewhere else, beyond or behind or below" the Oedipal triad that is so central to Freudian analysis (23). The schizoid has no 'me' and hence does not have an unconscious that is preoccupied with the Oedipal drama of daddy, mommy, and me. In attempts to cure schizophrenics, Freudian psychoanalysts have often tried to lead the schizophrenic down the road to ego formation, and normality. This has often meant forcibly imposing the Oedipal cycle, which is supposedly characteristic of normal psychic development.³⁰

For both Freud and Lacan desire is predicated on lack. Conversely for Deleuze and Guattari the schizoid is incapable of experiencing lack; instead desire produces the real and creates new worlds and possibilities. The Deleuzio-Guattarian schizoid scrambles and decodes the Oedipal signifying chain. Thus, they explain that capitalist societies

'Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism', *New Left Review*, 146:53-92, 1984. ²⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, (London: Continum, 2004), p.25.

²⁸ ibid., See also: Frederic Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society", in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture,* Hal Foster, ed., (Washington, Bay Press, 1983); Frederic Jameson,

³⁰ Peretti, Jonah, 'Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Contemporary Visual Culture and the Acceleration of Identity Formation/Dissolution', in *Negations*,

[...] exhibit a marked taste for all codes foreign and exotic...this taste is destructive and morbid. While decoding doubtless means understanding and translating a code, it also means destroying the code as such, assigning it an archaic, folkloric, or residual function.³¹

Although Deleuze and Guattari assert that civilization is defined by the decoding and deterritorialization of flows in capitalist production they also assert that it would be a serious error 'to consider the capitalist flows and the schizophrenic flows as identical, under the general theme of ... decoding.' They write that capitalism 'produces schizos the same way it produces Prell shampoo or Ford cars' but the schizos are not salable. Indeed the schizophrenic is locked up in institutions, and turned into a 'confined clinical entity.' For Deleuze and Guattari schizophrenia is:

[...] the exterior limit of capitalism itself or the conclusion of its deepest tendency, but that capitalism only functions on condition that it inhibit this tendency, or that it push back or displace this limit....Hence schizophrenia is not the identity of capitalism, but on the contrary its difference, its divergence, and its death.³⁵

Thus, Peretti writes: 'As capitalism decodes and deterritorializes it reaches a limit at which point it must artificially reterritorialize by augmenting the state apparatus, and repressive bureaucratic and symbolic regimes.' Furthermore, he states that:

Deleuze and Guattari disagree with Jameson's argument that schizophrenia reinforces and contributes to the hegemony of capitalism. Instead, Deleuze and Guattari see the schizophrenic as capitalism's exterminating angel. For them the schizo is a radical, revolutionary, nomadic wanderer who resists all forms of oppressive power. They believe that radical political movements should "learn from the psychotic how to shake off the Oedipal yoke and the effects of power, in order to initiate a radical politics of desire freed from all beliefs" (Seem xxi). 37

Thus, the 1970s, on the level of Jameson's infrastructure and superstructure, with its economic shocks and oil crisis of 1973, underpins the 'strange new landscape' of

³³ ibid., p.266.

³¹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Anti-Oedipus, p.266.

³² ibid., p.266.

³⁴ ibid., p.266.

³⁵ ibid., p.267.

³⁶ Peretti, Jonah, 'Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Contemporary Visual Culture and the Acceleration of Identity Formation/Dissolution', in *Negations*,

[[]http://www.datawranglers.com/negations/issues/96w/96w_peretti.html], date accessed: 10/09/2008. ³⁷ ibid., inserted quote from Mark Seem's introduction to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*.

Blatty's, King's and Farris' novels as well as their adaptations to the screen. America in the 1970s is marked by the return of wounded and crippled war veterans, a period where social, racial and generational divisions were rife. It was post-1960s, the decade of the long-haired, peace and free loving, flower-child generation. As the critic Mark Kermode notes:

Hippies, once tolerated, found themselves tarred with the same brush as Charles Manson, the cult-murderer who made shaggy hair, sex and drugs synonymous with brutal killing and pagan sacrifice. The death of Meredith Hunter at the Altamont Free Festival in 1969 had left a generation of flower children wondering what had happened to all the peace love and understanding with which they were going to save the world.³⁸

Concurrently, the government was also in turmoil as President Richard Nixon became increasingly implicated in a series of suspicious political and criminal subterfuges which culminated in the breaking of the Watergate scandal. However, the schizophrenic character of postmodern late capitalism, its culture and identity (collective and personal), I will argue, is not, as Jameson concludes, based solely on desire as lack and the reinforcement of capitalist hegemony. Instead, this chapter will adopt the Deleuzio-Guattarian position whereby the schizo is a type of terrorist who threatens capitalist systems. Thus, these 1970s novels and films of pubescent, menstrual young girls demonstrate the threat the non-unitary 'I' poses to the traditional structures of capitalism. Capitalism, with its schizophrenic deterritorializing and re-coding capacity reaches an exterior limit at which point it must reterritorialize and augment its state apparatuses, bureaucratic and symbolic regimes in order to resist capitalist implosion. Thus, disruptions to this vertical or linear position of order and structure within the texts of Blatty, King and Farris are bodies in defiance of solidity, the solidity of structure and the solidity or stability of identity. As such they become the locus of horror, the horror of chaos and the fear of a decentralised, schizoid identity.

In its specifically American/Western context, identity is constituted by the traditional discourses of theology, medicine, psychology, education and the patriarchal family. However, the menstruous body as I have noted is a body of *becoming* not *being* and what is contested in these texts is the reinstatement or reterritorialization of arborescent, normalised, traditional, hegemonic concepts of subjectivity and control in

³⁸ Mark Kermode, *The Exorcist*, p.8.

opposition to the suggested and potential anarchy of a system of knowledge or change that is not rooted or centralised in the Oedipal paradigm. This extends beyond the usual contentions based on fears of female sexuality and instead politicises and challenges the processes of individual socialization. Therefore, I will argue that the 'leaky' body or its so-called menstruous-monstrosity is potentially positive, multiple and transgressive and that the 'real' horror in these texts instead resides within the 'Frankensteinian' agencies of family, state, and religion, and in the methods they employ to both create and destroy the 'monster'.

Thus, in this chapter I will primarily explore the menstruous-monstrous in 1970s horror within the framework of Deleuzio-Guattarian philosophies of desire and becoming. Both gender and historic specificity will be central to my analysis. The first section will explore 'menstrual-morphosis' and the positive potential of the leaky body to disrupt and transgress boundaries. This section will engage with Deleuzian theories of 'becoming' and 'Bodies without Organs' in order to demonstrate a philosophy of productive and affirmative desire. In section two, I will explore how the threat of transgression and disruption in 1970s menstrual horror texts is neutralised through reterritorializing processes. Here I will examine the intervention of agencies of control such as the family, the medical profession, the state/government, the judicial system and religion, focusing on the reinstatement of the father figure and the Oedipal family unit. The final section will look at the overarching fear of threats to capitalism and subsequent appropriations of war machines. Here, I will examine parapsychology and cold war paranoia in 1970s America.

'Menstrual-Morphosis': Becoming-Menstruous-Monstrous

Early cinema actually swarms with monstrosities of all kinds, like Nosferatu and The Golem. The shift away from marginality into the mainstream occurs in the seventies with W.P. Blatty's The Exorcist (1971), and Ira Levin's Rosemary's Baby (1967) and The Stepford Wives (1972). A new generation of accomplished film directors was ready to take up the challenge, Spielberg, Cronenberg, De Palma, Cameron, Lynch, Carpenter, Ridley and Tony Scott, Bigelow and others. The audience was primarily the baby-boomers, that is to say the first postwar generation that grew up with television and endless re-runs of B-rate films [...] they are

also the generation of feminism, civil rights and other momentous social and political changes.

(Rosi Braidotti, Metamorphoses)

From Greek mythology to gothic literature the monster has always been a signifier of otherness. Or, referring to the French philosopher Canguilhem, Rosi Braidotti notes, 'normality is, after all, only the zero-degree of monstrosity.' With the Western concept of normality being Male/White, this automatically positions woman as monstrous other. Not missing a limb (maybe the phallus), or physically 'deformed', (depending on what one considers to be deformity), one way in which her difference to man is most obvious is that she bleeds. Braidotti argues that it is in the 'language of monstrosity that difference is often translated.' She argues:

Because this difference-as-pejoration fulfils a structural and constitutive function, it also occupies a strategic position. It can consequently illuminate the complex and dissymmetrical power-relations at work within the dominant subject-position.

In *Carrie*, *The Exorcist*, and *The Fury*, where menstruation is exaggerated and rendered monstrous, inequalities within dominant, traditional subject positions are highlighted. These texts demonstrate a menstrual-morphosis, a simultaneous 'becoming-woman' and 'becoming-monster' which, challenges normative hegemonic relations – familial, political, social and sexual. The philosophy of 'becoming' is a complex process of the self and body. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the body (both organic and inorganic) consists of strata, molecular and molar, belts, pincers and articulation which create a signifying totality. Strata operate by coding and territorialization, they are

[...] acts of capture, they are like 'black holes' or occlusions striving to seize whatever comes within their reach. They operate by coding and territorialization

³⁹ Rosi Braidotti, Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming, p.178.

⁴⁰ Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, (1966), quoted in Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming*, p.174.

⁴¹ Rosi Braidotti, Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming, p.175.

⁴² ibid., p.175.

⁴³ In this chapter I will expand on Deleuze and Guattari's definition of 'becoming-woman', I will use it in both the Deleuzio-Guattarian sense of becoming minor but also in terms of puberty and menstruation as a physical metamorphosis, that is, a further type of a sexed specific minor identity. As such puberty and menstruation are politicised in this chapter as 'becomings'.

upon the earth; they proceed simultaneously by code and by territoriality. The strata are judgements of God; stratification in general is the entire system of the judgment of God (but the earth, or the body without organs, constantly eludes that judgment, flees, becomes destratified, decoded, deterritorialized.)⁴⁴

A stratum consists of diverse forms and substances, a variety of codes and milieus, possessing both different formal types of organization and different substantial modes of development which divides into *metastrata*, that is, *parastrata* and *epistrata*. In fact *epistrata* and *parastrata* which subdivide a stratum can be considered strata themselves, so the list is never exhaustive. How we read or express any given stratum is through articulation. Articulation is constitutive of a stratum and is always double or what is called a 'double pincer' made up of content and expression. Whereas form and substance are not really distinct, content and expression are. Therefore, it is possible to have articulation of content and articulation of expression, with content and expression each possessing its own form and substance. This complicates the traditional structuralist relationship between the sign, signifier and signified.

In the case of *The Exorcist*, *Carrie*, and *The Fury*, content is the body and expression how we read the body, for example, as monstrous, grotesque, or as a site of horror. Deleuze and Guattari maintain that between content and expression there is no correspondence, no cause-effect relation, no signified-signifier relationship. Instead there is real distinction, reciprocal presupposition and only isomorphy.⁴⁵ In this way, it is possible to dislocate or remove traditional associations between the female body as sign and her subsequent signification (usually negative and dualistic) as leaky, monstrous, inferior, and subordinate to the point (the phallus). Therefore, the leakiness and monstrosity of these girls' bodies can instead be read as potentially positive and transgressive. Moving outside the strata is a 'becoming':

We can be thrown into a becoming by anything at all, by the most unexpected, most insignificant of things. You don't deviate from the majority unless there is a little detail that starts to swell and carries you off. 46

Or, as Cliff Stagoll, states:

⁴⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, p.40.

⁴⁵ ibid., pp.553-554.

Rather than a product, final or interim, becoming is the very dynamism of change, situated between heterogeneous terms and tending towards no particular goal or end-state. [...] For Deleuze, there is no world 'behind appearances', as it were. Instead of being about transitions things and states are *products* of becoming. The human subject, for example, ought not to be conceived as a stable, rational individual, experiencing changes but remaining principally, the same person. Rather, for Deleuze, one's self must be conceived as a constantly changing assemblage of forces, an epiphenomenon arising from chance confluences of languages, organisms, societies, expectations, laws and so on. ⁴⁷

Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari, note that becomings can only be minoritarian – woman, animal, insect – a move away from the normative position of centralised power (phallogocentric). As Rosi Braidotti notes:

Deleuze rejects the speculative self/other relationship of dialectics and argues instead that these terms are not linked by negation, but are two positively different systems each with its specific mode of activity. Thus 'woman' is not the sexualised 'second sex' of the phallic system, but a positive term: as the other, she is a matrix of becoming. Deleuze also rejects the psychoanalytic emphasis on negativity (lack) and the equation of bodily materiality with the originary site of the maternal. Instead of the régime of the phallus and of its specular other – woman – Deleuze prefers heterogeneous multiplicities and internal differentiation. [...] Transcending the negative passions that the Oedipalising economy of the phallus induces is in effect a Deleuzian engine of the transformation, what Deleuze otherwise calls 'becoming'. 48

As already explained in the Introduction to this thesis, on the near side of becomings 'we encounter becomings-woman, becomings-child (becoming-woman more than any other becoming, possesses a special introductory power ...). However, becoming-woman is problematic for feminist theory as is indicated by Braidotti who, as I have noted, points to its generality and gender-free implications, stating that for Deleuze 'it is as if all becomings were equal but some were more equal than others. She resolves this issue by arguing that in becoming-woman there is also 'significant evidence of gender specific patterns.'

Furthermore, the girl occupies a unique position in relation to becomings. The girl is a threshold in becoming-woman. As Deleuze and Guattari write, the girl 'is neither a representation nor the staring point for becoming-(a)-woman. Rather, the girl is the force

187

_

⁴⁷ Cliff Stagoll, 'Becoming' in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr, pp.21-22.

⁴⁸ Rosi Braidotti, 'Woman' in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr, pp.302-303.

⁴⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, p.274.

⁵⁰ Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, pp.114-115.

of desire that breaks off particles from the molar compositions that constitute us as women and men, young and old, heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual, creating lines of rampant propagation and contagion'⁵¹ and a 'diversity of conjugated beomings.'⁵² They continue noting that the girl knows how to love: 'Knowing how to love does not mean remaining a man or a woman; it means extracting from one's sex the particles, the speeds and slownesses, the flows, the n sexes that constitute the girl of *that* sexuality.'⁵³ Significantly, they further write that 'Girls do not belong to an age group, sex, order, or kingdom: they slip in everywhere, between orders, acts, ages, sexes; they produce n molecular sexes on the line of flight in relation to the dualism machines they cross right through.'⁵⁴

Thus, as Patty Sotirin states, the girl, 'is an experiment, constantly traversing borderlines of childhood and adulthood, innocence and disenchantment, naivete and wisdom. She is not becoming a woman; she is always a becoming-woman.'55 However, like feminist critiques of becoming woman there are also certain problematic aspects with respect to 'girl' becoming woman. Firstly, her body is taken from her and she becomes the object of masculine desire and the property of the patriarchal economy. Secondly that 'becoming-woman' denies any sexual specificity and finally that since becoming-imperceptible 'is the immanent end of becoming-woman, the girl seems to replicate unwittingly the subordination and suppression of girls culturally and historically.'56 At the same time Sotirin notes that the girl offers intriguing opportunities for feminist theories and politics, thus in this chapter I will attempt to ascertain what these opportunities and possibilities might be. However girl-becoming-woman is inextricably linked within 1970s horror with the monstrous. As such, I want to distinguish in this chapter between 'becoming-monstrous' and the symbolic signification of girl/woman/menstruous as 'being-monster'.

As Patricia MacCormack notes 'woman is the primary monster because man is the primary non-monster.' She explains that: 'The monster is that which abjectly pushes us outside symbolic integrity, either back, in psychoanalytic terms to the primary monster,

⁵² Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, p.307.

⁵¹ Patty Sotirin, 'Becoming-Woman' in Charles, J. Stivale, ed., Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts, p.108.

⁵³ ibid. p.306. ⁵⁴ ibid., p.305.

⁵⁵ Patty Sotirin, 'Becoming-Woman' in Charles, J. Stivale, ed., *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, p.100. ⁵⁶ ibid., p.108.

⁵⁷ Patricia MacCormack, 'Perversion: Transgressive Sexuality and Becoming-Monster', *thirdspace*, volume 3, issue 2, [http://www.thirdspace.ca/articles/3 2 maccormack.htm], date accessed: 06/01/2009.

the mother, or in a more Deleuzio-Guattarian sense that which pushes us away from what we think we are.'58 Thus, the 'monstrous' body challenges more than the relationship between the sexes, it also destabilizes the symbolic integrity of socio-political structures. The girl-body, in the *The Exorcist, Carrie* and *The Fury*, moves beyond its stratified contours, its monstrosity transgressing normal expectations of the physical. The monstrous bodies of Regan, Carrie and Gillian, are potentially positive challenges to the paradigms of traditional orthodoxy. Menstruation becomes the catalyst, which throws these girls into a becoming that, instead of having a start and end point, child to sexualized adult, is continuous. The menstrual bodies of these girls indicate multiplicity and polymorphous sexuality.

Therefore, the horror of the leaky bodies in these texts is not simply a fear of adult female sexuality, but a fear of 'deviance,' 'perversion,' and indeterminable identities which transgress socio-cultural normative standards. As Braidotti writes, 'we need to learn to think of the anomalous, the monstrously different not as a sign of pejoration but as the unfolding of virtual possibilities that point to positive alternatives for us all.'⁵⁹ Or, as MacCormack indicates the 'virtual here refers to the instability in thinking possibility without establishing a limited and limiting series of pre-set possibilities. Braidotti's explicit refusal of 'the sign' is a refusal of signification within systems of knowledge and discourse. Even monsters as signs of celebration use signification as a stabilising act, rather than the infinite potential of thinking the monster as continual 'unfolding'.'⁶⁰ Braidotti focuses her analysis of metamorphosis and the monstrous on contemporary science-fiction, but her argument can equally be extended to the horror genre. She states:

As a 'low culture' genre, moreover it is also mercifully free of grandiose pretension – of the aesthetic or cognitive kind – and thus ends up being a more accurate and honest depiction of contemporary culture than other, more self-consciously 'representational' genres (such as the documentary, for instance). ⁶¹

Her argument is for the

55

⁵⁸ ibid

⁵⁹ Rosi Braidotti, 'Teratologies', in *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*. eds. Claire Colebrook and Ian Buchanan, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), p.172.

⁶⁰ Patricia MacCormack, 'Perversion: Transgressive Sexuality and Becoming-Monster', *thirdspace*, volume 3, issue 2, [http://www.thirdspace.ca/articles/3 2 maccormack.htm], date accessed: 06/01/2009.

⁶¹ Rosi Braidotti, Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming, p.182

Quest for positive social and cultural representations of hybrid, monstrous, abject and alien others in such a way as to subvert the construction and consumption of pejorative differences. [...] or what Harraway describes affectionately as 'the promises of monsters'. 62

However, like most feminist theorists, Braidotti focuses her argument on the maternal female body and reproduction. Puberty and menstruation tend to be over-looked even though they are equally, if not more liminal and abjected. Horror in the 1970s has an uneasy relationship with its menstrual/monstrous protagonists. On the one hand they proliferate with positive menstrual lines of flight, destratifications, and Bodies without Organs, yet on the other they tend to fall on the side of conservatism. However, it is possible to initially read the monstrosity in these texts as potentially positive and subversive.

In *The Exorcist*, as I have already noted, the body of Regan MacNeil is possessed by the demon Pazuzu, that is, menstruation and puberty, (I will comment further and in more detail on this point later), who reduces her body to an oozing orifice/pustule. Her 'becoming-woman' (becoming-minor) is aligned with her physical descent into the Deleuzio-Guattarian Body without Organs. Her entire exterior and interior become indistinguishable. The destratification of her body is first evidenced in her leakiness or incontinence, whereby she publicly urinates on the carpet in front of a house full of guests attending a party hosted by her mother Chris MacNeil. Blatty describes Regan as 'urinating gushingly'. Her 'possessed' body then proceeds over time to contort, twist, (in the film version, her head rotates three hundred and sixty degrees and she crawls both upside down and backwards down the stairs) and ooze vomit, bile, excrement, snot and blood. Her physical leakiness can be read as a revolt, with her body refusing to conform to what is expected from it and equally as a revolt against the agencies that seek to control it.

-

62 ibid., p.182

⁶³ William Peter Blatty, *The Exorcist*, p.77.



Fig.3.1

This is particularly evident in what can be described as the schizo-body and the schizo-linguistic aspects of Regan's possession and monstrous transgression. According to Deleuze and Guattari the Body without Organs 'is already underway the moment the body has had enough of organs and wants to slough them off.' Examples of the Body without Organs which they give include: the hypochondriac body, the drugged body, the masochist body and the schizo-body which they describe as 'waging its own active internal struggle against the organs, at the price of catatonia.' The schizo-body in all its multiplicity is related to what Deleuze and Guattari term schizoanalysis. Schizoanalysis is:

The revolutionary 'materialist psychiatry' derived primarily from the critique of psychoanalysis. As the concept 'schizoanalysis' indicates, Sigmund Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex is the principal object of critique: schizoanalysis drawing substantially on Karl Marx, transforms psychoanalysis so as to include the full scope of social and historical factors in its explanations of cognition and behaviour. Yet psychoanalysis is not rejected wholesale: schizoanalysis also draws substantially on Freud and especially on Jacques Lacan to transform historical materialism so as to include the full scope of libidinal and semiotic factors in its explanations of social structure and development. ⁶⁶

Or, as Rosi Braidotti explains, the Body without Organs is not only critical of psychoanalytic repression but also of the functional approach to human affectivity and the material body. Thus, the distinction between proper and abject objects of desire is

⁶⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, p.150.

⁶⁵ ibid., p.150

⁶⁶ Eugene Holland, 'Schizoanalysis' in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr, p.236.

implemented to police and civilize behaviour. She states that 'the schizophrenic body is emblematic of this violent 'outside', one that is beyond propriety and normality.' ⁶⁷

The demon possessing Regan's body is multiple. He refers to himself when asked as 'Nowonmai' a phonetic anagram of 'I am no one' (also of 'no one me', 'no one may', 'I am now on', or 'I am not one'). The demon is legion, suggesting the Biblical exorcism of the possessed man at Gadara. According to the Gospel of St. Luke, upon meeting the man, '[...] Jesus asked him, saying what is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.' (Lk 8:30) What is presented is a legion of voices or subjects and what is expressed by the demon through the possessed body of Regan is a schizophrenic appraisal of numerous anxieties which plague the central adult characters. There is no centralized subject or 'I'. The possessed Regan comments on her mother's relationship with the movie director Burke Denning; insults the inadequacies of the medical profession; and needles the guilt and crisis of faith plaguing the church and personified in the character of Fr Karras.

These schizo-linguistic attacks draw attention to more than just Regan's 'becomingwoman' they also draw attention to the wider socio-cultural system as a whole. Her body is politicized, and when the words 'Help me' rise from within, to the surface of her stomach, who precisely is asking for help? Traditionally it is assumed that it is Regan, trapped within her own body who is asking to be released, but if there is no centralized identity in the possessed body of this young girl, is it not a multiple and broader attempt of a rhizomatic disaggregated politic asking for release from the centrally rooted agencies which attempt to control, obstruct and curtail it – in *The Exorcist*, the agencies employed are medical, psychiatric and religious and more overarchingly paternal. It is also possible to read the socio-cultural backdrop of the novel as a schizo-body politic. The Exorcist suggests the gaping generation gap, the breakdown of the family, the lack of respect for religious traditions, the destruction of the home, issues that were deeply troubling the conservative element of America. A world described by the police detective Kinderman in the novel as 'having a massive nervous breakdown.'68 Challenging the segmented, official, molar line of conservative tradition and orthodoxy, socio-cultural change is constitutive of rhizomatic thinking and becoming. It is therefore possible to read Regan's possessed body as a positive revolt and challenge to majoritarian discourses. Stephen King describes the 1960s and 1970s in a similar manner. He writes:

⁶⁸ William Peter Blatty, *The Exorcist*, p.132.

⁶⁷ Rosi Braidotti, 'Schizophrenia' in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr, p.238.

Little Richard, who had horrified parents in 1957 when he leaped atop his piano and began boogying on it in his lizardskin loafers, looked tame next to John Lennon, who was proclaiming that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus – a statement that set off a rash of fundamentalist record-burnings. The Bryl-cream look was replaced by long locks [...] Parents began to find strange herbs in their sons' and daughters' bureau drawers. The images in rock music had become increasingly distressing: Mr. Tambourine Man seemed to be about drugs; with the Byrds' Eight Miles High there could be no question. Radio stations continued to play discs by one group even after two male band members announced that they were in love with each other. [...] Then there was the war in Vietnam. Messrs. Johnson and Nixon spread it out like a great big rancid picnic lunch over there in Asia. [...] It was more than a generation gap. The two generations seemed, like the San Andreas Fault, to be moving along opposing plates of social and cultural conscience, commitment, and definitions of civilized behaviour itself. The result was not so much an earthquake as it was a timequake.⁶⁹

Moreover, he describes *The Exorcist*, both the novel and film, as finely honed focusing points 'for that entire youth explosion that took place in the late sixties and early seventies.' He also notes that 'Religious trappings aside, every adult in America understood what the film's powerful subtext was saying; they understood that the demon in Regan MacNeil would have responded enthusiastically to the Fish Cheer at Woodstock.' Thus, the San Andreas Fault and opposing plates are the equivalent of Deleuze and Guattari's black holes and plateaus. Music, hair, clothes and drugs act as lines of flight which move beyond the strata. Also when describing feminism in relation to his first novel *Carrie*, he writes:

Carrie is largely about how women find their own channels of power, and what men fear about women and women's sexuality ... which is only to say that, writing the book in 1973 and only out of college three years, I was fully aware of what Women's Liberation implied for me and others of my sex. The book is, in its more adult implications, an uneasy masculine shrinking from a future of female equality. For me, Carrie White is a sadly misused teenager, an example of the sort of person whose spirit is so often broken for good in that pit of man and womaneaters that is your normal suburban high school. But she's also Woman, feeling

_

⁶⁹ Stephen King, Danse Macabre, p.167.

⁷⁰ ibid., pp.196-197.

⁷¹ ibid., p.197 (The Fish Cheer is attributed to Country Joe McDonald and his band Country Joe and the Fish. Their best know song is the 'Fish Cheer/I-Feel-like-I'm-Fixin'-to-Die-Rag with its anti-Vietnam War message which was played to an enthusiastic audience at Woodstock in 1969. The song opens with Gimme an 'F', Gimme an 'I', Gimme an 'S', Gimme a 'H' – 'Fish' and the infamous chorus goes as follows – 'and it's 1, 2, 3, what're we fighting for? don't ask me I don't give a damn next stop is vietnam and it's 5, 6, 7, open up the pearly gates well there ain't no time to wonder why whoopee! we're all gonna die.')
⁷¹ ibid., p.170.

her powers for the first time and, like Samson, pulling down the temple on everyone in sight at the end of the book.⁷²

The 1960s and 1970s were decades of a marked feminist movement. Betty Friedan, following the impact of her feminist tract The Feminine Mystique, published in 1963, founded NOW (National Organisation for Women) in 1966. As an organization, it sought to bring women into full participation in mainstream American society and to gain equal partnership with men. In contrast the women's liberation movement in America, which grew alongside Friedan's organization for women, had its roots in the civil rights debates and anti-Vietnam War and student movements of the 1960s. The primary aim of this movement was a process known as 'consciousness-raising' the move to transform what is experienced as personal into political analysis. It sought to demonstrate how patriarchy is sustained and reinforced through 'personal' institutions such as marriage, child-rearing and sexual practices. The women's liberation movement was probably one of the most rhizomatic and perhaps most successful political movements of second wave feminism. It was a deliberately decentralized ideology, which disseminated its message through a multiplicity of media and discursive practices. One example is the 'Take Back the Night' campaign, which saw the demand for more safety for women who were walking college campuses alone at night.⁷³

These leaky, rhizomatic changes in terms of relations between the sexes in 1970s America are embodied in the figure of King's Carrie. He introduces the reader to Carrie as

[...] standing among them stolidly, a frog among swans. She was a chunky girl with pimples on her neck and back and buttocks, her wet hair completely without colour. It rested against her face with dispirited sogginess and she simply stood, head slightly bent, letting the water splat against her flesh and roll off. She looked the part of the sacrificial goat, the constant butt, believer in left-handed monkey wrenches, perpetual foul up and she was.⁷⁴

Described as frog-like or amphibious she is immediately positioned as in-between. Her weight suggests 'over-spill', a breaching of borders, pimples break through her skin, another example of her body's lack of containment. Furthermore, she is aligned with

⁷² ibid., p.170.

⁷³ c.f. Sarah Gamble, *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism*, p.46.

⁷⁴ Stephen King, *Carrie*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975), p.10.

Kristeva's concept of abjection and excrement, with graffiti informing the reader that 'Carrie White eats shit'. And fundamentally, as DePalma dramatically captures in his film adaptation, she is a public menstruant with telekinetic powers. The most blood-drenched moments in both the film and novel are the shower scene and prom night. King juxtaposes both scenes in his novel, he writes:

Someone began to laugh, a solitary, affrightened hyena sound, and she *did* open her eyes, opened them to see who it *was* and it was true, the final nightmare, she was red and dripping with it, they had drenched her in the very secretness of blood, in front of all of them and her thought (oh I ... COVERED...with it) was coloured a ghastly purple with her revulsion and her shame. She could smell herself and it was the stink of blood, the awful wet, coppery smell.⁷⁵

Carrie, in one of the penultimate episodes of both novel and film, is the ultimate leaky body, the Body without Organs. She may as well have been turned inside-out. Her telekinetic powers also provide an outward challenge, a line of flight or destratification in the process of 'becoming-woman'. The first telekinetic 'line of flight' is evidenced in the opening chapter of King's novel, aptly entitled 'Blood Sport', where Carrie as a young child challenges her mother's extreme religious fundamentalism with regard to sexuality. The young Carrie is discovered speaking to her teenage neighbour who is sunbathing in a bikini. Mrs White erupts into an apoplectic fit of rage, dragging Carrie indoors. In response to her mother's crazed and violent admonitions her telekinetic powers cause it to rain blocks of ice which crash down upon the house. Her telekinesis, which acts both as a buffer and challenge, re-emerges at menarche. Carrie publicly gets her first period after gym class and is ridiculed by her class-mates who in a frenzied mob throw tampons at her, yelling 'plug-it-up'. Her ignorance of what is happening to her combined with fear and humiliation result in her turning over a rack of soft balls and blowing up the overhead light bulb in the shower, a scene dramatically captured by DePalma in his adaptation of King's novel. Both the novel and film initially demonstrate how her telekinetic powers are an essential factor in her sexual liberation and socialization, primarily serving to extricate her from the dominance of her over-powering mother. Her telekinetic, 'becoming-woman' monstrosity to begin with is potentially positive.

⁷⁵ ibid., p.180.



Fig.3.2

Carrie, also like the possessed Regan, is a type of schizo-body. As Stephen King has stated, he wrote *Carrie* as a response to women's liberation. He also admitted when confronted in a Playboy interview in the early 1980s his inability 'to develop a believable woman character between the ages of 17 and 60', stating that:

Yes, unfortunately, I think it is probably the most justifiable of all those levelled at me ... And when I think I'm free of the charge that most male American writers depict women as either nebbishes or bitch-goddess destroyers, I create someone like Carrie – who starts out as a nebbish victim and then becomes a bitch goddess, destroying the entire town in an explosion of hormonal rage. I recognize the problems but can't yet rectify them. ⁷⁶

Therefore, if Carrie is not believable as 'woman' how do we read her 'becoming woman', her 'menstrual-morphosis', initiated with her first period and rendered monstrous by her telekinetic powers? It can be argued that she is another decentralized version of a disaggregated politic both sexual and socio-cultural. She is repeatedly referred to as a scapegoat, a body that becomes a repository for the anxieties of other women in the novel.

Although King's narrative centres upon Carrie White, the misfit and misunderstood student, four other female characters stand out strongly and present disturbing images of femininity, her mother Margaret White, her gym teacher Miss Desjardin (Miss Collins in DePalma's film) and her classmates, Susan Snell and Chris Hargenson. Mrs White is the sexually repressed, fundamentalist zealot who seeks atonement through the body of Carrie; Miss Desjardin the concerned teacher who seeks to socialize her; the pretty,

⁷⁶ Clive Bloom, *Gothic Horror*, (Basingtoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p.96.

popular Sue Snell who seeks to allay her own feelings of guilt through Carrie; and finally Chris, the rich kid, spoilt and angry, who needs a scapegoat in order to alleviate her own anxieties about her femininity and sexuality. Thus, it is possible to read Carrie as the extreme embodiment of her mother's, Miss Desjardin's, Sue's and Chris' anxieties pertaining to what constitutes femininity and their individual identity as women.

Sue Snell epitomizes the socially and politically conscious young woman in postsixties America. However, Sue as a character is intensely aware of the contradictions inherent in her femininity and also in the role she occupies in the microcosmic universe that is 'high school'. Sue describes herself, her life, and boyfriend Tommy, as popular, conformist and predictable. She contemplates herself noting that she was:

Someone who had been Popular herself all her life, it had almost seemed written that she would meet and fall in love with someone as Popular as she. They were almost certain to be voted King and Queen of the high school Spring Ball, and the senior class had already voted them class couple for the yearbook. They had become a fixed star in the shifting firmament of the high school's relationships, the acknowledged Romeo and Juliet. And she knew with sudden hatefulness that there was one couple like them in every white suburban high school in America.⁷⁷

Sue then begins to question her motives for dating Tommy:

There goes a handsome couple. She was quite sure (or only hopeful) that she wasn't that weak, not that liable to fall docilely into the complacent expectations of parents, friends, and even herself. But now there was this shower thing where she had gone along and pitched in with high, savage glee. The word she was avoiding was expressed To Conform, in the infinitive, and it conjured up miserable images of hair in rollers, long afternoons in front of the soap operas while hubby was off busting heavies in an anonymous Office, of joining the P.T.A. and then the country club when their income moved into five figures; of pills in circular yellow cases without number to insure against having to move out of the misses' size before it became absolutely necessary and against the intrusion of repulsive little strangers who shat in their pants and screamed for help at two in the morning; of fighting with desperate decorum to keep the niggers out of Kleen Korners ... ⁷⁸

And so she continues to muse with bitterness, finally blaming her realizations on Carrie White:

⁷⁷ Stephen King, *Carrie*, pp.45-46.

Carrie, it was the goddamned Carrie, this was her fault. Perhaps before today she had heard distant, circling footfalls around their lighted place, but tonight hearing her own crummy story, she saw the actual silhouettes of all these things, and yellow eyes that glowed like flashlights in the dark.⁷⁹

Sue finds her own inadequacies glaringly exposed in Carrie, whose failings and flawed femininity serve as a mirror of self-reflection for other women. King, in an episode which DePalma does not include in his film adaptation, shows her final encounter with Carrie before she dies. He draws a telepathic connection between the two characters and Sue and Carrie become almost indistinguishable. He writes:

(who's there)

And Sue without thought, spoke in the same fashion:

(me Sue Snell)

Only there was no need to think of her name. The thought of herself as herself was neither words nor pictures. The realization suddenly brought everything up close, made it real, and compassion for Carrie broke through the dullness of her shock. [...] The mixture of image and emotion was staggering, indescribable. Blood. Sadness. Fear. The latest dirty trick in a long series of dirty tricks: they flashed by in a dizzying shuffle that made Sue's mind reel helplessly, hopelessly. The shared the awful totality of perfect knowledge. [...] She tried to pull away, to disengage her mind to allow Carrie at least the privacy of her dying, and was unable to. She felt that she was dying herself and did not want to see this preview of her own eventual end. ⁸⁰

The subject or 'I' of self-identity is irrelevant here. Moreover, Sue, whose period is late and who may be pregnant, is described in these terms:

Her rapid breathing slowed, slowed, caught suddenly as if on a thorn - And suddenly vented itself in one howling, cheated scream. As she felt the slow course of dark menstrual blood down her thighs. 81

Carrie is Sue, Sue is Carrie, in a scene that replays the initial menstrual episode in the shower; however, it is impossible to determine whether Sue is actually menstruating or having a miscarriage. In either case it can be read as a positive 'leakiness', Sue's body is beginning to slough itself of its organs, she is 'becoming-woman'. If she has miscarried, perhaps it is a counter-cultural transgression, a move beyond the strictures of a suburban, small-town life of diet pills, anti-depressants and dependable Tommy.

Stephen King, *Carrie*, pp.228-230.

81 ibid., p.231.

⁷⁹ ibid., pp.47.

In a similar vein, the high school über-bitch Christine Hargenson is also painted by King as a pathetic example of femininity. Behind, her hard veneer, Chris is merely a victim of a spoilt, upper-class background, one that offers her very little in terms of autonomy or identity. Prior to the bad boy character of Billy Nolan she had dated preppy boys with clear, pimple-free faces and whose parents had connections with places such as the country club. They went to U-Mass or Boston College. Nonetheless, the conformity of her background only creates a sexual emptiness:

Quite often she lay passively beneath them, not helping or hindering, until it was over. Later she achieved her own solitary climax while viewing the incident as a single closed loop of her own memory.⁸²

The sexless, religious, though equally lonely and empty Carrie, threatens her sense of self and sexual identity. By using Carrie as a scapegoat, a monstrous other, she secures her own fragile identity. Both Chris and Carrie are a conflated version of the virgin/whore dichotomy. Chris expresses her feelings towards Carrie as:

That god-damned Carrie White! I wish she'd taken her goddamn holy joe routine and stuff it straight up her ass. [...] That fucking Carrie runs around saying everyone but her and her gilt-edged momma are going to hell and you can stick up for her? We should have taken those rags and stuffed them down her throat.⁸³

Next, Miss Desjardin, the liberal gym-teacher who admits to her horror and revulsion at Carrie's public menstruation is also self-serving in her attempt to socialize Carrie. By integrating and socializing Carrie, Miss Desjardin increases her own self-worth as educator. However, it is Margaret White, who more than anyone else in the novel exerts the most vehement control over Carrie's body. Her own sexual anxieties are transferred and displaced onto the body of Carrie. This is evidenced early in King's novel when a six year old Carrie confides to her teenage neighbour that her mother refers to breasts as 'dirty pillows'. The reasons for her transference and displacement of sexual anxiety are connected to her fanatical religious fundamentalism. In one of the final scenes of both the novel and film when Carrie has returned home from the devastation and

⁸² Ibid., p.119.

⁸³ ibid., p.74.

destruction of the prom – her mother tells her 'I should have killed myself when he put it in me.' She continues:

After the first time, before we were married. He promised. Never again. He said we just ... slipped. I believed him. I fell down and I lost the baby that was God's judgment. I felt that the sin had been expiated. By blood. But sin never dies. Sin ... never ... dies. [...] At first it was all right. We lived sinlessly. We slept in the same bed, belly to belly sometimes, and o, I could feel the presence of the Serpent, but we never did until.' She began to grin, and it was a hard, terrible grin. And that night I could see him looking at me That Way. We got down on our knees to pray. [...] It wasn't until he came in that I smelled the whiskey on his breath. And he took me. *Took me!* With the stink of filthy roadhouse whiskey still on him he took me ... and I liked it! She screamed out the last words at the ceiling. 'I liked it o all that dirty fucking and his hands on me ALL OVER ME!'84

Her mother purges her failure to remain chaste upon the body of Carrie. Her response to Carrie's first period is to spout religious damnation at her and to physically abuse her by smacking and kicking her into atonement. Carrie's 'becoming-woman' is intolerable to Margaret White and ends in infanticide, or what can equally be read as a suicide. By stabbing Carrie, Mrs White, who has embodied herself in her daughter, is in a sense killing herself. Carrie in retaliation kills her mother, an act of matricide, or again a suicidal act, whereby Carrie is in fact killing a schizo, polymorphous sexual aspect of herself. She does not exist independently; she is a multiplicity of femininities.

Therefore, the character of Carrie is in a sense the personification or schizo-embodiment of the contradictions of 1970s feminism in a society which was still to a large extent highly conformist and conservative. Carrie, through reflection and embodiment destabilizes and challenges the individual identity (or fragile lack of identity as it is controlled and constructed) of the other female characters in the novel and film. Her monstrosity and schizo-embodiment transgresses and destratifies normalised constructs of gender and identity. However, her destratification, her leaky Body without Organs is unacceptable as indicated in both the novel and the film in the scene where she publicly menstruates. In DePalma's film, Carrie is mobbed by her female peers who demand that she 'plug' her body up as they throw tampons and sanitary pads at her naked bleeding body. In King's novel, she is slapped by her gym teacher Miss Desjardin who

⁸⁴ ibid., pp.206-207.

with 'hissing deadly emphasis' demands that she takes a napkin from the sanitary dispenser, stating 'damn it, will you do it.'

John Farris' novel *The Fury*, published after *The Exorcist* and *Carrie*, can be read as an amalgamation of both. It is the story of the psychic and telekinetic, fourteen year old Gillian Bellaver. Gillian is psychically connected to a young boy named Robin Sandza who shares her powers and who has been abducted by a government agency called MORG for experimental military purposes. The novel centres on Gillian's connection to Robin and the threat she poses to this secret government organisation. Contiguous with King and Blatty, Farris' novel presents the reader with a rhizomatic, decentralized sociopolitical and cultural backdrop. Pointing explicitly to the breakdown and dissolution of social ideologies and practices and the subsequent disorientation and dislocation of young people, Avery Bellaver, Gillian's father, and the novel's resident anthropologist, describes the world in the following terms:

[...] in the so-called civilizations, where taboo is breaking down and family groups are fragmented, acceptance and approval are concentrated in highly structured peer-groups where the rules are constantly changing, dictated by fashion, by the, ah, soul-destroying perversities of our merchandisers. [...] The demands change so capriciously it doesn't astonish me to see very young school children standing on street corners with bulging satchels and utter blankness in their eyes, as if they are about to scream. What do they want? What do I do now? There are those few, I suspect, for whom it doesn't matter, children who have the inherited stamina and self-focusing qualities necessary to survive. For many the failure to be informed of their status is excruciating. Eventually emotional seams give way and our shamans appear unequal to the task of integrating the frail and the fallen into what is, essentially, a societal madhouse. ⁸⁶

The breaking down of taboo, family units and consumerism all contribute to chaos as emotional seams begin to unravel.

The rhizomatic, socio-cultural Body without Organs, is depicted as negative and seen to have profound and potentially devastating effects on young people. The opening scene of the novel describes how this societal madhouse is affecting Gillian's peers:

Lately many of the girls Gillian went to school with seemed to be going through some sort of morbid crisis or startling personality change. Most had already turned fifteen with Gillian the laggard in her class; she wouldn't be fifteen until the fourth of February, half way through the school year. Anne Wardrop, the poor klutz, had

-

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.11.

⁸⁶ John Farris, *The Fury*, (London: Futura Publications, 1978) pp.12-13.

suffered a bona fide nervous breakdown precipitated by a really terrifying laughing jag during the Verdi *Requiem* at St. Bartholomew's. Gillian shuddered when she heard the details, but Anne had been through three stepfathers and a change of analyst every few months for the past two years, and everybody knew she was bound to come unwrapped. On the other hand, Carol Dommerick, she of the bright blue stare and whispering shyness, had discovered sex and was carrying on a precocious affair with a twenty-three year old seminarian at General Theological. [...] Then there was Wendy Van Alexia⁸⁷

Central to the decoding and destratification of society is Gillian. Physically, she is described (in soft-porn rhetoric) as still in-between and pubescent

[...] just coming into her shape and her style and she had a natural sensitivity about her body, about the last bit of baby fat and the burgeoning breast with nipples that overwhelmed them like the nose on the faces of baby seals. 88

Furthermore, her powers render her a type of Deleuzio-Guattarian 'Body without Organs'. Her latent psychic skills which she has always possessed return after her hospitalization with a viral infection. As well as being psychic she also causes those who

come into contact with her to bleed, thus, effectively menstruizing those around her. Although, Gillian is never specifically referred to as menstrual, her first period at age twelve is referred to by her mother and blood and bleeding feature strongly throughout the novel and film. I would argue that Gillian's power to cause others to bleed is a deterritorialized and displaced type of menstrual bleeding. It is also a power which destratifies the bodies of those



Fig.3.3

who come into contact with her rendering them momentary Bodies without Organs. Gillian, in this sense can also be read as infectious or as a social agitator. Her own leakiness and powers are both contagious and lethal. While recovering from the viral infection in hospital she is the cause of two women bleeding to death, one of whom is described as follows:

0,

⁸⁷ ibid., p.11.

⁸⁸ ibid., p.17.

'Peter', she mumbled. 'Mrs Mc Curdy's dead.' She found it increasingly painful to talk because of her tongue. 'Ah ...' Gillian caught her breath and made another attempt. She urgently had to tell him, while she could still get the words out. 'Just bled and bled. All over. Soaked ... me. God. I think I did it, Peter. I made it happen.89

Even more interesting is her post-menopausal mother who begins to re-menstruate and describes her feelings about its return: 'I just feel sort of draggy and really depressed at times. I went through the change of life and here I am, puberty all over again'90 Gillian also bleeds her friend Larue to death and is the cause of an embolism in Peter Sandza (Robin's father). However, one of the most disturbing episodes in the novel is her mangled pet cat who she reconfigures as a childhood toy she calls Skipper (the nickname given to Robin by his Dad). At home, after running away from the hospital, Gillian, whilst being comforted by her mother bends down to play with a marionette theatre from her childhood. From inside she takes a puppet she calls skipper who is endowed with a moveable and particularly large penis.

Gillian reached for another figure at the back of the stage. She turned around holding him fondly in her hands. Skipper was about a foot and a half long, human in his proportions cleverly articulated. His head was walnut, his body pine. Unlike the other puppets, some of which were turn-of-the-century antiques, Skipper had a freshly carved look. He wasn't wearing one of the traditional costumes. He had a freckled boyish face, and a thatch of red hair. The room wasn't well lighted, but Skipper's hair looked almost real to Katherine. She was stunned to see that the puppet had been provided with realistically carved balls and a man's cock that hung down between his thighs.⁹¹

Her mother watches both transfixed and horrified at the same time while Gillian plays with this grotesque toy. Later, when she is sleeping, her mother decides to find this macabre puppet whom she does not remember from Gillian's childhood only to find instead the family cat who has been mutilated and mangled:

The Skipper puppet wasn't there. In its place was a badly mangled marmalade cat which had gone by the name Sulky Sue. [...] Vivid colouring, but the tail

⁸⁹ John Farris, The Fury, p.126.

⁹⁰ ibid., p.209.

⁹¹ John Farris, *The Fury*, p.162.

depended from the body in an unlikely place. One ear was much larger than the other. The feet were crudely clubbed, not defined by toes. And the eyes \dots 92

She also recalls how the puppet skipper was in fact a dildo:

But absolutely she had not imagined Skipper, she'd seen him lying limp and smug in Gillian's hands, and gross as a dildo. Of course that was the purpose it was intended for, but what was Gilly doing with it? Was Skipper some girlish-kinky thing the kids at Bordendale were passing around? Katherine had too high an opinion of Gillian's good taste and sensitivity to believe it. Nevertheless she'd cuddled the thing. ⁹³

So what exactly is going on here? A mangled cat, a childhood toy, a puppet called Skipper, who was/is a dildo? This entire scene is revelatory on a number of levels and complicates the embodiment of Gillian.⁹⁴ I would argue that Robin is a polymorphic aspect of Gillian's sexual self and the entire scene is a regression to pre-pubescent masturbation. Gillian's conflicting and uneasy adolescent sexuality and her sexual awareness are a source of anxiety and have led to a crisis of a unified and singular identity. Robin is constitutive of the Deleuzio-Guattarian schizo-body, an off-shoot or adventitious disaggregate of Gillian's psyche. He is described in the novel as 'potentially schizoid'. 95 He is also described as Gillian's 'psychic twin' who in early childhood would visit her regularly until she began to deny his presence. Furthermore, he is her döppelganger, they were born virtually at the same moment and are said to resemble each other physically a type of masculine/feminine mirroring of the self. Furthermore, in a later scene in the novel, which is bizarrely voyeuristic and pornographic Robin makes Gillian watch him having sex with his minder/girlfriend Gwyneth, suggestive of both autoeroticism and homosexual desire. Once again the psychic connection between them is underpinned by a preoccupation with sex and sexuality. Therefore, Gillian's psychic monstrosity and the re-manifestation of Robin Sandza can be read as positive lines of flight, destratifications of her childhood self and an exploration of multiple and polymorphous sexualities.

If both Robin and Gillian are conflations of a schizo-identity, Robin's acts of bodily destruction can also be attributed to Gillian. Bodies without Organs, destratifications and

⁹² ibid., p.163.

⁹³ ibid., p.164.

⁹⁴ Her psychic connection is with Robin Sandza, whose father nicknamed him Skipper, who is a dildo.

⁹⁵ John Farris, The Fury, p.255.

decodings of the physical proliferate throughout the novel. Reminiscent of the blood-drenched Carrie is the murderous bleeding to death of Gwyneth:

Thick tears welled from the corners of Gwyneth's eyes; her face had broken out with what she thought were beads of perspiration. Gwyn was stifling. She tore apart the high collar of the blouse, got up and snatched a napkin from the dining table. Shaking dreadfully, she pressed the napkin to her face. It came away crimson. Gwyn screamed. Through a heat haze she saw .Robin turn and walk idly away from her. His mind seemed to be on other things. Gwyn stared at the backs of her hands. She was bleeding from almost every pore, tiny perfect bubbles of blood merging, flowing. She smelled of wrack and weed, of the strong salty sea; she felt the running of a fatal tide through her disappearing skin. ⁹⁶

Gwyneth, like Carrie, is an ultimate blood-drenched Body without Organs, however, it is a line of flight and destratification of the self which ends in death; the negative rejection perhaps of Gillian's homosexuality. Gillian, like her peers, is unravelling at the seams. She describes herself aptly as 'a receiver', one who embodies the anxieties and destabilizations afflicting the other characters in the novel. Thus, the subjectivity and identity of Gillian can be read as multiple, not singular and centralized, she asks herself the question 'If I can't be Gillian, who can I be? What can I be?' ⁹⁷

Also, like Carrie and Regan, Gillian is in a sense possessed. In fact, her anthropologist father pursues this line of research into his daughter's condition reading a book entitled *Demonic Possession*. However, the scene most suggestive of a schizoid split or disembodiment is the one where Gillian is discovered by her parents in an almost catatonic state. Once again Avery Bellaver, the social observer/anthropologist explains:

Might have expected it. She required the enormous energy of the music. These ceremonies vary little in form, whether among the Ashanti, the Bavenda, the Hopi. The ritualist first utilizes the energy of sound; then he intones a name of power. Finally he performs a circumambulation, a ritual movement, until the exercise results in a deep trance. Much easier then for the novice to separate from the physical body. Of course those who are adepts, or specially skilled at astral projection, need no extraordinary preparations in order to separate. ⁹⁸

Furthermore, it is also possible to read Gillian in a political sense as the novel is also preoccupied with Cold War anxieties in a decidedly Deleuzian conflict, rhizomatic,

⁹⁶ ibid., p.330.

⁹⁷ ibid., p.262.

⁹⁸ ibid., p.214.

disaggregated and with no centre, producing a culture of fear and anxiety. The enemy is Communism and like Gillian it is infectious and contagious, both a threat from without and within, an aspect of the novel I will discuss in more detail later in this chapter. However, this does lead into the next section which will focus on the agencies employed to deal with the threat posed by the minored-political bodies of the menstruous-monstrous young girls in 1970s horror.

Our Father(s) Deliver us from Evil: Reterritorializing and Re-Coding the Menstrual-Body

Initially, the body in each of these texts, before it enters puberty and begins to change into a body of 'becoming' is a contoured, contained stratification (i.e. to a large extent a striated construct of childhood). It is only when collisions occur and the strata and its contours become decoded that the body spills open, a type of Body without Organs. Carrie, Regan and Gillian do not as numerous critics would suggest simply signify the monstrous feminine; instead as I have argued they are an intrinsic part of the cultural matrix of instability which they inhabit. They are indicative of the rhizomatic potential of socio-cultural and political change in 1970s America.

However, portrayed and rendered as aberrations and monsters their pubescent lines of flight are curtailed, obstructed and re-coded. Becoming-Woman-Menstruous-Monstrous invariably results in 'Becomes-Monster' in these texts. Becoming-woman involves a process of deterritorialization but one which, although initially positive is eventually reterritorialized. As already noted in the 'Introduction' to this thesis, the function of deterritorialization is the movement by which 'one' leaves the territory. It is the operation of the line of flight and can be either negative or positive. The line of flight is a negative deterritorialization if it is overlaid or obstructed by a compensatory reterritorialization.

Anything can serve as a reterritorialization, in other words, stand for the lost territory. One can reterritorialize on a being, an object, a book, an apparatus or a system. For example:

^[...] it is inaccurate to say that the State apparatus is territorial: it in fact performs a deterritorialization, but one immediately overlaid by reterritorializations on property, work, and money (clearly that landownership, public or private is not

territorial but reterritorializing). Among regimes of signs, the signifying regime certainly attains a high level of deterritorialization, but because it simultaneously sets up a whole system of reterritorializations on the signified, and on the signifier itself, it blocks the line of flight, allowing only a negative deterritorialization to persist. ⁹⁹

Another case is when

[..] deterritorialization becomes positive, in other words, when it prevails over reterritorializations, which play only a secondary role but nevertheless remains relative because the line of flight it draws is segmented, is divided into successive proceedings, sinks into black holes or even ends up in a generalized black hole (catastrophe); this is the case of the regime of subjective signs with its passional and consciousness-related deterritorialization, which is positive but only in a relative sense. ¹⁰⁰

Moreover, the relations between territory, deterritorialization and reterritorialization are inseparable. Again, as I previously noted, deterritorialization is *negative* or *relative* when it conforms to and operates either by principal reterritorializations that obstruct the lines of flight, or by secondary reterritorializations that segment and work to curtail them. Deterritorialization is *absolute* 'when it conforms to and is about the creation of a new earth, in other words, when it connects lines of flight, raises them to the power of an abstract vital line, or draws a plane of consistency.' Therefore, menstruation and puberty, possession and psychic manifestations, in these texts can be read as potentially positive lines of flight which invariably become relative through secondary reterrorializations.

One method by which secondary reterritorializations operate is through culturally inscribed discourses which can be described as apparatuses of capture. The theorist Alberto Toscano explains that:

The logic of capture is such that what is captured is simultaneously presupposed and generated by the act of capture, appropriated and produced. [...] Deleuze and Guattari are sensitive to the juridical aspects of the question, such that State capture defines a domain of legitimate violence, in as much as it always accompanies capture with the affirmation of a right to capture. 102

¹⁰¹ ibid., p.561.

⁹⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, p.560.

¹⁰⁰ ibid., p.560.

¹⁰² Alberto Toscano, 'Capture' in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr, pp.39-40.

Apparatuses of capture which reterritorialize the menstrual body in Western culture are determined by patriarchal discourses, firstly, primitive ritual and taboo, followed by Judaeo-Christian theology, psychoanalysis and finally medical or state intervention. Each of the following is employed in one manner or another in King's, Blatty's and Farris' novels and in their film adaptations. As Toscano notes, these agencies are certain of their self-righteous entitlement to and in the legitimacy of their use of violence as a means to achieve 'capture'. In relation to 1970s menstrual horror texts the female body after an initial pubescent revolt comes under siege. It is attacked from multiple sources until the threat it poses to majoritarian discourses and phallocentric State apparatuses is neutralized through either death or containment.

Outside, yet informing the frames of these texts is the overall cultural embodiment of women through ritual and taboo, as I have argued extensively in Chapter One of this thesis. First and foremost the position of the menstruant in society automatically renders her monstrous and establishes her predisposition to possession and/or 'supernatural expression'. In *The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation*, Delaney, Toth and Lupton, write that 'In many societies, the menstruating woman is believed to emit a *mana*, or threatening supernatural power.' The relationship between the menstruant, and/or pollution and demonic possession can also be found in the Bible and as I have previously noted the most comprehensive list of prohibitions ascribed to the menstruant can be found in Leviticus. According to the theologian, Jacob Milgrom, 'The most striking fact about genital discharges is that they are regarded as a source of impurity virtually throughout the world.' Speaking of the menstruant he gives numerous cultural examples of the impurity and danger of menstrual blood:

Members of primitive societies (Henninger 1979) have testified to their researchers that menstrual and lochial blood is dangerous to persons. Written sources give testimony that this view was also held by the ancients, for instance, the Romans and the pre-Islamic Arabs (Smith 1927:48). It is also recorded as a folk belief in the Talmud: 'If a menstruant woman passes between two [men], if it is at the beginning of her menses, she will slay one of them, and if it is at the end of her menses, she will cause strife between them' (b. Pesah. 111a). Moreover, menstrual blood was regarded as a powerful charm among the Arabs (Smith, ibid), and here too we find an echo in rabbinic writings: 'If a woman sees a snake ... she should take some of her hair and fingernails and throw them at it and say, 'I am menstruous' (b. Šaab. 110a; cf. further examples in Dinari 1979-80: 310-11). Thus

¹⁰³ Janice Delaney, Mary Jane Lupton, Emily Toth, *The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation*, p.7.

it was the worldwide fear of menstrual blood as the repository of demonic forces that is most likely the cause of the isolation of the menstruant. 105

Milgrom also quotes a Rabbi Yochanan, who stated of the menstruant

Even the utterance of her mouth is impure. One is forbidden to walk after a menstruant and tread her footsteps, which are as impure as a corpse; so is the dust upon which the menstruant stepped impure, and it is forbidden to derive and benefit from her work. (on Gen 31:25)¹⁰⁶

In *The Exorcist*, Regan at the onset of puberty begins to claim of a stench which eventually culminates in her menstrual body becoming an excremental site of abjection. Fr. Karras visit to Regan is described by Blatty as follows:

Karras hesitated, then entered the room slowly, almost flinching backward at the pungent stench of moldering excrement that hit him in the face like a palpable blast. Quickly reining back his revulsion, he closed the door. Then his eyes locked, stunned, on the thing that was Regan, on the creature that was lying on its back in the bed [...] eyes bulging wide [...] seething in a face shaped into a skeletal, hideous mask of mind-bending malevolence.¹⁰⁷

Furthermore, the menstrual Regan is murderous, with the death of the movie director Burke Dennings directly attributed to her. Impurity and menstruation is also evidenced in King's novel *Carrie*. The voice of religious approbation comes from Margaret White, Carrie's mother, who preaches:

'And Eve was weak and loosed the raven on the world,' Momma continued, 'and the raven was called Sin, and the first Sin was Intercourse. And the Lord visited Eve with a Curse, and the Curse was the Curse of Blood. And Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden and into the World and Eve found that her belly had grown big with child.' 108

Both in *Carrie* and in *The Exorcist*, the body at puberty and menstruation is seen to be impure and polluting. This is also evident in *The Fury*: Gillian, as I have already pointed out is infectious causing those she comes into contact with to bleed. The curse of Eve as preached by Margaret White is also of particular interest in relation to the final

106 ibid., p.948.

¹⁰⁵ ibid., p.766.

¹⁰⁷ William Peter Blatty, The Exorcist, p.194.

statement referring to pregnancy. Predominantly, possession in these texts is a menstrual possession, but it is notable that pregnancy is also often referred to as a type of possession. Interestingly, in *The Exorcist*, the demon that possesses Regan is called Pazuzu, a Babylonian wind deity who was used as a symbol on amulets to ward off evil demons for pregnant women or women in childbirth.

Moreover, the depiction of specific menstrual possession in these texts bears a remarkable resemblance to the way in which demonic possession is theologically described. In the *Dictionary of the Bible* possession is defined as

The coercive seizing of the spirit of a man by another spirit, viewed as superhuman, with the result that the man's will is no longer free but is controlled, often against his wish, by this indwelling person or power. In Scripture the idea is associated with both phases of moral character; and a man may be possessed by Christ or the Holy Spirit, or by, *a*, or *the* devil. Later usage has confined the word mainly, though not exclusively, to possession by an evil spirit. ¹⁰⁹

In accordance with its moral aspect, Catholic definitions of demonology and possession tend to stress its psychical aspect. According to the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*;

Whilst at times disease is attributed to daemons, possession is not a comprehensive word for disease in general [...] The drift of the evidence seems to carry us to the conclusion that the idea of possession was associated, in the main with psychical disease (cp also Mk 5:15: Lk 7:33; Jn 7:20), and this is confirmed by the hints thrown out here and there that this affliction was of all afflictions the direst and most impractical. ¹¹⁰

The coercive seizing of the person by a superhuman spirit and the connection between possession and psychical disease is easily applied to menstruation and possession in these texts. In fact, Stephen King in his introduction to *Carrie* makes clear his self-conscious use of the connection between menstruation and supernatural powers:

In the late fall or early winter of 1972, I had an idea for a short story about a girl with telekinetic (or psychokinetic, if you prefer) powers. The idea had actually been kicking around in my head since high school, when I read a *Life* magazine article about a case of poltergeist activity in a suburban home. Poltergeists are frisky or teasing spirits – ghosts, if you want to call a spook a spook. The activity in this house seemed, on closer examination, to have nothing to do with ghosts.

-

¹⁰⁹ *Dictionary of the Bible*, original ed. James Hastings, revised by Frederick C. Grant and H.H. Rowley (Edinburgh: T & T Clark,1963), p.782.

Encylopaedia Biblica, p. 1071.

There was a troubled teenage girl in the family. When she was home, objects particularly religious objects – flew through the air. When she was away, things stayed where they belonged. The article hazarded the theory that much of the activity ascribed to ghosts is actually caused by kids, and that girls on the brink of puberty seem especially apt to tap into this wild talent; the idea seemed to be that there was a great force within them, accessible only at this time of life. 111

Or, as the critic Shelley Stamp Lindsay writes:

Carrie is indeed the victim of a horror film curse, not quite the curse of Dracula or even the 'mummy's curse', but a menstrual 'curse' passed down from woman to woman. Menstruation and female sexuality here are inseparable from the 'curse' of supernatural power, more properly the domain of horror films. 112

Carrie's response to menstruation, puberty and sexuality are conflicting, the result of a fundamentally religious mother (voice of menstrual taboo and the 'culturalconstruction' of female sexuality) and contemporary views promoting a more liberated approach to sex. She describes her sexual awakening as follows:

Evil, bad, oh it was. Momma had told her there was Something. The Something was dangerous, ancient, unutterable evil.'113

Her first period is experienced as a type of invasion/possession:

Suddenly she felt that she must burst into tears, scream, or rip the Something out of her body whole and, beating, crush it, kill it. 114

I would also like to refer here once again to the Biblical exorcism at Gadara. The demons are exorcised by Jesus into a herd of swine: 'Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.' (Lk 8:33). What is interesting with regards to the swine is that it is pig blood which is spilled over Carrie at her prom. Thus, there is a conflation between menstrual blood and possession which recurs throughout these texts. This will be seen

¹¹¹ Stephen King, Carrie, p.x.

¹¹² Lindsay Stamp Shelley, 'Horror, Femininity, and Carrie's Monstrous Puberty, in Barry Keith Grant, ed., The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), p.284.
¹¹³ Stephen King, *Carrie*, p.43.

¹¹⁴ ibid., p.41.

again in my discussion of *The Exorcist* where there are numerous references to 'pigs', 'swine' and 'sows' alongside Regan's possession and menstrual body.

As such, possession and the paranormal in these texts can therefore be read as the pathologizing of menstruation through the cultural processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. Although, the leakiness of these bodies is initially a relatively positive line of flight, through myth, ritual and taboo they are contained. Particularly striking, in each of these novels and films, is the reassertion of and a return to the Freudian concept of Oedipal desire. The return to an Oedipal framework is arguably the main function of these texts, whereby, the menstrual, schizo, 'Body without Organs' is reterritorialized. Perhaps this is why Mark Kermode describes both Blatty's novel and the film as reassuring for those who longed for a return to absolute moral order. He states:

For here on screen was a clear-cut struggle between good and evil in which priest, policemen, good mothers and devoted sons fought a righteous battle to release parent-hating children from the grip of a lustful, all-consuming devil.¹¹⁵

Even more controversially he goes on to pose the question:

For all its terrifying reputation, wasn't *The Exorcist* more a fantasy of wish fulfilment than a nightmare of horror?¹¹⁶

It is the re-embodiment of these young girls at puberty and the return to so-called order that is crucial. Thus, what I wish to focus on next is the absent father figure in these texts. Deleuzio-Guattarian philosophy is anti-Oedipal critiquing the insistence by Freud on the Oedipal ordering of desire. Tamsin Lorraine explains:

Deleuze and Guattari reject the psychoanalytic contention that the only alternative to Oedipal subjectivity is psychosis and instead explore anoedipal flows of desire and the schizo who is a functioning subject of such desire. Their notion of the unconscious suggests ways of approaching its 'symptoms' that point to possibilities for creative transformation inevitably linked with social change. 117

Or, as Claire Colebrook observes, repression in relation to Deleuze and Guattari is the

-

¹¹⁵ Mark Kermode, *The Exorcist*, (London: British Film Institute, 1998), p.9.

¹¹⁶ ibid., p.10.

¹¹⁷ Tamsin Lorraine, 'Oedipalisation' in Alan Parr, ed., in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, p.191.

[...] internalisation of subjection — as a modern phenomenon that nevertheless draws upon archaic structures and images. [...] Whereas, Freud's Oedipus complex seeks to explain why and how we are repressed — how it is that we submit to law and renounce our enjoyment — Deleuze and Guattari argue that we suffer from the idea of repression itself, the idea that there is some ultimate object that we have abandoned. [...] Desire, they insist, is not the desire for some forbidden object, a desire that we must necessarily repress. Rather, all life is positive desire — expansion, connection, creation. [...] We are repressed then not by a social order that prohibits the natural desire for incest, but by the image that our desires 'naturally' take the form of Oedipal and family images. [...] In the case of Oedipal repression, it is the desire of the father — the desire of white, modern, bourgeois man — that lies at the heart of the idea of all selves as necessarily subjected to repressive power.

Common to each of these texts is the absent father figure causing a disruption to the Oedipal triad of Father/Mother/Child. This absence of the father figure in horror is noted by the film critic William Paul, who argues that the motif of the absent father is common to what he terms the child abuse film. In such films he observes the equation of the child with absolute malignancy, which he sees as a view of the child as a repository for all which is negative in the culture. He notes that *The Exorcist* places its 'young rebel in the context of the late 1960s student rebellions.' He also notes a disturbing combination of precociousness and regression in the child; that the age of the evil child is generally prepubescent or just pubescent with the age tying the monstrousness to sexuality; he further comments on the desire to see the child punished; and a dramatic strategy of slow revelation that makes one both anxious and pleased at discovering the evil in children and finally the absent parent. According to Paul:

Family life is generally presented as being disrupted or disturbed in some way, with an absent parent the clearest source of difficulty. If the offending child is a girl the absent parent is most likely to be a father, and the film is concerned with female power as a problem. ¹¹⁹

In *The Exorcist*, Chris MacNeil is in the process of divorcing her husband who is absent throughout both the novel and film. The father figure in *Carrie* is dead and in *The Fury*, it is explicitly stated that Gillian's anthropologist father is rarely at home as he is frequently away for months at a time working. The absent father disrupts the operation of desire in these texts.

¹¹⁸ Claire Colebrook, 'Repression' in Alan Parr, ed., *The Deleuze Dictionary*, p.139.

¹¹⁹ William Paul, Laughing Screaming, p.283.

As I have already noted in the previous section, Bodies without Organs, and the schizo aspects of these young, pubescent, menstrual girls, create the possibility of polymorphic sexualities with subsequent if not concomitant possibilities for disruption and change to Western social and economic structuration, that is, Capitalist desire and consumption. As this is the underlying fear of molar, orthodox, majoritarian discourses and Apparatuses, the disrupted territory of the Oedipal family triad must be reinstated. A replacement father figure is seminal to the reterritorializing of these menstruous and monstrous bodies. The substitute father figure in these texts is religious, albeit an actual priest, a performative priest or an image/icon of the ultimate priest figure — Christ. According to Deleuze and Guattari the priest is one of the most insidious obstructers of desire and deterritorialization. They write in relation to desire that:

The BwO (Body without Organs) is the field of immanence of desire, the plane of consistency specific to desire (with desire defined as a process of production without reference to any exterior agency, whether it be a lack that hollows it out or a pleasure that fills it). 120

Further arguing that:

Every time desire is betrayed, cursed, uprooted from its field of immanence, a priest is behind it. The priest cast the triple curse on desire: the negative law, the extrinsic rule, and the transcendent ideal. Facing north, the priest said, Desire is lack (how could it not lack what it desires?). The priest carried out the first sacrifice, named castration, and all the men and women of the north lined up behind him, crying in cadence, 'Lack, lack, it's the common law.' Then, facing south, the priest linked desire to pleasure. For there are hedonistic, even orginstic priests. Desire will be assuaged by pleasure; and not only will the pleasure obtained silence desire or a moment but the process of obtaining it is already a way of interrupting it, of instantly discharging it an unburdening oneself of it. Pleasure as discharge: the priest carries out the second sacrifice, named masturbation. Then, facing east, he exclaimed: Jouissance is impossible, but impossible jouissance is inscribed in desire. For that, in its very impossibility, is the Ideal the 'manque-á-jouir' that is life.' The priest carried out the third sacrifice, phantasy or the thousand and one nights, the one hundred twenty days, while the men of the East chanted: Yes, we will be your phantasy, your ideal and impossibility, yours and also our own. The priest did not turn to the west. He knew that in the west lay a plane of consistency, but he thought that the way was blocked by the columns of Hercules, that it led nowhere and was uninhabited by people. But that is where desire was lurking, west was the shortest route east, as well as to the other directions, rediscovered or deterritorialized. ¹²¹

¹²¹ ibid., p.154.

¹²⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, p.154.

They go on to point out that

The most recent figure of the priest is the psychoanalyst, with his or her three principles: Pleasure, Death, and Reality. Doubtless, psychoanalysis demonstrated that desire is not subordinated to procreation, or even to genitality. That was its modernism. But it retained the essentials; it even found new ways of inscribing in desire the negative law of lack, the external rule of pleasure, and the transcendent ideal of phantasy. 122

Deleuze and Guattari draw attention to the curtailment and control of desire in Western culture which essentially has been religiously extended through a philosophy based on lack and castration anxiety, desire as pleasure through discharge (masturbation) and desire as an impossibility (phantasy). They further extrapolate that psychoanalysis, although having moved the focus of desire from the genitalia continues to inscribe the 'negative law of lack, the external rule of pleasure and the transcendent ideal of phantasy.' Horror as a genre draws extensively on the work of Freud and contemporary feminist and psychoanalytic theorists, thus, maintaining and centring the focus of horror criticism and analysis on lack, pleasure and phantasy. Therefore, a move away from this centred position opens the possibilities for new interpretations and analyses.

It has been critically observed that in *The Exorcist* Regan's possession, as well as coinciding with puberty, also coincides with paternal rejection. She overhears a conversation with her mother on the phone to her father who has forgotten her birthday. From this point in the narrative a precocious sexuality emerges in Regan, her use of language becomes decidedly crude and sexualized. It is also suggested that a series of desecrations in a local church is the work of Regan. Fr Dyer describes these desecrations as follows:

In the first of the instances the elderly sacristan of the church had discovered a mound of human excrement on the altar cloth directly before the tabernacle. [...] 'Well, the other's even worse,' remarked the dean who then employed indirection and one or two euphemisms to explain how a massive phallus sculpted in clay had been found glued firmly to a statue of Christ on the left side altar. 12

Another desecration, a blasphemous note is described as written in:

¹²² ibid., pp. 154-155.

¹²³ William Peter Blatty, *The Exorcist*, p.70.

[...] ersatz text, though containing some strike-overs and various typographical errors, was in basically fluent and intelligible Latin and described in vivid, erotic detail an imagined homosexual encounter involving the Blessed Virgin and Mary Magdalene. 124

These desecrations can be read as deliberate disruptions to the Oedipal holy family. Alongside, Regan's sexual precociousness, desire is deterritorialized and liberated from images and signifiers of the incest taboo. Gender and sexuality are destratified and a schizophrenic polymorphic sexuality replaces heterosexual normativity.

Perhaps, the most controversial scene in both the novel and film is Regan's masturbation with a crucifix. The alignment of the genitalia with the crucifix and desire at first appears blasphemous and antithetical but if read in terms of Deleuze and Guattari it is perhaps the most positively challenging and transgressive scene in both the novel and film. Desire as controlled and inscribed by religion and the Oedipal paradigm merge and intersect until it is unclear as to whether what is happening is an act of pleasure or masochism. Lack/castration, pleasure/pain and fantasy, collapse into a 'fuzzy aggregate', a decoding of strata, and a deterritorialization of desire. Blatty describes the scene as follows:

Regan, her legs propped up and spread wide on a bed that was violently bouncing and shaking, clutched the bone-white crucifix in raw-knuckled hands, the bone-white crucifix poised at her vagina [...] Yes you're going to let Jesus *fuck* you, *fuck* you, f_c' Regan now, eyes wide and staring, flinching from the rush of some hideous finality, mouth agape shrieking at the dread of some ending. The abruptly the demonic face once more possessed her, now filled her, the room choking suddenly with a stench in the nostrils, with an icy cold that seeped from the walls as the rappings ended and Regan's piercing cry of terror turned to a guttural, yelping laugh of malevolent spite and rage triumphant while she thrust down down the crucifix into her vagina and began to masturbate ferociously, roaring in that deep, coarse, deafening voice, 'Now you're *mine*, now you're *mine*, you stinking cow! You bitch! Let Jesus *fuck* you, *fuck* you!'¹²⁵

This scene further disrupts the Oedipal triad of desire and the law of the father with references to a poly-gendered, poly-sexual Regan, intimating a complete break with the incest taboo. The taboo of incest is further ruptured when the possessed Regan clutches her mother's hair and

-

¹²⁴ ibid., p.93.

William Peter Blatty, *The Exorcist*, pp.182-183.

[...] yanked her face hard against her vagina, smearing it with blood while she frantically undulated her pelvis. 'Aahhh, little pig mother!' Regan crooned with a guttural, rasping, throaty eroticism. 'Lick me, lick me! Aahhhhhh!' 126

A reinstatement of Oedipal law is achieved by replacing the absent father with another kind of father – a priest, who in turn is both assisted and replaced by the ultimate theological father figure Christ/God. It is through the ritual of exorcism that Regan is reappropriated back into the familial fold. The exorcism, although, pivotal to both the novel and film, is given little space either textually or visually. Yet, it encapsulates in all its forms the Deleuzio-Guattarian philosophy of 'reterritorialization'. Through the ritual of exorcism Regan's body of 'becoming', with its lines of flight and deterritorializations is reterritorialized. By employing the body of Christ, perhaps, along with the Virgin Mary, one of the most profoundly determined, striated and religiously inscribed bodies in Western culture, Regan is recoded. The words 'the body of Christ compels you' are repeated over and over again during her exorcism, Regan is essentially compelled and coerced by the body of Christ to restratify and reterritorialize. The symbolic figure of Christ reinforces the phallocentric interventions of both the Church and medical profession into the socializing of Regan.

The Oedipal reterritorialization of Regan is also reflective of anxieties concerning the dissipation of faith and religion in the 1960s and 1970s. The sixties saw a growing interest in Eastern religions and esoteric philosophies which greatly undermined the hitherto centralised control and influence of the Catholic Church. The modernisation and re-branding of Catholicism began in earnest with the opening of the Vatican II Council in 1962 and which continued until 1965. A further indication of how far people had begun to move away from organized religion and spiritual faith is evident in an address of Pope Paul VI to a general audience in November, 1972, entitled 'Confronting the Devil's Power', which opened with:

What are the Church's greatest needs at the present time? Don't be surprised at our answer and don't write it off as simplistic or even superstitious: one of the Church's greatest needs is to be defended against the evil we call the Devil. 127

He further proclaimed that:

¹²⁶ ibid., p.183.

¹²⁷ Pope Paul VI, 'Confronting the Devil, Papal Encyclicals,

[[]http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Paul06/p6devil.htm], date accessed: 07/10/2008.

So we know that this dark disturbing being exists and that he is still at work with his treacherous cunning; he is the hidden enemy who sows errors and misfortunes in human history [...] This matter of the Devil and of the influence he can exert on individuals as well as on communities, entire societies or events, is a very important chapter of Catholic doctrine which should be studied again, although it is given little attention today. [...] People are afraid of falling back into old Manichean theories, or into frightening deviations of fancy and superstition. Nowadays they prefer to appear strong and unprejudiced to pose as positivists, while at the same time lending faith to many unfounded magical or popular superstitions or, worse still, exposing their souls – their baptised souls, visited so often by the Eucharistic Presence and inhabited by the Holy Spirit! – to licentious sensual experiences and to harmful drugs, as well as to the ideological seductions of fashionable errors. These are cracks through which the Evil One can easily penetrate the human mind. 128

Thus, concluding that:

The Christian must be a militant; he must be vigilant and strong; and he must at times make use of special ascetical practices to escape from certain diabolical attacks. Jesus teaches us this by pointing to 'prayer and fasting' as the remedy. And the Apostle suggests the main line we should follow: "Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." With an awareness, therefore, of the opposition that individual souls, the Church and the world must face at the present time, we will try to give both meaning and, effectiveness to the familiar invocation in our principal prayer: 'Our Father... deliver us from evil!¹²⁹

This further demonstrates Catholicism's attempt to reassert itself in a changing environment which had more or less rendered it obsolete in the lives of ordinary people. Both the novel and film are permeated with this crisis of faith. The figure of Fr. Karras, a priest who has lost his faith or who can also be said to be 'fatherless' (Godless) regains his religious belief through the exorcism of Regan. Chris MacNeil, the atheist mother also has her faith renewed. Overall, what *The Exorcist*, ultimately achieves is a reterritorialisation of rhizomatic socio-cultural and sexual lines of flight. In a faithless fragmented, schizophrenic culture Oedipal law is reinscribed. The horror lies not in the monstrous, grotesque body of Regan or in her possession as traditional structuralist readings of signifier and signified would suggest but rather in her 'redemption/exorcism' and the reinscription and re-embodiment of rooted phallocentric desire and control through a reassertion of the following triad - lack/castration, masturbatory pleasure and

¹²⁸ ibid.

¹²⁹ ibid.

desire as phantasy. Potentially positive lines of flight and deterritorializations are reterritorialized and locked back into highly striated packages. The body, puberty, female sexuality, political agitation and change are all reconfigured in the exorcised Regan MacNeil. She has moved from becoming-woman, to becomes-monster, to finally being reconfigured as a socialized embodiment of inscribed femininity.

In Carrie, the father figure is dead, once again disrupting the Oedipal triad of desire. Carrie's fundamentalist, zealot of a mother, Margaret White, reconstructs this broken trinity by substituting the absent father with the figure of Christ. Religious iconography dominates the White household, from one of a picture of Jesus with a caption that reads 'The Unseen Guest' to the one Carrie liked the best of 'Jesus leading lambs on a hill that was as green and smooth as the Riverside golf course,' to others less tranquil, 'Jesus turning the money-changers from the temple, Moses throwing the Tablets down upon the worshippers of the golden calf, Thomas the Doubter putting his hand on Christ's wounded side' and 'Noah's ark floating above the agonized drowning sinners, Lot and his family fleeing the great burning of Sodom and Gomorrah.' But the ultimate item of religious paraphernalia in the White household is a towering four foot high plaster crucifix:

The Jesus impaled upon it was frozen in a grotesque, muscle-straining rictus of pain, mouth drawn down in a groaning curve. His crown of thorns bled scarlet streams down temples and forehead. The eyes were turned up in a medieval expression of slanted agony. Both hands were also drenched with blood and the feet were nailed to a small plaster platform. 131

Furthermore, it is noted that it is 'a corpus' that had given Carrie endless nightmares in which:

[...] the mutilated Christ chased her through dream corridors, holding a mallet and nails, begging her to take up her cross and follow him. Just lately these dreams had evolved into something less understandable but more sinister. The object did not seem to be murder but something more awful. 132

Carrie's nightmare reads like an episode from a Gothic novel where the hapless, virginal heroine is pursued by an older, sexually voracious predator. The sinister undertones and

¹³⁰ Stephen King, Carrie, p.38.

¹³¹ ibid., p.38.

¹³² ibid., pp.38-39.

the 'something' more awful than murder are therefore, more than likely, sexual, involving a transgression of the incest taboo, whereby, the body of Christ employed by her mother as an apotropaic to ward off the evils of sexual intercourse is inverted.

In one of the final scenes in the film (a scene absent from the novel) Carrie crucifies her mother to the wall with kitchen implements. This can be read as the continuing attempt of the striated body of Christ to recode and reterritorialize, however, it is too late as the incest taboo has already been transgressed when Carrie is stabbed by her mother. Mrs White, it can be argued, is a conflation of priest, father, and Christ, thus her stabbing of Carrie implies incest — mother/daughter, father/daughter and/or brother/sister. The White family is merely a simulacra of the Oedipal nuclear family and perhaps this is the reason why both Carrie and her Mother ultimately die. The imaginary nuclear family is unable to sustain the polymorphic, sexual transgression of Carrie's becoming-woman. Carrie is essentially captured by a Deleuzio-Guattarian catastrophic black-hole which swallows her up. This is perhaps also a warning to women's liberation and the changes it was affecting in relation to sexuality and the traditional family unit. Thus, King's novel reinforces a traditional family politics.

Less explicitly is the figure of the priest in *The Fury* who features in a performative capacity. Gillian, like her counterparts Regan and Carrie, inhabits a disrupted nuclear family circuit with a father who spends a large amount of time away from his family due to his work as an anthropologist. While recovering from a viral infection in hospital she is approached by Peter Sandza, the father of her psychic twin Robin. Peter comes to Gillian dressed in the guise of a priest. Once again, there is a decisive inversion or perversion of the Oedipus complex. Gillian, in a state of panic and anxiety, is first struck by Peter to calm her down and when this doesn't work, he

[...] kissed her instead, tenderly and with as much lust as he thought she might be familiar with at her age. Gillian found this new approach confusing, shocking and indefensible, and as she grew slack in his arms gradually the kiss became a comfort to her. With his own eyes closed Peter readily lost awareness of her youth; the snug pressure of her uncovered cunt against his body was mature enough, even insinuating. 134

Peter is further described as

¹³³ In King's novel, Carrie slows down her mother's heart until she dies: 'I'm picturing your heart Momma,' Carrie said. 'It's easier when you see things in your mind. Your heart is a big red muscle. Mine goes faster when I use my power. Bur yours is going a little slower now. A little slower.' (p.209). ¹³⁴ John Farris, *The Fury*, pp.124-125.

Grotesquely ambivalent toward this unusual girl, as if he'd just given birth to her, as if they were already lovers. He was in the worst possible danger, or he would've taken her with him ... and Peter knew Gillian would accompany him without question. He had saved her from the fury and the terror, and in a sense he owned her now.¹³⁵

As Gillian comes to her senses and gains awareness, Peter explains that he is not a priest and that he is just wearing 'a lousy disguise'. A substitute father, he saves her from madness in the guise of a priest, moreover, this father figure is the actual father of Robin. This establishes another unholy trinity or perverse Oedipal triad - Gillian, Peter and Robin. Such transgressions of the incest taboo as they are intimated throughout the novel suggest polymorphic sexualities. However, it is not religion which reterritorializes and reconfigures Gillian into the social stratum, instead, it is another 'Apparatus of Capture', a secret state organization called MORG. Although, the State apparatuses of capture from the medical to the educational do feature in *The Exorcist* and *Carrie*, they are not at the fore.

Menstrual Blood and PSI as War Machine

The father, the mother and the self are at grips with, and directly coupled to, the elements of the political and historical situation – the soldier, the cop, the occupier, the collaborator, the radical, the resister, the boss, the boss's wife – who constantly break all triangulations, and who prevent the entire situation from falling back on the familial complex and becoming internalized in it. In a word, the family is never a microcosm in the sense of an autonomous figure, even when inscribed in a larger circle that it is said to mediate and express. The family is by nature eccentric, decentred. 136

(Deleuze Gilles and Felix Guattari, Anti-Oedipus)

In *The Fury* it is the State/Government intervention which ultimately restratifies and recodes the body of Gillian. The State as Deleuze and Guattari argue is as, or even more dependant on the Oedipus complex in terms of lack, desire, and capitalist consumption. As Tamsin Lorraine argues:

¹³⁵ ibid., p.125.

¹³⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Anti-Oedipus, p.107.

Oedipal subjectivity is but one form that human sentience can take. The syntheses they describe have anoedipal as well as Oedipal forms. 'Oedipalisation' is a contemporary form of social repression that reduces the forms desire takes – and thus the connections desire makes – to those that sustain the social formation of capitalism. ¹³⁷

Or, as Eugene Holland observes:

Why do people fight for their own servitude as stubbornly as if it were their salvation? The answer is that people have been trained since birth in asceticism by the Oedipus complex, which relays social oppression into the heart of the nuclear family. Social oppression and psychic oppression, thus, are for schizoanalysis two sides of the same coin, except that schizoanalysis reverses the direction of causality, making psychic repression depend on social oppression. It is not the child who is father to the man, who is in turn father to the child: the nuclear family imprints capitalist social relations on the infant psyche. Just as capital denies (through primitive accumulation) direct access to the means of production and the means of life, and mediates between the worker, work, consumer good and eventual retirement, so the father denies (through the threat of castration enforcing the incest taboo) direct access to the mother (the means of life), and mediates between the child, other family members and eventual marriage with a mother-substitute. By denying the child all the people closest to her the nuclear family programmes people from birth for asceticism.

Essentially, for Deleuze and Guattari, he notes that:

Through the privatisation of reproduction in the nuclear family: the nuclear family, but also Oedipal psychoanalysis itself, are thus revealed to be strictly capitalist institutions. Yet at the same time that the nuclear family is capturing and programming desire in the Oedipus complex, the market is subverting codes and freeing desire from capture in representation throughout society at large, thereby producing schizophrenia as the radically free form of semiosis and the potential hope of universal history. ¹³⁹

Thus, there is self-interest on behalf of the State in its reinstatement of the nuclear family in Farris' *The Fury*. Furthermore, the intervention of a covert military agency is a deliberate strategy to maintain the capitalist machine. Antithetical to Capitalism is the collectivity (dissolution of the individual and subjectivity) promoted by Communism. However, communism is not anoedipal, as is argued by Slavoj Žižek in his work on political ontology *The Ticklish Subject*. Žižek instead argues that unlike the uncertain

139 ibid., p.236.

¹³⁷ Tamsin Lorraine, 'Oedipalisation' in Alan Parr ed., The Deleuze Dictionary, p.189.

Eugene Holland, 'Schizoanalysis' in Alan Parr ed., *The Deleuze Dictionary*, p.236.

schizophrenic nature of capitalism – socialism establishes an exemplary 'symbolic law of the father'. He writes of the 'perverted realization' of actual socialism with regard to the first free Serbian elections and the election slogan of Slobodan Milosevic's Socialist Party which claimed 'With us, there is no uncertainty'. Žižek explains:

[...] although life was poor and drab, there was no need to worry about the future; everyone's modest existence was guaranteed; the Party took care of everything – that is, all decisions were made by Them. Despite all the contempt for the regime, people none the less half-consciously trusted 'Them', relied on 'Them', believed that there was somebody holding all the reins and taking care of everything. There was actually a perverse kind of liberation in the this possibility of shifting the burden of responsibility on to the Other. 140

So although, communist/socialist ideology does not threaten the symbolic law of the father it does threaten modes of capitalist production and desire. Instead two prohibiting fathers are at war (the capitalist father disguises itself through a disclaiming of authority by placing responsibility with the instabilities of the economic market, while at the same time, as Deleuze states, maintaining a schizophrenic exterior limit). As previously noted, the 1970s were marked by economic crisis, thus, I would argue that out of the three novels and their film adaptations I have examined in this chapter – *The Fury* – is striking in its unapologetic and open representation of military intervention as economic strategy which further extrapolates the anti-oedipal arguments of this chapter whilst also bringing into relief the military as appropriated war machine.

The Deleuzio-Guattarian war machine is nomadic, molecular and rhizomatic by nature, it is any group or band that resists the state. However, the war machine does not have war as its primary goal, it is secondary. Thus, the avant-garde or similar creative movements have artistic production as its primary aim and its disruptive resistance to the State or majoritarian ideology as secondary. As Deleuze and Guattari write:

The war machine is that nomad invention that in fact has war not as its primary object but as its second-order, supplementary or synthetic objective, in the sense that it is determined in such a way as to destroy the State-form and city-form with

^{1.}

¹⁴⁰ Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, (London: Verso, 1999), pp.339-340. He also gives the example Eva Hoffman who returns in 1990 to post-Communist Poland, the country of her youth and who noted: 'I know this grayness; I even used to love it, as part of the mood and weather with which one grew up here, and which sank into the bones with a comforting melancholy. Why, then does it seem so much more desolate than before? I guess I'm looking at it with different antennae, without the protective filters of the system, which was the justification, the explanation for so much; even the gray. Indeed, the drabness was partly their doing, a matter not only of economics but of deliberate Puritanism ... now this neighbourhood is just what it is, bareness striped of significance.' [Eva Hoffman, *Exit into History*, (London: Minerva, 1993)].

which it collides. When the State appropriates the war machine, the latter obviously changes in nature and function, since it is afterward directed against the nomad and all State destroyers, or else expresses relations between States, to the extent that a State undertakes exclusively to destroy another State or impose its aims upon it. It is precisely after the war machine has been appropriated by the State in this way that it tends to take war for its direct and primary object). In short it is at one and the same time that the State apparatus appropriates a war machine, that the war machine takes war as its object, and that war becomes subordinated to the aims of the State. ¹⁴¹

Thus, the military or army is not the war machine but the form in which it is appropriated by the State. Furthermore, this explains what Deleuze and Guattari describe as the uneasy relationship between States and their military institutions. They also draw the connection between the military and capitalism, writing that:

The factors that make State war total war are closely connected to capitalism: it has to do with the investment of constant capital in equipment, industry, and the war economy, and the investment of variable capital in the population in its physical and mental aspects (both as warmaker and as victim of war).¹⁴²

As such I would argue the paranormal and *Psi* is initially a type of nomadic war machine, one that is a potential threat to the State but one which is appropriated by the military and which in the Farris' novel *The Fury* is both connected to the Oedipal paradigm of desire and capitalist production. Thus, the psychic abilities of the two main protagonists Gillian and Robin are captured, analysed and researched by the military for the productive use in espionage and total war.

The Cold War in the 1960s and 1970s continued to be marked by a mutual suspicion between America and Russia. The result of this mistrust was an intensification of operations by the intelligence services on both sides. The obscure field of parapsychology in espionage received a significant injection of funding as a result. The events which led to the explosion of interest in the possibilities of parapsychology for military intelligence was a series of inaccurate information leaks, the first, an article in a French newspaper in 1959 which reported a successful remote telepathic card guessing experiment between an American research institution in Maryland and one of its submarines, *The Nautilus*. The Soviets were shocked by America's lead and in response increased their efforts into the military applicability of psychic research.

¹⁴² ibid., p.464.

¹⁴¹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, p.461.

In a similar chain of events at a conference in Moscow in 1968 American scientists were deliberately confronted with film footage of Soviet successes in psychic research. As Elmer R. Gruber in his work *Psychic Wars* writes:

They were shown the exciting experiments in psychokinesis conducted by Nina Kulagina, and even permitted to 'smuggle' a copy of the film to the west. The Russian parapsychologist Eduard Naumov reported to the conference that the Red Army had successfully 'repeated' the Nautillus experiments. These and many even less verifiable – and therefore all the more spectacular stories were collected in a book by Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder, and the book, in turn, set off nervous reactions among Americans about the psi advances of the Soviets. ¹⁴³

Or, as W. Adam Mandelbaum in his book *The. Psychic. Battlefield.: Behind the Lines of Paranormal ESPionage* notes:

The intelligence services were concerned about a psychic gap between the United States and the Soviet Bloc. DIA reports warned of Russian dominance in the field, and books like *Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain* were telling tales of super psychics, psychotronic weapons, and other science-fiction-sounding wonders in the Warsaw Pact world.¹⁴⁴

Published in 1970, *Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain* carried reviews which fed the frenzy for information on the link between military intelligence and the use psychic abilities for espionage. Above the book's title ran a review from the Los Angeles times which stated 'The most important book about ESP research and the validity of the occult tradition yet to appear.' Inside the cover the sensationalist reviews continued with the following from *Psychic Magazine*:

This book may do for ESP what Sputnik did for space travel ... This book was born to cause controversy. Some chapters make science-fiction seem dull and unimaginative by comparison ... Fact, fancies and fantasies are all there, woven in a vivid style that will stimulate and intrigue every imagination. This is not only a fascinating book but a potential bombshell.¹⁴⁵

Or, the review from Publishers' Weekly, which stated:

p.21.
¹⁴⁴ W. Adam Mandelbaum, *The. Psychic. Battlefield.: Behind the Lines of Paranormal ESPionage*, Gordon Vision 2000), pp.126-127

¹⁴³ Elmer R. Gruber, *Psychic Wars: Parapsychology in Espionage – and beyond*, (London: Blanford, 1999), p.21.

¹⁴⁵ Psychic Magazine Review in Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain, eds., Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder, intro. By Ivan T. Sanderson (New York: Bantam Books, 1970).

An eye-opening, fascinating sometimes frightening and hard-to-believe book ... The Russians are actually investigating ESP and its use. The authors are utterly serious, so are the Russians.¹⁴⁶

In response the American intelligence agency the CIA founded the psi research programme at SRI (Stanford Research Institute) in 1972, a programme set up to investigate the possibilities of psi for military purposes and which was to last for twenty three years. The subject under study was not as to whether psi existed or not but rather as to how it could be used in intelligence operations to penetrate the Iron Curtain. The secrecy surrounding these experiments undoubtedly contributed to the overall mythologizing of military psychic spying. As W. Adam Mandelbaum notes of SRI:

The research at SRI was not the first time that the government spent money on psychic research to determine its utility as a military and espionage tool. It was, however the most sustained effort by the United States to incorporate psychic spying in its arsenal of intelligence collection techniques. The research was to continue, and other laboratories were to make their contributions in the field of remote-viewing research, but it all started in Menlo Park, California at SRI. 147

Thus, Farris' novel published at the height of experimentation in the field, exploits fears of communism, nuclear war and the dangers of using the human mind as a military weapon. The agency MORG an acronym for Multiphasic Operations Research Group and the Paragon Institute are fictional representations of the CIA and the psychic research programme undertaken at the Stanford Research Institute. Headed by a man named Childermass, Farris writes:

He conned large numbers of otherwise sensible men into believing that the CIA and FBI weren't enough. We needed MORG. And did we ever get it. [...] 'You didn't know Childermass was interested in psychic phenomena'. 'No. The Russians and Czechs had been diddling with it for years, reason enough for Childermass to sink a few million into Paragon Institute. Nothing much had come of his investments. But it was all there, just waiting, for Robin.' [...] Childermass found himself in the possession of a unique natural resource. The Russians don't have one. The Chinese don't have one. He wanted Robin locked up – the

¹⁴⁷ W. Adam Mandelbaum, *The. Psychic. Battlefield.: Behind the Lines of Paranormal ESPionage*, pp.126-132.

¹⁴⁶ Publishers' Weekly Review in Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain, eds., Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder, intro. By Ivan T. Sanderson.

euphemism is 'involuntary sequestration' – where his researchers could devote full time to him. 148

Childermass can also be read as a characterisation of the actual scientists who were employed to conduct the psychic research at SRI. The first person to head the research programme was a Dr. Harold Puthoff who had previously served in Naval Intelligence and as a civilian at the National Security Agency. Other notable characters are the psychic spies Ed Dames, Lyn Buchanan, David Morehouse, Joseph Mc Moneagle, General Stubblebine and Ingo Swann. Therefore, Robin and Gillian are further fictionalized characterisations of so-called 'psychic spies' employed by the U.S. military from the 1960s until the mid-1990s.

As unbelievable as the evidence on the use of psychic spies and the research conducted over the past thirty years by the U.S. government may be it is further evidenced in a new form of military strategy which employs postmodern theory. As Eyal Weizman an architect, writer and Director of Goldsmith's College Centre for Research Architecture writes on the subject of new forms of military operations, focusing primarily on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict:

By examining the military's own language, and the theoretical basis that they claim as essential for the development of new military tactics – a basis often sought in critical and postmodern theory, including the writings of Deleuze and Guattari, Bataille, and the Situationists, among others – this article will try to explore what is at stake in the uses of such theoretical 'tools' by military thinkers, especially since they are the very same tools through which forms of oppositional critique have themselves frequently been articulated.¹⁴⁹

Deleuze and Guattari also presciently postulate on the militancy of Oedipal disruptions and the use of schizoanalysis:

[...] what is invested by the libido throughout the disjoined elements of Oedipus – especially given the fact that these elements never form a mental structure that is autonomous and expressive – are these extrafamilial, subfamilial gaps and breaks (coupures), these forms of social production in conjunction with desiring-production. Schizonanalysis therefore does not hide the fact that it is a political social psychoanalysis, a militant analysis: not because it would go about generalizing Oedipus in culture, under the ridiculous conditions that have been he

_

¹⁴⁸ John Farris, *The Fury*, p.102.

¹⁴⁹ Eyal Weizman, 'The Art of War', Freize Magazine, Issue 99, May 2006,

[[]http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/the art of war/], date accessed: 28/10/2008.

norm until now. [...] the Dreyfus Affair and then World War I cut across families, introducing into them new breaks and new connections resulting in a modification of the heterosexual and homosexual libido (in the decomposed milieu of the Guermates, for example).¹⁵⁰

As they point out these 'extramilial, subfamilial gaps and breaks *(coupures)* are coexistent with the traditional Oedipal structure', they note that every family has 'an uncle from America; a brother who went bad; an aunt who took off with a military man; a cousin out of work, bankrupt, or a victim of the Crash; an anarchist grandfather; a grandmother in the hospital, crazy or senile.' Furthermore, they write: 'The family does not engender its own ruptures. Families are filled with gaps and transacted by breaks that are not familial: the Commune, the Dreyfus Affair, religion and atheism, the Spanish Civil War, the rise of fascism, Stalinism, the Vietnam war, May '68' – all these things form complexes of the unconscious, more effective than everlasting Oedipus.' 152

Schizoanalysis therefore does not hide the fact that it is a political, social and militant analysis. Although, Deleuze and Guattari do see schizoanalysis as demonstrating the existence of an unconscious libidinal investment of sociohistorical production distinct from conscious investments which coexist with it, certain events cut across families – creating new breaks, new connections and modifications. Though this is true, capitalist use of schizoanalysis again has its exterior limit, that is, the point where it must recode and augment its state apparatuses.

This is seen in contemporary military operatives and the appropriation of postmodern theory and philosophy for military purposes. This is evident in the Israeli-Palestine conflict. Exemplary is a quote from Naveh, a retired Brigadier General who directs the Operational Theory Research Institute founded in 1996 and which trains staff officers from the IDF and other militaries in 'operational theory' who states: 'We are like the Jesuit Order. We attempt to teach and train soldiers to think.' Again this echoes the intervention of the Catholic Church in *The Exorcist* and the fanatical tirades of Carrie White's mother in King's novel *Carrie*. Furthermore, it again draws a connection between military motivation and the fervor of the Christian crusader. This is echoed in the contemporary 'God fearing' rhetoric of George W. Bush and the more recent presidential

¹⁵⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Anti-Oedipus, p.108.

¹⁵¹ ibid., p.107.

¹⁵² ibid., p.107.

Eyal Weizman, telephone interview with Shimon Naveh, 14 October 2005 in Eyal Weizman, 'The Art of War', *Freize Magazine*, Issue 99, May 2006 in [http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/the_art_of_war/], date accessed: 28/10/2008.

campaign of Mc Cain and Palin, whereby, military, familial and religious discourse become inseparable and interchangeable. Eyal Weisman also notes the intensity of the use of postmodern theory in teaching at the Research Institute:

In a lecture Naveh showed a diagram resembling a 'square of opposition' that plots a set of logical relationships between certain propositions referring to military and guerrilla operations. Labelled with phrases such as 'Difference and Repetition – The Dialectics of Structuring and Structure', 'Formless Rival Entities', 'Fractal Manoeuvre', 'Velocity vs. Rhythms', 'The Wahabi War Machine', 'Postmodern Anarchists' and 'Nomadic Terrorists', they often reference the work of Deleuze and Guattari. War machines, according to the philosophers, are polymorphous; diffuse organizations characterized by their capacity for metamorphosis, made up of small groups that split up or merge with one another, depending on contingency and circumstances. (Deleuze and Guattari were aware that the state can willingly transform itself into a war machine. Similarly, in their discussion of 'smooth space' it is implied that this conception may lead to domination.)¹⁵⁴

Thus the 'Operational Research Institute' of the IDF is in effect another version of the Stanford Research Institute or Farris' MORG (institutions that appropriate the nomadic war machine in the form of the State military). It is also interesting to note that an investigative work into the subject of psychic spies by Jon Ronson, called Men who Stare at Goats (2004), has been adapted for the screen to be released in 2009 and starring George Clooney in the central role. What is also striking about the timing of the book's publication and the film's release is that they emerge not within a climate of capitalist fears of communism but instead within a new climate of post 9/11 paranoia. A cultural climate which is more notable for its fears of terrorism, jihad and Islam but also a climate of fear which again can be directly traced to a threat on capitalism. The iconic attack on September 11th 2001 was encapsulated by the fall of the twin towers of the World Trade Centre the epicenter of global capitalism. Thus, the restitution of Gillian to her family and a returned, now present and concerned father at the end of Farris' novel and DePalma's cinematic adaptation indicates a return to order, one that pivots on the connection between oedipal desire, capitalism and the appropriation of psychic ability as a military weapon of war. Although, the experiments at MORG fail this does not signify a failure as the experiments will continue with new subjects for analysis and appropriation (as suggested by Jon Ronson's publication on parapsychology and the military in 2004).

¹⁵⁴ ibid.

Overall, this chapter has attempted to extend the argument of the 'monstrous-feminine' beyond its usual parameters to include an analysis of the leaky female body in the 1970s according to a broader cultural landscape of schizophrenic anxiety which has as its ultimate goal the reinstatement of Oedipal desire serving to consolidate and reinforce capitalist economics. This leads me into my final chapter which will again examine the bleeding, menstruous body according to disruptions of Oedipal desire.

'Cartographies of Blood': Re-Mapping the Body in the Slasher and Rape-Revenge Film

In fact, there is nothing incomprehensible about the view point that sees menstrual blood as a physical representation of sexual violence. We ought, however, to go further: to inquire whether this process of symbolization does not respond to some half-suppressed desire to place the blame for all forms of violence on women. By means of this taboo a transfer of violence has been effected and a monopoly established that is clearly detrimental to the female sex. ¹

(René Girard, Violence and the Sacred)

A cultural history of rape demonstrates how rape affects issues of gender, race, class and nation in ways that Sarah Projansky describes as enabling the production and maintenance of social relations and hierarchies.² The female body, as this thesis has already demonstrated, continually undergoes varying types of territorializations and as Projansky succinctly notes:

Whether in the form of legal documents, literature, or folklore [...] the versatility and ubiquity of rape narratives, [illustrate] how they have, among other things, operated historically to define the masculine familial subject; to structure women's relationship to love, family and the law; to define property; to transform the structure of the novel; to justify and perpetuate U.S. colonialism; to define the nation; to produce masculine spectatorial pleasure predicated on illicit (violent) sexuality and culturally sanctioned racism; to perpetuate and justify slavery; to resist slavery; and to perpetuate racism. Operating in literature, law, the courts, social activism, family and plantation life, newspapers, paintings, and war, rape narratives help organize, understand, and even arguably produce the social world; they help structure social understandings of complex phenomena such as gender, race, class, and nation. Additionally, they help inscribe a way of looking, the condition of watching, and the attitudes and structures of feeling one might have about rape, women, and people of color.³

As Projansky points out, rape operates as a socio-historic, cultural, master narrative in discursive and structural practices. This ubiquitous presence of rape in Western culture is evidenced in Classical history and mythology, for example, from the rape of the Sabine women to Zeus' rape of his mother Rhea.⁴ It is also evident in oral folk tales and

¹ René Girard, Violence and the Sacred, (London: Continuum, 2005), p.37.

² Sarah Projansky, Watching Rape: Film and Television in Postfeminist Culture, p.3.

³ ibid., p.7.

⁴ The rape of the Sabine women, and the subsequent war and reconciliation leading to the integration of the Sabines into the community under the joint rule of Romulus and Titus are central elements to how the story of Rome was founded. (Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spaworth, eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*,

fairytales such as 'Little Red Riding Hood' where the threat of rape is central to the narrative. The earliest form of the novel also propagated the threat of rape as central to both the plot and the progression of the narrative, for example, Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, first published in 1740, and continues to do so in contemporary fiction, for example, *Disgrace* by J.M. Coetzee in 2003. Both actual and representative acts of rape and the threat of rape have consistently been used in the construction and control of female sexuality and identity.

Historically, the dominant masculine familial subject has been reinforced and maintained both by the Church and the State. According to the teaching of the Church it was, until recently, illegal for a wife to refuse sexual intercourse with her husband and until 1884 in Victorian England the state allowed that a wife could be jailed for refusing to have sexual relations with her husband. Furthermore, the legal age of consent also contributed to the rape of women. In the seventeenth century the age of female consent was six years of age (pre-pubescent) and had only risen to the age of twelve in the nineteenth century. Property and land acquisition also contributed to a Western culture of rape. As late as the fifteenth century any Englishman could kidnap and rape an heiress and then lay claim to the victim's inheritance. As Susan Brownmiller writes in her seminal work *Against Our Will*:

The earliest form of permanent, protective conjugal relationship, the accommodation called mating that we now know as marriage, appears to have been institutionalized by the male's forcible abduction and rape of the female.⁶

It was not until the late 1970s that rape was legally outlawed in marriage in the U.S. However, as Larry R. Peterson writes, 'In 1978, New York became the first state to outlaw rape in marriage. By 1990, only a total of ten states outlawed rape in marriage. In thirty-six states rape in marriage was a crime only in certain circumstances. In four states, rape in marriage was never a crime.' Or, as Linda Regan and Liz Kelly document, 'it

⁽Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.1342. Hellenic myth assimilated Rhea as both mother and wife of the Great God Zeus. Zeus 'raped' his mother Rhea because she forbade him to make a monogamous marriage (her own people practiced group marriage). See also: Barbara G. Walker *The Woman's Encyclopaedia of Myths and Secrets*, p.832.

⁵ Barbara G. Walker, The Woman's Encyclopaedia of Myths and Secrets, p.834.

⁶ Susan Brownmiller, *Against our Will: Men, Women and Rape*, ((Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1986), p.17.

⁷ Larry R. Peterson, *The History of Marriage as an Institution*, (1997), 'Partners Task Force for Gay and Lesbian Couples', [http://www.buddybuddy.com/peters-1.html], date accessed: 03/08/2009.

was not until the 1980s and 1990s that legal reform in Europe widened the definition of rape in various ways and removed discriminatory aspects, such as the exclusion of rape in marriage, and evidential requirements that distinguished rape from all other criminal offences.'8 Thus, it is only over the past twenty-five years or so that rape has been legally accounted for within marital relationships.

Rape has also been pivotal in relation to issues of class and racial identity and used in the construction of the 'nation' and in the promotion of colonial expansionist policies. According to late nineteenth-century degeneracy theories, sexual depravity was aligned with the lower classes and also with the 'primitive' native. Such myth-making has caused innumerable social problems, for example, the persecution of the 'black' man as rapist and the 'black' woman as exotic, erotic and highly sexualized and therefore both wanting and incapable of being raped. Richard Dyer discusses rape in relation to white race fiction in his critical work *White*. Linking both white male ownership and possession to myth-making practices, Dyer states that:

The form that rapes takes in these fictions, of white women by non-white men, not only displaces attention from the routinised misuse of non-white women by white men. It also threatens white men's control over their property in two senses: their women as their chattels, and their control over their wives as the mean of ensuring their other possessions are passed on to those who should properly inherit them their (sons or if need be daughters, whom they can be sure are their own offspring). ¹⁰

Also implicated in such discourses of inter-racial rape are fears of miscegenation; the pollution and contamination of Western white identity 'as bestiality storming the citadel of civilization.' Rape, it would thus appear, underpins Western culture, it is one of the fundamental pivots upon which we construct, control and maintain hegemonic gendered, racial and social positions.

Likewise, the gothic horror genre since its inception in the mid-eighteenth century has similarly used rape as a narrative device. From Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* and the gothic romances of Anne Radcliffe to Stoker's *Dracula*, the hapless virgin chased through dark and labyrinthine corridors by an older, sexually deprayed man has been a

-

⁸ Linda Regan and Liz Kelly, *Rape: Still a forgotten issue. Briefing Document For Strengthening the Linkages – Consolidating the European Network, Rape Crisis Network Europe*, p.9. [http://www.rcne.com/downloads/RepsPubs/Attritn.pdf], date accessed: 03/08/2008.

See Sarah Projansky, Watching Rape: Film and Television in Postfeminist Culture, p.6.

¹⁰ Richard Dyer, White, (London: Routledge, 1997), p.26.

¹¹ Richard Dyer, White, p.26.

stock plot element. Similarly, gothic horror cinema has continued to perpetuate this cultural master-narrative of woman as potential rape victim. Nowhere is this more evident than in the second half of the twentieth century and in the sub-genres of the slasher and the rape-revenge film, whereby, the entire plot is focused on the penetration and rape of the central female character(s). However, rape is not unique to horror cinema. As Sarah Projansky notes:

Quite probably not a year has gone by since the beginning of cinema when any number of films have not represented, implied, or alluded to rape, attempted rape, or other forms of sexual violence. I would argue, in fact, that rape is a key force throughout the history of U.S. cinema and that one cannot fully understand cinema itself without addressing rape and its representation.¹²

She further notes that although the representation of rape is ubiquitous throughout the history of cinema, shifts have occurred in terms of its frequency and its modes of representation. In early cinema rape was both explicitly alluded to and represented, however, the Hollywood Production Code of the late 1920s meant that representations of rape became covert occurring either off-screen or else in codified form. She also states that:

[...] after federal antitrust actions against the film industry and the 1952 U.S. Supreme Court decision that films were to be considered under rules of free speech, the Production Code gave way to a new form of self-regulation: a ratings system, a descendant of which is used today. Concomitantly, the number of films depicting explicit rape or attempted rape increased. For example Aljean Hametz (1973) examines nearly twenty films from the late 1960s and early 1970s that include rape, calling rape 'the new Hollywood game'. ¹³

Rape as 'the new Hollywood game' coincides with the emergence of the so-called 'New Hollywood'. This New Hollywood was one of unprecedented on-screen violence. As Stephen Jay Schneider writes:

Variety's page-one banner headline in its inaugural 1968 issue referred to 1967 as a 'Year of Violence,' and that trend quite obviously intensified over the ensuing year. This surge in movie violence was one clear indication that Hollywood was entering a period of unprecedented innovation, experimentation, and

¹³ ibid., p.28.

236

¹² Sarah Projansky, Watching Rape: Film and Television in Postfeminist Culture, p.26.

accomplishment – a period that has been variously described as the American New Wave, the Hollywood Renaissance, the New American Cinema and inevitably, the New Hollywood. More so, perhaps, than at any time in its history, Hollywood was attuned to the larger social and cultural climate, as well as to the changing values and sensibilities of its core audience, as the 'youth culture' shifted from a subculture to a genuine counterculture. Movies were distinctly in sync with the violence and turmoil of the era, and in fact Hollywood in the late 1960s was exceptionally attuned to the larger cultural climate. Americans in their teens and twenties during this period were at the forefront of a range of social movements – civil rights, antiwar, feminist, environmentalist, etc. - that ushered in a period of massive cultural transformation; nowhere on the US cultural landscape was that transformation more evident than on movie screens. 14

Also contributing to the changes occurring in cinema production was the radical revision of the Production code in 1965 alongside the dismantling of the PCA which left Hollywood without a self-censorship mechanism until the introduction of the MPAA rating system in 1968. Concurrent with this unprecedented on-screen violence is the emergence of independent Horror film-makers in the 1960s. One of the most influential and defining moments in the history of horror cinema was the release of Alfred Hitchcock's Psycho in 1960. Psycho was a crucial cinematic moment for both the horror genre and on-screen violence in general due largely to its innovative experimentation and its confrontational approach to the themes of sex and violence. I will examine Psycho in more detail later, but what is striking is the horror genre's new boldness in its depiction of gore, blood and sexual violence following the release of Psycho. If not 1967 as Schneider notes, indeed 1968 could be seen as another fundamental turning point for horror cinema. This was the year that The Devil Rides Out, Witchfinder General and Rosemary's Baby were released but even more crucially it was the year that Romero released the first of his zombie series – Night of the Living Dead. The shifts and innovations of the period in terms of violence and sexual content both in mainstream fare and in horror also coincided with the evolution of the sub-genre of rape-revenge.

Furthermore, second wave feminism could also be argued as a contributing factor to the increasing on-screen representation of rape. 'Rape' was a central concern of second wave feminism, with radical feminists from Andrea Dworkin to Catherine MacKinnon fighting for rape to be recognized as a criminal act and highlighting the extent to which women lived in constant fear from the threat of rape. As MacKinnon argues:

¹⁴ Stephen Jay Schneider, New Hollywood Violence, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp.5-6.

If sexuality is central to women's definition and forced sex is central to sexuality, rape is indigenous, not exceptional to women's condition. In feminist analysis, a rape is not an isolated event or moral transgression or individual interchange gone wrong but an act of terrorism and torture within a systemic context of group subjection, like lynching. ¹⁵

Furthermore, students across the U.S. were promoting a 'Take Back the Night' campaign in response to the number of women raped and attacked on college campuses. It could therefore be argued, that it was a combination of factors, from social changes in relation to sexual permissiveness and second wave feminism to the relaxation of cinema censorship laws that contributed to, and enabled, more graphic representations of rape (not that it wasn't a ubiquitous and a constant presence already).

However, to return to horror cinema, which was arguably the most extreme in its depiction of on-screen rape, I wish to specifically examine the genre of 'rape-revenge'. Rape-revenge films, 'the conventions of which are still considered somewhat fluid', 16 could be argued to have begun with Ingmar Bergman's *The Virgin Spring* (1960) in which a young girl is brutally raped and killed and subsequently avenged by her father. As the critic James R. Alexander writes:

While these basic conventional elements undergo various permutations in later films – How innocent and young is the girl portrayed? Has she been rendered vulnerable by fate or by actions of others? Is her vulnerability a natural or contrived circumstance? Has she been raped and killed or just raped ('violated')? Is she avenged by her father, her friend or by society acting in concert? – the conventional message is set: the savaging of an innocent begets equally savage retribution against the attackers. ¹⁷

He also observes that the

[c]onventional message of rape-revenge films is portrayed on two levels: the individual level focusing on the violation of the purity of an innocent and its impact on individual lives, and the more cosmic level in which the moral balance to the universe is tipped by a random act of sexual violence and demands restoration. The nature of the retribution sought, and thereby the ascriptive

¹⁵ Catherine MacKinnon, 'Rape: On Coercion and Consent', in Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina and Sarah Stanbury, eds., *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1997), p.42.

¹⁶ James R. Alexander, 'The Maturity of a Film Genre in an Era of Relaxing Standards of Obscenity: Takashi Ishii's *Freeze Me* as a Rape Revenge Film', *Senses of Cinema*, issue 36, July-Sept, 2005. [http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/05/36/freeze_me.html], date accessed: 27/07/2006. ¹⁷ ibid.

message of the film, is governed wholly by the nature (and the visceral portrayal) of the violation. 18

The rape-revenge film proliferated in the 1970s and early 1980s. Examples of films which fall into this category include Wes Craven's *Last House on the Left* (1972), (loosely based on Bergman's *The Virgin Spring*), Meir Zarchi's *I Spit on Your Grave* (1978), Charles Kaufman's *Mother's Day* (1980), and Ruggero Deodata's *House on the Edge of the Park* (1980), Abel Ferrara's *Ms. 45* (1981), and more recently, Todd Morris' and Jennifer Twiss' *A Gun for Jennifer* (1996) and Virginie Despentes' and Coralie Trinh Thi's highly controversial French film *Baise-Moi* (2000).

Another version of the rape-revenge genre is the 'slasher'. In the slasher genre rape is codified and the penis is replaced by knives, hammers, axes, ice picks, pitchforks, chainsaws, hooks and so forth. These weapons, as Carol J. Clover has argued, act as extensions of the killer's body, dangerous phallic appendices with which to penetrate and murder the victim. As Darryl Jones notes the slasher movie flourished approximately between 1978 and 1984, and was revived for a new audience in the late 1990s 'as the teenage consumers of the first wave of slashers became cultural producers bent on revisiting their own adolescence.' Early examples and antecedents of the genre as we now define and recognize it are Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) and the Italian *giallo* thrillers of Mario Bava and Dario Argento. However, Jones, along with most critics of the genre, agrees that the history of the slasher movie really dates from the release of John Carpenter's 1978 film *Halloween*. This was followed by films such as *Friday 13th* (1980), *Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), and more recently, *Scream* (1996), *I Know What You Did Last Summer* (1997), and *Urban Legend* (1998).

Jacinda Read in her work *The New Avengers: Feminism, Femininity and the Rape-Revenge Cycle* also draws a cinematic connection between the history of the literary and screen vampire/vamp/femme fatale and the female avenger of rape-revenge narratives. She writes:

The similarities between the erotic female avenger and the femme fatale suggest, moreover, that, while the origins of the rape-revenge structure do lie in the horror genre, they go back much further than the relatively recent slasher sub-genre. [...]

-

¹⁸ ibid.

¹⁹ Darryl Jones, *Horror: A Thematic History*, p.114.

the femme fatale emerged as a key representational figure in the nineteenth-century and the inspiration for these representations can be traced largely to the vampire narratives that had circulated widely since the publication of John Polidori's *The Vampyre* in 1819. Indeed [...] the similarities between the raperevenge film and the vampire story extend beyond the level of representation to the level of narrative structure and ideology.²⁰

Read further makes the point:

Given these similarities and the prominence of the female or lesbian vampire at key moments in the history of feminism (the 1890s and the 1970s), it is possible to argue that the female/lesbian vampire like the female avenger of rape-revenge, represents one of the key female figures through which British and US culture has attempted to make sense of emergent feminism. Indeed, the recent surge of feminist interest in 'vampy' figures such as the contemporary femme fatale suggests that such figures might also be a key site through which the current feminist movement can be understood.²¹

I concur with Read's assessment of feminism and its influence on representations of femininity. In the horror genre the most extreme representations of woman as monstrous have tended to coincide with seismic social shifts in relation to gender and female sexuality. However, it is also important to note that in examining the slasher and rape-revenge genres in this chapter, I am specifically looking at the 'representation' of rape as opposed to 'real' incidents of the physical act. Thus, representation will also extend in this chapter to include displaced acts of rape, such as the use of phallic weapons in the slasher genre, as I mentioned earlier, which functions as a type of codified rape. However, neither real nor representative or displaced rape, are mutually exclusive, or as Sarah Projansky writes on the subject:

I do not mean to suggest that encountering discourses of rape is equivalent to experiencing the physical act of rape. [...] Nevertheless, as AIDS discourse is to AIDS and cancer discourse is to cancer (Sontag 1990), rape discourse is part of the fabric of what rape is in contemporary culture.²²

She also writes:

²⁰ Jacinda Read, *The New Avengers: Feminism, Femininity and the Rape-Revenge Cycle*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p.182.

²² Sarah Projansky, Watching Rape: Film and Television in Postfeminist Culture, p.2.

Discourses of rape are both productive and determinative. They are not simply narratives marketed for consumption in an entertainment context or 'talk' about real things. They are themselves functional, generative, formative, strategic, performative, and real. Like physical actions, rape discourses have the capacity to inform, indeed embody and make way for, future actions, even physical ones. They are not simply metaphors for how people behave; [...] they are 'structures of feeling' for how people act in social contexts. The pervasiveness of representations of rape naturalizes rape's place in our everyday world, not only as real physical events but also as part of our fantasies, fears, desire, and consumptive practices. Representations of rape form a complex of cultural discourses central to the very structure of stories people tell about themselves and others.²³

The great majority of representations of rape in literature and film are of women. In turn, this directly influences how we read rape as a gendered sign/signifier in both real and representative terms.

Second Wave feminism is notable for its necessary and important work in highlighting rape as an act of sexual violence against women; however it also served to reinforce the notion of 'rape' as something that specifically happens to 'women' (victimization). For example Susan Brownmiller, writes in her seminal work Against Our Will:

[...] when a group of my women friends discussed rape one evening in the fall of 1970, I fairly shrieked in dismay. I knew what rape was, and what it wasn't. Rape was a sex crime, a product of a diseased and deranged mind. Rape wasn't a feminist issue, rape was ... well, what was it? At any rate, I certainly knew something about rape victims. Victims of rape were ... well, what were they? Who were they? I learned that evening and on many other evenings and long afternoons, that victims of rape could be women I knew -women who, when their turn came to speak, quietly articulated their own experiences.²⁴

Second Wave Feminism, along with the work of Michel Foucault, also argued that legal approaches to rape should redefine it as an act of violence and not of sexuality. Foucault's comments on rape were made in 1977, in a discussion concerning his work Discipline and Punish (1979), to a French commission concerned with the reform of the penal code. In an interview relating to penal reform Foucault asserted the following arguments in relation to rape:

²³ ibid., pp.2-3.

²⁴ Susan Brownmiller, Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape, p.8.

I've another problem now – one concerned with the same arc – that I'd like to talk to you about. My question is this. In France today there's a Commission for the reform of penal law. [...] I think one can say in principle that, in no circumstances, should sexuality be subject to any kind of legislation whatever. O.K. But there are two areas that for me present a problem. One is rape and the other is children. What should be said about rape? [...] One can always produce the theoretical discourse that amounts to saying: in any case, sexuality can in no circumstances be the object of punishment. And when one punishes rape one should be punishing physical violence and nothing but that. And to say that it is nothing more that an act of aggression: that there is no difference in principle, between sticking one's fist into one's face or one's penis into their sex ... But to start with, I'm not sure that women would agree with this. [...] It isn't a matter of sexuality, it's the physical violence that would be punished, without bringing in the fact that sexuality was involved. I apologize for insisting on this.²⁵

In relation to Foucault's comments, Ann J. Cahill writes:

At first glance it would appear that Foucault's suggestion was remarkably in keeping with the current feminist wisdom, which sought to define rape solely as a violent crime. It is perhaps surprising then, that both the women who were present at the discussion and subsequent feminist thinkers responded vehemently, and negatively, to his position. The similarities between Foucault's suggestion, namely that rape be redefined merely as another type of assault without any sexual specificity, and Susan Brownmiller's call for a 'gender-free, non-activity-specific' law are striking. Yet the differences between the philosophical motivations compelling the proposals are significant. Whereas feminist thinkers such as Brownmiller were seeking to purge rape of its sexual content in order to render moot the legal question of victim (i.e. female) culpability, Foucault viewed the desexualization of rape as a liberating blow against the disciplining discourse which constructed sexuality as a means of social and political power. ²⁶

However, Foucault's position is not entirely antithetical or divorced from the sexualized body. In fact in his first volume of *The History of Sexuality* he explores the over-sexualization of certain body parts to the neglect of others, a point which he had also argued in his comments on his work for the commission for penal law in France, whereby he states:

[...] sexuality as such, in the body, has a preponderant place, the sexual organ isn't like a hand, hair, or a nose. It therefore has to be protected, surrounded, invested in any case with legislation that isn't pertaining to the rest of the body.²⁷

²⁵ Michel Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977-1984*, Lawrence D. Kritzman ed., (London: Routledge, 1988), pp.200-202.

²⁶ Ann J. Cahill, 'Foucault Rape and the Construction of the Feminine Body', *Hypatia*, volume15, issue 1, Winter 2000, pp.42-64.

²⁷ Michel Foucault, in Lawrence D. Kritzman ed., *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977-1984*, p.201.

However, for Foucault this investment of certain body parts with a 'sexualized' privilege is a constructed materiality of the body. The body for Foucault is a site upon which diffuse discourses produce and enact power relations. As Cahill writes:

Refusing the traditional description of power as primarily repressive and imposed solely from a position of authority, Foucault claims instead that power actually produces social bodies and realities and does not emanate from a central source, but rather is diffused throughout the social structure. ²⁸

Contemporary critical discourses on rape, particularly in post-feminist theory, have developed and expanded upon Foucault's work to include a more expansive politics of power which extends beyond gender binaries and essentialisms but without denying or desexualizing the act.

Thus, in this chapter my main concern will be to map the female body, its rape, and the revenge it exacts according to a broader socio-cultural topography of power relations. However, in order to do this it is necessary to establish the link between the bleeding female body and sexual violence. Therefore, I will firstly examine psychoanalytical theory from Freud to Lacan in relation to desire and castration. I will also draw on the psychoanalytic work of C.D. Daly and his largely ignored and overlooked essay on 'The Menstruation Complex in Literature' (1935) to emphasize the pivotal role of the female genitals and menstrual blood in relation to sexual desire and violence. In part two of this chapter, I will focus on René Girard's work on violence, blood and society in relation to the social fabric of America in the 1970s. I will conclude this chapter with an analysis of Virgine Despentes' and Coralie Trinh Thi's film Baise-Moi (2000). In this final section I will examine the problematics of rape-revenge in a post-modern, late-capitalist context, engaging with Deleuze and Guattari's work on minor identities, micropolitics, resistance and the concept of the Body without Organs, while also drawing on Rosi Braidotti's work on postmodern materialism and nomadic ethics. What I hope to establish and argue overall in this chapter is that both the act of rape and the act of retribution in rape-revenge narratives are processes of either, reinforcing and re-establishing dominant-subject positions, or else act as revolts against and/or subversions of majoritarian discourses.

²⁸ ibid.

'The Menstrual Complex': Dead(ly) Mothers and Incestuous Desire

When the psychoanalytical inhibitions in relation to the theory of the menstruation complex are overcome, it will be discovered everywhere in literature, art, mythology, etc., by those who are willing and able to see.²⁹

(C.D. Daly, 'The Menstruation Complex in Literature)

Psychoanalysis has for the most part ignored the significance of menstruation in relation to subjectivity and sexual development. Freud in his earliest works attempted albeit in a circumlocutory manner, to address the issue of menstrual blood and its significance to sexual differentiation. In the case study of Emma Eckstein and her vicarious bleeding (particularly nose bleeds) he drew attention to its menstrual context. However, by the late 1890s Freud had more or less ceased his work on menstruation in order to focus on the Oedipus complex. From this point on menstruation is rarely mentioned in his work and it is not until the 1920s and 1930s that challenges to Freud's theories on female sexuality begin to emerge from psychoanalysts such as Melanie Klein, Karen Horney, Claude Dagmar Daly and Otto Rank. As the critic Mary Jane Lupton states:

According to these theorists, menstruation achieves visibility not only during puberty but far earlier, in childhood perceptions of the mother. To examine how it functions within psychoanalytic theory requires that menstruation be examined within and against the Freudian view of female sexuality, where concepts such as penis envy, castration anxiety, passivity, hysteria, and female masochism have served to define menstrual difference. ³⁰

However, although these critics argued for a more rigorous analysis of female sexuality in relation to menstrual bleeding the dominant psychoanalytical trend instead moved its focus from the Oedipus complex to the Castration complex. According to Juliette Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose:

During the first phase of Freud's work we can see the idea of the castration complex gradually gain momentum. It was discussed in 'On the Sexual Theories of Children' (1908), crucially important in the analysis of Little Hans (1909), yet

²⁹ C.D. Daly, 'The Menstrual Complex in Literature, *Psychoanalytical Quarterly*, volume 5, 1935, p.307.

³⁰ Mary Jane Lupton, *Menstruation and Psychoanalysis*, (Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1993), p.5.

when he wrote 'On Narcissism: An Introduction' in 1914 Freud was still uncertain as to whether or not it was a universal occurrence. But in 1915 it starts to assume a larger and larger part. By 1924, in the paper on 'The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex' the castration complex has emerged as a central concept. In his autobiography of 1925, Freud wrote: 'the castration complex is of the profoundest importance in the formation alike of character and of neurosis' (Freud, xx, 1925, p.37). He made it the focal point of the acquisition of culture; it operates as a law whereby men and women assume their humanity and, inextricably bound up with this, it gives the human meaning of the distinction between the sexes. ³¹

In Freud's castration theory the young boy and girl initially share the same sexual history which he terms masculine. The first object of desire for both is the mother. This he termed the phallic phase. This is forbidden and so occurs the castration complex. Rose and Mitchell describe the function of the castration complex as follows:

In Freud's eventual schema, the little boy and the little girl initially share the same sexual history which he terms 'masculine'. They start by desiring their first object: the mother. In fantasy this means having the phallus which is the object of the mother's desire (the phallic phase). This position is forbidden (the castration complex) and the differentiation of the sexes occurs. The castration complex ends the boy's Oedipus complex (his love for his mother) and inaugurates for the girl the one that is specifically hers: she will transfer her object love to her father who seems to have the phallus and identify with her mother who, to the girl's fury, has not. Henceforth the girl will desire to have the phallus and the boy will struggle to represent it. For this reason, for both sexes, this is the insoluble desire of their lives and for, Freud, because its entire point is precisely to be insoluble, it is the bedrock beneath which psychoanalysis cannot reach. Psychoanalysis cannot have the human subject that which is its fate, as the condition of its subjecthood, to do without.³²

Before Freud's concept of the castration complex it was assumed that the Oedipus complex was a developmental phase that passed naturally. His theory on the castration complex changed this assumption and as Mitchell and Rose point out:

Once the castration complex is postulated it is this alone that shatters the Oedipus complex. The castration complex institutes the superego as its representative and as representative thereby of the law. Together with the organizing role of the Oedipus complex in relation to desire, the castration complex governs the position of each person in the triangle of father, mother and child; in the way it does this, it embodies the law that founds the human order itself. Thus, the question of

³² ibid., p.14.

³¹ Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, eds., *Feminine Sexuality*, *Jacques Lacan and the École Freudienne*, (London, Macmillan, 1982), p.13.

castration, of sexual difference as the product of a division, and the concept of an historical and symbolic order, all begin, tentatively, to come together.³³

Freud heavily influenced the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan whose work on desire and lack draws on the interdependence of the Oedipus and Castration complexes. He directly confronts and explores the connection between the two in his essay 'The Signification of the Phallus' (1958). In this essay Lacan poses a number of questions, from why did Freud need the concept of castration at all to an exploration of female castration and male castration anxieties. Lacan's originality is found in the connections he makes between desire and language. He termed that which is missing the 'objet petit a' a lost object that the subject never had and which is unattainable. However, as well as this 'universal' castration there is also according to Lacan, a more specific castration that involves the development of sexual subjectivity and sexual differentiation. This he described as the symbolic castration of the mother 'as not all (not all there is for the child, not a total body form, not entirely focused on the child without other relationships).³⁴

Both Freud and Lacan's theorizing of woman as 'lacking' has impacted enormously on horror's depiction of female monstrosity. However, the critical analysis of castration in horror to date has been limited. As Barbara Creed in her work on the monstrous-feminine has noted:

Significantly, the horror film does not attempt to construct male and female in a totally different relation to castration – both are represented (man literally/woman symbolically) as castrated and as agents of castration. However, this factor is not usually recognized in critical writings on horror; it is the male who is almost always described as the monster and the agent of castration, woman as his victim.35

Nonetheless, both woman as victim and woman as the agent of castration are both negative constructions of the female. I will examine this tension between victim and agent in more detail later. However, in this section I will primarily focus on the overlooked aspects of menstrual bleeding and sexuality by employing the largely unrecognized possibilities of the work of C.D. Daly and his theory on the menstruation complex for reading the female body and violence in horror texts.

³³ibid., p.15.

³⁴ Vincent B. Leitch, et al. eds., 'Jacques Lacan', Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism, (London: Norton, 2001), p.1283.

³⁵ Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, p152.

Daly examines the menstruation complex through an analysis of a number of Edgar Allan Poe's short stories, primarily focusing on 'The Black Cat'. In this section I will extend Daly's reading of 'The Black Cat' to examine the significance of the 'bleeding eye' in relation to the menstrual complex and its recurrence in both the slasher and raperevenge genre. I will argue that eye-gouging, more than merely signifying male castration anxieties, as argued by Freud, relates to menstruation and incestuous desire. The bleeding eye as a menstrual signifier also impacts on readings of the phallic mother. Rather than adorning the mother with a penis, the male figure or son in numerous slasher/raperevenge films compensates for his own impotency, in relation to satisfying his sexual desire for the mother by instead giving himself a prosthetic, violent, penetrating penile extension e.g. a knife, chainsaw or indeed any other penetrating weapon. What emerges in my analysis of slasher and indeed rape-revenge narratives is a bizarre restitution of incestuous desire for the mother and the incestuous family unit.

Daly's first significant work on menstruation was 'Hindu-Mythologie und Kastrationskomplex', published in the leading psychoanalytical journal *Imago* in 1927. As a theory, however, it is most fully realised in his essay 'The Menstruation Complex in Literature' published in 1935. His theory argued that the menstruation complex preceded the Oedipus complex and was an attempt to theorize the mother. Lupton writes:

Daly then seems to use the term *menstruation complex* to theorize the mother in a number of ways: phallic, preoedipal, castrated/castrating, the mother/other. His mother is primal but also aggressive, an object of hatred and retaliation, a negative construct finally fixed, despite efforts to feminize her, within Freud's oedipal structure as an object of her son's ambivalent desire. Enticing, pleasurable, the source of pride, the menstruating mother, as a consequence of her desirability, must ultimately assume the role of Repressor and Castrator.³⁶

Daly's theory of the menstrual complex diverges from Freud and Lacan in its reading of the mother as the ultimate repressor and castrator as opposed to the father. Creed makes a similar argument in her work on castration in *The Monstrous Feminine*, a point I will return to later. It is also important to point out that throughout Daly's essay on 'The Menstruation Complex in Literature' menstruating women are peripheral and his main focus rests on the male writer/poet or the male protagonist of the text. As Lupton writes, 'The bleeding mother is identified less in her own terms than in terms of the incest barrier

³⁶ Mary Jane Lupton, Menstruation and Psychoanalysis, p.111.

she erects against the son, the reminder of his castration and death.'³⁷ This is an interpretation that I would wish to avoid in my own analysis of the slasher and raperevenge genres, however, given that it is in fact male frustrated desire which resides at the core of the sexual violence in these texts, the emphasis will focus on the incest barrier erected against the son. Indeed the female body in horror generally tends to function as a repository for male anxieties and frustrations.

In this section I will argue that sons overwhelmed by the psychological presence of their dead mothers exemplify Daly's menstrual complex. Daly writes:

A great deal has been written in regard to the son's sense of guilt in relation to the parricidal and incestuous wishes prompted by his positive Oedipus complex, whilst comparatively little has been written concerning the matricidal tendencies and guilt towards the mother, or the fear of retaliation by her. The place played by the projected mother in the super-ego is also less clearly defined than that of the father. ³⁸

He first demonstrates that vaginal bleeding of the mother is the nucleus of the incest barrier. Examining Baudelaire's poem *Duellum*, he writes:

The woman is transformed into a man with a sword (= penis), and the battle represented is that between the mother and the son who, exasperated by love, rolls into a ravine (= vagina) which infested with lynxes and ounces (= father). [...] The last verse shows the hate of the son for the mother who has spurned his passions at the height of the primary genital phase [...] These poems bring out clearly the struggle of the son with his passionate desire for the mother, and show that the first passionate attachment is not easily given up. Even when evidence of the mother's bloody vagina confirms his castration and death fears, the son's infantile libido before undergoing repression struggles to maintain its object. Unable to contemplate her bloody aspect, he denies it and adorns her with a penis in order that he may retain her as a libidinal object. ³⁹

Attachment to the mother is usually repressed if the menstrual complex is successful but if desire for the mother fails to remain suppressed it often results in the manifestation of extreme violence towards other women. His most comprehensive analysis of the menstrual complex is seen in his reading of Poe's short story 'The Black Cat'. Poe's story tells the tale of a husband who has a fondness for domesticated pets and

³⁸ C.D. Daly, 'The Menstrual Complex in Literature, *Psychoanalytical Quarterly*, volume 5, 1935, pp.307-308.

3

³⁷ ibid., p.114.

³⁹ ibid., p.309.

his most cherished is a black cat. However, over time the husband becomes an ill-tempered alcoholic and his relationships both with his wife and with the cat begin to disintegrate. This culminates in a fit of rage, wherein he takes a pen-knife and gouges out the eye of the cat. Eventually, unable to deal with the mutilated cat's presence, which acts as a constant reminder of his actions, he puts a noose around its neck and hangs it from a tree. The husband next acquires a second cat, also black and missing one eye, differentiated only by a distinctive white patch on its breast. This second cat becomes a surrogate for the first and soon the husband begins to develop an aversion towards it too. His hatred for the second cat once again reaches a violent climax. In an attempt to kill the second cat with an axe he is interrupted by his wife, thus, throwing him into demoniacal rage, wherein he murders her instead. The second black cat disappears and he walls up his wife in the cellar. The denouement of Poe's story sees the arrival of the police who discover his dead wife's body due to the wails and howls of the second cat whom he accidentally walled up along with the corpse of his wife.

Daly first reads the husband's descent into gloom and alcoholism as symptomatic of a failure of the incest barrier. He writes:

The sadness and gloom which overtake such persons arises because deep in their souls they have been unable to give up their incestuous longings, and at the same time have been unable to satisfy their feelings of revenge. Death wishes emerge, first felt against the father who comes between them and their love object, and later concentrated towards the imago of all love, their mother, who inhibits their love at the height of their infantile genitality – thus bringing about that phase of ontogenetic repression which corresponds to the origin of the menstruation taboo in phylogenesis. ⁴⁰

In Poe's story the husband's wife, Daly argues, gradually comes to take the place of his mother and as a result the incest barrier rises between them. ⁴¹ Daly explains that the son's first figure of hatred is his father, who he sees as a rival for his mother's attention. This hatred is then transferred to the mother. However, when the menstrual complex fails, the incestuous split or fissure that should be fully realized isn't. In 'The Black Cat' hatred of the father is initially displaced on to the cat who comes to symbolise for him his wife. Until eventually the cat embodies his incestuous desires for his mother. At this point his repressed and inhibited sexuality violently explode. Daly explains:

⁴¹ ibid., p.313.

⁴⁰ ibid., p.313.

[...] until one night he takes out his knife (= penis) and gouges out one of its eyes (= castrates it). The one eyed bleeding animal flees from him henceforth and his hatred of it grows – which means that his hatred towards his wife grows with the increase of his sexual inhibitions caused by her menstruation, resuscitating his repressed primary Oedipus complex. In childhood he had turned in horror from his bleeding mother. 42

He continues:

To understand this we can refer to Freud's case of the Wolfman, which shows that the son believed the father to have caused the mother's vaginal bleeding by having stuck his penis (= knife) into her. This supposed cruel act of the father furnishes an example to be copied by the child, when his mother's frustration of his amorous advances, combined with her evidence of castration and death, turns his aggressive passivity into sadism – the extent of the sadistic hate being conditioned by: (1) the strength of his libido; (2) the extent of the inhibiting effects of the trauma; (3) the emotional nature of the mother; (4) oral and anal predispositions.

At this stage in Poe's story the cat is continuously referred to as a 'he'. Daly makes the point that at this stage in the narrative the cat embodies both parents and how

castration and death were first feared from the father, against whom similar wishes were first directed. He is thus in fancy copying his father's assault on his mother, now adorned with a penis, and at the same time satisfying his repressed castration wish against the father in the revenge he takes on the mother surrogate, on to whom all the previous hatred of his father has been displaced. The black tom-cat symbolizes his mother with a penis and his father as well. [...] In slaying the cat he had castrated, he was symbolically committing incest and vicariously repeating the primal crime of parricide. ⁴⁴

Daly also observes that the second cat is referred to as 'it', exemplifying the sudden transference of hate of the cat on to the surrogate mother figure of the wife. In the second half of the story Daly shows how this hatred of the father is clearly displaced onto the wife. The father = black cat = wife = mother as a result of what Daly reads as the reactions called forth by the bleeding eye = menstruating vagina = death. The husband of Poe's story goes out and makes friends with a cat resembling the one he has just slain.

-

⁴² ibid., p.314.

⁴³ ibid., p.314.

⁴⁴ ibid., p.314.

The next day he discovers that the cat is blind in one eye. Thus, the second cat is symbolically castrated and Daly surmises:

The cat was not a normal male cat with a penis but a castrated cat, that is to say, a female and not a male, which further symbolizes an accusing cat. For with the evidence for her castration (= her vagina), she reminds the son (= the husband) that he had had guilty wishes of castration and death towards his father, and incest with his mother (and later death wishes against the mother), because her supposed castration (that is, her vagina) is a continual reminder of his own evil wishes, which prevent reconciliation with his father. Yet his sadistic act in slaying the displaced father in the mother also includes his repressed incestuous wish. 45

Thus, Daly's menstrual complex can be read as follows: the primary sexual act between father and mother is seen as a type of castration. Although, the bleeding woman is symbolic of her own castrated state, therefore, indicating to the son his own potential castration at the hands of the father, she too is also castrating. Castration by the mother refers to the incest taboo resulting from the menstruation complex, which prohibits the son's sexual desire for the mother, thus effecting a type of 'impotency'. Therefore, the mother with the bleeding vagina is indicative of the frustrated incestuous desires of the son and this is later re-invoked in the bleeding vagina of all women. When the incest barrier fails and repressed desire emerges, it is expressed through violence which is exacted on surrogate objects (bleeding/menstruating women) who remind him of his thwarted sexual desire for the mother. Thus, the paroxysm of Daly's failed menstrual complex results in chaos and the breakdown of the incest barrier. The murderous act executed with the phallic instrument of the axe in 'The Black Cat' indicates the sadistic violence of repressed desire for the mother. When the menstrual complex fails and the incest taboo is broken, order dissolves into chaos, a universe of horror and violence against women.

The eye is central to Daly's reading of Poe, the menstrual complex and castration anxiety. In relation to the eyeless cat, he theorizes that 'the husband's hatred of it grows which means that his hatred towards his wife grows with the increase of his sexual inhibitions caused by her menstruation.' The bleeding eye confirms for Daly the central aspects of the menstrual complex – fears of castration, death and incestuous desire. However, this reading of the gouged-out or bleeding eye is unusual as most

⁴⁵ ibid., p.315.

⁴⁶ ibid., p.314.

psychoanalytic theories generally interpret eye-gouging as symbolic of male fears of castration by the father. Freud demonstrates this in his analysis of E.T.A Hoffman's short story 'The Sandman', in his essay on 'The Uncanny'. He writes:

Moreover, I would not advise any opponent of the psychoanalytic view to appeal to Hoffmann's story of the Sand-Man in support of the contention that fear for the eyes is something independent of the castration complex. For why is this fear for the eyes so closely linked here with the death of the father? Why does the Sand-Man always appear as a disruptor of love? He estranges the unfortunate student from his fiancée, and from her brother his best friend; he destroys the second object of his love; the beautiful doll Olympia, and even drive him to suicide just when he has won back his fiancée and the two are about to be happily united. These and many other features of the tale appear arbitrary and meaningless if one rejects the relation between fear for the eyes and fear of castration but they become meaningful as soon as the Sand-Man is replaced by the dreaded father, at whose hands castration is expected. 47

Freud's reading of 'The Sandman' reinforces this reading of eye-gouging as indicative of early childhood fears of the young boy of castration at the hands of the father. As such, Daly's interpretation of the mother as potential castrator appears contrary or irreconcilable with orthodox psychoanalytical readings of the gouged eye. I would argue, however, that Daly is in fact engaging with an overlooked eye symbology located in fears of the feminine, although it must be added that Daly does not wholy explore the full potential of this aspect of the bleeding eye instead focusing on it more as a signifier of thwarted incestuous desire. However, as I have already pointed out, this thwarted sexual desire is, in itself, a type of castration. In horror this is frequently depicted as male fears of the feminine which manifest as sexual impotence. From the evil eye, to the gaze of Medusa, the female eye has always been a potential castrator/repressor or cause of impotence. This is evident in Barbara G. Walker's analysis of 'Medusa' and the link she makes between the gaze and menstrual taboo. Walker writes:

Another meaning of her hidden, dangerous face was the menstrual taboo. Primitive folk often believe the look of a menstruous woman can turn a man to stone. Medusa had magic blood that could create and destroy life; thus she represented the dreaded life – and death – giving moon blood of women.⁴⁸

Even Freud, in his work on sexuality and Medusa writes:

⁴

⁴⁷ Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, David McLintock, trans. (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p.140.

⁴⁸ Barbara G. Walker, *The Woman's Encyclopaedia of Myths and Women's Secrets*, p.629.

We have not often attempted to interpret individual mythological themes, but an interpretation suggests itself easily in the case of the horrifying decapitated head of Medusa. To decapitate = to castrate. The terror of Medusa is thus a terror of castration that is linked to the sight of something. Numerous analyses have made us familiar with the occasion for this: it occurs when a boy, who has hitherto been unwilling to believe the threat of castration, catches sight of the female genitals, probably those of an adult, surrounded by hair, and essentially those of his mother.⁴⁹

Although Freud's reading of Medusa acknowledges the importance of sight or the gaze in relation to the young boy it fails to see the menstrual vagina itself as type of (castrating) eye/gaze; that is the mother as castrating. Instead, for Freud, the vagina as a bleeding wound suggests to the young boy the mother's castration by the father, a fate he similarly fate fears for himself.

This is evidenced in Freud's case of the 'Wolf Man'. As already noted in Chapter One, the 'Wolf Man,' written in 1914 and published in 1918, refers to the twenty-three year old Russian aristocrat Sergei Pankeieff, who came to Freud for a consultation in February 1910. After a period of unsuccessful consultation, in 1913 Pankeieff revealed a childhood nightmare of wolves perched in a tree outside of his bedroom window. Freud interpreted the dream as the young Pankeieff having witnessed his parents having 'coitus a tergo,' sex from behind. He surmised that the boy understood he would have to be castrated to become like his mother and as a result positioned his father as the castrating parent. However, as Barbara Creed argues, 'Freud did not explore the Wolf Man story in enough depth' thus overlooking other possible readings one in particular relating to woman and animal. She writes:

[...] the Wolf Man's childhood 'fear and loathing' of butterflies, beetles and caterpillars, 'horses, too, gave him an uncanny feeling', particularly if a horse was being beaten. The 'opening and shutting of the butterfly's wings while it was settled on the flower had also given him an uncanny feeling. It had looked, so he had said like a woman opening her legs, and the legs then made the shape of a Roman V.'50

⁵⁰ Barbara Creed, *Phallic Panic*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2005), p.104.

⁴⁹ Sigmund Freud, 'Medusa's Head', in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and Other Works, Volume XVIII, (1920-1922)*, James Strachey, ed., p.273.

Creed links the Wolf Man's nightmare to the fairy tale of 'Little Red Riding Hood'. She connects the Wolf Man having been born with a caul to that of the red hood of the young girl in the story. From this analysis I would add that the hood is as I have already argued in Chapter One, is indicative of menstruation and thus threatens the Wolf Man's sexuality – it is a menstrual anxiety of the castrating/devouring/incorporating potential of the mother. As Creed further states:

Otto Rank claimed that Freud overemphasized the young Wolf Man's castration anxiety, developed in relation to the father/wolf, while neglecting his fear of being incorporated, a fear associated with the mother/wolf.⁵¹

Furthermore, and very interestingly, she points out that:

The Wolf Man recounted another dream in which he was carrying the bark of a walnut tree (the same tree as in his nightmare?) and just cut off his finger with his pocket knife, but when he looked again it was whole. In re-telling the story on another occasion, he said he was cutting the walnut tree and blood came out of the tree. The Wolf Man said that the dream was brought on by hearing of a female relative who was born with six toes and the extra one was cut off with an axe. Freud focused on these events in terms of castration anxiety. As in the story of Tancred, the tree is female and bleeds because of the woman trapped inside. In addition, his mother suffered from haemorrhages, further reinforcing the uncanny idea that women are castrated and have a wound that bleeds. This wound, however, is associated not just with castration but also with being eaten by the wolves and the mark of the werewolf. Signs of the primal uncanny – woman, animal, death – run throughout the case history and constitute the central reason for the boy's neurosis. ⁵²

Expanding on Creed's analysis of this aspect of the 'Wolf Man' case history, it is possible that the bleeding tree and haemorrhaging mother can also be read as indicative of menstrual bleeding, even more so than it can be read as symbolizing female castration. Therefore, the initial witnessing of parental sex can be linked to menstrual anxiety, the mother, the bleeding vagina and subsequently the mother as potential castrator and repressor of sexual desire. Furthermore, if menstrual blood as Kristeva has described it, is a 'semantic crossroads' then so too it could be argued is the vagina. The vagina is both a devouring mouth and a castrating eye. This could be determined as a vaginal/menstrual ocularity which is often overlooked in readings of the eye, the gaze, the vagina and

254

⁵¹ Barbara Creed, *Phallic Panic*, p.109.

⁵² ibid., pp.109-110.

menstrual bleeding. This gaze and the potentially castrating, Vaginal/Menstrual – Eye, is evident in Hitchcock's *Psycho*, a film which both challenged and changed the conventions of horror cinema and to which I now want to return and read according to Daly's 'Menstrual Complex', with reference to Freudian castration anxiety, which is also, as I have argued deeply connected to the gaze, the eye and the bleeding vagina.

Hitchcock's *Psycho*, as I have already noted, was a significant juncture in the development of horror cinema. Released in 1960 and based on the novel of the same

name published by Robert Bloch in 1959, it propelled horror cinema and sexual violence in a wholly new direction. *Psycho* is the infamous story of Marion Crane (Janet Leigh) who steals from her boss in order to start a new life with her lover. However, she has the misfortune of stopping overnight at the Bates Motel where she meets its owner Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins) and where the most shocking murder scene that horror had seen to date occurs in the infamous shower scene. Although Hitchcock's *Psycho* does not explicitly include cats or gouged-out eyes, a parallel can be drawn between the

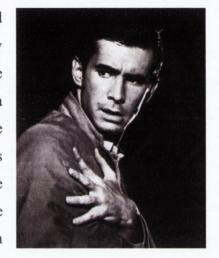


Fig.4.1

character of Norman and the husband in Daly's reading of Poe's 'The Black Cat'.

Norman's over-attachment to his mother is established almost from the outset. We first hear his mother scream obscenities at Norman when he tells her that he has invited Marion to supper. In the following scene we see him apologise to Marion for his mother's angry and abusive reaction to his invitation. However, the dominance of the mother figure and Norman's unhealthy attachment to her is quickly re-established as he comments that 'A mother is a boy's best friend'⁵³ and even more disturbingly asserts that 'A son is a poor substitute for a lover'.⁵⁴ Later, it is revealed that two previous father figures, as well as his mother, are dead and we discover that it is Norman who killed both his mother and her lover. The psychiatrist, who interviews Norman following his arrest, explains that he murdered his mother and her lover in a jealous rage after seeing them in bed together. Unable to deal with his crime of matricide, he attempts to reanimate his dead mother, taking her corpse from the grave, preserving her body with his taxidermist chemicals and mimicking her voice. As well as introjecting his mother, he also transfers his own

54 ibid.

⁵³ Psycho, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, (1960).

incestuous jealousy onto her. Therefore, the film psychiatrist concludes that when the incestuous mother/son relationship is threatened, the 'mother side' of Norman erupts in jealously murdering the object of Norman's desire. Barbara Creed in her analysis of *Psycho* argues that the film

[...] provides us with an exemplary study of the horror that ensues when the son feels threatened, physically and psychically, by the maternal figure. Norman Bates's desire to become the mother is motivated not by love but by fear; he wants to become the mother in order to prevent his own castration rather than to be castrated. ⁵⁵



Fig.4.2

Although, both the film's psychiatrist and Creed's explanations for Norman's actions are plausible, I believe another, more controversial, interesting and parallel reading can be applied in accordance with C.D. Daly's theory of the menstruation complex. Norman displays obvious incestuous desires for his mother from the outset. Having murdered both his mother and her lover he has in effect committed both symbolic parricide and incest. However, the arrival of Marion Crane at the Bates hotel, like the arrival of the second cat in Poe's story resuscitates his incestuous desire for the mother. It is also heavily implied at the end of the film that Norman has killed other women in the past. Furthermore, blood and vaginal imagery are evidenced in the shower scene. The

bloodied water eddies towards the plug hole before cutting directly to the dead eye of Marion Crane.⁵⁶ The plug hole is thus directly aligned with the eye and can be read as in Poe as a bleeding eye or moreover as the menstruating, bleeding vagina. The eye imagery and its significance, is acknowledged by Creed, she writes:



Fig.4.3

⁵⁶ See Slavoj Zizek, *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema*, dir. Sophie Fiennes, (2006).

⁵⁵ Barbara Creed, The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis, p.140.

Throughout *Psycho* woman is associated with eyes that stare and appraise. It is the maternal gaze that Norman most fears, the look that will lay bare his innermost secret desires, particularly his sexual ones; it is this aspect of the mother, her probing gaze that he tries to 'kill' in other women.⁵⁷

Unfortunately, Creed fails to see the eye or the gaze as menstrual, thus, her analysis ignores Norman's sexual desire as incestuous. Her most insightful comments in regards to the gaze relate to Norman as a peeping Tom. She writes:

As soon as Marion returns to her room we learn that Norman is a peeping Tom, a voyeur. He has drilled a hole into one of the motel rooms so that he can spy on its occupants. The hole is covered with a painting which depicts a scene from classical mythology of a woman's sexual victimization. In the air surrounding the secret hole, several stuffed birds hang, poised, as if ready to strike. After her conversation with Norman, Marion returns to her room, where she resolves to return the money. Norman watches her through his secret hole. Norman's envy is filmed in extreme close-up, drawing attention to the activity of voyeurism. A reverse shot shows us that he is watching Marion undressing. As Norman watches Marion, we are reminded of his phrase, 'the cruel eyes studying you', a phrase he used to refer to the experience of being trapped in a madhouse – one's own private trap – and appeared to refer to the watchful eyes of his mother. Now Norman controls the look. Second controls the look.

Again what is interesting in Creed's analysis is the attention she draws to the eye and the gaze. Slavoj Žižek in his documentary *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema* has described peeping Tom moments in film where the gaze is mediated through a crack or a hole as a 'wound in the text'. This 'wound' in the text, this mediated eye and gaze is one that I would again argue evokes the bleeding vagina which in effect should establish the incest taboo. However, in horror, the gaze or wound in the text, instead indicate a failed menstrual complex. Creed goes on to point out that:

-

⁵⁷ Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine*, p.140.

⁵⁸ The painting which Norman has placed over the hole he has drilled in the wall through which to spy is that of *Susanna and the Elders*. As Creed writes it is 'a fictional story set during the Jewish Exile in Babylon; [...] Two elders conceiver a passion for Susanna whom they spy on when she bathes in the garden. When she refuses to have intercourse with them they denounce her, claiming they watched her as she lay with a young man. Eventually they are caught out because their testimonies do not match. The painting depicts the moment where they apprehend her, trying to hold her semi-naked struggling body.' See Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, p.146.

In his analysis, Raymond Bellour links Norman's 'bulging eye' with the look of the camera and the deadly knife: This is the point of maximal identification between the character and the instance of the *mise-en-scène*; it can only be surpassed by its own excess, when the camera-eye becomes a body-knife, entering the field of its object and attempting in vain to coincide with it.'60

As Bellour himself argues:

A few shots later, the alternation between Norman and Marion recommences, this time through an apparatus that mimics the cinematographic apparatus itself. Norman is concealed, significantly, by a painting that prefigures the effect he is to produce: Susanna and the Elders, virtually at the moment of the rape. Beneath the painting is a large hole that reveals, in the wall itself, the tiny luminous hole to which Norman puts his eye, creating – just like the projector's beam – an image that is for us virtual and for him almost real. [...] The alternation then continues, obsessively marking the insert of the bulging eyeball, and shifting from the relationship between shots to the relationship between segments (or subsegments). [...] The moment of the murder marks the invasion by the subject (hero and spectator together) of the constituted image of his fantasy. Here, alternation must be abandoned; it is ruptured by the brutal inscription on the image of the living body-knife-bird of Norman-the mother, the reiterated fragmentation of Marion's body, the insert of her mouth agape in a horrendous scream and that of the dead eye that answers – at the opposite extreme of this very long fragment – the bulging eye of Norman given over to the inordinate desire of the scopic drive.⁶¹

Creed continues her own reading, noting that 'Bellour also interprets the knife as a form of symbolic rape enacted by the phallic mother – the mother-as-a-fetish-figure of and for the son.' She explains:

In his analysis of doubling in the text, Bellour links Sam with Norman. He also parallels the hotel lovemaking scene with that of the shower murder. In the former, man's aggression towards woman is disguised: in the latter it erupts in a murderous attack. Through a relay of symbols, the knife is associated with the phallus—'phallus-bird-fetish-mother-eye-knife-camera'. ⁶²

As Bellour states:

He seeks to construct a chain in which the excessiveness of the psychotic-perverse desire of the male subject can be structured – from the man to the camera, his true measure – during the scene where he establishes his presence at a distance,

_

⁵⁰ ibid., p.146

⁶¹ Raymond Bellour, 'Psychosis, Neurosis, Perversion' in Raymond Bellour and Constance Penley, *The Analysis of Film*, (Indiana University Press, 2002), p.247.

⁶² Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, p.147.

fascinated, in vertiginous mastery. This chain may be written phallus-bird-fetishmother-eye-knife-camera. A terrifying play on words (suggested rather than made explicit, in the film) connects this chain to the omnipotence of infantile desire turned toward death: Mommy, mummy: the mother's body, fetishized to death, so to speak, becomes the body that murders, in keeping with the desire awakened in the eye of the subject possessed by it. Through the incredible incorporation of a metaphor become reality, Norman's fascinated look carries within it the phallus immemorially attributed to the mother. But he can acknowledge it in himself only on condition that he ceaselessly encounter it in his mirror image, namely in the body/look of woman (which engenders the mirage), and as an absolute threat to which he must respond; otherwise, it is his own body that will desert him. Such (to complete the psychiatrist's speech) might be the motivations behind the genealogy of the case: the reiterative passage from the former murder (that of the mother) to the murder of Marion of which Norman-the mother is the agent, emphasizing in both cases, given an original identificatory fantasy, the literally impossible desire for possession and fusion that is at stake. 63

Bellour's alignment of the eye, the gaze and the knife can also be read as a conflation of the 'bleeding eye' or moreover, menstrual bleeding. As such, it is further possible to extend doubling in the text to include Mother and Marion. Marion, as watched through the peephole is a double of the abject menstruating mother, one who both reinforces the incest taboo while at the same time resuscitating the son's sexual desire for the mother. The impotency imposed by the menstrual complex as a prohibitor of incestuous desire is even more explicit in Robert Bloch's rendering of the scene. He writes:

Funny, when he actually saw her, he had this terrible feeling of – what was the word? Im-something. Importance. No, that wasn't it. He didn't feel important when he was with a woman. He felt – impossible? That wasn't right, either. He knew the word he was looking for, he'd read it a hundred times in books, the kind of books Mother didn't even know he owned. Well, it didn't matter. When he was with the girl he felt that, way, but not now. Now he could do anything. ⁶⁴

Norman's desire for Mary Crane (Marion in Hitchcock's *Psycho*) in Bloch's novel is conflated with desire for the mother. He states:

Mother was right. They were bitches. But you couldn't help yourself, not when a bitch was as lovely as this one was, and you knew you would never see her again. You had to see her again. If you were any kind of man, you'd have told her so, when you were in her room. You'd have brought in the bottle and offered her a

⁶³ Raymond Bellour, 'Psychosis, Neurosis, Perversion' Perversion' in Raymond Bellour and Constance Penley, *The Analysis of Film*, p.250.

⁶⁴ Robert Bloch, *Psycho*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing: 1999), p.34.

drink, drunk with her, and then you'd carry her over to the bed and – No you wouldn't. Not you. Because you're impotent. That's the word you couldn't remember, isn't it? Impotent. The word the books used, the word Mother used, the word that meant you were never going to see her again because it wouldn't do any good. The word the bitches knew; they must know it, and that's why they always laughed. ⁶⁵

Norman's impotency is central to the scene. The hole he has bored in the wall enables him to reclaim the male gaze and a position of phallic primacy, thus, restoring his sexual potency. However, when he begins to imagine that Mary is aware of his gaze and is vaginally returning his look the scene erupts into violence. A drunk and defiant Norman surmises that 'As long as Mother didn't know. As long as the girl didn't know. It would all be a big secret. Impotent was he? Well that didn't mean he couldn't see her again. He was going to see her right now.' This momentary restoration of sexual potency quickly dissipates as he gazes at Mary through the crack in the wall. Excitedly watching Mary undress and begin to take off her panties, paranoia starts to overcome him:

Now she was going to take them off, she was *taking* them off, and he could see, she was standing before the mirror and actually *gesturing! Did she know?* Had she known all along, known about the hole in the wall, known that he was watching? Did she want him to watch, was she doing this on purpose, the bitch? She was swaying back and forth, back and forth, and now the mirror was wavy again and she was wavy, and he couldn't stand it, he wanted to pound on the wall, he wanted to scream at her to stop because this was an evil, perverted thing she was doing and she must stop before he became evil and perverted too. That's what the bitches did to you, they perverted you, and she was a bitch, they were all bitches, Mother was a $-^{67}$

The visual impact of Mary's undressing and vaginal gesturing is equivalent to the gaze of the Medusa. Another example of Norman looking, in Bloch's novel, this time directly linked with his mother's genitals is the following: 'The muck was bubbling up to her knees [...] her hips were sinking under, her dress was pressed tight in a V across the front of her thighs. Mother's thighs were dirty. Mustn't look.'68 The menstrual complex and incest taboo are invoked reinforcing Norman's impotency, culminating in his violent substitution of the flaccid penis with the hard, sharp, penetrating knife. Unsurprisingly, in

⁶⁵ ibid., pp.34-35.

⁶⁶ ibid., p.35.

⁶⁷ ibid., p.36.

⁶⁸ ibid., p.61.

Bloch's novel, Mary, like Medusa is decapitated. As Norman notes 'The head was the worst. Nothing else was severed, only slashed'. 69

However, the dressing up of Norman in his mother's clothes complicates the scene. As Elizabeth Bronfen writes, Norman Bates

[...] both is and is not mother, both is and is not dead, is neither masculine nor feminine, mother nor son, fetish, corpse, nor living body. Rather it is all these states amalgamated into one phantastic body, into whose presence Hitchcock has drawn us 70

Bronfen's analysis of Norman's cross-dressing can be paralleled with Daly's theory of the failed menstrual complex. Daly explains the menstrual complex and its failure as follows:

Even when evidence of the mother's bloody vagina confirms his castration and death fears, the son's infantile libido before undergoing repression struggles to maintain its object. Unable to contemplate her bloody aspect, he denies it and adorns her with a penis in order that he may retain her as a libidinal object. 71

Interestingly, as I have already noted, in the slasher genre the weapon of choice acts as a phallic extension of the body. Therefore, Norman adorns the mother with the penis; however, because the mother is dead he can only achieve this through cross-dressing. Having failed to overcome his incestuous desire for his mother she remains for Norman his primary libidinal object, one who prevents him for having sexual relationships with other women. Therefore, in Hitchcock's Psycho and in Bloch's novel, Marion/Mary is stabbed (or symbolically raped) as a result of Norman's impotent incestuous desires for his mother, which are realized in the bleeding female body, a signifier of the failed menstrual complex. Marion comes to symbolize his thwarted sexual desire for his mother and thus, as in Poe's story, his frustrated sexual desire erupts in a paroxysm of violence. Furthermore, the phallic stabbing of Marion can also be read as a type of composite rape. Norman is a masculinized and phallicized, mother figure, he is at once, mother, father and son. Marion's rape can therefore also be read as a familial attack, one which sustains the incestuous family unit.

⁶⁹ ibid., p.44.

⁷⁰ Bronfen, Elizabeth, *The Knotted Subject, Hysteria and its Discontents*, (Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1998), p.31.

⁷¹ C.D. Daly, 'The Menstrual Complex in Literature, *Psychoanalytical Quarterly*, volume5, 1935, p.309.

A further example of the abject menstrual mother is most chillingly evident in the

scene where Lila (Marion's sister) and the viewer encounter her as a grotesque, grinning skull. Creed describes the image which fills the screen as one of 'huge black eye sockets [which] stare out from the head as if still able to control everything in their line of vision.'72



Fig.4.4

It is again the eye socket which is established as ambiguous, dark, murky and potentially bloody. I would

also suggest that the swamp where Norman dumps Marion's body can also be read as a menstruous, castrating, swallowing vagina similar to the tarn in 'The Fall of the House of Usher' which swallows up the incestuous brother and sister (sister = displaced/surrogate mother). 73 The tarn-swamp image also recurs in Wes Craven's Last House on the Left in the scene where Mari is murdered in the lake. Waist deep in the water, drenched in her own blood she is shot and swallowed up by the bloodied water, another displaced menstrual image.

The incestuous family unit and moreover the phallic woman, the primary libidinal object, who obstructs normal relations with the opposite sex is also evidenced in Tobe Hooper's Texas Chain Saw Massacre (1974) and in Brian de Palma's Dressed to Kill (1980). Carol J. Clover writes:

Just as Norman wears his mother's clothes during his acts of violence and is thought by the screen characters and also for a while, by the film's spectators, to be his mother, so the murderer in the Psycho-imitation Dressed to Kill (Brian de Palma, 1980), a transvestite psychiatrist, seems until his unveiling to be a woman; like Norman, he must kill women who arouse him sexually. Likewise, in muted form, Hitchhiker, Chop Top, and Leatherface in the Chain Saw films: none of the brothers show any sign of overt signs of gender confusion but their cathexis to the sick family – in which the mother is conspicuously absent but the preserved corpse of the grandmother (answering the treated body of Mrs. Bates in Psycho) is conspicuously present – has palpably arrested their development. ⁷⁴

The arrested sexual development of the male characters in these films, similar to Norman in Psycho, appropriate the phallic-mother through cross-dressing. This appropriation reduces the male protagonist to a composite of the family unit. Anxieties

⁷² Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, p.150.

⁷³ c.f. C.D. Daly, 'The Menstruation Complex in Literature', *Psychoanalytical Quarterly*, volume5, 1935, p.337.

⁷⁴ Carol J. Clover, *Men, Women and Chainsaws*, (London: British Film Institute, 1993), p.27.

relating to transgressions of the incest taboo proliferate in horror of the 1970s. For example, the incestuous, inbreeding of the family unit in the *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* is made clear from the outset. So too is the dialectic of the city versus countryside or moreover the order versus chaos dialectic. This order/chaos binary also suggests the primal division between endogamy and exogamy. The menstrual complex in *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* is again highlighted in the absent mother figure and, as Clover notes the preserved corpse of the grandmother. The remaining members of this dysfunctional family are all male, yet the presence of the phallic mother dominates the film. Leatherface, in his apron, wielding his chainsaw (penis) or when dressed in woman's clothes and wearing a wig is another version of Norman Bates.

Furthermore, the relationship between blood, rape, and castration underpins the film at every turn. Perhaps the most disturbing manifestation of this threat occurs in the scenes with the grandfather. Firstly, Sally, the tormented young woman has her finger cut by a female-garbed Leatherface. This act can be read in parallel with the 'staking' scene in vampire narratives, as in the staking of Lucy Westenra, thus, Sally is in effect gangraped, in this case not by the band of men who make up the 'crew of light' but instead by the men who constitute this crazed and inbred family unit. Further evidenced in this scene, is the failed menstrual complex. Sally becomes the surrogate dead mother (and/or grandmother) figure. Her penetration is followed by the grandfather sucking the blood from her finger. As in *Psycho*, a shot of a terrified eye is used, in this instance cut with a shot of the blood from the young woman's bleeding finger; again it is possible to read this as the 'bleeding eye' which can be aligned with the bleeding vagina (menstrual bleeding). Fear of castration and fear of the menstruating woman are clearly evidenced in the actions of this scene.

Furthermore, at the dinner table the gang-rape continues. The terrified screams of Sally are repeatedly cut with the howls and screams of the men in this clearly insane family and also with close-up shots of her eye. The eye becomes the central focus of the horror with the close-ups focusing not only on her dilated pupil but also on the bloodied capillaries of her eyeball again drawing attention to Daly's 'eye' as a bleeding vagina. Also notable is the implied impotency of this all-male unit. The supper-scene concludes with an absurd attempt by the grandfather to kill Sally. However, the grandfather, the ultimate father figure supposedly 'the best killer there ever was' and who supposedly 'killed sixty in five minutes' proves impotent as he fails to penetrate/murder the young woman (he can't even lift his hammer). This impotency is again indicative of a failed

menstrual complex, an inability to have sexual relations outside the incestuous mother/son dyad. In fact none of the other male family members besides Leatherface appear to be capable of killing/penetrating Sally, as the father figure in this scene points out when he states 'I just can't take no pleasure in killing'. Leatherface exemplifies the menstrual complex at its extreme, whereby, his thwarted sexuality moves beyond impotency into a frenzied paroxysm of murder, or as I would argue, prostheticized rape/incest (chainsaw acts as a prosthetic penis).

The incestuous family is not unique to *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, with numerous rape-revenge films, such as *Last House on the Left* and *I Spit on Your Grave*, alluding to similar endogamous units and further evidencing Daly's menstrual complex. In *Last House on the Left* the group of escaped convicts make up a crazed incestuous group, a performative and actual family. As a group they exist within a self-contained unit of violence outside the regulations of conventional social mores and norms. This twisted type of incestuous family unit further suggests the horror of chaos and the failure of the incest taboo, without which society disintegrates into unregulated mayhem and bloodshed. In *I Spit on Your Grave* the all-male group dynamic is even more reminiscent of the insane *Chain Saw* family. The group consists solely of men, one mentally retarded, and their brutal actions and gang rape of Jennifer Hills again suggest an impotency related to a failed menstrual complex with her rape and penetration acting as displaced incestuous and murderous desire.

Daly's menstrual complex therefore allows for an interpretation of the bleeding and penetrated female body according to thwarted incestuous desire. From *Psycho* to *Last House on the Left* and *I Spit on Your Grave* thwarted desire for the original libidinal object of desire – the mother – erupts in sexual violence. Hatred of the mother is transferred to other females and 'woman' becomes a version of the *menstruous-monstrous*. However, also notable is the prevalence of the incestuous family-type unit in the rape-revenge film and it is this collective nature of the violence which I will examine in the next section.

'Blood-Letting': Collective Rape and the Politics of Revenge

In refusing to admit an association between sexuality and violence – an association readily acknowledged by men over the course of several millennia – modern thinkers are attempting to prove their broadmindedness and liberality. Their stance has led to numerous misconceptions.

Like violence, sexual desire tends to fasten upon surrogate objects if the object to which it was originally attracted remains inaccessible; it willingly accepts substitutes. And again like violence, repressed sexual desire accumulates energy that sooner or later burst forth, causing tremendous havoc. It is also worth noting that the shift from violence to sexuality and from sexuality to violence is easily effected, even by the most 'normal' individuals, totally lacking in perversion. Thwarted sexuality leads naturally to violence.

(René Girard, Violence and the Sacred)

Sexuality and violence as René Girard points out, are inextricably connected. The 1970s in horror and in the emergent sub-genre of rape-revenge brought cinematic sexual violence against women to new and unprecedented levels. Sarah Projansky suggests that

[...] what is particularly troubling about rape films is not that they are sometimes sexist, capitalist, racist, nationalist, and colonialist (although, of course, many are), but that violence against women is so central to the films, so key to character transformations and narrative development and resolution, so versatile, that it not only seems to be necessary to the film itself, but it concomitantly naturalizes the policing and negotiating of gendered, classed, racialized, and national boundaries these films engage.⁷⁶

In this section I want to examine the reasons for this violence and its link to broader social and cultural anxieties. Firstly, I will examine the sacrificial and collective nature of the rape scenes in the rape-revenge genre. Moreover, I want to focus on the sexual and gendered nature of this violence. What is evident from the makers of these films is their distinct failure to deal with the issue of sexual brutality and sadism in relation to women. Instead, these film makers promote the socio-cultural backdrop out of which these films emerged, thus, justifying the sexual violence. I will conclude with an analysis of the revenge sequences which I will argue are dislocated from any feminist politic and which instead continue to promote and sustain negative discourses of female sexuality.

Wes Craven, in the documentary The American Nightmare (2000) describes his rape-revenge film Last House on the Left (1972) as a response to the Vietnam War. The on-screen sexual violence he explained was an attempt to re-sensitize the populace who had been numbed by images of war. He also says of himself and that period in American history:

⁷⁵ René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, pp.36-37.

⁷⁶ Sarah Projansky, Watching Rape: Film and Television in Postfeminist Culture, pp.62-63.

I feel like I'm a veteran of a war, and I think we all do from that generation whether you went to the war or not, it had come home, in a very strange way. [...] It just seemed to be like there was nothing to be trusted in the establishment and everything to be trusted in yourself and in your generation. So that was kind of the context in which *Last House* was made. ⁷⁷

In the same documentary it is argued that internal politics had also become problematic and something which needed to be grappled with by the American people. John Landis asserts:

You had Kent State the only time in American history where you have government troops firing on students it was like Jesus Christ. It was American troops shooting Americans; and for doing what? For doing their constitutional right, protesting the war.⁷⁸

Thus, it is possible to read the body of the young woman who is raped in these texts as a surrogate victim for the frustrations of the country and the society as a whole. Or, as Paul Wells writes, it is possible to read the horror genre in general as 'preoccupied with the internal and microcosmic.' However, this would be to ignore the complexity and perhaps the more disturbing aspect of the sexual violence which is exacted on the female body. As Carol J. Clover argues in relation to *I Spit on Your Grave* 'there are viewers including myself who do not find its values more "shockingly misplaced" than those of a great deal of critically acceptable mainstream film and video fare and who moreover appreciate, however grudgingly, the way in which its brutal simplicity exposes a mainstream of popular culture.' In Clover's view, the sexual politics of such a film extend beyond the constraints of explicitness and genre, and is in fact a sexual politic found freely in many areas of popular culture and the mainstream, albeit less explicit and brutal. Therefore, majoritarian discourses of gender and sexuality are crucial to reading these films. In order to do so, I wish to explore the collective nature of the violence in these texts.

In his work *Violence and the Sacred* René Girard discusses surrogate victims and the community. He maintains that internal violence is kept under control by strategic

⁸⁰ Carol J. Clover, Men, Women and Chainsaws, p.116.

⁷⁷ Wes Craven, quoted in *American Nightmare*, dir. Adam Simon, (2004).

⁷⁸ John Landis, quoted in *American Nightmare*, dir. Adam Simon, , (2004).

⁷⁹ Paul Wells, *The Horror Genre, From Beelzebub to Blair Witch*, p.8.

sacrificial violence. He asserts that the hypothesis of substitution is the basis for the practice of sacrifice. He writes:

If sacrifice resembles criminal violence, we may say that there is inversely, hardly any form of violence that cannot be described in terms of sacrifice [...]⁸¹

He also makes the point that if the initial object of hostility remains out of reach unappeased violence will always seek out a surrogate victim. The surrogate victim acts as a site of displacement for the original subject that arouses violence. He explains:

Once we have focused attention on the sacrificial victim, the object originally singled out for violence fades from view. Sacrificial substitution implies a degree of misunderstanding. Its vitality as an institution depends on its ability to conceal the displacement upon which the rite is based. It must never lose sight entirely, however, of the original object, or cease to be aware of the act of transference from that object to the surrogate victim; without that awareness no substitution can take place and the sacrifice loses all efficacy. 82

In terms of the community, he further posits that the deliberate act of collective substitution is performed at the expense of the victim, who absorbs all the 'internal tensions, feuds, and rivalries pent up within the community.'83 In contemporary society, according to Girard, there exists a common denominator which determines the efficacy of the sacrifice. This common denominator is 'internal violence' and is evidenced in the proliferation of dissent, rivalries, jealousies and quarrels within the community and which exist in order to reinforce the social fabric.

Women occupy a complex position as sacrificial victims yet their relationship with, and their subjection, to violence is undeniable. The reason for this relationship to violence is according to Girard due to the link between women and blood. He writes:

Among primitive taboos the one that has perhaps been most analyzed is the taboo surrounding menstrual blood. Menstrual blood is regarded as impure; menstruating women are segregated from the community. They are forbidden to touch any objects of communal usage, sometimes even their own food, for risk of contamination. If we wish to understand why menstruation is considered 'impure' we must consider it within the general category of bloodletting. Most primitive

83 bid., pp.7-8.

⁸¹ René Girard, Violence and the Sacred, p.1.

⁸² ibid., pp.5-6.

peoples take the utmost care to avoid contact with blood. Spilt blood of any origin, unless it has been associated with a sacrificial act, is considered impure. This universal attribution of impurity to spilt blood springs directly from the definition we have just proposed: wherever violence threatens, ritual impurity is present. ⁸⁴

He concludes that 'Any bloodletting is frightening. It is only natural therefore, that menstrual bleeding should awaken fear.' He continues:

We have conceded that menstrual blood has a direct relationship to sexuality; we also contend that its relationship to unleashed violence is even closer. The blood of a murdered man is impure. This impurity cannot be derived from the impurity attributed to menstrual blood. On the other hand, to understand the impurity of menstrual blood we but trace its relationship to blood spilt by violence, as well as to sexuality. The fact that the sexual organs of women periodically emit a flow of blood has always made a great impression on men; it seems to confirm an affinity between sexuality and those diverse forms of violence that invariably lead to bloodshed. ⁸⁶

Thus, according to Girard, 'there is nothing incomprehensible about the viewpoint that sees menstrual blood as a physical representation of sexual violence.'87

Freud makes similar claims in relation to sexual violence and menstruation. Mary Jane Lupton writes that Freud acknowledged that menstrual blood

[...] is related in preliterate societies to sadism and to the male fear of blood, although he did not explore the implications of this fear but instead reversed his position: 'Other considerations, however, warn us not to over-estimate the influence of a factor such as the horror of blood.' No, it is neither uncleanliness nor fear of blood but female sexuality *in general* which men fear, said Freud, in what is perhaps his strongest statement on the mysterious power of women. ⁸⁸

From The Texas Chain Saw Massacre (1974), to Last House on the Left (1972) and I Spit on Your Grave (1978), to the more recent film A Gun for Jennifer (1996), the sexual violence exacted on women can be directly attributed to fears of the menstruous feminine and can also be seen to be undeniably collective. In relation to collectivity, Girard states:

⁸⁴ René Girard, Violence and the Sacred, p.35.

⁸⁵ ibid., p.35.

⁸⁶ ibid., p.36.

⁸⁷ ibid., p.37.

⁸⁸ Mary Jane Lupton, Menstruation and Psychoanalysis, pp.98-99.

Sexuality is one of those primary forces whose sovereignty over man is assured by man's firm belief in his sovereignty over it. The most extreme forms of violence can never be directly sexual because they are collective in nature. The group is quite capable of perpetrating a single, coherent act of violence, whose force is increased with the addition of each individual quotient of violence; but sexuality is never truly collective. That fact alone explains why sexual interpretations of the sacred invariably ignore or play down the role of violence, whereas an interpretation based on violence readily grants sexuality the prominent place it occupies in all primitive religions. We are tempted to conclude that violence is impure because of its relation to sexuality. Yet only the reverse proposition can withstand close scrutiny. ⁸⁹

Therefore, I would argue that Mari's body in *Last House on the Left* and Jennifer's body in *I Spit on Your Grave* are surrogate bodies upon which the collective narratives of war, race, class and gender are violently exposed through sexual violation. The rape and violation of the woman is a displaced politic, whereby the bleeding female body inmplies sacrifice, death, retribution and impurity. From the threat of communism, the death of young soldiers, the return of disabled war veterans, Nixon politics and the Watergate scandal to changing gender roles and second wave feminism, the threatened majoritarian discourses of white-male phallocentrism exacts revenge on the surrogate tableau of the female body. A shocked and disarticulated America in an un-winnable war and internally struggling with dramatic changes to the social fabric in relation to gender, sexuality and the family takes revenge on-screen and on-women.

The critic Stephen Rebello makes a similar argument in relation to Hitchcock's *Psycho*, he writes that the film skews 'America's sacred cows – virginity, cleanliness, privacy, masculinity, sex, mother love, marriage, the reliance on pills, the sanctity of the family and the bathroom.' Or as Paul Wells writes:

Psycho essentially defines the parameters of the text and subtext of the genre as a whole. It is the moment when the monster, as a metaphor or myth, is conflated with the reality of a modern world in which humankind is increasingly self-conscious and alienated from its pre-determined social structures. Psycho works as an act of permission for film-makers in the genre to further expose the illusory securities and limited rationales of contemporary life to reveal the chaos which underpins modern existence and constantly threatens to ensure its collapse. ⁹¹

⁸⁹ René Girard, Violence and the Sacred, p.35.

⁹⁰ Stephen Rebello, Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of 'Psycho', (London: Marion Boyars, 1998), p.46.

⁹¹ Paul Wells, The Horror Genre from Beelzebub to the Blair Witch, p.75.

The monster as metaphor or myth, conflated with modernity and its illusory securities, beneath which lies chaos and the threat of collapse is also espoused in the opening chapter of Bloch's novel, wherein, we are introduced to Norman musing on the barbaric rituals of a primitive Incan past. 92 He is reading a text entitled *The Realm of the Incas* by Victor W. Von Hagen from which he quotes a description of the *cachua* or victory dance:

The drumbeat for this was usually performed on what had been the body of an enemy: the skin had been flayed and the belly stretched to form a drum, and the whole body acted as a sound box while throbbings came out of the open mouth – grotesque but effective. 93

This description eerily presages Mary Crane's decapitation later in the novel. The ritualistic element of the quotation also lends itself to the ritualised/sacrificial nature of the rape in Bloch's novel and also in films of the nineteen sixties and seventies. Thus, it is the threat of chaos implicit in the fragile socio-cultural reality of America during these decades which resides at the core of rape-revenge narratives. Furthermore, the endogamous, internalized nature of these social units which violently rape and murder, indicate an underlying psychology which can be related back to both Daly's work on the phallic mother and Freud's work on the castration complex and castration anxiety.

Meir Zarchi's *I Spit on Your Grave* (1978) is often understood as the prototypical rape-revenge film. The film centres upon the female character Jennifer Hill (played by Camille Keaton), a writer from New York, who rents a lake-side house in the Connecticut countryside for the summer months where she hopes to finish the novel she in the process of writing. Jennifer is the typical stylish, cosmopolitan city woman, dressed in heels and skirt, groomed and sophisticated. Arriving in the small town where she hopes to reside for the summer months she pulls into a gas station where she encounters Johnny - the alphamale amongst the group of men who will later seize and gang rape her. The first half of the film follows the harassment and rape of Jennifer. She is seized and taken from her canoe and brought up shore in a speed-boat where she is brutally gang-raped. There is a slight intermission between the first and second half of the film, a period of during which Jennifer recovers physically. The final section of the film then commences and Jennifer exacts her revenge on her male attackers.

93 Robert Bloch, Psycho, p.2.

⁹² He also reads the Marquis De Sade's *Justine*.

Although the film itself and its plot are simplistic and crudely unadulterated, the layers of interpretation and critical debate are complex. Clover accepts the importance and significance of such a film as 'a premier processing site for the modern debate on sexual violence in life and law.'94 However, I would argue that although the film equally distributes the time given to both the rape and the revenge, the brutality, torture and close-up shots of Jennifer's rape, undermines and negates any feminist politic which might be present.

From the outset, the city versus countryside axis is established, connotative of exogamy and endogamy. The male unit in *I Spit on Your Grave* is redolent of the *Chain Saw* family, and though the location is Connecticut there are obvious links to the Southern Gothic and a film heritage that can immediately be traced to John Boorman's 1972 film *Deliverance*, with the mentally retarded Matthew suggesting incestuous inbreeding and the harmonica-playing Stanley invoking the madness and crazed familial lunacy that is a staple of a genre which preys on the fear of what lurks in the shadows of rural, isolated communities in a highly industrialized and urbanized America.

However, it is possible to read the incestuous, inbred nature of this male unit as a substitute version of America itself, whereby the small, endogamous, often familial units are suggestive of the wider endogamous social unit that is the internal political and cultural mechanism of American society in the 1970s. America, like these crazed incestuous units is symbolically exorcising its frustrated impotency and anxieties through the sexual violation of the woman. Furthermore, the rural primal scenes indicate the regressive, dark and hidden side of a country's psyche, suggesting the unease of a society in the process of enormous social change particularly in relation to gender roles, sexuality and the family, if not also in relation to the urban itself. As Henri LeFebvre observes in relation to the 1970s:

It should be noted in passing that even at that time (around 1970) *urban* questions were being raised with great clarity (too blindingly clear for many people, who preferred to avert their gaze). Official documents could neither regulate nor mask the new barbarism. Massive and 'uncontrolled', with no other strategy than to maximize profits, devoid of rationality or creative originality, construction and urban development, as they called it, were having noticeably disastrous effects – visible on all sides even then. Under the colours of 'modernity'. Even then! How are we to maintain without new arguments the thesis (Graeco-Latin: our own, that our civilization!) that the City, the Town, the Urban, are the centres, the privileged places, the cradles of thought and invention? The 'city-country' relationship was

⁹⁴ Carol J. Clover, Men, Women and Chainsaws, p. 151.

changing, at the world scale, with 'extremist interpretations (the worldwide countryside versus the worldwide city!). How to think about the City (its widespread explosion-implosion, the 'modern Urban') without conceiving clearly the space it occupies, appropriates (or disappropriates)?⁹⁵

As LeFebvre points out, the classical designation of the city as a civilized space has collapsed in contemporary society. Instead it can now be conflated with the rural and its more barbarous connotations. This collapsing or conflation of city and countryside in the rape-revenge genre is evident in the breakdown of civilizing structures in both spaces. In *I Spit on Your Grave*, the city is immediately established as evil with Matthew describing New York, the city from which Jennifer has come, as 'an evil place'. Jennifer also contributes to this notion by telling Matthew that she has many boyfriends, suggestive of promiscuity, a modern-day Lucy Westenra statement which pre-empts her eventual rape. The city as evil is further highlighted when the group of men discuss women and sex in terms of Hollywood. Jennifer is an embodied simulacrum of displaced desire; she signifies their impotency and frustrated desires. She, thus, becomes the surrogate, sacrificial victim upon which the broader political and socio-cultural anxieties are espoused, negotiated, contested and eventually reconciled. The sacrificial and ritualistic reconciling of socio-cultural and political anxiety in horror can thus be read as a very orthodox resolution of traditional, patriarchal, structures of power and control.

The initial harassment of Jennifer is centred on the lake and lakeshore where she has taken up a summer residence. Visually, the audience is presented with images of Jennifer swimming in the lake, sunbathing in her canoe and then on the banks of the shore. The utopian aspect of this scene is evidenced in her writing where she expresses the following:

After self-doubt and deliberation she embarked on a temporary leave of absence from everything that formed the fabric of her life in the big city, her job, her friends, her hectic daily schedule, restless days, sleepless nights [...] ⁹⁶

⁹⁶ I Spit on Your Grave, dir. Meir Zarchi, (1978).

⁹⁵ Henri LeFebvre, in Elden, Stuart, Elizabeth Lebas and Eleonore Kofman, eds., *Henri LeFebvre: Key Writings*, eds., (London: Continuum, 2003), p.207-208.

Then suddenly this tranquil scene is violently interrupted by a speed boat. The phallic aggressiveness of the scene is immediately established with the speed boat, erect, and violently cutting through the vaginal and menstrual image of the water. Jennifer is later taken in her canoe by these men to an isolated spot.



Fig.4.5

It is at this point in the film that the narrative quickly disintegrates into a bizarre and violent, dystopic nightmare. There is a definite strangeness to the rape-scene which I attribute to the continual cutting of Edenic and naturalised images with the brutality and violence of the rape itself.

It is almost a 'National Geographic' animal narrative of the 'hunt', whereby, the terrified unsuspecting prey is tormented and played with by the predator. Creed describes the rape scenes in *I Spit on Your Grave*:

[...] filmed in such a way that woman becomes a complete and total victim. She is hunted down, degraded, humiliated and tortured. The men subject her to vaginal, anal and oral rape with a penis and a beer bottle. She is beaten, kicked and punched. Her creative work is even derided and desecrated. Furthermore, her humiliation and subjugation are dwelt on and drawn-out. On two occasions the gang release her only to capture her again later. On each occasion their attacks grow more violent. Rarely are the rape fantasies of even hard-core pornography represented in such a brutal, and horrific manner.⁹⁷

Jennifer is raped, hunted and in one particularly evocative scene raped again on a rock, a visually suggestive sacrificial altar. This naturalized landscape is not unique to *I Spit on Your Grave* it is also the primary scene of the rapes and murders in *Last House on the Left* where the majority of the brutality and sadism occurs in an isolated rural location. Again the rape and bloody torture of Mari and her friend are repeatedly cut with natural images of the landscape and animals. This cutting of nature with violence is problematic on so many levels, not the least because it suggests that rape is a natural instinct, while at the same time correlating it to degeneracy and animalism. However, again I would argue that

⁹⁷ Barbara Creed, The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis, p.130.

it is collective primal endogamy that is evoked. The move is social, evidenced in the narrative move from the city to the countryside (a nostalgic move from civilized to barbaric).



Fig.4.6

Isolated primitive social landscapes are also common to the 'cannibal' films of the 1970s and early 1980s. These films were influenced by the 'Mondo' genre of anthropological documentary-making which focused on bizarre local customs, death and cruelty from around the world. This is again similar to what I call rape-revenge's 'National Geographic' style in terms of its use of nature and natural landscapes. Moreover, one of the most visceral images of female sacrifice is to be found in Rugerro Deodato's Cannibal Holocaust (1980). The startling image of the woman who is staked through the vagina to her mouth is a perverse example of sexual violence, rape and sacrificial crucifixion. Fear of the bleeding, menstrual vagina is evoked as is the fear of the castrating orality/ocularity of the female genitals. This use of natural imagery, anthropology, and barbarous, primal, endogamous, cannibal communities suggests that American horror cinema during this period reflects a broader social need to keep internal violence under control by what Girard has described as strategic sacrificial violence. Horror cinema becomes the sacrificial alter upon which the impotency and thwarted desires of a society are violently transposed onto the female body. This of course raises the problem of audience, a subject which Clover deals with extensively in her work on rape-revenge films in relation to identification. 98 However, what I would suggest in terms of audience in relation to rape-revenge is the inherent complexity of the revenge element, which I will now examine.

⁹⁸ c.f. Carol J. Clover's work on audience and identification in Men, Women and Chainsaws.



Fig.4.5

In the revenge sequence what emerges is a hyphenated, intrinsically linked relationship between the rape and revenge elements. The revenge element similar to the rape of the woman acts as a complex collective response to a changing socio-cultural landscape, one which is again played out and negotiated on and through the female body. What is striking in rape-revenge films of the 1970s is the total breakdown of the judicial system and the absence or complete inefficacy of the police force, thus, giving rise to vigilantism. Secondly, the reductive dialectic of woman as either/or emerges, whereby, woman as virgin or whore instead becomes complete victim or else monstrous-other in the form of the *femme castratrice*. Thus, the revenge element is of immense importance in terms of reading the rape element but also in terms of how we read and determine the meaning of the overall narrative.

René Girard has written comprehensively on the problematics of revenge and its relationship to the social fabric. He writes:

Why does the spirit of revenge, wherever it breaks out, constitute such an intolerable menace? Perhaps because the only satisfactory revenge of spilt blood is spilling the blood of the killer; and in the blood feud there is a clear distinction

between the act for which the killer is being punished and the punishment itself. Vengeance professes to be an act of reprisal and every reprisal calls for another reprisal. The crime to which the act of vengeance addresses itself is almost never an unprecedented offence; in almost every case it has been committed in revenge for some other prior crime.⁹⁹

Important in Girard's analysis is the distinction he makes between the act for which the killer (or, in the case of rape-revenge, the rapist) is being punished and the act of punishment itself. This is the problem implicit in any reading of rape-revenge narratives, a point I will return to later in relation to the female avenger, her representation and the means by which she exacts her revenge. He also describes vengeance as an 'interminable, infinitely repetitive process.' Whereby:

Every time it turns up in some part of the community, it threatens to involve the whole social body. There is the risk that the act of vengeance will initiate a chain reaction whose consequences will quickly prove fatal to any society of modest size. The multiplication of reprisals instantaneously puts the very existence of a society in jeopardy, and that is why it is universally proscribed. 100

Furthermore, he writes 'If vengeance is an unending process it can hardly be invoked to restrain the violent impulses of society. In fact, it is vengeance itself that must be restrained.' It thus follows, according to Girard, that 'When we minimize the dangers implicit in vengeance we risk losing sight of the true function of sacrifice.' In contemporary society, he also writes, 'modern man has long lost his fear of reciprocal violence, which, after all, provides our judicial system with its structure.' In fact, it could be argued that the rape-revenge genre does the opposite, demonstrating instead, that contemporary 1970s America, is in fact very much in fear of reciprocal violence, which as I have already noted, is evident in student anti-war demonstrations, to overall anti-government sentiment with Nixon and Watergate to second-wave feminist agitation. Also the collapse or the absence/inefficacy of the judicial system in these films, similarly suggests a dystopic vision of a society where vengeance has no limits (and where as I already argued, the city-country dialectic has collapsed, where both spaces are now indicative of the uncivilized, the barbarous). Thus, the revenge element can be read on a

⁹⁹ René Girard, Violence and the Sacred, p.15.

¹⁰⁰ ibid., p.15.

¹⁰¹ ibid., p.17.

ibid., p.19.

¹⁰³ ibid., p.28.

micro-level as representative of male fears of the liberated woman (similar to King's claim in relation to his first novel *Carrie*) or else on a macro-level as indicative of society's fear of retaliation by any number of subjugated social groups in a culture that is imploding on itself. It is this second reading which I wish to explore in more detail and one which I believe lends itself to a more complex reading of the female body, ritualistic sacrifice and blood-spilling.

What is perhaps most striking in terms of the judicial system in rape-revenge is either its absence or its inadequacies. Nowhere is the failure of the judicial system more satirically represented than in Wes Craven's Last House on the Left. The two cops who are featured throughout are portrayed as an ineffective comedy duo. From the outset their incompetence is established as they fail to make crucial links between events and the knowledge they possess in relation to the escaped convicts. Instead what ensues is a bizarre series of bungled attempts to resolve their mistakes. Is Craven's point here again to highlight the failures of American society to function according to established systems? Is society in the throes of collapse and disintegration? If, as already pointed out Americans are now shooting at Americans does this mean that the systems that maintain social order no longer hold any weight and that the only recourse for violence is to reciprocate with more violence. This, as I have already argued, would appear to be the message of rape-revenge in the 1970s. In Last House on the Left justice is left to the parents of Mari who take vengeance for her rape and murder. After Mari's death the sadistic, crazed group of convicts arrive at her family home which is ironically located next to the site of her rape and murder. Claiming that their car has broken down they proceed to spend the night. What ensues is an absurd attempt at bourgeois, performative, familial normality, another loaded comment by Craven on the veneer of civilized modernity. Once it has been deduced that Mari is dead and that those who are spending the night are her rapists and murderers, Mari's parents take the law into their own hands (vigilantism).

The revenge sequence, however, as opposed to the nastiness and visceral sadism of the rape scenes, verges on the absurd and the surreal. This is of course problematic and compromises the politics of sexual violence which underpin the film. Furthermore, the revenge sequence becomes entangled with the traditional and limited paradigm of the femme fatale and the eroticization of the avenging female. Jacinda Read draws attention to this in her work on rape-revenge, where she notes that 'the avenging woman is

frequently eroticized rather than masculinized.' In effect, the mother in *Last House* transforms from domesticated wife and mother into an erotic, sexualized woman and the father, into a bizarre version of the hyper-masculine as he wields his over-sized phallic weapon, 'the chainsaw'.

However, I would argue that although fears of reciprocal violence and the breakdown of the law are evident in the rape-revenge genre, they are minimized and reconciled through the ritualistic aspect of the revenge sequences. This is demonstrated, firstly, in the reductive and essentialized rendering of the woman as castrating, and secondly, in the very different filming techniques used to represent the revenge aspect of the narrative. Barbara Creed has written extensively on the woman as castrating. She argues that whereas 'Freud argued that woman terrifies because she appears to be castrated, man's fear of castration has in my view, led him to construct another monstrous phantasy – that of woman as castrator.' One of the crudest expressions of male fears of orality and the castrating potential of the mother is evidenced in *Last House on the Left*. The mother offers to fellate her daughter's rapist and instead bites off his penis. This action negates any feminist politic that the film may possess by reducing the revenge to a primal fear of the vagina dentata, wherein, the narrative returns to a phallocentric obsessive fear of female sexuality.

Similarly, the character of Jennifer, in *I Spit on Your Grave* transforms from victim into an eroticized femme fatale in a revenge sequence that again verges on comic, a complete change in tone from the crazed brutality of the rape scenes. As already pointed out, there is a slight intermission between the first and second half of the film. A period of two weeks passes during which, Jennifer physically recovers and begins work on her manuscript again. During this time she also visits a church and prays. The final section of the film then commences and Jennifer executes her revenge on the male characters. Matthew is the first to be symbolically castrated - Jennifer places a grocery order and when he arrives she sexually entices him outdoors and once she has him engaged sexually, places a noose over his head and hangs him. Next to suffer her vengeance is Johnny, the prime instigator of her rape. Jennifer pulls into the gas station and with a sexually suggestive look and eroticized tone invites him to join her. He gets into the car, she drives him to a secluded spot, takes out a pistol and demands that he drop his trousers. He talks her out of shooting him at this point and as a gesture of trust she throws him the

1/

¹⁰⁵ Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, p.7.

¹⁰⁴ Jacinda Read, The New Avengers: Feminism, Femininity and the Rape Revenge Cycle, p.36.

gun and invites him back to her house. This is followed by perhaps the most notorious of all rape-revenge castration scenes; in which Johnny lies in the bathtub while Jennifer sexually fondles and plays with his penis. His sexual pleasure is evident as he compliments Jennifer with the words 'God Bless your hands.' Jennifer then quietly slips a knife into the water, whilst Johnny, unaware of the danger and in a moment of what can only be described as perverted sexual irony, utters 'that's so sweet ...that's so sweet it's painful' before yelling and screaming in pain with the realisation that his penis has been cut off. Jennifer then locks the bathroom door, proceeds downstairs and turns up the classical music which is playing while she sits back in her chair and waits for Johnny to bleed to death.

Andy and Stanley, the two who remain are murdered in the river. One is axed to death and the other is mutilated and killed by the propeller of the speed-boat. Again, it could be argued that the bloodied water in this scene symbolically signifies the overarching fear of the *menstruous-feminine* which underpins the narrative. However, what is most notable in both *Last House on the Left* and in *I Spit on Your Grave* is how the narrative of the revenge sequence replicates and perpetuates mythologies of the castrating woman. As Creed writes, in reference to the latter:

Critics have been sharply divided in their response to the film. Some focus on the rape scenes and argue that the film encourages violence against women; it is frequently singled out in debates on censorship as an example of a 'video nasty'. Others argue that the film is more likely to militate against violence. ¹⁰⁶

However, referring to the critic Phil Hardy as positing one of the 'more thoughtful' responses, she notes:

[...] the men are so repulsive, the rapes so harrowing and horrifying, it is difficult to imagine that male spectators would identify with the rapists, particularly as the narrative action is presented from the woman's point of view. 'Further there is no suggestion that 'she asked for it' or enjoyed it, except of course, in the rapist's own perceptions, from which the film is careful to distance itself.' Hardy, however, is critical of the way in which the heroine changes into an avenging fury.'

Hardy writes of Jennifer in I Spit on Your Grave, that:

¹⁰⁶ Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, p.128. ¹⁰⁷ ibid., pp.128-129.

[...] by allowing her to lapse into an almost catatonic, silent obsessive state, the film distances the viewer from her, making her seem like a mere cipher and pushing her dangerously close to that negative female stereotype, the all-destructive *femme castratrice* (quite literally, as it happens, in this case). ¹⁰⁸

Creed further describes the rape scenes in *I Spit on Your Grave* as misogynistic in their representation of women. She also observes, in a similar manner to Jacinda Read, that 'the scenes in which Jennifer carries out her revenge are deliberately eroticized. Woman is monstrous because she castrates, or kills, the male during coition.' Her most interesting analysis, however, is in relation to the sacrificial mode and ritualistic aspects of the revenge scenes:

The first killing, which sets the scene for the later murders, is clearly in the mode of a sacrificial rite. Jennifer is dressed in the garb of a priestess or nymph. [...] Her second scene is imbued with an even more ritualistic quality. She lures her victim into a bath where she first cleanses him. As he dies, his blood streams forth to the strains of classical music. Woman, pleasure and death are intimately related in these scenes. The castrations are imbued with a sense of ritual: Jennifer takes a religious pledge prior to the deaths, she wears white robes and appears to have acquired super-human powers. The iconography of these scenes has a ritualistic quality: white robes, water, classical music; the shedding of blood as a form of atonement; the clear connection between sexual pleasure and death. 110

She also writes that revenges scenes 'offer the spectator the promise of an erotic pleasure associated with a desire for death and non-differentiation. In this context, the *femme castratrice* becomes an ambiguous figure. She arouses a fear of castration and death while simultaneously playing on a masochistic desire for death, pleasure and oblivion.' She concludes that:

It is significant that the three rape scenes in the first half of *I Spit on Your Grave* are filmed in a completely different way from the revenge scenes of the second half. Whereas woman-as-victim is represented as an abject thing, man-as-victim is not similarly degraded and humiliated. If anything, the death scenes of the male victims offer a form of masochistic pleasure to the viewer because of the way they associate death with pleasure. (I am not suggesting, for a moment, that this inequality should be addressed by eroticizing the rape scenes.) The main reason

¹⁰⁸ Phil Hardy, ed., *The Encyclopaedia of Horror*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), p.329.

¹⁰⁹ Barbara Creed, The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis, p.129.

ibid., p.129. ibid., p.130.

for this difference stems from the film's ideological purpose – to represent woman as monstrous because she castrates. 112

I concur with Creed's reading of the revenge scenes, however, she fails to extend her analysis of the ritualistic element to the rape scenes. Although Creed makes some very sharp observations in relation to the *femme castratrice*, I would argue that it is possible to read the castrations as fears of the *menstruous-monstrous*, whereby, the violence and blood-spilling are indicative of anxieties pertaining to socio-cultural change. Therefore, the sacrificial, ritualistic, nature of both the rape and the revenge element can be linked to the broader socio-cultural context. As Girard argues:

The tendency of violence to hurl itself on a surrogate if deprived of its original object can surely be described as a contaminating process. Violence too long held in check will overflow its bounds – and woe to those who happen to be nearby. Ritual precautions are intended both to prevent this flooding and to offer protection, insofar as it is possible, to those who find themselves in the path of ritual impurity – that is, caught in the floodtide of violence. 113

Thus:

In a universe where the slightest dispute can lead to disaster – just as a slight cut can prove fatal to a haemophiliac – the rites of sacrifice serve to polarize the community's aggressive impulses and redirect them toward victims that may be actual or figurative, animate or inanimate, but that are always incapable of propagating further violent impulses that cannot be mastered by self-restraint; a partial outlet, to be sure, but always renewable, and one whose efficacy has been attested by an impressive number of reliable witnesses. The sacrificial process prevents the spread of violence by keeping vengeance in check. 114

As such, the rape and the revenge scenes can be read as fulfilling similar ritualistic, sacrificial functions, albeit on two differing fronts. In the former, this is evident in the socio-cultural scapegoating and the sacrificing of the female body, in the latter it is in the containment of revolt by abjected or othered social groupings. This is reflective of Foucault's claim that 'there are no relations of power without resistance' or, as Barthes has observed, a regulated amount of resistance can in fact function as a type of

¹¹² ibid., p.129.

¹¹³ René Girard, Violence and the Sacred, p.31.

¹¹⁴ ibid., p.18.

¹¹⁵ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, (Gordon Colin, ed., p.142.

inoculation against total revolt and anarchy. According to Barthes, 'One immunizes the contents of the collective imagination by means of a small inoculation of acknowledged evil; one thus protects it against the risk of a generalized subversion.'116 Thus, minor identities and counter-cultural agitation is allowed within the rape-revenge genre as a localized subversion (revenge) but one which is highly controlled and mediated both in the narrative structure and in the final restitution of bourgeois order and stability. In Psycho Norman is arrested and incarcerated, in the Texas Chain Saw Massacre Sally eventually escapes and in both I Spit on Your Grave and Last House on the Left, because the revenge element is both individual and familial the broader fear of retaliation is exorcised in a controlled and seemingly justified manner. Jennifer will return to New York, her rape avenged without any fear of consequence for her actions. Furthermore, one suspects that in the final scene of Last House in which the police officers finally arrive, Mari's parents will be offered judicial vindication for their actions. Thus, the ritualistic aspect of the revenge is a collective catharsis to allay the real and worsening fears of American society that civilization is in a process of disintegration. The female body is employed within the rape-revenge genre for its connection to blood, sacrifice and violence and it is on and through this body, that incest, endogamy, thwarted individual and social anxieties are brutally and sadistically contested.

A more recent film to also incorporate the sacrificial and the ritualistic is Todd Morris' and Jennifer Twiss' 1996 film *A Gun for Jennifer* which centres on a group of vigilante women, survivors of sexual abuse. 117 Again all the elements of the 1970s raperevenge film are present. From the rape scene, to the failure of the judicial system, to the ritualistic castrations of the rapists and sexual abusers, to the essentially over-riding sacrificial function of the female body. The film critic Bev Zalcock, in an interview with Deborah Twiss, compares the tone of the film with the politics of the 1970s, surmising that it is

[...] strongly about male violence and its effect on women. In many ways reminiscent of radical feminism of the '70s that 'all men are rapists' and it begins with the female vigilante group castrating a pornographer who rapes and tortures women. ¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, p.150.

118 Bev Zalcock, Renegade Sisters, (London: Creation Books, 2001), p.136.

¹¹⁷ A Gun for Jennifer. is reminiscent of an earlier film, Violated, dir. Richard Cannistraro, (1984). In the film a group of female rape victims band together to take action against rapists who have been released from prison and who go on to rape again, by surgically castrating them.

The denouement of the film involves a graphic torture scene in which the central character, Jesse, is literally sacrificed. On a sacrificial table, her body is surgically opened up, her organs removed and eaten. Zalcock describes the film and this scene in particular as a descent into hell. In response Twiss explains:

That character, Carl Varna, is based on a real criminal. All the crimes that are in the film are things that are in the news in the US over the past ten to fifteen years. Everything. At the end we had to do something symbolic of what women have endured throughout the centuries at the hands of men; graphic images of torture. People are living in terror of violent and abusive crime, e.g. children disappear on a regular basis in the US and are used in pornography. 119

Zalcock further elaborates on Twiss' comments when she observes that A Gun for Jennifer 'highlights what the media and society denies – particularly violent crimes against women'. 120 I'm not sure if I completely agree with Twiss' ideological reasoning in relation to the film. Although a feminist politic may have been the over-riding aim of Morris and Twiss' film, instead it tends to replicate the problems of 1970s rape-revenge films in terms of feminist readings. Overall, what A Gun for Jennifer demonstrates is the continuing sexual violence endured by women who become sacrificial, surrogate victims for the frustrations and anxieties of society as a whole (that is a white-male, bourgeois, hetero-normative, majoritarian society). What is evident, therefore, from Hitchcock's Psycho and the rape-revenge films of the 1970s to A Gun for Jennifer (1996) is the link between the open wound, the bleeding female body and menstrual anxiety. Furthermore, these films can be read as articulating male anxieties in relation to the changing political and socio-cultural topography of America. Again, to reiterate Girard: 'when we minimize the dangers implicit in vengeance we risk losing the true function of sacrifice'. The female body in these films is central in terms of analysing how violence, sacrifice and narratives of revenge are gendered according to dominant ideologies and discourses. Therefore, I would argue that the phallocentrism of both the rape and the revenge elements of these films render feminist readings impossible.

'(Re)Mapping the Body': Cartographies of Blood

¹¹⁹ ibid., p.137.

¹²⁰ ibid., p.137.

The ethical subject of sustainable becoming practices a humble kind of hope, rooted in the ordinary micro-practices of everyday life: simple strategies to hold, sustain and map out thresholds of sustainable transformations.

(Rosi Braidotti, Transpositions)

Conversely, a novel and film which attempts to re-map the rape-revenge narrative, violence and female sexuality is Virginie Despentes' novel and film adaptation *Baise-Moi*. Despentes' novel published in 1993 and its film release in 2000 politically engages a transversal network of subjugated subjectivities and identities producing new-cartographies of desire and power relations. The narrative of both the novel and film pivots on two central characters Manu (in the film played by Raffaëla Anderson) and Nadine (played by Karen Bach) who subsequent to Manu's rape meet by chance on a day when both have committed murders and together embark on a violently bloody rampage. The film's release in France in the summer of 2000 was followed by an intense campaign by the extreme right which led to the State Council withdrawing its commercial certificate, thus, effectually banning it. This was the first outright ban on a film in France since 1973. Eventually, the film was given an X classification usually reserved for pornographic films.¹²¹ This was interesting in the light of how the novel had previously been received. By the time it was published, 50,000 copies of *Baise-Moi* had been presold and the text translated into 10 languages.

It was followed by a collection of short stories, *Mordre au Travers* (*Bite Through*), which consolidated Despentes' reputation. Two years later she published her second novel, *Chiennes Savantes* (*Highbrow Bitches*), followed by *Les Jolies Choses* (*Pretty Things*) in 1998 which went onto win the prestigious Prix de Flore French literary award and as the journalist Alix Sharkey succinctly observes, it was in light of this that Despentes a 'former punk, one-time beggar, massage-parlour hostess, rock journalist and rapper – was finally drawn to the bosom of France's literary industry.'

Therefore, in this section I will briefly examine how Despentes' novel and film function as 'minor' works of literature and cinema challenging dominant socio-cultural

¹²¹ Nicole Fayard, 'The Rebellious Body as Parody: *Baise-Moi* by Virginie Despentes', *French Studies*, volume 60, issue 1, January, 2006, pp.63-77.

Alix Sharkey, 'Scandale!', *The Observer*, April 14th, 2002, [http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2002/apr/14/filmcensorship.features], date accessed: 04/06/2008.

hierarchies. Overall, I wish to explore the micro-politics of race, gender, class and moreover argue that there is in *Baise-Moi* a menstrual/reproductive micro-politic which challenges strategies of power and control which operate through essentialised constructions of the body, sexuality and desire.

An initial examination of the minor and micro-politics is then necessary before applying it to *Baise-Moi*. It is of interest to note that, as Mark Anderson has pointed out, Deleuze and Guattari 'base their analysis on a flagrant but insightful misreading' of a passage taken from one of Kafka's diaries entries. This entry for December 25, 1911, shows Kafka musing on the advantages of a small literature, that is, the literature of a minority. Kafka saw 'small literature' as one which was connected intimately with politics. As Kafka further expressed:

What in great literature goes on down below, constituting a not indispensable cellar of the structure, here takes place in the full light of day, what is there a matter of passing interest for a few, here absorbs everyone no less than as a matter of life and death.¹²³

What Deleuze and Guattari draw from their deliberate misreading of Kafka is the belief that within language and literature it was possible to create a minor position which would conform to the political implications inherent in the diary entry. According to Deleuze and Guattari, 'A minor literature doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language.' Deleuze and Guattari define major and minor not as quantitative:

Majority implies a constant, of expression or content, serving as a standard measure by which to evaluate it. Let us suppose that the constant or standard is the average adult-white-heterosexual-European-male speaking a standard language (Joyce's or Ezra Pound's Ulysses). It is obvious that 'man' holds the majority, even if he is less numerous than mosquitoes, children, women, blacks, peasants, homosexuals, etc. That is because he appears twice, once in the constant and again in the variable from which the constant is extracted. Majority assumes a state of power and domination, not the other way around. It assumes the standard measure, not the other way around. Even Marxism 'has almost always translated hegemony from the point of view of the national worker, qualified, male and over thirty-five'. A determination different from that of the constant will therefore be considered

¹²⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan, (University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p.16.

¹²³ Mark Anderson, 'Introduction' in Mark Anderson (ed.), *Reading Kafka: Prague, Politics and the Fin de Siècle*, (New York: Schocken Press, 1989), p.11.

minoritarian, by nature and regardless of number, in other words, a subsystem or an outsystem. ¹²⁵

Following this approach Deleuze and Guattari developed their theory of minor literature, which is constituted of three main points: 'the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation.' Or, as the critic Ronald Bogue writes:

Minor literature's blend of the aesthetic and the political, as well as its antiidentitarian, open-ended politics of becoming, arise directly from its presuppositions about language, for the minor is above all a minor practice, a detteritorialization of relations of power that engages immanent lines of continuous variation within language and thereby induces becomings and generates possibilities for collective self-invention.¹²⁷

Minor Literature, thus:

- 1. Experiments with language (high coefficient of deterritorialization)
- 2. Treats the world as a network of power relations
- 3. Opens up possibilities for a people to come (becomings)

Although, in their work on Kafka, Deleuze and Guattari largely restrict their discussion to prose literature in later work Deleuze does refer to a minor theatre and a minor cinema. In relation to minor-cinema, Deleuze argues that the ultimate goal of film-makers is to go beyond current identities and create the images and voices of a people to come. I would argue that both Despentes' novel and film are examples of minor practices in literature and film. Both the novel and film are engaged with a political immediacy and suggest possibilities of future becomings for those on the peripheries of the majoritarian centre, those minor identities constituted by gender, race and class.

As an example of a minor literature, Despentes credits the underground punk scene in Lyon where she was living, with greatly influencing her work: 'The punks helped me to develop a writing style free of hang-ups and complexes. [...] My writing is really just

¹²⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattar, A Thousand Plateaus, p.116.

¹²⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature, trans. Dana Polan, p.18.

¹²⁷ Ronald Bogue, 'The Minor', Charles Stivale ed., *Deleuze: Key Concepts*, p.119.

rap and punk applied in literary form.' Similarly, her film adaptation applies a similar level of de-coding and deterritorializing of traditional cinematic conventions, from genre, to the choice of actresses, to the representation of the body and sexuality. As such, Despentes and Trinh Thi broke with traditional cinematic convention filming using only natural light, the two main actresses were former porn actors and both the body and sexuality as explored in the film both challenge and disrupt orthodox and generic representation. Furthermore, there is a constant tension in the film between the margins and the dominant majoritarian centre.

In an interview, Coralie Trinh Thi explains that, 'the first part of the film, the rape scene and the scene in the tabac, that's all part of everyday France.' With Virginie Despentes describing the controversy and outrage the film experienced upon its release as follows:

Me and Coralie, we didn't go to any of the grandes écoles [the French equivalent of Oxbridge], we didn't do classic cinema studies, we both have strong links with the so-called margins of society, so everything about us was deeply disturbing to the cinematic and media industries. If we'd had the conventional French attitude you know, conceptual discourse, the right references, something a little less visceral and more intellectual – they would have been reassured. Instead, we were simply too raw, too real for them. Of course, they want to make films about people like us, but they don't want us in their cosy little cinematic world. The real problem is that Baise-Moi is a film about violent 'lower class' women, made by supposedly marginal women. The mainstream doesn't want to hear about people with nothing, the disenfranchised, the marginals, taking up arms and killing people for fun and money. It happens, of course, but we're not allowed to acknowledge it. Then there's the question of the actresses. Of course it's fine to have porn films and porn actresses, but when you put them in a naturalistic drama that causes all kinds of problems. Why? Because you've destroyed the idea that they are sexual toys and brought them to life. 130

Despentes and Trinh Thi's film directly interrogates dominant subject positions and relational power dynamics. Racism and national identity is immediately confronted in one of the opening scenes in which Manu intimates that she can't get social benefit because she is not French enough. Furthermore, the two main actresses are of Arab origins. Despentes expresses:

10

 ¹²⁸ Virginie Despentes quoted in Alix Sharkey, 'Scandale!', *The Observer*, April 14th, 2002.
 [http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2002/apr/14/filmcensorship.features], date accessed: 04/06/2008.
 ¹²⁹ Coralie Trinh Thi, quoted in Alix Sharkey, 'Scandale!', *The Observer*, April 14th, 2002.
 [http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2002/apr/14/filmcensorship.features], date accessed: 04/06/2008.

¹³⁰ Virginie Despentes, quoted in Alix Sharkey, 'Scandale!', *The Observer*, April 14th, 2002. [http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2002/apr/14/filmcensorship.features], date accessed: 04/06/2008.

We didn't realize just how much fear and hatred it would arouse, but it definitely stoked up a lot of nasty stuff. Not least because it's about poor, non-white women. In France, there's a real conflict between the white majority and the Arabic population. Our two lead actresses both have African roots — one is half-Moroccan, the other half-Algerian — and in France, don't harbour any illusion, its visceral this problem. A lot of people really don't want to see two North African women who have been raped taking up arms and shooting European men. That's a little too close to historical reality. ¹³¹

As Etienne Balibar has argued, racism, class and sexism are inherently linked. Balibar writes in relation to racist practices:

Class is obviously a determinant but not the only one. I believe there is a third order of determination: there is class, there is the nation-state and there is sexuality, insofar as sexuality is a trans-individual phenomenon. If we agree that the racist way of thinking is closely linked to the impulse to constitute or to reconstitute a permanent form of community, which is the racist community or the community of racists, to transform historical communities as a means of confirming their own identities or their own social positions, and if we agree that sexism constitutes another form of community-building which we can call the community of males, or the community dominated by males to differing degrees, can we say that these two communities differ in any way? Are they in a sense, the same thing?¹³²

However, he goes on to make the point that:

We cannot say that there is a broad concept of racism which embraces nationalism, sexism, discrimination against minorities, and so on. We must rather locate those forms of oppression and discrimination which are historically and psychologically linked in a concrete way. Therefore, let us not say that sexism is another form of racism, rather let us examine how our social structures sustain the extremely close relationship between the two. ¹³³

As such, Despentes' sensibility to the violence of race, gender and class politics in France can be located in the numerous eruptions of discontent throughout France in the late 1970s and early 1980s to more recent events. As the French sociologist, novelist, and politician Azouz Begag writes:

13

³¹ ibid.

Etienne Balibar and Imanuelle Wallerstein, Trans. Chris Turner, Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities, (London: Routledge, 1991), p.34.
 ibid., p.34.

In 1977, for example, in Vitry-sur-Seine, in the southeastern banlieues [disadvantaged, multiethnic suburbs] of Paris, around thirty youths attacked three policemen as an act of reprisal for the harassment that they had been suffering. In 1979 and 1980 similar events took place in banlieues of Marseilles, Paris, and Lyon, where young people considered themselves to be at war with the police. In June 1979 a police sweep on young Maghrebis in Nanterre, in the northwestern banlieues of Paris, provoked the indignation of a group of lawyers, who took up the case with the justice and interior ministers. 'In the interests of security' the police had arrested dozens of youths, some of whom were under thirteen years old, but all of whom were visibly Arabs; none of their French friends was arrested. All the 'suspects' were photographed and put on police files. ¹³⁴

Despentes' time spent in Lyon during the eighties was also fraught with similar incidents of violent confrontation between the inhabitants of racially segregated and socially disadvantaged suburbs and the police. Begag writes of Lyon in 1980:

The same year brought serious confrontations between young people and the police in the banlieues of Lyon. The Zups of Venissieux-Les Minguettes, Rillieux, and Vaulx-en-Velin, which had just been built, contained dense concentrations of Maghrebi families who had been rehoused from nearby slums, temporary shelters, and shantytowns. France was becoming aware that living on its soil was a new generation born of immigration and colonization. As the children of foreigners, these youngsters were themselves regarded as foreigners. ¹³⁵

He also notes that:

The year 1980 marked a turning point in worsening relations between youths of immigrant origin and the police. For youngsters, the situation had gotten steadily tougher with heavy prison sentences, prison suicides, systemic deportations, and repeated attacks and murders in the hoods. 136

Given the political climate that informs Despentes novel it is unsurprising that minoritarian subject positions undercut the narrative at every possible turn. The revenge and murderous rampage that Nadine and Manu undertake is entirely anti-majoritarian, their targets are predominantly white, middle-class, heterosexual men and women. As Nicole Fayard writes:

¹³⁶ ibid., p.15.

¹³⁴ Azouz Begag, Alec G. Hargreaves, trans., *Ethnicity, Equality: France in the Balance*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), p.13.

¹³⁵ ibid., p.14.

In that respect Manu's and Nadine's victims are less random than might appear at first: they are all middle-class and characterized either by economic or patriarchal power and morals. Arabs and immigrants are excluded from the long list of victims, suggesting a solidarity or at least identification with traditional victims of social alienation. 137

Significantly, it is identified in the novel as an ethical choice. Manu announces to Nadine that she is going to stop at an Arab grocer's and states that she doesn't 'want any carnage with Arabs.' She then comments reflectively on the nature of violence 'Got to take it to the limit, but not every time. There's a clever balance to find. Another aspect of race relations in contemporary France brought into focus by Despentes is that of police surveillance and interrogation. In a scene where a young French-Arab woman is stopped and aggressively questioned by two police officers, she writes:

A few feet farther, their headlights illuminate two cops searching a girl against a wall. Manu says through her teeth, 'I can't believe it, not for one second. Nothing to do with us.' The moment they get to them, the girl head-butts one of the two cops, he pulls back a few steps, she takes off running, the other cop moves a hand to his belt. Manu shouts, 'Stop,' and the car skids, screeching as it suddenly brakes. Manu shoots until the cops fall, they don't even have the time to shoot back. Then she calmly walks up to them and pumps several bullets in each for good measure, muttering, 'Can't be too careful.'

Again, this is a common example of everyday racism in France. As Begag writes of his own experience of policed identity 'As the son of an Algerian immigrant, I've always been afraid of the police. I always felt a natural, instinctive fear rooted in a distant past that went way beyond me'¹⁴¹ Or, as Alec G. Hargreaves posits, surveying the disproportional levels of identity checks on Arab youths:

Significantly, the chain of events that sparked the conflagration of 2005 began with a police identity check on a group of young ethnics in Clichy-sous-Bois, in the northeastern banlieues of Paris. Minority ethnic youths have long complained of harassment by the police, who in their eyes symbolize a repressive and

ibid., p.162.

¹³⁷ Nicole Fayard, 'The Rebellious Body as Parody: *Baise-Moi* by Virginie Despentes', *French Studies*, volume 60, issue 1, January, 2006, p.67.

¹³⁸ Virginie Despentes, Bruce Benderson, trans., *Baise-Moi*, p.158.

¹³⁹ ibid., p.159.

¹⁴¹ Azouz Begag, Alec G. Hargreaves, trans., *Ethnicity, Equality: France in the Balance*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007),p.7.

discriminatory social order. Disproportionately high rates of police identity checks on young ethnics typify the suspicion with which they are regarded by many members of the majority ethnic population. Fear of harassment has, in turn generated deep distrust among young ethnics such as those who, in Clichy-sous-Bois, fled and took refuge in an electrical substation rather than submit to a police identity check. When two of them — of Mauritanian and Tunisian origin, respectively — died there by accidental electrocution, many in the banlieues were quick to blame their deaths on aggressive policing and took to the streets to demonstrate their anger by torching cars and attacking police stations and other public buildings. Within days, the cycle of police repression and counter-protests spiralled into the most serious civil disturbances seen in France since 1968. [42]

He goes on to surmise that:

The identity checks that sparked the disorders of 2005 are deeply symbolic not only of the role played by the police in enforcing what young ethnics see as a discriminatory social order but also of the wider pattern of identity politics to which the ethnicization of social differences has given rise. In the eyes of young ethnics the disproportionate rate at which they are asked to produce their identity papers is symptomatic of deep-seated suspicions among many members of the majority ethnic population concerning the legitimacy of their presence in French society. Checks on their papers enable the police to scrutinize not only their name but also their nationality and/or immigration status and, by the same token, their right to be in France. In point of fact the overwhelming majority of young ethnics, including those who took to the streets in 2005, were born in France, and as the children or grandchildren of immigrants, they are automatically French nationals who, by the same token, have the inalienable right to reside in France. The disproportionate rate at which young ethnics are subjected to identity checks reflects the reluctance of many on the majority ethnic side of French society to acknowledge that young people of colour and/or of Muslim heritage really belong in that society. Suspicions and prejudices of this nature fuel patterns of discrimination that exacerbate the socioeconomic inequalities to which postcolonial minorities are prone by virtue of their disadvantaged backgrounds. Discriminatory notions of national identity are thus, intimately linked with socially divisive identity politics. 143

It is this cultural reality of race relations, national identity and socially divisive identity politics which Despentes brings to the fore. Manu in the novel is of Arabic origins and in the film, as already noted, both actresses are of North-African heritage. Furthermore, the socially divisive identity politics of race and class is further complicated by gender. The conflation of minored identities is described by Rosi Braidotti, as a monstrous 'otherness', a 'domestic foreignness'. She writes:

ibid., pp.xiv-xv.

¹⁴² Alec G. Hargreaves, 'Translators Note', in Azouz Begag, Alec G. Hargreaves, trans., *Ethnicity, Equality: France in the Balance*, pp.xiii-xiv.

This mechanism of 'domestic foreignness', exemplified by the monster, finds its closest analogy in mechanisms such as sexism and racism. The woman, the Jew, the black or the homosexual are certainly different from the configuration of human subjectivity based on masculinity, whiteness, heterosexuality, and Christian values which dominates our scientific thinking. Yet they are central to this thinking, linked to it by negation, and therefore structurally necessary to upholding the dominant view of subjectivity. ¹⁴⁴

This 'domestic foreignness' of racism, class and gender in *Baise-Moi*, leads me into my final analysis which will specifically examine the body, sexuality and desire. Minor and micro-political practices in cinema and literature involve high-coefficients of deterritorialization. In Despentes' novel and film the female body undergoes extensive decoding. From the rape of Manu, to pornography, prostitution, masturbation, incest and bodily fluids, particularly blood, the body takes multiple lines of flight from the highly coded, striated and controlled territory of female sexuality and desire. Moreover, these lines of flight are again politically engaged across a transversal matrix of minored identities and becomings challenging Oedipal and capitalist structures of desire.

One of the most controversial scenes in the film is the rape scene, which was criticized for portraying Manu's indifference to her attack. In the film Manu expresses:

We're still alive, right? If you park in the projects, you empty your car because someone's going to break in. I leave nothing precious in my cunt for those jerks. It's just a bit of cock. 145

This parallels the micro-politics of Despentes and Trinh Thi's film, whereby, molar, hierarchical, patriarchal structures of control are challenged. As Deleuze and Guattari write in *A Thousand Plateaus*:

You will be organized, you will be an organism, you will articulate your body – otherwise you're just depraved. You will be signifier and signified, interpreter and interpreted – otherwise you're just a deviant. You will be a subject, nailed down as one, a subject of enunciation, recoiled into a subject of the statement – otherwise you're just a tramp. ¹⁴⁶

292

 ¹⁴⁴ Rosi Braidotti, 'Teratology and Embodied Difference' in Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick, eds.,
 Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p.293.
 ¹⁴⁵ *Baise-Moi*, (2000), dir. Virginie Despentes and Coralie Trinh Thi.

¹⁴⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, p.177.

Manu's indifference to her rape in the novel proves extremely disturbing to her attackers who describe her as a corpse and not a woman, in the film adaptation she is described as a zombie, a state of resistance in both the novel and film which provokes further brutality and physical violence. Despentes writes:

'I can't believe the way this one just lies there and takes it'. 'Gotta say, with that slut's mug of hers she drags around she must not get pronged often, you know?' 'Careful, she probably doesn't know the difference between her cunt and a garbage chute.' 'Should have brought rubbers, you never know ... With girls who let themselves get raped ...' [...] She looks at the ground, there's a little of her blood on the grass, from when the guy slugged her in the nose. Another one, standing looks at them. The guy fucking her in the ass gets irritated; 'Feels like fucking a corpse.' The one looking says, 'look at her, she isn't even crying, she's not even a woman.' 147

Sexual politics and organisational structures of control are transgressed and challenged through Manu's disarticulation of her body. However, this disarticulation of the body as a form of resistance to the exertion of power through sexual violence further agitates her rapists leaving her inevitably frustrated. She questions: 'Fuck, why'd they hit her so much when she didn't put up a fight.' Her resistance is further undermined by Karla who has also been raped and who asks of Manu: 'How could you do that? How could you give in like that?' In response to which, she thinks: 'she disgusts Karla even more than the guys. How could she do that? What an idiotic remark.' It is this interrogation of feminist and philosophical debate, from second wave feminism and Foucauldian thought in the 1970s to contemporary postfeminist debate, which Despentes engages with in the rape scene and which she continues to explore through a sustained decoding and deterritorialization of sexuality and the body throughout both the novel and film, whereby, the female body becomes a type of Body without Organs.

For Deleuze and Guattari, as stated in Chapter Three, 'The BwO: [...] is already underway the moment the body has had enough of organs and wants to slough them off, or loses them.' Thus, the film is permeated with images of bodily fluids. Manu wallows in vomit, and her own menstrual blood, and in the novel Despentes dedicates an entire short chapter to Manu's menstrual bleeding. The chapter opens with Nadine entering a

¹⁴⁷ Virgine Despentes, Bruce Benderson, trans., *Baise-Moi*, p.50.

¹⁴⁸ ibid., p.51.

¹⁴⁹ ibid., p.51.

¹⁵⁰ ibid., p.51.

¹⁵¹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, p.177.

hotel room to find Manu crouched in a corner, wearing only her high heels. Despentes writes:

She's studying some blood flowing from between her legs, moving her ass to make trails of it. The dark red stains stay at the surface for a moment in brilliant scarlet bubbles, then seep into the fibres, spreading out on the light-coloured carpet. 152

Here, there is a deliberate interrogation of female sexuality as interiority and exteriority, as embedded and embodied through socio-cultural discursive and visual practices. The scene sardonically satirizes the ubiquitous image of the bleeding, tortured, mutilated and ripped-open female body in popular visual culture. Nadine watches while Manu reflects and disrupts menstrual taboo:

Nadine squats opposite her, judgmentally considers the thick red thread of liquid coming out in more or less generous squirts. Inside it are small darker shreds, like the cream in milk that you skim off with a spoon. Manu's hands play between her legs. She's smeared with blood up to her breasts, says, 'It smells good in there, you end up liking it.' 153

Manu asks Nadine in the same opening sequence:

Doesn't it piss you off that I got blood everywhere? I bleed like a bitch on the first day. But it only lasts a day. When I was a kid, I got it on everything just to piss my mother off. She was from the old school, not into those things. She'd vote against it if she could. It made her sick to her stomach.¹⁵⁴

Furthermore, the scene juxtaposes the menstruating vagina with violence and bloodshed a relationship which is deeply embedded in the cultural psyche as this chapter has already demonstrated. Despentes' writing explicitly exposes this relationship, she writes:

Nadine gets up without moving her eyes away from the stains on the carpet, Manu slides onto her back. Lying on the floor, she moves her legs. The hairs around her vagina are pretty light, and it's easy to see the blood on them. In the mags Nadine

154 ibid., p.50.

294

¹⁵² Virginie Despentes, *Baise-Moi*, Bruce Benderson, trans., p.151.

¹⁵³ ibid., p.152.

bought, they have photos showing how to take apart a gun and clean it. They give the names of all the parts. Facing each other, each takes an end of the bed, and they spend part of the day examining the guns every possible which way. Manu still has no clothes on, she leaves blood stains wherever she sits. She tells about gun battles she's seen in the movies, aiming at stuff in the room. It's as if the hand were made to hold a rod. Metal against your palm. Obvious. Just what your arm needed. ¹⁵⁵

The critic Nicole Fayard further reinforces this link between menstruation and broader cultural violence by drawing a connection between Manu and Nadine's interest in their victims' blood, which she describes as paralleling 'their fascination with their own menstrual blood suggesting further resistance to the containment of femininity.' 156

The dismantling of the self in *Baise-Moi* is also connected to desire. In his work with Guattari, Deleuze developed a definition of desire as positive and productive that supports the conception of life as material flows. His definition contests desire as premised on 'lack' or regulated by 'law', arguing against psychoanalysis and the Oedipalization of desire. This Anti-Oedipalization of desire and production is also evidenced in *Baise-Moi*. There is a distinct absence of the family unit and the only father figure intimated is one implicated with incestuous desire. As Fayard has observed:

Thus, the family is completely evacuated from the plot through both the concrete and symbolic elimination of fathers: parental figures are both absent and described as inadequate. Fatima's father was put in prison for incest and died there, and Manu describes her own father as so emotionally detached that he did not know her name. ¹⁵⁷

She continues 'Baise-Moi performs what is perhaps the ultimate transgression in patriarchal society through its presentation of incest, which is glorified.' As Fatima expresses in the novel:

Me and my father were together all the time, it just happened all by itself, really easy. I think I was the one who came on to him. I know that I'd wanted it a lot, thought about it for a long time. 159

ibid., p.152

¹⁵⁶ Nicole Fayard, 'The Rebellious Body as Parody: *Baise-Moi* by Virginie Despentes', *French Studies*, volume 60, issue 1, January, 2006, p.74.

¹⁵⁷ ibid., p.72.

¹⁵⁸ ibid., p.72.

¹⁵⁹ Virginie Despentes, Virginie, trans. Bruce Benderson, *Baise-Moi*, p.177.

However, rather than glorify, this scene once again politicizes desire, demonstrating the brutality of social morality as it is enacted and played out upon the female body. Despentes continues:

Incest. They found out about it because I got pregnant. I don't ever talk about it Not because I'm afraid or ashamed. Just know it'd be better not to. I was thirteen when he got arrested. Nobody listened to me. That's how they are, they know better than you what goes on at your house. I had an abortion. I don't remember asking for it. There was no question about it as far as they were concerned, I think They D. and C.'d me the day my father died. Not an innocent coincidence. Seemed strange to me. I had the right to grieve, but not they way I was. They wanted me to clearly understand that there was some stuff I wasn't supposed to complain about. 160

Furthermore, medical 'ethics' are exposed as hypocritical:

[...] the doctor I went to confused me. He told me he was bound by some kind of secret, and he duped me, you know. I told him everything, he got mixed up in our business. I guess he had nothing fucking better to do. [...] That's the reason I don't give a shit that you've killed people, people that you don't even know. Innocent people. I know them, those innocents. 161

Baise-Moi deviates from the usual depictions of incest as evidenced in earlier versions of the genre. Desire is complicated, becomes molecular and multiple. It is a political act, a becoming-minor, a line of flight, rather than a repetition of molar, insular and internal national politics as is the case in the primitive barbarism of films such as Last House on the Left (1972) and I Spit on Your Grave (1978). In Despentes' work incest is disruptive of capitalist and psychoanalytic productions of desire, functioning instead as an act of resistance.

Disruptions of the Oedipal family triangulation are further apparent in the indiscriminate murder of women as mothers and men as fathers and in, perhaps one of the most striking scenes in the novel, Nadine's murder of a child; a scene which is distinctly absent in the film adaptation and one which recalls the child murders on Hampstead Heath by Lucy Westenra, 'The Bloofer Lady' in Stoker's Dracula. In a fancy café a young child becomes belligerent and Nadine muses to herself about newspapers and child killers:

¹⁶⁰ ibid., p.176.

¹⁶¹ ibid., p.177.

The headlines and barroom talk when a child is killed. The effect it has on people. Even she'd have a hard time doing that. Shut yourself out from the rest of the world, get over the hurdle. Be the worst that's in you. Put a gulf between you and everyone else. Make a mark. They want something for the front page, she can give them that. She takes out her gun, goes through the motions without having to think about it. Takes a deep breath, keeps the child fixed in her eyes. The child with a whim who doesn't want to hear about anything else. The barrel extends her arm, shines in close-up right in the middle of the kids face. The old lady screams just before it goes off, like a roll of drums announcing the solo. 162

Fayard writes of this scene, that:

Having established cultural and generic backgrounds for her novels, Despentes then destabilized them through the principle of role reversal. This role-reversal is twofold. First, the portrayal of violence perpetrated by women functions as an obvious critique of conventional gender models; second, more subtly, Manu and Nadine draw attention to their social condition by voluntarily excluding themselves from this society, preferring self-exclusion to social elimination. ¹⁶³

It is this disruption, the stutter and stammer in both the linguistic and visual texts of writing and cinema which makes *Baise-Moi* politically active. In conclusion, *Baise-Moi*, both the novel and film, are minor practices of literature and cinema, deterritorializating networks of power relations and engaging immanent lines of continuous variation within the major forms of writing and film-making. Despentes and Trinh Thi re-map and construct new-cartographies of power and desire. Bodies, voices and sexualities are collectively enunciated from the peripheries, thus, opening possibilities for a people to come and the possibility of multiple centres, whilst simultaneously challenging the Oedipalized, controlling machinic assemblages, of nation, state, family, and police. To quote Rosi Braidotti:

The becoming-minoritarian, or becoming-nomadic is the pattern of subversion that is open to both the empirical members of the majority (the 'same') and to those of the minority (the 'others'). [...] Power is the key issue, and mobility is a term that indexes access to it. As such, power-relations are internally contradictory. The politics of location and the politically invested cartographies they produce are the main tools – in a conceptual as well as political sense of the term. Producing a cartography is a way of embedding critical practice in a specific situated

¹⁶² ibid., p.156.

¹⁶³ Nicole Fayard, 'The Rebellious Body as Parody: *Baise-Moi* by Virginie Despentes', *French Studies*, Volume 60, issue 1, January, 2006, p.68.

perspective, avoiding universalistic generalizations and grounding it so as to make it accountable. 164

Finally, Baise-Moi is a scathing critique of middle-class, neo-liberal humanism. It rips apart the illusions of social, racial and gender integration and equality. Instead, mechanisms of power are exposed for what they are; 'a standard' by which to measure. Thus, both novel and film function as rhizomatic, subsystems/outsystems and viscerally, bloody practices of resistance.

Overall, this chapter has expanded upon the female body at puberty to engage with the menstrual woman in general. The prevalence of sexual violence towards women in horror can be traced to both a failed menstrual complex and also to the signification of the bleeding female body in rituals of sacrifice and retribution. The horror of the slasher and rape-revenge genres resides in incestuous desire for the mother that erupts in violence towards other women. However, this is challenged in the work of Virginie Despentes and Coralie Trin Thi who move beyond the strictures of psychoanalysis and oedipal structures to politically engage with and challenge the subject of sexual violence.

¹⁶⁴ Rosi Braidotti, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*, p.79.

Afterword

'I just don't trust anything that bleeds for five days and doesn't die'1

(Mr Garrison, South Park: Bigger Longer & Uncut)

In this thesis I have attempted to explore the otherwise absent subject of menstrual blood within academic studies of gothic and horror literature and film. Through an examination of prohibition and taboo, medical discourse and practice, and conservative orthodox tradition and politics, I have endeavoured to position, locate and make accountable representations of the bleeding, menstrual body within the genre. The girl occupies a unique position in terms of identity politics, she is a threshold, always 'becoming' and always minor. Thus, female puberty is a *menstrual-morphosis*, a becoming-woman. This extends the argument of the '*monstrous-feminine*' to an analysis of the '*menstruous-monstrous*' according to Oedipal desire which serves to consolidate and reinforce capitalist economics. As Rosi Braidotti argues 'post-feminist neo-liberalism is pro-capitalist.'²

Furthermore, bio-power according to Donna Haraway, has entered the age of 'the informatics of domination' or as Braidotti writes, it is necessary 'to try to account for contemporary embodied subjects in terms of their surplus-value as visual commodities that circulate in a global circuit of cash flow [...]' However, on occasion within the textual and visual media of gothic and horror literature and film, the bleeding, menstrual body disrupts Oedipal desire and pro-capitalist economics, opening new possibilities for positive becomings and lines of flight. However, for the most part contemporary gothic and horror continues to fixate on the female body and female sexuality according to the capitalist dictates of the commercial box-office. This is particularly evident in the recent American and Australian torture-porn trend where the female body is subjected to violent and torturous mutilations. The success of the genre has spawned numerous sequels of films such as *Hostel* and *Saw*. However, gothic and horror has always been political and the female body has

¹ Mr Garrison, quoted in *South Park: Bigger Longer & Uncut*, (1999), dir. Trey Parker.

² Rosi Braidotti, *Transpositions*, p.45.

³ Donna Haraway, *Modest_Witness@Second_Millenium. FemaleMan©_Meets. OncoMouse*, (London: Routledge, 1997), p.174.

⁴ ibid., p.45.

provided a unique site for ideological contestation. Thus, what I argue for in this thesis is a positive ontology and politics of the body where the bleeding female body is not a limit but a threshold, 'that is to say [a point] of encounter and not of closure',⁵ one that allows for difference and multiplicity.

Interestingly, those writers and directors I have posited as politically affirmative within this thesis are women – Claire Denis, Virginie Despentes and Coralie Trin Thi – who have attempted to rhizomatically reposition and articulate with a renewed emphasis the materiality of the body. Their respective works engage with issues of bio-technology, gender, race and class. As Rosi Braidotti states,

Positive metamorphoses are indeed my political passion: the kinds of becoming that destabilize dominant power-relations, deterritorialize Majority-based identities and values, and infuse a joyful sense of empowerment into a subject that is in-becoming. This passion is political as well in that it associates these creative deterritorializations with resistance against monolithic and centralized power systems. This critical freedom mobilizes the work of the creative imagination as well as more traditional intellectual resources.⁶

Thus, from fairy tales of blood and the figure of 'Little Red Riding Hood' to vampires and female puberty in 1970s horror and the slasher and rape-revenge genre, I have attempted in this thesis to both engage with and critique discursive formations and representations of the bleeding female body within horror arguing for a positive *menstrual-morphosis* that politically resists dominant, phallocentric power systems.

⁵ ibid., p.268.

⁶ ibid., p.271.

Bibliography

Arata, Luigi, 'Menses in the *Corpus Hippocratium*' in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, eds., *Menstruation: A Cultural History*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) pp.13-25

Aristotle, 'On the Generation of Animals', in Jonathan Barnes ed., *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation, Volume One*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984)

Armitt, Lucie, 'The Fragile Frames of *The Bloody Chamber*', in Joseph Bristow and Trev Lynn Broughton, eds., *The Infernal Desires of Angela Carter*, (London: Longman, 1997), pp.88-98

Atwood, Margaret, 'Running with Tigers', in Lorna Sage, ed., *Flesh and the Mirror*, (London: Virago, 1994), pp.117-135

Auerbach, Nina, Our Vampires, Ourselves, (London: University of Chicago Press, 1995)

Auerbach, Nina, Woman and the Demon, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982)

Austin, Guy, Contemporary French Cinema: An Introduction, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996)

Baggini, Julian and Jeremy Stangroom, Great Thinkers A-Z, (London: Continuum, 2005)

Baker, Christine, eds., *The Wordsworth Book of Classic Horror Stories*, (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Ltd.,1998)

Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984)

Baldick, Chris, In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity and Nineteenth-Century Writing, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987)

Balibar, Etienne and Imanuelle Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, trans., Chris Turner (London: Routledge, 1991)

Barchillon, Jacques, 'Remembering Angela Carter', in Danielle M. Roemer and Cristina Bacchilega, eds., *Angela Carter and the Fairy Tale*, (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2001), pp.26-29

Barker, Clive, Clive Barker's Books of Blood, Volumes 1-3, (London: Warner Books, 1994)

Barker, Clive, Clive Barker's Books of Blood, Volumes 3-6, (London: Warner Books, 1994)

Barker, Martin, ed., *The Video Nasties: Freedom and Censorship in the Media*, (London: Pluto, 1984)

Barthes, Roland, *Mythologies*, (London: Vintage Classics, 2000)

Bataille, Georges, *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality*, trans. Mary Dalwood, (London: Marion Boyars Publishers, 1987)

Bataille, Georges, trans. by Mary Dalwood, Eroticism, (London: Marion Boyars Publishers, 1987)

Beahm, Georges, The Stephen King Companion, (New York: Andrews & McMeel, 1992)

Belford, Barbara, Bram Stoker: A Biography of the Author of Dracula, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1996)

Bellour, Raymond and Constance Penley, The Analysis of Film, (Indiana University Press, 2002)

Benedict, Helen, Virgin or Vamp: How the Press Covers Sex Crimes, (London: University of Oxford Press, 1992)

Benson, Stephen, 'Angela Carter and the Literary Märchen: A Review Essay', in Danielle M. Roemer and Cristina Bacchilega, eds., *Angela Carter and the Fairy Tale*, (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2001), pp.30-58

Bettelheim, Bruno, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978)

Bible, King James Version, (Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004)

Blatty, William P., The Exorcist, (London: Faber, 1998)

Bloch, Robert, *Psycho*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1999)

Bloom, Clive, Gothic Horror, (Basingtoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)

Bogue, Ronald, Deleuze and Guattari, (New York: Routledge, 2005)

Bordo, Susan, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003)

Botting, Fred, and Scott Wilson, *Bataille*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001)

Botting, Fred, and Scott Wilson, eds. The Bataille Reader, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997)

Bourke, Joanna, Rape: A History from 1860 to the Present, (London: Virago, 2008)

Braidotti, Rosi, Metamorphosis: Towards A Materialist Theory of Becoming, (London: Polity Press, 2007)

Braidotti, Rosi, *Transpositions*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006)

Braidotti, Rosi, 'Schizophrenia' in Adrian Parr, ed., *The Deleuze Dictionary*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005) pp.237-240

Braidotti, Rosi, 'Teratology and Embodied Difference', in Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick, eds., *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999) pp.290-301

Braidotti, Rosi, 'Meta(l)morphoses' in *Theory, Culture and Society*, volume 14, issue 2, 1997, pp.67-80

Braidotti, Rosi, Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory, (New York: Columbia Press, 1994)

Brennan, Teresa, ed., Between Feminism and Psychoanalysis, (London: Routledge, 1989)

Bristow, Joseph and Trev Lynn Broughton, *The Infernal Desires of Angela Carter*, (London: Longman, 1997)

Bronfen, Elizabeth, *The Knotted Subject, Hysteria and its Discontents*, (Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1998)

Brooker, Peter et al., eds., *Literature and History*, (London: Thames Polytechnic, 1984)

Brottman, Mikita, *Meat is Murder: An Illustrated Guide to Cannibal Culture*, (London, Creation Books International, 1998)

Browne, Porter Emerson, A Fool there Was, (New York: Kessinger Publications, 2004)

Brownmiller, Susan, Against our Will Men, Women and Rape, (Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1986)

Buckley, Thomas and Alma Gottlieb, *Blood Magic: The Anthropology of Menstruation*, (Berkelely: University of California Press, 1988)

Bunnin, Nicholas, and Jiyuan Yu, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy*, (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Publishers, 2009)

Bunson, Matthew, Vampire The Encyclopaedia, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993)

Bynum, Caroline Walker, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Germany and Beyond*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2007)

Bynum, Caroline Walker, Metamorphosis and Identity, (New York: Zone Books, 2001)

Bynum, Caroline Walker, *The Resurrection of the Body*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995)

Bynum, Caroline Walker, Fragmentation and Redemption, (New York: Zone Books, 1991)

Bynum, Caroline Walker, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988)

Cahill, Ann J., 'Foucault Rape and the Construction of the Feminine Body', in *Hypatia*, volume 15, issue, 1, Winter 2000, pp.42-64

Canguilhem, Georges, *The Normal and the Pathological*, (New York: Zone Books, 1989)

Carroll, Noël, *The Philosophy of Horror: Or, Paradoxes of the Heart,* (New York: Routledge, 1990)

Carter, Angela, The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault, (London: Penguin Classics, 2008)

Carter, Angela, The Sadeian Woman: An Exercise in Cultural History, (London: Virago, 2006)

Carter, Angela, The Sadeian Woman: An Exercise in Cultural History, (London: Virago, 2000)

Carter, Angela, *Shaking a Leg: Journalism and Writings: The Collected Angela Carter*, Jenny Uglow ed., (London, Chato & Windus, 1997)

Carter, Angela, Burning Your Boats: Collected Short Stories, (London: Vintage, 1996)

Carter, Angela, The Bloody Chamber, (London: Vintage, 1995)

Carter, Angela, ed., The Second Virago Book of Fairy Tales, (London: Virago, 1992)

Carter, Angela, ed., The Second Virago Book of Fairy Tales, (London: Virago, 1992)

Carter, Angela, Expletives Deleted: Selected Writings, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1992)

Carter, Angela, The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman, (London: Picador, 1988)

Carter, Angela, Nights at the Circus, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1984)

Carter, Angela, Nothing Sacred: Selected Writings, (London: Virago Press, 1982)

Carter, Angela, The Passion of the New Eve, (London: Gollancz, 1977)

Carter, Angela, Fireworks: Nine Profane Pieces, (London: Quartet Books, 1974)

Clark, Robert, 'Angela Carter's Desire Machine', in *Women's Studies*, volume 1, issue 2, 1987, pp.147-161.

Clover, Carol, J., Men, Women and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film, (London: British Film Institute, 1993)

Codrescu, Andrei, *The Blood Countess*, (London: Quartet Books, 1995)

Colebrook, Claire, 'Repression' in Alan Parr, ed., *The Deleuze Dictionary*, (New York: Zone Books, 1989), pp.229-230

Colebrook, Claire, Deleuze: A Guide for the Perplexed, (London: Continuum: 2006)

Crane, Jonathan Lake, Terror and Everyday Life, (London: Sage, 1994)

Creed, Barbara, *Phallic Panic*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2005)

Creed, Barbara, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, (London: Routledge, 1993)

Critchley, Simon, and William R. Schroeder, eds., *A Companion to Continental Philosophy*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1999)

Cronan Rose, Ellen, 'Through the Looking Glass: When Women Tell Fairy Tales', in Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch and Elizabeth Langland, eds., *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development*, (Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1983), pp.209-227

Dahl, Roald, Revolting Rhymes, (London: Penguin Books, 2001)

Dalton, Katharina, *Once a Month*, (Fontana Paperbacks: Glasgow, 1983)

Daly, Claude Dagmar, 'Menstruation Complex in Literature' in *Psychoanalytical Quarterly*, volume 4, 1935, pp.307-340

Darnton, Robert, *The Great Cat Massacre*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

Davenport-Hines, Richard, Sex, Death and Punishment, (London: Collins, 1990)

Day, Aidan, Angela Carter: The Rational Glass, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998)

De Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, trans. and ed. by H.M. Parshely, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973)

De Lauretis, Teresa, ed., Feminist Studies/Critical Studies, (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1988)

De Lauretis, Teresa, *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction*, (London: Macmillan Press, 1987)

De Lauretis, Teresa, Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema, (London: Macmillan, 1984)

Delaney, Janice, Mary Jane Lupton and Emily Toth, *The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988)

Deleuze, Gilles, Foucault, (London: Continuum, 2006)

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, (London: Continuum, 2004)

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari, Anti-Oedipus, (London: Continuum, 2004)

Deleuze, Gilles, *Desert Islands and Other Texts: 1953-1974*, trans., Michael Taormina, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2004)

Deleuze, Gilles, Negotiations, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995)

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari, trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson, What is Philosophy, (London: Verso, 1994)

Deleuze, Gilles, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, (New York: Zone Books, 1991)

Deleuze, Gilles, *Coldness and Cruelty* and *Venus in Furs* by Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, (New York: Zone Books, 1991)

Despentes, Virginie, Baise-Moi, Bruce Benderson, trans., (New York Grove Press, 1999)

Dijkstra, Bram, Evil Sisters, (New York: Henry Holt and Company Inc., 1998)

Dijkstra, Bram, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986)

Dika, Vera, Games of Terror: Halloween, Friday the 13th, and the Films of the Stalker Cycle, (London: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1990)

Dika, Vera, 'The Stalker Film' in Gregory A. Waller, ed., *American Horrors: Essays on the Modern American Horror Film*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987) pp.86-101

Doane, Mary Ann, *The Desire to Desire*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987)

Douglas, Mary, *Implicit Meanings: Selected Essays in Anthropology*, (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1999)

Douglas, Mary, *Purity and Danger Danger: An Analysis of the concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, (London: Routledge, 2005)

Du Gay, Paul, Jessica Evans and Peter Redman, *Identity: A Reader*, (London: Sage Publications, 2007)

Dunker, Patricia, 'Re-Imagining the Fairy Tales: Angela Carter's Bloody Chambers', *Literature and History*, Peter Brooker, ed., volume 10, issue 1, (London: Thames Polytechnic, 1984), pp.3-14

Dyer, Richard, White, (London: Routledge, 1997)

Easton, Alison, ed., Angela Carter: Contemporary Critical Essays, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000)

Eliade, Mircea, ed., The Encyclopaedia of Religion, (London: Macmillan, 1987)

Eliade, Mircea, Patterns in Comparative Religion, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1979)

Eliade, Mircea, The Sacred and the Profane, (New York: Harcourt Brace and World Inc., 1959)

Emily Martin, 'Medical Metaphors of Women's Bodies: Menstruation and Menopause' in Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina and Sarah Stanbury, eds., *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, (New York: Columbia Press, 1997), pp.15-41

Eyles, Allen, Robert Adkinson and Nicholas Fry, eds., *The House of Horror: The Complete Story of Hammer Films*, (London: Lorrimer, 1981)

Fairclough, Peter, Three Gothic Novels (The Castle of Otranto, Horace Walpole; Vathek, William Beckford; Frankenstein, Mary Shelley, (Penguin: London, 1986)

Farris, John, *The Fury*, (London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1977)

Fayard, Nicole, 'The Rebellious Body as Parody: *Baise-Moi* by Virginie Despentes' in *French Studies*, volume 60, issue 1, January, 2006, pp.63-77

Fingerson, Laura, *Girls in Power: Gender, Body, and Adolescence*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006)

Foster, Hal, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, (Washington Bay Press, 1983)

Foucault, Michel, The Archaeology of Knowledge, Alan Sheridan, ed., (London: Routledge, 2002)

Foucault, Michel, Essential Works of Foucault: 1954-1984, volume 3, James D. Faubian, ed., (London: Penguin, 2000)

Foucault, Michel, The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality: 1, (London: Penguin, 1998)

Foucault, Michel, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, Gordon Colin, ed., (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980)

Foucault, Michel, Gordon Colin, ed., *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings* 1972-1977, (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980)

Foucault, Michel, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, eds., and trans., (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977)

Foucault, Michel, Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason, trans., Richard Howard, (London: Tavistock, 1967)

Fout, John C., ed., Forbidden History: The State, Society and the Regulation of Sexuality in Modern Europe, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992)

Franz, Marie-Louise von, Archetypal Patterns in Fairytales, (New York: Icon Books, 1997)

Franz, Marie-Louise von, *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales*, (Dallas, Texas: Spring Publications, 1982)

Frayling, Christopher, Vampyres: Lord Byron to Count Dracula, (London: Faber and Faber, 1991)

Frazer, James G., The Golden Bough, abridged edition, (Londan: Macmillan, 1980)

Freeland, Cynthia A., *The Naked and the Undead: Evil and the Appeal of Horror*, (Boulder Colorado: Westview Press, 2000)

Freud, Sigmund, *The Uncanny*, (London: Penguin, 2003)

Freud, Sigmund, 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: Volume VII (1901-1905)*, James Strachey, ed., (London: Vintage, The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 2001)

Freud, Sigmund, On The History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement: Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works in The Complete Works of Sigmund Freud Volume XIV (1914-1916), James Strachey, ed., (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1981)

Freud, Sigmund, 'Medusa's Head', James Strachey, ed., *The Complete Works of Sigmund Freud Volume XVIII (1920-1922) On The History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works*, James Strachey, ed., (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1981)

Freud, Sigmund, Case Histories II, Angela Richards, ed., (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979)

Freud, Sigmund, 'The Aetiology of Hysteria' in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume III*, James Strachey ed., (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1966)

Freud, Sigmund, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, (London: Hogarth Press, 1961)

Gamble, Sarah, ed., *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism*, (London: Routledge, 2001)

Gamble, Sarah, ed., Angela Carter: Writing from the Front Line, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997)

Gay, Peter, ed., The Freud Reader, (London: Vintage, 1995)

Gelder, Ken, Reading the Vampire, (London: Routeledge, 1994)

Geyer-Ryan, Helga, Fables of Desire, (Cambridge: Polity, 1994)

Gilbert, Sandra and Susan Gubar, eds., *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and Nineteenth Century Imagination*, (Yale: Yale University Press, 1984)

Girard, René, Violence and the Sacred, (London: Continuum, 2005)

Glazier, Michael and Monika K. Hellwig, eds., *The Modern Catholic Encyclopaedia*, (Liturgical Press, 1994)

Gold, Judith, *The Psychiatric Implications of Menstruation*, (Washington: American Psychiatric Press, 1985)

Golub, Sharon, Periods: From Menarche to Menopause, (London: Sage Publications, 1992)

Gosling, Nigel, Gustave Doré, (Devon: Newton Abbot, 1973)

Gould, Stephen Jay, *The Mismeasure of Man*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981)

Grant, Barry Keith, ed., *Planks of Reason: Essays on the Modern Horror Film*, (London: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1984)

Grant, Barry Keith, ed., *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996)

Gray, Miranda, Red Moon: Understanding and Using the Gifts of the Menstrual Cycle, (Shaftsbury: Element, 1994)

Great Vampire Stories, anon., ed., (Chancellor Press: London, 1992)

Green, Monica H., 'Menstruation in Medieval Western Europe', in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, eds., *Menstruation: A Cultural History*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp.51-64

Greer, Germaine, *The Change: Women, Ageing and the Menopause,* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1991)

Grigg, Russell, Dominique Hecq and Craig Smith, eds., Female Sexuality: The Early Psychoanalytic Controversies, (London: Rebus Press, 1999)

Gruber, Elmar R., Psychic Wars: Parapsychology in Espionage – and beyond, (London: Blanford, 1999)

Guiley, Rosemary, Vampires Among Us, (New York: Pocket Books, 1991)

Haiken, Elizabeth, Venus Envy: A History of Cosmetic Surgery, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997)

Haining, Peter, ed., The Vampire Hunters' Casebook, (London: Warner, 1996)

Haining, Peter, The Vampire Omnibus, (London: Bounty Books, 1995)

Hardy, Phil, ed., Horror, (London: Aurum, 1993)

Hargreaves, Alec G., 'Translators Note', in Begag, Azouz, *Ethnicity and Equality: France in the Balance*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), pp.xiv-xv

Hastings, James, original ed., revised by Frederick C. Grant and H.H. Rowley, *Dictionary of the Bible*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clarke, 1963)

Hiltmann, Gabriell, 'Menstruation in Aristotle's Concept of the Person' in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, eds., *Menstruation: A Cultural History*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp.25-37

Hite, Shere, Oedipus Revisited: Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male Today, (Arcadia Books: London, 2005)

Holland, Eugene, 'Schizoanalysis' in Adrian Parr ed., *The Deleuze Dictionary*, (Edinburgh, Edinburgh Press, 2005), pp.236-237

Hornblower, Simon and Anthony Spawforth eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, (Oxford: Oxford University, 2003)

Houppert, Karen, *The Curse: Confronting the Last Unmentionable Taboo: Menstruation*, (London: Profile, 2000)

Hughes, William and Andrew Smith, ed., *Bram Stoker: History, Psychoanalysis and the Gothic*, (London: St. Martin's Press, 1998)

Irigaray, Luce, Key Writings, (London: Continuum, 2004)

Irigaray, Luce, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, Catherine Porter, trans., (New York: Cornell University Press, 1985)

Jameson, Frederic, *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, (London: Verso, 1990)

Jancovich, Mark, ed., Horror: A Reader, (London: Routledge, 2002)

Jones, Darryl, Horror: A Thematic History, (London: Arnold, 2002)

Jung, Carl, Man and his Symbols, (London: Picador, 1978)

Kenealy, Arabella, 'A Beautiful Vampire' in Peter Haining ed., *The Vampire Hunters' Casebook*, (London: Warner, 1996), pp.22-34

Kermode, Mark, *The Exorcist*, (London: Bristish Film Institute, 1998)

King, Stephen, Danse Macabre, (London Warner Books, 1993)

King, Stephen, Carrie, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975)

Kipling, Rudyard, 'The Vampire', Rudyard Kipling: The Complete Verse, (London: Kyle Cathie Limited, 1990)

Knight, Chris, *Blood Relations: Menstruation and the Origins of Culture*, (Bath: Bath Press, 1991)

Krafft-Ebing, Richard Von, Psychopathia Sexualis, (London: Rebman, 1899)

Kristeva, Julia, 'Stabat Mater' in Toril Moi, ed., *The Kristeva Reader*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp.160-186.

Kristeva, Julia, *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982)

Lacan, Jacques, Écrits, Bruce Fink trans., (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006)

Laqueur, Thomas, *Making Sex: From the Greeks to Freud*, (London: Harvard, University Press, 1990)

Lau, Kimberley 'Erotic Infidelities: Angel Carter's Wolf Trilogy', in Donald Haase, ed., *Marvels and Tales*, (Michigan: Wayne University Press, 2008), pp.74-94

Le Fanu, Sheridan, In a Glass Darkly, (London: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1995)

Leader, Darian and Judy Groves, Introducing Lacan, (Cambridge: Icon Books, 2005)

Lechte, John, Julia Kristeva: Live Theory, (London Continuum, 2004)

Leeming, David Adams, The World of Myth, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)

LeFebvre, Henri, 'Preface to the New Edition: The Production of Space' in Elden Stuart, Elizabeth Lebas and Eleonore Kofman, eds., *Henri LeFebvre: Key Writings*, (London: Continuum, 2003)

Leitch, Vincent B, William E. Cain, Laurie A. Finke, Barbara E. Johnson, John McGowan and Jeffrey J. Williams, eds., *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001)

Lévi-Strauss, Claude, Myth and Meaning: Cracking the Code of Culture, (New York: Schocken Books, 1995)

Lewellen, Avis, 'Wayward Girls but Wicked Women? Female Sexuality in Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*', in Gary Day and Clive Bloom, eds., *Perspectives on Pornography: Sexuality in Film and Literature*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), pp.144-158

Lorraine, Tamsin, 'Oedipalisation' in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Alan Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), pp.189-191

Lupton, Mary Jane, *Menstruation and Psychoanalysis*, (Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1993)

Macey, David, Dictionary of Critical Theory, (London: Penguin, 2001)

MacCormack, Patricia, Cinesexuality, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008)

MacCormack Patricia, 'Perversion: Transgressive Sexuality and Becoming-monster', *Thirdspace*, Vol.3 Issue 2, 2004.

MacKinnon, Catherine, 'Rape: On Coercion and Consent', in Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina and Sarah Stanbury, eds., *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1997)

Makinen, Merja, 'The Bloody Chamber and Decolonisation of Feminine Sexuality', in Alison Easton, ed., Angela Carter: Contemporary Critical Essays, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), pp.20-36.

Mandelbaum, W. Adam, *The Psychic Battlefield.: Behind the Lines of Paranormal ESPionage*, (London: Vision, 2000)

Marigny, Jean, Vampires: The World of the Undead, (London: Thames and Hudson Press, 1994)

Mark Anderson, 'Introduction' in Mark Anderson (ed.), Reading Kafka: Prague, Politics and the Fin de Siècle, (New York: Schocken Press, 1989)

Marsh Ian and Mike Keating eds., Sociology Making Sense of Society, (Pearson Education, 2006)

Martin, Emily, 'Medical Metaphors of Women's Bodies: Menstruation and Menopause' in Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina and Sarah Stanbury, eds., *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1997)

Martin, Wendy, ed., Women's Studies, (London: Gordon and Breach, 1987)

Marx, Karl, The Portable Karl Marx, Eugene Kamenka, ed., (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983)

Mbembe, Achille 'Necropolitics', in *Public Culture*, Libby Meintjes, trans., volume 15, issue 1, 1993, pp.11-40

McBrien, Richard, P., ed., *The Harper Collins Encyclopaedia of Catholicism*, (London: HarperCollins, 1995)

McClive, Cathy, 'Menstrual Knowledge in Early Modern France, c. 1555-1761' in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, eds., *Menstruation a Cultural History*, pp.76-89

McNally, Raymond T., *Dracula was a Woman*, (London: Hale, 1984)

McGrath, Roberta, Seeing Her Sex: Medical Archives and the Female Body, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002)

McRobbie, Angela, *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change*, (London: Sage, 2009)

Meider, Wolfgang, 'Survival Forms of "Little Red Riding Hood" in Modern Society', in Venetia Newall, ed., *International Folklore Review*, volume 2, 1982, pp.23-42

Mighall, Robert, A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmare, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

Mikkonen, Kai, 'The Hoffman(n) Effect and the Sleeping Prince: Fairy Tales in Angela Carter's *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman*', in Danielle M. Roemer, Cristina Bacchilega,

eds., Angela Carter and the Fairy Tale, (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2001), pp.167-186.

Milgrom, Jacob, Bible: Leviticus 1-16, (New York: Doubleday, 1992)

Mitchell, Juliet and Jacqueline Rose, eds., Feminine Sexuality, Jacques Lacan and the École Freudienne, (London, Macmillan, 1982)

Morford, Mark P.O and Robert J. Lenardon, *Classical Mythology Fifth Edition*, (New York: Longman Publishers, 1995)

Moriarty, Michael, Roland Barthes, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991)

Morrey, Douglas, 'Textures of Terror: Claire Denis's *Trouble Every Day*' in *Littérature Populaire et Culture Médiatique*, volume 3, issue 2, April 2004, pp.1-6

Mulvey-Roberts, Marie, '*Dracula* and the Doctors: Bad Blood, Menstrual Taboo and the New Woman' in William Hughes and Andrew Smith, ed., *Bram Stoker: History, Psychoanalysis and the Gothic*, pp.72-94

Mulvey-Roberts, Marie, 'Menstrual Misogyny and Taboo, The Medusa, Vampire and Female Stigmatic' in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, eds., *Menstruation: A Cultural History*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp.152-153

Myrone, Martin, ed., The Gothic Reader: A Critical Anthology, (London: Tate Publishing, 2006)

Nancy, Jean-luc, 'Icon Fury: Claire Denis' *Trouble Every Day*', *Film-Philosophy*, volume 12, issue 1, 2008, pp.1-9

Newall, Venetia, ed., *International Folklore Review, Vol.2*, (London: William Glaisher Ltd., 1982)

O'Gorman, Francis, A Concise Companion to the Victorian Novel, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005)

Odell, Colin, and Michelle Le Blanc, *The Pocket Essential Horror Books*, (Harpenden, Hertfordshire: Pocket Essentials, 2001)

Oppenheimer, Paul, Evil and the Demonic: A New Theory of Monstrous Behaviour, (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1996)

Ostrander, Sheila, and Lynn Schroeder, *Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1971)

Ovid, Metamorphoses, trans. A.D. Melville, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986)

Parr, Adrian, *The Deleuze Dictionary*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Press, 2005)

Paul, William, Laughing Screaming, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)

Penrose, Valentine, *The Bloody Countess*, trans. Alexander Trocchi, (London: Calder and Boyars, 1970)

Perrault, Charles, Fairy Tales, A.E. Johnson, trans., (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1969)

Poe, Edgar, Allan, *The Complete Stories*, (London: David Campbell, 1992)

Poe, Edgar Allan, *Poetry and Tales*, (Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1984)

Poovey, Mary, Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988)

Porter, Roy, Blood and Guts: A Short History of Medicine, (London: Penguin, 2003)

Powell, Anna, Deleuze and Horror Film, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006)

Pramagiorre, Maria, Neil Jordan, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008)

Prawer, S.S., Caligari's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror, (New York: Da Capo, 1980)

Projansky, Sarah, Watching Rape: Film and Television in Postfeminist Culture, (New York: New York University Press, 2006)

Pykett, Lyn, *The 'Improper' Feminine: The Woman's Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing*, (London: Routledge, 1992)

Quigley, Christine, *Modern Mummies: The Preservation of the Human Body in the Twentieth Century*, (North Carolina: Mc Farland & Company Inc., 1998)

Ramsland, Katherine, *The Vampire Companion: The Official Guide to Anne Rice's The Vampire Chronicles*, (London: Little Brown, 1994)

Read, Jacinda, *The New Avengers: Feminism, Femininity and the Rape-Revenge Cycle*, (Manchester: Mancester University Press, 2000)

Rebello, Stephen, Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of 'Psycho', (London: Marion Boyars, 1998)

Rice, Anne, Interview with the Vampire, (London: Futura, 1976)

Richardson, Angelique, "The difference between human beings": Biology in the Victorian Novel' in Francis O'Gorman, ed., *A Concise Companion to the Victorian Novel*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp.203-231

Rickels, Laurence, *The Vampire Lectures*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999)

Roemer, Danielle M. and Cristina Bacchilega, eds., *Angela Carter and the Fairy Tale*, (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2001)

Roemer, Danielle M. and Cristina Bacchilega, eds., *Marvels and Tales*, volume 12, issue 1, (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1998)

Russo, Mary, 'Female Grotesques: Carnival and Theory', in *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*, Teresa de Lauretis, ed., (Basingstoke: MacMillan Press, 1986) pp.213-229.

Russo, Mary, *The Female Grotesque*, (London: Routledge, 1994)

Sage, Lorna, 'Angela Carter: The Fairy Tale', in Danielle M. Roemer and Cristina Bacchilega, eds., *Angela Carter and the Fairy Tale*, (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2001), pp.65-81

Sage, Lorna, ed., Flesh and the Mirror, (London: Virago, 1994)

Schneider, Stephen Jay, *Horror Film and Psychoanalysis: Freud's worst nightmare*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

Schneider, Stephen Jay, New Hollywood Violence, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004)

Scholz, Sebastian and Hanna Surma, 'Exceeding the limits of Representation: screen and/as skin in Claire Denis's *Trouble Every Day* (2001)' in *Studies in French Cinema*, volume 8, issue 1, 2008, pp.5-16

Scruton, Roger, A Short History of Modern Philosophy, (London: Routledge Classics, 2002)

Seifert, Lewis C., Fairy Tales, Sexuality, and Gender in France, 1690-1715, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

Shail, Andrew, and Gillian Howie, *Menstruation: A Cultural History*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)

Sheets, Robin Ann, 'Pornography, Fairy Tales, and Feminism: Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*' in John C. Fout, ed., *Forbidden History: The State, Society and the Regulation of Sexuality in Modern Europe*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), pp.335-361

Shildrick, Margrit, *Embodying the Monster: Encounters with the Vulnerable Self*, (London: Sage, 2002)

Shildrick Margrit, and Janet Price, *Vital Signs: Feminist Reconfigurations of the Bio/Logical Body*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998)

Shildrick, Margrit, *Leaky Bodies and Boundaries: Feminism, Postmodernism and (Bio) Ethics*, (London Routledge, 1997)

Shilling, Chris, *The Body and Social Theory*, (London: Sage, 2006)

Shorter, Edward, A History of Women's Bodies, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984)

Showalter, Elaine, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980*, (London: Virago, 1987)

Shuttle, Penelope and Peter Redgrove, *The Wise Wound: Menstruation and Everywoman*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980)

Skal, David J., 'Fatal Image: The Artist, the Actress and the 'Vampire', in David J. Skal ed., *Vampires: Encounters with the Undead*, (Blackdog & Levanthal, 2006), pp. 223-260

Skal, David J., The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror, (London: Plexus, 1994)

Skal, David J., Hollywood Gothic: The Tangled Web of 'Dracula' from Stage to Screen, (London: Deutsch, 1990)

Solomons, Bethel and Edward Solomons, A Handbook of Gynaecology: For the Student and General Practitioner, (London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox, 1944)

Sontag, Susan, *Illness as Metaphor*, (London: Penguin, 2002)

Sotirin, Patty, 'Becoming-Woman' in Charles, J. Stivale, ed., *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, (Stockfield: Acumen: 2005), pp.98-109

Speert, Harold, M.D., *Obstetrics and Gynaecology: A History and Iconography*, (New York: Parthenon, 2004)

Stagoll, Cliff, 'Becoming' in Adrian Parr, ed., *The Deleuze Dictionary*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), pp.21-23

Staiger, Janet, *Bad Women: Regulating Sexuality in Early American Cinema*, (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1995)

Stamp Lindsay, Shelley, 'Horror, Femininity, and Carrie's Monstrous Puberty', in Barry Keith Grant, ed., *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), pp.279-295

Stivale, Charles J., ed., Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts, (Stocksfield: Acumen, 2007)

Stoker, Bram, Dracula, (London: Penguin Classics, 1993)

Stott, Rebecca, *The Fabrication of the Late-Victorian Femme Fatale*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992)

Strange, Julie-Marie, 'I Believe it to be a Case Depending on Menstruation: Madness and Menstrual Taboo in British Medical Practice, c. 1840-1930', in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie eds., *Menstruation a Cultural History*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp.102-116

Strieber, Whitley, The Hunger, (New York: Pocket, 2007)

Summers, Montague, *The Vampire in Europe*, (London: Bracken 1996)

Swensen, Kristine, 'The Menopausal Vampire: Arabella Kenealy and The Boundaries of True Womanhood', in *Women's Writing*, volume 10, issue 1, 2003, pp.27-28

Symons, Arthur, *The Vampire*, in 'Fatal Image: The Artist, the Actress and the 'Vampire', in David J. Skal ed., *Vampires: Encounters with the Undead*, (Blackdog & Levanthal, 2006), pp. 223-260

Tatar, Maria, ed., *The Annotated Classic Fairy Tales*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002)

Tatar, Maria, The Classic Fairy Tales, (New York, W.W. Norton & Company: New York, 2002)

Thody, Philip, *Introducing Barthes*, ed., Richard Appignanessi, (Cambridge: Icon Books, 2006)

Thorne, Tony, Countess Dracula, (London: Bloomsbury, 1997)

Tilt, Edward, *The Change of Life in Health and Disease: A Practical Treatise on the Nervous and Other Afflictions Incidental to Women at the Decline of Life*, (London: John Churchill and Sons, 1870)

Todorov, Tvetzan, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, Richard Howard, trans., (New York: Cornell University Press, 1975)

Toscano, Alberto, 'Capture' in Adrian Parr, ed., *The Deleuze Dictionary*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), pp.39-40

Twitchell, James B, *Dreadful Pleasures*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985)

Twitchell, James B, *The Living Dead: A Study of the Vampire in Romantic Literature*, (Durham, NC: Duke University press, 1981)

Walker, Barbara G., *The Woman's Encyclopaedia of Myths and Women's Secrets*, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1983)

Waller, Gregory A., ed., *American Horrors: Essays on the Modern American Horror Film*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987)

Warner, Marina, 'Bottle Blonde, Double Drag', in Lorna Sage, ed., Flesh and the Mirror, (London: Virago, 1994), pp.243-256

Warner, Marina, From the Beast to the Blonde, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1994)

Warner, Marina, Alone of All Her Sex - The Cult of the Virgin Mary, (London: Picador, 1985)

Watkins, Susan Alice, Marisa Rueda and Marta Rodriguez, *Introducing Feminism*, (London: Icon Books, 1999)

Wells, Paul, The Horror Genre: From Beelzebub to Blair Witch, (London: Wallflower, 2004)

Wood, Robin, Hollywood: From Vietnam to Regan, (New York: Columbia Press, 2003)

Woodward, Kathryn, ed., Identity and Difference, (London: Sage, 1997)

Wooton, David, *Bad Medicine: Doctors Doing Harm Since Hippocrates*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007)

Zalcock, Bev, Renegade Sisters: Girl Gangs on Film, (London: Creation Books: 2001)

Zipes, Jack, 'Introduction' in Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*, (London: Vintage, 2006), pp.vii-xix

Zipes, Jack, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) Zipes, Jack, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, (London: Heinemann, 1983)

Zipes, Jack, The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood, (New York, Routledge, 1993)

Zipes, Jack, ed., *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood*, (London: Heinemann, 1983)

Žižek, Slavoj, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, (London: Verso, 1999)

Zucker, Carole, The Cinema of Neil Jordan: Dark Carnival, (New York: Wallflower Press, 2003)

Electronic Sources

Alexander, James R., 'The Maturity of a Film Genre in an Era of Relaxing Standards of Obscenity: Takashi Ishii's *Freeze Me* as a Rape Revenge Film', *Senses of Cinema*, issue 36, July-Sept, 2005. [http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/05/36/freeze_me.html], date accessed: 27/07/2006.

Always Ultra and Freshelle, [http://www.always-info.co.uk/products/always-Ultra-And-Freshelle/], date accessed: 29/03/09.

Battey, Robert, 'Summary of the Results of Fifteen Cases of Battey's Operation', *The British Medical Journal*, April 3rd 1880, p.510. *PubMed Central, Archive of Life Science Journals*, [http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/picrender.fcgi?artid=2240106&blobtype=pdf], date accessed: 18/03/09.

Denis, Claire, 'An Interview by Aimé Ancian', trans. by Inge Pruks, originally published in *Sofa*, issue 17. republished with permission in *Senses of Cinema*: [http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/02/23/denis_interview.html], Date accessed: 08/10/2008.

'The Economics of Menstruation', Industrial Fatigue Research Board, Report no. 45. London: H.M. Stationary Office. 1928, in the *British Medical Journal*, April 7th, 1928. *PubMed Central, Archive of Life Science Journals*,

[http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/picrender.fcgi?artid=2455113&blobtype=pdf], date accessed: 04/01/2009.

A Good Way to be Bad', *Chicago Daily Tribune*, (1872-1963); Oct 21st, 1945; ProQuest Historical Newspapers, *Chicago Tribune* (1849-1986). [http://ezp1.harvard.edu/login?url=http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=475788612&Fmt=10&clientId=11201&RQT=309&VName=HNP], date accessed: 18/12/2008.

Hewitt, Graily, 'Lectures on the Diagnosis and Treatment of Women/Disorders of Menstruation', *British Medical Journal*, Sept 7th, 1861. *PubMed Central, Archive of Life Science Journals*, [http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/picrender.fcgi?artid=2287899&blobtype=pdf], date accessed: 04/01/2009.

'Josephine Butler, Centenary Tribute' in the *British Medical Journal*, April 7th, 1928. *PubMed Central, Archive of Life Science Journals*, [http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/picrender.fcgi?artid=2455108&blobtype=pdf], date accessed: 04/01/2009.

Large, Victoria, 'Hairy on the Inside: Surrealism and Sexual Anxiety in Neil Jordan's *The Company of Wolves*', *Bight Lights Film Journal*, November 2006, Issue 54. Online archive: [http://www.brightlightsfilm.com/54/wolves.htm], date accessed: 12/07/2007.

Lawson, Mark, 'Cape Fear', *The Guardian*, Wednesday, 27 September, 2006. *The Guardian* online: [http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2006/sep/27/classics], date accessed: 12/07/2008.

Nielson, Bianca, "'Something's Wrong, Like More Than you Being Female': Transgressive Sexuality and Discourses of Reproduction in *Ginger Snaps*", *thirdspace* 3/2 (March 2004), 55-69. Online archive: [http://www.thirdspace.ca/articles/pr_3_2_nielsen.htm], date accessed: 04/06/2008.

Peretti, Jonah, 'Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Contemporary Visual Culture and the Acceleration of Identity Formation/Dissolution', in *Negations*,

[http://www.datawranglers.com/negations/issues/96w/96w_peretti.html], date accessed: 10/09/2008.

Peterson, Larry R., *The History of Marriage as an Institution*, (1997), 'Partners Task Force for Gay and Lesbian Couples', [http://www.buddybuddy.com/peters-1.html], date accessed: 03/08/2009.

Pope Paul VI, 'Confronting the Devil' *Papal Encyclicals*, [http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Paul06/p6devil.htm], date accessed: 07/10/2008.

Regan, Linda and Liz Kelly, *Rape: Still a forgotten issue. Briefing Document For Strengthening the Linkages – Consolidating the European Network, Rape Crisis Network Europe*, p.9. [http://www.rcne.com/downloads/RepsPubs/Attritn.pdf], date accessed: 03/08/2008.

Sharkey, Alix, 'Scandale!', *The Observer*, April 14th, 2002. [http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2002/apr/14/filmcensorship.features], date accessed: 04/06/2008.

Studd, J., 'Ovariotomy for menstrual madness and premenstrual syndrome--19th century history and lessons for current practice', *Gynecol Endocrinol*, 2006 Aug, 22(8):411-5, *PubMed Central*, *Archive of Life Science Journals*, [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/1701210], date accessed: 11/03/09.

Weizman, Eyal, 'The Art of War', *Freize Magazine*, Issue 99, May 2006, [http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/the_art_of_war/], date accessed: 28/10/2008

Filmography

American Nightmare, dir. Adam Simon, (2000)

Baisse-Moi, dir. Coralie Trinh Thi, Virginie Despentes, (2000)

Cannibal Holocaust, dir. Ruggero Deodato, (1979)

Carrie, dir. Brian de Palma, (1976)

The Company of Wolves, dir. Neil Jordan, (1984)

Countess Dracula, dir. Peter Sasdy, (1970)

The Devil Rides Out, dir. Terence Fisher, (1967)

Don't Look Now, dir. Nicolas Roeg, (1973)

Dracula Prince of Darkness, dir. Terence Fisher, (1966)

The Exorcist, dir. William Friedkin, (1973)

A Fool There Was, dir. Frank Powell, (1915)

The Fury, dir. Brian de Palma, (1978)

Ginger Snaps, dir. John Fawcett, (2000)

A Gun for Jennifer, dir. Todd Morris and Jennifer Twiss, (1996)

Halloween, dir. John Carpenter, (1978)

Hard Candy, dir. David Slade (2005)

The House on the Edge of the Park, dir. Ruggero Deodato, (1980)

The Hunger, dir. Tony Scott, (1983)

I Spit on Your Grave, dir. Meir Zarchi, (1978)

The Last House on the Left, dir. Wes Craven, (1972)

Mother's Day, dir. Charles Kaufman, (1980)

Ms. 45, dir. Abel Ferrara, (1981)

Night of the Living Dead, dir. George A. Romero, (1968)

The Perverts Guide to Cinema, dir. Sophie Fiennes, (2006)

Psycho, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, (1960)

Rosemary's Baby, dir. Roman Polanski, (1968)

A Streetcar Named Desire, dir. Elia Kazan, (1951)

The Texas Chain Saw Massacre, dir. Tobe Hooper, (1974)

Thirst, dir. Rod Hardy, (1979)

Trouble Every Day, dir. Claire Denis, (2000)

Violated, dir. Richard Cannistraro, (1984)

The Virgin Spring, dir. Ingmar Bergman, (1960)

Witchfinder General, dir. Michael Reeves, (1968)