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'I am the Dark Mirror; the Vampire of My Own Heart': The Postmodern Vampire in Fiction, Film and Culture 1975-2008

A thesis submitted in fulfilment for the Higher Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English, Trinity College, Dublin.

2009

by

Sorcha Ní Fhlainn

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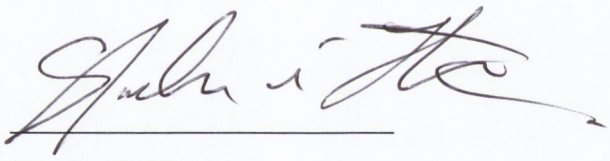

Sorcha Ní Fhlainn

Summary

This thesis explores the distinct shift of the vampire, in film, fiction and culture, from 1975 – 2008. Each chapter of this thesis represents four 'cultural decades' of change, through which we see the development of the Postmodern Vampire from a monstrous 'other' at the margins of the story to the central narrator in his own tale. This transition is highly significant as it recognises a shift from Modernity to Postmodernity, and removes the previously established hierarchal structure of culture in favour of academically critiquing all modes of popular culture and representation. Vampires inhabit all facets of popular culture and narrate their place within our culture through these streams of representation. It is the objective of the thesis to locate specific dialogues on politics, economics, sexualities, and religious views within the vampire narrative in popular culture and cultural history, from Fred Saberhagen's novel *The Dracula Tape* in 1975 to Stephenie Meyer's popular adolescent novels, the *Twilight* series; the most recent instalment published in 2008.

The thesis is divided into four chapters, each one representing specific cultural decades. The cultural decade of 1970s, discussed in Chapter One, spanning from 1975 to 1980, examines this intense period of change in both vampire representations in fiction and film, and establishing the vampire voice. Chapter Two focuses on the 1980s 'cultural decade' from 1980 to 1992, highlighting the 'family values' under President Ronald Reagan and the reactions to HIV/AIDS, underpinning the violence and destruction of the vampire body in this period of excess and 'body culture'. Chapter Three approaches the cultural decade of the 1990s, from 1992 to pre 9/11 2001, through the lens of the Gothic Double, a narrative construct which re-emerges in mainstream culture, representing both popular figures and vampires as split entities. The cultural decade of the millennium, from Sept. 11th 2001 to October 2008, accounts for the rise in religious narratives and the increasing emphasis on cultural war. Since 9/11, the vampire has accounted for cultural fears of invasion, border control and relocating the geographical margins they inhabit to the centre of political debate. The vampire of the millennium illustrates the depths of this cultural fear which has dominated the Presidency of George W. Bush. I draw this thesis to a close on the eve of the November presidential election which I

believe will shape the next cultural decade in American cultural history and the vampires who shall emerge from it.

The central texts referred to in this thesis cover many aspects of popular culture. Not only is the vampire present in literature, but also in cinema, music videos, and cultural events. The vampire also narrates cultural trends with great fluidity; from the discontent of the 1970s to the facades of beauty in the 1980s, the doubles in popular culture of the 1990s to the millennial angst and religious and cyborg qualities of the 2000s, the vampire is ever present and aware of these particular developments within our world. Other texts referred to, such as the apocalyptic paintings of Bosch and Bruegel, the art of Francis Bacon and decadence of Nine Inch Nails, illustrate the same cultural anxieties and descriptions found within the Postmodern Vampire narrative, indicating significant cultural signatures found everywhere in popular cultural representation. The vampire emerges as a triumphant figure of change and fluidity, adapting to shifts and transitions; the vampire's reflection now looks back when we gaze into the cultural mirror.

Acknowledgements

A thesis is never a solo endeavour. There are many colleagues and friends I wish to thank for their continued support and ideas throughout the genesis of this work. Firstly, I wish to thank the Department of English for their continued support and help, particularly to Professor Stephen Matterson, whose enthusiasm for popular culture has been extremely encouraging. To Dr. Elizabeth McCarthy, Dr. Bernice Murphy, Dr. Jenny McDonnell, Dara Downey and Maria Parsons, who made the experience of studying within this unique gothic fold so wonderfully warm and comforting, and were always willing to discuss ideas and observations. I wish to thank my other colleagues within the department who consistently made the academic environment pleasant and exciting. I am extremely grateful to you all for your friendship and encouragement.

I also wish to thank Dr. Stephen Milligen and my close friends who offered support and advice during my studies.

To my wonderful supervisor Dr. Darryl Jones, who endlessly advised, reread and poured over drafts of this work, and always gave an encouraging and positive outlook, above and beyond the duty of any academic supervisor. I am sincerely grateful that you genuinely believed in my work and I can honestly say it has been a pleasure to work with you for the past four years. It is because of your diligent work that this thesis is now a reality.

To my beloved John, who understands my passion for horror and vampirism and never fails to make me laugh (including his initial suggestion for the title of this work). Your infectious enthusiasm, patience and love has supported me through the most demanding times in this work and for that I am eternally grateful.

To the myriad of authors, commentators, film-makers and academics who have written on vampires, who obviously cherish and understand the importance of the vampire within our culture; it is because of your work in this field that the vampire continues to thrive.

Finally, I am deeply indebted to my mother Léin, and my brother Eoghan, for their continued support and love. For those endless conversations and teasing out academic arguments, late night words of support, horror movies, and advice throughout my studies; had it not been for the both of you, this work would not have been possible. To my late dad Michéal, who never had much time for vampires but knew of my great love for them, this is for you. I miss you every single day. You always encouraged me to follow my dreams and to pursue my academic thirst in all of my interests.

It has been said to me that a thesis is largely autobiographical in nature;
I can only concur that this statement is unequivocally true.

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Introduction: The Vampire in the Mirror

On July 4th, 1821, John Quincy Adams addressed the House of Representatives, voicing his concerns on American Values and Foreign Policy: "America goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own."[1] Adams's vision of an America that would guard its isolationist position has largely been discarded in the twentieth century. In particular, World War II brought America onto the geopolitical platform, and she has since remained the central source of world power in our now unipolar world. America has spread her influence through its popular culture, its influential presidents, and its sense of national identity. Being a young nation, she has exerted herself as a monumental presence around the globe and has become an increasingly changeable landscape. Within the short thirty-three years this thesis examines, the American landscape has undergone dramatic political, economic, cultural and historical shifts. It is my contention in this thesis that the vampire has become the central symbolic documenter and narrator of these shifts. As Adams's speech implies, America is home to many monsters; the vampire has come home.

Vampires too have shifted within the American landscape: they have become central narrators of cultural space and, most significantly, obtained a narrative voice which, before 1975, was absent. Vampires were marginalised, 'others', sidelined in the narrative of society's continual shifts and developments; they were archaic monsters perpetually symbolizing the past, and remained immobilised within the nineteenth century framework of the Kristevan 'abject' –"disturb[ing] identity, system, order. [It] does not respect borders, positions, rules",[2] signifying 'otherness' "which is formless, disgusting, terrifying and threatening. The abject must be removed from orderly society and/or destroyed"[3]. Texts prior to 1975 were concerned with destroying the vampire; representing him through the vampire hunter's narrative as a one dimensional

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[1] John Quincy Adams. Address to the House of Representatives. July 4th, 1821

[2] Julia Kristeva. "Powers of Horror" in Kelly Oliver (ed). *The Portable Kristeva*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997. p.232

[3] Keith Khan Harris. *Extreme Metal*. Oxford: Berg, 2007.p. 29

being which must be obliterated. Without representing the vampire's point of view, his version of history and his *raison d'être*, the vampire would have continued as a static character, reinforcing associations with the past that are no longer relevant in the present. It is through this crucial development and identification of the vampire voice within the horror genre that marks the vampire's transition from modernity to postmodernity in fiction and film.

Ellen E. Berry argues that "The modernist idea of culture was generated out of a specific sense of cultural hierarchy that divided cultural spaces and products into highbrow (true culture) and lowbrow (popular culture)."[4] As a number of its most prominent theorists, from Eliot to Adorno maintained, Modernism can be defined by its antipathy to mass culture. "The mass media aroused 'the cheapest emotional responses,' [F.R Leavis] warned; 'Films, newspapers, publicity in all forms, commercially-catered fiction – all offer satisfaction at the lowest level."[5] Fredric Jameson, in his highly influential book *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, separates the modern and the postmodern very specifically: "modernism thought of itself as a prodigious revolution in cultural production, however, postmodernism thinks of itself as a renewal of production as such after a long period of ossification and dwelling among dead monuments."[6] As the nineteenth century vampire can be considered a static 'dead monument', a sepulchre perpetually frozen in time, this postmodern climate revives and revitalises the vampire. Jameson's distinctions are essential if we are to understand the vampire narrative as a postmodern development, as this narrative essentially destroys the boundaries held by previous distinguished vampire authors, most notably Bram Stoker, and realigns the narrative by providing a central account by the very creature that was previously marginalised. This collapsing of hierarchical structures of high and low culture allows for equal status, and a recognisable sense of 'textual' production (as all modes of production can be read as textual entities – television, cinema, advertising to name a few) which is fully accessible in

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[4] Ellen E. Berry. *Curved Thought and Textual Wandering*. 1992. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1995. p. 134

[5] John Carey. *Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia*. London: Faber and Faber, 1992. p. 7 Citing (in part) F.R Leavis and Denys Thompson. *Culture and Environment: The Training of Critical Awareness*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1933. p. 3

[6] Fredric Jameson. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. London: Verso, 1991 p. 313

society. It denies determinist constructions or classifications of what is 'art' or 'literature' and what is not, and breaks down aesthetic hierarchies:

> The Postmodernisms have, in fact, been fascinated precisely by this whole 'degraded' landscape of schlock and kitsch, of TV series and *Reader's Digest* culture, of advertising and motels, of the late show and the grade-B Hollywood film, of so-called paraliterature with its airport paperback categories of the gothic and the romance, the popular biography, the murder mystery, and the science fiction or fantasy novel: materials they no longer simply 'quote', as a Joyce or a Mahler might have done, but incorporate into their very substance.[7]

It can also be noted that the postmodernist shift in the vampire narrative was a reaction to a significant previous silence, or complete absence, in characterisation and depth in earlier narratives and cinematic representations. This static form formulated the vampire in rather static, singular forms, which must be contained and duly destroyed to retain social order. However, postmodernism recognises that culture is fluid and constant: as David Harvey suggests, it is "a series of stages upon which individuals...work their own distinctive magic while performing a multiplicity of roles"[8]

1975

My thesis begins in 1975 with the publication of Fred Saberhagen's *The Dracula Tape*. This novel, unlike any other preceding vampire novel, repositions the vampire as narrator of his own tale. Since this watershed in 1975, which I discuss in Chapter One, vampires, once spectres of fear and catalysts for dramatic narratives that surround their stories, become narrative agents in their own right, and have much to say about our shared world. Candace R. Benefiel accounts for this shift through Anne Rice's vampire novel *Interview With The Vampire* (1976), stating that this moment or realisation, or 'dark renaissance', transformed the Modern Vampire of the nineteenth century into the Postmodern Vampire:

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[7] ibid. pp.3-4
[8] David Harvey. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. London: Blackwell, 1990. p. 5

> In the vast dark landscape of Gothic fiction in late twentieth century America, the seminal figure of the vampire wanders in ever-increasing numbers. Much of the gothic has seen a flowering in the past twenty-five years, the vampire has risen from an uneasy sleep of the earlier part of the century and experienced his own dark renaissance. Prior to 1976, in film and fiction, the vampire was portrayed in the mold [sic] into which he had been cast by Bram Stoker in the greatest of the nineteenth-century vampire novels, Dracula – an essentially solitary predator whose presence was the stimulus for an intrepid group of vampire hunters to form and bay in his pursuit, and whose time on center [sic] stage was limited to brief, menacing appearances and capped with a spectacular death scene. The vampire was, to borrow a term from film, a McGuffin, - a device to drive the plot and give the vampire hunters something to pursue. In 1976, this changed.... Anne Rice published her first novel, *Interview with the Vampire*, and turned the vampire paradigm on its head. This breakthrough novel focused not on vampire hunters, but on the vampires themselves – and what a different breed they were.[9]

Benefiel recognizes this shift in the vampire narrative through Rice's highly influential novel in 1976, but *Interview With The Vampire* is not the first to use this particular format in the vampire narrative. Fred Saberhagen's 1975 novel, *The Dracula Tape* retells Stoker's narrative through tape recordings, highly influenced by the Nixon tapes which were transcribed and released by the White House in 1974 before Nixon's resignation, providing Dracula with an opportunity to document his own version of events which were previously only accounted for by the Crew of Light (the vampire hunters in Stoker's novel).

1975 marked the end of the Vietnam War with the surrender of the South Vietnamese army, after Saigon was captured by North Vietnamese communist

[9] Candace R. Benefiel. "Blood Relations: The Gothic Perversion of the Nuclear Family in Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*." *Journal of Popular Culture*. Vol. 38, No. 2, 2004. p. 261

forces. Americans in particular could not understand how their methods, tactics and weaponry failed to secure a victory, and challenged government representatives (including Henry Kissinger) to explain why they had continued to participate in a war that had killed thousands of veterans and had funded military spending of $120 billion dollars, if it was known to have been futile.

In hindsight, 1975 was largely a year of endings: the policies of Richard Nixon and the Vietnam War concluded with feelings of shame and disgrace, national turmoil and questioning. The dominant superpower had failed to contain the spread of communism – and perhaps it is because of this failure, coupled with the disgrace of Nixon's final days in office, that opened up a narrative space no longer confined to dominant and fixed modes in fiction, but to marginalised and previously unheard voices. Howard Zinn notes that a significant shift in public attitudes to political issues, such as protests against the Vietnam War, suspicions about government and policy, and social dissent dominated the first half of the 1970s:

> Undoubtedly, much of this national mood of hostility to government and business came out of the Vietnam War, its 55,000 casualties, its moral shame its exposure of government lies and atrocities. On top of this came the political disgrace of the Nixon administration in the scandal that came to be known by the one-word label "Watergate", and which led to the historic resignation from the presidency – the first in American history – of Richard Nixon in August 1974.[10]

In exploring the vampire narrative through the vampire's own unique perspective and participation in cultural and historical narratives, the geographical region and national dialogues of this study are, save for a brief look at British revisionism in relation to *Dracula*, predominantly American. Since the popularity and importance of Rice and Saberhagen's narratives have been recognised by other writers, scholars and audiences, vampire narratives have largely been associated and preoccupied with American locations,

[10] Howard Zinn. *A People's History of the United States*. 2001. New York: Harper Perennial, 2005. p. 542

identities and cultural issues. Americans have also produced the vast majority of postmodern vampire narratives since 1975 in both literature and cinema, and this is unsurprising: Nina Auerbach states in her seminal study *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, "vampires go where the power is"[11], and America's presence on the geopolitical world stage as the dominant western superpower, economically and culturally, during the Cold War reinforces this notion. Auerbach reminds us:

> In the nineteenth century, England dominated the west, British vampires ruled the popular imagination, but with the birth of film, they migrated to America in time for the American century... vampires in the American century...gravitate towards leadership, aping the tyrants they parody. In the vacuum of authority that afflicted and energised the 1970s, they devised innovative exhibitions of undeath.[12]

It is because of this annotated history the vampire narrative provides that we may read the vampire as a postmodern entity. However, the vampire is attaining this highly significant literary and film development – for vampires onscreen too become heroes of their own tales, while the 'Crew of Light' fail because they still fully subscribe to the trappings of modernity manifested in the character of Van Helsing – is not the only major characteristic of these new narratives. Vampires, previously stuck in their Victorian past are made continuously present and relevant, embracing, embodying and tracing the current anxieties and developments of these new times, often indicating the cultural phenomena at work before the narrative appears in any other form of popular representation.

Cultural Decades

For the purposes of chronological analysis, this thesis works with the following vampire taxonomy:

Pre-1750: "The Folkloric Vampire"

1750-1897: "The Byronic Vampire"

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[11] Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. p. 6

[12] ibid. pp. 6-7

1897-1975: "The Modern Vampire"

1975 - : "The Postmodern Vampire"

Though the first two categories do have a bearing here, my thesis is overwhelmingly concerned with the final two, and the last in particular.

It must be noted that while I am specifically concerned with the developments of the Postmodern Vampire, I fully acknowledge the complexities and important developments the Modern Vampire has presented from the publication of *Dracula* in 1897 to the inception of the subjective Postmodern Vampire between late 1974/early 1975. Modern Vampires, in particular, are responsible for our cultural familiarity with vampires, and indeed, many texts concerning the Modern Vampire permitted a shift which directly facilitates the further evolution of the vampire from a modern to postmodern agent. In particular, important texts such as the television series *Dark Shadows* (1966-1971) and Roman Polanski's film *Dance of the Vampires* (1967) chart the important developments of the Modern Vampire before Postmodernism takes hold in the vampire narrative.

My methodology in exploring the continuing transpositions of cultural history through the vampire narrative relies on the construction of particular 'cultural decades'. Cultural decades are not strictly numerical representations of decades; some extend far beyond their numerical markers, for example, the 1980s as a cultural decade in this thesis spans from 1980 – 1992, while other 'cultural decades', such as the 1970s are shorter, beginning with the crisis point of Watergate and the end of the Vietnam War over 1974/1975, and firmly ending in 1980 with Ronald Reagan's presidential nomination and subsequent presidency. Cultural decades permit a fluid reading of the vampire narrative which is constantly in flux and transposition – no two vampire narratives are completely alike; they absorb the influential environments in which they are created. Historians are used to examining 'long' and 'short' centuries, as somewhat fictitious formations, to account for significant changes within framed periods of time: for example, Eric Hobsbawm's critical analysis of the twentieth century, entitled *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century*

1914-1991,[13] is culturally structured in its presentation of the twentieth century beginning with World War I and ending with the collapse of the Soviet Union. This thesis, similarly structured to Hobsbawm's historical analysis, recognises that history does not simply occur within neat constructs of time. George McKenna notes, "Cultural decades often fail to match up with calendar dates. Much of what we call 'the fifties' began at the end of the 1940s, (the Alger Hiss hearings, the communist takeovers of China and Eastern Europe, the USSR's nuclear bomb), while the culture of the sixties came late, not making a full appearance until the middle of the decade."[14] It is the ongoing flux and recognition of events which shape culture, society and historical movements that represent particular and significant periods, which we may call 'cultural decades', or in Hobsbawm's case, 'cultural centuries'. The historical construct of time is largely analogous to the academic topic being examined, and this remains consistently true in this work which spans three cultural decades in the late twentieth century and arguably the first cultural decade in the early twenty-first century. Cultural decades tend to mirror the terms of presidencies in the United States, and within that, specific fluctuations are seen between the presidencies of Republicans and Democrats.

Vampire Evolution

Each chapter of this work, while being explicitly framed by my construction of particular cultural decades, also accounts for a continuing evolution in the vampire narrative in both fiction and film. Set against the dominant themes and issues within the predominantly American landscape these articulate vampires inhabit, "The appropriation, misappropriation, montage, collage, hybridization, and general mixing up of visual and verbal texts and discourse, from all periods of the past as well as from the multiple social and linguistic fields of the present, is probably the most characteristic feature of what can be called 'postmodern style'".[15] This postmodern style, as Benshoff describes, accounts for the anthropomorphic characteristics and concerns these vampires engage in. As the vampire of the nineteenth century is firmly left behind in 1974, in Paul

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[13] Eric Hobsbawm. *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991*. London: Abacus, 1994.
[14] George McKenna. *The Puritan Origins of American Patriotism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007 p.208
[15] Harry M. Benshoff. *Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Film*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997. p.233

Morrissey's *Blood For Dracula*, where aristocratic politics are discarded, as the Count himself is dismembered in a scene comprising of aesthetic shock tactics and ideology, opening up a dialogue for an alternative perspective on human monstrosity more evident than the vampire's perceived evil nature. Vampires become fully integrated within the cultural narrative of America, which was fully recognised in the success of Anne Rice's novel, *Interview With The Vampire* in 1976.

It must be stated that the vampire has been subject to a considerable evolution within the four cultural decades discussed in this thesis. Vampires of the 1970s are extremely different from their counterparts in the early 2000s, and yet, both sets of vampires still share, articulate and engage in our everyday world. As we have progressed in our developments in technology and media, vampires, in varying degrees, have paralleled these discoveries and assimilations. The evolution of the vampire has occurred not only in physical representations, but also within the interplay seen in their awareness of pastiche, a characteristically postmodern trait – postmodern vampires frequently draw upon previous vampire myths and narratives to debunk, denounce and often mock their elders. Over the span of this work, we encounter vampires who are unharmed by missals, crucifixes, communion wafers, running water, and who become increasingly secular. When we imagine Stoker's count, he is, in the twentieth century mind, largely based on the costuming, movement and image of Bela Lugosi in Tod Browning's *Dracula* (1931), perhaps the most lasting image of the modern incarnations of Dracula. F.W Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922) certainly represents a more accurate image of Stoker's count – his decrepit features and piercing gaze – and adds a new vulnerability to the vampire body where sunlight is fatal. This still remains a *relatively* fixed affliction despite other changes which have been cast aside entirely. Both Murnau's and Browning's vampires were highly influential in how we have come to know the vampire in the twentieth century – indeed, one need not have read a page of vampire fiction to know of the vampire's distinctive look, physical limitations and unending thirst. I believe that it is because of these powerful and extremely familiar images that the vampire was cast into a very specific set of criteria, both physically and figuratively. The significant development of the authoritative vampire voice – the vampire's narrative in the first person –

facilitated a reimagining of the vampire wholly different from traditional representations. This does not draw away from the influence of the modern vampire, but indicates why they are now distinctly more beautiful, less 'other' and completely assimilated within our society. As Rice's vampire protagonist Lestat informs the distinctly Modern Vampires in the coven of the Theatre des Vampires in *The Vampire Lestat* (1985), "I am the new evil. I am the vampire of these times... try to see the evil that I am. I stalk the world in mortal dress – the worst of fiends, the monster who looks exactly like everyone else".[16] Judith Halberstam also recognises that the postmodern monster has collapsed the boundary of inside/outside, which, I contend occurred in the moment that the vampire retained full control of his own narrative.

> The Postmodern monster is no longer the hideous other storming the gates of the human citadel, he has already disrupted the careful geography of the human self and demon other and he makes the peripheral and the marginal part of the center [sic]. Monsters within postmodernism are already inside – the house, the body, the head, the skin, the nation – and they work their way out. Accordingly, it is the human, the facade of the normal, that tends to become the place of terror within the postmodern Gothic.[17]

Costuming is not the only significant difference between the modern and postmodern vampire, their physical representations have also been altered. However, these alterations are not precisely fixed – vampire bodies often vary within each cultural decade and, within that construct, can indeed vary from text to text. Vampire bodies are beautified and rendered significantly less abject in the 1970s but are still in transition from the previous modern guises which precede them – their transition from Nosferatus to newly established Draculas occurs throughout the rest of the cultural 1970s. The 1970s also introduces newborn vampires who are completely different from Stoker's patriarchal predecessor – while Dracula certainly is reimagined through texts (Saberhagen's *The Dracula Tape* (1975)) and mini-series (BBC's *Count*

[16] Anne Rice. *The Vampire Lestat*. New York: Alfred A Knopf., 1985. p. 228.
[17] Judith Halberstam. *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*. London: Duke University Press, 1995. p. 162

Dracula (1978)) and lavish film adaptations (John Badham's *Dracula* (1979)), new vampires begin to populate the vampire narrative beyond established literary characters. Anne Rice's Louis and Lestat, Suzy McKee Charnas's Dr. Weyland, and Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's Saint Germain come to prominence in a decade which is aware of the need to produce new characters to embody the new vampire narrative in a culturally turbulent time. Vampires incorporate a certain historical resonance, and shift accordingly. In the 1970s, as interest in vampires began to resurge, they were developing a renewed sense of self, mirroring the sentiment of fragmentation and alienation echoed in post-Vietnam and post-Nixon America that was struggling to regain a sense of national unity. William Chafe observed: "Yet if one era had ended, it was by no means clear what the next would bring. The 1970s thus became a decade of transition- marked by confusion, frustration and an overwhelming feeling that America had lost its direction."[18]

In the 1980s, during Ronald Reagan's awakening of the American ideals of national pride, free-market trade and deregulation, vampires too became commodified and incorporated into an MTV image – both S.P Somtow's Timmy Valentine in *Vampire Junction* (1985) and Lestat in Anne Rice's *The Vampire Lestat* (1985) become rock star icons, physically incorporating the decade's obsession with facades, aesthetics, celebrity and consumerism. Concurrent with this development, the vampire body also displayed the horror of HIV/AIDS, combining discourses of infection with conservative narratives on homosexuality that were blaming the spiralling increase of divorce and the breakdown of the nuclear family. Vampires became sick and scorched, liquefied and unstable; their bodies leaking and exploding uncontrollably as they were hunted down by their slayers. Interestingly, this was also the period in which half-vampirism became more evident: in the 1980s 'family values' vampire films, *The Lost Boys* (1987), *Near Dark* (1987) and *Fright Night* (1985), vampirism was akin to homosexual contamination and contact, which could only be reversed and order restored by removing the infecting vampire completely.

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[18] William H. Chafe. *The Unfinished Journey: America since World War II*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. p.430

By the 1990s, vampires displayed two distinct faces, becoming in essence fragmented gothic doubles. Mimicking the rise of gothic doubles in American celebrity culture, recalling the trials of O.J Simpson and Michael Jackson, vampires harboured two faces and shadow personalities. Cult vampires and independent cinema in particular unveiled the darker side to vampirism's increasingly integrated cultural narrative while Hollywood cinema and mass published vampire narratives (such as Rice's chronicles and Yarbro's Saint Germain series) continued to convey the vampire in a romantic Byronic light. This split in the narrative is read as dialectic of opposites under the Presidency of Bill Clinton, who also experienced a similar gothic doubling by attorney and special prosecutor Kenneth Starr, who investigated Clinton on the grounds that he had perjured himself under oath and had obstructed justice. Vampires continued through the 1990s as split entities on an explicit boundary of independent and corporate representations.

In the 2000s, vampires also experience millennial anxieties and uncertainties. They return to religious narratives and identities, and post-9/11, become recruits of unstoppable anxieties which are manifest American projections of cultural 'others'. The vampire onscreen also becomes a flexible, pixelated object, combining technological advancement and malleability onscreen, which alters the composition of the vampire body to new dimensions of possibilities. Vampire bodies stretch and mutate, and are unbound from their previously fleshy and sanguine bodies. We also see vampires emerging at marginal borders, in Sweden (*Let the Right One In*), and Alaska (*30 Days of Night*) where vampirism is still unchecked, reminding us that Arctic Circle vampires are capable of penetrating the very edges of our world, which have opened up as new permeable borders. Vampire evolution also centres on the return of cultural myths and legends, articulating the debate on evolution and intelligent design in *Teeth* (2007), which parodies the current debates within the United States regarding the removal of religious belief from biological and science curricula in schools. Most significantly, Stephenie Meyer's adolescent fiction series *Twilight* remaps the vampire body as a chaste entity, converting the vampire into a religious emblem of Mormon values. The vampire here has become enlisted to promote the teachings of the Religious Right, which also devalues the role of women, sexual independence and feminism, while

compounding the vampire narrative into a significant arena where past liberal agendas have been (temporarily) abandoned.

Vampires are excellent receptors to change; they are constantly in a state of flux or evolution. Stacey Abbott notes that "vampires embrace the present and its vast array of experiences"[19], they become our friends and lovers (*Buffy The Vampire Slayer*), our heroes (*Angel*), and our liberators (Saint Germain of *Hotel Transylvania*). Literary and cinematic vampires thrive at both the centre and at the margins of our world, from the Arctic Circle (*30 Days of Night*; *Frostbiten*) to the great American cities (*Angel* in Los Angeles; *Nadja* in New York) to outer space (*Dracula 3000*). Abbott's study of the cinematic vampire illustrates that the postmodern vampire populates and embodies every imaginable scope in our society:

> While Stoker's Dracula was primarily the prototype for the cinematic vampire in the first major cycle of American horror films in the 1930s and 1940s, since the 1970s the image of the vampire has become fragmented into a diverse range. Vampires in film and television are no longer ruled by the past or tradition... vampires today can be good (*Blade*), evil (the Master in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*), or both (*Angel*); European (*Revenant*), African- American (*Blacula*), or Mexican (*From Dusk Till Dawn*); children (*The Little Vampire*) or grandparents (*My Grandfather is a Vampire*); isolated (*Nadja*) or familial (*Near Dark*); rock stars (*Queen of the Damned*), philosophy students (*The Addiction*), performance artists (*Fright Night II*) or action heroes (*Blade*); gangs (*Blood Ties*) or gangsters (*Innocent Blood*); nomadic (*The Forsaken*) or urban (*Habit*); fallen priests (*Vampires*) or fallen apostles (*Dracula 2000*).[20]

Furthermore, vampires combine the wonders of modern technology with their everyday environments, as do we. They no longer gaze in amazement at the moving image or computers because they have truly adapted to modern

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[19] Stacey Abbott. *Celluloid Vampires*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007. p. 4
[20] ibid. p. 4

technology and have become dependent on it for their own survival and advancement. The Postmodern Vampire has been reinvented since 1975 due to their own sense of self, their desired participation in our world and, furthermore, their ability to adapt and change within it. Vampires adapt and constantly shift to update themselves within our advancing climate of technology and science, and move from the margins to the centre of our cultural dialogues and preoccupations.

The Reflection looks back

This thesis relies on a core set of definitions used throughout through which we may read the postmodern vampire's absolute participation in our world. This shift allows a collapse of 'otherness', defined as 'not us but them' – those outside the fold of our current values and moral structures indentifying *us* as wholly western or American, and *them* as not. Others are the source for anxieties, racial politics or moral values which are abject or conceived to be wholly incompatible to our accepted societal norms. Others are usually projected and accounted for by those within *our* societal norms – "Gothic others as Frankenstein's creature, Poe's Raven or Ligeia, Dr. Jekyll's Mr. Hyde, Wilde's portrait of Dorian Gray, Stoker's Count Dracula... and Gaston Leroux's phantom of the Paris Opera"[21] - are cast as other because the narrative is situated within our familiar space. It is the breakdown of this 'us vs. them' formation that creates the space for the postmodern vampire to emerge; as Ken Gelder notes of Anne Rice's contribution to this shift: "This narrative strategy emphasises disclosure (through confession or revelation) and publicity... the reader hears the 'other' speaking first-hand; the vampire comes out of the closet and makes himself known; he gives us 'the real' story (at last) about vampires."[22]

I treat vampire modernity and postmodernity as two significantly different periods in time; modernity, ending in the vampire narrative in late 1974, is based on the perfection of technology, on establishing a hierarchal base for knowledge and reason, art and culture, which is further subdivided into high (accepted and academic) or low culture (popular culture). Postmodernity

[21] Fred Botting. *The Gothic*. London: Boydell and Brewer, 2001. p. 158
[22] Ken Gelder. *Reading The Vampire*. London: Routledge, 1994. p. 109

disavows the structures of hierarchal knowledge and accepts that all texts and media are equally valid. Unlike modernism which considers itself 'New' and attempts to locate pinnacles in the arts and culture, "postmodernism looks for breaks, for events rather than new worlds, for the tell-tale instant after which it is no longer the same; for the 'When it all changed'... or better still, for shifts and irrevocable changes in the *representation* of things and of the way they change." [Jameson's emphasis][23] Literature, cinema, advertising, online interactions, graphic novels, television are among the many even playing fields from which we engage within our world – they are products by which we understand our environment that are not subject to critical labelling or "prophetic elitism or [the] authoritarianism of the modern movement"[24] but rather "a kind of aesthetic populism".[25] I treat all media used in this study within the postmodern framework of equal value, and frame various texts in tandem according to their particular cultural topics.

Examples found and used within this study focus on many works in vampire literature and cinema, but also all other types of media and cultural representations, including artworks by Francis Bacon, William Blake and Hieronymus Bosch; music videos, rock albums, musicians and MTV; popular media including magazines *Newsweek* and *Time* and mainstream newspapers; television programmes and advertisements; graphic novels; criminal trials; religious iconography and its reinterpretations; medical and scientific advancements and the discovery of HIV/AIDS; the advent of the Religious Right in the United States, the continuing debates on evolution and intelligent design; and the administrations of recent American presidents. While this thesis is *not* a survey of cultural history, it tracks the development of these movements in our culture and finds that vampires, unleashed to manifest and assimilate, are everywhere.

There are distinct shapes and patterns which preoccupy the four chapters of this study. Furthermore, these patterns shift considerably within the cultural decade each chapter examines. As I discuss in Chapter One of this thesis, 1970s vampires are preoccupied in carving out a distinctive narrative space which

[23] Fredric Jameson. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.* p. ix
[24] ibid. p. 2
[25] ibid. p. 2

revolves around their narrative shifting from the 'other' to the first person narrative, the 'I'. Beginning with the complexities of this shift from the old world aristocracy Dracula represents prior to 1975, I explore the various Draculas represented in 1970s fiction and film. Fred Saberhagen's *The Dracula Tape* reverses the narrative trajectory so familiar to readers of Stoker's 1897 novel and casts Dracula as the hero against a righteous sadistic Van Helsing. Similarly, in Paul Morrissey's *Blood For Dracula* (1974), Dracula (Udo Kier) is characterised as a sickly aristocratic vampire who attempts to gain access to virginal blood in an Italian household, only to be brutally dispatched by its dubious Marxist 'hero' Mario (Joe Dalessandro). These texts mark the watershed of the vampire narrative which becomes populated by brutal patriarchal forces and sadistic Van Helsings. Other Draculas embrace romance heroism, in particular George Hamilton in *Love At First Bite* (1979), and Frank Langella in John Badham's *Dracula* (1979), both attempting to liberate the women they desire from the cultural entrapments and patriarchies they endure. Other vampires attempting to establish their new found identities are Martin, Louis and Lestat, in George A. Romero's *Martin* (1976) and Anne Rice's debut novel I*nterview With The Vampire* (1976), all of whom explicitly sever ties with their modern counterparts: Martin reiterates repeatedly: "there is no magic"[26] while Louis rebukes Stoker's *Dracula* as "bullshit... [we have] no magical power whatsoever"[27] and reduces Stoker and his work to "the vulgar fictions of a demented Irishman"[28]. Mirroring the culture of dieting that boomed during the 1970s, vampires become skinny and frail, a form of self-punishment or mutilation to express their frustrations, when linked to the Modern Vampire, for their postmodern transgressions. In the characters of Dr. Weyland in Suzy McKee Charnas's novel *The Vampire Tapestry* (1980) and Saint Germain of Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's *Hotel Transylvania* (1978), vampires gain access to forbidden knowledge and forbidden sexualities, form trysts with human lovers and engage in intellectual endeavours. I finally turn to Stephen King's vampire king Barlow in *'Salem's Lot* (1975) and Werner Herzog's remake of F.W Murnau's 1922 film, *Nosferatu* (1979). Both Nosferatus physically embody otherness and the fantastic in their appearance and their narratives, and illustrate the implications facing the vampire that

[26] *Martin*. Dir. George A. Romero, Arrow Films, 1976.
[27] Anne Rice. *Interview With The Vampire*. London: Raven Books, 1976. p. 27
[28] *Interview With The Vampire*. Dir. Neil Jordan, Warner Bros. 1994.

cannot adapt or develop within the postmodern narrative. In particular, King's novel is fixated on the permeability of American borders and homosexual politics, two topics which emerge with considerable prominence later in this study. 1970s vampires embody the difficulties they encounter as they begin to establish this new mode of narrative and becoming more integrated within the American narrative of the everyday. Within a short cultural decade, these vampires shed the skins of their modern vampire fathers in an attempt to voice their own individual perspectives.

In Chapter Two, vampires enter the family home via an absentee parent, or through tempting the teenager out of the confines of the nuclear home. The 1980s witnessed a sharp increase in divorce rates, and family based narratives consistently had either an absentee father or a familial gap, which the invading vampire often exploited by posing as a potential suitor to gain access to the teenage children. In these Reaganite 'family values' narratives, *The Lost Boys* (1987), *Fright Night* (1985) and *Near Dark* (1987), the family has become a site of vulnerability. The 'family values' films discussed also incorporate new fears of HIV/AIDS infection and 'deviant' sexuality. These three films clandestinely equate gay contact and vampire infection, which can only be prevented by killing the vampire patriarch and restoring family order. The advent of HIV/AIDS is read as an apocalyptic plague, where the life-force of the body – blood and sexual fluids – becomes the contaminator. Through Whitley Streiber's novel *The Hunger* (1981) and its film adaptation by Tony Scott in 1983, explicit connections between homosexual contact and vampirism are made, where vampirism is described as a contaminant of the blood, slowly, yet aggressively, consuming the entire body. Chapter Two focuses much of its historical and cultural analysis on the AIDS narrative, as well as its associations and hateful reactions within the media. As the vampire body begins to manifest symptoms of sickness, discrimination and public denouncements of gay people and their ability to infect 'decent' society are present in the vampire narrative and are duly examined. The rise of dialogues concerning Armageddon and religious rhetoric posited the vampire as representative of biblical plague and pestilence, voiced by Anne Rice's violent and reactionary matriarch Akasha in *Queen of the Damned* (1988), Rice's third Vampire Chronicle, who calls upon Lestat to slay his brothers and sisters in

this time of divine war. Among these reactionary texts, Thomas Harris's series of 'Hannibal Lecter' novels, *Red Dragon* (1980), *The Silence of The Lambs* (1988) and *Hannibal* (1999) run concurrent to this continued plague narrative and focus on the horrors of consumption and the textual importance of skin and skinning. I read the character of Hannibal Lecter as a vampire, through his orality, intellect and behaviour, and approach the novel, film adaptation and Francis Ford Coppola's adaptation of Stoker's novel, *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992), as forming an explicit triangle through the casting of Anthony Hopkins in both films. Coppola's revision of Stoker's novel coincides with a distinct return of revisionist history novels and a centenary celebration of the publication of *Dracula* in 1897. These revisionist novels, namely Kim Newman's *Anno Dracula* (1992) and its American counterpart, Michael Romkey's *I, Vampire* (1991), are decadent works of gothic excess incorporating fin de siècle doom, populating their narratives with infamous characters from Victorian history and fiction. This overwhelming sense of decadence and consumption culminates in the final section where I approach the narratives of vampire consumption, yuppies, plastic bodies, Reaganomics and MTV. Reaganomics is approached from a narrative of invasion, embodied in the slasher film franchises which thrived during the period, while MTV, the beacon of aesthetic gloss and consumption, becomes the new platform for vampires Timmy Valentine of S.P. Somtow's *Vampire Junction* (1985) and Rice's Lestat in *The Vampire Lestat* (1985). *Vampire's Kiss* (1988) tracks yuppie Peter Loew through his 'vampirism', primarily based on the ruthless dispatching and tormenting of others outside the yuppie class system, paralleled with equal horror, ruthlessness and depravity through Patrick Bateman in Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho* (1991) who also displays overt vampire qualities and a distorted mental state. Vampires have become jaded by the 1980s, scorched by the Reaganite sun, and choose either to die or go into hiding, in the form of the hidden gothic double.

In Chapter Three, the central thematic preoccupation is the revealing of the gothic double through the vampire with two distinct faces. Vampirism is re-invigorated through two wholly different versions of narrative representation; one primarily concerned with 'independent' productions - novels that were written outside of the mainstream fold of vampire authors such as Anne Rice,

and films that are produced without the influence or budgets of Hollywood studios – and the prominence of the corporate vampire within the mainstream of the genre. The vampire 'splits' within the 1990s cultural decade (from 1992 to pre 9/11 2001) into oppositional personas, mimicking the unveiling of certain established celebrity figures as public gothic doubles. This chapter also charts the terrain of millennial angst, and the introduction of gothic television through David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991), which bookends this chapter with a discussion on the revival of the televisual vampire narrative in Joss Whedon's *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) and its sister series *Angel* (1999-2004). In particular, the gothic doubling of the 1990s was a televised event; both *Twin Peaks* and *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* repeatedly double their characters and spaces, forming unique modes of enquiry that are evident in 90s American cultural history, exemplified in the criminal trial of O.J Simpson, the Susan Smith Case and the West Memphis Three. These gothic doubles are given considerable attention to illustrate the importance of this mirroring in the vampire narratives. It should be noted that most of the vampires discussed in this chapter are largely from cinema or television, as I consider these to be exemplary texts charting this development of the vampire. Independent vampires are accounted for in my discussion on *Nadja* (1995), *The Addiction* (1995) and *Cronos* (1993), and Poppy Z.Brite's cult novel *Lost Souls* (1992), all of which place the vampire as the other who seeks to consume, control or become an agent of destructive excess. Contrastingly, the corporate vampire becomes a glossy desired being; Neil Jordan's version of *Interview With The Vampire* (1994) focuses on the vampire in a historical cinematic lens, beautifying both Louis and Lestat and their participation in the present via the historical moving image of past familiar vampires. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* explicitly relies on this intertextuality of cinema and popular culture within the 'Buffyverse', and investigates *Buffy* through two different vampires who represent this split: Spike and Angel.

Concluding with Chapter Four, my study returns to the millennial angst of the late 1990s to locate the roots of the rhetoric of Armageddon which is central to the ongoing metamorphosis of the twenty-first century vampire. The dominant theme of cultural war returns as a haunting spectre in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Both *Dracula 2000* (2000) and *Van Helsing* (2004) largely

configure the vampire as a religious figure or ideological terrorist who must be dispatched to restore order. I also look to Jerry B. Jenkins and Tim LaHaye's *Left Behind* series to reinforce the depth of this paranoia and religious right rhetoric which firmly associates the vampire as an agent of religious evil. To account for certain shifts within this thematic investigation, my discussion on the *Blade* trilogy relocates *Blade* (1998) to the millennium to allow a fluid reading of the entire trilogy. Alongside this discussion, I focus on white consumption of the black body in Andrew Fox's novel *Fat White Vampire Blues* (2002). *Blade*, in particular, navigates a new terrain in racial politics, embracing technology and representative of a new cinematic development: the vampire cyborg. Hybridity becomes a central link between the *Blade* trilogy and both *Underworld* films, each presenting undesirable mulattos as an evolutionary advancement. I argue that vampires within the corporate fold embrace a cyborg existence while vampires beyond this Hollywood representation return to older fears and myths, namely the vagina dentata and paedophilia, located both in America's heartland in *Teeth* (2007) and abroad in John Ajvide Lindqvist's 2007 Swedish novel *Let The Right One In*. Vampires also migrate to the fringes of the Arctic Circle in *Frostbiten* (2006) and Alaska, America's geographical margins, in both the 2002 graphic novel and film adaptation of *30 Days of Night* (2007). I conclude this chapter with a section concerning Anne Rice's final vampire chronicles *Blackwood Farm* (2002) and *Blood Canticle* (2003), a series she draws to a close by rejecting the vampire narratives she reigned over, and in their stead writing fictions of Jesus Christ. This thematic link is also present in the re-interpretation of Richard Matheson's 1954 novel, *I Am Legend* in its most recent adaptation, *I Am Legend* (2007), which reconfigures the novel's narrative of science and evolution to one of religious redemption. I conclude by looking at the recent rise of adolescent vampire fiction, most notably Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series, which maps the vampire body as excessively clean and chaste, a bastion of morality and Mormon teachings, which marks the vampire narrative's temporary transition from the political far left to the religious right. This relocation illustrates the political power present within these different religious groups who use the vampire narrative to recruit the young into a set of specific ideologies.

Within the parameters set for this study on the Postmodern Vampire, it must be noted that I am being led by history. The cultural history that is discussed in this thesis is the culture of the everyday, the historical happenings that shape and define our lives, our attitudes, and our politics. As previously stated, this is not a cultural survey, nor is it a vampire survey or encyclopedia; while my use of texts is extensive, it is not a complete account of vampire literature or cinema. To provide such an inclusive account would require an encyclopedic structure and a much larger volume. There are many other collections such as David J. Skal's *V is for Vampire: The A – Z of Everything Undead* (1996), Matthew Bunson's *The Vampire Encyclopedia* (2000) and J. Gordon Melton's *The Vampire Book: The Encyclopedia of the Undead* (1999) that extensively account for the multitudes of vampires both mentioned and unmentioned in this study. Many scholars and authors feature and overlap within the framework of this thesis, each contributing significantly in their own accounts on the development of the vampire narrative. Among these scholars is Nina Auerbach, whose seminal study *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (1995), charts the relationship between the vampire and Western culture, ending with Kathryn Bigelow's *Near Dark* (1987). Auerbach explores the American President as a figure akin to the vampire, in terms of power and influence, and discovers a specific symbiotic relationship is present between the two. As she rightly states, and as I have already quoted, "vampires go where the power is"[29] and it is through this distinctive link between vampires and presidential administrations that she bases her form of enquiry on the 20th century vampire. David J Skal, in his book *The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror* (2001) investigates horror through the prism of cultural history, and reveals that within each era, monsters unveil and represent very specific anxieties that dominate the period. Darryl Jones dedicates a sub-section of his book *Horror: A Thematic History in Fiction and Film* (2002) to the postmodern vampire, clearly acknowledging the identity split that occurs in 1975, and furthermore categorizes this period as the 'vampire circus': "1975 was to prove singularly important for vampires, the beginning of a new era for the Children of The Night."[30] Stacey Abbott's study on the cinematic vampire in *Celluloid Vampires* (2007) approaches the changing vampire through its continued presence onscreen, representative of

[29] Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. p. 6
[30] Darryl Jones. *Horror: A Thematic History in Fiction and Film*. London: Arnold, 2002. p. 94

ongoing developments in make-up, computer-generated images (CGI) and representing the modern world. As Abbott recognises, "The vampire is timeless but, through the process of renewal, it is completely in tune with the present."[31] In particular, Abbott's brilliant development of the vampire cyborg is included to illustrate our continuing reliance on technology in the twenty-first century and how the vampire body incorporates this dependence for its evolutionary advancement onscreen. My own research has grown out of these important and various interdisciplinary studies, and develops from their conclusions on the vampire's various anthropomorphic embodiments.

My research differs from many other works on the vampire because it openly claims the vampire as a characteristically postmodern being. I emphasise this claim as the vampire has entered every conceivable spectrum of media and cultural mode of representation since 1975, and continues to develop its very present narrative. I treat these works as having equal importance – I make no hierarchal distinction between works of film, literature or other media, as the vampire's infiltration is everywhere, and they are equally indiscriminate. In my studies, I have encountered many authors who have academically and critically examined the vampire in terms of gender theory, psychoanalysis, cinema, literature, and religion among others, but have found no one who has critically explored examples of cultural history found in the vampire's own story explicitly within postmodernity. Auerbach does inform us of the importance of cultural links and highlights many excellent examples, but concludes her study during the 1980s; many important developments have occurred since then which I have explored within this work.

My aim is to present exemplary vampire narratives which conclusively prove the vampire's significance to the cultural issues at hand in our fragmented world. The postmodern vampire proliferates, splits, and reassembles, represents cultural fragments and religious configuration, and consistently accounts, with particular accuracy, for the everyday anxieties and developments we endure. My title should therefore be explanatory - Baudelaire, the great French poet, described modernity as the 'here and now'. Stripping away the modernist hierarchal structure of knowledge and academic ranking of texts,

[31] Stacey Abbott. *Celluloid Vampires*. p. 11

postmodernity too recognises the importance of the present, and looks at all texts and dialectics that contribute to dialogues concerned with the here and now. Vampires are projections of the present, eternally with us, eternally reflecting us – our desires, our fears, our irrational beliefs and our possible futures. We create them and it is the vampire, through the looking glass, who looks back: "I am the dark mirror... the vampire of my own heart". [32]

[32] Charles Baudelaire. "L'Héautontimorouménos" *Les Fleurs du Mal.* 1857. Trans. from French by Jörg Waltje: "Je suis le sinistre miroir,... je suis de mon coeur le vampire..." Jörg Waltje. *Blood Obsession: Vampires, Serial Killers and the Popular Imagination.* New York: Peter Lang, 2005. pp. 55-56

Chapter One: Shedding the Skins of Our Fathers; Establishing Postmodern Undeath.

'Can you talk about being a vampire: being one now?'
'You won't like knowing,' he said.[1]

If ever there was in the world a warranted and proven history,
it is that of vampires. [2]

No other creature captivates the imagination in popular culture quite like the vampire. An immortal being, the vampire gives insights into historical and cultural narratives while also acting as a touchstone for those unrepresented in the dominant social dialogue. The vampire, acting also as a cultural mirror, offers readers and viewers an insight into why his immortal influence is significant. Through the mechanisms of dialogue, image and the drastic alterations experienced in vampirism throughout the 1970s, vampires become politically and socially charged – reflectors of our social ills and constraints as well as our deepest desires.

Not only does this new 'cirque des vampires' emerge in the 1970s to shed the skins of its predecessors, most of whom were depicted according to a strict horror format such as that of the Hammer studios, but they continue within this new vampire template of vampire narratives to evolve and shift. No two vampires are completely alike in this new exploration of vampirism, and as a result, there are very few conclusive and rigorous rules by which they must abide. The desire for blood, and the need for recognition (as these vampires wish to become more included in our cultural world) seem to be the over-arching factors amongst these vampires, though we must also note that this is how one primarily distinguishes a vampire from any other supernatural entity. The rules and restrictions of separation are gone; interpretation forms the new path for Postmodern Vampirism and the social narrative of this vampire becomes intermingled with our own. Some vampires express themes of

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[1] Suzy McKee Charnas. *The Vampire Tapestry.* New York: Pocket Books, 1980 p. 124
[2] Jean Jacques Rousseau. "Letter to the Archbishop of Paris". 1762. rpt. in Anthony Masters. *The Natural History of The Vampire.* St. Albans: Mayflower, 1975 p. 243

homosexuality and body image crises; other vampires such as the 1970s Draculas express their romantic intentions despite this theme being largely absent from Stoker's novel; while others represent the haunting of a disturbing political past that seems wholly inescapable. Archaic vampires cannot narrate the troubles of the latter twentieth century with the same authority as the newborn Postmodern Vampire due to the quick succession of dramatic cultural shifts, which occur from the late 1960s onwards. In gaining his independence from a particular stylised form, the vampire is more reflective of our culture than ever, and more illustrative of our social malaises. For our new vampire narratives, "this is a humanised terrain, which is more ambiguous in its depiction of good and evil."[3]

Chapter One of this thesis shall focus specifically on 1970s vampires, the time parameter stretching from late 1974 with *Blood For Dracula*, directed by Paul Morrissey, to *The Vampire Tapestry* by Suzy McKee Charnas in 1980. Specifically, my investigations into 1970s vampires focus on the vampires that emerge in the post-Hammer world. Thematically linked and chronologically arranged within these set themes, these vampires represent the struggles facing the vampire in forming this new identity, and ruthlessly casting off typical and expected motifs.

Stereotypes are laid to rest and parodied, and corrective texts emerge - *The Dracula Tape*, *Interview With The Vampire* and *Martin* among them - which are concerned with providing 'accurate' accounts of Dracula and his legion, and new vampire characters, unknown and faceless, come into view. Beginning with the surviving Draculas who straddle this gap from Modernity to Postmodernity, these Draculean vampires explicitly depict the trappings of their past narratives and their need to transition from the past, to update themselves with a vengeance in this fast new world. They are determined characters who leave the past and its vampire relics behind them. The second section introduces two new vampire texts, Anne Rice's Louis and George A. Romero's Martin, who experience the pains of cultural change openly. Concluding our study of 'newborn' 1970s vampires we encounter the vampire hero and sexual liberator Saint Germain, of Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's *Hotel*

[3] Milly Williamson. *The Lure Of The Vampire.* London: Wallflower Press, 2005 p. 31

Transylvania, and the psychoanalysed vampire and anthropologist Dr. Weyland in Suzy McKee Charnas's *The Vampire Tapestry*.

The concluding section of Chapter One is an in-depth analysis into two specific 'Nosferatu' vampires who are doomed by their particular inability to modernise with their counterparts. These vampires, Count Dracula (formally Graf Orlok) and Mr. Kurt Barlow, are the dying fathers of a new vampire type which now openly and firmly rejects them. Incapable of change, particularly in their lack of humanity and in their physical attributes, they are doomed to die; their decrepitude disallowed in this, the postmodern condition. As politically charged vampires, these two Nosferatus are representative of the decade they leave behind: political corruption and destruction of the community, from which the newborn vampire evolves for survival. This chapter charts the arrival of new vampires, examines the revision of the Dracula tale and Dracula's personal perspective, and concludes with the Nosferatu vampires who cannot survive these transformations. This chapter explores three types of vampires: the newborn, the enduring and the dying. Each of these subcategories relates to particular periods in 1970s history and culture, where the Postmodern Vampire (and postmodern variations of enduring vampires) reflects our cultural and political struggles in society.

Paul Morrissey, Fred Saberhagen, Louis Jourdan, George Hamilton and John Badham: Chronicling the enduring vampire: 1970s Draculas

Dracula and his many variants have been the subject of more academic scrutiny than any other vampires in fiction and film. Dracula is a creature of fascination still, a wide spectrum of academics probe his character, his surroundings and the political overtones of his vampire nature; and yet, Dracula seems jaded. Stoker's character has the power to invite new scholarly work but Dracula, the character himself, has only prolonged his postmodern life by suffering the re-workings of many writers and directors who have produced diluted television and film versions of the vampire. These various *Draculas* are important protégés of the original *Dracula* Stoker created but often lack the original dynamic of the character. This is due to writers and directors drawing concepts from the more recognisable interpretations, such as Bela Lugosi's or

Christopher Lee's performances, rather than from Stoker's text. Stoker's Dracula is a *changeling,* a shape-shifter, which the postmodern revisions of his character highlight, and they too enjoy the act of blending in with their new surroundings. However, the expansion of Dracula's possibilities as a character in the 1970s led to his emotional, cultural and geographical displacement. This section is not a mere comparison of the postmodern Draculas with the original Stoker creation, but rather, a view of how Postmodernity has altered our perceptions of vampirism, and how this has filtered through to the source of the 20th Century's most popular monster figure. While it is true that the Hammer films addressed the sexual aspects of the Stoker novel in graphic detail, Postmodern Vampires are not inclined (especially in the case of the 1970s Draculas) to be overtly sexual in body, but rather focus their desires through their gaze. The desire for companionship through eternity is what compels these Draculas to leave their crypts and abandon their homeland for the West. Dracula modernises as he leaves his homeland in search of companionship, while his hunters, or Stoker's good men, remain archaic.

The variations on the Dracula story are wide, complex and often run counter to the original novel; consequently, they are sometimes a mere shadow of Stoker's vision. Dracula's name alone may be a seal of legitimacy for some vampire films but it is often a misappropriation. Dracula has been the only vampire to enjoy over two hundred film appearances with hardly any of the films being remotely faithful to the Stoker novel. *Dracula* has been presented in terms of horror, comedy, ballet, parody and pornography, with all of the variations being *very* loosely based on the novel.[4] It is starkly apparent that

[4] There is an abundance of such titles based on *Dracula* and the character's permeable influences in popular culture. Here are some of the most interesting ones I have found: *Dracula Sucks* (1979), *Spermula* (1976) starring Udo Kier from Paul Morrissey's *Blood for Dracula* and *Scarlett Countess* (2001) – lesbian porn inspired by Dracula and *Muffy The Vampire Layer* (1992) – a porn remake of the film version of *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* (Joss Whedon ,1992). The children's cartoon *Count Duckula* (1988-1993) featuring a vegetarian vampire! The ballet *Dracula: Pages From A Virgin's Diary* (2002), *Blacula* (1972) – a blaxploitation film, and *Lust of Blackula* (1987) – a soft porn sequel. Marvel Comics also released a series entitled *Tomb of Dracula*, which ran from April 1972 to August 1979. DC Comics also adapted a revision of Dracula in *Batman and Dracula: Red Rain* (1997). Here Batman fights Dracula for control over Gotham City. Also, based entirely on the image of Bela Lugosi is the character of Count Von Count, the arithmomanic (obsessive need to count) vampire character from Sesame Street. Perhaps this is also an acknowledgement of Chinese and Eastern European folklore, where it is believed that vampire's have an obsessive need to count and thus, grains of rice and sand are left at a presumed vampire's gravesite to delay him in rising – s/he first must count every grain. Debuting in 1972 and still featuring in Sesame Street, Count von Count is still

Dracula's name is merely enough to allow such varied adaptations to be produced. Not only do we see Dracula become an entity that is endlessly parodied and remade, but has become a vast commercial empire:

> We see this most clearly in film, but the vampire has also infested comics (two complete Marvel series and reams of others), the radio (Orson Welles' *Dracula* for "The Mercury Theatre" is still a classic), television (there was an entire soap opera, "Dark Shadows," back in the 1960s, a sitcom, "The Munsters," and hundreds of made-for-TV movies, one of which, *The Night Stalker*, 1971, was the highest-rated feature film ever made for television), cartoons (the vampire has been on almost every animated series almost from the first), and wax museums, coloring books [sic], breakfast cereals, figurines, masks, bath mittens, erasers, stamps and decals, plastic model kits, wallets, bubble bath, bracelets, paint-by-numbers kits, costumes, kites, play money, candy, pencil sharpeners, Mon-Stirs swizzle sticks, muppets, popcorn, and lunch boxes. If a twelve-year-old can use it, the vampire has been on it.[5]

Dracula has become simultaneously a commercial commodity, a literary institution and the embodiment of an Old World gothic persona, which remains buried under an exhaustive amount of variation and adaptation.

In the 1970s we encounter a series of Draculas who not only offer variations in the guise of setting the record straight but whose personas are steeped in despair. Fred Saberhagen's Dracula in *The Dracula Tape* is intent on retelling his own tale from his own point of view, being thoroughly irritated by the inaccuracies that have been promulgated though Harker's journal and other accounts. He declares them false accounts; variations on a truth which invites the reader to view him not as Stoker's fanged monster but as a refined, sophisticated vampire who has been misread and misunderstood. This motif is

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considered to be one of Jim Henson's most beloved Muppets. By including these titles, I only wish to note the impact *Dracula* has had from a variety of leftfield cultural sources.

[5] James B. Twitchell. *Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985 p. 140

also found in John Badham's version of *Dracula* (1979) where one is compelled to sympathize with our new vampire protagonist against a dysfunctional family and an incapable, incompetent Van Helsing (Laurence Olivier). All of these Draculas encounter similar themes of change, which advance their metamorphosis from Modernity to Postmodernity. In each of these films and novels, we see a Dracula expelled from his home, which can be translated as the end of the unknown world and the shrinking of supernatural space. The expansions of Western Borders also coincide with this evacuation of Old World vampires, in the removal of borders in expanding the E.E.C (European Economic Community) in the 1970s. Here, breaking down borders not only allows the invasion of vampires to be accomplished with greater ease, but also allows the invasion of the vampire sphere by outside forces. This forced evacuation is the central dynamic by which these vampires progress – and discover their need for evolution. Fred Saberhagen's Vlad is 'correcting' the erroneous accounts of his deeds, while Udo Kier's Dracula in Paul Morrissey's *Blood For Dracula* is suffering through the breakdown of morality in the human world. John Badham's *Dracula* is highlighting the erosion of family structures and George Hamilton's Count in *Love at First Bite* illustrates the need for New World vampirism, an injection of Americana into Old World blood. Ultimately, it is the promise of change and companionship that draws the 1970s Draculas together.

The Demise of Hammer

The mid-twentieth century vampire, I suggest, can be categorised as the Modern (rather than Postmodern) Vampire. He is the vampire that was used as the source of malignant evil in the horror film or novel, the central force of evil whose presence alone incited fear, repulsion and suspicion. Modern Vampires are outsiders in the formulaic fiction they emerge from, but here in postmodernity, we the audience are privy to their thoughts and intent. The Other in horror needs little motivation for its acts of evil and is thus excluded from any discourse of character depth or alternate perspectives. Otherness is a binary form of horror theory: us versus them. This then, allows an externalised view of evil, an evil outside of normative family structures, for example: Modern Vampires are hostile, excluded beings, "predominantly a figure of fear

in Western popular culture..."[6] who, like most literary and film monsters, are unable to transcend these strict social divides because they are firmly rejected and are unsympathetic. While 1976 is the year that both Rice's and Romero's works were released, it coincides with two other significant facts: 1975 is the year in which the final Hammer film, *To The Devil A Daughter*, was released; and 1976 was the five hundredth anniversary of the death of Vlad Dracul, also known as Vlad the Impaler. Noting the anniversary of the infamous Wallachian Prince Vlad is important because this commemoration can be viewed in two ways: the end of the era of the Modern Vampire (spanning from 1897, the year of the publication of *Dracula*, to 1975) through the celebration of his contribution to culture in both film and fiction, and the marking of a new beginning for the Postmodern Vampire. In this two-year period 1975-1976, the polar shift between the Modern Vampire and the new Postmodern Vampire emerge. As Richard Davenport-Hines suggests, the celebration of all things vampire-related was thriving and the cultural interest in the vampire increased.

> The 500th anniversary of Vlad's death in 1976 was commemorated with a postage stamp: The Romanian tyrant Ceausescu hailed the Impaler as a nationalist hero. The reification of vampire myths has continued apace.[7]

Coincidentally, the closure of the Hammer Studios and the anniversary of Vlad's death in 1976 also signalled the end of this particular type of representation of Dracula, presenting the characters of Stoker's novel as archaic and dated. Hammer had exhausted its repertoire of vampire horror, and by 1976, the public commemoration on the death of the historical Dracula provided new opportunities for new vampiric forms. It seems that the time was fitting for the vampire movement to change, not least because the vampire's role in popular culture had become more of soundless spectacle than a lyrical presence. The absence of dialogue written for Dracula in later Hammer Horror films only confirms that the modern vampire had nothing left to say. In *Dracula- Prince of Darkness* (1966), Christopher Lee's Count Dracula is

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[6] Milly Williamson. *The Lure of The Vampire*. p. 29

[7] Richard Davenport-Hines. *Gothic: Four Hundred Years of Excess Horror, Evil and Ruin*. London: Fourth Estate Publishers, 1998. p. 353

merely iconic; his presence is more than enough to convince the audience of his intentions, despite the absence of dialogue.

Darryl Jones suggests interesting reasons for Hammer's reluctance for progression or modernisation in their plots:

> In part, this is because of the studio's continuing commitment to traditional Gothicism, its habitual reliance on accepted templates for horror...and consequently its reluctance, in narrative and metaphorical terms, to leave the nineteenth century.[8]

To further this argument on the limitations of Hammer as a source for exploring the vampire's identity, it is worth suggesting that as the vampire aged, he became less articulate and more bestial, or animalistic.

> Christopher Lee's Dracula became more limited and less broadly menacing over the years. Increasingly inarticulate, he became more animalistic and less chic; when he did talk he abandoned his brisk authority for lingering chants in the manner of Lugosi... Lee's Dracula turned primitive as he aged.[9]

The reluctance of Hammer studios to change or to experiment with new innovations and interpretations of horror meant simply that any form of change would become a source of threat to this staple diet of capes and heaving bosoms. It is not surprising that the Hammer films, however significant in the promotion of highly sexualised provocative horror and reinforcing the importance of Dracula, should come to an end.

As Darryl Jones suggests, "there is a kind of Puritanism in [Terence] Fisher's work, as there is throughout the Hammer *oeuvre* generally."[10] The vampire had to find another format to confess his sins and motivations outside of the Hammer regime. Anne Rice's *Interview With The Vampire* provided the vampire as the central character and the narrator of the tale, offering a new

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[8] Darryl Jones. *Horror: A Thematic History in Fiction and Film*. p. 93
[9] Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. p. 129
[10] Darryl Jones. *Horror: A Thematic History in Fiction and Film*. p. 93

opportunity to engage in the vampire's perspective. By providing the vampire with a sense of identity, this revisionist, and revitalising touch offered new life to the formulaic Undead.

Paul Morrissey's Body Politic(s)

We begin chronologically with *Blood For Dracula* (also known as *Andy Warhol's Dracula*) in 1974, with the young German actor Udo Kier in the title role. This is a Dracula who is in transition, caught between the expectations of his Old World lineage and failing to cope with the breakdown of morality in this new world order. In the opening credits, Dracula is dyeing his hair black. Here, the blackened hair with a pronounced widow's peak indicates that he is an Old World creature who struggles with his identity externally. The image of Dracula dyeing his hair can be interpreted as homage to Bela Lugosi's image of Dracula. Internally, this vampire is of a weak disposition, his need for 'pure' virginal blood being his primary concern and all that he can digest. The significance of the 'pure' blood is twofold; it represents the breakdown of sexual morality in the modern world and illustrates that Dracula's politics have also become diluted. Pure blood is also associated with royalty and the aristocracy, the upper echelons of the class system. Dracula, as a representative of the aristocracy must have access to more of this bloodline if his survival is to be assured. His feeding on this blood is not only ingestion but also the continuance of an Old World order.

We see the horrors of Dracula's failing health when he consumes 'dirty' blood believing it to be pure, only to regurgitate it in a violent spew of red blood in a pristine porcelain bathtub. Direct links can be made here between the gory regurgitation scenes and the eating disorder bulimia. In this case, blood is a substitute for food and nourishment, which Dracula is in dire need of. His demeanour is that of a physically incapable man, wheelchair-bound by weakness and hunger. His thinness is highlighted through Kier's pronounced facial bone structure, his jaw line and increasing paleness illustrating his starvation. It is suggested during the film that, while Dracula is not gay, clandestine gayness surrounds his servant Anton, which could serve as a displaced version of Dracula's own sexual problems. Dracula's inability to procreate, and his overall sexual inadequacy can also be linked to female

anorexia and bulimia, as the menstrual cycle ceases when the body is under such conditions of starvation (though Dracula's 'menstrual' blood is coming out the wrong orifice). Dracula's vampiric beauty is highlighted by theories of male bulimia, which is linked culturally to the gay community, and the importance placed on 'thinness'. But unlike anorexia, where one can derive warped 'praise' of sorts due to the ritual of starvation and powerful will, bulimics are chastised and secretive – they are viewed as failures by the dieting world because they can literally 'have their cake and eat it' – only to purge it afterwards.

> Within the gay community itself, there is some evidence that disordered eating attitudes and behaviours, such as fear of fatness and purging, are relatively common. ...The male gay community tend to put a premium on thinness as a criterion for attractiveness. [11]

We see this also in Anne Rice's *Interview With The Vampire* where Louis, struggling with his identity as a vampire, also abuses his body through radical dieting while coming to terms with his (heavily implied) homosexual identity. For Rice, homosexuality is an intrinsic element in the vampire body; few straight vampires exist in her world. Udo Kier's Dracula endures physical distress by suffering violent tremors and sweating prolifically, indicating severe illness, which increases as his source of pure blood is contaminated. These physical expressions directly correlate with bulimia, which is often fuelled by identity crisis.

> Bulimics tend to be extraordinarily vulnerable to external influences, and given their intense concern with their appearance, fashion models and media figures often have a

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[11] Richard A. Gordon. *Eating Disorders: Anatomy of a Social Epidemic.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. 2000. p. 114. Further research on this can be found in J. Yager, F. Kurtzman, J. Landsverk and E. Weismeier, "Behaviours and attitudes related to eating disorders in homosexual male college students," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 145. 1988. pp. 495-7. Further sources for gay male thinness can be found in M.D Siever, "Sexual orientation and gender as factors in socioculturally acquired vulnerability to body dissatisfaction and eating disorders," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, vol. 62. 1994, pp. 252-60

> powerful impact on the standards they feel they must live up to.[12]

Identity crises have often troubled Paul Morrissey's film career, particularly as his films have been overshadowed by the name of his producer, Andy Warhol. The relationship between Dracula and Anton, the servant, has been read by Maurice Yacowar as a reflection of the creative relationship Morrissey had with Warhol in the Film Factory, Warhol's film studio.[13] Yacowar notes the repeated theme of master and servant across Warhol's trilogy of costume films, suggesting that this collaboration between Warhol and Morrissey was of mutual benefit:

> The servant's hunger to break free is balanced by his need for discipline and for his master's support. The flawed master needs his assistant for the simple basics of survival.[14]

Vampirism is clearly associated with Andy Warhol's persona; illustrated in his Factory nickname of 'Drella' – "a combination of Cinderella and Dracula"[15] - resulting from the Factory members' recognition of Warhol's "vampirism... his activity as image producer and stargazer, the notion that his touch had the effect of draining away the life of his 'found personalities'... Warhol himself was "affectionately" tagged by some of his close associates as a vampire."[16] But this metaphor of vampirism can also be extended to Morrissey, viewed by some as "something of a leech or bloodsucker, attaching himself to Warhol in a crass bid for recognition and fame."[17] With this co-dependent relationship with Morrissey and the volume of film and literature in the current popular culture

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[12] ibid. p.109. Relating data on this identity crisis is drawn by the author from R.H Striegel-Moore, L.R. Silberstein, and J. Rodin "The social self in bulimia nervosa: Public self-consciousness, social anxiety and perceived fraudulence". *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, vol. 102. 1993, pp. 297 - 303

[13] All three of Warhol's costume films, *Andy Warhol's Dracula* (1974), *Andy Warhol's Flesh for Frankenstein* (1974) and *Beethoven's Nephew* (1985) (USA titles) imply a sense of ownership in the film titles, emphasising the importance of the famous producer over a skilled director.

[14] Maurice Yacowar. *The Films of Paul Morrissey.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993 p.73

[15] Joan Hawkins. *Cutting Edge: Art Horror and the Horrific Avant-garde.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000 p. 186

[16] ibid. p. 186

[17] ibid. p. 186

of the 1970s, it is unsurprising that Andy Warhol, viewed as a vampire by some, in what could be interpreted as a co-vampiric association with Morrissey, would explore *Dracula* through his own art and artists. In Kim Newman's novella *Andy Warhol's Dracula*, Andy masquerades as a vampire to impress his current crowd, Johnny Rotten of the Sex Pistols among them. The novel ends with Warhol's death, punctuated with the blurring of fiction and reigning perceptions of Warhol; Newman concludes, "Andy Warhol was a vampire for only fifteen minutes."[18]

In *Blood for Dracula*, Kier's Dracula is placed under the pressures of furthering the lineage of his family and their way of life, and by extension, the image and perceived powers of the vampire condition. His sister has been entombed as she has reached a degenerative state and is now dependent on her brother finding pure blood to ensure the survival of the family. Morrissey takes pleasure from the extremities in which he presents this unusual twist on Dracula's health and seemingly doomed task of finding 'pure' blood. Morrissey presents a highly sexualised, misogynist, abusive, communist Van Helsing character, the communist farm boy Mario Balato (Joe Dalessandro), to contend with the aristocratic Dracula and his unnerving servant Anton. Both Dracula the aristocrat and Mario the communist are shown to be part of regimes that, for Morrissey, ring hollow. They are equally predators and nemeses: "Where Dracula thrives on a woman's purity, Mario thrives on her corruption. Morrissey shares his monster's rue at the loss of values and self-control, though they have different reasons for regretting the virtual obsolescence of the virgin of the modern world."[19]

Mario is responsible for three of the four sisters of the house losing their virginity. The fourth and eldest sister, Esmerelda, is assumed to be 'impure' due to a broken engagement. She is sidelined in comparison to her younger sisters, considered an old maid due to the failure of her engagement. Oddly, only Esmerelda has any empathy with the Count, possibly as she sees him as an extension of herself. Only when Dracula discovers that Mario is deliberately polluting the 'pure' blood of the women (through orgies with the

[18] Kim Newman. *Andy Warhol's Dracula.* London: Millennium, 2000. p. 89
[19] Maurice Yacowar. *The Films of Paul Morrissey.* p. 83

middle daughters and the rape of the youngest daughter, Perla, for her 'protection') does the bloodshed begin. "'You should lose that virginity of yours before he gets to you,' he advises. But Mario's motive is undercut by a large tapestry depicting a country hunt...the Marxist is simply replacing one predatory politic for another."[20] What is most troubling is that Mario, who can easily be viewed as the real monster of the piece, is constructed as the hero, by violently severing both Dracula's arms and legs, symbolically castrating him. Both institutions, Dracula's aristocracy and Mario's communism, are portrayed as barbaric, bringing destruction to the innocent.

Also, it is critical to note that Mario's virility is the central reason that he is Dracula's nemesis, not only because he is able to contaminate the 'pure' blood of the women, but also because Dracula is sexually inadequate in comparison to him. The implications of this inadequacy are that he must arrange to meet the girls in order to attempt to drink from them, being unable to take their blood at will due to his physical weakness. Dracula is proud of his title and aristocracy, using it to enter the house of the young maidens by impressing the financially troubled father of the house. Conversely, Mario focuses his attention on reading Karl Marx and identifying himself as a communist, explicitly symbolised in the painted mural of hammer and sickle symbol of communist Russia above Mario's bed. For Karl Marx, vampirism always carried political overtones, embodying exploitative class relations. In *Das Kapital*, the bourgeoisie were essentially vampires; draining the working class for their own capitalistic sustenance. Marx used this language deliberately; according to Chris Baldick, "Marx was keenly alert to the ways in which the achievements of bourgeois political reform and capitalist industry could take on the aspect of the mythological and the fabulous."[21] Capitalism is driven by its own addictions, its need to propagate continuously to nourish its own existence, "in the grip of a more powerful demon of his own summoning."[22] Like the vampire, the capitalist is "reduced to an appendage of his own economic machine, driven by unquenchable and destructive cravings."[23]

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[20] Maurice Yacowar. *The Films of Paul Morrissey*. p. 86
[21] Chris Baldick. *In Frankenstein's Shadow*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. (2nd Ed) p. 122
[22] ibid. p. 128
[23] ibid. p. 128

For readers of Marx, represented by Mario, the exploitation of the worker is found historically in the "Danubian principalities" and "the image of the 'Wallachian Boyard', who demanded that a large proportion of peasants' time be devoted to his seigniorial estate... The 'Wallachian Boyard' was none other than Vlad the Impaler, Vlad Dracula". [24] This is a battle between an ancient aristocracy and the communist: the impotent and the virile. Dracula is a fragile, sick creature in this film (his politics and title can be viewed as old and frail too) whose role as villain is contested by the sexual predator Mario. Morrissey is critical of both ideological institutions, illustrating his personal opinion through Mario's shallow commitment to the cause. Morrissey is heavily critiquing the romantic ideals of communism when "directors like Bertolucci and the actors [would] 'talk seriously' about communism."[25] In Morrissey's view, the group of artists and directors were reluctant to look at the failures of communism in politically unstable nations. Morrissey continues, "they have an example like Yugoslavia right on their borders and they actually talk very seriously about how wonderful communism will be."[26]

As for Dracula's aristocracy, sexual activity equals literal death for him, meaning that the lineage of Dracula's politics is on the verge of its own end simply by the impossibility of procreation. Dracula is defeated by the dilution of morality and the obvious decline in Old World values amongst the young – graphically presented by women shedding their virginity before marriage. The rotting of Dracula's world, his decaying body, his fractured identity and his final spectacular castration is Morrissey's death spectacle for the Hammer vampires. In this glorious spectacle, Morrissey finally rids us of this overcooked image of the Modern Dracula, effectively disposing of the aged Hammer Horror vampire.

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[24] Christopher Frayling. *Vampyres: Lord Byron to Count Dracula* 2nd Ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1991) p. 84

[25] Maurice Yacowar. *The Films of Paul Morrissey.* p. 86 quoting Paul Morrissey. *Dialogue on Film.* American Film Institute, vol. 4, no. 2. November 1974. p. 25

[26] Paul Morrissey. *Dialogue on Film.* American Film Institute, vol. 4, no. 2. November 1974. p. 25

Fred Saberhagen: Revising Stoker

Dracula emerges in the 1970s as a revisionist of an incorrectly documented history, which has been wrongfully attached to his name. In a thoroughly postmodern reflection on the previous misconceptions of Dracula, Fred Saberhagen's *The Dracula Tape* positions itself as the novel which openly rebuts Stoker's vision of the Count, succeeding in narrating a convincing defence for Dracula's 'evil' deeds. Saberhagen's idea is a convincing, interesting concept to reinvent Dracula, as Dracula's narrative voice is the only one not recorded in Stoker's novel. Dracula is silenced in Stoker's novel, his activities and movements are recorded by those who witness them, but Dracula's own opinions, motivations and desires are not recounted in his own hand, but rather mediated through a series of very partial (and unreliable) narrators. Robin Wood notes this in his account of Stoker's novel, "it is up to the reader to supply the discourse of Dracula, from the manifold hints the book offers."[27] His perspectives are noted through other characters, we are never privy to a first hand account of his perspective. "The corollary is that Dracula must never be allowed a voice, a discourse, a point of view: he must remain unknowable, whom the narrative is about, but of whom it simultaneously disowns all intimate knowledge."[28]

This narrative 'pocket' in Stoker's text is an open invitation for the Postmodern Vampire to voice his own story, particularly in the case of Dracula. His story is known through a prism of variations, from Murnau's German Expressionism to Terence Fisher's Hammer spectacle. By providing this revisionist Dracula with an original voice at the beginning of this moment of vampire revision in the 1970s, Saberhagen's novel is not only unique but also necessary if Dracula is to transcend his 19th century mythic status. This new reflection that Dracula casts upon his tale is one of a misunderstood, evolving creature who attempts to aid the women surrounded by Stoker's band of incompetent men. Again, we see a misinformed history being corrected, particularly at the heart of Lucy

[27] Robin Wood. "Burying the Undead: The Use and Obsolescence of Count Dracula" in Barry Keith Grant. (Ed). *The Dread Of Difference*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1996. p. 368

[28] ibid. p. 368

Westenra's transformation from a sickly woman to a fledgling vampire. According to Saberhagen's revision, it is Van Helsing's botched blood transfusion and his failure to understand the mixing of blood types – leading to a fatal clotting of the blood - that dooms Lucy. Dracula maintains throughout his confession that because of this unfortunate turn in Lucy's health, he must 'vampirize' her if she is to survive Van Helsing's fatal malpractice. Historically, Karl Landsteiner identified blood types in 1901, classifying three of the four blood groups (A, B, O)[29], and later won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1930. Dr. James Blundell, a British obstetrician, performed the first successful blood transfusion from donor to recipient in 1818, with five of the ten transfusions he performed between 1825-1830 being successful, though he was unaware of blood types. Like Stoker's characters, the patient's spouse donated their blood.

It is unsurprising, then, that Van Helsing was unaware of the blood types, or Rhesus system, identified by Karl Landsteiner and Alexander S. Weiner in 1937, as the incidents in the novel predate these medical discoveries. In this instance, Dracula's defence is historically anachronistic, though we can assume his indignation is based on his dislike of Van Helsing's medical practices and his empathy for the ill Lucy. Saberhagan's Dracula is offering a secular defence and self-justification throughout the novel; his argument being more persuasive to the 1970s reader than the moralistic, religious zealot Van Helsing. As Jules Zanger writes, Saberhagan's Dracula is not a modern monster but rather "... the benevolent protector of his human friends."[30] As the final transfusion is given to Lucy, she becomes more ill. Vlad appears to her, attempting to aid her. Lucy has become suspicious and frantic as she realises she is growing sicker. "Vlad, help me, save me. Arthur is not here, and I fear the others are killing me with what they do."[31] Although it is presumed that Van Helsing and the band of men are attempting to aid Lucy at any cost, the ignorance of blood types and blood transfusions lays the full weight of Lucy's death on Stoker's good men, exonerating Dracula from responsibility. Once

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[29] Decastrello and Sturli identified the fourth blood type (AB) in 1907.
[30] Jules Zanger. "Metaphor into Metonymy: The Vampire Next Door" in Joan Gordon, Veronica Hollinger (Eds) *Blood Read: The Vampire as Metaphor in Contemporary Culture*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 1997. p. 19
[31] Fred Saberhagen. *The Dracula Tape*. New York: Tor Publishers. 1975. p. 127

again we meet with the familiar defence of Dracula; Stoker's good men may contain a dark side. Saberhagen goes so far as to investigate the true motives of Van Helsing's expertise on vampires and vampirism; openly accusing him of a desire to exterminate vampires across Europe:

> '...Why, Professor, do you persecute and torment us? ...Van Helsing, you may believe if you wish that being a vampire is worse than being dead... but forcing the consequences of this belief upon others is something else again.'[32]

Dracula furthers this argument with the example of Lucy being condemned to death entirely, arguing that Undeath is more favourable than death. The debate between the nemeses ends with Dracula declaring Van Helsing a murderer - "...It was really *you* who sent her to the tomb... you have done it before, butcher!"[33] The power in this alternate narrative of Stoker's account of events has a startling ability to sway the reader toward Dracula's point of view. Here, Dracula is not only sympathetic, thought provoking and humanistic, but he successfully casts a shadow of considerable doubt on the character of Van Helsing - "So they took away such life as God had given Lucy, and I in my poor, well meaning way had tried to help her retain... when they were done they soldered up her mangled body in its coffin...."[34]

The cruelty of Stoker's vampire hunters is revisited frequently in the course of retellings of the Dracula tale, particularly relating to the violence which Lucy experiences. It is worth noting that Lucy's death occupies far more of the text than the Count's death, signalling that the 'turning' of women is far more horrific and damaging to the vampire hunters than Dracula himself. It is the recruitment of the women under Dracula's influence that horrifies the Victorian men; the invasion of outside forces, which liberate these women from Victorian culture. This can be interpreted as counter-culturalism, as Dracula was attempting to liberate the women from their expected Victorian roles. Throughout Dracula adaptations, Lucy Westenra suffers the utmost torture by staking, screaming and thrashing in her coffin in the throes of 'death'. Often,

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[32] ibid. pp. 154 -55
[33] ibid. p. 156
[34] ibid. p. 165

this scene is compared to the acts of gang rape, due to the fact that the language used by Stoker to convey the scene is horrific and highly sexual. As the night of Lucy's staking was originally intended to be the night before she was to wed Arthur Holmwood, Arthur is called upon here, as in Stoker's text, to plunge the stake into her bosom. "But Arthur never faltered...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."[35]

In Saberhagen's version, Lucy's staking is quoted from the original text, in an almost mocking tone of the original account, which Dracula himself finds horrific. Stoker's description of Lucy's demise is now placed in a 1970s context; after women's liberation and demands of political equality, Dracula's disgust at the vampire hunters' treatment of Lucy's body indicates that depictions of violence against women cannot be portrayed innocently. The description of Lucy's 'mangled body' lends itself to imagery of desecration and murder, as though some ritualistic act of serial killing has taken place. Given the language used - 'when they were done' - and given the previous contexts of this scene widely interpreted and accepted as the sexual correction of women, there can be little doubt that women are *corrected* through violence into being the penetrated body, disallowing the capacity for women to penetrate men. Stoker's female characters become more sexualised as they encounter the Count. Van Helsing, needing to restore the cultural norm of 'silencing' women and their newly expressed sexuality, prescribes 're-penetration' through the staking of the female vampire body, and removing the head to permanently close the woman's political dialogue. Van Helsing removes Lucy's head effectively to shut her up, after the 're-penetration' with the stake. Phyllis A Roth views the shudders and screams from Lucy as an orgasm, a 'sexually corrective' procedure followed by "the peace into which they subside [which] is to be read as a thank you note."[36] This is to indicate the Victorian woman's place as the penetrated. The orgasm here is not for the benefit of the woman, but rather, to indicate that the male remains dominant in

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[35] ibid. p. 164 quoting Bram Stoker. *Dracula.* 1897. Nina Auerbach and David J. Skal, (Eds) *The Norton Critical Edition of Dracula.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997. p. 192. S.S. Prawer dedicates a whole chapter to this scene of frenzied, sexualised violence in his book, *Caligari's Children: The Film as a Tale of Terror.* New York: Da Capo, 1980.

[36] Phyllis A. Roth. "Suddenly Sexual Women in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*" in Nina Auerbach and David J. Skal, (Eds) *The Norton Critical Edition of Dracula* p. 416

the Victorian gender code, both politically and anatomically. Christopher Craft comments on Lucy's violent staking as a reinstatement of male dominance over the sexually provocative female, as "we may say that this last penetration is doubly efficacious; in a single stroke both the sexual and textual needs of the Crew of Light find a sufficient satisfaction."[37] With these violent actions, Van Helsing's own authority reinstates patriarchy, religion and societal norms. "One might question a mercy this destructive, this fatal, but Van Helsing's actions, [are] always sanctified by the patriarchal textual tradition signified by 'his missal'."[38] Van Helsing's righteous actions are sanctioned through religious dogma and patriarchy, through medicine and fatherhood (as he is often made the father to either Lucy or Mina, in postmodern variations of Dracula), where his knowledge bestows authority and power. The missal (a book of texts used throughout the year for Catholic Mass) Van Helsing usually wields becomes lost to Postmodern Van Helsings. Religion and faith become totems to repel vampires but no fear of God is present amongst the characters. It seems clear that Van Helsing's character has been ravaged by time, his authority quelled by his thirst to expel vampires. Kim Newman's *Anno Dracula*, a revisionist Dracula novel which places the Count as the Prince Consort of England after the events in Stoker's novel, disposes of Van Helsing from the outset: "Some say Van Helsing has returned... it's merely a rumour. Van Helsing is dead. His head remains on its spike."[39] Van Helsing's head is displayed on the palace spikes, reaffirming Dracula's authority. Despite this lost authority, Van Helsing has demeaned his own importance in the Dracula narrative by his zealous nature, which ironically makes him the worthy nemesis of Stoker's Count. Van Helsing is usually portrayed as misguided, foolish, arrogant and outdated by filmmakers of post-1970s vampire films and novels. By inverting the narrative to Dracula's point of view (rather than the Crew of Light), we are now to intentionally root for the Count. Van Helsing and the Crew of Light emerge in these revised histories as perilously flawed characters and, save for the mostly faithful BBC version of *Dracula*, fail in the end to emerge heroically.

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[37] Christopher Craft. "Kiss me With Those Red Lips: Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*" in Nina Auerbach and David J. Skal, (Eds) *The Norton Critical Edition of Dracula*. p. 456

[38] ibid. p. 456

[39] Kim Newman. *Anno Dracula.* New York: Avon Books, 1992 p. 13

Louis Jourdan, Frank Langella and George Hamilton: The Vampire Lovers

In 1977, the BBC showcased an extravagant two-part drama entitled *Count Dracula*, closely based on Stoker's novel, with Louis Jourdan in the title role. The televised production, shot on sound stages and on location in Whitby, captures the intimate surroundings of the characters without compromising on the lavish nature of the Victorian original. In a period where Dracula productions borrowed themes and styles from Stoker's novel, "Louis Jordan [sic], actually attempts fidelity to it."[40] Though the production does convey a serious attempt to remain faithful to the original *Dracula*, some variations in this version prove not only interesting but also, compelling in exploring this tamer exploration of Stoker's sexually fuelled novel. The first of these dramatic alterations is the total absence of Arthur Holmwood, Lucy's fiancée from the original novel, in which she has proposals from three men: Quincy Morris (the Texan), Doctor Seward (the psychiatrist) and Arthur Holmwood (the absent 'good man' in the BBC version). Quincy Morris becomes Lucy's suitor, replacing Holmwood completely.

To highlight the horror of Dracula's vampirism, Jourdan does apply a particular physicality to the Count's movements, reminiscent of Christopher Lee's performance in *Horror of Dracula* (1958). Jourdan looms over his female victims with a ferocity that speaks of real danger rather then expectant eroticism. Also, his Dracula is the first seen crawling along the walls of the castle in the manner of a lizard as Stoker described: "I saw the fingers and toes grasp the corners of the stones, worn clear of the mortar by the stress of years, and by thus using every projection and inequality move downwards and considerable speed, just as a lizard moves along a wall."[41]

In the graveyard at Whitby where Lucy (Susan Penhaligon) wanders in her sleep towards Dracula, the force used by Jourdan in feeding from her is a horrific metaphor for rape. There is no eroticism here, as Lucy is depicted as an

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[40] William Patrick Day. *Vampire Legends in Contemporary American Culture.* Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2002 p. 62

[41] Bram Stoker. *Dracula.* 1897. in Nina Auerbach and David J. Skal (Eds). *The Norton Critical Edition of Dracula.* p. 39

innocent, sweet young woman, not a promiscuous diva like Sadie Frost in Coppola's version of the tale. Lucy is bent over a gravestone in a limp fashion while Dracula bites her with force. Unlike other victims (and other Lucy incarnations) there is no orgasmic sound, no sigh or indication of enjoyment but rather animalistic ferocity and violent penetration. Jourdan's Dracula embraces with these women in an overtly sexual way, rather than linking himself with other 1970s Draculas longing for companionship. Women in the BBC *Dracula* are as repressed and as vulnerable as Stoker's original characters, completely abandoning the precepts of the 1970s Women's Liberation Movement, kept by Stoker's Count once more. The depiction of the vampire face is the most original yet: To depict this more brutal horror, shots of Dracula's face while he is either in pursuit of blood or just after consuming it are shot in inverse colours. Jourdan's face seems hollow as we see his features on black screenshots with white detail and red ruby lips. His eyes are also inverted by the lens shot so his pupils appear off colour and deeper, often appearing to mimic shots of the full moon. The use of such camera trickery, through "solarization, mattes, step-printing and other optical effects whenever Dracula's vampirism manifests"[42] does give this Dracula a particular eerie and otherworldly quality, although it dates it strongly to the 1970s. Jourdan's facial expressions hint at an evil that is brimming beneath the surface, which "visually reinforces the sense of a parallel world of unnatural urges and behaviour existing side-by-side with well mannered, Victorian society." [43]

There is an overt feeling of homage toward the novel, despite some minor character alterations, specifically in Quincy Morris and Renfield. However, this is a Dracula focused primarily on consumption. This is clearly seen when Dracula offers Mina to Renfield so that he may finally consume a human life, the presumable final step in his zoophagy. Renfield declines as Mina (Judi Bowker) confesses that she fears damning her soul by associating with Dracula. The language of the soul in this scene does re-affirm the romanticism of Stoker's characters. She asks Renfield (Jack Shepherd) to consider the existence and value of his soul, and for the souls he has consumed. Renfield cannot bear to take Mina's life and openly defies Dracula's wishes. Again we

[42] Alain Silver, James Ursini. *The Vampire Film.* 3rd Ed. New York: Limelight Editions, 1997. p. 144
[43] ibid. p. 144

see the whistleblower in Renfield, thus reflecting current political culture. However, Renfield is suitably punished for his insolence.

In a decade where *Dracula* was filtered through a myriad of variation (pornography and exploitation cinema is especially noted, with titles such as *Spermula*, *Deafula*, *Dracula Sucks*), this is one version that is determined to remain as faithful to the novel as possible. Though not without some flaws, the BBC production highlights the drama between living characters in cultural transition brought about by Dracula's invasion. Raymond T. McNally, one of the few scholars to comment on the film, concludes that while the adaptation is 'relatively faithful', its flaws must not be over-looked: "Louis Jourdan is too old for the role – stiff, cold, aloof, and not scary. The special electronic effects of negative images and reverse mattes of Jourdan's face unfortunately jar the viewer and disrupt the story."[44]

John Badham's version of *Dracula* in 1979 placed the Count in the Twentieth Century, surrounded by a famous cast and luscious set designs. Unfortunately, despite the lavish production in this adaptation of the John L. Balderston and Hamilton Deane play based on Stoker's novel, this film version attempts to cover plot holes, confusing family relationships and miscasting, ultimately harming this production. In the role of Dracula was Frank Langella, who had had a successful run as the Count on Broadway. He was the only actor to have been cast directly from the Broadway show, his fellow cast members being successful film actors previously. However, the confusion that surrounds the characters, the clumsy attempt to create a 'sweeping' *Dracula* film, highlights the film's failings. David J Skal notes:

> Despite some brilliant moments, the film was not a box office hit…Langella made a languid, almost Wildean vampire, and the film was marred by some grotesque editing – Van Helsing's daughter, called Mina here, becomes a vampire and is destroyed twice in completely contradictory scenes.[45]

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[44] Raymond T. McNally, Radu Florescu. *In Search of Dracula*. 2nd Ed. London: Robson Books, 1994. p. 277

[45] David J. Skal. *Hollywood Gothic: The Tangled Web of Dracula from Novel to Stage to Screen*. London: Andre Deutsch, 1992. p. 197

Langella's Dracula adds a 'Dorian Gray' dynamic to this Old World Count, as a jaded socialite vampire. His magnetic gaze is focused on as the epicentre of his sexuality, luring women to him openly and with their consent. The women are trapped by awkward, dried up men, negatively compared to the smouldering, magnetic Dracula, and because of this, viewers are drawn to the Count.

In Badham's film, domineering fathers and partners forbid women their own desires for freedom and choice. Dracula's charms increase Lucy's (again trading places with Stoker's Mina) desire to break free from her staid relationship with Jonathan Harker and flee with Dracula towards potential freedom. The construct of this confusing family structure only further adds to the need for female individualism. Here the vampire is the provider of a potential freedom – the women freely walk towards the vampire in an act of consensual desire, again differing from the previous 'taking' of the women. The act of choice alone confirms that it is the vampire who acts as a conduit in which sexual experimentation and the political freedoms of women can be channelled. Nina Auerbach also confirms these motifs of political and social freedoms in Badham's adaptation. However, I would read the political freedom as a sexual freedom also – allowing women to be in control of their bodies as well as their body politic (suffrage, voting rights and their independence from family lineage). The women's body politic is expressed through rejecting the patriarchy of the household, denying the roles expected of them, and links very closely with the narrative of Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's heroine Madelaine in *Hotel Transylvania*. Female sexuality is openly explored in Badham's Dracula as Lucy is not hypnotised or lured by the Count, but goes to him of her own free will.

> In this breathtaking if confusing movie, Stoker's good men are villains; Stoker's vampire is a hero; the women, victims no more, embrace vampirism with rapture as the sole available escape from patriarchy...Badham's *Dracula* makes radical

> claims, turning the old story into a vehicle for twentieth-century social critiques, especially feminist critiques.[46]

Dracula here becomes a figure of metamorphosis; he is no longer the repellent or ghastly figure who stalks women, but rather is invited to embrace and touch them by the women themselves. This is a characteristic of 1970s vampiric sensuality, where characters such as Louis, Weyland and Saint Germain inhabit narratives dominated by desire rather than power. There is a raw sensuality and sexuality found in Langella's Dracula, which equates him with the romantic 'new born' vampires. Contrasting this with Bela Lugosi's physical expressions in the Balderston-Deane production of *Dracula*, Langella's sexual magnetism illustrates that the play has undergone a fusion with Postmodern Vampirism. Bela Lugosi's audience would have rejected these open, reciprocal expressions of desire, finding them too invasive and provocative. Here Dracula is a seducer, a provider of pleasure for women, and a saviour from a regressive family unit.

Setting the film in the madhouse of Doctor Seward (played by horror veteran Donald Pleasance), this ingrown family represents the madness of the home/asylum they inhabit. The clinical and psychological setting merges into the pattern of 'psychologically analysing' the vampire of the 1970s; seen not only here but explicitly in Charnas's *The Vampire Tapestry*. As with this atmosphere of clinical observation and madness, the ineptitudes of small men become glaringly clear. Doctor Seward cannot medically treat either his daughter Lucy or Mina when illness is threatened and seems incapable of displaying any real authority despite his role in charge of lunatics. "It's been so long since I practised real medicine"[47] he remarks after administering laudanum to the pained, frantic, bitten Mina, which seems to worsen her response. Ineptitudes mar this house as Van Helsing (Laurence Olivier) arrives to aid his frail daughter Mina, only to add to the calamity. While attempting to find the cause for the vampirism in the neighbourhood, the men in turn shut the women into the madhouse, leading Lucy to the conclusion that it is only Dracula who can release her from these paternal entrapments. Furthermore,

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[46] Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves.* p. 140
[47] *Dracula* Dir. John Badham, Universal Pictures, 1979.

her suspicions are not unfounded. Dracula is completely inverted in Badham's film; Van Helsing is staked to death and feminine influences are acknowledged rather than repressed. Women are not quietened or sexualised for gratification but are empowered by Dracula's presence. His escape from England is aided by his lover, Lucy, whose desire to have him live supersedes her love for her own family (as rotten as they may be). "Indeed, the editing suggests quite strongly that it is Lucy who gives Dracula the strength to escape."[48] The film is centred on this crumbling patriarchy, the Hammer Horror family, of which God is a natural extension (the greatest patriarch of them all). Badham is quite explicit in this viewpoint: Van Helsing declares that they (the Crew of Light) must succeed in defeating the evil Dracula, placing his faith as affirmation of their capacity to defeat him; "If we are defeated, then there is no God".[49] With the aid of the parentally liberated Lucy, "they are defeated."[50] This leads us to a nasty conclusion regarding women's sexuality: When Dracula succeeds in releasing women's potential for sexual expression and freedom from a patriarchal stranglehold, he secularises society and overthrows the power structures assigned by God. As Dracula, in himself, represents the antithesis of divinity (by living or existing long after his natural lifetime) women's sexual freedom is associated with a secular culture. Christianity cannot condone such overt expressions of sexual or political freedom. Robin Wood contends that the film's failure lies in the 'pseudo-liberation' of the women. I contend that there is no failure in the ideology at all: With the death of Van Helsing and his feeble declarations regarding the certainty of their mission, (and God's support, it seems) liberation has arrived, if only because Van Helsing does not survive in this version. Van Helsing's death alone assures us that the expected righteous behaviour of women has been removed.

Nina Auerbach notes that Renfield, the forgotten whistleblower under Doctor Seward's care, attempts to forewarn those in Dracula's path of his vampirism and is only further shunned for being 'mad'. This Renfield does attempt to have his voice heard amidst the reigning confusion of the Seward madhouse, but is punished further by being ignored despite his unique insight into

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[48] Robin Wood. *Hollywood: From Vietnam to Reagan...and Beyond.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2003. p. 99
[49] ibid. p. 99
[50] ibid. p. 99

Dracula's true self. Auerbach compares Badham's Renfield to the whistleblowers of the 1970s, such as Karen Silkwood. "Like other post-1960s culture heroes who vanished after giving fragmentary warnings – the Black Panthers, Karen Silkwood – Renfield becomes a silenced seer."[51] This comparison is apt. In the case of Karen Silkwood, her forewarnings were ignored in the name of power and control, and her 'vanishing' was an effective silencer.[52] In using the term 'vanishing', I am presuming that Nina Auerbach also reads the death of Karen Silkwood in a car accident on November 13th, 1974 as highly suspicious. Given that all traces of Silkwood's documentation relating to health and safety in the Kerr–McGee plutonium power plant in Crescent, Oklahoma, disappeared, the 'silencing' of this whistleblower can be linked with Renfield as no one could continue with her research or prove culpability. Renfield, condemned to madness, is silenced by fear and social rejection.

Both Karen Silkwood and Renfield act as political barometers in their respective situations, representing the failures and crumbling power structures they work within. Denial is the shared response to the decay that is caused by these faltering men – with much cost to both the whistleblower and society. In Badham's fallout, women who are 'kept' ultimately deny their families. Instead, they embrace their sexual liberation with anyone who offers the route of escape. In the case of Karen Silkwood, had her warnings been acknowledged, society at large would have been more aware of the imminent threat to human life by nuclear disasters.[53] While her sudden 'silencing' highlights Karen Silkwood's story, Renfield's knowledge is still suppressed. Renfield in the BBC production of Dracula suffers the same fate: when his collusion with Dracula ends, he is murdered to be kept silent, preventing him from becoming an effective whistleblower. Trapped in the confines of the

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[51] Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves.* p. 142

[52] The ending of the film *Silkwood* . Dir. Mike Nichols, 20th Century Fox, 1983., clearly depicts that Karen Silkwood (played by Meryl Streep) was murdered, her car being involved in a suspicious fatal one-car crash.

[53] The case of Karen Silkwood is of great political importance in the 1970s. While her death highlighted the levels of perceived and proven safety failures and corruption in the maintaining corporate power at any cost, her story has continued to highlight the importance of whistleblowers and became a catalyst for intensive scrutiny surrounding safety at nuclear power plants.

Seward madhouse, Renfield's 'disappearance' is accepted because he is condemned to madness, which embodies social rejection and social silencing.

Love at First Bite (1979) is an exploration into a comical, out of date Dracula in desperate need of modernising and affection. This Dracula (played by George Hamilton, brilliantly spoofing Bela Lugosi at every turn) longs to be re-united with his long lost love over the ages, now reincarnated as a model in 1970s New York. Comparisons can be made here with Udo Kier's Dracula being forced to leave his castle in search of sustenance from a virgin bride and David Niven's bride Vampira, an almost bloodless entity, who requires a blood transfusion for her survival.[54] For post 1970s Draculas, contact with the outside world is not only inevitable but also vital to ensure their survival. As it happens, Hamilton's Dracula is evicted from his castle in Transylvania in order to facilitate the Communist Romanian gymnastics team preparing for the Olympics. Interestingly, this could be seen as a direct tribute to the Romanian gymnast Nadia Comaneci; she was the fist gymnast to ever score a perfect ten at the Olympics. Comaneci, scoring seven perfect tens in all, became an international name for Romania, winning five medals in gymnastics at the 1976 Summer Olympics. While the Count remains an intrinsic part of Romanian culture and folklore, international athletic success could be seen as a better image for Romania than its infamous vampire resident. Being evicted from Transylvania is an important theme among these postmodern Draculas, as they all share this format of eviction and the opening of borders, a further expansion of the movement of people and the shrinking of supernatural space. According to Rosemary Jackson's reading of Freud's essay 'The Uncanny', the opening of this space, either by force (seen here by eviction) or willingly (when Dracula reveals his nature) is *das Unheimlich*, the 'discovering' or revealing of unfamiliar space. Freud states this theory of the 'uncanny' in his essay:

> The subject of the 'uncanny' is a province of this kind. It is undoubtedly related to what is frightening – to what arouses dread and horror; equally certainly too, the word is not always

[54] In *Vampira* Dir. Clive Donner, American International Pictures, 1974. Dracula's (David Niven) bride Vampira receives her blood transfusion, which results in her metamorphosis into a black woman.

> used in a clearly definable sense, so that it tends to coincide with what excites fear in general.[55]

Not only do we learn that the 'uncanny' is a space unfamiliar to us and thus frightening, but it reveals that the opening of unfamiliar spaces in what we believe to be familiar is equally terrifying. A good example of this is found in haunted house stories from Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of The House of Usher*, to Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves*. Using the house as an example, it is an extension of the self (the body or mind of the inhabitant) and thus familiar. When uncanny space is revealed within the house [56] (hauntings, unfamiliar occurrences, defiance of logic), the duality of *das Heimlich / das Unheimlich* is illustrated clearly. On one level, what is familiar is revealed to have unfamiliar properties, and on the other, what is unfamiliar is transformed and revealed (no longer hidden or secreted). *Das Heimlich* is not necessarily a benign force but, with exploration, a hidden entity. Jackson explains the 'uncanny' spaces of Freud's theory, which perfectly reveals itself in *Love at First Bite* as a dual portal of *das Heimlich* and *das Unheimlich.*

> *Das Heimlich*, the un-negated version, is ambivalent. On the first level of meaning, it signifies that which is homely, familiar, friendly, cheerful, comfortable, intimate. It gives as sense of being 'at home' in the world, and its negation is therefore summons up with unfamiliar, uncomfortable, strange and alien... A second level of meaning begins to explain the uncanny's disturbing powers. *Das Heimlich* also means that which is concealed from others: all that is hidden, secreted, obscured. Its negation, *das Unheimlich*, then functions to discover, reveal, expose areas normally kept out of sight. The uncanny combines these two semantic levels: its signification lies precisely in this dualism. It uncovers what is hidden and, by

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[55] Sigmund Freud. "The Uncanny". 1919. in James Strachey. (Ed) *The Standard Edition of The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud.* Vol. XVII. London: The Howarth Press, 1966. p. 219

[56] Victor Sage. *Horror Fiction in the Protestant Tradition.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988. pp.
1-3. Sage uses the image of the house as an image of the body, the mind and the soul in horror fiction.

> doing so, effects a disturbing transformation of the familiar into the unfamiliar.[57]

Relating this theory of the uncanny space to *Love at First Bite*, we have two characters that are fundamentally displaced from their own space and time. Vladimir Dracula must survive in a different time, in a city where vampires are benign in comparison to social issues and forces. Cindy must regress from her political gains as an independent woman if she is to remain with the Count – this act placing her in the heart of cultural transition also. Thus we see this dualism occur at the same time, in roughly the same pattern in a counterpoint motion from *das Heimlich* to the *das Unheimlich*. Both characters are displaced by their journeys toward one another and discover their current culture values must transform. Jackson's theory on the *Dracula* template is also accurate here:

> In the Dracula type of myth (of which Don Juan is a variant), otherness is established through a fusion of self with something outside, producing a new form, an 'other' reality (structured around the themes of 'not-I'). This second type centralises around the problem of power: Dracula, like Romero's zombies, collects conquests, collects victims to prove the power of possession, to try and establish a total, self-supporting system.[58]

In looking at the problem of power in the film, Dracula never takes the power of political equality from Cindy, but rather, without influence from him, she gives it up willingly to remain with him in his homeland. Dracula, on the other hand, is left somewhat power*less* in New York. He has been evicted from his home to facilitate the communist Romanian gymnastics team (again, politics overpower him) and is not treated with reverence or fear while residing in New York. Both characters are so displaced by their role swapping that they become virtually unrecognisable in this Dracula version. However, simply by returning to Transylvania at the film's end (as the two fly away in bat form) constitutes the reinstating of the norm once again. Cindy is to revert to the role of the wife and Dracula is to become the powerful, revered Count in familiar territory once

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[57] Rosemary Jackson. *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*. London: Routledge, 1981. p. 68
[58] ibid. p. 59

more. While the film is not blatantly anti-feminist, it is a comedic re-affirmation of traditional values. The film does remain overtly postmodern, despite its retrograde ending; Dracula is humane, charming and roguish and defeats yet another incompetent Van Helsing.

Indeed this whole film is about displacement in Freudian terms and cultural alienation. In one particularly humorous moment, Dracula attempts to adapt to modernity by examining current language, only to realise the book is referring to the New Deal era, the joke referring to Tod Browning's 1931 film: "Renfield you idiot! This book is as out of date as I am!"[59] The premise of most of the humour in the film is based on Dracula's displaced, outdated predicament. Yet, the darker tones of the film: black poverty, crime and drug abuse, are hidden by Dracula's inability to understand the social malaises of 1970s New York. The revelation that Dracula is a vampire from the Old World makes little difference to the inhabitants of this New York, as they struggle with more pressing social issues. This film is the most postmodern of all Dracula comedies as it openly places Dracula at the heart of the maladjustment in postmodernity, and illustrates that (once again) he is subject to the tyrannies of petty small men. These Draculas are lovers, in need of companionship in comparison to their predecessors who (arguably) need blood alone.

> *Love at First Bite* is that rarity, a genuinely funny spoof that doesn't mock its vampires out of existence. It can be both funny and vampiric because it embraces the comedy inherent in the 1970s vampire romance. *Love at First Bite* plays, in fact, like a high-spirited distillation of Badham's *Dracula*, which appeared in the same year, but George Hamilton is less threatening than Frank Langella's sad eyed sophisticate. [60]

Perhaps it is the fact that George Hamilton's displaced Count makes *Love at First Bite* seem less threatening than Langella's Dracula; Hamilton seeks companionship and by extension, a family, whereas Langella's Dracula negates this, by destroying any confusing family structures. Hamilton's Count is

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[59] *Love At First Bite* Dir. Stan Dragoti, Warner Bros., 1979.
[60] Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. p. 165

rescuing his beloved Cindy from the excesses of the New York drug and disco scene, which could be an acknowledgement of Badham's own 1977 New York disco film *Saturday Night Fever*. It is Langella's deliberate destruction of the family unit that allows this perception of threat to pervade – as opposed to Hamilton's romantic gestures, which are filled with promise of fulfilment. Both films share a similar ending, which ensures the survival of the protagonist and the furthering of their legacy as liberators of these trapped women. While Langella's Dracula attempts to escape England by ship, he is forced to turn into a bat in daylight. Though he is burning from such exposure to the sun, he smokes and chars but survives by flying back towards his homeland alone. Though we do not see him arrive back in his original home (nor do we see him embark from it at the beginning), we assume that his survival is assured.

What is interesting is that both Draculas give conflicting messages to their female companions: Langella's love Lucy (Kate Nelligan) is left remaining in England but with her family structure fractured. She can now move on to be free in body, mind and soul, away from the threatening influences of the ingrown Hammer family she was surrounded by. She is now empowered with choice when looking to the future. Contrastingly, Cindy chooses to regress from her place in modern New York as a successful model and independent woman. She is casting off her independence for a quiet life in Transylvania with her vampire Count. What is sub-textually implied in both works is that Dracula's transforming presence can work on either side of the spectrum of liberation or captivity. What is engaging about it is that both of these women are transformed by their experiences with the Count; both female characters desiring what the other is damned by. Placing it in a historical context briefly - Badham's Dracula is set in the 1930s, where women are expected to be subservient to their families. Hamilton's Dracula is placed in the 1970s America, the forefront of the women's liberation movement, especially in relation to work practises and social equality. Whether it is freedom or captivity, the female characters defy the cultural 'norm' and choose outside their expected roles. Subsequently, this is why these particular Draculas are considered a threat to social norms.

Conclusions on *Dracula*(s)

By opening up revisions of *Dracula*, and the many academic texts that continue to debate the novel's subtextual meanings, new discourses emerge from new writers and filmmakers who abduct the Victorian text and revise it in a postmodern guise. It is through these writers and filmmakers (and their fans) that the opportunity arises for the vampire to live, escape, narrate, revise and examine his own immortal existence. The Postmodern Vampire is our new anti-hero, the new underdog. His ability to transgress social mores and power structures gives these Postmodern Draculas a new lease of life in Undeath. All of these Draculas (and the countless other variants also in existence) continue to tell their tales because *Dracula*; the novel, the character and the myth, endures. He endures time, as the vampire always will, if not by this name, then by his folkloric past. Horror theorist James B. Twitchell, author of *Dreadful Pleasures* is openly uninterested in the new version of the vampire, proclaiming him 'unaffected and artless'.[61] Though I vehemently disagree with such a statement, Dracula must endure his critics as well as his growing commercialism.

Despite the varied and highly valuable commercial entity that Dracula has become, the image that is synonymous with adults viewing *Dracula* stems from the romantic, gothic imagery buried deep within the pages of the 1897 novel. Moreover, as representative as Dracula was of Victorian culture - hidden sexuality, colonial anxieties and Jewish invasion, Dracula is a changeling, and continues to represent and narrate the anxieties and repressions of our Western postmodern society. Here we have explored Draculas in crisis, in the throes of change and uncertainty, but with the altered standpoint of seeing ourselves through *his* eyes.

Martin and *Interview With The Vampire*: Establishing New Found Vampire Identity

I wish to discuss the dualistic approaches to vampires and vampirism in 1976 through two major works of that year on vampires and their newfound identity. This new identity successfully breaks away from the previous vampire

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[61] James B. Twitchell. *Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985. p. 140

incarnations that were popularised in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and other major works of vampire fiction. It is an important 'moment' in vampire literature and film, where the vampire becomes the central focus of the story, and has his first opportunity to convey his own perspective on the events in the story. Where previously the vampire was a liminal figure, used for spectacle and to amplify moments of horror, the vampire is now permitted to move out of the shadows of horror spectacle and into the central focus of the novel and film. He is no longer merely a monster featuring in the narrative but the driving force of the narrative itself. The vampire has become self aware, and in the two works featured here, the narrator and protagonist of the tale. It is through this new awareness of "the arrival of a 'new' vampire whose cravings and motivations have become individualised and personalised"[62], adding character depth, personality and an active voice in the narrative, whereby these new vampires are to be considered postmodern.

Although it is Fred Saberhagen's *The Dracula Tape,* published in 1975, which is considered to mark the very beginning of Postmodern Vampire narratives, a year later, in 1976, we come into contact with two new, chic, unknown vampires who encapsulate the evolutionary steps into Postmodern Vampirism. Louis, the narrator in Anne Rice's *Interview With The Vampire* and Martin, the central character in George Romero's *Martin*, are our two significant vampires, each exploring new depths in our cultural understanding of the life of a vampire. Both Martin and Louis experience vampirism in exceptionally different ways. The vampiric condition is now open to all forms of interpretation, from a revision of the classical format of Undeath, to the vampire as medical sanguinarian (human blood drinker). As Harry M. Benshoff suggests, "George A. Romero's *Martin*, is exemplary in this respect, contrasting the black and white gothic vampire fantasies of a troubled young man with his actual practice of attacking women with razor blades in order to drink their blood."[63] Vampirism can now be reinvented and altered to suit the artistry of the author, and because of this re-evaluation, the rules of vampirism, the vampire's needs and constraints are also open to interpretation as the author sees fit. The severing of historical ties with the Modern Vampire makes the

[62] Milly Williamson. *The Lure of the Vampire*. p. 31
[63] Harry M. Benshoff. *Monsters in The Closet: Homosexuality in the Horror Film*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997. p. 234

transition to the Postmodern Vampire complete, as the two categories are mostly polar in their ideologies.

Re-evaluating the 'rules'

The first example of this new form of vampirism explored by Rice and Romero is in the approaches to the rules that the vampires must adhere to for their survival. However, it is in these particular works that the greatest forms of vampire diversity appear not only in physical manifestations of vampirism but also in both vampires' attitudes towards their Modern predecessors. Both vampires treat their Modern counterparts with a level of disdain and humour that is arguably arrogant yet accessible and elegant. These arguments are elegant because both vampires point to the absurd beliefs regarding the powers and limitations of the Modern Vampire. In Neil Jordan's 1994 film version of Anne Rice's cult novel, Louis (Brad Pitt) reduces the iconic image of *Dracula* by stating that *Dracula* is nothing more than "the vulgar fictions of a demented Irishman".[64] As Louis, the narrator and subject for the novel *Interview With the Vampire* is questioned about his capacities and limitations as a vampire, he confronts popular theories on a vampire's limitations:

> 'Oh, the rumour about crosses?' the vampire laughed. 'You refer to our being afraid of crosses?' 'Unable to look on them, I thought', said the boy. 'Nonsense, my friend, sheer nonsense. I can look on anything I like. And I rather like looking on crucifixes in particular.' 'And what about the rumour about keyholes? That you can...become steam and go through them.' 'I wish I could,' laughed the vampire. 'How positively delightful I should like to pass through all manner of different keyholes and feel the tickle of their peculiar shapes. No.'... 'The story about stakes through the heart,' said the boy, his cheeks colouring slightly. 'The same,' said the vampire. 'Bull-shit' he said, carefully articulating both syllables, so that the boy smiled. 'No magical power whatsoever.'[65]

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[64] *Interview With The Vampire*. Dir. Neil Jordan. Warner Bros., 1994.
[65] Anne Rice. *Interview With The Vampire*. p. 27

The abilities of each Postmodern Vampire are rather unique, varying almost on a case-by-case basis. While both vampires in these works have comparably different skills and methods for survival, both share a definitive defiance when questioned about their powers or their capacity for magic. Martin is aware that the world generally perceives that a vampire has an ability to possess magical powers but he emphatically denies any such power when referring to his own vampirism. "There is no real magic!"[66] Martin declares time and again to his Uncle Cuda, who trusts in the power of mythological vampire repellents, and attempts to use these emblems on Martin to repel him. To prove the lack of magical power the items possess, Martin looks into mirrors, bites into raw bulbs of garlic and rings bells. None of these ancient ritualistic antidotes prevent Martin from committing his vampiric deeds.

One reading of *Martin* suggests that because Cuda cannot accept this new condition or mutation of the Postmodern Vampire, he is forced to kill Martin himself, if only to attempt to restore a form of order regarding vampires. Cuda is a conformist, a traditionalist who views the world in a binary form. This is demonstrated beyond doubt when he addresses Martin not by name but as 'Nosferatu'. By using this old gypsy term for the vampire, it is clear that there is no hope for his understanding Martin's unique vampirism. Martin's difference is a threat to Cuda's traditionalist beliefs and thus Martin has met his ideological enemy - his own personal Van Helsing.

Body dysmorphia and mental illness: reactions to newfound vampirism

The loneliness experienced by these two Postmodern Vampires is explored quite vividly, often leading the audience into a sense of sympathy for the two anti-heroes. Louis's narrative is a gloomy account of his vampiric association with his maker and immortal counterpart Lestat. Louis feels both fascination and abhorrence for Lestat, dependant on him despite abuse, neglect and lovelessness. Their cohabiting relationship is symbolically indicative of spousal abuse. As Louis and Lestat form the nucleus of a gay family, we see a recurring image of Louis as a battered housewife. The creation of the vampire child Claudia enables Louis to express his maternal nature, while attempting to

[66] *Martin*. Dir. George A. Romero. Arrow Films, 1976.

control the household he shares with the abusive yet charismatic Lestat. Louis's response to this abusive relationship emerges in his frustration regarding his self-image, and results in self-harm.

Lestat has no care for what mortals make of him in Louis's tale, merely co-existing with human history rather than actively participating in it. "Lestat inhabits a spectacular universe of his own,"[67] Nina Auerbach states, and as a result of this, Louis's attachment to his mortal past life leads him to an intense sense of self-loathing for his species and their evil nature. The boundaries of human ethics and morality are overlooked, replaced by the glamour and gluttony of this new species of vampire. Rice's vampires toil with the good and evil of their vampire condition; Lestat wholly representing the evils of vampirism where illusions of goodness are absent. Louis, a newborn vampire under Lestat's parentage, struggles for the entire tale to come to terms with the role of an immortal evil being with a human conscience. The humanity in Louis remains, often at great cost. An expression of this self-loathing and humanity is in Louis' attitude to feeding. Louis 'diets' on the blood of animals as he attempts to accept his new vampire state despite his lingering human conscience. In Neil Jordan's film, Lestat's (Tom Cruise) description of the diet, "I wouldn't call it living, I'd call it surviving,"[68] clearly indicates the extremity of Louis' eating pattern. The entire novel "contains all the signal features of the diet narrative- its characters are preoccupied throughout with hunger and food and with the manipulation of their bodies,"[69] and is structured in such a tone of wanton feeding, gluttony and guilt that it can only be associated with the destructives tones of radical dieting.

Sandra Tomc also recognises the originality of this hunger motif, stating that the hunger of previous Modern Vampires was a disguised metaphor for deviant sexual appetites, as opposed to Rice's vampires who wish to nourish themselves physically and emotionally: "*Interview With The Vampire* is unique for focusing obsessively on the vampire's hunger for nourishment, often to the

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[67] Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. p. 153
[68] *Interview With The Vampire*. Dir. Neil Jordan, Warner Bros., 1994.
[69] Sandra Tomc. "Dieting and Damnation: Anne Rice's Interview With The Vampire" in Veronica Hollinger, Joan Gordon (Eds) *Blood Read: The Vampire as Metaphor in Contemporary Culture*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997. p. 97

exclusion of its hunger for anything else."[70] This need for emotional nourishment is particularly important, as it is a common bond that both Martin and Louis share in their quest for understanding their own postmodern condition and the exclusions this condition thrusts upon them.

This act of dieting can be decoded in two ways - it is an attempt to deviate from the usual nourishment the vampire requires, and it is an exercise in body dysmorphia, in an age when the 'super-diet' is promoted in order to retain beauty. Also, as I noted earlier, we see a direct link with anorexia and bulimia in Paul Morrissey's *Blood For Dracula* (1974) where Dracula's (Udo Kier) malnourished physical presence indicates severe eating patterns. Radical diets such as the Dr. Atkins Weight Loss Diet (1972) and the Virginia Slims Diet (1968) became powerful symbols of success by endorsing severe eating regimes that were aimed at capturing the imagination of women.[71] According to the Argentine Federation of Cardiology, The Virginia Slims Diet, which consisted of smoking Phillip Morris' long slim branded cigarette to suppress appetite, was promoted to exclusively appeal to women.

> The surge in entrapping women came when Philip Morris introduced its women's specialty brand, Virginia Slims in 1968. The name not only suggested thinness, but implied grace and beauty as well. The brand's advertising was unstinting on funds and involved promotion by young, pert, strikingly slim models, projecting an image of long-stemmed beauty.[72]

The slogan for Virginia Slims ad campaign was "You've Come a Long Way, Baby" which also suggests a reference to the advent of Women's Liberation movement and the National Women's Organisation.[73] Dr Atkins' protein-based diet, on the other hand, encouraged its participants to eat as much as they desired, as long as they refrained from eating any carbohydrates. The Atkins

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[70] ibid. p. 216.
[71] Bernard Lown. "Tobacco VI C: The Assault on Women: Issues of Weight and Penetration in Poor Countries" August 19th 1999, Argentine Federation of Cardiology. Online at: http://www.fac.org.ar/search/mensaje.php3?epi-pcvc+235. Accessed on 13/03/ 2006.
[72] ibid.
[73] From reading this ad slogan, which was directly advertised towards women, I believe that this slogan is to be read as an advanced diet, radical in its slimming results for radical women.

diet has faced some heated controversy, as the diet rejects all forms of refined carbohydrates and encourages food choices based on their protein and fatty acid contents. Defending this radical eating pattern, Atkins argues, "As cavemen, we humans evolved mainly on a diet of meat. And that's what our bodies were and are built to handle."[74] The mechanism of this diet is in the chemical process of ketosis, which burns fat stored in the body once the primary function of turning carbohydrate into glucose has been suppressed. By eating only protein-based food (meat, eggs, dairy produce and some vegetables), the body switches from burning glucose to burning fat: essentially consuming itself. The diet permits one "to eat truly luxurious food without limit"[75] which permits a perception of gorging. These two super diets are in direct contrast with each other – Virginia Slims having all the traits of anorexic willpower to starve oneself into thinness, and the bulimic styled binge eating (but not purging) which is encouraged by Atkins. Atkins became a cultural phenomenon in the dieting world as it allowed a carnivorous existence while dieting to become skinny and beautiful.

Anne Rice's vampires must be beautiful in order successfully to survive immortality and dieting is a potent metaphor for striving for physical beauty and perfection. The reason for Rice's celebration of beauty as a necessary qualification for immortality is a form of hierarchy in society; an early indication of the 1980s celebration of outer beauty in contrast to inner worth. The importance placed on beauty in Rice's works, which she retains and revisits in all of her vampire chronicles, is a form of establishing the vampire as an evolutionary development that further distances her vampires from the bestial European Vampire. When Rice writes of the European vampire, he is a decrepit form, an animated corpse that is reminiscent of a *memento mori* figure. This symbol of death, engraved on European tombstones to remind the living that death is a part of life and a frightening destruction of the body, does not glorify vampirism in any form. Rather, early medieval vampire images always illustrate the destruction of the human and vampire body. Thus, Rice is explicitly indicating that her vampires are an evolutionary advancement. While the beauty of the vampire is also an obvious glamorisation of vampire life and

[74] Robert C. Atkins. *Dr. Atkins' Diet Revolution.* New York: Bantam Books, 1972. p. 5
[75] ibid. p. 15

the beauty of the male form, Rice obsessively protects her vampires from decay, removing all associations with these vampires.

Auerbach comments on this required necessity of beauty in postmodern vampirism: "Its vampirism is a select club, a fraternity of beauty and death, whose members are expected to be handsome and refined enough not to irritate each other throughout eternity"[76] This select club is not tolerant of their vampire predecessors, one of whom Louis and Claudia uncover in Transylvania (presumably Dracula himself). In reading Claudia's violent reaction to this reanimated corpse, Rice's attitude to vampiric beauty becomes clear: American Postmodern Vampires are creatures of beauty whereas European Modern Vampires are ugly and dead:

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> Gradually I realised that Claudia knelt on his chest, that she was probing the mass of hair and bone that had been his head. She was scattering the fragments of his skull. We had met the European vampire, the creature of the Old World. He was dead.[77]

Through the challenges and failures of the radical super diet that Louis willingly participates in, we see his transformation into a feminised vampire. Louis's femininity is a potent compensatory metaphor for the overall lack of female characters in Rice's novel and, save for the vampire Claudia, the interactions with women in general do not extend beyond the occasional binge on human blood. Gender roles are confused in the novel: Louis represents the feminised vampire through his maternal role as Claudia's parent, while Claudia's personality shifts from childlike girlishness to vicious killer, matching Lestat's cruel appetite and abusive tones. Here we can see Claudia in an androgynous role, for her developmentally arrested body is one of a girl, with all the torment, violence and taste that is usually equated with masculinity. This gender displacement is also central to the theory of Claudia's Electra complex. James R. Keller argues that Claudia's desire to usurp Lestat for power is to replace his role as an abuser. There is no sympathy for Louis, as he

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[76] Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. p. 154
[77] Anne Rice. *Interview With The Vampire*. p. 207

has feelings of loyalty towards the abuser, Lestat. Claudia wishes to remove Lestat to take the power for herself, and to still dominate Louis as her surrogate, abused mother.

> As she develops, however, she comes to sympathize and identify with her mother and to long for the father, who possesses the penis she desires for herself. Claudia's inability to mature into a full-grown woman signifies the infantile condition that Freudian psychology relegates to her. The female is regarded as the incomplete male, defined by the absent penis. Claudia resents the father in the same way that the oedipal daughter resents the mother. She blames Lestat for the condition she regards as inadequate... it appears that the author has intentionally confused the Freudian psychology within the vampire household, because Claudia also closely resembles the oedipal male child. ...Rice may have mixed the male and female oedipal experiences to demonstrate that there are no strict gender categories in immortality.[78]

Claudia blames Louis for being weak and for being subjected to Lestat's torments, and yet she envies Lestat's authority because she has none. Where Louis refuses to challenge Lestat for power, she cannot threaten Lestat herself because of her physical stasis. Acting as both a child and central cause for the damnation of Louis in the final act of the novel, she is characteristically and physically static, and thus is as damned as her Hammer counterparts: "She is a visual icon of arrested development...For the Claudia who will always look like a doll, vampirism is no release from patriarchy, but a perpetuation of it until the end of time."[79] Her physical inability to change into a grown woman is the centre of her pain and anguish, finally being expressed explosively in her 'murder' of Lestat. By acting the role of a daughter to the conscience-stricken maternal figure Louis assumes, Claudia reinforces the divide between patriarchal abuser Lestat, and the emotionally fragile Louis. Claudia refers to Louis as a slave, hoping to convince him to act on his desires to be free from

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[78] James R. Keller. *Anne Rice and Sexual Politics*. Jefferson N.C: McFarland & Co, 2000 pp. 18-19

[79] Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. p. 154

Lestat's tyranny. "[Lestat] would no more be a slave than I would be a slave... and you've been his slave... and I shall free us both."[80] Claudia is locked in a stifling patriarchy, and after her attempt to murder Lestat fails, she is condemned to burn in the sunlight. It is Louis who finds this return to ancient laws held by the European Vampires repulsive, yet he has searched for a sense of ethics for the entirety of the novel. Louis's return to Lestat after the demise of Claudia at the hands of the Old World vampire coven in Paris is a personal damnation brought about by his female companion. Louis seems unable to escape his role as a battered housewife, returning to the role that he has become dependent on. This is expressed in his repeated fondness for Lestat and forgiving him his previous violence. There is a connection between Louis' abuse and the shame felt by sufferers of domestic violence, who, like Louis, find it difficult to discuss the abuse they have endured. For Louis, the crux of his tale revolves around the search for other immortals in the world, to vocalise and discuss his confusion and torment. Louis reflects the isolation in the vampire family who are "locked together in hatred"[81], and, without another person to interact with, withdraws into shame and silence about his abusive partnership. It is a strikingly similar dialogue of the silence and shame felt by abuse victims, who, like Louis, feel unprotected and isolated. Stephanie A. Eisenstat and Lundy Bancroft articulate the victim's feelings in their paper on 'Domestic Violence':

> For patients, past failures with the medical system, shame about the abuse, cultural and language barriers, and fear of reprisal make it difficult to disclose a history of abuse. In fact, most victims of domestic violence report that they are hoping that the clinician will ask whether they have been abused and that if asked in a caring manner, they would be prepared to discuss their history of abuse.[82]

However, domestic violence remains hidden, shameful and difficult to identify without admission or accusations of abuse. This is often presented through fear

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[80] Anne Rice. *Interview With The Vampire*. p. 135
[81] ibid. p. 129
[82] Stephanie A. Eisenstat, Lundy Bancroft. "Domestic Violence" in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. Vol. 341, issue 12. Boston: Massachusetts Medical Society, Sept. 16th 1999. p. 888. online at: http://www.womenshealthtrack.vcu.edu/pdf/domestic-violence.pdf

of or dependence upon the abusive spouse, and a continued sense of loyalty to them.

Martin explores the paths in which the vampire's true identity can remain in question. Romero is never explicit in his film as to whether Martin is in fact a vampire who possesses the power of immortality, or a young man which a penchant for blood drinking and possibly a severe form of mental illness. Martin claims to be an eighty-four year old vampire but acts out all of his vampiric activities in human fashion. He cuts women with razor blades, as he possesses no fangs. He rapes women for sexual gratification and arguably to alleviate his sense of desperate isolation and lovelessness. While rape can neither be tolerated nor exonerated in any form, Martin's particular method of acting out his vampiric impulses is focused more on his desperation to find any form of acceptance rather than to exist in isolation. The exclusion that Martin experiences is expressed in the fact that he is the only vampire we encounter in the film and thus, being a solitary example, we conclude that there is no basis by which his condition can be understood. It is difficult to discern whether Martin is in fact an ageless vampire or a human sanguinarian; a point that Romero seems to relish. David J. Skal, one of the few horror theorists to write about *Martin,* criticises the motives of Romero's ambiguous vampire stating that the film's weakness lies in this uncertainty about Martin's vampiric status: "The film would have been better had Romero resisted the temptation to present the character as a supernatural monster rather than a psycho-sexual one."[83]

Martin experiences all of his vampire identification moments in flashback, indicating that these may be either a memory or a fantasy of the hunting of a vampire. It is the audience who must decide whether Martin is a fully-fledged vampire or a human blood-drinking predator. The central focus of the postmodern condition is in the simple fact that all rules are open for re-evaluation and re-interpretation. According to David Harvey, "Postmodernism swims, even wallows, in the fragmentary and the chaotic currents of change as

[83] David J. Skal. *V is for Vampire: An A to Z to Everything Undead.* London: Robson Books, 1996. pp. 148-149.

if that is all there is"[84]- which accurately accounts for the difficulties in categorising Postmodern Vampires into neat templates. Romero tries to celebrate the unique condition of vampirism through re-interpretation, and insists the audience must do the same. Harvey defines the importance in this fundamental understanding of uniqueness in the postmodern condition in saying "Postmodernism, by way of contrast [to modernism], privileges heterogeneity and difference as liberative forces in the redefinition of cultural discourse."[85] The shattering of stereotypes is at the centre of Romero's vision, as it was with his 1968 horror classic *Night of The Living Dead*, where Romero's central character and hero of the piece is black, a controversial casting decision at the time in an otherwise conservative film genre. Romero, knowing the impact that this casting decision would have brilliantly highlights racist issues with the film's devastating, racially charged conclusion. While Skal is correct when he states that *Martin* "combined the traditional images of the supernatural vampire with the trappings of real-life blood fetishism"[86], he fails to recognise that most of the Postmodern Vampires constitute a new development in vampire evolution, thus nearly always incorporating the traditional Modern Vampire in some form. What Skal is suggesting in terms of the psychosexual monster emerges later in the slasher film genre in 1978 with John Carpenter's *Halloween*. Some supernatural elements add to the slasher's appearance of immortality, but unlike the vampire, the slasher is a formulaic construction that does not change. The slasher is always figured as barely human, while the vampire, having origins in supernaturalism becomes *humanised*.

'Damn You, Woman!' Damnation through female liaisons

Martin's damnation is met through a female companion, as is the case for Louis in *Interview With The Vampire*. Martin's damnation comes in the form of untimely death at the hands of Cuda who, in graphic detail, stakes Martin through the heart. Cuda believes that Martin has murdered his only consensual lover, Mrs. Santini, in an act of frenzied violence, and is convinced that Martin is incapable of love or kindness because of his sanguinary tendencies. He

[84] David Harvey. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. p. 44
[85] ibid. p. 9
[86] David J. Skal. *V is for Vampire: An A to Z to Everything Undead*. p. 148

murders Martin believing that it is an act of good to rid the world of this evil creature. It is ironic that Martin is condemned to death for the only sin he did not commit. While the audience is in no doubt about Martin's wicked behaviour in drugging and raping women, and murdering any men who threaten his plans, there is an overwhelming sense of pity surrounding the character. I have been reading the film as a narrative of intolerant isolation and emotional starvation. To Martin, rape is a twisted expression of love, an attempt to alleviate his solitary torment. During the rape scenes in the film, Martin does not act in the brutal manner that is usually expected in film rape scenes. This is Romero's coup, where the expected violence of rape, is replaced with a gentle touch, ultimately, gaining sympathy for the rapist. Martin commits these acts because he truly believes that no one has the capacity to ever love him consensually. When he begins his only consensual sexual relationship with Mrs. Santini, he ceases to attack women and his bloodlust, while ever present, also ceases to control him. While rape is the underlying metaphor of sexual rejection and lack of emotional maturity in *Martin*, the depiction of rape in *Interview With The Vampire* has a more sinister effect. In Rice's world -

> No vampire is born a vampire. Every vampire is converted through a forced encounter, a rape. All vampire encounters include unwilling participants, some of whom also become vampires. In addition, these erotic moments are generally destructive to the human victim, who either dies or is permanently transformed. This explains the resentment of the vampires towards the individuals who create them.[87]

The trauma of surviving the 'rape' or initiation into a vampire existence propels the isolation felt by both the rapist, in Martin, and the victim, initially seen in Louis. These vampires are left bereft in their quest for companionship, and remain on the fringes of society. They are more frightened than frightening, more confused than enlightened by their condition. As Nina Auerbach concludes on the 'nice' Postmodern Vampire:

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[87] James R. Keller. *Anne Rice and Sexual Politics*. p. 28

> The visionary novelists who resurrected and remade vampires know that there are social forces more frightening than Dracula: tyranny, dullness, brutality, unbelief, mass self-deception and self destruction... the vampire who is a symptom of lost authority becomes, too often, too nice.[88]

The conclusions that can be drawn from these works are that both their cases of Postmodern Vampirism share a similar blend of despair and identity crisis. By aiming to set their emergence as different and to shatter the stereotypes that bind their kind to a distant past, these vampires are the sole bearers of the pains of this transition. By defying their expected roles, they are punished, isolated and confronted with suffering, pain and fear. These vampires command a feeling of sympathy despite their evil nature, which however well appropriated, is still present. The structure of the narrative is in the form of confession. Louis confesses his tale to the boy interviewer, Daniel, and Martin confesses his sins and secret desires on a radio talk show, and similarly, Saberhagen's Dracula confesses his tale on a tape recorder to finally document his own tale. Most importantly, these three tales are structured as confessions and thus the desired response is forgiveness. To forgive these vampires would be to exonerate them of their sins and, greater still, to accept their existence as valid. The structure of the two tales is vital in understanding the difficulties that surround the Postmodern Vampire's voice and how important it is for them to be heard.

Forbidden Sexuality and Forbidden Knowledge: Saint Germain and Dr. Weyland

Both Chelsea Quinn Yarbro and Suzy McKee Charnas developed upon the new vampire narrative that Anne Rice established in 1976. The continued interest in new and unknown vampires delivered sympathetic and heroic vampires, a variation on what became a popular theme in horror and fantasy novels. [89] Unlike the vampires Martin and Louis, who are tortured by their vampire-hood, both Saint Germain in Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's *Hotel Transylvania* (1978) and

[88] Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. p. 155

[89] By using the term 'new' here, I am distinguishing between vampires replicating Dracula and those who are not. New 1970s vampires are quite simply newborn vampires, who often reject Dracula as their King vampire.

Dr. Edward Weyland from Suzy McKee Charnas's *The Vampire Tapestry* (1980) exude an enjoyment and self-understanding when examining their vampire nature. Saint Germain is a romantic hero; in no way does he pose any threat or any harm to the human race but rather, uses his vampire senses to protect the helpless and "help the helpless".[90] Yarbro constructs her vampire hero around the historical Comte de Saint Germain, whose past is shrouded in mystery and who considered himself to be the rightful heir to the throne of Transylvania. Saint Germain apparently claimed to be the son of Prince Rakoczy, who "was forced to yield his crown to the Austrian Empire after a prolonged and bitter struggle."[91] His noted appearances throughout Europe's courts and diplomatic circles garnered him quite a reputation and a lasting prestige. According to E.M Butler, "He was also a brilliant conversationalist and raconteur, so widely travelled, so deeply read, so learned, so light-hearted, so urbane, and withal so lavish and so splendid, that he outshone even his own diamonds and sparkling precious stones."[92] It is therefore unsurprising that Yarbro transforms Saint-Germain into a successful vampire character, as his mythic appearances and depth of knowledge and experience can be attributed to his mysterious existence. Butler also makes this correlation between Saint Germain's mythic life and immortality, stating: "Saint Germain, worth hardly more than a footnote in history, is adored in theosophical circles as an immortal being with angels at his command and unquestioning belief at his disposal."[93] The obscurity of this mythic, ostentatious character lends Yarbro the opportunity to further the influence of Saint Germain's real life exploits, while repackaging his history into that of a righteous vampire. Saint Germain, like Joss Whedon's vampire Angel, becomes the Wandering Jew, who must walk through eternity righting past sins until the second coming of Christ. Butler admits that this connection is plausible in Saint Germain's case, "the theory that he was the Wandering Jew in person will be acceptable, not in itself, but for its psychological value."[94] The symbols identifying the Wandering Jew are

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[90] The vampire hero Angel uses this phrase "to help the helpless". Angel originally featured in the television series *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* and continued his adventures in the spin off show *Angel*. Angel establishes his detective agency to aid people in need in LA. It seems obvious through character investigation that Angel is a 21st century variation on the Saint Germain character.

[91] E.M. Butler. *The Myth of The Magus*. Cambridge: Canto, 1993. p. 187

[92] ibid. p. 189

[93] ibid. p. 268

[94] ibid. p. 187

also shared in a multitude of vampire novels and films. The mark of a burning cross is imprinted unto the wanderer's forehead to instil fear, though it is hidden from view by wearing a headdress or band. This mark is, according to Marie Roberts, "a sign of the Almighty's vengeance,"[95] and familiar in vampire films as crosses are used to repel, burn and scar the vampire body.[96]

In Yarbro's novel, Saint Germain is a figure of honour, valour and redemption, surrounded by the darkness of the human heart: thieves, murderers, rapists and Satanists. Yarbro makes the wicked human men in her novel participants in the cult of Satanism, elevating her vampire hero above such mis-categorization. Saint Germain is a peaceful man, who socially interacts between the learned and the wealthy, the sophisticated and the powerful. The existential purpose he gives to his immortality is to aid those who are incapable of transcending oppressive social structures and offering salvation to those who need it. His vampirism is an element of survival to him, a means by which he can be seen as a guardian of humanity for humanity, and to ensure his struggle for justice and righteousness continues. Brian Stableford recognises these attributes in Saint Germain and his counterparts also: "vampires...can function as heroic symbols of philosophical enlightenment, scientific progress, and sexual liberation while those who hunt them down can be portrayed as bigoted psychopaths." [97]

Saint Sebastian, the evil archenemy of the novel, like Saint Germain, is also a figure of notable history. Represented characteristically in art, Saint Sebastian is a young man, tied to a tree and multiply pierced in the torso by arrows. He has become the patron saint of young men, a military martyr, a protector from plague and, more recently (and unofficially) a gay icon.[98] It is not clear in Yarbro's novel whether she is negatively commenting on the increase of gay

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[95] Marie Roberts. *Gothic Immortals*. London: Routledge, 1990. p. 75

[96] One example of the burning cross scarring a vampire's forehead is in *Fright Night*. Dir. Tom Holland, Columbia Pictures, 1985., when Evil Ed (Stephen Geoffreys) is confronted by vampire hunter Peter Vincent (Roddy McDowell). When this scarring occurs, we see the vampire's flesh blister and sizzle, indicating the religious heresy that the vampire body represents.

[97] Brian Stableford. "*Sang* for Supper: Notes on the Metaphorical use of Vampires in *The Empire of Fear* and *Young Blood*." in Joan Gordon, Veronica Hollinger (Eds) *Blood Read: The Vampire as Metaphor in Contemporary Culture*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997. p. 74

[98] Saint Sebastian's annual feast celebration occurs on January 20th.

vampires in 1970s culture by using Saint Sebastian's name or merely using historical characters to heighten the drama of her novel. Saint Sebastian continues to be referenced in literary and popular culture, from George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Derek Jarman and Paul Humfress's 1976 film *Sebastiane*, to the R.E.M music video "Losing My Religion".[99] Given that so many of the Postmodern Vampires are linked closely with homosexual activities, implied or overt, it is interesting to note that Yarbro has used the name of Saint Sebastian for her evil, rapist villain in the novel.

Hotel Transylvania's villains consist of a tribe of aristocrats, led in their satanic practices by the evil Saint Sebastian, with each member bowing to his will and obsessed with maintaining their wealth and abusing their women. Women are hunted and kept like pets, disciplined and abused when deemed necessary by their cruel masters. The structure of Yarbro's tale is indicative of a sexual fantasy, incorporating the language and structure of a romance novel. The heroine, Madelaine, is independent and unbridled, clearly illustrated by her refusal to be kept by any man. Madelaine's body is an object of lust and power for the satanic cult; they plan to rape and murder her during a crucial satanic ritual. In a manner similar to the plot and language of a romance novel, Saint Germain embodies morality, and is presented as the ideal vampire lover.

Saint Germain's vampire body poses no threat to the women in the novel; while his reluctance to feed is similar to Louis's constant hunger throughout *Interview With The Vampire*, animal blood is an adequate substitute. It is Saint Germain's embarrassment at this prerequisite that draws our attention to his feeding needs, not the psychological disturbances that haunt Louis. Unlike Louis, Saint Germain does not question his immortality, nor does his narrative become self-indulgent. His pleasures lie in pleasing the loveless women he saves, though he is a sterile being (like Rice's vampires). Eroticism for Yarbro has no need for penetration (fangs) or the penis; it is a celebration of women's multi-orgasmic capabilities beyond procreation: "...the ecstasy that bound them, exalted them, consumed them with a fervour that fed on its own

[99] In George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston fantasises about tying up his lover Julia and strapping her naked to a tree and piercing her with arrows. R.E.M depicted Saint Sebastian tied to a tree in the background of their music video "Losing My Religion". This image is considered to be lead singer Michael Stipe's 'coming out' moment as a bisexual.

satisfaction."[100] The novel, then, is aligned with 1970s feminist thought, in the non-threatening, non-phallic body of Saint Germain. Nancy Friday comments on the hostility towards female sexuality and expression in the 1970s, which would also reject the non-phallic sexual desires and fantasies of women:

> As late as 1973, the noted 'permissive' Dr. Allen Fromme ...[wrote] "Women do not have sexual fantasies" and went on with a patronising kindness: 'The reason for this is obvious: women haven't been brought up to enjoy sex...women are by and large destitute of sexual fantasy.'[101]

The women in Yarbro's novel are subjected to continued degradation and humiliation and are continuously reminded that they are owned. This ownership also extends into the realm of female sexuality and expression. As Nancy Friday highlights, the denial of independent female sexual fantasy also denies women the capacity of sexual fulfilment beyond stereotypes: "The portraits of women it evokes is too new, too frightening – above all, too much at war with all our past stereotypes of women as maidens, mothers, 'ladies'". [102] Saint Germain can be read as a romance figure, as he is a female liberator and sexual ideal, but also as a representative of feminist thought and independence. Saint Germain's narrative influence is similar to that of feminist Eva Figes; "women must be treated as total human beings in their own right, and not appendages to a man."[103] Working within the category of the romance novel as much as the horror genre, Yarbro writes liberal feminist romantic vampires for a predominantly female audience. Saint Germain vocalises the repressed expression of female sexuality within this female orientated genre. This is in response to the dominant male disciplines such as medicine that reject female fantasies, declaring them perverse. Nancy Friday notes that she was repeatedly asked to quantify her arguments on independent female sexuality with medical qualifications and evidence. While answering these arguments and explaining her findings, she observed the attitudes and threatened demeanour of the medical professionals who discredited her - "the

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[100] Chelsea Quinn Yarbro. *Hotel Transylvania*. New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1978. p. 244
[101] Nancy Friday. *Forbidden Flowers*. London: Arrow, 1994. p. 3
[102] ibid p. 5
[103] Eva Figes. *Patriarchal Attitudes*. London: Virago, 1978. p. 179

medical mask would slip, and I would find myself facing not the calm professional but the outraged man... with ill concealed anxiety and dislike." [104]

Hotel Transylvania introduces the romanticised vampire as the provider of sensual experience for women without reciprocal male obligations. Auerbach furthers this alignment by removing the woman as a social and sexual appendage from the man. "Feminists in the 1970s were discovering, just as the vampire lovers do, the multi-orgasmic versatility of women's eroticism, which, despite the admonitions of male experts, requires no penis for arousal."[105] Perhaps, in the age and spirit of feminist thought, Saint Germain represents the 'enlightened' man elevated by his non-phallic sexuality. Unlike castration, where the potential for life beyond the self is violently ripped from the body, Saint Germain's dried fluids ensure that female sexuality is explored outside of procreative means. Yarbro notes at the end of the novel, "in most cultures it is agreed that vampires are not capable of genital sexual contact, but that they express their desires through their biting",[106] though in her novel, it is Madelaine who instigates the sexual touch and the consumption of blood. She desires to taste Saint Germain, implying fellatio: "You said you would let me taste of you...let me. Let me."[107] This act of tasting is focused on his blood, drawn from his breast, like Dracula, away from his penis and reproductive fluids. Saint Germain's lack of capability in genital sexual contact implies that he is reproductively dry. This elevation beyond procreative fluids makes this romantic vampire more elusive, and thus more desirable. This can also be linked with the increase in the use of the contraceptive pill in the 1970s, substantially decreasing the likelihood of pregnancy in sexual intercourse. Saint Germain's dried fluids also function as a form of sexual freedom for women, instilling a value in sex beyond procreation and physical ownership. Though Saint Germain does procreate vampirically with Madelaine, it is by choice and of her free will, advocating that sex and marriage (and by extension, children or transformation) is a consensual pact, not merely a consequence of sexual liaisons. In 1975, a nationwide sample of college women was taken which revealed a cultural anomaly regarding perceptions on female sexuality:

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[104] Nancy Friday. *Forbidden Flowers.* p. 3
[105] Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves.* pp. 149-150
[106] Chelsea Quinn Yarbro. *Hotel Transylvania.* p. 252
[107] ibid. p. 243

> Prior to the 1960s, rates of premarital intercourse conformed to the patterns established in the 1920s, with engaged women having the highest frequency of premarital sex.... Most indicative of changing mores, perhaps, was a mid-1970s survey of eight colleges that showed that 76 percent of women had engaged in intercourse by their junior year... other poll data suggested that college students, in particular, had changed their underlying approach towards sexual behaviour and attitudes.[108]

While these figures are an indication of the changing perceptions regarding female sexuality and sexual experimentation, Yarbro places her sexually liberating vampire centuries earlier, indicating perhaps personal views that Women's Liberation came centuries late. For Yarbro and Auerbach, Saint Germain is a progressive spirit, "a yardstick by which to measure society's recurrent falls."[109] Yarbro's vampire is a stark reminder of the failures in addressing female sexuality openly, the failure in recognizing and progressing the Women's Liberation movement and the campaigns of the National Organisation for Women (NOW). Kate Millett, who vigorously campaigned for the recognition of women's rights through campaigns like NOW writes: "Our society, like all other historical societies, is a patriarchy. The fact is evident at once if one recalls that...every avenue of power within the society...is entirely in male hands."[110] As Saint Germain is an immortal aiding and liberating women from their confined and repressed sexuality, there is no conceivable end to his mission. His mission is eternal (as a Wandering Jew) in a historically patriarchal social structure, as old and continued as he is as an immortal. He is the object of sexual fantasy for female readers of the novel because he will continue to liberate women through the span of patriarchal history without seeking any sexual gratification in return. Yarbro transforms the sympathetic and benign vampire into an idealised romance figure:

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[108] William H. Chafe. *The Unfinished Journey*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. pp. 436-7

[109] ibid. p. 149

[110] Kate Millett. *Sexual Politics*. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1970. p. 25

> His hands sought out her desires, drawing response on response from her, until the very air shook with the force of her love. Passion blinded her, so that there was only Saint Germain and the glory of his ravishment... The fierce sweetness of her heart opened to him as she felt his inexpressible loneliness thaw in the radiance of her fulfilment.[111]

According to Janice A. Radway, the reader of the romance novel is from the outset expecting the climactic moment of surrender by the heroine to the idealised male. *Hotel Transylvania*, with its independent heroine and righteous vampire protagonist, incorporates Radway's definition of the romance genre as "a story whose central vision is one of total surrender where all danger has been expunged, thus permitting the heroine to relinquish self control."[112] By turning Madelaine into a vampire, Saint Germain passes on the knowledge of female eroticism independent of penetration, so that she embodies and continues this new feminist movement. However, the final goal of this narrative is ultimately rooted in the idealised version of the male, who understands and nourishes the suppressed sexualised female: "the final goal of each narrative is the creation of that perfect union where the ideal male, who is masculine and strong yet nurturant too, finally recognises the intrinsic worth of the heroine."[113]

Suzy McKee Charnas's vampire loner, Dr. Edward Weyland, shares little in common with the romantic Saint Germain. Both vampires have drastically different methods of survival when compared to Rice's self-involved immortals. While Saint Germain is an immortal historian, helping the hopeless and collecting his diamonds, Dr. Weyland hibernates. Weyland wakes every century or so, hungry to feed and re-integrate into society for a short while, then growing weary and returning to ground. Notoriety and infamy belongs firmly to Rice's clan, because of their lack of subtlety and hunger for recognition from all (vampires and humans).[114] Weyland is an underground

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[111] Chelsea Quinn Yarbro. *Hotel Transylvania.* pp. 243-244

[112] Janice A. Radway. *Reading the Romance*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991. p. 97

[113] ibid. p. 97

[114] This comment is a reference to the sequels, which Rice places her core set of vampires in. *The Vampire Lestat*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc, 1985., and *The Queen of the Damned*

figure – figuratively and literally. He survives the ages by using his animalistic skills as a vampire; hunting and remaining solitary, refusing to engage with the mortals he encounters. Unlike Saint Germain, he does not wish to right the wrongs of humanity; his human interactions seem to be a source of nuisance to him. Unlike Lestat, he wishes to remain as anonymous in society as possible; a predator who believes his greatest asset lies in people's ignorance of his existence. The subtleties of Weyland's character make him truly memorable by being 'not supernatural but supremely natural - a creature of evolution.'[115] He is a famous Professor of anthropology: the study of humankind and cultures, which suggests that Weyland remains a keen predator by studying his prey. Unlike his contemporaries, Weyland has no fangs but has developed a stinger for drawing blood, which lies under his tongue. Charnas's character is aligned with a folkloric Russian vampire who, according to vampire anthropologist and folklorist Paul Barber, has a distinctively pointed tongue to puncture the skin of its victims.

> Although the vampire's teeth are an essential characteristic, distinguishing him from other monsters, in folklore, the teeth are not especially prominent. Only occasionally is it remarked that his teeth had grown while he was a vampire. Some vampires do not even use their teeth to draw blood. Zelenin, for example, reports the belief that the Russian vampire has a pointed tongue, which he uses to puncture the skin of his victims. When a vampire's teeth are remarked on at all, it is usually as the observation that children born with teeth are destined to become vampires.[116]

.New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc, 1988., are perhaps the most garish of the Vampire Chronicles as the vampires are obsessed with approval from each other. Only Lestat seeks mortal approval too, his rock band, 'Satan's Night Out', being the front in which he exposes the vampires and received human adulation.

[115] Suzy McKee Charnas. "Meditations in Red: On Writing The Vampire Tapestry" in Joan Gordon, Veronica Hollinger (Eds) *Blood Read: The Vampire as Metaphor in Contemporary Culture*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1997. p. 60

[116] Paul Barber. *Vampires, Burial and Death*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. p. 44 Paul Barber quotes Russian folklorist Dmitrij Zelenin when discussing the Russian folkloric vampire who develops a distinctively pointed tongue. Dmitrij Zelenin, *Russische (Ostslavische) Volkskunde*. Berlin: No publisher cited, 1927. p. 394

Weyland is physically skilled and intellectually suited to blend in with whatever society demands of him. Psychologically, he is removed from social interaction by choice; this is an impediment to the vampire: he survives the ages but knows nothing of human nature or human kindness. Two characters in Charnas's novel alter Weyland's view on humanity: Floria, the psychiatrist and lover, and Mark, the teenager who aids his escape from a coven of dark sorcerers. Despite Weyland's acknowledgement and gratitude towards his physical and psychological allies, he initially resolves to forget them, to survive as he always has, and takes to the underground as before. Accustomed as he is to shun his mortal dealings and drift into a forgetful slumber, Weyland is transformed into a 'humanised' vampire by his traumatic experiences: he is caged, tortured, bound, controlled and pursued. This could also be read as a 'feminisation' of Weyland, whereby he is placed in a submissive role rather than the more familiar dominant vampire patriarch. However, Charnas discredits this 'feminisation' of Weyland, and defends his initial choice of human rejection by stating:

> Fiction's solution to monstrosity, hope's solution – love, empathy and compassion – seems in real world terms impotent and overwhelmed... In the end, I decided that because my vampire would not be vanquished by – well, by love. He would prove his alienness from humanity, his truly "other" nature, by simply walking away from it all, shedding his Weyland identity just as he plans to do – but, in the event, does not do – in the final chapter. He was going to shuck off the human emotions he had acquired and the human connections he had made just as a snake sheds its skin, discarding his fatally compromised professorial identity because – not being human – he could. Don't we all long to be able to do the same, at certain excruciating moments of our emotional lives? [117]

But Weyland *is* affected by love, and by the human contacts he has made. He does not simply go to ground as he did in his previous lives and forget his experiences. Weyland has tapped into the forbidden side of himself, the

[117] Suzy McKee Charnas. "Meditations in Red: On Writing *The Vampire Tapestry*". pp. 64-65

sentimental attachments that he previously denied himself. Charnas illustrates throughout her novel and article, "Meditations In Red", that her vampire is an attempt to place a possible evolutionary, anthropological vampire within a real world scenario. But if Weyland is a product of evolutionary progress, he must stem from a predecessor: homo sapiens. Weyland has tasted the forbidden fruit of meaningful human contact, forbidden by his regime of survival. Charnas admits to deliberately focusing the novel away from the 'romantic' ending, her first draft having Weyland turn away from the characters without a backward glance. After editorial negotiation, she re-wrote the ending with Weyland moving on, his memories intact, his soul forever altered by human love and kindness. Charnas admits "Against my best intentions, my better judgement, and everything else I could bring to bear, the 'new' 'romantic' ending was a lot more satisfying to me as both reader and writer than the old, more innovative and clever one had been."[118] Explaining her insight into why this second draft was a more fitting conclusion to Weyland's human experiences: "With the courage of love, the longing of love, the hopefulness of love, they [the humans] reach across the immense gap between species, and what is brave and needy and hopeful in him [Weyland] is awakened and responds."[119]

The forbidden knowledge in Charnas's novel is twofold: Weyland decides to cling on to the human experiences he has with Floria and Mark rather than to allow them to be erased through his usual century-long slumber. Floria analyses the vampire mind, it too being a well of forbidden insights into how monstrous beings also share emotional and companionship issues which daunt many humans. Both Weyland as Other and Floria as mind healer transcend the forbidden paths of knowledge; he by extracting meaningful, emotional contact and she by experiencing (professionally and privately) the anthropological vampire's mind and body. Interestingly, Charnas uses the word 'profession' to convey the separation between the vampire and self, humanity. His profession is to survive and to kill; hers is to understand and heal without physically engaging with the subject. Before their bittersweet parting, they have sex, the act being of one of an exchange of 'knowing' the Other, and the removal of 'professional' barriers.

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[118] Suzy McKee Charnas. "Meditations in Red: On Writing *The Vampire Tapestry*". p. 66
[119] ibid. p. 67

> 'Isn't it extremely unprofessional to proposition a client?' 'Extremely, and I never do; but this, now, feels right. For you to indulge in courtship that doesn't end in a meal would be unprofessional, too, but how would it feel to indulge anyway – this once? Since we started, you've pushed me light years beyond my profession. Now I want to travel all the way with you, Weyland. Let's be unprofessional together.'[120]

Through this insight, we realise that Weyland is not far removed from humanity and we share many of the same desires as he does, but cannot act on them due to our mortality. We cannot shed the skin as Weyland has before, nor can we shake off our experiences as the vampire has before. And now, by being humanised by accepting his own previously self-forbidden contact and knowledge, Weyland becomes humane, and by being humanised through this discourse with human contact, he transforms himself and becomes openly postmodern.

Both Weyland and Saint Germain are accepted as vampires – no harm comes to them from those who learn of their vampire existence. The good humans who encounter them wish to preserve them from harm and are transformed by the vampire's fleeting role in their lives. This is not the case for Martin and Louis; they are tormented in their closest relationships and seek out a sense of belonging in a world which is cruel and unusual to them. Martin and Louis are victims of evil people, and the evil they encounter is far greater than the evil represented by their vampire bodies (in that, their existence). Saint Germain and Weyland accept their fate as eternal wanderers, only enjoying brief encounters with humanity rather than attempting to integrate into a society permanently. Though Rice's vampires have little desire to interact with human affairs, theirs is a vampire society that mimics our own human structures – clans, covens and families, which tolerate or cast out members. In these terms, their world has little difference from our own; its laws and rules are in place to control their roles within the structure, and insofar as these structures mimic human society, our ills and malaises are mirrored within it also. The terms in

[120] Suzy McKee Charnas. *The Vampire Tapestry.* p. 174

which we view this new breed of unknown vampires are found in the struggles they encounter as they attempt to integrate with the social structures they are placed in: be it human society or Rice's vampire society. Both Louis and Martin are cast out, Martin is murdered and Louis becomes nomadic. Saint Germain and Weyland also have fleeting encounters with these societies but realise that their condition does not permit total integration. Saint Germain wishes to save the world, while Louis wishes to save his own soul. Martin hopes that he can be accepted and loved, as does Weyland, finally attaining some notion of peace for discovering one human who can love him as he is. The romantic elements of these 1970s vampires remain intact, continuing through to the Draculas that emerge in this period, as we see their particular motives are driven by love and integration rather than as an aggressive coloniser.[121] This firmly lays to rest the template of the Hammer vampire by opening up new borders, new interpretations and dialogues. By using these new means of cultural expression, we can accept the vampire in his newfound place in postmodernity.

New World Order, Old World Monster: Placement, Monsters, the Fantastic and the Rational in *'Salem's Lot* and *Nosferatu The Vampyre*

While their postmodern contemporaries, in the works of Rice or Charnas, continually developed to suit their times, other vampires of the 1970s were trapped in an archaic past. These were the Nosferatu. The notion of the inability to adapt and change may seem to contrast to the ideas of postmodernity in the vampire narrative and should be treated as an important abandonment of past popular vampire representation, favouring the beautiful new vampires among us. Postmodern Vampires continue to ignore or wash away the sins of their predecessors, whenever possible. In this new phase of the vampire in popular culture, some vampires (Nosferatus in this case) represent the inability for all trends to adapt to cultural shifts. Similar to the trends seen in pop culture to idolise the music or fashion of a previous decade as 'kitsch' or 'retro', if vampires do not progress, adapt and develop, they too are to fade away. As culture is an ongoing, continuing binding force, so too are our ever-

[121] *Dracula* is often read as a coloniser or a contagion from abroad rather than a being in search of human acceptance. This categorisation of potential invader is explored thoroughly by Stephen D. Arata in his essay "The Occidental Tourist: Dracula and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonisation" in Nina Auerbach, David J. Skal (Eds) *The Norton Critical Edition of Dracula.* New York: W&W Norton & Co, 1997. pp. 462-470

changing vampires, reflecting the ongoing concerns and narratives of the culture from which they are born.

Unsurprisingly, 1970s vampires, more so than any other Postmodern Vampire category are subjected to the trappings of their predecessors in literature. 1970s vampires in literature and film are compared and contrasted critically in an attempt to differentiate, defuse and often to debunk the Modern Vampire in an attempt to place and legitimise the Postmodern Vampire as the 'real', valid vampire. New vampires of the 1970s are not monsters from the vaults of the Hammer Studios, trapped in the 19th century, but in contemporary times, for contemporary audiences. The *monstrous* vampires to be discussed here are not without their charms or a sense of the cultural shift that has emerged in vampire writing. The writers and directors of these works recognise the decay of the Modern Vampire. These authors and creators know that Postmodern Vampires must adapt if they are to survive, and hence their Modern Vampire creations die. These vampires die because they are incapable of change: that is the moral of each of these narratives. This is clearly depicted in the works of both Stephen King and Werner Herzog as both of these vampire creations are of the Old World. Whether in a rotting castle or in a morally rotten small Maine town, these vampires reflect and are bound to the evil that emanates from the walls and buildings, which surrounds the vampire tomb. Victor Sage's description of the dilapidated house describes the symbolic underpinnings of the Marsden House in King's novel: "Christian iconography commonly represents the body metaphorically as the house or mansion of the soul...Sin, however, makes this state of mind and body into a dungeon, a permanent prison"[122] The house looms over the town as though it were ever watchful of the town's inhabitants. King's novel, which concentrates on the evils of small town America, is perhaps more unsettling to the reader than the invasion of the vampires. Victor Sage continues to comment on the phenomenon of tenancy as reflecting the darkness of the old, ruined house in horror fiction: "Property, in this image, however momentarily, is associated with anxiety and uncertainty; this traditional, but still widely current image of the dark house stresses the tenancy, not the ownership, of the 'soul's dark cottage'."[123]

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[122] Victor Sage. *Horror in the Protestant Tradition*. pp. 1-3
[123] ibid. p. 6

The two versions of King's Old World vampire: the book's Mr Barlow and the screen incarnation of Mr Barlow (Reggie Nalder) are starkly different vampires. Two contrasts can be drawn between the book and film version of Mr. Barlow, the most important of these being his inability to communicate in the film version, in comparison to his lavish penmanship and articulate speeches in King's novel. In the novel, Barlow writes a letter to the team of good citizens who are attempting to thwart his plans of vampire colonisation. Barlow's letter is written with a certain sense of wickedness and dark wit, proclaiming that Ben's girlfriend was '*very toothsome*' and assuring Mark Petrie that ...[he] "shall enter my church as a choirboy *castratum.*" [124] This is the point, which separates and contrasts King's novel version of Barlow from Hooper's film representation. Barlow is depicted as a monster on Straker's leash, bending to Straker's will in Hooper's version, whereas it is quite clear that Barlow is both consciously plotting and coercing the heroes into traps in the novel. King's monster in Hooper's film is left to be a monster in appearance, but not in terms of character. He is reminiscent of the death throes of the Hammer Horror Draculas; snarling, animalistic and reactionary.

Hooper's adaptation of King's novel is for the most part successful in capturing the underlying evil that surrounds the town and its doomed inhabitants whom Darryl Jones describes as "...as vile a bunch as you'd care to meet, a motley collection of wife-beaters, sadists, racists, paedophiles, homophobes and 'preeverts'."[125] The central focus on the vampire as character of pure evil is lost amidst the many subplots and interweaving with which King layers his novels. The book captures the end of the Hammer genre and the beginnings of the self-realisation of the vampire-monster. Thus, King cleverly permits his vampire to display both cunning and narrative function (which features in the letter Barlow addresses to Ben Mears) and yet, has provided a lasting image of the Nosferatu vampire type. This particular type of vampire whose traits descend from the infamous film *Nosferatu* in 1922 share the same features; baldness, translucent skin, piercing eyes, pronounced rat-like canines, long fingernails with sharpened ends and dressed in black robes. As with Werner

[124] Stephen King. *'Salem's Lot.* 1975. London: New English Library, 1999. pp. 380-81
[125] Darryl Jones. *Horror: A Thematic History in Fiction and Film.* p. 95. The word 'Preeverts' is an obvious mispronunciation of the word pervert on Danny Glick's part in King's novel.

Herzog's *Nosferatu* (1979), the Nosferatu vampire is in the throes of change as the concept of the vampire as a monster begins to fade. In contrast, Postmodern Vampires are so attached to the awes and promise of eternal beauty that the Nosferatu is treated as though he were a distant cousin rather than a contemporaneous entity. While Tobe Hooper's and Werner Herzog's Nosferatu vampires are the last of their kind to appear in vampire horror until the 21st century, they are an important element in the transitional pains, stylisations and recognised ancestry which defines the Postmodern Vampire. This is the binding motif that threads these works together, the inability of physical change and the price of their supernatural appearance and existence.

Stephen King's American Nightmares - The Nosferatu as a political contagion in *'Salem's Lot*.

Beginning with the Old World Nosferatu vampire Mr. Kurt Barlow, whose invasion illegally into 'Salem's Lot seems to re-awaken the underlying evils of American culture of the early 1970s, King's vampire encompasses two social comments which both mirrors the unease of American Politics during Watergate and the attempt by King to draw from the fears of Old World invasions, which he compares to Stoker's *Dracula*.[126] It is important to emphasise the illegality of Barlow's arrival, noted in the text by the nature of his arrival- through the docks at night in a large crate without a customs stamp. By bringing in Barlow as an illegal alien, King provides a direct nod to the fears of border control and its permeability, the fear of the lack of cultural and police control, and the overall deficient political order felt in the United States in the early 1970s. King goes to great lengths to describe the evil nature of the town during the daylight hours- when evil menace bubbles below the surface in the name of small town propriety. It seems quite clear from King's three newcomers to the town, Mr. Barlow, Mr. Straker and Ben Mears, our protagonist, that invaders bring a form of questioned authority and judgement. King's determination to link his novel with *Dracula* poses some interesting questions about the author's intent and the attitude he holds on the subject of invading monsters.

[126] Stephen King. *'Salem's Lot*. New Introduction. 1999. p. xi

Why does King wish to link Dracula to his novel, especially in a time when vampire films had such a prolific outlet as the Hammer Studios? [127] The attempt at legitimacy in his only vampire novel to date seems to haunt King as a writer. King's strongest link to *Dracula* is revealed by the overwhelming sense of disgust pronounced by the townsfolk in the possibility that both Barlow and Straker are "queer for each other."[128] Being of the Old World, it is without surprise that the presumption of *gay* outsiders residing in the local house of horrors is held. Superstition casts shadows on any outsider in small town America and European descent neatly fits into the persona of the misunderstood and the supernatural. Also, King's evildoers are posing as antique dealers- specialising in 'old things, fine things' - their shop will undoubtedly attract the housewives of the area, not straight men. Robin Wood argues that it is the fear of homosexuality that spurs King's "unambiguously reactionary" novel, stating "the novel's monster is unequivocally evil and repulsive, and onto him are projected all the things of which the book is clearly terrified (including gayness, which provides the novel with a whole sub-text of evasions and subterfuges)."[129] Homophobia rages in many of King's other novels, but in *'Salem's Lot,* love between two men is often seen as affectionate and symbolising the lost father. Ben Mears and his high school English teacher, Matt, share mutual affection for one another, as proxy fathers and sons, while the protective relationship between Ben and young Mark Petrie, mimics this structure also. Many of King's novels feature this motif that, for Linda Badley, is a biographical signature based on King's absent father during his adolescence; "King's protagonists are orphans searching for their true parents – and ultimately (as adults) for community."[130] However, in King's community, which is often a nostalgic revision of the 1950s, homosexuality is not an inclusive lifestyle. Vampirism in the 1970s has been equated with and steeped in the narrative of homoerotic relations between men, Anne Rice being the other major author to have used and recognised the symbolic connection

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[127] Hammer Studios closed their doors in 1976, but King's love of Hammer has clearly influenced his take on the monster genre. For more on this, consult Stephen King. *Danse Macabre.* London: Warner Books 1981. As *'Salem's Lot* was written in 1972, Hammer was releasing the last of its vampire horror films.

[128] Stephen King. *'Salem's Lot.* p. 107

[129] Robin Wood. "Return of the Repressed" *Film Comment.* July/August, 1978. p. 25. cited in Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves.* p. 216

[130] Linda Badley. *Writing Horror and the Body.* Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1996. p. 45

between vampirism and gayness. However, as Nina Auerbach defends this attack on King's gay couplings by Robin Wood, she notes that a sort of equality emerges in *'Salem's Lot*, where all men need the interaction of good solid male friends: "If that homoeroticism makes villains villains, it also makes heroes heroes."[131] The links Auerbach makes are valid; by establishing straight parental type relationships, we recognise the protagonists as an extension of King's troubled youth, and by grouping the antagonists as a (suggested or actual) gay couple, it is to be read as an extension of their evil intentions.

King's linking his novel to *Dracula* is nonetheless problematic. *Dracula* is laid to rest for a prolonged period after 1980, in both fiction and film, until Francis Ford Coppola's lavish production in 1992,[132] leaving a pronounced gap in this development of the Dracula narrative. In reading the new introduction to *'Salem's Lot*, it is an important dramatic point to note that King feels that without *Dracula*, there can be no legitimacy for the vampire in contemporary literature. Though King does not openly make such a bold statement, he makes every effort to construct his novel as a thematically comparative text to Stoker's Victorian classic. As Stoker's novel is linked with the fear of invasion, King does connect with the spirit of the fear of reverse colonisation at a time when American politics was an invading forceful presence in the Vietnam War. The fear of reverse colonisation is not merely a narrative of invasion and inevitable immigration from abroad, but a fear in altering values and a dilution of home-grown identity. The American fear of invasion, outside forces penetrating the core values of identity and self-containment were heightened significantly during King's turbulent childhood in the 1950s. This influential period in King's life has clearly left an imprint in the novel as we come to recognise that King's villains embody traits of what was questioned and feared during the 'Red Scare'.

Ideologically, American identity is centred on the individual. To be an American in cultural terms during the Cold War was to be anti-communist, fearing its alien political thought and viewing it as an invasive, brutal force in geopolitics. While the South Vietnamese fought to protect their government

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[131] Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. pp. 215-16

[132] Some texts on Dracula emerge prior to 1992 (as seen in Chapter Two) but none revivified and intensified as much interest in Stoker's novel to the same extent as Coppola's film did.

from the communist North Vietnamese, the American presence in Vietnam from 1954-1975 was not of international obligation to capitalism and democratic choice but to face the forces of communism in a physical battle during the escalating Cold War. The fear of communism is well documented in the United States, famously captured in the creation of HUAC – The House Un-American Activities Committee. The HUAC board would convene to ask questions about a person's (usually a person of wealth or status or recognised for their intellect) political affiliation. This was trial by mob and trial by media, which often resulted in people who questioned authority to become 'blacklisted'. Often, those who suffered such a fate failed to secure any stable work for years. Richard Hofstadter highlights an account, which illustrates the fear of outside invading forces penetrating 'American virtues':

> Although the following may well be considered by discriminating readers as anti-cultural rather than anti-intellectual, I cannot omit some remarks made by Congressman George Dondero of Michigan, long a vigilant crusader against Communism in the schools and against cubism, expressionism, surrealism, dadaism, futurism, and other movements in art. ... 'The art of the isms, the weapon of the Russian Revolution, is the art which has been transplanted to America, and today, having infiltrated and saturated many of our art centers [sic], threatens to overawe, override and overpower the fine art of our tradition and inheritance. So-called modern or contemporary art in our own beloved country contains all the isms of depravity, decadence, and destruction... All these isms are of foreign origin, and truly should have no place in American art... All are instruments and weapons of destruction.' [133]

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[133] Richard Hofstadter. *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*. London: Jonathan Cape Publications, 1964. p. 14 quoting *Congressional Record*, 81st Congress, 1st session, p. 11584 .August 16, 1949. Hofstadter notes these particular comments made in congress in 1949, surrounding the issues of American culture and the arts and the pervading force of communist influences. This is included to highlight the continued notions held in American culture terms in the arts, where outside forces continue to threaten American ideals and American values. While these comments are focused mostly on the particular movements in Art, the broad focus of these comments is indicative of attitudes towards foreign movements in culture and the arts. Extending these comments to film and literature, these pervading thoughts illustrate the fear of outside forces as a threat to American Values and the American Cultural Landscape.

While communism failed to penetrate American Culture at a real political level, it penetrated the American psyche invasively. Although communism is not an openly Un-American virtue in King's novel, Old World values, liberalism, attitudes and suspected homosexuality are the traits that seem to cause most distress. The respected customs in small town America are unknown and thus disrespected by the foreigner – which presents this dilution of 'purity' in the American small town and furthers a feeling of outside invasion. It puts a familiar twist on 'you ain't from around here'. The fear of eroding American culture is a very real one when national politics hits crisis points such as the McCarthy Era or the Nixon scandals. Again, to return to the climate in which *'Salem's Lot* was written, when political crises occur, powerful rhetoric and persuasive speeches are heard about the importance of national identity. This is the rhetoric of the White House. As chaos engulfed the political fronts of the 1970s, authority weakened. This opens up opportunities for people (albeit mostly young people) to break away from authority figures and to explore new territories. Whether it is by testing the moral ground or the political front, bad leadership in the 1970s shines through the novel *'Salem's Lot* clearly: even the spiritual leader, Father Callahan, has lost faith. Homosexuality, racial difference, colonisation and the threat of eroding integral national identity are exposed in *'Salem's Lot* with a great deal of success. However, it is unfortunate that such arguments are narrated mostly by the local yobs and alcoholics of the town, though it can be identified clandestinely throughout.

Stephen D. Arata notes in his seminal essay on *Dracula* and the fears of reverse colonisation that to transform the victim is to alter their body, and the body politic. This theme can be clearly seen in King's novel:

> Dracula's twin status as vampire and Szekely warrior suggests that for Stoker the Count's aggressions against the body are also aggressions against the body politic. Indeed, the Count can threaten the integrity of the nation precisely because of the nature of his threat to personal integrity...Dracula imperils not simply his victim's personal identities, but also their cultural, political and racial selves. In *Dracula* vampirism designates a

> kind of colonisation of the body. Horror arises not because Dracula destroys bodies, but because he appropriates and transforms them. Having yielded to his assault, one literally 'goes native' by becoming a vampire oneself. [134]

This is a very accurate account of King's horror of vampirism: the uninhibited spread of vampirism and the lack of control that Barlow holds over them. Vampirism here is akin to illegal immigration through the fear of reverse colonisation and the unaccountability of the unknown migrants, and the lack of control felt politically. This lack of control and authority was embodied in Nixon's questionable integrity and leadership skills as President from 1972 - 1974. [135] King's newborn vampires are leaderless and thus, the horror is compounded by the inability to predict the spread of the contagion. This contagion, which originally emanated from the Marsten House is now left bereft, merely a breeding ground, a nest, from which new and uncontrollable evil can spread.

> King has often claimed that Stoker's *Dracula* is the source of *'Salem's Lot*, but his is a *Dracula* without pattern or rationale or rule-giving elders. Not only is there no viable Van Helsing, vampires are so abundant that there is virtually no Dracula. [136]

Interestingly, this leaderless condition of 1970s vampires has been attributed to three major cultural points: the generation gap, the population boom, and the clinging to the rational at all costs. Birth figures indicate the rise in population after World War II, (spanning from 1946 – 1964) as the typical American Family unit rose from the average two parent / two children template to four children or more. This generation was known as the 'baby boomer' generation, which grew largely due to certain acts of legislation - the G.I Bill (1944) most

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[134] Stephen D. Arata. "The Occidental Tourist: Dracula and The Anxiety of Reverse Colonisation" in Nina Auerbach and David J Skal. (Eds). *The Norton Critical Edition of Dracula* p. 465

[135] Between these dates, spanning Nixon's second term as President, *The Washington Post*'s investigations into the Watergate Burglary were connecting the burglars with high-powered officials and White House staff. By 1974, it was proven, through documented evidence and secret sources, that Nixon sanctioned the bugging of the Democratic Headquarters in the Watergate complex. See Bob Woodward, Carl Bernstein. *All The President's Men*. 1974 rpt. London: Bloomsbury, 1998.

[136] Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. p. 156

prominently, which secured cheap housing and economic stability for troops returning home after the war. William Chafe describes this by looking at the demographic figures of school enrolment:

> All during the 1940s, school enrolments only increased by a million. Then, during the 1950s, they rocketed by 10 million. Instead of picturing families with two children in their advertisements, mass circulation magazines now featured family portraits of five - and six person families, all supposedly participating in the prosperity and bliss of suburban living.[137]

Also, as the numbers of children born peaked during the 1950s, the subsequent decline thereafter brought about the generation gap felt by King and his fellow 'baby boomers'. The following generation – 'Generation X' or 'Cold War Babies' (spanning births from 1961 – 1981) vocalised much of their political and social discontent regarding the generation gap, which was felt between them and their 'baby boomer' parents. Generation X's cultural malcontents and social alienation is clearly seen in 1980s horror (discussed in depth in Chapter Two). The rational is accounted for by the Vietnam War vets who came home with their own terrifying experiences on the battlefields, often being described as broken men at a young age. Journalist Michael Herr wrote:

> 'Americans coming out of battle looked like a colony of stroke victims,' ...their eyes sunk into their heads, their faces pasty white, their appearance that of old men. 'How do you feel,' Herr asked, 'When a nineteen year old kid tells you from the bottom of his heart that he has gotten too old for this kind of shit?'[138]

In light of this real terror, flashbacks and repeated exposure to brutal and bloody killing, the horrors of the last generation were of rational war and severed limbs, not fantastic monsters, or the realm of the supernatural.

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[137] William H. Chafe. *The Unfinished Journey*. p. 123
[138] ibid. p. 293

The townspeople attribute the ascendancy of the evil European vampires and their transformed followers to coincidence, and accept the medical analysis of anaemia as the cause of death. Only the protagonist's double, the ten-year-old Mark, knows the truth regarding the bizarre deaths. "'Understand death? Sure. That's when the monsters got you' ...the young have access to terror their rationalist parents are denied."[139] Confusion reigns as the invasions proceed, but it goes unabated as the townsfolk await scientific, rational knowledge. Both Mark Petrie and Ben Mears understand the supernatural as they have both encountered monsters by being one of "those charmed Stephen King children born with apprehension of evil, understands the invasion because he has learned life from the random grue of horror comics...for in comic books death is neither logical nor sacramental." [140]

King's vampires are supernatural beings - not by being merely vampires, but by their particular version of vampirism. As they are physically monstrous, recognisable as monsters by possessing all the identifying elements of Nosferatu vampirism, they are thus are more akin to the supernatural because of their inherent ugliness. "King's vampires are so horrible that they may look retrograde."[141] While Tobe Hooper's Barlow is most certainly a Nosferatu, King's version maintains only elements of this: "He [Mark] was looking at Barlow's fingers, those long, sensitive fingers, which lay against the boy's throat. There were small blue blotches on them."[142] This vital, but small characteristic links Barlow closely to the Nosferatu vampire, while not formally classifying him as one entirely. David J. Hogan encapsulates Hooper's vision of Barlow that is so repellent to the reader and viewer of *'Salem's Lot*:

> Because the vampire myth has been thoroughly dissected, modern audiences seem to react most positively to those films which place vampirism in a modern setting...The Undead Barlow in Tobe Hooper's *'Salem's Lot* (1979) expresses a purity of vampiric evil that is very nearly the ultimate

[139] Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. p. 156.
[140] ibid. p. 156
[141] ibid. p. 155
[142] Stephen King. *'Salem's Lot*. pp. 400-01

> extrapolation of the myth. Repellently ugly, Barlow has no personality, no dimension. He (*it* may be more appropriate) is a killing machine who destroys children and crushes a young mother's head like balsa. Hooper's focus is on Barlow's victims; vampirism becomes an abstract evil.[143]

German Nightmares: Herzog and the politics of Nosferatus

Werner Herzog's *Nosferatu The Vampire* (1979) offers an opportunity to explore two approaches regarding *Dracula* long since established by F.W. Murnau in his seminal film *Nosferatu: a Symphony of Horror* (1922). Beautifully photographed to capture both extensive use of shadow and cast brilliant light on the Nosferatu's face, Herzog has cleverly reinvented the Murnau classic while paying due homage to the powerful iconic images of the first modern film vampire. Herzog claims that Murnau's *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* (1922) is the most important German film ever made and that he is attempting to bridge the gap from the expressionist cinema of the 1920s to his updating of the film in 1979. One important difference is that Murnau's film, barely surviving as a negative due to the Stoker estate's lawsuit against the filmmaker for plagiarism and unauthorised use of *Dracula*, has been officially restored. Now in Herzog's film, we have the Nosferatu Count Dracula as Murnau envisioned, shedding the name Graf Orlok. While the reverence of the original is openly admired, re-enacted and glossed, the film draws on the powers of its origins in Murnau's piece and attempts to restore vampire imagery back to its German roots. Not only is this film highly nationalistic in its desire to replicate and further the original *Nosferatu* film, it is also a fierce critique of the rational and the decline of the supernatural. The supernatural in this film can be seen as German folk stories, myths, cultural beliefs and practises. There is a genuine sense of mourning in the film; a pain that is self confessed by the director as though he is both in awe of Murnau's film and is evoking pity for Nosferatu as an extension of himself.[144]

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[143] David J. Hogan. *Dark Romance: Sex and Death in the Horror Film*. Northamptonshire: Equation, 1986.p. 162

[144] *Nosferatu The Vampyre*. Dir. Werner Herzog. 20th Century Fox, 1979. The director gave an interview on the making of the film in a special edition DVD released in 2001. He expressed

Lawrence Rickles equates the film to Herzog's feelings on Nazi Germany, stating that death and guilt ripples through the film. The similarity in the location name of Wismar to Weimar invites parallels with the German political past. The focus of decaying bodies, mass destruction and the missing comes forth in the opening scene, and, here it is clear, according to Rickles, that vampirism for Herzog is a symbol for the post-war scars of Germany. In a paragraph which psycho-analyses the political groupings and meanings of both Murnau's and Herzog's films, Rickles argues:

> Like the disappearance of the sailors at sea during Nosferatu's journey to Germany, which in both *Nosferatu* films puts through a direct connection to all those soldiers missing in action, this crypt sequence foreshadows the catastrophe that will plague Wismar (the place name that resonates with Weimar).[145]

Rickles is linking both films as being reactions and dialogues regarding the previous World Wars respectively. "It is highly significant that during this period German imagination, regardless of its starting-point, always gravitated towards such figures – as if under the compulsion of hate-love."[146] The figures of power and of horror are closely linked here under the turmoil post World War I. Both films treat vampirism as a source of Black Death plague, combining the repeated images of rats and the Nosferatus in question having certain physical similarities to vermin: pointed ears and ferocious elongated nails, and being called 'the king of rats'. This is also clear from the location of the fangs in the mouth- where the stereotypical vampire has his fangs at the canine teeth, all of these Nosferatus share frontal fangs, sharing the same dental structure with a rat. The use of rats for these two vampires only further highlights the attitudes of disgust surrounding the vampire, as the rat is known as the carrier of disease. "The horrors Nosferatu spreads are caused by a

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his views during a 'making of' documentary shot on the set. It is clear from this documentary that the director feels that German cinema is re-birthing itself from a crisis point. Perhaps this is due to the decline in popularity of German cinema abroad, most notably in America. We also see takes from the film, which was shot in two languages - German and English.

[145] Lawrence Rickles. *The Vampire Lectures*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999. p. 96

[146] Siegfried Kracauer. *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*. London: Denis Dobson Ltd, 1947. p. 79

vampire identified with pestilence. Does he embody the pestilence or is its image evoked to characterize him?"[147]

Kracauer's alignment of 'vampire as disease carrier' is not a new metaphor, but here Rickles is using the motif of disease as a political gesture. Orlok may be an autonomous vampire, but he is not a master, whereas Dracula in Herzog's film is legitimised by his name alone. He is Dracula, the one and only. Here, in Herzog's piece, Von Helsing (as opposed to Van Helsing) is also thwarted by the rational explanation, refusing to believe in vampires, in spite of Lucy's warnings. Too little is accomplished too late here, as Von Helsing stakes the Count after Lucy perishes. In the aftermath, rather than being hailed as a hero, Von Helsing is arrested for murder. Order has broken down in Wismar due to the plague that infects it, here a clear association with Nazism can be seen, and though the order of the town has been disbanded, in that no police, magistrates or jailers are to be found due to the plague, Von Helsing must be held accountable for committing murder although it has spared the town from further destruction from the supernatural. It must be noted here that the absence of a Van Helsing in King's novel and the incompetence of Herzog's Von Helsing in *Nosferatu The Vampyre* illustrates the lack of control in containing evil. Through dismissing the existence of supernatural evil, they (the townspeople and the incompetent Von Helsing) provide the space needed for the continued invasion.

Although both Murnau's and Herzog's Nosferatus perish by the harsh light of day at the end of their films, in Herzog's version a new Nosferatu is born in Jonathan Harker. Also, we see a duality emerging between Dracula and Jonathan in Herzog's version, a paralleling in character progression and a merging of identity. This happens as a character counterpoint from the moment Jonathan becomes sick from the Nosferatu's bite. As he grows sicker, he forgets his relationship with his wife Lucy (in this film version being exchanged for Stoker's Mina), while Dracula becomes obsessed with consuming her. Dracula approaches her in a spectacular sequence involving shadow and mirrors, demonstrating that he is without legitimacy in her world. The town of Wismar clings to reason, by way of blaming the onset of the

[147] ibid. p. 79

plague for the death toll, despite Lucy's understanding of the clash of these two contrasting situations. It is in the final sequence that this supernatural trade takes place, where Lucy embraces the Count erotically attempting to save Jonathan and exposing the Nosferatu to the daylight. All the while, Jonathan sits below stairs slowly vampirising, trapped in a chair surrounded by a blessed host at his feet. After the erotically charged blood exchange, Lucy dies from blood loss, the Count dies by being exposed to sunlight and it is Jonathan who returns to Transylvania by horse to replace the Count. A cyclical rebirth of both the political and the supernatural occurs, as this is the only Nosferatu to survive by transference. This is political evil by transference, drawn by Herzog from Murnau's film, which has been read as prophetically warning against Nazism. More hopefully, this can also be read as the postmodern answer to the clash of the rational and the supernatural. Transference is a means of survival and we are witness to its survival in this new ending. This supernatural means of survival ensures that while the rational may not permit the existence of the supernatural, it cannot fully destroy it either. As with Langella's and Hamilton's Draculas, Herzog's new vampire (in the transformed Jonathan Harker) must return to the homeland to ensure his survival and supernatural continuance.

Postmodern Undeath: Conclusion

The last version of the Murnau masterpiece in the Postmodern Vampire age is *Shadow of the Vampire* (2001). This film's premise of entering Murnau's film as a documentary on the actual film shoot is a masterstroke, indicating the possibilities of supernatural entities being among us in an age of reason and secularism, technology and the death of folklore. We see F.W. Murnau (played by John Malkovich) cast Max Schreck (Willem Defoe) to play Graf Orlok for his film, and Schreck astounds his fellow actors by remaining in character. Interpreted as a pure method actor, it is not revealed until Orlok's death sequence that he was in fact a vampire who has been sacrificed by Murnau to create a successful picture. It is the case in this film that the supernatural is exploited to further the cause of the rational: the success of the picture as a masterpiece of technological achievement through special effects and to

generate profit. The real madness is seen in Malkovich's Murnau, who is exploiting the vampire for his own career and success.

Stephen King's Mr. Barlow and Herzog's reinterpretation of Murnau's Graf Orlok, are vampires in the throes of death. King and Herzog use this narrative to illustrate the need for vampire mutation, the blending in of vampires into our ever-expanding knowledge of human geography and culture, which these texts draw from Stoker's *Dracula* as reverse colonisation and invasion. Nothing is to be left undiscovered, unstudied, unknown. To this end, the cultural narrative of these vampires requires our new vampires to be clandestine in appearance, to be homogenous and integrated in order to survive the nature of our new world. These two Old World vampires are now the ancestors of the new age of vampires- they illustrate the need for secrecy in open spaces, and their survival strategy is to now blend in with their prey. Newborn vampires recognise the threat of being exposed as an Other in society; Charnas's Weyland and Yarbro's Saint Germain in particular are discreet in their lifestyles to ensure that they can continue on without threat. Both authors use their characters to illustrate these vampires do not need to 'look' vampiric in order to be vampires. Rice and Romero portray their vampires as victims of isolation who are tormented by guilt and suffering because of their unique condition. The significance of Dracula in this new postmodern age is because he, as an eternal changeling, is still considered to be the King Vampire. Dracula's adaptability in postmodernity proves that he reigns supreme in comparison to his Nosferatu counterparts. While the newborn vampires of the 1970s are confused and tormented by their condition, Dracula does not suffer this transition as they do. Langella's Dracula embraces the feminist politics of the 1970s, freeing women from the confinement of family obligations. Postmodern Draculas, once confined to supernatural space, must come into the secular West for nourishment and revivification. Whether it is for love, blood or knowledge, these vampires must leave their homeland in order to maintain their legacies, fully aware that their previous existence in self-containment and isolation cannot continue. The changing world around these vampires demands that they must adapt with it physically, politically and culturally. As our cultural mirrors, they transform as we transform, unearthing their hidden histories and questioning reigning hierarchies. Postmodernity has offered the vampire a

depth of character, and a complex, permeable existence, which merges with our own. The Postmodern Vampire becomes legitimate by leaving Stoker's and Dracula's shadow.

Chapter Two: Bad Blood –The Vampire in Family Politics, AIDS, and Fetish Consumption in the 1980s

Maybe we have found the perfect moment in history,
the perfect balance between the monstrous and the human...
and the god dies, and the god rises. But this time no one is redeemed.[1]

How many of you would be vampires? [2]

The 1980s Family Unit

The early 1980s saw an increase in the number of horror films, most of which were in the slasher genre. Andrew Tudor documents the substantial increase in horror film production and distribution, which he categorises as a period of 'Sustained Growth', from 1978 - 1983: "The two major sources of horror-movie threat remain psychosis and supernature, and of the two, psychosis dominates."[3] Tudor describes the slasher film as a psychosis film, in which the film's monster is usually mentally ill, or has been repressed by society. 'Supernature' is Tudor's category for Vampires, Zombies and other supernatural creatures whose stand outside the laws of nature characterise their particular sub-genre in horror cinema. In the early 1980s in particular, the slasher reigned supreme: "During the period of sustained growth, psychotics figure in 38 per cent of films, passing over the 50 per cent mark in the early eighties: no less than 73 films over the six years ... and only rarely has any single category so dominated a period."[4] The slasher cycle was born (although proto-slashers such as *Psycho* (1960), *Frenzy* (1972) and *Last House on the Left* (1972) preceded the cycle) with the release of *Halloween* (1978), and peaked in popularity as the fortieth President, Ronald Reagan, was sworn into office in January 1981. In short, these films adhere to a series of plot rules from which they rarely if ever deviate: a particular date or event in the past where a wrongdoing occurred; a killer (usually masked) who uses blades, knives or

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[1] Anne Rice. *The Vampire Lestat.* pp.545 - 546
[2] ibid. p. 584
[3] Andrew Tudor. *Monsters and Mad Scientists: A Cultural History of the Horror Movie.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989. p. 67
[4] ibid. pp. 67-68

penetrating objects to pick off his victims who are 'sinners', and a 'final girl' whose chastity and intelligence allow her the opportunity to best the killer in the finale. The rigidity of this formula ensured a domino effect in Hollywood – there would be a series of imitators as the genre was so formulaic and popular with young audiences, and required only a minimal budget to produce. The slasher's conservative plot devices not only became so familiar that the franchise would end without much credibility in popular culture but also, in effect, made sex a punishable act.

> Whenever you see two young people about to frolic in a slasher film, you know within minutes they will be sliced, macheted, garrotted, pierced with an arrow, a spear, a pitchfork – whatever is handy, sharp and primitive enough to evoke primal punishment. In slasher films, there are no *petites morts*.[5]

The slasher genre was to have a short shelf life. Its formula could only allow a certain amount of interpretation or deviation from 'the rules' and, by 1986, the genre sealed its fate by parodying itself.[6] Unlike the vampire film, which was experiencing resurgence in the teen market at a slow and steady pace, the plot of the slasher was set around teenage self-regulation. Parents were out of sight in the genre.[7] Without the protection of elders and parents, teenagers had to fend for themselves against the brutal killer. Parents figured as the authority or haven, which was out-of-reach for teens in peril. The vampire films that emerged after the slasher had fallen into a pattern of decline included parents from the outset; vampires preyed on the parents' insecurities and worst fears by being unable to protect the child from outside influence, or usurping the lone parent by acting as a potential replacement parent to the wayward teen. The

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[5] Mark Edmundson. *Nightmare on Main Street: Angels, Sadomasochism and the Culture of Gothic*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997. p. 16

[6] Adam Rockoff situates the moment of the slasher movie's decline with the release of *April Fool's Day*. Dir. Fred Walton, 1986., a spoof on the genre, which was grossly misrepresented in its marketing strategies. The film received a poor reception as it was promoted as a slasher film, but parodied itself by fooling the audience. The murders are revealed to have been an elaborate prank. For more on this, see Adam Rockoff. *Going to Pieces: The Rise and Fall of the Slasher Film, 1978 – 1986*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2002. pp. 160-163

[7] There are a few exceptions to the rule of absent parents, most notably in *Friday the 13th*. Dir. Sean S. Cunningham, 1980., where it is revealed that Mrs. Voorhees (the wholesome Betsy Palmer), mother to Jason who drowned at Camp Crystal Lake years previously, is in fact the killer. Parents who do appear in slashers are then considered as fragmentary warnings of lack of control or are killers themselves.

three films in the 'family' set, *Fright Night* (1985), *Near Dark* (1987) and *The Lost Boys* (1987), open up the family unit to invasion by the vampire, and illustrate the vulnerability of the family to destruction. Vampirism in the 1980s differs from its 1970s romanticism, in that vampirism becomes a fragile state, which is fully reversible. Half-vampirism is depicted as dicing with death, in teenagers who lack responsibility and who are sexually experimenting with unknown others. We can see, retrospectively, the beginning of the HIV/AIDS narrative in these works as early as 1983 in Tony Scott's *The Hunger*, a mere two years after the disease was officially diagnosed. If the slasher genre was to signify the perils of teenagers who were unsupervised, the vampire film was to heighten these qualms by dictating that the family itself was now under threat. The parents of these teens are sole survivors of divorce or are widowed, and it is through this exposure that the vampire thrives.

Fright Night, *Near Dark* and *The Lost Boys*: Broken Families and Queer Invasions

Tom Holland's 1985 vampire film, *Fright Night*, is the first of the famous three teenage vampire films of the 1980s. The film itself is plotted against the quiet suburban neighbourhood of a presumably large west coast city, deploying the familiar trope of the suburban background located outside a major city as the desired yet unsafe family haven.

Peter Vincent's fading stardom is also seen here as he berates the contemporary direction of the horror genre, which favours the slasher over the vampire film. The premise of Peter Vincent's indignation is relevant in establishing the location of the film: belief in vampires is ridiculous in 1980s America, especially Hollywood. 1980s slashers narrate society's fears of crime and violent deaths at the hands of serial killers and psychopaths, which is far more plausible than vampires. Vampires were perceived as a far less likely threat and less frightening than the make up effects produced by gore veteran Tom Savini.[8] Savini's make-up and gruesome effects coupled with the reality of

[8] Tom Savini gained his reputation as a horror film gore specialist and make-up artist when he worked with George A. Romero on *Dawn of The Dead*. United Film Distributed Company,

serial murder in society produced responses in the slasher genre that did not spill over into the vampire genre. Vampires could still be charming and alluring, mythical and sexual but psychotic killers do not embody any of these traits. This is successfully reflected in Peter Vincent's outburst: "*I* have just been fired because nobody wants to see vampire killers anymore, or vampires either. Apparently, all *they* want are demented madmen running around in ski masks hacking up young virgins."[9] Darryl Jones suggests that this is "an accurate account of the dominant mode of horror movie in the early and mid-1980s,"[10] which explains not only the decline in 'Supernature' films, but also for Peter Vincent being fired. Slasher films were targeted at young audiences with young victims, villains and heroes, out of sight from elders, parents and authority figures.

Suburbia held the promise of family units, values and safety in cultural terms; crime was usually attributed to the residents of the inner city areas of, for example, Los Angeles and New York. However, it is the children of suburbanites who watch horror and, like the protagonist Nancy (Heather Lagenkamp) in Wes Craven's *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1985), pay for their parents' mistakes in protecting the sanctity of the suburban illusion. Suburbia became the place where horror notably dwelled; the horror of the city lay in the squalor into which it had already transformed. By the late 1980s, New York was self-described as The Rotten Apple, awash in corruption, drug use, crime and poverty. The horror was everywhere and self-evident. The true horror in the suburban space of the 1980s teenage vampire film was the absolute denial in the possibility that horror had invaded the space of the family. In a similar vein to the 1950s template of horror as an invasion of the Other into the Familiar (them versus us), 1980s culture reified the symbol of the family as a sacred unit, a predominantly patriarchal entity that was open to peril when the good father was absent. This mirrors President Reagan's self-emulated image as the 'good patriarch' of America, warding off Soviet invaders through international relations in a period of intense Cold War policies. All three of the vampire films discussed in this section, *Fright Night* (1985), *Near Dark* (1987)

1978., and *Friday the 13th* . In a series of famous and grisly deaths onscreen, Savini made his name as an original talent in the area of horror special effects.

[9] *Fright Night*. Dir. Tom Holland, Columbia Pictures, 1985

[10] Darryl Jones. *Horror: A Thematic History in Fiction and Film*. p. 113

and *The Lost Boys* (1987), share the commonality of an absent parent and thus, I argue, are left open and vulnerable to the outside invasion of the vampire. This outside invasion can also be translated into the rhetoric of invading homosexuality and sexual experimentation. The result of such temptations outside of the family unit leads to the presumption that homosexuality is a virulent contagion. Those characters associated with the vampire, being either a victim of the bite or the protagonist himself, become seduced by homosexual 'monstrous behaviour', leading "the monster queer" into the vulnerable family.[11]

Fright Night opens with a familiar scene; the sound of horror sound effects in a suburban house at night. It is evident from the first pan shot that our protagonist Charley Brewster (William Ragsdale) is a horror fan. As we are introduced to Charley in his home environment, our attention is drawn to the television where the show, *Fright Night*, is onscreen. Charley is failing in his attempt to persuade his girlfriend Amy (Amanda Bearse) to make love. Sexual anxiety is evident from the opening moments of the film: the screen shots in the background show the staking of a vampiress, whose screams we hear, which mirrors Amy's initial refusal of Charley's sexual advances. The vampiress is being staked by Peter Vincent, host of the television show *Fright Night* and self-proclaimed vampire killer. (The character's name was conjured as homage to both Vincent Price and Peter Cushing.) Roddy McDowall portrays this Van Helsing character as a failing and typecast actor. As the vampiress screams, she is mimicking the infamous death of Lucy Westenra in Stoker's *Dracula*, whose writhing and sexualised body is penetrated and restored to a death pallor. Contrastingly, when Amy loses Charley's interest, his attention is turned to a mysterious shadow in his next-door neighbours' yard. Charley witnesses his neighbours carrying a coffin into their basement and becomes intrigued, presuming them to be murderers. Upon further investigation, Charley becomes convinced that his neighbour, the stylish and suave Jerry Dandridge (Chris Sarandon), is a vampire. Both Jerry Dandridge and his roommate/ manservant Billy Cole (Jonathan Stark) pose as antique dealers to the outside world, mimicking Stephen King's Vampire king Mr.

[11] Harry M. Benshoff. *Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Movie*. p. 250

Barlow and manservant Mr. Straker in '*Salem's Lot.*[12] An earlier example in the coupling of antiques and perceived queerness is found in a Vincent Price and Peter Lorre pilot entitled 'Collector's Item' (1958),[13] "in which they played a pair of crime-fighting antique dealers."[14] Benshoff comments that this profession has parallel links with homosexuality by speculating reasons for the proposed television show never airing: "Perhaps their [Price and Lorre's] monstrously fey personas came too close to denoting homosexuality, for the pilot was never sold."[15]

Fright Night is the first in a series of vampire horror films that appeared in quick succession, discussing the problems within the modern American family and the threats which seek to invade its private sphere. However, unlike the films that were quick to follow, *Near Dark* and *The Lost Boys*, *Fright Night* is a self-aware production in the horror genre; its structure is based on the horror fan who must contend with the actualisation of monsters within his community. While *The Lost Boys* does acknowledge the horror comic as a source for guidelines on dealing with vampires, 'Fright Night' offers our protagonist the means of knowledge (in being a horror fan) and the Van Helsing character (Peter Vincent) in one package. Predating Wes Craven's postmodern slasher *Scream* (1996),[16] the film assumes the audience's knowledge of the genre, and indicates from the opening sequence that our protagonist is also aware of the 'rules' that govern vampires.[17]

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[12] Both King's novel and Tobe Hooper's television mini-series adaptation of the novel focus on the vampire duo's profession, and feature characters casting aspersions on their sexuality from the start. Benshoff also illustrates that these examples were not the first of their kind in hiding one's identity from the outside community. The association with collecting antiques and homosexuality may lie in the predominantly 'feminine' attachment to beautiful and collectable objects.

[13] While this series was never sold or aired by any television studio, it is available as an extra feature on the American DVD release of *The Last Man on Earth.* Dir. Ubaldo Ragona, Associated Pictures, International, 1964. The film is adapted from Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend.* 1954. London: Gollancz, 2001. Again interlinked with vampires and an underlying fear of homophobia, *I Am Legend* envisions a post-apocalyptic world where vampires dominate and one man is left to fend for himself.

[14] Harry M. Benshoff. *Monsters in The Closet*: *Homosexuality and the Horror Movie*. p. 251

[15] ibid. p. 251

[16] *Scream*. Dir. Wes Craven, Dimension Films, 1996.

[17] While *Fright Night* does make a compelling case for being postmodern in its approach to the horror rules concerning vampires, Charley (William Ragsdale) must seek advice from his friend Evil Ed (Stephen Geoffreys) in order to defeat them. Perhaps this is merely a script error as Charley is an avid fan of *Fright Night*, a show that is based on the slaying of vampires.

The film also pays homage to horror and suspense films of the past, most notably Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954), mimicked in the moment where Charley first sees Jerry Dandridge bare his teeth and feed from a female prostitute through his bedroom window. Like James Stewart's character Jeff in *Rear Window*, Charley uses binoculars while witnessing the murder next door and initially enjoys this act of voyeurism. As Jorg Waltje comments, "a sexual conundrum" is present throughout the film.[18] Exploring the scene where Charley views the murder through his bedroom window, the question is whether he is looking at the naked prostitute or at Jerry the vampire? It must be noted that the vampire is about to bite his victim from behind, strongly implying sodomy. Charley's sexuality can also be questioned in the opening scenes with Amy. She decides to succumb to Charley's sexual advances but at this pivotal moment he becomes distracted by the strangers/vampires next-door and loses interest in her. Evil Ed hints at the possibility of Charley's 'queerness', publicly taunting him, "Did she finally find out what you *really* like?"[19] Not only is Charley's sexuality brought into question, but, indeed all the male characters in *Fright Night* exert a particular hint towards a queer reading of the film. Vincent Price's camp persona in many of his horror films is the clear inspiration for Roddy McDowall's performance as Peter Vincent.[20]

Furthermore, the subsequent lives of a number of cast members reflect a strongly queer light back on the film. Amanda Bearse, who plays Charley's girlfriend Amy, came out as a lesbian soon after the release of *Fright Night* and became an active protester on behalf of gay community during the AIDS crisis in America. Perhaps the best-known actor to have completely changed career path and became involved with the gay community is actor Stephen Geoffreys. As Evil Ed, Geoffreys has a pivotal scene in the film strongly suggestive of the freedom to express his gay sexual desires when he embraces the vampire Jerry Dandridge. While trapped down an alley and with tears in his eyes, Ed is confronted by Dandridge and is soothed by his words: "You don't have to be

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[18] Jorg Waltje. *Blood Obsession: Vampires, Serial Murder and the Popular Imagination*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2005. pp. 97-98

[19] *Fright Night*. Dir. Tom Holland, Columbia Pictures, 1985

[20] Roddy McDowall was long considered to be a closeted gay actor, but as he was known for his secretive nature, it is not possible to conclusively ascertain if he was gay. However, gay actor Rupert Everett lays claim to some intimate knowledge of McDowall's sexual orientation in his biography *Red Carpets and Other Banana Skins*. London, Warner Books, 2007.

afraid of me. I know what it's like to be different. Only they won't pick on you anymore, or beat you up. I'll see to that. All you have to do is take my hand. Here, Edward, take my hand."[21] Ed reaches up to Dandridge and is enveloped in the vampire's coat. Here, the outsider is comforted by vampirism and embraces it, rather than face the social exclusions predetermined and represented by the popular crowd. Evil Ed, like many teenagers who lash out against their peers who have formally rejected them in the schoolyard, can now enact his revenge by embracing vampirism. When Ed is re-emerges as a vampire in Charley's house, he is dressed in "clownish female drag",[22] exalted at the liberation he feels by being vampirised. For Evil Ed, vampirism is more than sexual experimentation but, rather literally, a means of coming out of the closet. Interestingly, Stephen Geoffreys's career post *Fright Night* is predominantly in gay pornography, where he is often credited with the screen name Sam Ritter.[23]

The essence of vampirism in *Fright Night* is its potential to unleash the hidden sexualities in its repressed characters. For Amy and Ed, vampirism opens up the possibility of sex to them, where in the light of day they are both paralysed by shyness and therefore repressed. For Charley, the obsession with the vampire next door has a twofold interpretation. Charley seeks both to protect his lone parent mother and to prevent a replacement father figure from invading the family. Also, by becoming obsessed with the vampire next door, Charley's repressed sexuality is opened up to the possibility of experimentation with other men, which is often attributed to sons with absent fathers. One such case study argues that a connection can be found where an intimate relationship between fathers and sons is absent, and notes an increased level of homosexuality amongst the sons in a lone parent family. This study was conducted amongst seminarians in Canada, exploring their sexuality and relationships with their fathers. While no agenda is found within the study, homosexuality has not been endorsed by any major religion to date and directly goes against 'family values' structures by being associated with promiscuity, immorality and sexual deviance.

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[21] *Fright Night*. Dir. Tom Holland, Columbia Pictures, 1985.
[22] Harry M. Benshoff. *Monsters in The Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Film.* p. 251
[23] Stephen Geoffreys's career in gay pornography is quite extensive. The website IMDb lists over thirty pornography titles which Geoffreys has actively starred in or produced, including such titles as *Leather Buddies* (1997) and *Butt Blazer* (1997).

> The levels of father-son and mother-son emotional connectedness/distance, measured in terms of intimacy and intimidation, were studied among male Catholic seminarians in Canada. Results indicated that those seminarians who identified their sexual orientation as homosexual scored significantly lower on their level of intimacy with their fathers than did heterosexual seminarians. No such differences existed in the relationship of seminarians and their mothers. There were no significant differences on the intimidation scores. Results lend new credence to the 'weak father' theory of homosexuality and to the importance of same-sex emotional connectedness in the psychosexual gender development of individuals.[24]

The lack of a strong father figure has long been associated with providing a potential gateway to homosexuality, but without any sociological evidence to support it. The vampire is merely capitalising on these single parent families to draw out any potential homosexual feelings on the son's behalf. Similarly, in *The Lost Boys*, the absent father left in Phoenix by the Emerson family leaves this family unit open to the invited vampire as a suitor for the mother of the family. *Fright Night* also uses this identical framework but, with such questioning sexual readings, it can be viewed as an invitation for Charley to visit Dandridge next door rather than an invitation for his mother. Is the invited vampire attempting to gain access to the boys in the family via the mother? Queer readings of these films would posit the vampire's desire for young boys. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's "Erotic Triangle" theory is found in these films, shifting throughout the narrative to place the vampire in a position of power. The triangle is comprised of the male suitor for the woman, the woman herself, and the vampire as a rival for the woman's affection. Sedgwick's Erotic Triangles are repeatedly found in vampire narratives such as *Dracula*, from Harker, Mina and Dracula, to Holmwood, Lucy and Dracula. 'Homosocial desire' as Sedgwick describes it, is a form of male bonding:

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[24] Martin Rovers, Ray A. Seutter. (Eds) "Emotionally Absent Fathers: Furthering the Understanding of Homosexuality." *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, Vol. 32, 2004. p. 46

> Homosocial desire, to begin with, is a kind of oxymoron...a word occasionally used in history and the social sciences, where it describes social bonds between persons of the same sex; it is a neologism, obviously formed by analogy with 'homosexual', and just as obviously meant to be distinguished from 'homosexual'.[25]

When homosocial bonds are established between the males in the "Erotic Triangle", the woman is used as a conduit for their homosexual desires. The woman is initially set up as the prize only to be discarded later as a secondary conquest. The vampire's focus shifts from dominating the woman to dominating the other man in the narrative. In *Fright Night*, the "Erotic Triangle" between Charley, Amy and Dandridge is clear, as it is in *The Lost Boys* with Michael, Star and David. Women are used to tempt the suitor into the triangle where the vampire seeks to conquest them both. The vampire almost always conquests and discards the woman in preference for the male counterpart. Most vampire films have two triangles at work within the narrative. As with Stoker's Dracula, the triangles are formed by swaying an innocent into a battle between the good and bad patriarchs. This can also be extended to potentially gay characters. With Evil Ed as a conduit, a triangle is formed in the battle between Peter Vincent and Dandridge who both embrace Ed like a son. The same occurs in *Near Dark* where Caleb is centred in a battle between his good father and the vampire patriarch Jesse. These erotic triangles between males exclusively are permissible only because the innocent male's sexuality is in question. Beyond that, the triangle becomes an ideological struggle of recruitment rather than sexual triumph.

Near Dark, directed by Kathryn Bigelow, was released the same month as *The Lost Boys*. Both films approached the composition of the American family through drastically different means but with a similar core narrative: the teenage son being seduced into the world of the vampire. Beautiful and mysterious young women, (Mae in *Near Dark*, Star in *The Lost Boys*) whose beauty is used as a means to attract the new recruit, seduce the teenage sons in

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[25] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1985. p. 1

both films. In *Near Dark*, a film that is predominantly set in Texas and Arizona, the vampires embody the values and attributes that have been negatively associated with southern identity and inscribes the southern drifter as an outcast in 1980s society.

The plot unfolds as a teenage cowboy Caleb (Adrian Pasdar) is seduced by a young woman, Mae (Jenny Wright), who passionately bites him on the neck. Left wounded and sickened by the experience, he is kidnapped by her vampire clan in their blacked-out RV. Caleb's father and sister are witness to his kidnapping. The vampires - Jesse, Diamond Back, Severen and Homer - hold him prisoner until he wins their approval by helping them escape the police in a bloody shootout at noon. Blinded by his love for Mae, Caleb chooses to stay with the vampires. Caleb clings on to his humanity and conscience, unable to take human life and choosing to feed from Mae to survive. When his father tracks him and the vampire gang, Caleb realises that he has been living a fantasy and escapes with his father and sister. Sickened and near death, Caleb asks his father, a veterinarian, to give him a blood transfusion which restores him to his former self. At the film's climax, the vampire pack returns to Caleb's home to kidnap his younger sister in revenge for his abandonment. He rescues his sister and Mae, leading the others out into the daylight to be burned. Mae, who has survived the battle, is given a blood transfusion at the film's end that also reverses her vampirism.

The film has many elements which separate it from any other vampire film in the genre. It is the first vampire road movie of its kind in which vampires are not portrayed as supernatural beings but as a forgotten people. According to the film's director, Kathryn Bigelow, the vampires (though this word is never used in the film) are gypsy-like and were inspired by people suffering from the disease porphyria rather than embodying the supernatural qualities of the vampire.[26] Bigelow's cast, comprising of Lance Henriksen (Jesse), Bill Paxton (Severen) and Jenette Goldstein (Diamond Back), links her work very strongly

[26] Porphyria has many symptoms depending on the severity of the disease, which can vary. Milder symptoms include photosensitivity, excessive hair, an excess iron count in the blood, tachycardia (rapid heartbeat), and constant vomiting. Extreme symptoms include blistering of the skin when exposed to sunlight, sharpening of the teeth with reddening stains, hallucinations, mutilation affecting the nose and fingers, often with a loss of the fingertips. Another name given to extreme symptoms of porphyria in childhood is Gunther's Disease.

with director James Cameron, who directed the three actors in his film *Aliens* (1986) the previous year. Cameron's high octane sequel to Ridley Scott's 1979 sci-fi classic draws a similar thread to the 1980s vampire film: *Alien* is a film about the anxieties of male rape according to film historian Mark Kermode.[27] In Ridley Scott's *Alien* (1979), the horrific impregnation of males by the alien is a narrative of anxiety over the impenetrable male body. The male body is made unstable by the unnatural act of alien gestation, making the chest cavity into a womb. Kane (John Hurt) is impregnated orally by the face-hugger's 'tail' being forced down his throat, which can be interpreted as oral rape. [28] When Kane 'births' the alien in the infamous 'chest burst' sequence, the physical and mental anguish of the rape is fully realised and Kane perishes. The baby alien born through Kane's chest cavity looks like a penis, again enforcing the horror of male rape from the penis being inserted into the body (oral rape) to its removal (the birth). This also provokes a feeling of 'unnatural' orifices being made in gay encounters – "reinforce[ing] the heterosexual association of anal sex with self-annihilation".[29] While vampires have long been associated with male rape anxieties in the conquest of one male over another as seen in Sedgwick's "Erotic Triangle", the physical consequences of such actions are more subliminal and less fatal in vampire narratives than in *Alien*. Bigelow's vampires and Scott's aliens are ensuring their survival by killing and feeding indiscriminately.

In her interviews about *Near Dark*, Bigelow is clear that she wanted her vampires to embody a new breed of vampirism, which would need little or no explanation. Vampirism would be clearly seen as a physical and social disease in this narrative. In 1985, two years before the film's release, a chemistry professor, Dr. David Dolphin, presented a paper arguing that blood-sucking vampires in the Middle Ages were sufferers of the disease porphyria, a disease

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[27] Mark Kermode made this comment about Ridley Scott's *Alien* (1979) in a Film Four interview in 2005.

[28] There are three types of aliens seen in the *Alien* quadrilogy. The face-huggers' emerge from eggs and can impregnate humans and animals. The 'baby Alien', which bursts from the host's chest cavity and looks like a penis, sheds its skin like a serpent and becomes an adult alien. The third type is the Queen who is the largest of the three types and lays innumerable quantities of eggs, thus completing the Alien lifecycle.

[29] Leo Bersani. "Is the Rectum a Grave?" *October*. MIT Press, Vol. 43, Winter, 1987. p. 222

which affects fifty thousand Americans.[30] "Symptoms of the disease include skin lesions, respiratory difficulties, sudden severe pains...patients with porphyria cutania tarda (PCT), the most common form, have skin problems, typically fragility and blistering in areas exposed to sunlight."[31] Dr. Dolphin contends that these symptoms are due to the sufferer lacking a particular enzyme in the gut, involving the synthesis of heme. By injecting a "component of hemoglobin [sic] and related substances, found in largest amounts in the bone marrow, red blood cells, and the liver",[32] the symptoms would be alleviated. As injections were not possible in the Middle Ages, Dolphin argues that this was the reasoning for the oral ingestion of blood, which would be absorbed into the bloodstream via the intestinal walls. Garlic also has a negative effect on porphyria patients. Chemical reactions to garlic could heighten a porphyria attack – occurring because "its principal constituent is dialkyl disulfide, which destroys heme."[33] Considering all of the symptoms and aggressive substances that affect patients with porphyria, it was unfortunate that vulnerable people were branded as 'vampires' in the public domain and victimized.

National papers reported Dolphin's claims which terrified sufferers, often leading them to hide away in their communities. Certainly, when Bigelow was writing her screenplay for *Near Dark*, the stories about the debilitating disease must have had their influence. However, anthropologist Paul Barber contends that the links made between porphyria and vampirism are contentious. He states that it is difficult to form a conclusive relationship between this condition and the medieval evidence used to identify vampires, either 'living' or buried.

> Recent scholars have attempted to account for vampires by reference to the disease of porphyria, a rare blood disease that disfigures its victims. As a universal theory (previously used to

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[30] Dr. David Dolphin distributed a three-page abstract, "Werewolves and Vampires", to the American Association to the Advancement of Science on May 31, 1985. According to Norine Dresser, a longer version of the paper is unavailable as the paper has not been published and chemists usually do not present their papers in narrative form. See Norine Dresser. *American Vampires*. New York: Vintage, 1990. pp. 217-218. See also, *BioScience*, Vol. 35, No. 8, Sep., 1985, p. 527 for Dolphin's three page abstract.
[31] Norine Dresser. *American Vampires*. p. 171, 176.
[32] Ibid. pp. 171 - 173
[33] Ibid. p. 172

> explain the werewolves) this explanation presents the same difficulties as the live burial theory: it sounds plausible as long as you do not look at it too closely.[34]

Bigelow's film is directly influenced by the attention garnered by Dr. Dolphin's academic paper, as Caleb's reversed vampirism is the first of its kind in vampire film history to be achieved by a successful blood transfusion. Unlike Van Helsing's botched blood transfusion, which failed to heal Lucy Westenra in *Dracula*, Caleb's father represents the good patriarch and lone parent who can rein in his wayward son and heal him. Mirroring the scene in *Dracula*, Arthur Holmwood gives his own blood to transfuse into Lucy as they are to be wed. The bond between them grows stronger because of the blood exchange: "Arthur was saying he felt since then as if they two had really been married, and that she was his wife in the sight of God."[35] This blood transfusion links Caleb and his father in a fervent bond of family with a sinister tone of incest. The exchange between the two men is one with homosexual overtones, kept within the boundaries of the blood family and therefore restorative. The restorative blood of the patriarch is enough to sway the wayward home, much like religious symbolism. Stronger than the lone mothers in *Fright Night* and *The Lost Boys*, Caleb's father does not seek companionship to complete his family unit thus making him *less* vulnerable to their invasion. When Caleb feeds from Mae, he draws blood from her wrist, which is to be symbolically taken as suckling. He is replacing his dead mother by feeding from Mae – her feeding him keeps the vampire family from killing him and nurtures his emotional bond to her. However, this is an unsustainable bond. It is the purgatory of half-vampirism from which only the "father can turn Caleb back again, away from the vampiric bonding, just by pumping his own blood through him. Caleb is reborn again, as father's son. The antibody transfusions have aborted the funereal maternal relation."[36]

The sickness of the vampire body is laid bare in both *Near Dark* and *The Lost Boys*, as vampirism is portrayed as a drug-induced high or as a contagion

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[34] Paul Barber. *Vampires, Burial and Death*. p. 99
[35] Bram Stoker. *Dracula*. (1897) Nina Auerbach and David J Skal (Eds). *The Norton Critical Edition of Dracula*. p. 157
[36] Lawrence Rickels. *The Vampire Lectures*. p. 219

spreading amongst the young and the foolish. What can be interpreted as an acknowledgement of HIV/AIDS at a time in which it was politically incorrect to do so, sickness is depicted in the form of half-vampirism; a condition that emerges exclusively in the 1980s. Symptoms of half-vampirism are found in the infected character's inability to swallow normal food and/or a complete loss of appetite. The character is usually in a feverish state and has hallucinations, and almost always vomits when attempting to eat or drink after their vampire initiation.

Like others under Reagan's rule, those who were not contributing to the economic superiority of the United States were cast off, as were the liberals, the gay community and the sick. If Reaganite politics are represented by the daylight in all three of these vampire films, it must be noted that all vampires, representing all subgroups unaffiliated with Republican ideals, perish equally and harshly. Auerbach argues that the scorching of the vampire body becomes commonplace in the 1980s, unlike the mere inconvenience it was to the vampires in the 1970s such as Langella's Dracula and Lestat.[37] She argues "the sun is less selective in the Reaganesque years: now associated with fire and explosives rather than glory, it becomes an effective agent of mass destruction".[38] However, in the case of the vampires in *Near Dark*, no other means of destruction is explored other than exposure to the sun. All of Bigelow's vampires are dispatched in horrific scenes with close-up shots of burning and charring vampire flesh. These vampires spend most of the film blocking out the harmful rays by means of tin-foiling and spray-painting windows, and wearing cloaks until they are forced into the morning sun in a battle in which they ultimately perish. As a drifting family unit, the vampires in *Near Dark* are lost to modern American ideals; they are firmly situated in a

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[37] Langella's Dracula is thought to perish by many academics at the film's climactic end when he flies home, in bat form, to Transylvania in the sunlight. I would argue against this theory as the editing suggests he survives with the aid of Lucy, who gives him the strength to go home. David J. Skal also agrees with this interpretation in his book on Dracula: *Hollywood Gothic: The Tangled Web of Dracula from Novel to Stage to Screen*. London: Andre Deutsch, 1992. Lestat does not perish in the sun either due to his immortality being strengthened by drinking the blood of Akasha, the vampire Queen in Anne Rice's *The Tale of The Body Thief*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc, 1992. Lestat endures pain in the sunlight but does not burn and returns with bronzed skin to prove to his brethren that he has become all-powerful and equal to his vampire elders. As the book was published in 1992, it can be interpreted that Lestat survives because it is an end to a Republican era and the beginning of President Clinton's first term. Vampires tend to be revitalised under Democrats rather than Republicans.

[38] Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. p. 177

mentality which lends itself to America's gunslinger past rather than to its then Cold War suburban present. Aptly, as the third act of *Near Dark* opens, the good family encounter the transient vampires at the motel 'Godspeed', where 'America the Beautiful' blares on the television. This foretells the imminent destruction of the vampire clan by the 'good' southern family, no doubt a God-fearing family, to which Caleb quickly returns. Reagan's 'Morning in America'[39]- his campaign mantra during the 1984 election, which promotes growth, hegemony and prosperity - is mass destruction to all of the vampire bodies in these films. As vampires narrate the underlying cultural narrative of our times and the subcultures that are ignored by society as a whole, Reagan's rhetoric of American ideals and hegemony are destructive to society's undercurrents by encouraging mass identity rather than individuality. This destructive sunlight destroys all other subcultural leaderships, vagrants, homosexuals and disobedient youths: it destroys Jesse the vampire gang leader, and wounds David, the leader of the Lost Boys. It explodes the body of Jerry Dandridge in *Fright Night*, which underpins the feeling in Reagan's America: vampires must hide away if they hope to survive, but all are ultimately doomed to die.

The Lost Boys (1987), directed by Joel Schumacher, is the most popular 1980s vampire film. The film has achieved cult status since its release and has been cited as an inspiration to many filmmakers and musicians who partake in the gothic and vampire movements.[40] Schumacher's film, which again groups a set of teenage vampires as a dysfunctional family unit, centres on uniting families together. Lucy (Dianne Wiest), the mother of teenagers Michael (Jason Patric) and Sam (Corey Haim), uproots the family to Santa Carla (a fictional take on

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[39] "It's Morning in America" is a phrase that has been historically associated with Reagan's second term as President (1985-1989). The phrase was used repeatedly in an advertising campaign to re-elect the president. The video imagery consists of workers going to work, industry booming, homes being built and families being cared for. For the video link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EU-IBF8nwSY (23/12/06)

[40] The Finnish band, The 69 Eyes, released a song entitled "Lost Boys" (*Devils*, EMI Records, 2004.) which pays homage to the movie. The music video for the track has the band mimic the actions of the vampire pack (in particular, the motorcycle chase sequence in the film and hanging from the railroad tracks) and their stage is decorated as the Lost Boys cave. The video was directed by Bam Margera of MTV's *Jackass* crew and *Viva La Bam*, which links back to *The Lost Boys* (1987) in that consumer goods and MTV are missing in Grandpa's home where Michael and Sam live. Sam, in particular, craves for MTV. MTV is seen as a consumerist entity which vampirises youth by fetishising goods, setting false ideals and promoting mindless consumption. For more on this, see Rob Latham. *Consuming Youth: Vampires, Cyborgs, and the Culture of Consumption*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

California's Santa Cruz) to unite them with their grandfather after her divorce from their father in Phoenix, Arizona. The eldest, Michael, becomes involved with a pack of vampires when he pursues the hippie girl Star (Jami Gertz). David (Kiefer Sutherland) the vampire leader, initiates Michael into the gang by offering him immortal life through drinking a bottle of his decanted blood (rather than the vampire's open vein, usually fed to the initiate from the wrist) but the reasoning for the blood being kept in a bottle is ambiguous in the film. It can be read in three ways: the first is that the bottle of blood is a direct symbol for blood testing for HIV/AIDS in 1987, when everyone's blood is subject to scrutiny, similar to a vial of blood to be tested. Secondly, it can be equated with safe sex, a promotion that no liquids (blood or semen) can be taken directly from the source, as this would be in violation of responsibility in the days of rotten blood. A final interpretation is that it could be seen as symbolic fellatio in order to gain entry to the gang.

At first, vampirism in this film represents an avoidance of responsibility as we only see the vampires getting high or committing petty crimes. The tag-line for the film represents vampirism as the ultimate getaway from the dominating cultural narrative dictating the social place for teenagers: "Sleep all day. Party all night. Never get old. Never die. It's fun to be a vampire".[41] Also, the initial introduction to the culture of the gang is reminiscent of a college fraternity, consisting of a hierarchy or a sole leader, a series of rituals to gain membership and finally, ownership. When Michael feels the onset of his half-vampirism, the desire for blood is physically manifested as sickness, similar to Caleb's reaction to it in *Near Dark*. When Michael looks in the mirror, his reflection is translucent and green in colour, indicating that the vampire group has contaminated him. The Lost Boys, like the nomadic vampires in *Near Dark*, feed off lost people; people who have lost their social footing by being homeless, missing or forgotten, or people who are struggling with their own sexuality. As Michael and his brother Sam investigate the vampires and their powers, their mother Lucy begins to date her video store boss Max (Edward Herrmann). Max is initially positioned as the would-be suitor for Lucy, advising her "boys need discipline" and that she is in need of some family

[41] This wording is used on the 1987 packaging of the film and its original cinematic poster as well as all subsequent repackaging.

structure. His video business is also rooted in consumption of youth culture, which Rob Latham decodes as social, familial and literal vampirism.

> What Max represents, beyond the obvious threat of a usurper trying to supplant the boys' absent father, is the incarnate power of consumer culture itself...his glitzy video parlor [sic] vends mass fantasy to all... Significantly, Lucy's father, who thwarts Max's plot in the end does not – and indeed refuses to – own a TV set, a refusal that is part of a hippie-style rejection of modern consumer society.[42]

Max's invasion of the domestic space is achieved through the consumption of technology, be it a VCR or TV. His character is styled as the new yuppie of the 1980s whose lifestyle is measured by ownership, consumption and image. His trendy suit (in homage to the famous suits seen on the television show *Miami Vice*) and his introductory scene in which he framed by rows of television monitors in his video store reinforces his consumerist agenda. His final unveiling as the head vampire who acts as the patriarch to the Lost Boys gang is hardly surprising, as we have known throughout the film that assimilation into the family is what he desperately seeks. Before Grandpa dispatches Max, David and Michael do battle in sibling rivalry. Like Caleb and 'bad brother' Severen in *Near Dark*, they must destroy each other to protect the honour of their 'families' and values. No one leaves these initiated clans alive. Caleb destroys Severen with an articulated truck, which is a direct homage to James Cameron's *The Terminator* (1984),[43] whereas Michael impales David on a set of stag antlers.[44] This symbolic sodomy on the antlers is to reinforce the rejection of such a lifestyle, which kills not only David but also all those who practise such sexual 'deviancy'. As the two vampires fight, a reading of the body language in the film, and the language used by Craig Shaw Gardner to

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[42] Rob Latham. *Consuming Youth*. p. 62

[43] Bigelow's direct homage to Cameron is seen throughout the film; by using three high profile actors from his then recently released *Aliens* (1986) and by displaying the film's poster in the background, and in this shot of the semi articulated truck destroying Severen. Bigelow was briefly married to Cameron from 1989 – 1991.

[44] In the film, Grandpa (Barnard Hughes) is an accomplished taxidermist. Throughout the film, he gives Sam gifts of stuffed rodents and owls, which is used for comic relief. When Michael impales David on a stag's antlers in Grandpa's work den, it brings to mind the act of taxidermy as a form of vampirism by giving the illusion of preserving life in the animal long after death.

describe it, suggests a meaning that closely resembles attempted rape. "David was on top of him again, and the two of them wrestled midair. David's claws ripped open his shirtfront and gouged the skin on his chest. Michael knew he couldn't weaken. Not again. If he did, he was dead."[45] As the two fight, David snarls, "it's too late, my blood is in your veins"[46], denoting that Michael is beyond redemption and infected by his blood. When David dies,[47] Michael does not immediately revert back to his human form, which informs us that the bad patriarch Max must be the head vampire. Just as Caleb's father was able to reverse his son's vampirism and reclaim him, Grandpa reclaims his family and undoes Michael's vampirism by destroying Max. The good patriarch can reverse half-vampirism merely by his presence in the narrative. Caleb's father, by being a settled honest character in *Near Dark,* acts as the moral patriarch whose restorative blood undoes the infection of lawless vampirism. In Grandpa's case, by rejecting the trappings of 1980s consumption, he can reject the false promises and illusions, which ensnare the Emerson family. The film ends with Grandpa commenting "One thing I could never stomach about Santa Carla – all the damn vampires!"[48] indicating that he not only anticipated their invasion but also knew it was inevitable. Grandpa's closing line indicates that the vampiric invasion of the family sphere is, in fact, a recurring story.

The fascination with 1980s teenage vampires had some impact on real life crimes. Reports of a suicide and a murder, which were supposedly influenced by the film, caused a moral panic amongst parents who viewed these vampires as reckless misfits promoting lawlessness. "Blended from hippie, punk, biker and heavy metal influences",[49] the vampire's look immediately associated them with both a disenfranchised part of American subculture and a collective of

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[45] Craig Shaw Gardner. *The Lost Boys*. Toronto: Bantam Books, 1987 p. 208. This book is a novelisation of the film's screenplay. Only one print run was published.
[46] *The Lost Boys*. Dir. Joel Schumacher, Warner Bros., 1987.
[47] David (Kiefer Sutherland) was not supposed to die in the original ending of the film. This explains the abandonment of 'the rules' in killing him on the antlers, which would presumably not have the same effect as wooden stakes etc. There was supposed to be a sequel for the film with Sutherland reprising his role as the sole survivor, but the script was never finished. It has been rumoured that Joss Whedon authored this unofficial script as two 'coincidental' characterisations proposed in the film eventually ended up in the *Buffy* series. Originally, Whedon styled the character of Angel as a biker, and used Mayor of Santa Carla as the villain for the sequel to *The Lost Boys*. This is an interesting coincidence as season three of *Buffy* also uses this plot arc.
[48] *The Lost Boys*. Dir. Joel Schumacher, Warner Bros., 1987.
[49] Tony Thorne. *Children of the Night: Of Vampires and Vampirism*. London: Indigo, 1999. p. 249

political groups outcast in the Reagan years. This comparison with the teenage vampire parallels the Droogs gang in Anthony Burgess's 1962 novel *A Clockwork Orange*, where they are perceived as a stalking menace in small towns and eroding American values. In one case mimicking the Droogs, a "murder [took place] in Sauk Rapids-St Cloud, Minnesota of a thirty-year-old homeless man by three youths who beat and stabbed their victim before licking his blood from their fingers."[50] Although *The Lost Boys* was identified as one of the influences that inspired the murder, citing films such as *A Clockwork Orange* and *Near Dark* would have been more convincing. In the opening scenes of the 1971 Stanley Kubrick film of Burgess' novel, Alex (Malcolm McDowell) and his gang of Droogs beat a homeless Irish man to death. *Near Dark* would be a much closer comparison to the vampire murderers' method of tasting blood, in that, Severen beats a man to death in a bar and tastes his blood from his fingers, informing the others "It's finger-lickin' good."[51] The suicide case involved a fourteen-year-old girl "living in the southern bible-belt who hoped to be quickly resurrected as a Vampire and lead her schoolfriends to a better life".[52] Tony Thorne concludes, "*The Lost Boys* was a major step in equating the Vampire clan with the adolescent gang and associating both with the haunted nights of provincial small towns."[53]

All three films act as cautionary tales to those who wish to dabble with the forces of darkness. These forces are seen as abandoning the family ideals and the reckless pursuit of pleasure, through experimental sex and drug use. In all three films, half-vampirism is seen as a fragile entity, which can be reversed through destroying the bad patriarch and reinstating the good patriarch in the eyes of the deviant adolescent. Vampires begin to look and act as though they are perpetually sick, unable to gain nourishment from the land they once ruled. Their hierarchies begin to crumble with the arrival of the new adolescent who cannot take to their way of life, be it homosexuality, transient lifestyles or

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[50] ibid. p. 249
[51] *Near Dark*. Dir. Katherine Bigelow, Anchor Bay Entertainment, 1987. This sickening comment on the taste of the blood was a parody of a Kentucky Fried Chicken commercial in the US.
[52] Tony Thorne. *Children of the Night.* p. 249
[53] ibid. p.249

redefining and reconstituting 'the family'. In Reagan's America, survival is not assured for anyone and "vampirism itself is mortal."[54]

Apocalyptic Plagues and Perishable Immortals: AIDS in the 1980s

> The human immunodeficiency virus is not, in the strictest sense, a form of life. Until it is inside a host body, it is no more alive than a rock or a stone. It is a protein-coated mass of genetic instructions a hundred and fifty times smaller than the white blood cell it attacks. After penetrating, it multiplies until the cell bursts and dies. This continues for years; cell-by-cell it destroys its carrier's immune system. Untreated, the person becomes ill from a series of infections that are progressively serious and rare, and finally, fatal. This is AIDS.[55]

HIV/AIDS can be described as the most devastating disease of the past fifty years, affecting the bodies and minds of people in every geopolitical sphere. Its very nature as a disease is vampiric; it feeds on and drains away the body's natural defences until it becomes perilously weakened against common bacteria and viruses, eventually killing the host. HIV/AIDS was first discovered in Los Angeles in January 1981, when Dr. Michael Gottlieb noticed that young gay men were visiting his clinic with severe lesions and respiratory infections with little or no natural immune system responses to such an aggressive infection. The media initially coined the acronym GRID (gay related immune deficiency) to describe this new disease as most of the initial sufferers were practising gay men.[56] The Centres for Disease Control (CDC) officially recorded the disease in June 1981.

The links between HIV/AIDS and vampirism are inseparable particularly due to the virus being blood-borne and the violence that the AIDS body suffers. Similar to the body in the mainstream horror cinema of the early 1980s, the body of the victim is severely mutilated and scarred, often presenting with torn

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[54] Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. p. 168
[55] *The Age of AIDS* (part 1) *Frontline*. PBS, United States. aired on More4, UK. 02/06/2006. Also available online at: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/aids/view/
[56] ibid.

skin, swollen lymph glands and lesions, which are highly physically and emotionally distressing. These symptoms were found to be historically similar to the bubonic plague. Kaposi's sarcoma (KS) is the most common tumour in HIV-infected patients - it often appears as purplish nodules on the skin, but can affect other organs, especially the mouth, gastrointestinal tract, and lungs. The body becomes a site of extreme horror for the victim and the physicians who attempt to treat the patient. The body begins to open up, flesh comes away and the blood of the patient, the life force of the human body, becomes the infector. "Life – blood, sexual fluids – is itself the bearer of contamination."[57] AIDS represents the fate of the 1980s vampire: vampires perish and lose control of their immortal bodies. Their bodies become subject to extreme tortures, microscopic examinations and symptoms of illness. "Sometimes sufferers become social outcasts, like the leper of Leviticus, forced to wear torn clothes and, to warn off others with the cry 'unclean, unclean', and dwell alone."[58] This representation translates into the conservative politics of the West, the lack of recognition of homosexuality as a valid sexuality and the fear of 'others'. Often, sufferers of the disease were considered sexual perverts or depraved people, whose actions or sexual preferences were a natural progression to assume infection. "The vampire infects the victim through his tainted blood. A blood-borne infection, the vampire's bite bears an obvious similarity to AIDS transmission... an exchange of blood and a symbolic sex act."[59] One member of the gay community recalls that a Republican state convention held in the early years of the epidemic had bumper stickers printed up declaring "AIDS: It's killing all the right people".[60] Religious and political rhetoric was used about sufferers betraying Mother Nature and going against God through sexual perversion, which would unsurprisingly lead to such 'undesirable' people contracting AIDS. Risk groups were formed through examination of the known infected in western countries, further marginalizing those who were already suffering. AIDS is "unique in that those who were

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[57] Susan Sontag. *Illness as Metaphor / AIDS and its Metaphors*. London: Penguin, 1991 p.159
[58] Virginia van der Vliet. *The Politics of AIDS*. London: Bowerdean Publishing, 1996, p. 52. The use of the phrase 'Unclean, Unclean' is also used in *Dracula* when Mina Harker tastes Dracula's blood. Nina Auerbach and David J Skal (eds) *The Norton Critical Edition of Dracula*. pp. 247-48
[59] Jeane Rose "'A Girl Like That Will Give You AIDS' Vampirism as AIDS Metaphor in *Killing Zoë*" in James Craig Holte (ed) *The Fantastic Vampire: Studies in the Children of the Night*. Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002. p. 145
[60] *The Age of AIDS* (Part 1) *Frontline*. PBS.

actually afflicted were already victims of prejudice and discrimination. No social manipulation of facts was necessary; the disease struck directly at groups who were already marginal."[61]

In the many years to follow the discovery of the disease and its forms of transmission, the rhetoric of hatred towards sufferers and homosexuals was both widespread and condoned. Many newspaper reports used despicable language that encouraged the marginalisation and suffering of those who were struck by the disease, describing them as 'those who deserved to die'. Denial of the risk of infection inevitably followed, as those who were deemed likely to be infected were in sub-groups, which did not reflect the general practises or beliefs of society. "China denied it was at risk because AIDS was a disease of the decadent west. Romania's Ceaucescu dismissed it as a 'capitalist' disease [and] some even believed that Asians were biologically immune to AIDS."[62] Just as our 1980s vampires reflected those who did not follow social trends and familial expectations, AIDS was a disease that doomed the vampire from its discovery. Methods of ingesting blood varied in 1980s vampire films and novels as did the increased coding of relationships shown onscreen. This section focuses on the depictions of AIDS in the 1980s vampire film from 1981 to 1992 specifically, where the body rebels against itself and becomes a site of horror. The scrutiny and poisoning of the vampire body renders it mortal and transforms the vampire from a romantic antihero into an infecting, decaying corpse.

Whitley Strieber's 1981 novel and Tony Scott's 1983 film adaptation of *The Hunger* graphically illustrate the fragility of the vampire body amidst the fear of blood contagions. Strieber's novel focuses on the medical aspects of blood, nourishment and vitality and how vampirism is interconnected with primal instincts. Blood and destruction are the common threads that bind the chic vampires and sexually promiscuous victims together through a medical approach. Blood co-exists in this narrative as both the life force (nourishment) and contaminant (infecting cells), bringing destruction to both vampires and victims. As in the 1979 Australian film *Thirst*, medical interventions can create

[61] Virginia Van der Vliet. *The Politics of AIDS*. p. 53
[62] ibid. p.53

or replicate vampirism in laboratories before human testing begins. In *Thirst*, vampirism is simulated in a laboratory where humans are screened for infections, exsanguinated at regular intervals and farmed in a 'free range' environment. A medical experiment is underway to 'induce' vampirism in Kate Davis (Chantal Contouri), a descendant of Countess Elisabeth Bathory. Dr. Fraser (David Hemmings), the director of the 'dairy farm',[63] believes that by re-awakening Kate's powerful vampire lineage through medical practices, he will liege the cult as a superior race. The industrious nature of Dr. Fraser is revealed when he wishes to head the cult himself, by consuming the all-powerful blood of Bathory's descendant to become the head vampire. Blood, in this pre-AIDS film, is ranked according to cleanliness, lineage and production, with Marxist overtones on leeching the helpless in society.

The quest for immortality is interlinked in both *Thirst* and *The Hunger* through medical inquiry – an arrogance that leads to devastating results. In *The Hunger*, Dr. Sarah Roberts (Susan Sarandon) studies the medical implications of sleep deprivation in chimpanzees to prove conclusively that the aging process is linked to sleep therapy. She wishes to prove that immortality of sorts can be achieved – to beat the 'internal body clock'. When the ape is sleep-deprived and spirals into a rage in an act of barbaric cannibalism - which is intercut with the vampire couple, the Blaylocks, murdering their victims - the accelerated aging process for both the ape and John Blaylock (David Bowie) begins. Striking similarities can be found in Strieber's description of the ape's death and a vampire's body post-staking:

> The now-dead ape's skin cracked along the bones and began to fall like tissue to the floor of the cage. Soon the skeleton, still held together by tendons, lay amid a pile of rubble. Then it collapsed, and what had been just alive just minutes before was reduced to dust ... The dust in the bottom of the cage became finer and finer and at last was whisked away by an errant breeze.[64]

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[63] The cult's headquarters poses as a dairy farm to conduct their experiments and exsanguinations of patients. They refer to the patients as 'blood cows', who are milked for the elders benefit. *Thirst* Dir. Rod Hardy, New Line Cinema, 1979.

[64] Whitley Strieber. *The Hunger*. New York: Pocket Books, 1981. pp. 75-76

AIDS was discovered to have been transmitted to humans through contact with chimpanzees in the Congo – by way of eating chimpanzee flesh in some tribal communities – and passed on by sexual contact. The movement of people to foreign countries, most notably the US, the UK and the island of Haiti, brought the disease into the gay communities where it spread quickly and quietly. Being a dormant disease where the body is symptom-free for many years, AIDS spread through promiscuous activity in both gay and straight communities. While initially thought to be a gay disease, AIDS is indiscriminate in its survival technique – it will reside in any type of body regardless of gender, genetics, sexuality or race. Coincidentally, Strieber's novel was published at the time of the first diagnosed cases of AIDS. While striking references to AIDS are drawn from animal testing, disease, homosexuality and vampirism, it is in Tony Scott's 1983 film adaptation that these images and topics are fused to give a conclusive narrative on the disease. However, the narrative gives a political edge to the 'sexual deviance' of these vampires, and indicates that such transgressions will not go unpunished. As Benshoff writes, the lesbian sex between Susan Sarandon and Catherine Deneuve is shown at first to be erotic, then horrific and contaminating: "The scene slowly turns from tender and erotic to menacing and evil, as ominous bass tones sound discordantly under soothing classical music, and a flash cuts of red corpuscles punctuate the lovemaking."[65] What begins as a scene of desire and female bonding ends in violence and contamination; "the blood flows, and what had begun as a beautiful scene of making love ends as yet another monstrous horror: the 'foul disease of the vampire' has been passed on once again."[66] The taboos of lesbian sex and bloodletting are furthered in the film as a reading of incest. Barbara Creed reads Miriam's character as the blood mother to her lover, who is also weaned onto blood as a child is to milk. Then, as the vampire mother, Miriam teaches Sarah the ways of vampirism and bloodletting. Blood is mother's milk and, in this reading, "we are made more aware of the vampire's blood as woman's blood, a special blood which gives life/birth to the lover/child."[67] Homosexuality is presented as a monstrous act

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[65] Harry M. Benshoff. *Monsters in The Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Movie*. p. 244
[66] ibid. p. 244
[67] Barbara Creed. *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*. London: Routledge, 1993. p. 70

of sadism, satanic in nature and incestuous– an act that defies God by its unnatural state. And it is an act that transgresses all boundaries – from homosexual to heterosexual: "the abject nature of this relationship is even more pronounced because the boundary between heterosexual and homosexual love is also transgressed."[68] The horror of AIDS for the religious right was not that it killed the gay community, the sexually adventurous or drug addicts, but rather that it was passed on to the straight community, the middle class and society at large.

John Blaylock is Miriam's current heterosexual vampire companion who discovers that his immortal body is crumbling. The scene in the waiting room where he waits for a medical examination best illustrates the rapid onset of disease symptoms such as HIV where the body was previously healthy and smooth. He notes liver spots on his hands (which could be doubled as lesions) and rapid degeneration of his skin cells. His hair begins to fall out and his once lithe body is now feeble and weak. The symptoms John suffers from do mimic the onset of the aging process but, as we see these symptoms occur rapidly, they are more redolent of AIDS pathology. Unlike other vampire mythologies (most notably Rice's chronicles) where the vampire body heals after exsanguinating a victim, the blood of 1980s victims brings no such salvation in *The Hunger*. John seeks out two youthful victims to feed from – a roller-skater and his prepubescent neighbour Alice – and "clearly assumes that only by imbibing the literal substance of youth can his waning potency be restored."[69] After realising that his 'curing' has failed, he is entombed by his immune lover Miriam in the attic of their lavish Manhattan residence. He is shut away to rot with her previous lovers who have spanned centuries, not quite dead but certainly not in the realm of the living. John has become the 'walking dead' – the AIDS victim shut away from society's gaze.

This was virtually no different in the UK in the 1980s where many stories surfaced of people who suffered from the disease and who were publicly harassed, bullied and rejected by society. Mike Gill, a resident of Penryn, Cornwall, and a victim of AIDS, "was banned from his local pub, received hate

[68] ibid. p. 71
[69] Rob Latham. *Consuming Youth*. p. 113

mail, had dog shit shoved through his letter box and was shunned by his friends."[70] This was a mild treatment of a sufferer in comparison to some of the accounts Davenport-Hines includes – one haemophiliac man discovered "BEWARE AIDS IN HERE...daubed in two-foot high letters on the wall outside his Hartlepool home."[71] This menacing act of vandalism and social stigmatism was a 'warning' to others in the community – a "blurring of the image of the homosexual with that of a vampire. Homophobes had long held that gay people were evil predators with Draculean powers to corrupt and transform the sexually straight and virtuous".[72] As homosexuals were *the* significant risk group, closely followed by the impoverished drug addicts who rented needles for a fix,[73] vampirism, AIDS and spreading contagion were collapsed together by the right wing and the media. *The Sun* newspaper carried a story by Fred Sleeves with the headline "Gay Vampire Catches AIDS" that alleged "the merry neck-biter who swished his way from town to town luring gay lovers into this world of vampirism, apparently consumed disease infected blood along the way."[74] It has not been conclusively proved that the ingestion of infected blood has ever led to infection, according to Norine Dresser, but nevertheless, vampire practitioners, and by extension vampire fans, have been linked to AIDS and homosexuality through a range of tabloid press articles carrying sensationalist headlines. "Verifiable stories or not, the combination of elements – vampires, AIDS, homosexuality – is guaranteed to seize... attention."[75]

Anne Rice distilled this reactionary attitude to AIDS and its victims in the third novel of her Vampire Chronicles series. *Queen of The Damned* (1988), which is interlinked as a two-part saga that begins with *The Vampire Lestat* (1985), and seeks to update the vampire series by its awareness of contemporaneous issues in modern America and the destructive political rhetoric that dominated

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[70] Richard Davenport - Hines. *Sex, Death and Punishment*. London: Collins, 1990. p. 348
[71] ibid. p. 349
[72] David J. Skal. *The Monster Show*. p. 346
[73] This phenomenon of renting needles to shoot up heroin was noted as a major cause for the spread of HIV in Harlem, New York, in the early 1980s. Sometimes needles were soaked in bleach to 'sterilise' them before use but this did not impede the rate of infection. As many of the users were also working as prostitutes to feed their habit, infection spread into the wider community through both sex work and continued needle sharing. *The Age of AIDS*. (Part 1). *Frontline*. PBS. 2006.
[74] Norine Dresser. *American Vampires*. p. 104
[75] ibid. p. 105

the period. Akasha, the Queen of the Damned, dominates the narrative in the novel by seeking out purity in the modern world and overthrowing political systems to reign as a new matriarch. Introduced in *The Vampire Lestat*, in which Lestat seeks out the mythical origins of the vampires, Akasha is the embodiment of evil as *the* vampire 'Mother'; she has fused with an immortal spirit Emel, which has resulted in her immortality and, with the passing of two thousand years, rendered her body immobile and statuesque. Her blood is the first in the vampire lineage and thus connects her to every vampire on Earth while ensuring her survival against separatists; she cannot be killed outright as she is too powerful and would destroy every vampire by severing her link with the entity Emel, wiping out the shared vampire bloodline. When Lestat awakens her with his rock music and confessional lyrics, she summons him telepathically. Realising she now has the power to overthrow her vampire King Enkil (who remained with her in a statuesque state of semi-consciousness), she tears out his throat and deems Lestat her new consort in her plan to form a new world order. This new world order is to wipe out men "save one in a hundred".[76] The parallels between this plot and AIDS is staggering, especially given the politically conservative links made between gay males spreading the disease among their communities and the impurity of disease itself. By destroying the men, Akasha believes that this is a divine crusade to bring humanity closer to Eden. This rhetoric of Armageddon and subsequent resurrection from its ashes surmises the political right's feeling on social issues like poverty and AIDS. Gore Vidal notes in his seminal essay on Armageddon that Reagan's secretary of the Interior, James Watt, openly acknowledged to Congress in 1981 the administration's belief in the Coming of Christ and the 'Rapture': "This world is simply a used up Kleenex, as …'I do not know how many future generations we can count on before the Lord returns.' So why conserve anything, if Judgement Day is at hand?"[77] Reagan's presidency was laced with messages of an 'End of Days' being nigh, within the social context of American plagues (AIDS), politics (Cold War) and media frenzy (notably on serial killing and mass murder), that promoted a vocalisation by the right to 'clean up the mess' left over from 1960s ideals. Vidal reads this in a more realist manner: "A joyous millennium of no abortion, no sodomy, no crack, no

[76] Anne Rice. *Queen Of The Damned*. New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 1988. p. 64
[77] Gore Vidal. "Armageddon?" in *Armageddon? Essays 1983-1987*. London: André Deutsch, 1987. p.102

Pure drug and Food Act, no civil rights, but of schools where only prayers are said, and earth proved daily flat."[78] According to Stephen Milligen, "While in office [Reagan] was reported to have remarked to his friend Jerry Falwell, 'I sometimes believe we are heading very fast for Armageddon right now'".[79] This religious rhetoric and panic seeped into the common consciousness in 1980s America, firmly placing the blame of crime and moral dissolution at the door of the counterculture generation.

> The symbolic crime panics in the 1980s were all clearly identifiable as being, according to the ideology of Reagan, The New Right, and the FBI, products of 1960s liberalism and its departure from 'traditional' Christian family values. Other panics focused disproportionate attention on child abductions by strangers, 'satanic' cult crimes, and the detrimental effect of rap and rock music on American Youth... Significantly Reagan's manner and political rhetoric was steeped in Old Testament zeal and imagery.[80]

It is then unsurprising that AIDS would be associated with the 'free love' generation whose values were heavily criticised by the New Right. The conservative reaction of the New Right in the wake of the AIDS crisis is strikingly similar to Rice's Akasha; the belief that 'Homosexuality is a cancer and AIDS is the cure'[81] or extermination by divine intervention become virtually one and the same. Chris Hedges's book *American Fascists* exposes the extent to which conversion, hyper-masculinity and eradication of non-believers (those not 'saved') has pervaded in America. In an interview in Hedges's book, Reverend Dr. Mel White, a conflicted closeted gay man and colleague of fundamentalists Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, recalls the shared rhetoric of 'cleansing the nation' of such groups, "of all persons who might disagree with their political, religious and social agenda for our

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[78] ibid. p. 106

[79] Stephen Milligen. *Better To Reign in Hell: Serial Killers, Media Panics and the FBI.* London: Headpress, 2006. p. 7

[80] ibid. p. 9

[81] This hateful mantra has been heard repeatedly from Religious activists against gay rights. The origin of the saying is unknown but mirrors the many hateful slogans chronicled in Richard Davenport- Hines's chapter "Hating Others: AIDS". Richard Davenport - Hines. *Sex, Death and Punishment.* pp. 330 – 383.

country."[82] White distanced himself from such hateful treatment of his brethren but foresees a time when the New Right (with enough political power) will lobby for gay registration, cessation of gay adoptions, a military ban, reinstating sodomy laws, removing children from their custody, special medical attention and treatment, quarantine, and dissolution of personal and property rights. For the New Right, "Gays and Lesbians, like other enemies of Christ, are not fully human; they are 'unnatural'."[83] If to be actively homosexual is to go against divine laws, then it is acceptable to the Religious Right to assume that extermination by disease (of which vampires have always been a potent metaphor) is inevitable and just. Akasha's rhetoric is as equally violent as any fundamentalist religious genocide:

> My love, this is divine war. Not the loathsome feeding upon human life which you have done night after night without scheme or reason save to survive. You kill now in my name and for my cause and I give you the greatest freedom ever given man: I tell you that to slay your mortal brother is right.[84]

Contrastingly, Akasha herself is host to a pathogenic virus, which by its very nature allows her to be the figurehead of the vampire community. By fusing with the spirit of Emel, which allows her to achieve her status of vampire and its associated corporeal immortality, she has begun a bloodline that is matrilineally transmitted. "In this story of origins, the viral is projected outwards onto gigantic invisible proportions and comes to life with the merging of itself with the host Akasha. The blood becomes the transmission site and the material source of energy for this spiritual web."[85] As Heidi L. Nordberg argues, the link, described by Marius (Lestat's scholarly tutor who acts as custodian of 'Those Who Must Be Kept': Akasha and Enkil) as vines to the Great Mother, mimics the same metaphor from John 15:5; "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth

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[82] Chris Hedges. *American Fascists: The Christian Right and The War on America*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2007. p. 110
[83] ibid. pp. 110-112
[84] Anne Rice. *Queen Of The Damned*. pp. 340-341
[85] Heidi L. Nordberg. "Blood Spirit / Blood Bodies: The Viral in The Vampire Chronicles of Anne Rice and Chelsea Quinn Yarbro" in James Craig Holte (ed). *The Fantastic Vampire: Studies in the Children of the Night*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002. p. 112.

forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing",[86] in which "Jesus uses it to describe the spiritual connection of believers to each other and to him, the source of their power. Rice's vampire network is a dark materialisation of the kingdom heaven."[87] Rice's overt Catholicism, which arches over her entire Vampire Chronicles and has subsequently resulted in her abandoning vampire mythology for a new series of novels on Christ, does complicate the readings of gay and straight sexuality, and subsequent interpretations of HIV/AIDS. For the New Right, the presence of AIDS and its infection of 'innocent victims' (infected heterosexuals and haemophiliacs) indicated "a judgement against a society far too permissive for allowing such sin."[88] Akasha, as a reactionary New Right-inspired character, mirrors the calls for the incarceration and shunning of the AIDS sufferer by mimicking the voices of Jerry Falwell and his ilk.

> The more fundamentalist Christian churches and strict orthodox Jewish sects have seen AIDS as a divine punishment, a chastisement from God for violating scriptural prohibitions against sexual promiscuity, drug abuse, and most particularly, homosexuality. Persons with the disease are seen as touched by divine judgement.[89]

This viral projection onto the other vampires in Rice's universe leads to a complex reading of AIDS – and can be read as representing the entire vampire community because they are sanguinarians (and mostly gay practitioners). However, Akasha's quest for purity within the community itself leads to a reading of the vampire clan being a microcosmic version of American society with a figurehead determined to cleanse disobedience. What is interesting about Akasha's extermination program is that it does not include vampires (whom are allegorically presuming to be 'saved' but not necessarily extremists) but mere men. This position is hardly surprising for the Radical Right as it is an exact reversal of gendered power used by Dominionists; a group of radical

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[86] *The Bible*. King James Edition Passage John 15:5.
[87] Heidi L. Nordberg. "Blood Spirit / Blood Bodies: The Viral in The Vampire Chronicles of Anne Rice and Chelsea Quinn Yarbro". p. 113.
[88] Kenneth J. Doka. *AIDS, Fear and Society*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 1997. p. 112
[89] ibid. p. 112

extremists within the New Right who believe women have no claim to equality and express extreme racist and violent ideas to restore America to God's glory.

The rhetoric is similar to a violent form of feminism, in which the subjugation of males is envisioned as a path to a better life. However, vampirism for Rice is a predominantly male, homoerotic experience rather than a moralist agenda. "The extreme radical wing of the feminist movement has long insisted that all men are rapists. One of its chief ideologues, Andrea Dworkin, argues in effect that all heterosexual intercourse is rape."[90] This is the violent idea on which Akasha bases her plan to exterminate men, which would include the males believed to be 'infecting' innocents with AIDS, making her a reactionary character. Linda Badley reads Rice's characterisations as highly political but does not expand on the final deductions Rice makes of such powerful figures.

> Rice meant to evoke an image of AIDS's devastation of the gay community and AIDS panic as well – referring to fundamentalist and neo-nazi gay-bashing. Akasha is the Third Reich, Jerry Falwell, *and* Andrea Dworkin and Catherine McKinnon rolled into one abstraction that even Lestat worships for a time.[91]

Rice's characterisation of Akasha acts as a fundamental warning against such political figures that seduce with promises of a better, *cleansed* world. While Rice invokes Akasha as a representative voice of these violent figures,[92] calling for purification, annihilation or genocide in the name of an unheard or self-proclaimed deity, her aim is to warn against such figures rising to power. Lestat, for Rice, traces the steps of seduction to such rhetoric and the final realisation of the profound violence behind the calls for 'a better world'. Like the religious fanatic, "the evil are terrified at the prospect of non-being, stuffing

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[90] David M. Estlund, Martha Craven Nussbaum. (eds). *Sex, Preference and Family*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. p. 116

[91] Linda Badley. *Writing Horror and The Body*. Westport, Connecticut. Greenwood Press, 1996. p. 125

[92] While some of these figures used directly violent rhetoric and action when speaking of opposing groups, such as Jerry Falwell – who condemns those who are not 'born again' Christian and advocates discrimination - and the Third Reich - who committed genocide against the Jews - Catherine McKinnon and Andrea Dworkin are labelled violent by the extremism of their rhetoric against men. As hardcore feminists, their rhetoric is comparable to that of Akasha the matriarch because of gender extremism, not violent acts.

the vacuum which is themselves with their own manic will and fundamentalist dogma."[93] By subscribing to those figures calling fanatically for power by targeting 'others' in society, followers are lured into, and subsequently perceive, self-proclaimed righteousness for their group. "Power loathes weakness, since it brings to mind its own frailty. There are always more Jews, Muslims, homosexuals, women and other apparent non-persons. This is why hell endures for ever and ever."[94]

In protest against such hateful rhetoric and persecution of HIV/AIDS sufferers, a branch of extremists exist who deliberately seek HIV infection by 'Barebacking'. For this minority the prospect of being infected with HIV is erotic. "The erotic acts as a crossover point for a number of tensions whose origins are elsewhere: of class, gender, and racial location, of intergenerational conflict, moral acceptability and medical definition."[95] Because HIV infection was firmly associated with the San Francisco bath house scene - where numerous men would frequently have sex with strangers and have multiple partners – the sexual 'liberation' felt amongst the bathhouse practitioners became a symbol of moral decadence and evil to the New Right. "This is what makes sex a particular site of ethical and political concern – and of fear and loathing."[96] Within the community, new terms have been coined to distinguish those in search of HIV infection or those infected; "charging up" meaning a HIV positive partner ejaculating into a non infected partner; "Russian Roulette Party" or "Conversion Party" meaning group sex with persons both HIV positive and HIV negative.

> Distinct from an infrequent [slip up], drunken mishap, or safe sex 'relapse', barebacking represents a conscious, firm decision to forgo [sic] condoms and, despite the dangers, unapologetically revel in 'doing it raw'... this phenomenon

[93] Terry Eagleton. *Holy Terror*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. p. 120 -121
[94] ibid. p. 121
[95] Jeffrey Weeks. *Sexuality and Its Discontents*. London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1985. p. 44
[96] ibid. p. 44

> occurs frequently with one positive person dating another exercising the option of 'bareback' or 'raw sex'.[97]

The philosopher Michel Foucault was rumoured to be an early practitioner of barebacking. It is impossible to discern whether Foucault was fully aware of his HIV infection but since his death in 1984, rumours about his desire to infect his sexual partners, and the influence of the San Francisco bath scene, surfaced.

> A further scandal broke in 1990 when Hervé Guibert published his [largely autobiographical] novel *A L'Ami qui ne m'a pas sauvé la vie*... Foucault is thinly disguised as Muzil... a direct allusion to Robert Musil and his *Man Without Qualities*, a novel enjoyed by both Foucault and Guibert. The 'Muzil' figure certainly knows what he is suffering from, and seems to look forward to his own death as though it were some dark apotheosis... it is the portrait of a man who 'adored violent orgies in saunas' and who would quietly slip out at night, dressed in leather to look for 'victims' at Le Keller, a well known gay bar near the place de la Republique. This is a man who discovered the delights of sado-masochism in California and who kept whips and chains in his apartment.[98]

For these practitioners, also known as bug chasers, HIV/AIDS is viewed as a spiritual gift and any form of treatment is subsequently rejected. Gregory A. Freeman conducted an interview for *Rolling Stone* magazine with one such 'bug chaser' who views HIV+/AIDS as a freedom and a gift. Freeman finds that this subcultural group actively seeks infection and finds the prospect of being infected erotic. 'Carlos', Freeman's interviewee, posts frequent messages on many Internet message boards seeking out someone who will 'convert' him – "a man to fill me up with that poison seed."[99]

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[97] Michael Mansilla, Lisa Troshinsky. *Love In The Time of HIV*. New York: Guilford Press, 2003. pp. 107-108

[98] David Marcey. *Michel Foucault*. London: Reaktion Books, 2004. p.145

[99] Gregory A Freeman "Bug Chasers: The Men Who Long to be HIV+" in *Rolling Stone* magazine. Posted 23/01/2003. Online at: http://www.rollingstone.com/news/story/5939950/bug_chasers accessed on: 22/03/07.

> The men who want the virus are called 'bug chasers', and the men who freely give the virus to them are called 'gift givers'. While the rest of the world fights the AIDS epidemic and most people fear HIV infection, this subculture celebrates the virus and eroticizes [sic] it. HIV-infected semen is treated like liquid gold.[100]

In a similar vein to Freud's death drive, these extremist victims of societal persecution draw in such treatment as a part of their identity and claim to find freedom in their illness. As a persecuted minority, the AIDS victim can accept such treatment by society and be excommunicated, or rebel and revel in the power of their illness. The death drive compels this group to remove the moral imperatives placed upon them by the entire community to practice safe sex; an obligation, which they believe is removed when infection occurs. But like any extremist group, the further they are persecuted for such actions which are harmful both to the individual and the community, the more reason they find for their cause: "Stuck fast in the grip of the death drive, the damned delight in their own torments as well as in the afflictions of their prey, since clinging to their agony is their only alternative to annihilation."[101]

The term 'gift giver' recalls Rice's term for being vampirised, 'The Dark Gift', and her characters often experience a parallel erotic moment or swoon while being drunk from and simultaneously infected with the 'gift'. Practitioners feel liberated from society's mantra on safe sex and defend this act of actively seeking illness. The choice to practise 'bug chasing' is, to this enclosed group, to reclaim ownership of the body, and accept the consequences of infection willingly.

If vampirism is to be read as an infection and physical rebellion, then it is unsurprising that there are those who actively seek it as a form of personal power or in order to enact revenge. In *Queen of The Damned*, Baby Jenks, a teenage vampire, exemplifies this by murdering her white-trash mother – she "really bashed in her head" with an iron, and then turned on her father - "she

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[100] ibid.
[101] Terry Eagleton. *Holy Terror*. p.120

buried him while he was still alive. She never forgot the look on his face when he came to the door and saw her with the fire axe. 'Well, if it ain't Lizzie Borden' [he said]... she split his goddamn forehead in half".[102] Milly Williamson suggests that vampire fans and practitioners read vampirism as a means of regaining lost control: "The vampire suggests an attractive outsiderdom – even a bohemianism – in a culture where a dominant experience for the self is predominantly marginalisation and outsiderdom."[103] In light of revenge killings and open vampire fandom, the New Right promoted incorrect links with sexual perversities and Satanism to explain the behaviours of the marginalised who wish to be free from patriarchal grip. This is particularly striking in the case of Rod Ferrell, who was convicted of murder in Florida in 1998 after bludgeoning his girlfriend's parents to death with a crowbar. He then fled to New Orleans with his girlfriend to seek out Anne Rice, believing she would transform him into a fully-fledged vampire.[104]

By actively seeking infection, many barebacking practitioners believe they are reclaiming ownership of their bodies in a world that is politically controlling their private sexual practises. While Rice's vampires have the luxury of being immune to any diseases (sexually transmitted or not), they too struggle with the ownership of their vampire bodies. In Rice's *The Witching Hour* (1990), the first instalment of the Mayfair Chronicles, she revisits the theme of body ownership when a haunting entity, Lasher, chooses the thirteenth witch in the Mayfair family to become his birthing vessel into the world. Through a violent rape, he implants his essence into the body of Rowan Mayfair and controls her body during his development in the womb. This taltos [105] continues to haunt the women in the Mayfair clan, through rape and incest, until its violent demise. Returning to Rice's vampires and their body politics, now freed from tyrannical subjugation after the destruction of Akasha in *Queen of the Damned*

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[102] Anne Rice. *Queen of The Damned.* pp. 58-59.
[103] Milly Williamson. *The Lure of The Vampire*. pp. 35-36
[104] Details of the court case can be found at http://www.courttv.com/archive/verdicts/vampire.html . The film *Vampire Clan* Dir. John Webb, Langley Productions, 2002., was based on the Rod Ferrell case.
[105] Rice uses this word ' taltos' to define what Lasher is. He is an entity that protects and serves the Mayfair Witches and is tied to their legacy. The Mayfair Chronicles consists of three novels: *The Witching Hour* London: Chatto & Windus, 1991; *Lasher* London: Chatto & Windus, 1993; and *Taltos* London: Chatto & Windus, 1994.

(1988), Lestat's body becomes the canvas for her fourth instalment of the Vampire Chronicles, *The Tale of The Body Thief* (1992).

The Tale of The Body Thief is the only Rice novel that closely resembles the style of a thriller rather than her usual tapestry of a vast vampire mythology. A self-contained novel, in that its events do not elaborate on the other vampires who orbit her central character Lestat, its primary focus is on knowing and experiencing the impossible: our corporeal opposites. For Lestat, to be human is the last bastion of mystery for him after experiencing every conceivable high provided by vampirism. His sense of knowing that which he took for granted in his mortal life consumes him, and to cure him of this desire he wishes to regress into a forgotten physical state; in essence, Lestat wishes to be fragile once more. After his attempted suicide in the Gobi Desert, and his realisation that Akasha's blood (with which he was infused in *Queen of The Damned*) has made him indestructible, his sense of fatigue and purposelessness troubles him. He encounters Raglan James, an excommunicated member of the Talamasca (an ancient organisation which observes the dark realm including vampires), whose unique ability to switch bodies with others leads him to Lestat. While Lestat wishes to re-experience human fragility, Raglan James wishes to experience the power of taking life through drinking blood: "'I want to take life when I drink it. That's the point, isn't it? It's not merely the blood you steal from them, it's their lives. I've never stolen anything that valuable from anyone.' He gave me a knowing smile. 'The body, yes, but not the blood and the life'."[106] This consumption of life is viral, to completely consume a body and its capabilities, while also recognising that all life is based in blood. Like AIDS, it is consumption from within the body. James persists with the body swap, enticing Lestat with promises of real human experience and the beauty in the mundane details of everyday life: "Use me or you'll never know what it's like to be a human being again...You'll never know what it's like to walk in the sunlight, to enjoy a full meal of food, to make love to a woman or a man."[107]

[106] Anne Rice. *The Tale of The Body Thief.* London: Penguin Books, 1992. p. 191
[107] ibid. p. 193

With the body swap complete (which is described as a sort of dive into a body while floating from above, in a trance, near death state), James disappears with Lestat's powerful body and Lestat, now mortal in a previously stolen body and in considerable discomfort, is left to fend for himself. What is most striking about Lestat's initial transformation is his focus on cleanliness. He repeatedly washes his hands and convulses at the smell of his own urine. The thought alone of excrement passing through his new body makes him feel nauseous. What emerges here is Rice's conditioning of the vampire body; it is a body stripped clean of all impurities. The sterile vampire body (unable to produce either faecal waste or sexual fluids) is far more advantageous than a mortal coil. It is as though Rice's vampire body, previously fixated only on orality, now becomes leaky by having two other holes opened: the penile and anal. It is interesting as these holes represent sexual facility and, in examining Lestat's physical discomfort with having these 'new' openings, the vulnerability the holes represent. Lestat vocalises the Kristevan abject by focusing on his disgust at urination and defecation. In this time of disease crisis, Lestat is all too aware of his perishability. Like other vampires of the 1980s, there is an innate awareness that modern circumstances can dictate a vampire's mortality, though in Lestat's case the pact to swap bodies is by choice. The pleasures he so longs to experience prove to be worthless to him, as he feels the 'sickness' of mortality and fragility spoil his most desired experiences. "The truth was, I'd envisioned pleasure, a variety of pleasures – eating, drinking, a woman in my bed, then a man. But none of what I'd experienced was even vaguely pleasurable so far."[108] His body comes to represent sickness and limitations, from which he feels wholly alienated. Like disease sufferers, he is alienated in his own (borrowed) skin. "If being a vampire is anomalous, Lestat has forgotten how many inconveniences the human condition has: the finest foods taste like sand and dirt, wine is a poor substitute for blood, and the tedious human necessities of eating, sleeping and defecating prove unutterably wearying."[109] It is through Lestat's repeated hedonism that he becomes exposed and sickly, a shadow of his former self. The novel concludes with Lestat cornering Raglan James on a cruise ship, the *Queen Elizabeth 2*, forcibly stealing his body back and murdering James in revenge. What *The Tale of The*

[108] Anne Rice. *The Tale of The Body Thief*. p. 257
[109] Sunand T. Joshi. *The Modern Weird Tale*. Jefferson, N.C: McFarland, 2001. p. 240

Body Thief sets out to prove is not unique in the vampire myth. Vampires have craved contact with the mortal coil, or the promise of a celebration of life by recognising its frailty, since Stoker's *Dracula*. However, what Rice does to her character is an important step in the Postmodern Vampire pattern; she temporarily humanises her indestructible rock-god icon to illustrate that the human condition is unenviable, frail and precious.

Two other lesser-known texts also mimic this reoccurring theme of AIDS infection and insatiable sexual desires which are treated as contaminants. The film, *My Best Friend is a Vampire* (1988) [110] and Jeffrey McMahan's novel *Vampires Anonymous* (1991) both figure homosexuality as a viral disease, which must be suppressed for the good of humanity. While *My Best Friend is a Vampire* mimics the plot line of the 1985 film *Once Bitten* (in both films, a teenager sexually engages with an older female vampire resulting in his vampiric transformation), the latter film is an overtly homophobic film concerning "the misunderstood other whose 'disease' could infect untold millions by the early nineties if not checked."[111] Although not explicitly implying mass HIV infection, the three texts illustrate the moral panics of the late 1980s with strikingly conservative tones. McMahan's character Pablo, a vampire intent on 'going straight' and foregoing human blood, confesses to a room full of vampire men attending a Vampires Anonymous meeting (as distinct from human Alcoholics Anonymous meetings):

> My condition has taken me pretty low... Details are – painfully disgusting... midnight trysts in secluded places. I've taken on six in one night. I sought more than their blood.... Sometimes, just the chase, the seduction lure me [sic]. Sometimes, the thrill of holding one man's life – his death – in my hands is my nourishment.[112]

It is clear from McMahan's phrasing that vampire feeding and homosexual 'gangbanging' are interlinked with contagion. Andrew Schopp argues, "by

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[110] *My Best Friend is a Vampire*. Dir. Jimmy Huston, Kings Road Entertainment, USA, 1988.
[111] Andrew Schopp. "Cruising the Alternatives: Homoeroticism and the Contemporary Vampire." in *Journal of Popular Culture*. Vol. 30: Issue 4, spring 1997. p. 237
[112] Jeffrey McMahon. *Vampires Anonymous*. Boston: Alyson Publications, 1991. p. 16

depicting gay cruising as monstrous, he [McMahan] implicitly privileges heteronormative paradigms for sexual expression."[113] If heterosexual vampires remove the threat of contagion, the 1980s has little reassurance to offer the viewer. Barring Jim Carrey's character Mark in *Once Bitten* (1985), virtually all vampire initiates experience some form of seductive contact with 'harmful' homosexual vampires. Schopp concludes, "In fact, McMahan conflates sexual cruising and feeding, and his stories use the vampire world as a space for interrogating the 'real world's' contemporary gay community and its practices."[114] Indeed vampires in the late 1980s experienced such an alienation from their own bodies, through disease and social exclusion, that body transformations in popular culture became signature sites of horror. If changeling bodies are to exemplify the fluidity of viral infection and illnesses, Jonathan Demme's *The Silence of The Lambs* and Francis Ford Coppola's visually sumptuous version of *Dracula* (1992) require examination.

Our skin tells stories: Reimagining *Dracula* in Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* and the influence of Hannibal Lecter

If ever there was a vampire film marketed as an audience 'catch all' by being structured as a multi-layered gothic/romance/horror hybrid, it was Coppola's lavish production of *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. Released in 1992 with an aggressive marketing strategy to cross the boundaries of genre, it was "consumed as the latest creation of an auteur, a star vehicle (for any of four stars), a reworking of a popular myth, an adaptation of a literary 'classic', as horror, art film or romance, or as a mixture of these genres."[115] The early 1990s saw a particular rise in the gothic horror genre, which was notably due to the success of Jonathan Demme's 1991 Oscar-winning horror thriller *The Silence of The Lambs*. Among its many deserving Oscar recipients was Anthony Hopkins, whose portrayal of the psychotic cannibal Dr. Hannibal Lecter garnered him considerable Hollywood and media attention. By casting Hopkins to play opposite Dracula (Gary Oldman) as Abraham Van Helsing, Coppola sought to reproduce the success of *The Silence of The Lambs*, with its

[113] Andrew Schopp. "Cruising the Alternatives: Homoeroticism and the Contemporary Vampire." p. 238
[114] ibid. p. 238
[115] Thomas Austin. "*Bram Stoker's Dracula*: *Gone With The Wind* Plus Fangs" in *Hollywood, Hype and Audiences*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002. p. 114

gothic style and 'neo-feminist orientation'.[116] Both films also share the common thread of a central female character; Clarice Starling/Mina Harker, caught between two zealous madmen; Hannibal Lecter/Jame Gumb; Dracula/Van Helsing respectively.

And while *The Silence of The Lambs* is a hybrid film - a police procedural, a fairytale and a gothic thriller - it represents Lecter physically and intellectually as a vampire. His thirst for personal knowledge from Starling (Jodie Foster) is certainly an intellectual battle of wits with sexual tension bubbling underneath. The threat of Lecter's bite is visually reinforced whenever we encounter him; whether he is in his plexi-glass cell, wearing his leather mask, or when he attacks the guards in the Baltimore museum, it is through his vampiric orality (intellectual words, gourmet food and tearing flesh) that he finds gratification. Described by novelist Thomas Harris, author of the Lecter series, the character of Lecter is shrouded in vampiric suggestion: "Dr. Lecter's eyes are maroon and they reflect the lights in pinpoints of red. Sometimes the points of light seem to fly like sparks to his centre",[117] lyrically mimicking Jonathan Harker's description of the count infuriated with his vampire brides: "His eyes were positively blazing. The red light in them was lurid, as if the flames of hell-fire blazed behind them."[118] Visually, this description connects with the promotional stills of Gary Oldman in Victorian Dracula costume, his eyes filmed over with blood as he cranes over Mina Murray (Winona Ryder). David Sexton notes this also in Harris's third Lecter novel *Hannibal*:

> We learn in *Hannibal* that, like Dracula, Lecter is a Central European aristocrat. His father, too, was a count and believes himself to be descended from a 12th-century Tuscan named Bevisangue (blood-drinker). Like Dracula, Lecter drains his victims. After meeting him for the first time, Clarice Starling feels 'suddenly empty, as though she had given blood'.[119]

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[116] ibid. p.117. Thomas Austin correctly argues that early 1990s horror began incorporating more female protagonists and emphasising emotional relationships in plot arcs in an attempt to gain a wider audience.

[117] Thomas Harris. *The Silence of The Lambs* (1988). In *Red Dragon/ Silence of The Lambs* (combined volume) London: Peerage Books, 1991(rpt). p. 294

[118] Bram Stoker. *Dracula*. 1897. Nina Auerbach and David J. Skal (eds). *The Norton Critical Edition of Dracula*. p. 43

[119] David Sexton. *The Strange World of Thomas Harris*. London: Short Books, 2001. p. 86

Demme's film came under protest from the gay community at the 1991 Oscars in Los Angeles. The upset was based on the depiction of the film's serial killer, Jame Gumb/Buffalo Bill (Ted Levine), who desires to construct 'a woman suit out of real women' because he thinks he is transgendered and was refused 'sexual reassignment' at Johns Hopkins. The protesters accused the film of propagating a false image about gay people, claiming rightly that cross-dressers, gays, and transgendered people were often depicted as serial killers and social miscreants in Hollywood films.[120] Flyers were handed out and seven protesters were arrested for breaching the peace. However, Demme felt very affected by this act, and drew attention to the protests by asking members of the audience at the New York Critic's Awards to read the flyers and to take on board the community's concerns.[121] His next film project was *Philadelphia* (1993), a film drawing attention to the suffering of an AIDS victim (played by Tom Hanks), and his lawsuit against his former employers who dismiss him because of his illness. In an interview with *The New York Times*, Demme reflects on how neglected the gay community was in Hollywood:

> Mr. Demme is more than aware of how volatile the gay community can be in dealing with subjects like AIDS. It is he who mentions the gay protests against 'The Silence of the Lambs.' Protesters objected to the depiction of the killer as, in their view, homosexual. 'I got all this unfounded abuse on 'Silence of the Lambs,' he says, obviously still stung. 'He wasn't a gay character. He was a tormented man who hated himself and wished he was a woman because that would have made him as far away from himself as he possibly could be.' But the protests clearly had an effect. 'I got woke up,' he says. 'I came to realize that, in fact, there is a tremendous absence of positive gay characters in movies.'[122]

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[120] Among many examples are *Psycho.* Dir. Alfred Hitchcock, Paramount Pictures, 1960. and *Dressed to Kill.* Dir. Brian De Palma, Filmways Pictures, 1980., as well as focusing on the character of Jame Gumb in *Silence of The Lambs.*

[121] *Inside The Labyrinth: The Making of Silence of The Lambs.* Dir. Jeffrey Schwartz, MGM/UA Home Entertainment, 2001. This documentary featured on the 2001 special edition DVD of *The Silence of The Lambs.*

[122] Jeffrey Schmaltz. "From Visions of Paradise to Hell on Earth" An Interview with Jonathan Demme. *New York Times.* February 28th 1993. Online at:

Demme's *Philadelphia* gave a compassionate aspect to the AIDS sufferer, where love and humanity lie at the core of how we should treat the marginalised and the forgotten in society. Coppola's Dracula was marketed to demand a similar reaction: the Count is searching for love and acceptance, despite his occasional evil deeds. He is presented not solely as a monster, but as a forgotten viral being longing for compassion and love. Silver and Ursini note this new treatment of the Count: "After Dracula floats in and proclaims, as in the novel, that "this man is mine" the filmmaker's add another line... "Yes, I, too, can love. And I shall love again."[123] This line sets up the plot - which dominates this love story version of Dracula - but is entirely absent from the original novel. As Rick Worland notes, this gave Coppola and screenwriter James V. Hart the opportunity to keep him onscreen for longer periods, unlike the Hammer horror pictures in which Dracula is increasingly silent or absent for long stretches in the narrative. This "made him a more complex character, preserving the vampire's larger social impact while showcasing settings and special effects... [The film] is a love story as well as a commentary on the character's cultural evolution."[124] His crusade is not to colonise or threaten the Empire but to reclaim his wife, now re-incarnated in Mina Murray, whom he lost centuries earlier to suicide. In Coppola's 'origins' prologue, Prince Vlad Dracul of Transylvania defends his country in a religious war against the Moslem Turks. Upon his return from battle, he discovers his bride Elisabetha has flung herself into the river in grief, believing false news of Vlad's dead. In an act of pure anger at the betrayal of his lost bride's memory by the Christian Church, proclaiming her soul damned because of her sin of suicide, Vlad pierces the cross (which bleeds spectacularly) in his chapel and renounces his faith in God. Through this act of hatred and lost love, he becomes a vampire.[125]

Costume design is quite significant in Coppola's *Dracula*; not only does it exude the elegance of the Victorian era but, rather significantly, it codes the

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http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F0CE7DE1439F93BA15751C0A965958260&sec=health&spon=&pagewanted=3 . Accessed on: 26/03/07.

[123] Alain Silver, James Ursini. *The Vampire Film*. New York: Limelight Editions, 3rd ed., 1997.p. 156

[124] Rick Worland. *The Horror Film: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007. p. 256

[125] This is the first time that we see a vampire transformed by renouncing God rather than having contact with a vampire. As Dracula's origins are never revealed in Stoker's novel, Coppola's 'origins of Dracula' prologue is designed to bookend the romantic plot, while 'humanising' the character.

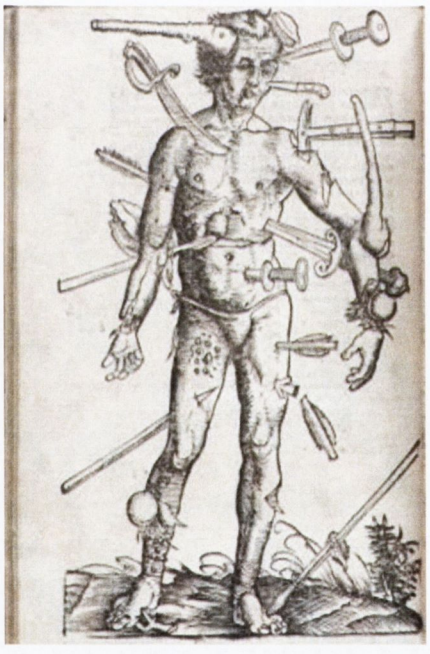
body of Dracula as a viral entity. In particular, when we first encounter Dracula wearing his blood red nightgown with its five-foot train, we are cued to recognise the 'blood trail' of the narrative and the movement of the fabric; the movement of viral contamination. Coppola specifically designed some of the costumes and produced a book on them as part of the film's aggressive merchandising campaign. Dracula's many costumes reveal his virality or slippage by cueing the audience to identify with his many personae. As Darryl Jones suggests, Dracula is a changeling: "Here, it is a question of the nature or source of the gaze, for Oldman's Dracula looks different depending on who does the looking."[126] With each costume change, another 'face' is presented to the audience, the only spectator privy to all five chimeric representations.[127] The most visceral costume is the armour of the Order of the Dragon (Fig 2.1 and Fig 2.2), most likely inspired by the drawings of the human body in *The Wound Man* (Fig.2.3) (1528), Titiano Vecelli's *The Flaying of Marsyas* (Fig.2.5) (1575), William Hogarth's *Four Stages of Cruelty* (Fig.2.6) (1751) and *Gray's Anatomy* (Fig.2.7) (1858).[128] Interestingly, a sketch of *The Wound Man* hangs in Dr. Lecter's cell in the novel *Red Dragon*. The arrangement of the victim's body reveals Lecter as a serial killer to protagonist FBI man Will Graham – *The Wound Man* display being the same as that of Lecter's sixth victim.

[126] Darryl Jones. *Horror: A Thematic History in Fiction and Film.* p. 97

[127] The five faces of Dracula are as follows, in chronological order: The Knight / Young Dracula, Old Dracula, Lycanthrope Dracula / Monkey Dracula, Bat Dracula and Vermin Dracula. At times in the film combinations of these costumes occur, usually in moments when the character expresses rage.

[128] Henry Gray. *Gray's Anatomy: Descriptive and Surgical.* 1858. London: Churchill Livingston, 2004 (39th Edition). This textbook is still widely used in the study of medical surgery and is considered to be the ultimate reference book in anatomy.

Figs. 2.1; 2.2 - Dracula's Order of the Dragon Armour and Costume with helmet.



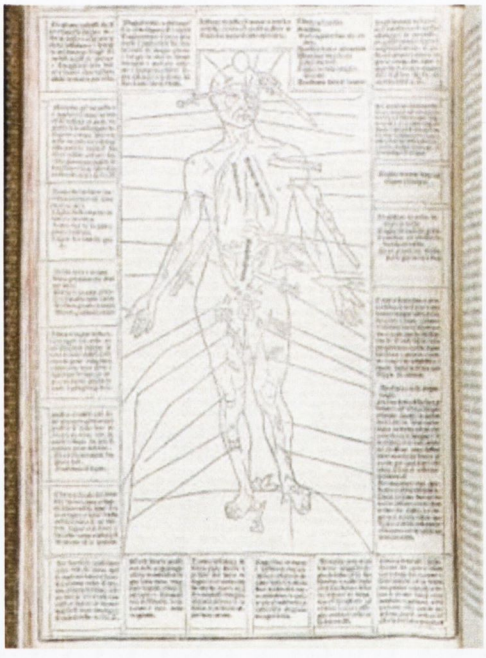


Fig. 2.3 *The Wound Man* (1528). This painting is based on the illustrations of *The Wound Man* from Johannes de Ketham's *Fasciculus Medicinae* (1492) Fig. 2.4 (pictured right)

Fig. 2.5 (Above left) Titiano Vecelli's *The Flaying of Marsyas* (1575) and Fig 2.6 (above right) 'The Reward of Cruelty' (1751) from Hogarth's *Four Stages of Cruelty*.

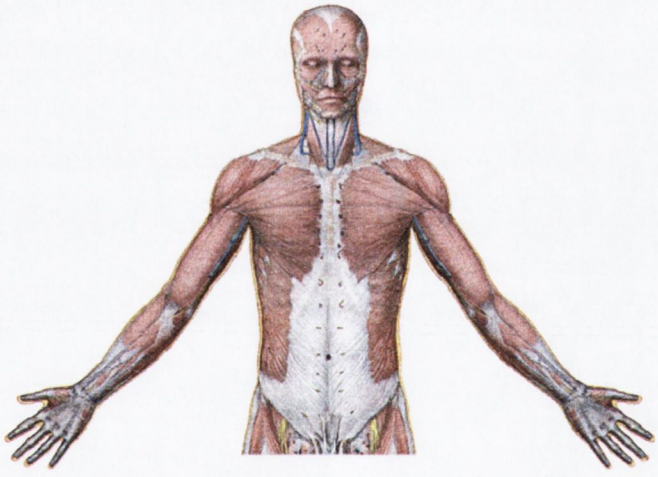


Fig. 2.7 The human body without skin from *Gray's Anatomy* (1858).

The armour aesthetically mimics a skin-stripped body revealing only muscle mass and tissue underneath. This lack of a skin is a coding of Dracula's body as human and 'open' to infection before any supernatural transformation has occurred. Also, it is oppositional to the character of Buffalo Bill in *The Silence of The Lambs* who seeks to sew together slain women's skins and use them on his own body in an effort to express his sexual desires. For Harris, the prominence of skins and scarification are significantly repeated for each antagonist. In Harris's first Lecter novel, *Red Dragon*, Francis Dolarhyde (dolour hide, perhaps – the pain of being in one's own skin), has a harelip scar,

earning him the nickname 'cunt face' as a child, and first becomes aware of his aging by noticing the wrinkles on his hands (a possible substitute for scales), triggering his murder spree and 'becoming' Blake's Red Dragon. When he captures tabloid reporter Freddy Lounds, he exposes the skin art/mutilation he identifies with – a full back tattoo of Blake's Red Dragon; "[his] great back muscles flexed above the brilliant tattoo of the tail that ran down his lower back and wrapped around [his] leg."[129] David Sexton notes Blake's Red Dragon (in the painting 'The Great Red Dragon and the Woman clothed in Sun')[130] has no scales on its tail.[131]

Fig.2.8 :(Left to Right) William Blake's 'The Great Red Dragon and the Woman clothed in Sun'; Fig. 2.9: Blake's 'The Great Red Dragon and the Woman clothed with the Sun' both dated (1805-1810); Fig. 2.10 - the film poster for *Red Dragon* (2002) depicting Francis Dolarhyde's (Ralph Fiennes) 'Red Dragon' tattoo.

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[129] Thomas Harris. *Red Dragon*. 1981. In *Red Dragon/ Silence of The Lambs* (combined volume) p.136

[130] In Harris's book *Red Dragon* (1981), Dolarhyde is obsessed with the painting 'The Great Red Dragon and the Woman clothed with the sun' while explicitly describing Blake's other 'Red Dragon' painting, 'The Great Red Dragon and the Woman clothed in Sun', particularly in the description of the dragon's tail wrapping around the woman, (in Dolarhyde's tattoo, the tail wraps around his leg). This error was further compounded in the two film adaptations of Harris's book: in *Manhunter* Dir. Michael Mann, De Laurentiis Entertainment Group, 1986, the painting referenced is Harris's erroneously attributed 'clothed with the sun' painting, also misattributed in *Red Dragon* Dir. Brett Ratner, Universal Pictures, 2002, though the painting depicted is the correct one, 'the woman clothed in sun'. While *Manhunter* draws its naming from the novel (the descriptively incorrect one, though it never shows Dolarhyde devouring the watercolour), *Red Dragon* sources the correct painting with the wrong name (crediting it as the 'with' painting rather than the 'in' painting), and includes Harris's infamous scene when Dolarhyde eats the original Blake 'The Great Red Dragon and the Woman clothed in Sun' painting. Interestingly, *Red Dragon* features the voice of Frank Langella (John Badham's Dracula from 1979) for the dragon's inner dialogue with Dolarhyde. In all, there are four 'Red Dragon' paintings by Blake (1805-1810), depicting Satan from the Book of Revelations. "And behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth" Revelations: 12:3,4. Bible. King James Edition.

[131] David Sexton. *The Strange World of Thomas Harris*. p. 72

Dolarhyde bites the lips off of Freddy Lounds because Freddy 'tells lies', having a previous history of biting his victims while wearing his abusive dead grandmother's dentures, earning him the nickname, the 'Tooth Fairy'. Buffalo Bill's skinning of younger women in *The Silence of the Lambs* (1988) also reverses the aging process (at least temporarily) as he plans to wear the woman suit when it is completed. Though most of Jame Gumb's scars are internalised, he believes they can be removed through the wearing of women's skins. By contrast, *Hannibal*'s Mason Verger's skin is horrifically altered after an evening with Lecter, who gives him a cocktail of...

> "angel dust...methamphetamines and some acid. He gave me a piece of glass [from a broken mirror]... and suggested I might like to peel off my face with it. He let the dogs out. I fed them my face. They got my nose back when they pumped the dogs' stomachs... but the graft didn't take."[132]

Verger (played by Coppola's Dracula, Gary Oldman in Ridley Scott's film *Hannibal* (2001)) holds Lecter responsible for skinning his own face, which has left him horrifically scarred. He is, perhaps, Harris's most physically scarred victim. The Verger skinning predates Lecter's incarceration, so Lecter's facial skinning in *The Silence of The Lambs* is in effect a repetition when he escapes police custody in Baltimore by wearing the skinned face of Officer Pembry. By the time we reencounter Lecter in *Hannibal*, compared with his plainness in *Red Dragon*, he is "bedecked with a dizzying plurality of historical, genealogical and mythological attributes",[133] metamorphosising from Dracula to Satan, "retriev[ing] a new identity from the Devil's Armour with its horned helmet" [134] in a church in Santa Reparata, south of Florence. He takes communion at mass, "though Dr. Lecter touches his lips to the cup with some reluctance"[135] and assumes a new identity through the contents (a passport and money) hidden inside the devil's armour. For the reader, the slippage of Lecter's identity is both obvious and satanic: "In addition to the

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[132] Thomas Harris. *Hannibal*. London: William Heinemann, 1999. p. 62
[133] David Sexton. *The Strange World of Thomas Harris*. p.88
[134] ibid. p.88
[135] Thomas Harris. *Hannibal* p. 209

graceful horns...the pointed gauntlet cuffs are stuck where the shoes should be, at the ends of the greaves, suggesting the cloven hooves of Satan."[136]

It is after Coppola's Dracula renounces God that his many guises or 'skins' take effect. The horned helmet represents both the Order of the Dragon and the devil and in this costuming Dracula represents both. Like Rice's Memnoch - from her fifth novel in the Vampire Chronicles, *Memnoch The Devil* (1995) - by questioning the rules of God, Coppola's Dracula is cast out in torment forever. The collapsing of stringent identities; Dracula as evil Other, Crew of Light as good, is furthered by the dualism between Oldman's and Hopkins's interpretations of their characters. If Oldman's sympathetic Count, searching for centuries to recapture the love he tragically lost, is evil, how are we to interpret Hopkins's Van Helsing, who is both destructive and imperious? When compared to the two madmen of *The Silence of The Lambs*, the film itself acknowledges commonalities between the two: While visiting Lecter in Baltimore about the Buffalo Bill killings, Starling is quizzed by a young deputy. He asks frankly, "What is it? Some kind of vampire?" "They don't have a name for what it is" she replies.[137] But the reference to which monster – Lecter or Bill - is obscured. We are left to conclude that it is in fact both. As the collapse of these character boundaries becomes stark, Coppola's vision of a 'mad' doctor – which he describes as being "as evil as Dracula"[138] - becomes a repetition of Hannibal Lecter. Carol J. Clover comments on the collapse of identities in Demme's film:

> *Silence of The Lambs*' innovation is the Lecter – Bill duet, which can be regarded either as a splitting of the monster function into its acting-out side and its contemplative side or as the collapse of the two roles traditionally held separate – the monster and the psychiatrist (Norman Bates and the doctor, or, in *Halloween*, Michael and Dr. Loomis).[139]

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[136] ibid. p. 209
[137] *Silence of The Lambs.* Dir. Jonathan Demme, Orion Pictures, 1990.
[138] *Bloodlines: Dracula. The Man. The Myth. The Movies.* Dir. Jeff Werner, Columbia Pictures, 1992. 'Making of ' documentary on DVD of *Bram Stoker's Dracula.* Dir. Francis Ford Coppola, Columbia Pictures, 1992.
[139] Carol J. Clover. *Men, Women and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992. p. 233 n4.

This slippage is brought about through Hopkins's "unhinged performance [which]...raises the possibility – a possibility that Stoker also entertains – that the doctor may be a deranged maniac, and thus the vampire hunters are far more dangerous than the vampire himself."[140] If we read this interpretation as infection, we can assume that while Dracula is the carrier of AIDS - by way of close-up shots of blood testing, skin slippage as unknown infection and concealment, and damnation to those exposed to his 'curse', the Crew of Light are coded as his oppositional yet equally unhinged evil: The Reaganite Right. Explicitly, the connections with AIDS feature when Lucy is vampirised by Dracula in the garden, when his body is presented as a repulsive hybrid of both a lycanthrope and monkey and when Mina and Lucy inspect the illustrations of buggery in Sir Richard Francis Burton's *Arabian Nights*. It is their sexual curiosity that leads them to Dracula, and to possible infection usually coded by the wearing of red. As a sympathetic and ill Dracula, Oldman's performance links with Frank Langella's 1979 portrayal of Dracula, in that, rather than being merely evil, they are highly sexual and deeply romantic. Whether they are being pursued by idiotic (Olivier) or psychotic (Hopkins) Van Helsings, the audience is swayed towards the Count. However, unlike Langella's hopeful and liberating Dracula who survives his brush with British culture, Oldman's sickly body fails and he is liberated from torment in death.

Coppola's *Dracula*, now firmly established in popular culture, was parodied in *The Simpsons*, with Mr. Burns as Dracula. Never failing to parody a film entrenched in popular imagination, or miss any underlying political message, the show highlights the Liberace style - "ridiculous pompadour hairstyle, candelabrum, robe, and general air of high camp"[141] - of Oldman's Old Man Dracula, and effortlessly cuts to the proverbial jugular. While opening the castle doors to welcome in the dysfunctional family, we see Burns in full Coppolian 'old' Dracula costume, while his shadow plays with a yo-yo. When Lisa expresses her unease with Burns's appearance, Homer replies: "I know; his hairdo looks *so* queer".[142]

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[140] Darryl Jones. *Horror: A Thematic History in Fiction and Film.* p. 97
[141] ibid. pp. 97-98
[142] *The Simpsons*. Halloween Special IV: "Bart Simpson's Dracula". 20th Century Fox. First aired: Oct 28th, 1993.

British Gothic and Draculean Centenary specials

In 1992, Kim Newman explored a historical revisionist approach to Stoker's *Dracula* in his novel, *Anno Dracula*. This gothic revisionism permits two forms of narrative which came to define 1990s vampires: placing vampires as significant characters among historical figures throughout history, thus inverting or indeed completely altering the course of history as we know it, and the use of 'Gothic Doubling' of actual historical people in fiction. Matt Hills suggests, "[Newman's novels] partly exhibit a fuzzy cultural/subcultural capital via rewritings of academically canonized/consecrated fictions... Newman's fictions thus intertextually occupy a specific 'space of possibilities' in the field of horror".[143] In many ways, Newman's *Anno Dracula* and Brian Aldiss's novel *Dracula Unbound* (1991) are born out of both reminiscence and celebration of Stoker's novel celebrating its centenary in print – both novels reminding the reader of the reflexivity of the title character in both postmodern space and time. Aldiss, like Newman, employs Van Helsing in order to reduce his presence entirely from the narrative: Aldiss's Van Helsing "does not believe in vampires",[144] although he is at least present in the narrative, unlike Newman's treatment of the character where he is merely a symbolic corpse representing Dracula's ascension to power. Van Helsing becomes redundant, powerless and is dispatched in various adaptations in an attempt to reinvigorate the vampire without the moralistic constraints so associated with Van Helsing's presence and character.

Newman's multitude of novels,[145] revolving around the character of Dracula, began with *Anno Dracula*, in which the fin de siècle Victorian era is re-imagined after the events of Stoker's novel. Dracula's invasion having proved successful, vampires populate England from the throne of Queen Victoria to the prostitutes of Whitechapel, across the population and body politic of England. Dracula's success is explicated immediately by Newman's quick

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[143] Matt Hills. *The Pleasures of Horror*. London: Continuum, 2005. p. 178

[144] Ken Gelder. *Reading The Vampire*. p. 134

[145] Newman's *Anno Dracula* is the first in a trilogy on Dracula through various culturally and historically defining moments in the 20th Century. The sequels, *The Bloody Red Baron* and *Dracula Cha Cha Cha* locate Dracula through both World War I and the late 1950s respectively, where Dracula appears in the climactic moments of the novels. Dracula also appears in many of Newman's satellite novels, novellas, and short stories which range in setting from Warhol's factory in the early 1970s to the decadent mid-1980s.

dispatching of Van Helsing – his head impaled on a spike outside the palace gates.[146] The novel's cast of Victorian figures is both impressive and exhaustive, by the sheer doubling of both historical characters being present, and the narrative device of fictitious characters mimicking historical villains. The first of the remarkable doubles present is Jack Seward, Lucy Westenra's suitor (who proposed, clutching a scalpel in his hand) from Stoker's *Dracula*, characterised by Newman as Jack the Ripper. Seward's urge to kill and dispatch the vampires is remarkably similar to his predecessor Van Helsing – "the streets are filthy, open sewers of vice. The dead are everywhere"[147] – yet his ascension to this role aquires an overt depravity in mutilating the vampire body. The doubling of Jack Seward to 'Saucy Jack' is fitting in an age that largely disowns Van Helsings.[148] It also permits Newman to expand on the familiar plotline of the serial killer cast as a double to the vampire as killer. Elizabeth McCarthy describes the overlap in serial killer formula when applied to the vampire hunters of Stoker's and Newman's novels, in that the vampire hunter, like the serial killer, has found his calling in despatching the 'wicked'.

> Here, the problematics of the man-of-science-turned-vampire-slayer are brought to the fore, with Seward performing his 'butchery with a surgeon's precision'.... This reiteration of a certain psychological perspective by Seward, along with his claim that it was in the act of surgically removing Lucy's head that he found his 'calling', all point to the eminent danger of the desensitising of the vampire killer to acts of brutal physical violence and mutilation.[149]

Here, McCarthy's argument is reminiscent of Friedrich Nietzsche's famous warning on hunting monsters in *Beyond Good and Evil*: "He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster. And

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[146] Kim Newman. *Anno Dracula*. 1992. New York: Avon Books, 1994. p. 13
[147] ibid. p. 6
[148] While it is not strictly true that Van Helsing is dispatched permanently in all Postmodern Vampire fiction and film, very few texts exist where Van Helsing resembles Stoker's character or his success in defeating Dracula, symbolically or in actuality. As discussed in Chapter one, Van Helsings of the postmodern age are usually decrepit, foolish or incorrect in their attempts to thwart the vampire, hence the vampire's ability to survive the narratives.
[149] Elizabeth McCarthy. "'Death to Vampires!': The Vampire Body and the Meaning of Mutilation" in Peter Day (ed) *Vampires: Myths and Metaphors of Enduring Evil*. New York: Rodopi, 2006. p.197

when you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you".[150] Yet, it is in the act of killing the vampire as a righteous duty that the serial killer within is awakened as McCarthy concludes: "It is as though the act of destroying evil, the vampire killer, in turn, takes the risk of becoming evil, a danger Newman's Dr. Seward comes to realize too late, 'I meant to destroy a monster, not become one'."[151] Perhaps it is strangely fitting that the vampire hunter becomes the double of the monster he vows to destroy: "the most dangerous infection the vampire killer is open to is not vampirism but the infectiousness of violence itself."[152]

Other doubles used in the narrative range from Robert Louis Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Edward Hyde; Sir Francis Varney; Polidori's Lord Ruthven (cast here as Prime Minister); Professor Moriarty, Colonel Sebastian Moran, Inspector Lestrade and Sherlock Holmes of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes* adventures; Inspector Fredrick Abberline and George Lusk (reprising their historical roles as investigators in the Ripper case) and Mary Kelly (the Ripper's final known victim); F.W. Murnau's Graf Orlok (as a notoriously cruel and petrifying Governor of the Tower of London); George Romero's Martin Cuda (as a Carpathian Guardsman); J. Sheridan LaFanu's Carmilla; 'The Elephant Man' John Merrick; and Queen Victoria, to name but a handful. The interweaving tapestry of fictional and historical characters in Newman's novel is an exhaustive example of modern day revisionist works using characters deeply embedded in 19th century fiction and crime. As Matt Hills summarises,

> Horror texts may be more or less imbued with intertextual cultural capital and intertextual subcultural capital, allowing 'officially', 'legitimately; educated and subculturally knowledgeable readers to exercise their discriminatory powers and thus receive the honour of 'symbolic capital' along with the pleasures of recognition.[153]

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[150] Friedrich Nietzsche. *Beyond Good and Evil.* 1886. Aphorism 146. London: Penguin Classics, 2003. p.102.
[151] Elizabeth McCarthy. "'Death to Vampires!': The Vampire Body and the Meaning of Mutilation". p. 198. Quoting Kim Newman. *Anno Dracula.* p. 329.
[152] ibid. p. 198
[153] Matt Hills. *The Pleasures of Horror.* London: Continuum, 2005. p. 170

Newman's use of significant historical people from the Victorian period reverses historical readings of such figures. He reveals the identity of Jack the Ripper in the novel's opening pages and reduces Queen Victoria to a weak and enslaved subject at the feet of the Prince Consort. In this scene, where the reader finally encounters Dracula and Queen Victoria, the inverting of character expectation and historical myth is at its most powerful. Dracula, usually portrayed to a familiar audience as elegant, sexually alluring and masquerading as human, is described here as gluttonous, vulgar and monstrous:

> An ermine-collared black velvet cloak, ragged at the edges, clung to Dracula's shoulders like the wings of a giant bat. Otherwise he was naked, his body thickly coated with matted hair, blood clotting on his chest and limbs. His white manhood coiled in his lap, tipped scarlet as an adder's tongue. His body was swollen with blood, rope-thick veins visibly pulsing in his neck and arms. In life, Vlad Tepes had been a man of less than medium height; now he was a giant. [154]

His Queen, historically the longest reigning monarch of the British Empire at its zenith, a pillar of propriety, staidness and stoicism, suffers ultimate humiliation:

> The Queen knelt by the throne, a spiked collar round her neck, a massive chain leading from it to a loose bracelet upon Dracula's wrist. She was in her shift and stockings, brown hair loose, blood on her face. It was impossible to see the round old woman she had been in this abused, wretched figure.... Panic bloomed in Victoria's eyes. Dracula's enormous fingers encircled Victoria's fragile skull and squeezed slightly.[155]

Newman concludes the novel with the suicide of Victoria (again a dramatic inverse) by puncturing her heart with Jack the Ripper's silver blade, in effect

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[154] Kim Newman. *Anno Dracula.* p. 390
[155] ibid. pp. 391, 393

ending the Victorian/ Draculean Empire, and giving birth to the twentieth century. Another revision of Jack the Ripper and the Victorian empire comes to mind at the novel's conclusion, from the graphic novel and film, *From Hell* (2001): "One day men will look back and say that I gave birth to the twentieth century".[156] As the historical Victoria died in 1901, the birth of the twentieth century, it seems a fitting conclusion. Newman's intertextuality and cultural capital engages the audience with a multitude of texts, layered imagery and myth, seamlessly blending stories and facts together, by inverting every possible angle. This is also a route favoured by graphic novel writer Alan Moore, whose graphic novel *From Hell* revived interest in the Jack the Ripper murders and introduced multiple theories on the actual identity of the Ripper, which continues to remain a mystery.

It is a fair contention that Alan Moore and Kevin O' Neill's graphic novel series *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (1999 -) featuring Stoker's Mina Murray,[157] also comprising of many historical and fictional characters strewn together to form an elite club with supernatural abilities, is a parallel endeavour of Newman's successful novel.[158] Newman's *Anno Dracula* and its sequels, *The Bloody Red Baron* (1995) and *Dracula Cha Cha Cha* (2001), transform their narratives from multitudes of texts, leading to intertextual readings that spiral far beyond the central character of Dracula.

Before *Anno Dracula*, a less successful vampire novel, which draws on the pool of the historical characters and celebrities populating its plot, appeared. Michael Romkey's first instalment of his ever-expanding vampire series *I,*

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[156] *From Hell*. Dirs: Albert and Allen Hughes. 20th Century Fox, 2001. This line is delivered by Jack the Ripper/ Sir William Gull (Ian Holm) as a pretext to the twentieth century phenomenon of multiple serial killers. The film is based on the graphic novel, *From Hell*, London: Eddie Campbell Comics, 1999., written by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell. Moore also wrote *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* New York: DC Comics, 1999 -.

[157] In the graphic novels of *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, Mina Murray is a central character to two of the leagues established between the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the film version of the graphic novel released in 2003, Mina Murray (Peta Wilson) is a vampire and romantically involved with the immortal Dorian Gray (Stuart Townsend) of Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. London: Ward, Lock and Co., 1891.

[158] Alan Moore's graphic novels and contributions to graphic novels which re-imagine cult and historical figures began with *Hulk Comic* (1979), and sporadically writing for *Captain Britain* in the 1980s before authoring the cult graphic novel *V For Vendetta* (originally 1982-1985 in *Warrior* – a quarterly comic) and *Watchmen.* New York: DC Comics, 1986-1987. Particularly in the case of Watchmen, Moore populates his graphic novel with fictional superheroes and politically hated figures such as former US President Richard Nixon.

Vampire assembles a host of vampires together as part of an elite group of intellectuals, musicians and artists, political heroes and revolutionaries, forming a romanticised, idealised vision of the Illuminati. Bearing no resemblance to the Bavarian Illuminati founded in 1776 by Adam Weishaupt, Romkey's Illuminati is a coven of vampires, turned because of their specific social significance or gifts. Romkey's protagonist, David Parker, a cocaine-addicted alcoholic whose divorce leads him to near suicide is turned to vampirism by Tatiana Nicolaievich, a Russian princess. She in turn claims to be under the guidance of an elder in the order, Grigori Rasputin, and informs David -a gifted musician- that he shall be tutored and guided by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. A common villain straddles both novels – Jack the Ripper, revealed by Romkey to be Prince Albert Victor, the Duke of Clarence. It seems that vampire novelists strongly connect the mythology of the Ripper with vampiric violence, and with considerable momentum in late 1980s / early 90s fiction. The doubling of the Ripper's identity by Romkey, Moore and Newman provides an ample platform to compare him to a vampire – his identity shifting alone in popular culture and fiction giving adequate anonymity. In Romkey's text, the frailty of vampirism is presented when David begins his transformation – he is warned that vampirism requires three 'infections' that will change his body at a physiological level. For Romkey, vampirism is literally a gift with few drawbacks: "[Vampirism] possesses some obvious advantages over mortals – longevity, strength, high IQs... but there are disadvantages – sensitivity to light, sterility is another. We cannot reproduce sexually...."[159] Vampirism is not a condition that provides total immortality: rather, like Rice's vampires, vampirism lasts roughly a thousand years, until the boredom of immortality leads to an inevitable suicide. Unlike Newman's vampires who have no intention of departing, and are presented, not in romantic language but rather as a plague, Romkey's vampires are initiated by way of permission by the Illuminati. Like Rice's vampire clique, vampirism is an elite club in which one earns membership. As William Patrick Day comments, the novel is laced with "the tormenting dualities of the Ricean vampire"[160] though it is more preoccupied with human history that Rice's insular world where humans are merely cattle awaiting slaughter. "Many

[159] Michael Romkey. *I, Vampire*. New York: Ballantine, 1990. pp. 94-95
[160] William Patrick Day. *Vampire Legends in Contemporary American Culture: What Becomes a Legend Most*. p. 55

famous historical figures, including the Borgias and Mozart, appear as vampires in this pastiche of human history that uses the secret world of nosferatu in explaining a wide variety of significant events."[161] Day rightly aligns David Parker to Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's character Saint Germain in terms of tone and setting in the romance/adventure genre borrowing the Stoker format of diary entries. By borrowing this format from *Dracula* and introducing the novel as a manuscript to be filed in a secret archive, Romkey's novel uses the motif of the 'lost manuscript' before it became a popular mode in later 90s historical revisionism. However, despite the novel's attempt to span modern human history through its many vampire celebrities, it lacks Newman's dense and critical approach to both vampirism and historical figures – and his critique of history's characters without romanticising the past. Where Romkey's central character is a 1980s yuppie surrounded by celebrity, Newman's narrative is voiced through the celebrity characters that populate his world, "an encyclopaedic orgy of late-Victorian popular culture".[162]

The queering of the 1980s vampires, and their sickness by a blood-borne contaminant, shows their considerable fragility in the Reagan era. Representing the secular, the sexually liberal and the marginalized, vampires are cast aside to die like so many victims of GRID. The horror projected onto the vampire body is so acute, violent and reactionary, that the mere gaze of the vampire (or of an AIDS sufferer) could prove fatal. And to admit to sickness, in a time dominated by fitness and health as status, was just as negative. Sontag notes even Reagan would not admit to being sick with cancer, as it would indicate weakness in the Presidency. "When asked how he felt after his cancer operation, he declared: 'I didn't have cancer. I had something inside of me that had cancer in it and it was removed.'"[163] While cancer is treatable in specific areas of the body, to Reagan and his party, AIDS was a sickness of the soul first and a virus incurred by God's wrath second. So vampires had to slip their skins in order to live again. While Lestat grew weary of his immortal existence, his brush with fragility proved too much to bear. The collapsing of boundaries, as AIDS became a disease for all sexualities, meant that a culture of body fear

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[161] William Patrick Day. *Vampire Legends in Contemporary American Culture: What Becomes a Legend Most*. p. 55
[162] Darryl Jones. *Horror: A Thematic History in Fiction and Film*. p. 98
[163] Susan Sontag. *Illness As Metaphor /AIDS And Its Metaphors*. p. 151

arose, and mass destruction was a shared rhetorical fear. The 1980s was notable for many cultural slipstreams, which continue to hold in the West. The return of overt greed and consumer fetishism (a reaction attributed to living in a state of fear) dominated the economics of the 1980s, and a new mantra was born - "greed is good".[164]

Consuming Youth: The Vampires of MTV, Economics and Plastic Surgery

During the 1980s, under the patriarchy of President Ronald Reagan, a former actor and image-maker de jour, a mass movement of professional consumerism took hold. Consumption was becoming an a culturally osmotic process; what became chic and desirable on television and in magazines was a recycling of advertising strategies encouraging consumers to consume more. Consumerism and vampirism is an age-old and far reaching relationship, from Marx's metaphors of the bourgeoisie as vampiric overlords to 1980s Lestat, consumerism became a fetish that permeated the culture with lasting and damaging results. The definitions of success – to have or have not – and the perceived powers which this definition affords supersede the economic truths of the American Dream of the 1980s and constructed a mirror of falsities. The image became the substance by which one's worth was measured; in the era of Reaganite selfishness, vampires are defined "not [by] their powers, but their assets".[165] Body image and plastic surgery became fetishes and desirable ends in themselves, as did the projected images of MTV and ownership at any cost. Political, economic, and class consumptions and the image of ownership pans the scope of this section on late 1980s texts, as we see the vampire becoming a consumer of others, reflecting the image based relationship 1980s culture had on the buying and selling of image.

The issue of ownership, particularly in the area of property, has been identified by academics as the initial response of horror filmmakers to Reagan's presidency. Ownership and consumption of property, in the terms of the most

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[164] *Wall Street*. Dir. Oliver Stone. 20th Century Fox, 1987. This famous line is delivered by Gordon Gekko (Michael Douglas) and became the signature mantra of 1980s materialism.
[165] Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. p. 58

notorious 1980s horror sub-genre, the slasher, has signalled the fixed state of often middle class victims, pitted against working class, transient and placeless killers. Private ownership soared as the model for personal success, which reflected Reagan's budget cuts in social projects and 'reduced government' policy. The welfare state and the legacy of Franklin Roosevelt's Great Society (whom Reagan admitted was his only 'real' political hero) were dismantled piece by piece by a new vision of Reaganomics. Reaganomics consisted of radically reducing social spending, Medicare and social security, cutting $25 billion in 1981 while simultaneously cutting taxes over a five-year period by $750 billion. Presumably in an attempt to fulfil his election promises that "never again would America be subject to humiliation at the hands of the Soviet Union",[166] Reagan won congressional approval to increase defence expenditures to $1.2 trillion.[167] Clearly, the finances did not add up. By increasingly promoting a nation secure in its global position while disenfranchising the vulnerable at home, Reagan's policies manifested these anxieties in a similar cycle in the horror film; if the 1950s model of the Red Scare was manifest in invasion films like *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), the same fears of outsider economic invasion and destruction are predominant in the roots of the slasher genre. The detraction of social infrastructure fractured the already fragile American tiered system into lines that discriminated against those condemned to a lower source of income, mainly within the Black and Hispanic communities. And while these economic lines do not seek to segregate on the basis of skin colour, the likelihood of white people's success in economic terms far outweigh their fellow Black and Hispanic citizens. Ownership of a home, a predominantly white middle and upper class luxury, translated into a culture of fear of those who were in a state of transience. Aviva Briefel and Sianne Ngai argue that the ownership of property and the sense of entitlement it brings reveals a paradoxical position of being both frightened and empowered in Reagan's America:

> Victims in these films are consistently white, suburban residents engaged in middle- class routines of moving to a single-family home, celebrating holidays, or going on vacation. The characters

[166] William H. Chafe. *The Unfinished Journey*. p. 473-474
[167] ibid. p. 473

> who seem to have the most claim to being afraid are thus themselves owners or future inheritors of property, as if the entitlements of material ownership automatically extend to the psychological or affective realm.[168]

The reading of slasher victims in the context of property ownership is quite relevant here, in that the usual setting of the slasher film is centred on everyday middle class anxieties or activities, such as babysitting (*Halloween*), the prom (*Prom Night*) or family events (*Happy Birthday To Me*).[169] The often-transient killer is the victim of Reaganomics, unlike his/her victims who are afforded political representation, and is always hinted to be of a lower class than the victims he chooses. Representing the fear of the middle classes, to be politically destabilised or forgotten, the slasher's own history of a past misdeed is often due to their personal economic instability. Within this instability of budget cuts and severely reduced public housing, the slasher film "raises the troubling question of *where* these newly displaced individuals would go."[170] The slasher's own experience of pain, fear and violence is then usually transferred onto a new set of middle-class, white teenagers representing those who are expected to survive Reaganomics, while the killer, by being transient, never can.

In both *Friday the 13th* (1980) and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), we see the slasher's history of physical destruction in relation to the property they serve or inhabit rather than own. Freddy Kruger's position as school janitor, who was burned to death by vigilante parents believing him to be a child molester, casts a shadow of servitude to a property that cannot be owned because it is a state-funded body. In *Friday the 13th* Mrs. Voorhees, mother to the series' hockey-masked chainsaw-wielding killer Jason, works as the cook for the summer camp, as a servant to the middle class teenage camp counsellors. As she is revealed to be the camp's killer, it emerges that twenty

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[168] Aviva Briefel, Sianne Ngai. "'How much did you pay for this place?' Fear, Entitlement, and Urban Space in Bernard Rose's *Candyman*". *Camera Obscura*. Vol. 37. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1996. p.71

[169] Virtually every holiday and cultural event experienced the slasher treatment in the early 1980s as the cycle generated a formula, which needed only a threadbare setting in order to produce a slasher film.

[170] Aviva Briefel, Sianne Ngai. "'How much did you pay for this place?' Fear, Entitlement, and Urban Space in Bernard Rose's *Candyman*. p. 74

years earlier, the counsellors had ignored Jason's drowning cries for help as they made love. Interviewed in *Going to Pieces*, a documentary charting the life of slasher film, Betsy Palmer revealed her entire character history for Mrs. Voorhees, which further explains the displacement of the slasher in relation to property:

> I can tell why Mrs. Voorhees is the way she is. One place in the script, there is a hand that has a high school ring on it – a male's high school ring and we girls always wore the boy's class ring, you went steady but you didn't have a sexual relationship... they did make love and she became pregnant. She told him and he [didn't want to know]. Her father has a fit; you're a tramp, you have no business being a part of this family, *get out*, so she leaves. She went to the Salvation Army and she had the baby there. [When make-up artist Tom Savini revealed that Jason was mongoloid to Betsy Palmer, she adapted her back-story] She takes this job at the camp so he [Jason] can be with other children and the counsellors were there off making love. Somewhere her little boy was off swimming and the kid drowns. Mrs. Voorhees is the perfect mother – not only will she kill for her son, she'll die for him.[171]

Freddy's boiler room and Jason's Camp Crystal Lake are sites of transition for property owners or middle-class children, in that they use the sites temporarily, rather than the punished figures that subsequently haunt them.[172]

The position of being frightened or targeted in the slasher film recognises the class of the victim, the victim's security within their class prior to their onscreen destruction and allows them the position of being both secure in their assured politics while being perpetually afraid of its loss at the hands of the 'other'. And despite this narrative of impending political, social and economic destruction surrounding 1980s America, the white suburb continues to endure

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[171] *Going to Pieces*. Dir. Unaccredited. Producer Rachel Belofsky, Think Film, USA, 2006

[172] For more on this see Sorcha Ní Fhlainn. "Sweet, Bloody Vengeance: Class, Social Stigma and Servitude in the Slasher Genre" in Holly Baumgartner and Roger Davis (eds.) *Hosting the Monster: Critical Essays on the Monstrous.* New York: Rodopi, 2008. pp. 179-196

in film after film, while the killer's motives, history and methods of bloodletting shift. The ideal of the white suburban neighbourhood consistently survives these narratives, despite any invading slasher or vampire, which "ultimately suggests a fantasy of its resilience to the changes embodied in the face of the haunter, who functions as an emblematic representation of change itself."[173] By polarising the working class through exclusionary policies, marking the working class as potential monster, the middle class hopes to survive through consumerist realpolitik. However, this consumption is of a two-fold nature: the slasher, who was once consumed by the exclusions that Reaganomics inflicted, now like Goya's Saturn, devours and punishes the young.

Fig. 2.11 Francisco Goya's *Saturn Devouring His Son*
1819 - 1823

[173] Aviva Briefel, Sianne Ngai. "'How much did you pay for this place?' Fear, Entitlement, and Urban Space in Bernard Rose's *Candyman* p. 73

MTV: Vampire TV

For middle class American teenagers, the ideals of Reaganite consumerism was broadcast via the music station MTV. Launched on August 1st 1981, MTV was a revolutionary move in the music industry, by playing music videos by upcoming and established artists twenty-four hours a day. The hype surrounding this new, fresh music channel, which marketed itself as a new beginning for youth culture - using the highly potent image of the Apollo 11 astronauts on the moon in July 1969 bearing an MTV flag instead of the American flag [174] - was an ideal outlet for advertising to the youth market: "It wasn't long before MTV was available everywhere in the States, and it was a mandatory teenage accessory."[175] By placing itself as a niche in the market of rebellion via musical influence and consumerism, MTV fit all the requirements to gain access to parental cash flow via the impressionable youth. This new imagery of power, influence, fame and immortality taught the young to consume their path to happiness and to crave images of Reaganite success. "MTV is producing the art form of the schizophrenic experience - with the possible consequence that the self is no longer unified, but fragmented and incoherent - conducted by capitalist forces of the culture industry that wishes to encourage obedient consumerist behavior."[176] The consumption of products advertised or endorsed by celebrities on MTV became lucrative.[177] Featured artists found that album sales increased when new music videos were received well by the target audience. In the case of Michael Jackson's groundbreaking "Thriller" video and album, MTV became the catalyst that immortalized Jackson onscreen as a solo artist.[178] Commenting on the fluidity of 20th century

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[174] This was the first of many MTV advertising campaigns, which imbedded the MTV logo into popular culture history. Other popular depictions include Edvard Munch's *Scream* painting with the MTV logo etched onto the screaming figure's exposed tonsils.

[175] David Konow. *Bang Your Head: The Rise and Fall of Heavy Metal*. London: Plexus, 2006. p. 134

[176] Liv I. Storli. "The Unbearable Lightness of MTV'ing" p. 11 Masters Diss. available online at: http://defekt.nl/~liv/project/thesis.pdf Accessed 03/04/07.

[177] Pepsi Cola ran several ad campaigns on MTV with stars including Michael Jackson, Madonna and Michael J Fox to run in conjunction with each star's promotions of new albums and films. MTV is also responsible for the career launch of comedian Denis Leary, who advertised MTV as a product in a series of one minute rants on modern America culture. Leary became a massive stand-up star overnight.

[178] Michael Jackson's "Thriller" was the longest video to run on MTV, totalling twelve minutes. The video is considered to be the most groundbreaking of its time (1983) and is still voted as the best video in music countdown documentaries. Directed by horror veteran John Landis, Jackson's video depicts him as a zombie who dances with the dead and metamorphosises into a werewolf. The song also features a 'rap' by Vincent Price (another

Gothic, Fred Botting elaborates: "In this respect, Gothic, always nourished in popular culture, is perfectly at home... Michael Jackson's video for the song 'Thriller' runs the gamut of visual mutations of terror which, though alluding to Gothic metamorphoses, draws widely on images popularized in cinematic representations of horror".[179] Just as MTV sought to promote and capitalise on its consumptive role, Jackson's video re-imagined and repackaged the Gothic for the 1980s audience.

The quest for immortality via MTV is one in which consumption of the image becomes essentially vampiric. The vampiric essence of this relationship – to feed off the young through their collective hopes, dreams and frustrations by promoting consumption as a gateway to happiness and fulfillment – is the central theme of two vampire novels in which the protagonist vampire is a rock star adopted by the MTV generation: Timmy Valentine of S.P Somtow's *Vampire Junction* and Anne Rice's Lestat in *The Vampire Lestat.* Both characters in these novels openly abuse the attention of their fans via MTV's powerful imagery. By using their fame to gain access to their fans, these vampires are provided with an unlimited supply of victims and afforded the privilege of keeping their lifestyle covert. Their selling of the vampire image both taps into the despair felt by the youth culture in both novels while simultaneously discrediting the truth to the audience that both characters are *actually* vampires.

> Lestat's genius, like Timmy Valentine's in *Vampire Junction*, is to package himself explicitly as a vampire, though while Timmy seemed uncomfortable with this commercialized posture, Lestat revels in it... His unapologetic visibility as a wanton fiend allows him to celebrate his predatory superiority while at the same time metaphorically expressing a subcultural deviance that marks him as implicitly queer. In the process, he at once feeds and feeds upon his youthful fans' desires.[180]

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beloved horror veteran) but amazingly vampires are completely absent from this homage to horror.

[179] Fred Botting. *Gothic*. London: Routledge, 1996. pp. 155-156

[180] Rob Latham. *Consuming Youth*. p. 129

And yet, the character of Timmy Valentine - a youthful child soprano turned into a vampire, now a pubescent and androgynous rock star in looks – recognises the adaptation of the vampire image since the dawn of MTV. Speaking to his appointed psychiatrist Carla Rubens, which reads as being directly influenced by Suzy McKee Charnas's *The Vampire Tapestry* in which the vampire Weyland and psychiatrist Floria have an identical interaction, Timmy reveals his inner conflict with the pre-MTV image while attempting to convince Carla that he is a vampire.

> 'Who am I? Lugosi, Lee, Langella? ...Those movies that so fascinate you mortals only touch on the myths. I am not a myth, Ms. Rubens. I am a distillation of men's most secret terrors, a summary of their million shapes of alienation. That is why I am hungrier than ever before – why for the first time I am being seen by millions, worshipped by children, lusted after by adults'.[181]

In an age where MTV rules the desires of the young, and capitalises on the greed of adults, both Timmy and Lestat are aware that the subscription to image is perilous and overexposes the vampire kind. Also, while it reduces the image of the vampire to mere gimmickry, it simultaneously hides the vampire kind in the public space of television leading to mass disbelief in vampires *because* it appears as gimmickry. Equated with the imagery of David Bowie, whose celebrated androgyny and previous role as a vampire in Tony Scott's *The Hunger* is significantly both chic and yuppie, the vampire of the 1980s on MTV must both consume and propagate an image that appeals to and permeates through the target audience. Yuppie desires and consumption in 1980s America stemmed, for Generation X mostly, from MTV. Lestat styles himself similarly in the wake of Bowie's vampiric performance; both as an actor and performer Bowie's appeal lies in his constantly shifting self-imaging: "For it is fairly obvious that, like Bowie's adoption of extraterrestrial personae in his 1970s incarnations, smuggling of 'deviant' eroticism into the mainstream of youth consumption, a diffusion facilitated by the 'electronic tentacles'[182] of

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[181] S.P. Somtow. *Vampire Junction*. London: Gollancz Horror, 1985. p. 17
[182] Anne Rice. *The Vampire Lestat*. p.520

the MTV apparatus."[183] Just as Claudia observes in Neil Jordan's *Interview with the Vampire* (1994), "Vampires pretending to be human pretending to be vampires – how avant garde!",[184] the power in the use of consumptive vampires on MTV is to disguise them as cliché, diminishing the monstrous elements of the vampire, until it has become a farce or parody of the image so propagated by Bela Lugosi or Christopher Lee.

Yuppies in 1980s America were the high-living epitome of the vampire experience. As vampires were styled in the fashion of rock icons (most certainly styled to be a rebellious outlet, one of maintaining a youthful outlook) and beautiful facades (as Rice's vampires must be beautiful in order to become and to be accepted as vampires by their insular community), popular culture marketed vampirism not only as a desirable rebellion and significant social status, it combined "fantasies of social wealth, sexual freedom and youthful potency... consumerist narcissism"[185] and membership of the new bourgeoisie.

Yuppie Consumerism

Undoubtedly, the parallels between vampirism and yuppie consumption are examined in Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho*, whose characters are obsessed with image, are consumptive and cruel, and exude a hard-edged physical sleekness and slickness – vampires among the corporate classes. Ellis's serial killer, Patrick Bateman, narrates with obsessive detail his appearance, his cavalier attitude towards women and drugs, a dysfunctional dependence on consumer luxuries as evidentiary proof of his personal worth, while deriving considerable perverse pleasures from torturing and mutilating victims who are either disposable or adversarial. Quite simply, Patrick Bateman is a yuppie beyond any constraints, with a very real taste for blood and suffering. In a similar vein to this worship of greed and consuming others, Robert Bierman's *Vampire's Kiss* (1989) narrates a similar terrain on the bleak landscape presented in modern day New York, casting the yuppie as the most vampiric threat in the culture. While predated by Jay McInerney's 'love letter to New York', *Bright Lights, Big City* (1984) - a novel written in the second

[183] Rob Latham. *Consuming Youth*. p. 131
[184] *Interview With the Vampire*. Dir. Neil Jordan. Geffen Pictures, 1994.
[185] Rob Latham. *Consuming Youth*. p. 99

person thus collapsing the space between author and reader - *Vampire's Kiss* shares the same cultural obsession with image and appearance, and is populated by characters who also embody the hollow emptiness of the culture of consumption. Frequently, McInerney describes Amanda, the narrator's ex-wife, in terms of the shallow consumptive woman whose success as a fashion model is as vampiric and empty as the world we, as readers, are thrust into."You stand in front of Saks Fifth Avenue and stare at the mannequin.... This is how she looked at the end, the blank stare, the lips tight and reticent. When did she become a mannequin?"[186]

As Day states, "This is emptiness in the midst of plenty rather than in the midst of decay, a future that looks bright but has no real value."[187] This model of consumptive emptiness turns murderous in both *Vampire's Kiss* and *American Psycho* by navigating the expected standards of upper class behaviour – perfectionism, class consumption, sexual gratification and body obsession, aligning the image so completely with vampirism. Patrick Bateman's moment of self-realisation, articulated entirely within his own mind, reveals the depths of his nihilistic, parasitic vampiric psychosis:

> There is an idea of a Patrick Bateman, some kind of abstraction, but there is no real me, only an entity, something illusory, and though I can hide my cold gaze and you can shake my hand and feel flesh gripping yours and maybe you can even sense our lifestyles are probably comparable: *I am simply not there.* [Ellis's emphasis] It is hard for me to make sense on any given level. Myself is fabricated, an aberration. I am a noncontingent human being. My personality is sketchy and unformed, my heartlessness goes deep and is persistent. My conscience, my pity, my hopes disappeared a long time ago (probably at Harvard) if they ever did exist. There are no more barriers to cross. All I have in common with the uncontrollable and the insane, the vicious and the evil all the mayhem I have caused and my utter indifference toward it, I have now surpassed. I still,

[186] Jay McInerney. *Bright Lights, Big City*. London: Vintage, 1984. p. 78
[187] William Patrick Day. *Vampire Legends in Contemporary American Culture: What becomes a Legend Most*. p. 97

> though, hold on to one single bleak truth: no one is safe, nothing is redeemed. Yet I am blameless. Each model of human behaviour must be assumed to have some validity. Is evil something you are? Or is it something you do? My pain is constant and sharp and I do not hope for a better world for anyone. In fact I want my pain inflicted on others. I want no one to escape. But even after admitting this – and I have, countless times, in just about every act I've committed – and coming face-to-face with these truths, there is no catharsis. I gain no deeper knowledge about myself, no new understanding can be extracted from my telling. There has been no reason for me to tell you any of this. This confession has meant *nothing* [Ellis's emphasis]...[188]

The nature of Bateman's psychosis mirrors that of the yuppie vampire completely, and is within the same cultural commentary as the 1989 film, *Vampire's Kiss*. Bierman's film openly compares the soulless existence of Peter Loew (Nicolas Cage) to that of Count Orlok from Murnau's *Nosferatu*. Unlike Patrick Bateman, who never identifies himself with vampirism but actively consumes others in the hope of attaining some form of mastery, Loew initially expresses his psychotic tendencies to his new secretary Alva (Maria Conchita Alonso) as a source of amusement. Loew preys on Alva with hellish tasks, obscene remarks and late nights at the office, feeding upon her obvious terror. Initially, Peter believes he has been bitten by the vampiress Rachel (Jennifer Beals), as he begins to notice physical changes; he thinks he casts no reflection (yet we can see it), and talks to himself. However, we are unsure if his actions are a result of a psychological breakdown, or if he has truly become a vampire.

At its core, *Vampire's Kiss* politically reduces yuppies to monstrous consumers; consumers of capital, people (especially women) and vapid self-gratification. As Silver and Ursini note: "the clear sub-text of *Vampire's Kiss* is a critique of both male chauvinism and an oppressive capitalist society... it is not accidental that [Peter] has picked a Hispanic woman to abuse; as he himself

[188] Bret Easton Ellis. *American Psycho*. London: Picador, 1991. p. 362

says to her, in the corporate world, 'you are the lowest'."[189] Eventually, after displaying severe mental illness and attacking a random woman in a nightclub with plastic fangs, he socially and mentally unravels - "immobilized in psychosis"[190] - becoming one of New York's 'walking crazies' (bag ladies, mumbling panhandlers), eventually eating a pigeon. He begins to emulate Count Orlok, copying his distinctive look, stare and movement – Cage's physical stiffness and accent does create a mood of tension and a distinct homage to German Expressionism. After finally losing all grasp on reality, Peter rapes Alva in his last attempt to consume her. In the aftermath of the attack, he tries to kill himself with a gun Alva carries with her but fails as the gun was loaded with blanks. Peter construes this as his definite damnation as a vampire. He goes back to his dishevelled apartment, hiding under his couch which, upturned, functions as his coffin. Alva's brother Emilio, in retaliation, breaks in and kills him by stabbing him through the chest. Peter welcomes his demise, yet his death, however fitting, clarifies nothing about his existence as a human or vampire. Overall, the film equates yuppies with vampirism because of their overwhelming consumption of others in the class wars. Just as Marx configured the vampire as the bourgeois master bleeding the proletariat, Bierman's film also aligns this monstrosity to consumer capitalism gone awry. Just as Patrick Bateman's inner confession reveals the depths of his psychosis, so too does Peter's determination in informing Alva of her place in his office, in his corporate world; she is to be consumed by him because she hardly ranks at all:

> Alva, there is no one else in this entire office that I could possibly ask to share such a horrible job. You're the lowest on the totem pole here, Alva. The lowest. Do you realize that? Every other secretary here has been here longer than you, Alva. Every one. And even if there was someone here who was here even one day longer than you, I still wouldn't ask that person to partake in such a miserable job as long as you were around. That's right, Alva. It's a horrible, horrible job; sifting through old contract after old contract. I couldn't think of a more

[189] Alain Silver, James Ursini. *The Vampire Film*. p. 188
[190] Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. p. 166

horrible job if I wanted to. And you have to do it! You have to or I'll fire you. You understand? Do you? Good.[191]

Race also plays a part in the film's narrative, particularly in Peter's social circle. His girlfriend, a light-skinned black woman, Jackie (Kasi Lemmons), ranks much higher in his estimation that his Hispanic secretary, and yet, as his psychosis progresses, all women are reduced to "bitches and cunts".[192] As the film ends, the audience can feel only relief at Peter's demise, because, despite his despicable behaviour, his psychosis is far more disturbing than any form of vampirism he exhibits.

Paralleling the fierce competition within the Wall Street culture of 1980s consumerism was the determination to defy the aging process. The fixation on body culture in 1980s America was, in part, birthed by the advent of MTV, and the pressures to sell products, music and brands, based on the desirability of the body. The desire to attain a fixed look – ageless, perhaps a vain attempt at cultural immortality - defying any natural bodily process akin to the elixir of life, was vigorously promoted in Hollywood and consumptive culture. The body culture of the 1980s drastically shifted towards removing any evidence of imperfection – wrinkles, folds of fat or any unappealing features had to be reshaped, removed, or starved off.

Amid the climate of attaining the body beautiful, the slasher genre, with all of its excessive explosions, decompositions and destructive penetrations of the body, thrived. Bodies in the 1980s, when out of control or subjected to violence, dripped, oozed, were subject to slicing and evisceration, symbolized the ultimate destruction of both the projected desired image of the self and of political representation. The vulnerability of the body, displayed in ever-increasing graphic depictions, where "flesh becomes meat, the inside becomes outside, blood pours out, skin is stripped off, viscera exposed, heads detached. People die in any number of creatively disgusting ways."[193] The physical expectations of both men and women in 1980s cinema represented the hardened body, overly muscular and toned, recalling the physiques of action

[191] *Vampire's Kiss*. Dir. Robert Bierman. MGM, 1989.
[192] ibid.
[193] Cynthia A. Freeland. *The Naked and The Undead.* Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 2000. p. 242

heroes such as Arnold Schwarzenegger (a former body builder and seven time winner of Mr. Olympia) and Sylvester Stallone. Both Schwarzenegger and Stallone's physiques, despite continued speculation about their use of steroids to maintain their builds, were central to their most successful series of roles in 1980s cinema: *The Terminator* (1984, 1991, 2003) and *Predator* (1987); *Rambo* (1982, 1985, 1988, 2008) and *Rocky* (1976, 1982, 1985, 1990, 2006). The image of the muscular hero was presented as the ultimate display of American masculinity. If the body becomes a literal body politic, representations of the masculine, strong male, such as the action hero of the 1980s, came to represent the desired look from the outside world – associated with power, justice, superior strength and military precision – the controlled, impenetrable and powerful body. Richard Dyer described the 'White man's muscles' as follows: "the built body is hard and contoured, often resembling armour....present[ing] a look of hardness."[194] If the desired dream is the muscle-gleaned body, sleek, defined and impenetrable, the nightmare is the body in literal bits and pieces.

The female body in culture was similarly sculpted to present a toned body, with an obsessive emphasis on aerobics, crash diets, and subscriptions to fitness empires such as Jane Fonda's multitude of video workouts.[195] As Stacey Abbott concludes, "Rather than defining the self by the soul and/or the spirit, it became defined as the status of the body, the physical extension of the materialistic culture if the 1980s. The body was treated as a product upon which a newly constructed sense of self would be projected"[196]. In an attempt to keep the body under control, many turned to the promise of plastic surgery; face-lifts, tummy tucks, sculpting and reshaping eyes, noses and cheekbones, as well as liposuction, to remove any unappealing norms of the body which would indicate a lack of control or bodily impurity. Baudrillard described the postmodern culture as the gradual eradication of distinctions between reality and appearance – *simulacrum* - a blur which accounts for, in body culture, the

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[194] Richard Dyer. *White: Essays on Race and Culture*. London: Routledge, 1997. p. 152

[195] Interestingly, as Cher is figured as a 'simulated body', her biggest selling album *Heart of Stone*, released in 1989, was promoted through the best-selling single "If I Could Turn Back Time". The video for the song was restricted to a post-watershed playtime on MTV because of Cher's revealing costumes; it was also in this video that her new dependency on plastic surgery became very apparent.

[196] Stacey Abbott. *Celluloid Vampires*. p. 126

impossibility of distinguishing between constructed images of the body (through plasticity and surgery, in later years through CGI technology) and its actual 'normal' form. Through this distinction, the copy becomes more 'real' than the original. "In fact, it is no longer the real, because no imaginary envelops it anymore. It is a hyperreal, produced from a radiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace without atmosphere".[197] The simulated body is one which needs to consume more if it is to continue to defy natural progression, needing continuous attention, and further consumption. Susan Bordo understands pop icon Cher as the exemplary simulated body:

> We all 'know' that Cher and virtually every other star over the age of 25 is the plastic product of numerous cosmetic surgeries on face and body. Some of us can even remember what Cher *used* to look like... [Bordo's emphasis]. But in fact, Cher, Jane Fonda and others have not made the aging female body sexually more acceptable, they have established a new norm – achievable only through continual cosmetic surgery – in which the female body ceases to age physically as the body grows older.[198]

Within this media-saturated image of the body fantastic, the vampire body embraced the same concerns of aging and dieting; food became putrid and a poison to the body. In a decade which was obsessed with controlling the body through disorders such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia, over-exercising, amphetamine pills and diet fads, food was carefully portioned or wholly removed. It seems that the process of vampiric metamorphosis in the 1980s requires all rejection of common wholesome food, replaced with an insatiable hunger for repulsive 'unclean' substitutes, such as crawling cockroaches as seen in both *Fright Night 2* (1988) and *Vampire's Kiss* (1988) – embodying both the abject and possibly pica (a disorder where one has an uncontrollable urge to eat non-nutritive substances).[199] In Howard Storm's 1985 vampire sex

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[197] Jean Baudrillard. *Simulacra and Simulations*. 1983. Trans. Sheila Faria Glaser. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1994. p. 2

[198] Susan Bordo. "Feminism, Foucault and the Politics of the Body" in Ricardo Miguel-Alfonso, Silvia Caporale-Bizzini (eds) *Reconstructing Foucault: Essays in the Wake of the 80s*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994. p. 240

[199] Mary Douglas. *Purity and Danger*. 1966. London: Routledge, 2002. p. 56. Anything that creeps, crawls or swarms is deemed unclean because it is explicitly contrary to holiness.

comedy *Once Bitten*, a young ice cream truck driver Mark (Jim Carrey) becomes the latest victim of a vampire countess who must consume virginal blood in order to retain her beauty. The opening scene of the film establishes the Countess as a health fanatic – her home, complete with her vampire entourage, resembles a health spa. Mark gives The Countess (Lauren Hutton) ice cream to convey his gratitude for her hospitality but she discards it in disgust. Similarly, Mark reacts negatively to food after the first bite from the Countess. Occurring over a period of three successive bites, where the Countess "apparently bites her victims while giving them a blow-job"[200]; Mark displays more vampiric behaviour as his metamorphosis takes hold. At first, he appears merely pale and confused, then his attitude to food changes: he drinks the run-off blood from a raw roast beef, much to the disgust of his mother. At school, he asks the lunch lady not to cook his burger patty, stating a preference for the raw meat. His eating pattern is not part of a willing diet, but shows the power the vampire hunger has in suppressing and contaminating any normal food. The vampire hunger projects itself as revulsion for food. By the film's end, when the Countess fails in her third attempt to drain Mark by her Halloween deadline, she ages instantly into a decrepit old woman, as frail and as putrid as the grandfather in *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974). By failing in her diet of virgin blood, she has failed socially by losing her eternal youth and beauty.

The 1980s was a cultural decade of devouring and aggressively controlling the body under the construct of the perfect simulacra of success. Vampires of the period became frail, sick and consumed – by disease, psychosis or sunlight – exploding bodies, mindless consumption or by becoming trapped within the economic machinations of MTV and yuppie culture. The body became the core text of the decade, whether frail due to the ravaging of AIDS, blistering from the Religious Right's policies or by the simulated image of desire and success, literally starving themselves thin and androgynous. As Nina Auerbach notes, by the end of the 80s, vampires, worn weary from affliction and frailty, coupled with the dominance of Reaganism, limped towards their deaths – "the wisest of them were fatigued: unable to bear continual changing times, the

[200] Harry M. Benshoff. *Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality in the Horror Movie*. p. 245

elders of Anne Rice's ... novels crawled out of their stories to die."[201] In Rice's *Tale of the Body Thief*, Lestat, broken spirited by the 1980s, scorches his vampire flesh in the Gobi Desert, only to find a redemptive meaning in immortality after a failed body swap which briefly allows him to taste human frailty. Vampires, after this decade of consumptive greed and sickness, briefly hide, and become re-invigorated and re-assimilated into the human fold once more.

[201] Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. p. 192

Chapter 3: The Decade of Gothic Doubles: Feminist Slayers, Corporate Vampires and Independent Narratives - Clinton's Vampires

We danced in graveyards with vampires 'till dawn,
We laughed in the faces of Kings, never afraid to again.[1]

And now, an ending, where there was once one there are now two. Or were there always two? What is a reflection - a chance to see two? When there are chances for reflections, there can always be two or more.[2]

90s Gothic Culture and the 'Double' in Media and Television

The Gothic Double, in fiction, film and cultural configurations, is a familiar and predominantly tantalizing construct. From the pages of Poe's short stories to modern television's ceremonious unveiling of a celebrity with two faces, the gothic double is the inner divide exposed outward: "of giving expression to the conscious self-division, opposition, contradiction and ambiguity, and often shades off into, or interpenetrates with, related approaches and forms."[3] The Gothic culture of the 1990s was predominantly schizophrenic, in that, the vampires who embody the cultural phenomena of this decade are bound to their fate. Herdman asserts, "No concept is more central to the theme of the double. Again and again protagonists, confronted with an embodiment of the dark forces within their own natures, attribute their possession to the inscrutable workings of a destiny which they are powerless to evade."[4] Each vampire featured in this chapter is bound to their fate either through an imagined choice or unfortunate circumstance; either way, their fate is inescapable. Vampirism becomes an evocation of the hidden self, the dark half, and is illustrated through both fictional and cultural phenomena as a Kantian struggle between

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[1] Tori Amos "Little Earthquakes" from the album *Little Earthquakes* Sire Records, 1991.
[2] Log Lady Introductions to *Twin Peaks* (episode 29, aired June 10th 1991) when the doppelganger of protagonist Dale Cooper (Kyle McLachlan) is finally revealed in the Black Lodge. *Twin Peaks*. Dir. David Lynch, ABC Television. 1990-1991.
[3] John Herdman. *The Double in Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. London: MacMillan, 1990. p. 11
[4] ibid. p. 11

good and evil within the human soul.[5] Drawing this cultural decade together from April 1990 until September 10th 2001 [6] - the night before the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York, which were to forever mark the psyche of American identity – we see a pattern of gothic doubles emerging, in both popular culture and in vampire representations. Doubles, and the doubling of cultural figures, are signatures of the historical and artistic products of the 1990s. These emerge in part due to the increasing focus on the coming of the new millennium and because of the fracturing of political and cultural divides with the collapse of the Iron Curtain. Arising from a climate of Post Cold-War fragmentation and disparity, this decade thus became entirely separate, jarred and disjointed, a change from the uncompromising cynicism and greed of the 1980s. In other words, the 1990s was the archetypal postmodern decade. We must also take stock of the recent history and cultural fragmentation that ended the Cold War in 1989, resulting in factions, Balkanism, and historical revisionism, and the perception of an 'End of History' on the horizon. In light of the turbulent historical events of the late 1980s: the end of Cold War, the fall of empires and the removal of dictators (Ceaucescu among them could easily be cast as the most culturally vampiric), the future seemed uncertain, unpredictable and, to some, apocalyptic.[7] "As the 1980s gave way to the 1990s, the mood of those who reflected on the century's past and future was a growing *fin-de-siècle* gloom."[8] This feeling of *fin-de-siècle* gloom has been noted in "clusters of gothic activity - novels, art, cultural decadence – that accompanied the 1790s, 1890s and, ultimately, the 1990s."[9] David Punter suggests that gothic has "something quite specific to do with the turn of centuries, as though the very attempt to turn over a new leaf unavoidably involves conjuring the

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[5] ibid. p. 12

[6] On April 8th 1990, *Twin Peaks* premiered on ABC television. Arguably the beginning of the postmodern television show which centres on the gothic double and absent spaces in narrative, *Twin Peaks* marks the moment when the mainstream culture of the gothic captured audiences and renewed the television plot formula.

[7] Jerry B. Jenkins, Tim LaHaye. *Left Behind.* Illinois: Tyndale House, 1995. In the *Left Behind* series, which envisions the aftermath of the fundamentalist Christian 'Rapture' where all pure and saved souls ascend into heaven, an enigmatic political villain in the guise of Ceausescu appears, named Nicolae Carpathia. Perhaps this disquisition on Ceausescu is used to harbour both the authors' and readers' intense suspicions of the United Nations. The use of a clearly vampiric name immediately evokes a sense of recognisable 'evil' for the reader, and returns an immediate cast of 'otherness' to Eastern Europe.

[8] Eric Hobsbawm. *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991.* London: Abacus, 1994. p. 6

[9] Catherine Spooner. *Contemporary Gothic.* London: Reaktion Books, 2006. p. 21

shadow of the past."[10] Historians looked to the twentieth century's troubled and violent past with trepidation about our new possible future. Vampires of this period are inevitably 'split' also, from the independent and low budget filmmakers and cult writers who claim them as their protagonists in an uncertain world to the mass published, voluminous instalments of slick corporate depictions of the vampire by the eve of the millennium. As Satan re-appeared in film (in 1999 alone he figured centrally in *End of Days*, *Stigmata* and *The Ninth Gate*) at the dawn of the new millennium, so too did the vampire, now heavily funded by Hollywood and comparatively tame next to their independent predecessors. As with all the 90s texts and cultural frameworks discussed in this chapter, we come to analyse this period through the gothic double. While this gothic framework is not new in the 1990s in either cultural history or horror, it is the most prevalent theme. The gothic double permits multiple views of the factions emerging in a post-cold war era, where the face of one ideology masks a darker truth. The masks that vampires both construct and deconstruct in the 1990s are divided between those that were endorsed by the 'cult' audience and those adopted by Hollywood, television and the mass media. The delineation between these two subcategories emerges in the dual nature of these vampires – the first exploring the monstrous nature of vampirism and the second promoting the beautified, glamorous ideal of vampirism. Historically, the capitalist ideology (and its darker truths) emerges in post-cold war Europe, where after the fall of communism and elimination of dictatorships disintegrates into Balkanism, rife with violence, ethnic cleansing and genocide.

Historian Eric Hobsbawm believed that "the collapse of the communist regimes between Istria and Vladivostok not only produced an enormous zone of political uncertainty, instability, chaos and civil war" [11] but destroyed previously held traditional meanings and group identities. In the aftermath "there was no other way to define group identity, except by defining the outsiders who were not in it."[12] The trauma of the disintegration of national and political identities outside of Western democracies fuelled political

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[10] David Punter. "Introduction: Of Apparitions" in Glennis Byron, David Punter (eds) *Spectral Readings: Towards a Gothic Geography*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 1999. p. 2
[11] Eric Hobsbawm. *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991*. p. 10
[12] ibid. p. 11

philosophers such as Francis Fukuyama to famously declare that we were indeed on the brink of the 'End of History'. His article and subsequent book on History's end, entitled *The End of History and The Last Man*, defines History "not the occurrence of events, even large and grave events but History: understood as a single coherent, evolutionary process, when taking into account the experience of all peoples in all times."[13] In citing the then recent events of the fall of communism in the former Soviet Union and the uprising in Tiananmen Square in 1989, The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and victims of Pol Pot's regime, Fukuyama envisions the 'End of History' in the eventual demise of all forms of government outside of liberal democracy:

> The apparent number of choices that countries face in determining how they will organize themselves politically and economically has been *diminishing* over time [Fukuyama's emphasis]. Of the different types of regimes that have emerged in the course of human history, from monarchies and aristocracies, to religious theocracies, to the fascist and communist dictatorships of this century, the only form of government that has survived intact to the end of the twentieth century has been liberal democracy.[14]

Indeed Fukuyama's influential and compelling argument marked the 1990s as the era of the inevitable 'End of History', presumably because of Hobsbawm's historical analysis of a feeling of perpetual uncertainty in global identities and cultural fragmentation. If Fukuyama's prediction is now seen to be premature, or indeed Eurocentric, it is only due to the assumption that the fractures produced by the fall of communism have been accounted for by the academics and commentators of last remaining superpower in the world: The United States. Such expected mirroring of values, economics and gradual incorporation of liberal democracy by states in increasing uncertainty is partly to quell the feeling of 'historic crisis'.

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[13] Francis Fukuyama. *The End of History and The Last Man*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992. p. xii

[14] ibid. p. 45

When approaching 'moments' of historic crisis, it becomes clear that such sentiment lends itself to historical revisionism in fiction. This revisionism is expressed in either of two forms: the 'found' manuscript format of Umberto Eco's *The Name of The Rose* (1980), *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) and Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves* (2000), or fake/revisionist histories seen in the vampire novels of Kim Newman and Anne Rice's continuation of the Vampire Chronicles. In Jonathan Bignell's reading of Fredric Jameson's influential essay on the postmodern moment in 'Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism', he states: "In this formulation of the end of history, contemporary culture has ceased to innovate or move forward, and the past is being perpetually recycled and reworked in the present."[15] Blind to the possibilities of envisioning a future, it is as though we are forced to look back in order to translate current cultural phenomena, constantly reinterpreting myth, ideology and history: Baudrillard states that: "This is our destiny: The end of the end. We are in a transfinite universe".[16] Bignell continues on Baudrillard's argument, "The function of utopias and dystopias is therefore one of alibi or deterrence, since there cannot be any imagination of a future which is possible."[17] The layering of the revisionist histories (and its success as a plot device to further the vampire's integration) relies on the reader's knowledge of the original text, period of time, or mythology presented for re-investigation. Such supposition is crucial to the success of the format, and often depends on the artefacts of the period, or recognisable representations of the text, to identify it clearly. In effect, we must, as readers, read back in order to propel the gothic text forward, enabling

> a shift which obligates us in addition to underscore the cultural sources of all the attributes with which we have endowed the period, many of which seem very precisely to derive from its

[15] Jonathan Bignell. *Postmodern Media Culture*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000. p. 66

[16] Jean Baudrillard. "Figures on the Transpolitical" in *Revenge of The Crystal: Selected Writings on the Modern Object and its Destiny, 1968 – 1983*. Trans. Paul Foss, Julian Pefanis. London: Pluto Press, 1999. p. 197.

[17] Jonathan Bignell. *Postmodern Media Culture*. pp. 66-67 Baudrillard quoted from: Jean Baudrillard. *Fatal Strategies*. Trans. P. Beitchman & W. Neisluchowski. London: Pluto, 1990. p. 70

> own television programs; in other words, its own representation of itself.[18]

It also allows a doubling to occur by way of reading not only the revisionist text but also its original form. Thus reading revisionist novels, which openly premise the alteration of culturally established myths and texts, encourages the reader not only to read the text, but also to read the original text, resulting in 'doubling' and reading both texts intertextually. However, reading both high culture texts and current popular fictions, acting intertextually, does evoke a sense of delineation between acceptable (high culture) and unacceptable (low or popular culture) texts - a boundary that postmodernism essentially blurs by endorsing both. This boundary is blurred by postmodern texts, which envision the end of history by retracing classical texts, to explicate possible yet unpredictable futures, particularly at Gothic's turn of the century. In particular, two postmodern texts, *The Name of the Rose* (1980) and *Se7en* (1995) challenge the cathartic reaction of the bourgeois disenfranchisement of postmodernism's endorsement of high and low cultural texts, by appropriately deploying medieval texts to solve modern murder mysteries in detective fiction. While no vampires are present in either example, each text illustrates the postmodern trait of encompassing both high and low cultural references to reward the viewer(s) in its genre construct (the serial killer film) and the references on past literary texts to further the plot and further elaborate on high concept clues.[19] This format is frequently employed when approaching revisionist history novels, thriving on a narrative space which reinforces intertextuality (especially within the vampire genre).

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[18] Fredric Jameson. *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.* p. 281. Jameson argues that the cultural artefacts of the period are noted by the production of images from the period, and its imaginary reflection and projection of that period, within itself. We are therefore, according to Jameson, consuming the construction of the image rather than the 'historical' period / person. This is also true of constant reconfigurations of vampire images which continuously look back to the images of Max Schreck or Bela Lugosi, rather than a textual analysis of Stoker's novel.

[19] Texts lie at the core of solving both mysteries, and the pivotal scenes in both texts are situated in libraries. William of Baskerville (a reference to Sherlock Holmes by Eco), determined to solve the murders within the monastery, marvels at the texts contained in the abbey's library, as does *Se7en*'s William Somerset (Morgan Freeman), who recognises also the importance of classical texts in solving the identically framed seven murders in seven days plot. The library becomes the centre point of both texts as it reveals not only the horrors yet to occur - Fincher's film provides clues to the beheading of Tracy (Gwyneth Paltrow) by focusing on images of severed heads in Gustav Doré's illustrations - but the initial inspiration for the murders. See Jonathan Bignell. *Postmodern Media Culture.* pp. 92-94

In essence, if our future is apocalyptic, it requires knowledge from past scholarship to survive beyond it. By reading 'subversive' books, Eco's mystery,

> is a debate over the future course of cultural history, because the librarian-killer wishes to banish frivolous texts and subjects from the library and thus culture itself. His method is to poison the pages of the forbidden book, so that its readers commit unintentional suicide when crossing the border between legitimate and illegitimate knowledge. The questions raised by the film are who controls what can be read, and who has the knowledge and skill which will allow him or her to read signs correctly.[20]

Similarly, in the denouement of *Se7en*, it is through the cataloguing of 'subversive literatures' by the FBI that allows Somerset to correctly identify the killer John Doe (Kevin Spacey) though his reading habits. Just as *The Name of The Rose* clearly identifies William of Baskerville with Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, and is structured in the detective fiction genre, it rewards those familiar with high culture texts, also clearly depicted in *Se7en*, while stylised and constructed in a popular, 'lower' cultural framework. Both texts are "art movie[s] with intellectual credentials, careful structuring, striking visual design, and a downbeat ending[21] and also popular cinema, being a serial killer film, a star vehicle and a police [/detective] thriller."[22] However, in this mixture of gothic culture, films or novels that connects conceptually high and low marks of culture and knowledge, postmodern imaginings of the Gothic bleed outward, and become increasingly decadent. The decadence of Gothic in the early 1990s is largely founded on the overly-saturated market of Hollywood horror sequels, the shallow commercial cash-ins at the box office, resulted in many of the decade's early slasher films (and their villains) transforming from shocking, menacing and provocative to splatter comic

[20] Jonathan Bignell. *Postmodern Media Culture*. p. 92
[21] Neither film offers hope nor virtue survival, as both Tracey (the only depiction of virtue in *Se7en*) is murdered, and Aristotle's forbidden book, 'On Comedy' is destroyed when the Abbey's library is burned.
[22] Jonathan Bignell. *Postmodern Media Culture*. p. 94

parody. In this mode of saturation, the decadence of Gothic, its distinct flavour and cinematic style, had become jaded.

Gothic American Television

In the early 90s, popular American television shows were primarily focused on Californian teenage and twenty-something lives, from *Beverly Hills 90210* to *Baywatch*. The Gothic and horror genres suffered a tremendous downturn from the late 1980s, creating a vacuum in high budget horror film production, yet a small but significant video industry:

> The majority of teen horror films released between 1986 to 1990 all had scant, if any, theatrical releases, but many gained their profits in the growing video trade... Sequels, which were often akin to remakes, became standard practice for any film that gained the slightest attention; the three most enduring franchises became *Halloween*, *Friday the 13th*, and *Nightmare* [*on Elm Street*], with at least seven versions of each.[23]

Despite this saturation of the horror genre, horror television was to become a signature of the 1990s. Fred Botting predicted that, with the lavish and decadent production of Coppola's *Dracula* in 1992, Gothic was, effectively, dead.

> With Coppola's Dracula, then, Gothic dies, divested of its excesses, of its transgressions, horrors and diabolical laughter, of its brilliant gloom and rich darkness, of its artificial and suggestive forms. Dying, of course, might just be the prelude to other spectral returns.[24]

While relatively few vampires featured in the rise and maintained interest in early 90s gothic television, its significance in the development of the vampire genre, and to a greater extent, the horror genre of the period should not be

[23] Timothy Shary, David Considine. *Generation Multiplex: The Image of Youth in Contemporary American Cinema*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2002. pp.140-141
[24] Fred Botting. *Gothic*. p. 180

underestimated. Fredric Jameson's description of the Gothic as "that boring and exhausted paradigm"[25] implies that Gothic's revival was one of a slow ascent and revivification in the mainstream, televisual culture, while experiencing a decadent (and therefore saturated) Grand Guignol, carnivalesque offering from Coppola. Fred Botting's apt description of Coppola's *Dracula* being the most decadent example of the vampire film[26] is certainly true, however, both Jameson and Botting collectively ignore the significance of Gothic television as a separate medium; essentially a scheduled, low budget production which could not rely on gory make-up and high budget special effects to draw an audience, contributing to a temporary paring back of the gothic tale to its earlier origins and deeply spiralling plots, and thus redeeming it from the over-utilised sequel machinations by the film studios in the late 1980s. Whether it is the production of soap styled shows such as *Twin Peaks*, the horrors abroad (famine, war and genocide) or the spectacle of familiar celebrities revealing a dark secret to the world via Oprah, Larry King or any other modern confessionals, television became the place of Gothic revelations in the 1990s; Magic Johnson's retirement from basketball after being diagnosed HIV +; Jordan Chandler's allegations against Michael Jackson for sexual molestation; O.J Simpson's shocking televised trial for the murder of his wife Nicole Brown and Ronald Goldman; Susan Smith drowning her children after she initially reported they were abducted by a unknown black assailant - this list is merely representative of the most infamous cases of 90s Gothic doubles and is owed much due consideration. Despite early 90s Gothic television's lack in producing televisual vampires (with the exception of Nick Knight in *Forever Knight* and the temporary resuscitation of Barnabus Collins in a remake of *Dark Shadows*), it warrants further investigation due to the overwhelming gothic boom which continually developed through to 2001, and the impact these gothic doubles had on vampiric representations throughout the entire decade. Catherine Spooner remarks that despite some critics desire to marginalise gothic as "invested with subversive potential [or] cult underground predilection; a form in which the dark unconscious desires of our pleasure-

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[25] Fredric Jameson. *Postmodernism, or The Cultural logic of Late Capitalism.* p. 289

[26] While Coppolla's Dracula is a product of the early 90s return to the Victorian text, and was probably highly influential in the spawning of other similarly-styled films including Kenneth Branagh's version of *Frankenstein*- it is without doubt that the rising interest in Gothic re-emerged in the public eye through influential gothic television such as Mark Frost's and David Lynch's series *Twin Peaks*.

seeking society are exposed and dissected", gothic is everywhere in popular culture; from television and cinema to chart-topping CDs [27] and New York Times bestsellers. Just as Fredric Jameson correlated the postmodern movement's fascination with the then anticipated 'End of History', "everything, including commodity production and high and speculative finance, has become cultural; and culture has equally become profoundly economic or commodity orientated."[28] Spooner comments:

> Yet Stephen King, writer of popular horror novels, is America's bestselling author, the vampire chronicler Anne Rice is not far behind. The self-styled 'Anti-Christ Superstar' Marilyn Manson has sold millions of copies of his Gothic-influenced albums across the world, while neo-Goth band Evanescence spent four weeks at the top of the British charts in 2003. Gothic images are used on television to sell everything from Smirnoff vodka[29] to Ariel washing-powder... By the turn of the twentieth century, Gothic had consolidated its position as the material of mainstream entertainment.[30]

Described by Mark Edmundson in *Nightmare on Main Street* as America's *fin de siècle,*[31] the 1990s, for Edmundson, began on Oscar Night March 30th 1992, when *The Silence of The Lambs* won a total of five Oscars [32] – a feat unknown

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[27] The Brooklyn based band Type O Negative released their platinum album *Bloody Kisses* on Roadrunner Record in 1993, to much critical acclaim, with lead singer Peter Steele baring his self-filed incisor fangs repeatedly in their numerous videos and on the band's cover art. The singles from *Bloody Kisses* secured the band's popularity, with their vampiric videos in heavy rotation on MTV.

[28] Fredric Jameson. *The Cultural Turn*. London: Verso, 1998. p. 73

[29] The Smirnoff Vodka campaign featured four gothic looking women staring into a mirror while adjusting their make-up. As is the usual style with Smirnoff ads, a vodka bottle provides a prism and rests over one of the women, who, it is revealed, casts no reflection at all. She is the most gothic and beautiful of all the women without the counterfeit effect of make-up because she is a vampire.

[30] Catherine Spooner. *Contemporary Gothic*. p. 25.

[31] Mark Edmundson. *Nightmare on Main Street: Angels, Sadomasochism and The Culture of Gothic*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997. p.3

[32] *The Silence of The Lambs* won the top five Oscars of 1991 (ceremony held March 30th 1992) – Best Adapted Screenplay (Ted Tally), Best Picture (Edward Saxton, Kenny Utt, Ronald M. Bozman - producers) Best Director (Jonathan Demme) Best Actress (Jodi Foster) and Best Actor (Anthony Hopkins). It is interesting to note that Edmundson highlights *The Silence of The Lambs*'s triumph as the rebirth of horror rather than Kathy Bates's Best Actress Oscar win the previous year (1990 – ceremony held March 25th 1991) for *Misery* Dir. Rob Reiner, Castle Rock Entertainment, 1990 adapted from the Stephen King novel. The last time an actor won

in the gothic / horror genre. And because of this unprecedented and surprising endorsement of the Gothic, Hollywood soon followed with more gothic explorations, this time lavishly funded and with all- star casts. Edmundson continues:

> After *Silence of the Lambs* swept the Academy Awards, Coppola directed *Dracula*; Kenneth Branagh ran pell-mell through *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*; Jack Nicholson became the wolf-man. Anne Rice has been enthralling readers with her sadomasochist vampire duo, Louis and Lestat. Stephen King...has trumped all previous Gothic writers, with nearly 250 million books in circulation... Terror has probably never been so hot, surely never so lucrative.[33]

Gothic television became a signature of the mainstream culture in the 1990s, not only in the different television shows that became 'cult' viewing; *X Files*, *Millennium*, and *American Gothic*, but also the celebrity figures who adorned the nightly news in the guise of the gothic double. O.J Simpson, Susan Smith, Michael Jackson, The West Memphis Three and The Bobbitts became the televised gothic doubles whose alleged crimes and subsequent denouncement in the public sphere reinforced a belief in the double nature of both celebrities and ordinary citizens. It fed the paranoia that those we admire and seemingly know (or indeed those who could be our neighbours and friends in our communities) could harbour dark influence and two faces.

With each example of the gothic in mainstream culture comes a sense of inheritance, a sense that we are perpetually haunted by our pasts in our cultural present. Chris Baldick defines the gothic by including the following elements - "[it] should combine a fearful sense of inheritance in time with a claustrophobic sense of enclosure in space, these two dimensions reinforcing one another to produce an impression of sickening descent into

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the Best Actor Oscar for a horror role was in 1932 – Fredric March in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.* Dir. Rouben Mamoulian. Paramount Pictures, 1931.

[33] Mark Edmundson. *Nightmare on Main Street.* p.4

disintegration."[34] The inheritance of the Republican presidencies of the 1980s brought about a sense of Armageddon in the popular imagination – from the end of the Cold War to the First invasion of Iraq in 1991, war and images of destruction culminated to produce a sense of profound turmoil. The familiarity of such images of destruction abroad on the nightly news mirrored the schizophrenic culture at home. The power of television in our daily lives, providing entertainment, news, talk shows, politics and drama series, has long been acknowledged, particularly since the Nixon-Kennedy presidential debates in 1960. The relayed information of gothic subjects and images, soap opera villains, images of war victims and focus on crime and serial killings, broadcast into homes on a nightly basis, is a profoundly haunting experience. According to Richard Davenport-Hines, "Television...has been the most important medium of gothic infiltration."[35] While Edmundson's suggestion of the 1990s beginning with the mainstream endorsement of the film *The Silence of The Lambs*, and by extension the gothic, is certainly convincing as a significant moment, I contend it began earlier with David Lynch and Mark Frost's television series, *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991). The relevance of *Twin Peaks* as the ultimate beginning of 90s gothic television is explored here to illustrate that while vampires do not figure within the narrative itself, the tone and shading so remarkably associated with Lynch is adopted for the subsequent vampire shows which marked the second half of this cultural decade. Wittily encapsulated by Joss Whedon's character Buffy (studied later in this chapter), "So that's why time went all David Lynch on me" ('Dead Things' 6x13) can be read as a nod to Gothic television's visionary return to the double, the gothic and the supernatural forces of evil, where Whedon's show (which bookends the decade) openly recognises Lynch's influential 90s fountainhead.

Twin Peaks was a television series set between the worlds of outer appearances and inner secrets, arguably born from the seeds of Lynch's gothic masterpiece *Blue Velvet* (1986). The setting of the show, a small town in Washington State where locals are embroiled in affairs, drugs, murder and warped family crises, provided the perfect catalyst for gothic tales; the peaceful, wholesome setting

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[34] Chris Baldick. (ed.) *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. p. xxi

[35] Richard Davenport-Hines. *Gothic: Four Hundred Years of Excess, Horror, Evil and Ruin*. p. 376

concealing an omnipresent evil bubbling underneath. When the young homecoming queen, Laura Palmer (Sheryl Lee), is murdered, her body washed ashore wrapped in plastic, FBI Special Agent Dale Cooper (Kyle McLachlan) is called in to investigate the case. Through its spiralling and complex plotting, involving both absurd and tragic local characters, the town of Twin Peaks begins to unfold as a labyrinthine world under the sway of mystical forces, both good (the White Lodge) and evil (the Black Lodge), and laced with politically charged warnings (in particular, the second season focuses much of its plot on saving the environment). At first, we are led to believe that this case can be dispatched quickly, as Cooper uses mystical forms of divination, dream analysis and Tibetan ritual to solve the mystery. However, by episode two of the first series, we encounter the frightening and menacing spectral figure of Bob, seen in a psychic vision by Laura's mother Sarah (Grace Zabriskie), which begins the trail of gothic breadcrumbs into the inner world of Twin Peaks. Helen Wheatley's study on gothic television concludes,

> We can think beyond [gothic literary forms] when looking at *Twin Peaks'* identity as Gothic Television... translated to the viewer through the creation of a certain 'mood' (melancholy, dread, the uncanny), and through an emphasis of impressionistic renditions of (troubled) subjectivities which can be seen across all recent Gothic television.[36]

The first use of 'second sight', presented through the eyes of a distressed mother cues the gothic and terrifying claustrophobia of the show, for we are never sure how to translate the images as 'real' or imagined, or in fact one and the same. The world of Twin Peaks collapses in on itself immediately with the image of Bob and the body of Laura Palmer.

We are then led into the Red Room through Cooper's ability of second sight in his dreams. The Red Room, a sparsely decorated room with flowing blood red drapes, black leather seating and a roman statue, is a place of neither logic nor order. We are met by a dwarf (Michael J Anderson, credited as The Man from Another Place) also dressed in red, who informs Cooper that in this magical

[36] Helen Wheatley. *Gothic Television*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006. p. 163

setting, "there is always music in the air".[37] The Red Room is a significant and signatory use of the gothic in this series from the outset – it is the place of divination, damnation and purgatory, of mystery, resolution, eternal recurrence and finally, terror. Spectral forces greet us in The Red Room - revealed to be the 'Waiting Room' within the Black (and possibly White) Lodge[38] - a place where evil spirits dwell, "a place of reversals and evil doubles"[39] – in the guise of owls, giants, victims and murderers. All inhabitants of the Red Room, excluding Cooper, speak backwards/forwards,[40] which raises considerable discomfort and alienation. The use of such audio trickery evokes extreme uncanny reactions from the audience. Such multi-layered gothic images set against the stereotypical soap opera setting so familiar to daytime television schedules gives the show the double effect within the everyday act of viewing. By day, viewers can watch the soap opera *Another World* and by night they can be brought into a gothic 'other world' disguised as a soap opera; further still, within the narrative of *Twin Peaks*, a fictional soap opera is watched by numerous characters, *Invitation to Love*, and often cues or mimics the main story of the episode, acting as both televisual intertextuality and as playful cross genre recognition. But what makes *Twin Peaks* particularly gothic lies in its constant 'doubling'.[41] The 'twin' in the show's title is a clue to the split

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[37] *Twin Peaks*. Dir. David Lynch, ABC Television. 1990-1991 (ep.2) This statement has three possible meanings: The location of the lodge(s) in the woods indicates bird song, it also provides a clue to identifying Laura's killer (music played as she is being raped and murdered). Finally, this statement reveals this 'other' world to be entirely abstract from rational thought.

[38] Much debate centres on the location and similarity between the aesthetics of the presumed Black and White Lodges, as we are only ever truly located in the Waiting Room (referenced in ep.2 and in *Fire Walk With Me* Dir. David Lynch, New Line Cinema, 1992). While the Black Lodge is only referenced once as a definite location (ep.29), the White Lodge is never *explicitly* seen or located. Lynch's locations can also be read as being 'one and the same' (ep.29) as each of the series' doppelgangers are revealed in the Waiting Room: The Dwarf and the Giant; the Bell hop and the Giant; the Dwarf as the 'Arm' of the one-armed-man Mike (a former associate of Bob); The Owls and Bob; and the physical doppelgangers of Maddy, Leland, Laura, Windom Earle, Caroline, Annie, and Dale Cooper. The Waiting Room is can also be read a physical 'doubled' space: as suggested by Alice Kuzniar when viewing the Red Room's signature floor tiling: "The black and white tiling suggests they are 'one and the same' place." The Red Room is also nominally doubled with the R'n'R diner, which is a focal point for much local interaction in the series. Alice Kuzniar. "Double Talk in *Twin Peaks*" in David Lavery (ed) *Full of Secrets: Critical Approaches to Twin Peaks*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995. p. 129 n8

[39] Fred Botting. *Gothic*. p. 176

[40] To have the characters in the Red Room sound 'other worldly', Lynch and Frost had the actors learn their lines backwards and then played their shots forwards. The sound produced is phonetically weird to the ear as the emphasis on words are displaced. Similarly, the movement of actors in the Red Room is uncanny because it is also shot in reverse and played forwards just as the audio track.

[41] Every character, every setting and every incident is revealed as a gothic double. Reoccurring characters are often revealed to have two faces, from transvestism to secret identities, to

sides or schizophrenic experiences of both ourselves and the contemporary culture. Davenport-Hines concludes that *Twin Peaks* was "the first explicitly gothic television soap-opera, with its murk, claustrophobia, evil, haunting doppelgangers, S&M, fetishism and family doom."[42] It can also be contended that *Twin Peaks*, above all other television shows, elevated the standards of television drama from low budget production to high cinema visuals. There is also no doubt that the visual representations of the Gothic set this series apart from all other on television during its run (1990-91), from special effects and spectral entities, dwarfs, giants, white horses, sets and the seedy world bubbling under home-grown Americana. Lenora Ledwon's article on *Twin Peaks* clearly identified and justified it as Gothic television, through mood, characters and space:

> The woods around *Twin Peaks* are a wild and mysterious landscape... The Bookhouse Boys are a secret, quasi-mystical institution. Subterranean spaces exist (Owl cave), as do the resonant silences, guilt and shame, nocturnal landscapes and dreams. Strange fires occur... the flickering torches of the charnel house are replaced by the cold glare and strobe effect of fluorescent lights in the morgue. Discovered manuscripts (Laura Palmer's diary) and mediated narratives (Cooper's tapes) abound. Cooper's quest for knowledge and his decision to sell his soul qualify him as a Faust-like figure. And, of course, the unspeakable occurs: rape, incest, and murder. The most antisocial of crimes intrude into the sanctuary of domesticity.[43]

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identical cousins or inhabiting evil forces such as Bob. Of the many examples in the show, these hold much significance: Denise/Denis Bryson (David Duchnovny) is an FBI transvestite working undercover; while Cooper's nemesis and madman Windom Earle is never seen publicly without a disguise; Laura Palmer's cousin Maddy is her uncanny double, posing as Laura in one episode; and Laura's murderer, revealed to be her father Leland Palmer (Ray Wise) whose penchant for incest acts as the catalyst for his Jekyll and Hyde split personality literally has two faces –his own and the reflection of the evil serial killing entity Bob (Frank Silva). Dale Cooper also suffers the same doubling effect in the Red Room in the series finale; his doppelganger escapes the Black Lodge possessed by Bob, while the true Cooper is left in gothic limbo.

[42] Richard Davenport-Hines. *Gothic: Four Hundred Years of Excess, Horror, Evil and Ruin*. p. 377

[43] Lenora Ledwon. '*Twin Peaks* and the television Gothic', *Literature/Film Quarterly*. Vol. 21; 4, 1993 p. 262

As the Gothic lends itself to the extravagance of visuality, *Twin Peaks* managed not only to transcend itself by being thoroughly postmodern by its lack of plot resolution and awareness as a genre breaking show – at times combining comedy and horror simultaneously- but also by having the power of an auteur at the helm of television itself.

> There was intellectual appeal – Lynch as auteur, *Twin Peaks* as avant-garde... television. Together the two appeals valorised as would be cinema and would be soap opera...not only in its use of conventions from Gothic Horror, police procedural, science fiction and soap opera but also... from straight to parody.[44]

By comparing 90s gothic culture to a schizophrenic experience, it becomes apparent that gothic doubling extends to a public/private split in identity and 'faces'. "The premise of Gothic's double psychology is that we ought to be very afraid – and of nothing so much as ourselves."[45] Like many moments in popular culture and on television talk shows - which Edmundson presents as being the modern confessional in the American psyche - numerous gothic revelations surrounding celebrity scandals and murder trials also reinforced the mode of the schizophrenic split. "Our collective pleasure in contemplating O.J, Michael Jackson, Freddy Krueger, the satanic ritual scandals, Oprah's guests, the victims of abuse, gothic TV..."[46] is culturally relevant because it reveals the shadow side of the public persona or mask we are already acquainted with. Edmundson continues "We are drawn to such things, Freud's elaborated line of thinking would run, because they reflect a pervasive interior state: they reflect the sadomasochistic tendencies in our own psyches."[47] This is also starkly apparent in the television series *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) when vampires are revealed to have literally two faces: the public face that allows them to conceal their identity and their 'game' face, which reveals their true vampiric nature.

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[44] John Storey. *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*. (4th ed) London: Pearson Books, 2006. p. 143
[45] Mark Edmundson. *Nightmare on Main Street* p. 11
[46] ibid. p. 132
[47] ibid. p. 132

(In)Famous Gothic Doubles

To place public cultural events of the 1990s in the form of the gothic double, I want briefly to look at three cases that captured the American imagination. Beginning with the Menendez trial in California in 1992, then at the John and Lorena Bobbitt case in 1993 and concluding with the O.J Simpson trial in 1995, I hope to illustrate an idealised picture of American life which was subsequently unmasked in the public domain. All of the cases mentioned involve murder or attempted murder and alleged sexual or domestic abuse and garnered significant television coverage and media attention. This will illuminate the cultural responses seen in 1990s vampires having split personalities – being either in/human monsters or beautified, glamorous, corporate bodies.

The Menendez family lived a seemingly enviable and wealthy lifestyle in Beverly Hills, California. On the evening of August 20th 1989, brothers Erik and Lyle Menendez called the police, claiming an intruder murdered their parents. Suspicion fell on the brothers when they began to spend the family fortune and led overtly extravagant lifestyles. They were eventually implicated in the murders but based their defence on years of sexual abuse at the hands of their parents.

> The brothers admitted to ambushing their parents, Jose, 45, and Kitty, 47, as the couple watched television in their Beverly Hills mansion in 1989. But they justified the attack on the ground that their parents had sexually and psychologically abused them since childhood and that their rage over the abuse, and fear of further harm had prompted them to kill their parents.[48]

Difficulties arose in proving the veracity of the sexual abuse claims at the hands of Jose Menendez, which subsequently led to two highly publicised mistrials. In 1996, after six years of imprisonment pending the outcome of their trial, the Menendez brothers were sentenced to life in prison. Considering the wealth of the family, and the privileged background of the Menendez brothers, the cultural shock of patricide in the case heightened the media attention and its

[48] Kenneth B. Noble. "Jury Decides to Spare Menendezes the Death Penalty". *New York Times*. Friday Sept. 28th 1996.

cultural significance. The sensationalist coverage of the case began a litany of media cases where murder trials became a form of entertainment. Programming such as television channel Court TV, which first aired on July 1st 1991, churned out real legal cases in a 'crime-and-justice format' for television, gaining a steady audience from highly covered celebrity and controversial legal cases. The channel's coup came with its extensive coverage of the O.J Simpson trial, significantly increasing viewer-ship and popularity. Advertising itself as a bastion of legal truth and justice, while being "Seriously Entertaining" – the channel's tag line- programming such as Court TV is a clear responses to the hunger drummed up in the media by sensational trials and celebrity cases.

While this case of the wealthy children committing patricide was shocking to the public, it could still be interpreted as being far removed from 'normal' American daily life. The case of Lorena and John Wayne Bobbitt, labelled an average married couple from Virginia, furthers the gothic twist in American suburbia. On June 23rd 1993, Lorena Bobbitt severed her husband's penis with a kitchen knife as he lay sleeping. She then subsequently drove away from the home, throwing John's severed penis from her moving vehicle. Incredibly, despite his injuries and his genitals being thrown from the vehicle, the police located his penis, and it was successfully surgically re-attached. In court, Lorena Bobbitt contested that she had wounded her husband because he had attempted to rape her.[49] Her psychiatrist had also claimed that Lorena was suffering post-traumatic stress from an alleged forced abortion years earlier, which had left her infertile. The aftermath of this case of domestic abuse led to a series of joke references about severing penises, "Bobbitt Jobs", and entered colloquial language by being referenced as such in international newspapers such as *The Boston Globe*. After divorcing, John became as a porn star in the spoof porn film *Frankenpenis* (1996),[50] in which he plays a man made out of body parts with a very enlarged penis. It is noted that during the climactic moment of his role, his penis becomes detached and he exclaims in horror, "Oh no! Not again!" The Bobbitts became figures in popular culture because of the

[49]For more on the final verdict and specific charges in this case, see the Court TV transcripts at this link: http://www.courttv.com/archive/casefiles/verdicts/bobbitt.html

[50] This film is credited in the US as *John Wayne Bobbitt's Frankenpenis*. (Dir: Ron Jeremy, Leisure Time Entertainment, 1996). In it, the character of Lorena Bobbitt - the protagonist's castrator and ex-wife - features and is played by porn actress Veronica Castillo.

bizarre circumstances in which they expressed their rage and violence under the illusion of quiet suburban life. It can also be read as strange mirror of the opening scene of Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986) where a severed ear is found in a picturesque American suburb. Linda Badley gathers the cases of gothic news from the 1990s and offers the insight that "the horrors that Stephen King imagined in the 1970s and 1980s have become the news of the 1990s.... the true horror stories of the 1990s were the media coverage of O.J Simpson's flight and capture or the 'family values' of Susan Smith, who killed her sons by driving her car into a lake...."[51] Before confessing to murdering her two sons, Smith falsely reported to police that she had been carjacked by an African American while her children remained in the car. The reaction after her confession to drowning her two children was one of extreme anger, particularly because of the racial element of her initial police report. "It was not that reality had outdistanced fantasy but that the real world had become fantastic: it mimicked and absorbed fantasy and was now indistinguishable from it."[52] Oliver Stone commented on *Natural Born Killers* (1994) representing the 'self-reflexivity' of both media and subject, particularly in light of the news scandals gripping America. "[Initially] this was a surreal piece. Now, thanks to Bobbit [sic] and Mendez [sic, probably meant 'Menendez'] and Tonya Harding, it's become satire. By the time I'd finished, fact had caught up to fiction. O.J. is the final blowout."[53]

The O.J Simpson case was arguably the most sensational court case in the 1990s, dubbed by media commentators as "The Trial of the Century". 150 million viewers tuned in as the trial verdict was broadcast live across the nation. America was "virtually glued to coverage of the case from the day after Nicole Brown Smith and Ron Goldman were murdered in Santa Monica to the moment the country screeched to a halt to hear the verdict."[54]

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[51] Linda Badley. *Film, Horror and the Body Fantastic*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1995. p. 157

[52] ibid. p. 157

[53] Richard Corliss. "'Stone Crazy': Reviewing *Natural Born Killers*". *Time Magazine* 29th August, 1994. p. 66

[54] Diane Holloway. "Frontline analyzes [sic] impact of O.J. verdict 10 years after trial" Oct. 4th 2005. Online at: http://www.austin360.com/tv/content/movies/television/2005/10/4tvcolumn.html Accessed: 02/02/08

> [O.J Simpson] became perhaps the most famous criminal defendant in American history and so easily recognizable that people referred to him by his initials only. It went on for nine months. There were 11 lawyers representing the man in the dock and 25 working around the clock for the largest prosecutor's office in the country. It became the most publicized case in US history. It was the longest trial ever held in California, costing over $20 million to fight and defend, running up 50,000 pages of trial transcript in the process. There were 150 witnesses called to give evidence before a jury that was sequestered at the Hotel Intercontinental in downtown L.A. from January until October [1995].[55]

O.J. Simpson's trial was not only a media sensation that crossed a deeply divided nation on the issue of race and sexual promiscuity but also became a nightly event staged in the format of a gothic/slasher thriller. "Simpson was habitually cast as an archetypal Gothic hero-villain. He was rendered as a man with a divided nature, intermittently possessed by a demon within."[56] Mark Edmundson claims that the trial was a signatory event of the 90s gothic, in that, the dual lives of Simpson, his ex-wife Nicole Brown and her lover Ron Goldman, both the accused and victims were revealed as gothic doubles. Equally, author James Ellroy contends, "O.J. Simpson wanted to be White. Ron Goldman wanted to be an actor – an equally ridiculous ambition. Nicole wanted a groovy fast lane and the second hand celebrity that comes with fucking famous men."[57] Ellroy wrote of the O.J. case in the narrative format of the double, each sentence offering both an affirmation and rebuttal of the allegations made during the criminal trial.

> A botched hack-and-run caper has become the Crime of the Century... On Sunday, June 12th, 1994, O.J Simpson did or did not drive to his ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson's pad and

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[55] Thomas L. Jones. "The O.J Simpson Murder Trial: Prologue". The sheer scale of the O.J. trial is documented at this website – offering a prologue and outline to the entire trial. Online at http://www.crimelibrary.com/notorious_murders/famous/simpson/index_1.html Accessed on 01/02/08.

[56] Mark Edmundson. *Nightmare on Main Street* p. 9

[57] James Ellroy. *Crime Wave*. New York: Vintage, 1999. p. 239

> slaughter her and a young man named Ronald Goldman. He did or did not wear gloves and a ski mask; he did or did not butcher his victims with a bone-handled knife, a bayonet or an entrenching tool. He did or did not split the scene and drive to his own home, a few minutes away.[58]

In particular, the issue of race and interracial relationships featured in this gothic doubling, as did the issues of wealth, jealousy, domestic violence and celebrity. Evan Thomas wrote of O.J as a gothic double in *Newsweek*, suggesting his 'fetish' for white women and his celebrity lifestyle labels him as a double:

> Simpson lived a double life... a hard partyer [sic] who cruised bars and indulged in drugs and random sex. His wife believed he was a cocaine addict; his friends, who saw him on the prowl at wild parties in Los Angeles, thought his real addiction was white women. The smooth talker took lessons to make his diction more 'white'.[59]

Using the powerful setting and rhetoric of the gothic – doubles emerging set against a murder mystery plot– or that of a vampire seeking out victims, O.J "[was cast as] black inside and white outside"[60]... a man of wealth, a successful sports star with a beautiful white wife "whose evil demon finally took over. And that evil demon, as *Newsweek*, *Time* [whose June 27th 1994 cover brandished an altered photo of Simpson where he appeared thuggish – a veritable Mr. Hyde] and other sources always stopped just short of making completely clear, was his black self."[61] The prosecution in both the criminal and civil trials described Simpson as a man with two faces, adding to the gothic motif of the case where the victims, though frequently mentioned throughout, were largely forgotten.

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[58] James Ellroy. *Crime Wave*. p. 237
[59] Evan Thomas. "The Double Life of O.J. Simpson" *Newsweek*, August 29, 1994, pp. 43-49.
[60] Mark Edmundson. *Nightmare on Main Street* pp. 9 – 10
[61] ibid. pp. 177 - 178

With literally two faces, Michael Jackson too was painted as a horrific gothic double. Edmundson aptly describes Jackson's doubling as "the male/female, child-adult, black-white, waif-mogul, and most centrally the presexual sexual predator… what he lacks is O.J's élan and his menace."[62] Jackson is portrayed as a figure masked behind a bizarre lifestyle of extravagance, a Peter-Pan complex and consistently shifting in categories, as Edmundson described. As Roger Friedman writes, "Think of him as a publicity vampire. Attention is the blood he needs to suck."[63] Jackson's fame and wealth, which vastly overshadows O.J's, is also central to his gothic persona – a means that simultaneously makes him a target and shields him (at least temporarily) from such allegations.

A final look at the becoming of a gothic double lies with the case of the West Memphis Three. In 1993, the corpses of three children were found in the Robin Hood Hills of West Memphis, Tennessee. Their bodies were bruised, tortured, and severely mutilated; one child Christopher Byers had his penis severed and had bite marks on his forehead. Three local teenagers, Damien Echols, Jessie Misskelley and Jason Baldwin were arrested after Misskelley (whose IQ is 72) 'confessed' to the police under duress, without a lawyer present. All three teenagers were tainted as Satanists and murderers, based largely on their interest in rock music, wearing black t-shirts and nail polish, and by reading Stephen King and Anne Rice novels. Echols was singled out as the ringleader because he was a practising Wiccan, which was subsequently twisted to mean 'active Satanism' throughout the trial.

> With precious little credible evidence linking them to the murders, the prosecution focused on the teens' lifestyle, using lyrics from their Metallica CD collection, along with expert testimony from an occult expert who admitted that his doctoral degree came from a now-defunct mail order college. 'If they found 10 black t-shirts in my dresser and I didn't have an alibi,'

[62] ibid. p. 13
[63] Roger Friedman. "Jacko gets Wacko on Purpose" May 21st, 2003. *Fox News*. Online at: http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,87443,00.html Accessed on 06/02/08.

> says attorney David Rees, whose firm represented Baldwin, 'I'd have been convicted too'.[64]

Since the trial in 1994, there has been worldwide support for three defendants, largely due to the HBO documentaries *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Lost 2: Revelations*, which have investigated the evidence, witnesses and defendants, concluding that the trial was rushed amidst a climate of 'Satanic Panic'.

> The West Memphis Three are victims not only of small town ignorance but of 'the very gothic imaginary that is so carefully crafted...' which in this case renders up three young men as sacrifices to 'a carefully constructed culture of fear' that serves as entertainment for those not imprisoned within it.[65]

In the climate of the moral and satanic panics that ultimately convicted the three defendants of murder, and sentenced Damien Echols to death by lethal injection, gothic doubles are found to be both revealing and damning. It is interesting to end on a revealing comment from Echols, currently on death row pending appeal for a retrial based on new DNA evidence: "They thought they could pin these murders on some poor white trash".[66] Despite the lack of forensic evidence and motive, the three were convicted largely on the insular fears held in the overtly religious community; their interests in the 'gothic' culture, literature and music was incriminating evidence of a shadow self. It seems that the 90s gothic double can 'shake off' the shadow of the gothic double, particularly when wealth, status, and celebrity can provide a defence. Presumed monsters or doubles, particularly of the lower classes are condemned by their social class, and are expected to exhibit the gothic trappings of the double. As the 1990s is littered with a host of doubles and revisionist histories in the wake of identity, politics and cultural 'end of histories', independent vampire voices continue to narrate the social circumstances surrounding

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[64] Johnny Dodd. "Beyond a Reasonable Doubt?: The Case of The West Memphis Three" *People Magazine*. January 21st 2008, p. 94

[65] Carol Siegel. *Goth's Dark Empire*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005. p. 108. Also quoting Andy Opel. "*Paradise Lost I&II*: Documentary and the Monster of Justice." Conference paper presented to the Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference, Atlanta, March 5th, 2004.

[66] Johnny Dodd. "Beyond a Reasonable Doubt?: The Case of The West Memphis Three" p. 94

teenage angst, sexuality and our cultural world, finding freedom of expression outside of bourgeois constraints.

Vampires from the Underground

In examining the vampire texts of the early 1990s, it becomes apparent that there is no true sense of cultural cohesion that so firmly laced the late 1970s and the 1980s. Vampire films tend to run in plot trends, touching upon cultural fears and engaging in a dialogue, which either reinforces or critiques the dominant ideology of the day. Our 90s vampires seem to be split within the cultural decade of the 90s – they begin it as an independent voice in the new Post-Cold War era, only to become entirely corporate and incorporated – by both major film companies and publishing houses- before the new millennium. In a sense, vampires of the 90s are split into two separate identities: these vampires transition from independent edgy, raw killers to slick, glossy and hyper–marketed Hollywood entities in a short but significant period of time. It is not simply a case of consumerism that fuels this transition either – it stems from a fractured sense of political and cultural identity as we approach the end of the twentieth century. The teenage culture that fuelled 1980s popular culture, from slasher films and glamorised vampires, transformed into a darker vision when the youth of the 1990s become the narrators and characters of these novels. It is as though the end of Reagan's presidency, and the fall of the Berlin Wall, brought about a sense of cultural ambiguity, political insecurities, and emerging nationalism in previously occupied states, is accountable. The teenager of the early 1990s, part of Generation X, is defined by the social and economic practises that gap or alienate previously held values and ideals of the baby boom generation (post WWII children). First coined in 1964 by Jane Deverson and Charles Hamblett in a study of British youth, their research indicated that a new generation of teenagers were emerging, engaging in casual sex, lacking respect for their parents and placed little value on religious faith.[67] Though the birth years of Generation X are widely debated, it is accepted that they roughly fall between 1966 and 1981. Generation X are also referred to as the 13th Generation by historians William Strauss and Neil Howe, "partly

[67] Anushka Asthana & Vanessa Thorpe. "Whatever happened to the original Generation X?" *The Observer* Sunday, Jan.23rd 2005. Online at http://observer.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,6903,1396618,00.html accessed on: 29/12/07.

for the gauntlet its members see in its 'bad' reputation",[68] and because they are the thirteenth generation to have known the American Flag, beginning with the generation of Benjamin Franklin.[69] The 13th Generation are, according to Strauss and Howe, more likely to experience a sense of despair, nihilism and generational inheritance from their parents along with divorce, increased mothers in the workforce, the Internet and access to education, the end of the Cold War and its bipolar politics. "[Generation X] members represent a diverse array of opinions and outlooks that cannot be neatly defined."[70] The family gap, seen in most of the 90s texts on vampires and in horror films and novels, stems from this shift in values and morals, which parents of the Generation X children seemingly cannot transcend.

An emerging sense of anger among the youth of Generation X was seeping into popular music and film in the late 1980s. Anti-establishment sentiment and anti-corporate feelings, as predicted by Strauss and Howe, was gaining in popularity, from the raw anger of Nine Inch Nails' album *Pretty Hate Machine* (1989) to N.W.A's (Niggaz With Attitude) infamous album *Straight Outta Compton* (1988) prevalent on MTV and other youth targeted media. This pronounced sense of anger comes from a new generation who either entirely reject the falsehoods of Reagan's American Dream, or cannot access it due to racial tension and social deprivation. This pronounced disenfranchisement is seen in family politics and structures, political malaise and open expressions and explorations into poly-sexualities.

The vampire novelist who best encapsulates all of these issues and anxieties is Poppy Z. Brite. According to Carol Siegel, the presence of Poppy Z. Brite as a cult writer in her own right stems from her books voicing a minoritarian voice within the horror genre, not only through blurring expected gender roles but by celebrating male masochism. Through this reading of Brite, Siegel claims that, "Brite's fiction fits Deleuze and Guattari's definition of a minoritarian

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[68] William Strauss, Neil Howe. *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584-2069.* New York: Harper Collins, 1992 p. 31

[69] ibid. p. 31 Strauss and Howe define the 13th Generation as being born between 1961-1981 and based their methodology on cultural history and birth rate demographics.

[70] Christy Zlatos. *Coming of Age in Reference Services.* Washington: Haworth Press, 1999. p. 22

literature."[71] This reading of Brite allows her the space to become a cult figure as she effectively adheres to Deleuze and Guattari's definitions as outlined in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature.*[72] "The first characteristic of a minor literature in any case is that in it language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization,"[73] [sic] meaning that it is written in a major language, or in the case of a colony, the colonizer's language. Its second characteristic is that everything within this language is political or politicised: "its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics".[74] Thirdly, it has a collective and enunciative value, clearly marked with an individual voice contaminated by the political domain. It is a literature that speaks for a minority, written from the margins of society, vocalising "the 'fragile community' from the border and expressing 'another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility'".[75]

By fracturing expected norms within the vampire genre, such as Eve Sedgwick's "Erotic Triangle" which presents a male world in which women are often relegated to secondary plots particularly in dealing with topics of sexuality, Brite subsumes the political, social and sexual cultures of the youth, delineating her novel from the vampire genre as one of 'cult' representation. "Instead of affirming the universalized [sic] identities that best serve existing power structures, of which binary gender systems is the most familiar, minoritarian literatures create identities that resist bourgeois norms by insisting on the particularity of sexual experience."[76]

The emergence of cult writers and musicians narrated this sense of generational tension, and became the plot for cult writer Poppy Z. Brite's first novel, *Lost Souls*. Adapted from a short story by Brite, originally entitled 'The Seeds of Lost Souls', concerns itself with the gothic underground movements, the teenage despair of being lost (as Generation X itself has been described) and where frustrations centre on the increasing deterioration and nihilism of 90s

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[71] Carol Siegel. *Goth's Dark Empire*. p. 76
[72] Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Trans. Dana Polan. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1986. pp. 16-27
[73] ibid. p. 16
[74] ibid. p. 17
[75] ibid. p. 17
[76] Carol Siegel. *Goth's Dark Empire* p. 76

teenagers. Her protagonist Nothing in *Lost Souls* repeats to himself, "*I am Nothing*" [Brite's emphasis][77], both to reinforce his identity and to find comfort in the despair of the teenage generation surrounding him. It also seems to "echo the words emblazoned on the back of that year's Nine Inch Nails promotional tour t-shirts, 'Now I'm Nothing'."[78] Accounting for Brite's subject matter and language in graphic and almost gluttonous, sensual detail, Publishers Weekly described Brite as the 'Reigning Queen of Generation X's Splatterpunks'. Such titles and her increasing cult following, stemming from the success of her first novel- which she encountered some difficulty in publishing – ultimately became a double-edged sword: while she has enjoyed success because of her shocking and often graphic portrayals of murder, incest, necrophilia, adolescent sexuality and teenage excess, Brite claims to have encountered some difficulties in having subsequent manuscripts, notably her serial killer novel *Exquisite Corpse* (1997), published, because of their 'dubious' content: "When I finally turned [*Exquisite Corpse*] in, Dell (Brite's American Publisher), announced that they couldn't publish it due to its 'extreme' content."[79] While *Lost Souls* may have been deemed as edgy and provocative, daring and with certain cult appeal, the subcultural and countercultural themes in the novel were to become problematic for the author. Brite continues:

> Soon after, I received notice that Penguin, my UK publisher, was declining to publish *Exquisite Corpse* as well. Unlike Dell, they had the decency to at least offer an explanation. "I was very sorry not to feel able to offer to publish it," wrote my editor, "both because I have so enjoyed the success we have had with your first three books and because I admired the book's ambition and what I felt was a considerable development in your writing. But I did have very considerable reservations about the subject; which is not to say that fiction shouldn't handle shocking and dangerous subjects, rather that I felt very uncomfortable with the mixture of a [journalistic] approach to the characters and a tendency to see them as admirable, almost vampire-like

[77] Poppy Z. Brite. *Lost Souls*. London: Penguin, 1992. p. 76
[78] Carol Siegel. *Goth's Dark Empire*. p. 79
[79] Poppy Z. Brite. Personal Biography on Brite's fan website. Online at: http://www.poppyzbrite.com/bio.html Dated Oct 2004, New Orleans. LA. Accessed 29/12/07.

> characters."[80] There would be bound to be some negative response to the book, and I am afraid I couldn't feel that I could wholeheartedly defend it, given my own reservations."[81]

Although Brite did eventually find a publisher for her manuscript at Simon and Schuster in the US and Orion in the UK, the ordeal has temporarily soured her interest in the gothic realm. However, Brite's violent, subcultural and anti-establishment fiction, lauded as brave, original and daring, *Lost Souls* propelled her as the voice of the gothic youth and the lost generation.

Lost Souls (1992) explores the anger and disenfranchisement felt by a lost generation of American youth, completely unable to connect with parental figures or societal expectations. Parents are represented as confused, unable to communicate or understand their children, while "these vampire teens leave their soulless broken homes, travelling from callow suburban Washington D.C. through the aptly named Missing Mile, North Carolina, to New Orleans, searching for kindred vampire spirits."[82] The novel is both graphic and nihilistic about the future of the teenage generation. Nothing, the novel's adolescent protagonist, is an adopted teenager who was left on a doorstep in Missing Mile, North Carolina, after his traumatic and destructive birth in New Orleans to a teenage girl, Jessy. His biological father, a vampire named Zillah, is unaware of his existence. Heading a decadent teenage vampire trio with Molochai and Twig, Zillah decides the gang must return to New Orleans to revisit an old vampire friend Christian, whose bar, years earlier, was the site of Nothing's birth and his mother's violent death. Also on the road are Ghost and Steve, members of the southern rock band *Lost Souls?* whose music tapes are bootlegged and become Nothing's prize possession. Their fates become intertwined when Nothing and his newfound vampire family flee to New Orleans after Zillah impregnates Ann (Steve's ex-girlfriend). Ghost and Steve

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[80] As Caitlin Kiernan (A close friend of Brite's and a fellow horror writer) later commented, "I suppose it never occurred to him (Brite's editor at Penguin) that vampires are, by definition, serial killers, or to question his implication that it's acceptable to view vampires as admirable." Online at: http://www.poppyzbrite.com/bio.html

[81] Poppy Z. Brite. Biography. Online at: http://www.poppyzbrite.com/bio.html Oct 2004, New Orleans. LA. Accessed 29/12/07.

[82] Joan Gordon. "Sharper Than a Serpent's Tooth: The Vampire in Search of its Mother" in Joan Gordon, Veronica Hollinger (Eds) *Blood Read: The Vampire as Metaphor in Contemporary Culture*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995. p.46

are warned that the pregnancy is always brutal and fatal for the mother. When Ann dies from the traumatic birth, violent revenge is taken as all the vampires are slain and Nothing is reclaimed from his violent vampire family.

Rob Latham compares the vampires of the novel to George A. Romero's vampire Martin, as "Brite's vampires are aimless, working-class kids who know they are basically unwanted, superfluous, disposable; but unlike Martin, they don't even have family to fall back on."[83] Similarly, in *Martin* and in *Lost Souls*, there is an overwhelming secular system surrounding the vampire. Just as Martin claims "there is no magic" and dresses up in Bela Lugosi make-up to frighten his uncle Cuda, the vampire trio in *Lost Souls* drink decantered blood and alcohol, take powerful drugs and laugh at vampire clichés and lore – "for the blood is the life" they mockingly cheer together in drunken stupor. Brite's protagonist reflects on the overwhelming power of such rigid categorisation, insisting that vampirism is not merely a caricature or a subcultural identity; "Too much faith in anything will suck you dry. In this way, all the world is a vampire."[84] Like Martin, garlic has no effect, crosses or sunlight bring them no harm – these vampires are more akin to a feral underclass than their Modern Vampire counterparts. And yet, these vampires and their prey are all presented as willing victims to a society that does not want or understand them.

For Brite, Goth and rock music are dominant cultural reference points for all of her characters, relating to specific bands and their symbolism, lyrics and dress sense. Brite soundtracks her novels with particular bands and rock idols, who represent the countercultural narrative of the late 1980s / early 1990s - be it through masochism and celebrated sexualities through Trent Reznor and his New Orleans based band Nine Inch Nails, Bauhaus whose song 'Bela Lugosi's Dead' forewarned of the emergence of new, Postmodern Vampires in Tony Scott's film *The Hunger* (1983), or stylised gothic dress and vocals by Robert Smith and his band, The Cure - a look that Brite emulated during the period when she was writing *Lost Souls*.[85] In particular, Robert Smith of The Cure is idolised for his androgyny, smudged make-up and gothic persona – a sex

[83] Rob Latham. *Consuming Youth*. p. 134
[84] Poppy Z. Brite. *Lost Souls*. p. 33
[85] On Brite's official website, she includes pictures of herself in 1988 when she was writing *Lost Souls*, stylised with Cure-like makeup and Robert Smith's infamous haircut.

symbol all the male characters are allured by and attempt to emulate. Sexuality is intrinsically linked with Goth music for Brite as she describes the teenage desires of her characters in relation to their desires for their consumerist idols. The Cure act as the sexual catalyst for Nothing's homosexual desires by his attraction to a poster of "Robert Smith's lips enlarged several thousand times, smeared with hot orange-red lipstick, shiny and sexual."[86] For Nothing, the idolisation of Robert Smith is both acceptance and belonging - "Nothing wished he could fall into them, could slide right down Robert Smith's throat and curl up safe in his belly"[87] – though it is an odd choice. While The Cure's lyrics are tinged with gothic sentiment, they are musically upbeat and melodic, rather than the more morose and depressing music of Ian Curtis's band Joy Division, whom Brite only casually references. The link these musical influences share through eroticised suffering is especially prevalent through Trent Reznor's music, his most famous song "Closer" being a homage to Ian Curtis's last album (and suicide note) of the same name.

In Reznor's "Closer", Brite's sexualisation of opening men is mirrored, especially with the repeated lyrics of breaking the boundaries of inside / outside and the video in which Reznor is engaged in S&M bondage. The video warrants investigation because it taps so successfully into the sentiments of a futureless generation so engrained in 90s culture, culturally sharing the same platform as Brite's novel. Reznor's song, now deemed to be an anthem of 90s angst by *Rolling Stone*, reveals such sentiment in explicit terms:

> You can have my isolation
> You can have the hate that it brings
> You can have my absence of faith
> You can have my everything
> Help me you tear down my reason
> Help me it's your sex I can smell
> Help me you make me perfect
> Help me become somebody else.[88]

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[86] Poppy Z. Brite. *Lost Souls*. p. 32
[87] ibid. p. 32
[88] "Closer". Performed by Nine Inch Nails. Lyrics by Trent Reznor. Taken from the album *The Downward Spiral*, Nothing Records / Interscope, 1994.

In the video, these lyrics are sung by Reznor standing in the foreground of a suspended open animal carcass, its bloody insides displayed outside; the image clearly inspired by Francis Bacon's painting *Figure with Meat* (1954). Both figures - Pope Innocent X and Trent Reznor - are framed almost identically by bloody carcasses mimicking wings.[89]

Fig. 3.1 Francis Bacon's *Figure With Meat* (1954).

Fig.3.2 Trent Reznor in the "Closer" video (1994)

A sequence of fin de siècle images punctuate the topics of sex, religion, conscience and authority – all of which are gothically presented and colour coded.[90] The 'sex' segment features a naked pubescent looking woman, petite and hairless, spinning two eggs on her fingertips. As the film progresses, we

[89] Francis Bacon's painting *Figure with Meat* (1954) depicts a man of power (considered to be Pope Innocent X, mimicking Diego Velázquez portrait of Pope Innocent X, 1650) in the foreground of the picture framed with an animal carcass strung up behind him, giving the appearance of bloodied meaty wings. The painting is hosted online at: http://www.francis-bacon.com/paintings/?c=54-55 and is part of the permanent collection in the Art Institute of Chicago. Director Mark Romanek alluded to this painting being an inspiration for the use of animal carcasses in the "Closer" video in the Nine Inch Nails documentary *Closure* (1994). The Bacon painting also features in the film *Batman* Dir. Tim Burton, Warner Bros. 1989, as the only painting not destroyed or defaced by the Joker (Jack Nicholson) and his cronies in the Gotham Art Gallery.

[90] Terry Hickman "Religion, Mythology and Fucking like an Animal: Inside the 'Closer' video". This amateur essay appears on the Nine Inch Nails website which details the exact image sequences in the Closer video (Dirs: Mark Romanek & Trent Reznor, 1994). Article found at: http://hnv.nin.net/closer.html. Accessed on 07/01/08. Hickman quotes substantially from William Irwin Thompson. *The Time Falling Bodies Take to Light: Mythology, Sexuality, and the Origins of Culture*. St. Martin's Press, New York, 1989 in deconstructing the images in the video.

see these eggs hatch producing lizards, indicating a lack of fertility, given the woman's physical lack of maternal features, and a skeleton of a foetus. From the outset, we are reminded that previously held values are disintegrating or coming undone. Reznor is suspended on his back spinning in a circle with no visible means of support, which can be read as a form of 'suspended animation' of modern culture – it spirals in a directionless motion.

The brief segment of religion inter-cuts with the 'sex' theme displaying a rhesus monkey tied to a cross – referencing AIDS, the lack of religious belief held by Generation X and its perceived futility. Both conscience and authority are treated as onlookers in the video – the spinning head of an impaled sow reminiscent of William Golding's *Lord of The Flies* and a group of old men, stylised as fascistic authoritarians, observing Reznor being bound and gagged. Just as each of these pillars of culture are being deconstructed, so is the boundary of inside/outside: a beating heart is framed, artificially kept beating by wires and machinery along with an animal carcass hanging from a hook, its inside pulled apart and displayed outside. The organs and emotions stored inside are exposed on the outside:

> Help Me I broke apart my insides
> Help me I've got no soul to sell
> Help me the only thing that works for me
> Help me get away from myself
> I want to fuck you like an animal
> I want to feel you on the inside
> I want to fuck you like an animal
> My whole existence is flawed
> You get me closer to god. [91]

The setting of a dusty laboratory also reminds us of the progression of science but also of the diseases associated with 'feeling on the inside' – undoubtedly referencing sex without the use of prophylactics. In light of the widespread fears with AIDS, sex became perceived as a dangerous activity in the cultural

[91] "Closer". Performed by Nine Inch Nails. Lyrics by Trent Reznor. Taken from the album *The Downward Spiral*, Nothing Records / Interscope, 1994.

narrative as Reznor's song highlights. The then controversial video, banned by MTV until a suitable re-edit was made, visually represents the dominant feelings in 90s popular culture in a time most previously held bourgeois pillars began to decay. Fittingly, a remix of the song features in the opening credits of David Fincher's bleak and brilliant film, *Se7en* (1995). "The significance is much more the recognisable sound of a group notoriously fascinated with Charles Manson and the controversial fact that the album was recorded in his house. Thus this soundtrack blurs the distinction between music and noise, and relates both to sin."[92] Reznor, in effect, becomes both a musical signifier for Brite's theme of alienation and an icon of and within her disenfranchised world.

Brite's teenage characters all participate in some form of sexual experimentation and drug use to drift away from their mundane suburban existence – a feature often punctuated by Brite's references to Goth music in both *Lost Souls* and *Drawing Blood*. She describes the teenage sexual experimentation by Nothing's peers as a lazy attempt at fashionable rebellion, where "bisexuality was much in vogue among this crowd. It was one of the ways they could feel daring."[93] In light of the targeting of bisexual and gay people living in the AIDS culture in America, sexual expression was one form of rebellion against the domineering voice of the Christian Right, whose influence in Middle America is considerable. Brite uses the sexual rebellion of teenagers as a catalyst for such debate and rejects such right wing attitudes towards self-expression, asserting "The Christian Right always need scapegoats, and the rise of Aids since the mid-eighties has made a convenient scapegoat out of anyone whose sexuality encompasses more than breeding in the missionary position".[94] Brite's writing graphically displays each female character's body as a text on which sexual experimentation is etched, with dire consequences. Essentially, a vampiric exchange of commercial consumerism and group consumption takes place. In a willing exchange, each of the group consume each other sexually, despite their clear disinterest in friendships beyond sexual gratification, and consume the images of rebellion fed through corporate mass marketing. *The Cure* are marketed to attract this particular fan

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[92] Richard Dyer. *Seven*. London: British Film Institute, 1999. p. 53
[93] Poppy Z. Brite. *Lost Souls*. p. 32
[94] Tony Thorne. *Children of The Night: Of Vampires and Vampirism*. p. 196

base in the guise of serious rebellion and a rejection of consumer fetishism while simultaneously promoting themselves on corporate outlets like MTV. The 'rebel sell' of goth taps into the jaded American youth whose parents survived the false promise of Reaganomics only to find themselves trapped in a similar exchange. Just as Nothing daydreams of Robert Smith's mouth swallowing him whole, a younger boy in the group, Laine, offers to fellate him. This gay exchange is read with tremendous sadness, as Nothing regards Laine as being much too young for such sexual interaction. The fellatio is brief but indicative of the generation lost to premature adult behaviour, as Laine acknowledges Nothing's orgasm with "clear and guileless eyes".[95]

Catherine Spooner comments on Brite's discourse on 'deviant' sexualities, which, like Anne Rice's vampire characters from the Vampire Chronicles, are predominantly incestuous and explicitly male-on-male gay. "As such [Lost Souls] is opposed to both heterosexual relationships, which are all presented as being profoundly problematic within the novel, or the trendy bisexuality of the suburban Goth teenagers with whom the protagonist Nothing hangs around."[96] While Rice's characters are often adolescent males from centuries past, their conduct and sexual experimentation often casts them as pubescent children, certainly by 1990s standards of teenage sexual savvy. The focus of the text lies in the development of male relationships, while the female characters, Ann and Jessy in *Lost Souls* and Claudia in *Interview With The Vampire*, act as catalysts for their relationship developments and antagonism. This correlates to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's Erotic Triangle where we see the female being a pathway between the vampire and protagonist's affections. This is also often in the form of rivalry for the female but she is cast aside as both males vie for sexual authority and power over one another.[97] However, in Brite's novel, men supersede the role of women as open vessels also. Women are regulated to the tyranny of pregnancy and physical openings in the body, but men are opened psychically and emotionally – a role that applies to Brite's categorisation as a minoritarian writer. Particularly in the character Ghost, we see a psychic link being opened in his mind which effectively casts him as an opposite

[95] Poppy Z. Brite. *Lost Souls*. p. 34
[96] Catherine Spooner. *Fashioning Gothic Bodies*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004. p.179
[97] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. p. 1

conventional male character – he represents sensitivity and femininity in expressing emotion and frequently crying, and the inside exposed as outside.

Female bodies are bodies of pleasure and pain for Brite, as she repeatedly warns of the capabilities of reproduction and its consequences. At times, *Lost Souls* seems to be a novel steeped in the fear of unwanted pregnancy and the lack of control over the sexual openings of the female body. The novel does not make any explicit reference to HIV/AIDS (unlike Brite's *Exquisite Corpse*, which is obsessed with AIDS) but does treat the pregnancy as a disease growing uncontrollably within and "as the most important possible consequence of unprotected sexual encounters."[98] It is only in Brite's later novel, *Exquisite Corpse*, that the horrors of the sexually exposed body are obsessed by the AIDS narrative. The body becomes a torn wound post birth and is broken – the vagina morphs from an opening of pleasure to a shredded wound - "[Christian] knelt between Jessy's limp legs and looked at the poor torn passage that had given him so many nights of idle pleasure. Ruined now, bloody."[99] The female body, for Brite, suffers problematic consequences not present in gay sex, and therefore codes underage heterosexual interactions as a largely unchecked social issue in society. According to Carol Siegel, "the novel codes pregnancy as alien invasion, absolutely incompatible with female survival. The book obsessively focuses on the darkest fears of heterosexual girls still young and inexperienced enough to view pregnancy exclusively as a terrifying threat."[100] The horror of pregnancy is also inscribed on the female vampire body, not merely relegated to human victims. The celibate vampire Richelle, whose rape results in pregnancy, rips the child out of her womb but perishes; "She tried to cut it out of her body. I found it in the ruins of her belly, half-hidden behind coils of entrails."[101] The tyranny of unwanted pregnancy is still haunting the youth that Brite attempts to engage with, and despite allusions to abortive options these characters may have, it seems the complete disregard for the troubled, abandoned youth in the novel only adds to the destructive pregnancies they endure. It seems that for Brite, the only solution to survive such physical destruction is to remain physically and psychically closed to

[98] Carol Siegel. *Goth's Dark Empire*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005. p. 83
[99] Poppy Z. Brite. *Lost Souls*. p. 10
[100] Carol Siegel. *Goth's Dark Empire*. p. 83
[101] Poppy Z. Brite. *Lost Souls*. p. 277

outside male/sexual influences. "Much is made of Nothing's orphan status until he is taken in by other vampires, ...",[102] obviously alluding to Nothing's vulnerability as an open penetrable character who remains protected by his gender. Unlike female spectators, who are deemed 'open' (lacking the male phallus) and subject to vampiric invasion, rape and influence, men are the only gender envisioned by Brite to endure in her violent world. As Candace Benefiel correctly concludes: "[For Brite] the family can only consist of a father and children; no mother is possible."[103]

Political, Independent and Arthouse Narratives: *Cronos*, *The Addiction* and *Nadja*

In Guillermo del Toro's *Cronos* (1993), the only female spectator who remains closed to both change and vampiric influence is a child. Combining the elements of "insect mythology, alchemy and vampire mythology all into one [film], coming from observation about alchemy, Catholicism and vampirism being intrinsically linked,"[104] del Toro's film is as much about the vampiric tendencies of all people and religions as it is in the natural world. Set in Mexico in 1997 (though shot in 1993) *Cronos*, derived from the Greek 'khronos' – meaning time - is concerned with the ravages and cyclical nature of time, from the perspectives of each character. Before the opening credits, we are informed of a brilliant alchemist named Uberto Fulcanelli,[105] who in 1536 fled to Mexico to escape the Inquisition. Fulcanelli, the viceroy's watchmaker, obsessed with devising a method to grant eternal life, invents the Cronos Device. Four hundred years later, a man of strange skin "the colour of marble in moonlight"[106] was mortally wounded in an earthquake. It is revealed that this marble-skinned man was the alchemist Fulcanelli. The contents of Fulcanelli's home were later sold at public auction but no trace of the Cronos Device was found.

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[102] Candace R. Benefiel. "Blood Relations: The Gothic Perversion of The Nuclear Family in Anne Rice's *Interview With The Vampire*" in *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 38, No. 2, 2004. p. 265

[103] ibid. p. 265

[104] *Cronos*. Dir. Guillermo del Toro. Instituto Mexicano de Cinematografia, 1993. quoted from the directors commentary track on the film. (Special edition DVD 2006).

[105] Fulcanelli, a pseudonym for a French alchemist whose true identity is still debated, is most likely to be inspiration for the Cronos Device inventor Uberto Fulcanelli. Fulcanelli was an alchemist who claimed to have turned lead into gold.

[106] *Cronos*. Dir. Guillermo del Toro. Instituto Mexicano de Cinematografia, 1993.

Set in modern day Mexico City, Jesús Gris (Federico Luppi) an antique dealer, (whose name translates to Grey Jesus), and his granddaughter Aurora (the dawn) find the Cronos Device in the antique shop. From the outset, we are aware of time being the central theme of the narrative, from the sound of ticking clocks and chimes, and the generational relationship between Jesús and Aurora representing both old and young. Accidentally activating the device, (which is wound like a watch, activating a countdown for the device to prong its stinger into the victim to feed the parasite within the gold shell) Jesús is bitten/stung and begins his vampiric transformation with an unending thirst and a craving for blood. After his initial bite, Jesús finds relief in reusing the device, repeatedly infecting himself to stave off his hunger. Almost immediately, Jesús begins to look and act younger, shaving off his moustache and dressing informally.

In pursuit of the Cronos Device are Angel de la Guardia (Ron Perlman) and his uncle; the Howard Hughes-styled Dieter de la Guardia (Claudio Brook), trawling through antique shops searching for the angel statue where the device was hidden. Dieter de la Guardia, a businessman dying of multiple cancers, resides in a world of sterile metals, plastic sheeting and gothic angel statues, bearing the pages detailing Fulcanelli's device as his last hope of survival. Dieter commands his nephew Angel to find the device to prolong his life, and upon purchasing the correct angel in Jesús's shop, invites him to learn the device's history.

Dieter's body resembles that of a modern version of Frankenstein's monster, keeping his extracted organs in fluid filled glass jars in a display case. The meeting places Jesús as the oppositional Dracula to Dieter's Frankenstein monster, creating "as much an atypical Frankenstein film as it is an atypical vampire film."[107] O'Brien refers to both Frankenstein and Dracula as 'dark twins', from David J. Skal's definitions of the monsters as the oppositional parts of the same brain: "The vampire's manner is seamless. Frankenstein's monster shows all his seams, literally... the monsters constitute an

[107] Brad O'Brien. "Fulcanelli as a vampiric Frankenstein and Jesus as his vampiric monster: The Frankenstein and Dracula myths in Guillermo del Toro's *Cronos*." In Richard J. Hand and Jay McRoy (eds). *Monstrous Adaptations: Generic and Thematic Mutations in Horror Film.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007. p. 173

overwhelming gestalt, representing the intuitive right and the logical left, shadow and substance, superstition and science – the oddest of couples."[108] However, the vampiric inventor Fulcanelli and De La Guardia, have conflicting politics: De La Guardia's immortality will function to conquer his monstrous illnesses and for capitalistic gain, whereas Fulcanelli fled a similar political monster (the inquisition) before creating the device. De La Guardia is simultaneously Frankenstein and Dracula, referenced explicitly not only in his physical lacking of his own organs but also through the vampiric grip he asserts on his nephew Angel (a possible subtle double for Renfield in Stoker's *Dracula*).

Hoping to inherit his uncle's corporate empire, Angel patiently awaits his uncle's demise while appearing to aid his request to seek out the device. Obsessed with his nose (a symbol for an opening for the soul) and wishing to reshape it through cosmetic surgery, Angel exhibits his own vampirism through desiring not only to appear physically younger and more beautiful, but also through his wish to become heir to his uncle's industrial vampiric empire in Mexico. In particular, the relationship between the US and Mexico reverses stereotypical depictions of Mexicans and relays the image back on to the American corporate thugs, namely Angel (Perlman). "I really hate it when Hollywood shows Mexicans or Latin Americans as sweaty villains with a big moustache. I wanted to do that to the American characters. I was very conscious that the American characters should be like comic book villains."[109] This relationship is also by its very nature vampiric and Frankensteinian – through exploitation of the work force and cheap labour and by denying basic rights and naturalisation to the significant proportion of Mexicans in the US population. Del Toro's film is also critical of the upcoming North American Free Trade Agreement (1994), anticipated by Del Toro at the time of filming to be detrimental to crop growth and wages in Mexico. "The insect was vampirising the victim, the mechanism was vampirising the insect [by keeping it alive and housed within its golden shell]; in turn the industrialists are

[108] David J. Skal. *The Monster Show*. p. 81

[109] *Cronos* Dir. Guillermo del Toro. Instituto Mexicano de Cinemagrafica, 1993. Special Edition 2006. Sleeve notes interview with director Guillermo del Toro with Jason Wood. Extract from Jason Wood. *The Faber Book of Mexican Cinema*. London: Faber & Faber, 2006.

vampirising Mexico. I wanted to create this ever-growing chain of vampirism."[110]

Vampirism becomes an organic process for del Toro, as the vampiric element is akin to insect life. Vampirism in *Cronos* is not a supernatural occurrence, but rather an extension of life through chemical/alchemical means.[111] As De la Guardia explains to Jesús, "That's the genius of it. The insect is trapped in the device...acting as a sort of living filter...who knows? Maybe insects are God's favourite creatures? Christ walked on water, just like the mosquito does. And as for resurrection, it is not a strange concept to ants, to spiders... They can remain inside a rock for hundreds of years until someone comes and sets them free."[112] Not only does this narrative explain the organic process of vampirism, it highlights the cyclical nature of vampirism through human ages, and being entrapped by it. Vampirism is rife in each adult character: Mercedes (Jesús's wife) is obsessed with her weight and beauty, preparing for the anticipated New Year's Eve party. She focuses on wearing the dress she wore last year to defy the aging process, to avoid acknowledging another year has passed in her life. Just as Jesús reverses the aging process by shaving off his moustache after he is bitten/stung, he asks his wife if he looks younger, repeating her pattern and appearing to be significantly different. He reiterates this when he sings to her at the party, "I cannot accept that everything is over, that life has set us apart".[113] This is also the last significant interaction he has with his wife before his abduction and physical death at the hands of Angel (who unwittingly provides Jesús's vampiric resurrection). Jesús's work as an antiques dealer depends on the preservation of the past, relics of a past age worth more as each year passes, while those who purchase the items wish to defy their place in the natural order of time.[114] The only character who does not exhibit any form of vampirism is the near mute Aurora, "who does not care about time and is

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[110] *Cronos*. Dir. Guillermo del Toro. Instituto Mexicano de Cinemagrafica, 1993. Director's commentary (special edition DVD 2006).

[111] The process of vampiric infection from the natural world through the insect bite proves to be both chemical, because of the poison or infection from the stinger, and alchemical due to its potential as an elixir of life.

[112] *Cronos*. Dir. Guillermo del Toro. Instituto Mexicano de Cinematografia. 1993.

[113] ibid.

[114] Yet again we visit another antique dealer who is or shall become a vampire. However, both Jesús and Angel (his only seen customer) are aware of their place in time, though they mean to conquer it through different means (Jesús through the alchemical and Angel via plastic surgery).

immune to the concept of death."[115] Aurora's immunity to the concept of death saves her from the corruption of life that surrounds her, clarified by her hiding the Cronos Device in her teddy bear (a familiar emblem of childhood).

In a visual homage to Frankenstein, and a virtual doubling of De la Guardia's own Frankensteinian body-without-organs and vampiric power, Jesús is laid out in the mortuary being stitched by the undertaker for an open casket wake. After his wake, he awakes as a vampire, leaving the crematorium before his cremation. Through his death, he has succumbed to being both a vampire, physically depicted by his marble skin underneath the folds of his wounded flesh and Frankenstein, as the stitching of his former skin by the undertaker is clearly shown. "Like the popular image of Karloff as Frankenstein's monster, the undead Jesús has grey skin and staples in his head...He wears a cape, like [Lugosi's] Count Dracula, and because the sunlight burns his skin, he sleeps during the day in Aurora's toy box, which functions as his coffin."[116] When both monsters De la Guardia and Jesús (both evoking imagery and characteristics of Frankenstein and Dracula as opposites) confront each other, they are both denied the answers they desperately seek. De la Guardia eats the Fulcanelli papers so that Jesús cannot use the device according to the scientist's specified rules (rules we are not made aware of), and Jesús refuses to relinquish the device. De la Guardia's attempt to pierce Jesús's heart fails but he is mortally wounded in the battle. Angel, upon finding his uncle near death crushes his windpipe, and revealed as Renfield explicitly, gleeful at his inherited reward: "It's mine, all mine. You made me wait long enough."[117]

Del Toro's political view on the American corporate attitude to Mexico is revealed in all its violence and punitive horror when Angel, beating Jesús to death on the roof of the De la Guardia building is seen in wide-angle, horrifically framed by the name of the American empire in neon lighting. Surviving the fall from the rooftop, Aurora eventually attaches the Cronos Device to revive him. His thirst is insatiable, now posing a threat to his

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[115] *Cronos* Dir. Guillermo del Toro. Instituto Mexicano de Cinematografía. 1993. Special Edition 2006. Sleeve notes interview with director Guillermo del Toro with Jason Wood. Extract from Jason Wood. *The Faber Book of Mexican Cinema*. London: Faber & Faber, 2006.
[116] Brad O'Brien. "Fulcanelli as a vampiric Frankenstein and Jesus as his vampiric monster: The Frankenstein and Dracula myths in Guillermo del Toro's *Cronos*." p. 178
[117] *Cronos*. Dir. Guillermo del Toro. Instituto Mexicano de Cinematografía. 1993

granddaughter. Enraged by the thirst of the inner monster/vampire he feared becoming, he destroys the device, reaffirming his identity and proclaiming redemption through it, "I am Jesús...Gris". Jesús denies the evil dwelling within him and succumbs to death.

The evil that springs from the depths of the human heart is central to vampiric existence in Abel Ferrara's *The Addiction* (1995). Intellectual, social and philosophical vampirism become intertwined in Ferrara's film as the complexities of human nature are fused together, determined to frame the vampire of the 90s as a beacon of the evil within all humanity. Ferrara's film bookends imagery of vampirism and addiction with photographs and documentary footage of genocide and war crimes, indicating a significant link between vampirism and evil atrocities violating human rights. For Ferrara, silence in the face of such evil amounts to tacit consent or approval, rather than active, audible protest. Kathleen (Lili Taylor), a PhD student in philosophy at NYU studies a short film on the massacre of My-Lai in Vietnam, questioning why one person should be tried for war crimes rather than an entire nation that supports the policy of murdering innocents as an act of war. Figures tried for war crimes sate the moral outrage of the nation, her colleague Jean (Edie Falco) implies, and temporarily alleviates the guilt of the masses. Soon after, Kathleen is attacked and dragged down an alley by the seductive vampire Casanova (Annabella Sciorra) and given a choice to survive: "Tell me to go away," she offers but Kathleen only replies "Please". She is then bitten forcefully by the vampire, and branded a 'collaborator' for not crying out in protest against Casanova's advances. Silver and Ursini argue that in Ferrara's violent world, denying or failing to resist such evils allows one to become embroiled in it, to be silently hostage to such powerful force:

> For those who fail to resist with vigor [sic], the evildoer obtains social consent for his or her evil whether it is on the natural level of murder, genocide, and drug addiction or on the supernatural plane of vampirism. In Ferrara's ethical construct these evils are

> all equal, all involving wilful violence to oneself and/or others.[118]

Describing history as an epitaph, Ferrara's script is heavily preoccupied with history's documentation on sins against others, while openly criticising the failure of humanity to acknowledge such atrocities. Doomed to repeat our sins over and over, Ferrara blames the weak and the silent, while leading us with Kathleen, destined towards an inherent evil aspect of the self. This is amplified in a scene where Kathleen leads a student away from the library and attacks her. After being bitten, the girl asks, "Am I going to get sick now?" Kathleen replies softly, "no, no worse than you were before".[119] It becomes apparent that all structures of society come under scrutiny in Ferrara's film because of the denial or silent resistance to evil in the everyday world. Everyone has the capacity for evil, to the extent of a violent individualistic 'clash of wills' for survival.

> *The Addiction* makes vampirism stand in for a whole host of issues, including man's inhumanity to man; the sheep-like groupthink of fascist societies; the struggle of free will versus determinism; the revolt of the free-thinking individual against bourgeois institutions like religion and morality; and finally, drug addiction.[120]

Kathleen's role as a doctoral student, a role of scholarship, academic insight and research integrated with the philosophers before her, is presented as a form of vampirism through a cannibalising of previous masters' innovative study, regurgitated without any historical change or impact in the world. While being complicit in an institutionalised academic environment and internally conflicted in her new vampiric viewpoint of her fellow students and professors, knowledge is presented as a privilege of the few – contrasted heavily by Ferrara's use of NYU's West 4th Street campus and St. Mark's district lined

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[118] Alain Silver, James Ursini. *The Vampire Film: From Nosferatu to Interview With the Vampire*. p. 226

[119] *The Addiction* Dir. Abel Ferrara. Polygram, 1995.

[120] Justin Vicari "Vampire as metaphor: Revisiting Abel Ferrara's *The Addiction*". *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media*. Issue 49, spring 2007. p.2. Online Journal available at http://www.ejumpcut.org/currentissue/addiction/2.html p.2 Accessed 19/02/08.

with prostitutes, drug dealers and homeless people within the same space as the campus – yet both groups, for Ferrara, feed off, and become indifferent to, pain and human misery. Vampirism returns to Marx's analogy of bleeding the proletariat to further the bourgeois agenda of greed and capital, here translated into knowledge and revising history. The film explicitly suggests reading academic learning through a lens of "[a] perceived tendency [that] academics 'feed off" such atrocities, waxing piously about their significance. Academics do so in a way that could be said to dull the edge of atrocity's human pain by converting it into a museum piece, remote and safe under glass."[121]

Contrasting the imagery of familiar symbols and metaphors for vampirism - drug addiction, prostitution, and the dangers of the modern city - are montages of dead bodies, each of them victims of war and genocide. The film was released in the shadow of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, offering a commentary of continued atrocity in the modern world and the endurance of evil between the silent and the silenced. Perhaps what is most striking is the complacency of the bourgeoisie, and the silence of other political actors outside the direct line of accountability. The overwhelming lack of condemnation, particularly by the U.S. Government, when Rwanda's political instability descended into ethnic cleansing and genocide by the Hutu against the Tutsis, was deafening. Samantha Power's study into the history of America and genocide reveals not only the efficiency of the Hutu murder machine but also the lack of political interest by the U.S. in Rwanda's descent into hell:

> The Rwandan genocide would prove to be the fastest, most efficient killing spree of the twentieth century. In 100 days, some 800,000 Tutsi and politically moderate Hutu were murdered. The United States did almost nothing to stop it.... When the massacres started, not only did the Clinton administration not send troops to Rwanda to contest the slaughter, but it refused countless other options. President

[121] ibid. p. 2

> Clinton did not convene a single meeting of his senior foreign policy advisers to discuss U.S options for Rwanda.[122]

Clinton's refusal to become embroiled in the bloodshed of Rwanda was largely based on the killing of U.S Army rangers and Delta special forces in Somalia on October 3rd 1993, and the subsequent humiliation of the U.S forces in the aftermath of the Somali insurgency in which eighteen U.S soldiers were killed in battle with the Somali militia, and kidnapping one Black Hawk helicopter pilot. Forces were informed of a complete withdrawal from the territory within six months of the attack, the humiliation of the 'Black Hawk Down' incident broadcast the world over. "The American networks broadcast a video interview with the trembling, disorientated pilot and a gory procession in which the naked corpse of a U.S ranger was dragged through a Mogadishu street."[123] Fearing a ground invasion would be the end result in their continued involvement in the Somali war, the U.S pulled out of the region in an attempt to avoid any further ground operations and to limit the damage to Clinton's administration. However, when the issue of genocide in Rwanda finally came to the fore, the administration did nothing to prevent the mounting bloodshed, militarily or politically. The U.S did not call for the expulsion of the extremist Hutu Rwandan Ambassador resident at the United Nations. Instead, Washington called for a complete withdrawal of all UN troops and refused to deploy any UN reinforcements. In the administration's eyes, "there were no costs to avoiding Rwanda altogether. Thus, the United States again stood on the sidelines."[124] The avoidance of intervention and recognition of genocide in Rwanda is revisited repeatedly in *The Addiction*, while making an equally valid example of the massacre of My-Lai in Vietnam (March 16th, 1968). The topic of genocide and war crimes remains a taboo subject, a topic while Ferrara reminds us of, and the guilt everyone should bear because of the sheer evil committed while spectators remain silent. Kathleen's vampirism is explicitly filtered through a sense of collective guilt when she reveals why she covers up the mirrors of her apartment: "Guilt doesn't pass with time, it's eternal ....The mirrors in my house I had to cover them up. What is it in my face that I don't

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[122] Samantha Power. *"A Problem From Hell": America and the Age of Genocide*. London: Flamingo, 2003. pp. 334-335
[123] ibid. p. 317
[124] ibid. p. 335

want to look at? I'm rotting on the inside but I'm not dying".[125] Lacking the ability or willingness to examine her reflection in the mirror is explicitly attributed to a self-loathing that is unshakable by being part of a collective that has committed or ignored atrocities. Culpability is everywhere and only those who protest audibly will be spared such guilt and wrath. As Kathleen repeatedly asks her victims, "Look evil in the face, and tell me to go away"; none succeed.[126]

> 'Everything we are is eternally with us. The question becomes, what can save us from spreading the blight in ever-widening circles?' Actress Lili Taylor makes the words 'the blight' sound like 'the *polite*,' here, identifying and indicting bourgeois complacency as the real enemy.[127]

Ferrara's reminder that evil is everywhere and flourishes within every political and social sphere in the world, and provokes a question of 'evil' being a base element in humanity, culminating in a collective addiction to evil. The repeated line of "essence is revealed by praxis" delineates between good intention and evil practises. We are all damned and culpable because history is never fully laid to rest.

Kathleen recruits a vampire ensemble to attack the guests at her PhD graduation party, systematically murdering the entire faculty of philosophy at NYU and the Dean; those she holds responsible for bourgeois silence, political complacency and fatigue, and the cannibalisation of knowledge. The image is one of mindless murder, consumption, rape and torture capturing a staged war crime, though the vampires temporarily resemble Romero's zombies from *Dawn of The Dead* (1978) rather than any familiar vampires. This temporary zombification is crucial when investigating those criminally responsible for war crimes – the temporary displacement of individual thought is replaced with

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[125] *The Addiction.* Dir. Abel Ferrara. Polygram, 1995. Kathleen's endurance is also symbolically reinforcing humanity's continued legacy of evil as war and genocide in human history.
[126] ibid. Perhaps this is Ferrara's defining moment in the film where the vampire, unable to see their own reflection, and the victim, unable to comprehend their own culpability in evil enduring in the present, can only find adequate reflections of each other when face-to-face.
[127] Justin Vicari "Vampire as metaphor: Revisiting Abel Ferrara's The Addiction". p. 2

behaviour as a collective, with transferred responsibility to the leader. Derived from the Milgram Experiments of 1961, which attempted to answer questions on culpability and obedience inspired by Adolf Eichmann's war crimes trial in Jerusalem that same year, Milgram found that obedience was obtained by stressing 'authority' (a lab coat, scientific surroundings and qualifications) at all times. As Kathleen is celebrating the conferring of her doctoral degree, she signifies considerable authority and rank. Milgram explains the findings of his initial experiments on obedience when confronted with rank and perceived authority:

> I set up a simple experiment at Yale University to test how much pain an ordinary citizen would inflict on another person simply because he was ordered to by an experimental scientist. Stark authority was pitted against the subjects' [participants'] strongest moral imperatives against hurting others, and, with the subjects' [participants'] ears ringing with the screams of the victims, authority won more often than not. The extreme willingness of adults to go to almost any lengths on the command of an authority constitutes the chief finding of the study and the fact most urgently demanding explanation.[128]

Kathleen's transformation is complete in her orchestration of the faculty massacre where she mimics the war criminal Lieutenant William Calley, the platoon leader of the My-Lai massacre who was charged with murdering 109 civilians, the representative monster held to account for a myriad of collective sins. Initially accepting her fate as an inherently evil human being-turned-vampire, she denies the philosophies of academia, Tibet and the goodness of mankind, only to be redeemed in the closing shot of the film: placing a rose on her own grave, bearing the quote 'I am the resurrection', Kathleen offers the viewer a view towards redemption that all mankind, through a future resurrection, may eventually break the addiction of power and evil. Ferrara's

[128] Stanley Milgram. "The Perils of Obedience" in *Harper*'s Magazine December Issue, 1973. Quoted in Stanley Milgram. *Obedience to Authority*. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.

film reminds us that evil will be always within us. Indeed "all that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing".[129]

Both *Irma Vep* (1996) and *Nadja* (1994) revise the course of history through remaking previous vampire films, visually reinforcing the idea of a story retold as a copy within a copy. *Irma Vep* is a reworking of *Les Vampires* (1915) and works on the premise of being a film project re-emphasising the original film while producing a new version in the failing and stoic French cinema industry. *Nadja*, produced by and co-starring David Lynch, is a revision of *Dracula's Daughter* (1936) set in modern day New York, firmly in the shadow of previous New York vampire films. The grainy imagery taken from the vampire's perspective indicates hallucinatory properties mixed in with an 'otherworldly' viewpoint, and sharing its black and white presentation with *The Addiction* (1995) gives it a timeless quality, from the underground American Arthouse scene. The opening premise is simple yet firmly establishes the mode of postmodernity that visually and lyrically dominates the film as Nadja (Elina Lowenshon) celebrates her father's death. "My father, Dracula, is dead... I am free. I want to change my life. I can find someone. I can be happy".[130] Encountering Lucy (Galaxy Craze), married to Jim (Martin Donovan) and nephew to an aging and often incoherent hippie Van Helsing (Peter Fonda), Nadja explains her family torment: her brother Edgar (Jared Harris) who wishes to destroy her, and her 'bastard' father who abandoned them both has left them a legacy of pain. Lucy shares a similar history; recalling her family trauma where she explains her family breaking up due to a religious divide, it reads as being akin to vampirism:

> My dad met a woman who was 'born again'. Do you know what that means? He got 'born again' too, married her and disowned me because my lifestyle was not in sync with their religion. They moved to Australia with their 'born again' children. But

[129] This quote is often attributed to the Irish political philosopher Edmund Burke, though this quote is not definitively from his known texts. It is suggested that it may have been paraphrased from his essay *Thoughts on the Cause of Present Discontents* (1770). It also features in the film version of Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. Dir. King Vidor, Paramount Pictures, 1956.

[130] *Nadja*. Dir. Michael Almereyda, October Films, 1995.

> I'm married now and all this family stuff feels so far removed from me now. It feels almost abstract.[131]

Being 'born again' in *Nadja* is akin to being 'born into darkness' or vampirised, and becoming part of a collective. Van Helsing too describes Dracula (whom he has killed before the narrative begins) in the same terms: "He was tired, lost. He was like Elvis in the end...drugged, surrounded by zombies. The magic was gone."[132] This can be read as the fate of those 'born again' into religion, and more specifically, the fate of Lucy's father. The emphasis on the legitimacy of marriage as a means of acceptance counteracts the ensuing lesbianism between Nadja and Lucy, as though this will save Lucy from the harsh judgement of her absent father, and a means for Nadja to deny her fate as a mother to future vampires. If religion and an inherited family code are akin to monstrosity, the film offers a dialogue in the same vein as *The Addiction*. Trying to change or to remove oneself from the collective becomes increasingly difficult for these independent vampires, partly because their involvement with the masses prior to their personal vampirism. Just as Kathleen is a participant in academic scholarship and the American public in *The Addiction*, where culpable guilt is redistributed to all who fail to speak out against atrocities, so too is Dracula guilty in *Nadja* for abandoning his children after the death of their human mother. This personal atrocity of parents abandoning their children is akin to turning one's back on the violence committed abroad: violence committed abroad is done to further the glory of the homeland, just as children are born inheriting their parent's name (a 'selfish gene' version of self-glory), are later abandoned or orphaned in shame. And yet, *Nadja* is filled with an undercurrent of incest between all the characters, and that family is a constant web around us. Edgar's nurse Cassandra (Suzy Amis) is Jim's sister and niece to Van Helsing, as is Jim who believes Van Helsing to be his uncle, but is also suggested to be his father through incest. Dracula and Van Helsing are both portrayed by Peter Fonda, indicating a bond between both characters that collapses identity into one form of image. And Lucy, Jim's wife, is romantically involved with Nadja. Both the Dracula and Van Helsing families mirror each other's incestuous nature, which Edgar

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[131] *Nadja*. Dir. Michael Almereyda, October Films, 1995.
[132] ibid. This line of dialogue echoes George A Romero's vampire Martin in *Martin* Arrow Films, 1976, who repeats 'there is no magic' in Postmodern Vampirism to his uncle Tata Cuda.

wishes to remove himself - "I don't want her (Cassandra) to be ruined by this fucked up family" he tells Nadja after openly wishing her dead - by destroying Nadja (and Dracula's legacy). The film ends with an unusual twist embracing both incest and reincarnation: kidnapping Cassandra and bringing her to Transylvania, Nadja transfuses herself into Cassandra and endures within her sister-in-law's body (now her own body). The closing shot of the film where "we hear Nadja's voice-over, though the shot fades to a close-up of Cassandra's face, which dissolves into Nadja's face, then back to Cassandra's; we cannot tell who is really speaking"[133] but the suggestion left is that Nadja endures. As Ursini and Silver note, "Nadja's possession of Cassandra adds a final twist to this incestuous tale as she marries her own brother. For as Nadja tells her brother, 'Family is all that really matters.'"[134]

Corporate Vampires in the *Fin-De-Siècle* America

Concurrent to the wave of independent vampire films and the rise of the public gothic double, major film studios, reaping the benefits of the Academy's endorsement of the gothic and the horror genre as documented by Mark Edmundson, also endorsed and financed the continued tale of the vampire. Contrary to the independent films of Guillermo del Toro, Abel Ferrara and Michael Almereyda, which defined alternative narratives against stereotypical and established vampire myths and metaphors, the corporate vampire was glossed, beautified and finessed and, attempted to remove any overt political or sexual undercurrents that could be presented as unpalatable. Studio funded projects, unlike the independent films that ran in smaller theatres with more limited budgets, had significant film stars and television actors cast, portraying either desirable vampires or vampire slayers. By way of such high budget productions and actors willing to portray studio-funded projects on the gothic, the bourgeois mindset of propriety and the need to secure blockbuster exposure of major productions resulted in an unwillingness to court cult or controversial topics. In essence, 'studio gothic' was cleaned down and glossed up, becoming more a simulacrum rather than a layered art form.

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[133] William Patrick Day. *Vampire Legends in Contemporary American Culture: What Becomes a Legend Most*. p. 121

[134] Alain Silver, James Ursini. *The Vampire Film: From Nosferatu to Interview With the Vampire*. p. 231

Anne Rice's *Interview With The Vampire*, the most successful vampire novel of the 1970s and considered to be a watershed in the vampire narrative, became known as the most famous unfilmed script in Hollywood for nearly twenty years. When it was eventually green-lit and given to Irish film director Neil Jordan by producer David Geffen, casting and script alteration became a serious contention for author Anne Rice. Publicly denouncing the casting of Tom Cruise in the role for Lestat - a role Cruise openly campaigned for, including dyeing his hair blonde to meet Lestat's physical description in the book – Rice took out numerous advertisements in magazines and newspapers in which she stated that her novel was not being properly captured or envisioned. "Rice saw the image of Cruise - his essential picture personality as an All-American, wholesome and youthful star – as antithetical to Lestat, a being motivated by homoerotic companionship and baroque bacchanalia in his insistent bloodsucking killing as a vampire."[135] Rice later retracted the statement, two days before the film premiered in the US "and took out a two page advertisement in *The New York Times* in which she lavished praise not only on the movie itself but also on Tom Cruise's portrayal of Lestat."[136] However, the reason for such a delay in filming the influential novel was, according to Harry Benshoff, due to Rice's explicitly homoerotic characters and Hollywood's unease in glamorising homosexuality:

> According to Rice, Hollywood was for years afraid to make *Interview* because they didn't want to 'be accused of homosexuality in conjunction with child molesting'. Well-known Hollywood actors were supposedly afraid to play the parts of Louis and Lestat, worried that the characters' implicit homosexuality might tarnish their chances for future heterosexual roles.[137]

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[135] P. David Marshall. *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1997. p.114

[136] Raymond T. McNally, Radu Florescu. *In Search of Dracula*. London: Robson Books, 1995. p. 178

[137] Harry M. Benshoff. *Monsters in The Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Movie*. p.271. Benshoff quotes Gerald Raymond. "Anne Rice: Queen of The Vampire Chronicles" *The New York Native*. 5th December 1988. p. 17

Benshoff reiterates the awkwardness in handling a multi-million dollar budget film where the monsters are notably, though significantly less obviously, queer. Having only recently completing *The Crying Game* (1992), David Geffen (a gay Hollywood mogul who attained control of the project), chose Jordan "to direct, ostensibly because he had previously shown the ability to handle such queer matters in an acceptable (i.e. profitable) fashion."[138] Despite Jordan's 'suitability' and filming of the script (which he substantially rewrote unaccredited from Rice's original script), significant changes were made to 'heterosexualize' or mute the homosexual tendencies of the characters. "For the most part, the Lestat/Louis dynamics is played out as asexual familial bickering (of estranged husband and wife, or father and son)."[139] Louis's torment in mourning his dead brother is replaced by a wife "who died in childbirth",[140] while Lestat's "penchant for little boys"[141] is virtually absent. Claudia, insofar as being an eternal child or doll, subtly escapes the glossing of the narrative to suit conservative taste, as she projects violence through another filmic lens. According to Kevin and Emer Rockett,

> Claudia partakes in her own objectification (of the woman's body) [she desires to be like a beautiful adult woman she sees through a window], which is bound up with notions of the male gaze. This becomes explicit in her attempt to touch (or appropriate) the body through drawing, and finally by killing her. But if, unlike the killer in *Silence of The Lambs*, she does not try to wear her skin, what she does is no less neurotic. Claudia buries the body in her bedroom under a pile of dolls she has been given (by Lestat) and obsessively collected, which mock her status as an eternal doll, 'the eighteenth century equivalent of Barbie'.[142]

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[138] Harry M. Benshoff. *Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality in the Horror Movie*. p. 271
[139] Emer Rockett, Kevin Rockett. *Neil Jordan: Exploring Boundaries*. Dublin: Liffey Press, 2003.p.157
[140] *Interview With The Vampire*. Dir. Neil Jordan. Warner Bros., 1994.
[141] Harry M. Benshoff. *Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality in the Horror Movie* p. 272. It is, however, hinted at in the film when Claudia presents Lestat with two boys she killed with laudanum, in order to poison Lestat with dead blood.
[142] Emer Rockett, Kevin Rockett. *Neil Jordan: Exploring Boundaries*. p.151

Although Claudia cannot ever 'become' a woman just as Jame Gumb cannot alter his gender, both cling to the notion of possible change (though it is understood to be futile by the audience and reader) by keeping the body or skins as trophies, concealed under the codified gender trait of their personal lack (Claudia's dolls and Gumb's sewing business, a typically feminine enterprise). Jame Gumb works under the pseudonym of Mr. Hyde though he is transforming himself into a 'Miss' from female hides, while Claudia, by throwing away her dolls, becomes more womanly minded and sexualised towards Louis as a vampire (which in itself is a metaphor for the over-sexualised woman from Stoker) though remaining an eternal, unchanging doll. Both characters fit the trope of being permanently stuck in the liminal experience, and lash out violently when uncovered or reminded of this lack.

A year after the film adaptation of *Interview With The Vampire* was released, Rice published the fifth novel of the Vampire Chronicles, *Memnoch The Devil*, initially signalling it was to finalize the series. The novel concerns itself with Lestat's moral ambiguity, his desire to become a saint and repent his sins, despite the clear conflict of interest and righteousness this self-serving dilemma presents. Memnoch, the devil, appears to Lestat proposing to acquire his allegiance, to serve as the prince of darkness in the nether-world, and to philosophically aid Memnoch (a fallen angel punished by God for his sexual transgression with a mortal) win the eternal debate on the 'goodness' of God.

> I chose you not so much because it would be easier for you to comprehend everything but because you're perfect for the job... of being my right hand instrument so to speak, being in my stead when I'm weary. Being my prince... if you don't help me, if you let God keep doing things His way, I tell you evil – which is nothing really – just might destroy the world.[143]

Memnoch tempts Lestat to witness his works and God's convictions at work, in the hope of recruiting him to be a saviour of sorts for those who do not qualify or seek solace or redemption through God, and specifically through Christ. Rice thus places the vampire as a liminal being, neither condemned nor

[143] Anne Rice. *Memnoch the Devil*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1995. p. 136

damned as an eternal being, rather in an ambiguous position of choosing which role in humanity's crusade he will represent – "obliterating the previous constructed dichotomy between the saved and the damned that is so commonplace"[144]. By the novel's end, after Lestat has fleetingly encountered God, Christ on the cross – from whom he drinks in a moment of both sacrifice and horror – and Memnoch the tempter, he flees from Memnoch's servitude and emerges in the modern world, clutching a token of religious evidence: Veronica's Veil. However, Lestat's re-emergence comes at a price which, evident in Rice's later writing, reveals the price of doubting religious faith: Lestat falls into a 'spiritual' slumber, a physical purgatory. This ambiguity, and then presumed conclusion to the Vampire Chronicles, asks the reader to allow Lestat to "pass from fiction into legend"[145] – an unclear request whether the greater "hubris lies with Lestat or his author"[146] – failing to fully clarify any debate on the possible meanings and inversions of the vampire condition. In the end, for Rice's 90s vampires, the eternal vampire condition presents too many questions, and reveals too many philosophical, literary and autobiographical faces.

Interview With The Vampire (1994) also uses cinematic reflexivity and intertextuality to play out significant scenes involving the passage of time, in a similar fashion to Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) where the use of the cinematograph signals Dracula's arrival in London and his first encounter with Mina Murray. "Stoker's novel was published a year after the Lumière brothers opened their first cinematograph in London in 1896, and at the cinematograph, both 'real' and simulated early films (including a striptease, and the Lumières' *Arrival of a Train* (*L'Arrivée d'un train à La Ciotat*) (1896) are being projected."[147] *Interview with The Vampire* (1994) simultaneously uses examples of both modern and postmodern cinema to intertextualise the cultural narrative of the vampire within cinematic American Identity. This 'reflexive inscription' on the cinematograph is also mimicked in *Interview With a Vampire* (1994) when Louis, at the end of the narrative, visits the cinema to

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[144] James R Keller *Anne Rice and Sexual Politics*. p. 31
[145] Anne Rice. *Memnoch the Devil*. p. 354
[146] Martin J. Wood. "New Life for an Old Tradition: Anne Rice and Vampire Literature" in Leonard G. Heldreth, Mary Pharr. (eds) The *Blood is The Life: Vampires in Literature*. Bowling Green Popular Press, 1999. p. 72
[147] Jonathan Bignell. *Postmodern Media Culture*. p. 106

cue the audience on the passing of time. It is referenced throughout the film by having the performance of the Parisian Theatre Des Vampires seemingly in tribute to the Theatre Du Grand Guignol, and Santiago's performance which actor Stephen Rea based on an infusion of Comédie-Française and the Master of Ceremonies (Joel Grey) in *Cabaret* (1972). The clips shown in Jordan's film could perhaps double for the changing influence the vampire has had on American culture, embodying the dramatic journey vampires have experienced throughout the 20th century in various new media. Explicitly included are recognisable scenes from early silent cinema – Murnau's *Sunrise* (1927) and *Nosferatu* (1922) – Hollywood's Golden Age – Victor Fleming's *Gone With The Wind* (1939) – to the modern Hollywood blockbuster – Richard Donner's *Superman* (1978). Louis's voiceover, which accompanies the short montage of these significant cinematic moments, summarises it as his breath of reawakening from his desire to die, so too encompassing the narrative that the vampire narrative must change with the course of time and revolutionary media:

> Then out of curiosity, boredom, who knows what, I left the Old World and came back to *my* America. And there a mechanical wonder allowed me to see the sunrise for the first time in two hundred years. And what sunrises! Seen as the human eye could never see them: silver at first, then as the years progressed, in tones of purple, red and my long lost blue.[148]

As Louis's voiceover explicitly paints the course of the twentieth century's advancement in technology (and the growth of the film industry), so too must the vampire narrative look beyond the confines of past literature and narrative. Although not explicitly referenced in Rice's novel, Lestat becomes the emblem of the past melodramatic vampire narrative after Louis's encounter with the new world of technology. Louis's enlightenment confines Lestat's character to a narrative that has, like his body, become old, decayed and forgotten. He pleads with Louis "If you stay with me, I could venture out again, become the *old* Lestat".[149] Louis declines his offer, knowing that staying would indeed

[148] *Interview With The Vampire*. Dir. Neil Jordan. Warner Bros., 1994.
[149] ibid.

condemn him to a past he cannot revert to. This alternate ending to Rice's novel explicitly encodes the Hollywood vampire as a significant departure from those who precede them. This encoding by Jordan is confined exclusively to the cinematic projection of vampires.[150] Jordan comments on a similarity between Hollywood movie star and the 90s vampire:

> My feeling having cast both Brad [Pitt] and Tom [Cruise] was basically, in a strange way, the world of a vampire is not that different from the world of a massive Hollywood star... you're kept from the harsh daylight, you're kept in seclusion. Every time you emerge, a ripple runs through people.[151]

Other 90s corporate vampires did not draw on celebrity endorsement to make an impact on eager audiences. Written as a mini-series and bought by Channel 4, *Ultraviolet* used science and technology to expose and destroy vampires. The show's gritty presentation, which relied on televisiual presentation rather than filmic editing and glossy special effects, combines a police procedural script where vampires, named 'Code 5' (or Code V – denoting vampire) are ruthlessly hunted down by an elite force of specialists recruited from the London Metropolitan Police. With a virtual arsenal of weaponry, ultraviolet-lit cameras (which expose vampires unlike normal cameras) and a compression chamber which house burnt vampire ashes to prevent resurrection, the overall sense of the show is one of corporate funded vampire law enforcement.

Buffy The Vampire Slayer

I now turn to the television show *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) as an important text on the 90s Postmodern Vampire and the resurgence of interest in vampires in a wider cultural context. Due to the exemplary and important impact of this television series, it has been subdivided by three main

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[150] As Rice's novels continue the story of Lestat in the majority of the nine remaining vampire chronicles, Lestat becomes very media savvy when he becomes a rock star on MTV. His reintroduction at the end of the film forces him (and the audience) to look to Hollywood constructed vampires, above all others.

[151] *Interview With The Vampire*. Dir. Neil Jordan. Warner Bros., 1994. Neil Jordan interviewed in *In the Shadow of The Vampire: the Making of Interview With The Vampire*. Warner Bros, 2002. Special edition DVD release.

characters; Buffy, and the core vampires in the show, Angel and Spike, are all subject to detailed analysis.

The double nature of vampires and vampirism, and of the humans who continuously fight and protect others from vampires, forms the substantial narrative of the television series *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*. Originally a low budget, unsuccessful comedy horror film starring Rutger Hauer, Donald Sutherland and Kristy Swanson as Buffy, the television series of *Buffy* was resurrected by writer/creator Joss Whedon when he regained control of the project in 1996. Vampires in the Buffyverse (as it is known by scholars and fans alike) are hybrids of a sort – they are monsters with human faces and the first Postmodern Vampires to extensively focus on the nature of their souls. In the Buffyverse, to be without a soul is to be truly monstrous. While the vampire Barnabas Collins in *Dark Shadows* also struggled with the duality of his humanity and vampiric needs, just as Louis in *Interview With The Vampire* does, vampires in the Buffyverse not only recall their human lives before their vampirism, but are also punished and haunted for their human sins prior to being vampirised. Vampirism, for Whedon, is essentially a living damnation from which there are precious few options to redeem oneself. Television series prior to *Buffy* also link this sense of impending doom and guilt, notably the short run series *Forever Knight*, in which the protagonist Nick Knight is a police officer by day and a vampire by night. His vampirism is a potent metaphor for alcoholism as he struggles (and often fails) to find solace and redemption. The structure of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* centres on Buffy Summers (Sarah Michelle Gellar), a 16 year-old high school student who is the 'Chosen One', a slayer of vampires born every generation to protect the world, who has just moved to the leafy southern Californian town of Sunnydale. Encountering her 'watcher' – the school librarian Giles (Anthony Stuart Head), she is thrust into a battle against evil as she learns her new hometown lies directly above the gateway to hell. Indeed, the portal into the Hellmouth is located within the high school; translating Whedon's belief that high school is literally hell.

Buffy is a final girl in a very postmodern sense – she is defined by her characteristics as a previously blonde vapid cheerleader who can defeat the

monsters, yet she is aided by her 'Scooby gang';[152] geeks and nerds who are outcast in the high-school social scene. By prefacing our introduction to Buffy as a final girl, she violates certain conventions of Clover's theory, which posits her as a postmodern variant of it. Clover's detailed analysis of the 'Final Girl' positions her as -

> the one who encounters the mutilated bodies of her friends and perceives the full extent of the preceding horror and of her own peril; who is chased, cornered, wounded; whom we see scream, stagger, fall, rise, and scream again.... She alone looks death in the face, but she alone also finds the strength either to stay the killer long enough to be rescued (ending A [*Texas Chain Saw Massacre*]) or to kill him herself (ending B [*Friday the 13th*]).[153]

Buffy's postmodernism is related to her specific knowledge that the monsters are not only invading her hometown, but also know her as the Slayer. As such, Clover's final girls presume they are safe until they encounter the bodies of friends, setting them up as the final girl of the narrative. The extension of the final girl theory to Buffy relies on our knowledge as viewer that she will survive every encounter with the monster – human, vampire or demon – just as we come to readily identify the final girls in the first cycle of the slasher genre. However, not only is she the postmodern final girl, Buffy is also significantly doubled within the 90s gothic framework, also contravening Clover's original final girl. Unlike Laurie (*Halloween*) or Alice (*Friday the 13th*), Clover's seminal 'final girls', Buffy is sexualised and sexually active several times throughout the series narrative. She constantly expresses a desire to be normal, to be accepted among her peers, but accepts the positioning of being alone (split from her group of friends by being predestined) as a warrior. She rarely exhibits fear or significant injury and, through the aid of her helpful gang, defeats the monsters. Being so fundamentally different from her related slasher film final girls, Buffy is a further step in intertextual horror found specifically in 90s gothic fiction, while specifically cueing the audience to identify her as a styled clichéd victim – not exceptionally academic, blonde, cheerleader, mall-

[152] Linked to the cartoon Scooby Doo, the Scooby gang consists of one pretty girl (Buffy), one smart girl (Willow) and a dumb boy (Xander).
[153] Carol J. Clover. *Men, Women and Chainsaws*. pp. 35-37

rat - turned 'final girl'. To reinforce this identification that she is only a postmodern final girl in the Buffyverse, Sarah Michelle Gellar made a cameo appearance in *Scream 2*, set up as a false potential 'final girl'- a sober, responsible sorority girl (conforming to Clover's specified requirements including an androgynous name, Casey) - who is quickly and violently dispatched.[154] Also, as the *Scream* franchise thrives on its self-reflexive intertextuality, only in this narrative could a slasher successfully kill 'Buffy'.

Angel

Monstrosity in *Buffy* is usually plotted around human reactions and desires, and the significance of vampires above all other monsters appearing in the show lies in the doubling of the vampire in culture. Indebted to Anne Rice's postmodern presentation of vampires from the 1970s, *Buffy* literally doubles the meanings and representations of vampirism through the use of the 'soul' and technology [155] as a splitting and neutering device. The vampires integral to the show, Angel and Spike - both European in origin and mirroring each other by name in former life through Irish and English identity: Liam (Angel) and William (Spike) - manifest their splitting differently. Corporate vampires are often castrated by clinging to their former human nature, or their sympathy for humans who suffer under the tyranny of vampire hierarchies. Angel, in *Buffy*, is particularly reminiscent of Louis in *Interview With The Vampire*, insofar as he views his vampirism as a means to endure suffering, reflection and self-torture. Cursed with a soul (for murdering a beloved gypsy woman), Angel cannot experience a single moment of true happiness or contentment. When Buffy loses her virginity to Angel (Surprise / Innocence, 2:13; 14), the curse is lifted and he is transformed into Angelus, a sadistic, cruel and evil double – so much so that he re-casts "their moment of intimacy as a one-night-stand and by mocking Buffy's sexual inexperience"[156]. Angel's soul proves to be a slippery affair in the Buffyverse, as it continues to be a source of antagonism and thematically central to the spin off series *Angel* that followed the character's departure from *Buffy* at the conclusion of Season 3. As Vivian Burr notes, "His appeal (to the viewer and, we suspect Buffy) lies in the fact [that] one persona

[154] *Scream 2*. Dir. Wes Craven. Dimension Films, 1997.
[155] Technology in *Buffy* can be termed as the soul of the twentieth century, when religion is absent in narrative.
[156] Vivian Burr. "Ambiguity and Sexuality in Buffy the Vampire Slayer: A Sartrean Analysis" *Sexualities* vol. 6, 2003, p. 353.

is dormant in the other; we are never sure when he may turn again.... Buffy too is seen in both loving and murderous modes with Angel; she loves him but must ultimately kill him."[157] The relationship they share is one of sexual sadism, concealed in the casting of slayer and vampire with the "ambiguity of violence and sex", [158] and "a kind of horror Romeo and Juliet, with two star crossed lovers (one human, one vampire) trying to make things work."[159]

Angel develops into a champion by re-emerging from Hell in series 3 (after Buffy kills him in the season 2 finale) and departing the series to establish himself in his own series, *Angel* (1999-2003), set in Los Angeles. Angel's function in *Buffy* is to add both tragedy and irony in narrating the complexity of relationships, and the dual nature of the vampire (sensitivity/hyper-masculinity), but coded ultimately as "the action hero, the romantic hero, the older boyfriend, the dangerous lover, and the mysterious stranger."[160] As a plot enabler and an overtly styled 'hunky' vampire – a trait Brad Pitt's portrayal of Louis lacks by being too effeminate - "Angel's presence enables various clichés of heterosexual romance, such as the redemptive power of dyadic love, the agony and angst of star-crossed lovers, the allure of secret trysts, and the deflowering of the female virgin."[161] The binaries of Angel's character can also be treated as both homage and, later in *Angel*, a collapse of Rice's characters Louis and Lestat, in that Angel is simultaneously weak and strong, feminised and hyper-masculine, kind and sadistic. Angel initially resembles Louis as he drinks animal blood (pigs' blood instead of chickens' and rats' blood) and a has a permanent moral conscience, described by Buffy's new human boyfriend Reilly as the 'King of Pain'.[162] Finally, like Lestat of the 1980s, he becomes corporate (by initially running a private detective agency), briefly corporeal by proxy (through fathering a human child (*Angel*, season 2)) and incorporated - eventually becoming CEO of the evil international law firm, Wolfram & Hart (*Angel* season 5). Though Angel accepts the position of power in order to do good, the evil resonating through the law-firm and the power it upholds make

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[157] ibid. p. 353
[158] ibid. p. 353
[159] John Kenneth Muir. *Terror Television*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2001. p. 500
[160] Lorna Jowett. *Sex and the Slayer: A Gender Studies Primer for the Buffy Fan*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005. p. 152
[161] Susan A. Owen. "Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Vampires, Postmodernity, and Postfeminism." *Journal of Popular Film and Television*. Vol. 27, Issue 2. 1999. p. 27
[162] *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*. "The Yoko Factor" (4: 20)

his struggle to work within the confines of the American Justice system difficult and at odds with his usual physically imposing methods. "All the traditional characteristics of the vampire are exemplified by the [Wolfram & Hart] lawyers, either personally or through their facilitation of the evil agendas of their clients."[163] However, the comparisons between lawyer and vampire are evidently apt, not only in terms of avarice, taxation, accumulation, prolongation of legal cases - "My revenge is just begun! I spread it over centuries, and time is on my side"[164] – but also repeated explicitly by Jonathan Harker in his description of Dracula: "...he certainly left me under the impression that he would have made a wonderful solicitor, for there was nothing that he did not think of or foresee."[165] Indeed, "*Dracula* reflects competing images of lawyering and the legal professions amid *fin de siècle* fear of modernity, moral degeneration and the growing disjunction between law and morality"[166] and not forgetting that Jonathan Harker is in training to be a lawyer himself. Vampires and lawyers collapse into the same profession and identity, and explicitly so in *Angel*.[167]

Spike

Just as the magical influences and metaphors are prevalent in *Buffy*, the use of technology is specific to vampire castration. While Angel is castrated by the gypsy curse that endows him with a soul and conscience, Spike, the blonde-haired, Billy Idol – inspired British vampire, is first introduced in the Buffyverse as another antagonist for Buffy to slay. However, as the series developed and the departure of Angel to his new show, Spike remained as a constant vampire figure and Buffy's third significant relationship in the series. Rhonda Wilcox notes, "[Angel's] absolute restraint puts him in the position of the superego, while Spike at first clearly functions as the id. And, of course,

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[163] Sharon Sutherland. "Piercing the Corporate Veil – With a Stake?: Vampire Imagery and The Law". Peter Day (ed) *Vampires: Myths and Metaphors of Enduring Evil*. New York: Rodopi, 2006. p.152

[164] Bram Stoker. *Dracula*. 1897. Nina Auerbach and David J. Skal (eds). *The Norton Critical Edition of Dracula*. p. 267

[165] ibid. p. 37

[166] Anne McGillivray "'He Would Have Made a Wonderful Solicitor': Law, Modernity and Professionalism in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*" in David Sugarman, W. Wesley Pue (eds). *Lawyers and Vampires: Cultural Histories of Legal Professions*. Portland, Oregon: Hart Publishing, 2003. p. 226

[167] In the case of evil attorney Lindsey (Christian Kane) in *Angel*, he is explicitly termed as a vampire because he literally sells his soul to the law firm Wolfram & Hart (Blind Date, 1:21) when he tells Angel he succumbed to a bribe, "a new office, a thundering raise and ungodly benefits."

their names correspond to these functions."[168] Spike's character, who is emotionally complex and in search of companionship which is unattainable, is split between noble and monstrous, lover and abuser, presenting him as a far more complex vampire than Angel was in the *Buffy* series.[169] Just as the morphing of faces recognisably cues viewers to identify vampires and vampiric urges, it also splits the identity of the vampire into a schizophrenic experience or episode: normal/monster. Spike is neutered through technology by having a microchip implanted in his head that prevents him from harming humans, at the hands of a secret government agency (The Initiative, 4:07).

Immediately after Spike escapes the laboratory where he was imprisoned and 'chipped', he appears to the Scooby gang, describing himself in terms of a castrated dog - "Spike had a little trip to the vet and now he doesn't chase the other puppies anymore" (Pangs, 4:08). Spike's 'chipping' allows for two interpretations within the castration he endures until he regains his soul (termed re-ensouled by Buffy scholars): he becomes a signified gothic double in terms of the 90s gothic and immediately begins to have feelings for Buffy that redefine him as oppositional to her in narrative terms: a shadow 'self'. In terms of doubling, splitting and schizophrenic episodes, "the chip which prevents him from harming humans can be paralleled to psychiatric medications which allow sufferers a respite and the chance to work through their psychological issues. The subsequent change is thus not simply physiological."[170]

The second form of his narrative function illustrates both Buffy and Spike mirror each other, shadowing each other's identity. Just as Spike describes himself in derogatory terms when he is castrated, she is termed a 'bitch' consistently by Warren, the sixth season's villain (and former lackey of Spike) and Spike himself. When Buffy is resurrected (Bargaining 1+2, 6:01;02), Spike is the only character able to relate to her trauma in returning to the world,

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[168] Rhonda Wilcox. *Why Buffy Matters: The Art of Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2005. p. 83

[169] Angel does become a much deeper character in the *Angel* series, as he is the central character of the show and not merely relegated as lover/opposition to Buffy. Desiring to be human again (following Lestat's desire in Rice's *The Tale of The Body Thief*) Angel fathers a human son with his vampire sire Darla (resurrected and humanised by Wolfram & Hart). Angel's subsequent struggles with evil become more complex, violent and engaging than his original character development in *Buffy*.

[170] Rhonda Wilcox. *Why Buffy Matters: The Art of Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. p. 87

realising that she has had to dig her way out of her own coffin. "I did the same myself," he adds, when he sees her torn hands. Spike's chip ceases to cause him pain when he discovers he can physically harm Buffy, informing her - "you came back wrong" – just as he did (vampire). Only then, when they become equals in danger, do they consummate their relationship via their usual 'violent dance'. When they do violently, passionately and sadistically beat each other up in an abandoned squat, realising an equally shared vulnerability against one another, the violence dissolves into lovemaking, and the house, symbolically and literally crumbles and collapses around them (Smashed, 6:09). The duality set to keep them apart dissolves with the house representing both boundary and identity frameworks.

The shadowing of Buffy through Spike is treated as a reversible reading when Spike, heartbroken and furious after their break-up, is sexually rejected by Buffy ('Seeing Red', 6:19). Buffy and Spike (here emotional and drastically different from his usual wry wit) begin quarrelling as lovers but soon become violent when Spike thrusts her to the ground, intent on raping her. Rape in *Buffy* is presented through the lens of human monstrosity, not through the typical associations of the metaphor with vampirism. Throughout Spike's attempted rape of Buffy, which she barely thwarts, Spike's face remains human (we expect to see his 'game' face but it never appears) indicating that the reaction and horror of the scene is rooted in the real, human world of relationships and violence, rather than the supernatural realm, and "thus become part of the show's critique of (normative, human) masculinity.... Spike's actions may be evil but his actions are all too human and he makes a clear decision to act in the face of Buffy's verbal and physical attempts to push him away."[171] This scene is perhaps the most pivotal between the two characters as we see multitude of role reversals: Buffy, usually wielding the phallus (stake) is threatened by the very being she is destined to penetrate, by his sexual phallus. Incorporating the horror genre (in its brief torn shower curtain reminiscent of Hitchcock's *Psycho*) and the "alternating close-ups and high angle shots... is disorientating and reminiscent of the rape revenge

[171] Karen Boyle. *Media and Violence: Gendering the Debates*. London: Sage Publications, 2005. p. 190

film".[172] In the show, both vampires, Angel and Spike, are continually sexualised under the female gaze, seen topless and sometimes S&M-style bound and chained. Lorna Jowett concurs: "Angel spends a ludicrous amount of time in chains, shirtless".[173] However, the return of the aggressive male gaze emerges through a triangulation of rape and deviant sexuality in *Buffy*'s sixth season. Power dynamics are reversed in this season to reinforce the 'reality' that not all power structures favour women, and vampires mask these very human issues. The triangulation of rape begins with Warren's (Adam Busch) attempt to rape his ex-girlfriend through the use of a spell. When it fails, he accidentally kills her but shows no remorse, because he wishes to dominate women, rather than engage with them. After Spike attempts to rape Buffy, he is filled with self-loathing and remorse, unable to forgive himself. Spike leaves Sunnydale in an attempt to retrieve his soul as a result. Reinforcing the imagery of powerful women beating misogynistic men, Buffy literally smashes the set of magical spheres Warren possesses, rendering him powerless and castrated. Willow, whose lesbianism was a source of controversy for the show, loses her girlfriend Tara (Amber Benson) and vows revenge on Warren, who killed Tara and shot Buffy in revenge for his castration. Willow, seeking revenge for the death of her lover, performs the final rape when she binds Warren up and horrifically skins him with dark magic (Villains, 6:20). This final horror inversion changes the character of Willow entirely as she symbolises pureness, intelligence and forgiveness until the sixth season, where she first encounters hatred and misogyny. The dynamics set up in the triangular rapes are essential in turning Buffy into a social commentary free from the usual constraints of Hollywood-isation. As the series developed past its initial run with the WB station at the end of season 5, Whedon's disappointment with both the network and the warnings to keep the show's content 'suitable' allowed him to change networks, discard any previous contractual creative controls and write the darkest season of the entire show. As a show, Buffy's threads of Hollywood-ised vampires lay in their ultimate desire and moral will to do good deeds and to be regarded as champions – the core theme of the final season of *Angel*.

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[172] ibid. p. 191

[173] Lorna Jowett. *Sex and the Slayer: A Gender Studies Primer for the Buffy Fan*. p. 157

Interestingly, Spike regains his moral worth (effectively removing the castrating chip) when his soul is returned to him by challenging and defeating a powerful demon. He is reinstated as a champion in Buffy's eyes when he sacrifices himself to save her and her friends from the pending apocalypse in the show's grand finale. Spike emerges from the Buffyverse as its only supernatural hero, and transforming the landscape of vampires into one aligned with heroic human values. Vampires mirror unexpressed and repressed emotions in the Buffyverse, offering a multitude of interpretations, wearing many masks - doubled implicitly and explicitly.

Allegory and Intertextuality in *Buffy*

The comedy-horror hybrid of *Buffy* allows for the concealment of certain more 'adult' issues, which the series raises through character development. *Buffy*, unlike *Angel* which firmly situates itself as a more adult show (and purposefully airing later than Buffy's tea-time television slot), uses layered meaning in language, allowing the show to tap particular linguistic double and triple entendres which soften some of the more adult orientated episodes for its younger viewers. *Angel*, however, is unapologetically more violent and gloomy than its sister show. In particular, issues of domestic violence in the guise of Jekyll and Hyde, ('Beauty and the Beasts', 3: 4), rape ('Seeing Red', 6: 19), parental death, (The Body, 5:16), drug abuse - heavily symbolised as 'Willow's (Alyson Hannigan) magical ability (Wrecked, 6:10, and throughout season 6 when she transforms into Dark Willow), alcoholism, mental illness (Normal Again, 6:17) lesbianism, murder (3: 14,15), sexual sadism and S & M feature in *Buffy*, but were disguised under the cloak of magic, monsters and teenage wit. Season six's turn towards a darker violence can be surveyed as the transition of Clinton's cultural impact to Bush's apocalyptic dialogue. The series transitioned a period "of unparalleled cynicism, scepticism, and irony in the Clinton years... early Buffy tends to be light, satirical and ironical, catching the wave of an intense postmodern moment circulating through U.S and global culture"[174] Under Bush's administration,

[174] Douglas Kellner. "Buffy the Vampire Slayer as Spectacular Allegory: A Diagnostic Critique." Available online: www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/**kellner**/essays/**buffy**.pdf , pp. 12-13 Accessed on: 03/02/2007.

> Buffy took a much darker, more violent, and pessimistic turn.... The escalating violence between Buffy and Spike, and the increasing dark apocalyptic ethos informing the series, replicates the violent response of the Bush administration to terrorism and imagined threats from the 'axis of evil,' a phrase that would fit well in the [Buffyverse].[175]

As Matthew Pateman notes,

> Whedon undermines conventions of horror specifically but notions of the hero generally; the range of inter-textual and allusive elements of both; and the element of humour in contexts that may initially appear less than conducive to comedy.... This extends as far as the show's opening theme-tune which opens with a powerful chord from an organ, akin to Hammer Horrors, but very quickly segues into contemporary indie pop. Once again the show is refusing to be simply a horror show and is also indicating that its main characters may not be what one may expect.[176]

However, this cloaking did not always conceal the larger social issues being presented in the episode arcs or prevent censorship. In the wake of the Columbine high school shooting, two episodes were postponed from the WB's schedule because the episodes (Earshot (3:18) and Graduation Day, part II (3:22)) featured guns on the school campus. "Under pressure from various moral watchdogs, the WB pulled 'Earshot' out of *Buffy*'s episode roster, fearing its guns and school theme would be misperceived as 'encouraging' violence in teens."[177] While critics praised *Buffy*'s narrative of teen-angst, morality and feminist outlook, Christian abhorrence to its plotting and lack of 'Christian morals and values' were heavily vocalised. Some Christian critics claimed that television shows depicting magic and supernatural forces are intrinsically involved with devil worship, such as David J. Stewart's online

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[175] ibid. p.13
[176] Matthew Pateman. "'You Say Tomato': Englishness in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*". *Cercles*. Vol. 8, 2003. p. 104
[177] John Kenneth Muir. *Terror Television*. p. 502

essay denouncing both *Buffy* and *Angel*. "*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Charmed, Witches, Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, *Harry Potter*, and *Witch Academy & Angel* are among popular TV programs which Satan has used to attract teens, particularly teenage girls, into Wicca witchcraft."[178] Although Stewart's argument rings hollow, his essay articulates the sentiment among the extreme right wing Christians who condemned both shows for influencing and promoting alternate lifestyles and beliefs, "while lauding sophomoric melodrama such as *Touched by an Angel* and *7th Heaven* as 'good' Christian entertainment."[179]

Buffy relies on the conventions of past gothic narratives to alter past meanings though postmodern conventions. This is especially true in the plot structure of seasons and the specific monsters and villains set up the main story arc, referred to in Buffy terminology as the 'Big Bad'. Season one's villain, The Master (Mark Metcalf), is a Nosferatu vampire, styled in homage to F.W Murnau's Orlok. In the Buffyverse, this type of vampire cannot be staked, their particular age thickens their skin and is therefore resistant to penetration. Like Murnau's Orlok, The Master is killed through exposure to sunlight. Intertextuality in Buffy does not only reference past vampire and gothic texts, it also heavily draws on shared fears and cultural experience, and other television shows paralleling Buffy's topic vein of gothic and science gone awry. In the mythologies of the season's story arc, Buffy's villains draw on previous fears in human history, most notably the abuse of power. Season three's Mayor Wilkins (Harry Groener) is an upstanding member of the community, contrasting pure evil with his 'Mr. Rogers' persona as a concerned, Christian citizen – illustrating this contrast with comedic effect when he reminds his vampire legion to kill all the teenagers in the school, but to "watch the swearing". Season Four's postmodern Prometheus, Adam, is quite literally Frankenstein's monster with a biological twist – he is constructed to be a superhuman soldier commissioned by the government. Similar plotting was also evident in James Cameron's TV series *Dark Angel* and Chris Carter's series *The X Files*, featuring a black and white episode entitled 'The Post-

[178] David J. Stewart. "Are Buffy and Sabrina Angels or Demons?". Online at: http://www.jesus-is-savior.com/Evils%20in%20America/Hellivision/buffy_and_sabrina.htm Accessed on: 06/03/08

[179] John Kenneth Muir. *Terror Television*. p. 502

Modern Prometheus' (X Files, 5:05) in which the monster, the Great Mutato, is created by Dr. Pollidori [sic], in homage to Dr. John Polidori, author of *The Vampyre* and friend of *Frankenstein* author, Mary Shelley. The episode also contains references from David Lynch's film *The Elephant Man* (1980). Douglas Kellner draws the three series together under the cultural fear of technology and military experimentation:

> All three shows dealt with genetic engineering and biotech experiments for the military to create super soldiers. Obviously, there was a publicly generally unarticulated fear of militarism among some segments of U.S society, as well as fears of genetic engineering and posthumanism, fears that came out in the debate, intense at the time, over stem cell research and human cloning.[180]

However, as *Buffy* progressed, it had to bury some arch nemeses into the ground before it could establish its desired darker edge. Unsurprisingly, Buffy would come to face Dracula (Buffy vs. Dracula, 5:01). The episode set the tone for the entire fifth season, based in mythological gods (Glory, 'the Big Bad') and infamous monsters. Initially suggesting that Dracula is too powerful for Buffy to contend with, she is fighting not just the character Dracula, but "also fights the Hollywood narrative tradition that would have a woman succumb to the power of Dracula."[181] In the Buffyverse, Dracula's heritage is no match for the Slayer's will and determination, and ensuring not only that she will not succumb to his will or desires, but also that she can ultimately defeat him. In the Buffyverse, "Dracula's affects and his gothic narrative are textually construed as obsolete…the episode concludes by self-reflexively 'refracting' Dracula-the-character through Dracula – the media- texts."[182] The novel *Dracula*, and the character's physically imposing nature has been completely lost in the translation from novel to cinema to television. Buffy reveals she knows him through his 20th century media, the cinema, just as Neil Jordan reinforces the vampire through the cinematic lens. Exemplified in the final

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[180] Douglas Kellner. "Buffy the Vampire Slayer as Spectacular Allegory: A Diagnostic Critique." p.10
[181] Matt Hills. *The Pleasures of Horror*. London: Continuum, 2005. p. 122
[182] ibid. p. 122

moment of the episode, "when Dracula's dust reassembles, Buffy is right there to stake him, again and again. 'You think I don't watch your movies?' she asks, 'You always come back.'"[183]

[183] Anne Millard Daugherty. 'Just a girl: Buffy as Icon' in Roz Kaveaney (ed.) *Reading The Vampire Slayer.* London: I.B. Tauris, 2001. p. 162

Chapter Four: Millennial Angst: Fundamentalism, Hybridity and Remapping the Vampire Body.

I wanna be a saint, I wanna save souls by the millions.[1]

I am so impure.[2]

After the scholarly, literary and cultural celebrations of Dracula's centenary ended in the late 1990s, it was not with any great surprise that the count would be re-imagined for a new twenty-first century audience. Updating Stoker's character from the late nineteenth century to the new millennium, patterned against the previous cycle of *fin de siècle* gothic and horror films and novels, the new millennium horror films (especially in vampire cinema) combined technology and sophisticated weaponry against a folkloric, heavily symbolised being. Vampires in the twenty-first century have become realigned into narratives of extremism: good and evil return to the vampire narrative not as collapsed pillars as they were in previous vampire narratives, but as a steadfast divide signposted in political, religious and scientific themes. In the increasing polarized discourse of United States politics, vampires have been remapped and reclaimed to voice both sides of this divide. From narratives on Christ and Judas to racial politics localised within the mulatto vampire body, the vampire has absorbed these tensions and has voiced both sides of this extremism.

The theme of cultural war is common to all the films and novels discussed in this final chapter; religion and scientific progress feature with particular emphasis, while religious fervour and secularism indicate that the vampire body has been reclaimed and remapped as a stern political warning in the vampire narrative. Looking toward many possible conclusions to this cultural decade, as the end of the Bush administration draws near, vampires are beginning to emerge fully realised and radicalised from the cultural wars that have dominated the landscape since the millennium. Hiding from that neo-conservative Republican sun previously destructive to vampires in the 1980s

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[1] Anne Rice. *Blood Canticle*. London: Chatto & Windus, 2003. p. 305

[2] "Reptile". Performed by Nine Inch Nails. Lyrics by Trent Reznor. Taken from the album *The Downward Spiral*. Nothing Records/Interscope. 1994.

under Reagan, vampires have recently been shadowed into a meagre existence; domesticated by technology in *Buffy* and *Angel*, or hybridised in the superhero narrative like *Blade*. In many of the textual readings to follow, we find vampires dominated by, or in pursuit of, technological wonders. Science and weaponry are also present in a myriad of other horror and action genre films in recent years, usually anticipating a chemical or biological apocalypse from which zombies, vampires and hybridized monsters emerge to pick off the remains of human kind. This cultural space in the new millennium is preoccupied completely with the demise of humankind; while Y2K brought about none of the projected fears of meltdown, 9/11 became the cultural event marking the beginning of the first cultural decade of the twenty-first century, casting aside previously held isolationist cultural security and re-instating American foreign policy on a global front. Vampires too, have gone global[3]; it seems no borders shackle their influence or prevent their vampiric infiltration: from small isolated towns in northern Sweden and Alaska to major American cities, vampires gang up, compete for influence and status, and create more vampires. Of course, vampiric invasions beyond defined national borders have always been present; from Stoker's Dracula to Stephen King's vampire-king Barlow, vampires are the embodiment of the ability to permeate and slip behind closed boundaries. Becoming pan-national and international beings, vampires frequently highlight the vulnerability of a nation's 'blood and soil', they threaten the security of boundaries, inside / outside, home / abroad, that define our perceptions of identity. As Stacey Abbott concludes in *Celluloid Vampires*, "the vampire of the twenty-first century continues to be a product of the changing modern world, this time by expanding its freedom of mobility beyond the borders of America."[4] Examples of this extensive influence are found in both novels and film; *Blade II* (2002) takes place in Prague, while *Blade: Trinity* (2004) finds vampirism's inception in the Iraqi desert; *30 Days of Night* (2007) highlights Alaska as a weak permeable point for a heavily suggested Russian invasion relocated to the very margins of US geography, and *Queen of the Damned* (2002) shifts location continuously – from the Caribbean to London to the Nevada desert, Lestat (Stuart Townsend) knows no geographical boundaries. As of August 2008, Alaska has become the central

[3] Stacey Abbott. *Celluloid Vampires*. p. 215
[4] ibid. p. 215

focus to the presidential election with Republican vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin running alongside candidate John McCain. Palin's candidacy places her home state Alaska, an often-overlooked state in presidential contests, at the centre of the campaign, and reads as an act of closing borders which could be potentially threatened from external forces. Palin's candidacy, which enjoys a large support base from the evangelical right, politically relocates this state from the fringes of American geography to the heart of Washington politics.

Some vampires in this chapter have been relocated to this chapter for narrative clarity (particularly in cases where entire trilogies are discussed in one grouping like the *Blade* Trilogy) to permit a reading that explores the development of vampires that transcend the dawning of the new millennium. Graphic novel vampires, who make the transition to film in *30 Days of Night*, are explored through both media to establish their origins, and the narrative space and development between the original and cinematic representation. Other vampires in this chapter are read within a religious narrative, concerning the dramatic flourishing of Christian groups in the United States with considerable political drawing power.

The cultural assimilation of the vampire is also narrated through the extremes of the political spectrum (and in part how other characters in popular culture, especially superheroes such as Spider Man and Batman have also been similarly assimilated within the same structures), revealing how, after the various multitudes of vampire progression, a recapitulation of nineteenth century themes and narratives of invasion, cultural dilution and infiltration feature again, recalling Stephen D. Arata's reading of Stoker's novel as symbolically articulating a fear of reverse colonisation. The unprecedented level of aggressive globalisation in the twenty-first century is not only for commercial gain; post 9/11 the reinstatement of western cultural metanarratives incorporated fundamentalist rhetoric on Armageddon, paranoia regarding the cultural and physical borders of the United States, recasting outsiders and non westerners as hateful and barbaric 'others'. This rhetoric is also overwhelmingly endorsed by the born-again Christian president George

W. Bush, who repeatedly categorises the Islamic terrorist groups of the Middle East as 'Evil Doers'.

Samuel Huntington's influential essay "The Clash of Civilizations"[5] can be reread in light of the events of 9/11, where we seem to have returned to a debate over cultural supremacy. Returning to Huntington's thesis, which examines the blocks of civilisations through history ending immediately after the end of the Cold War, it predates the re-ignition the cultural war of East vs. West that dominated in Europe since the Crusades in 1095, the 'Clash of Civilisations' seems more relevant than ever.

This return to the cultural other, which each group has posited the opposition as, has been redeployed within the horror narrative; the rise of the 'torture porn' horror film such as Eli Roth's *Hostel* (2005) and *Hostel II* (2007) and James Wan's *Saw* films (2004 -), often referred to as gorenography (gore presented as pornography), and real internet videos depicting beheading of western captives by Islamic extremists, indicates that with the rise of technology, the Internet and the Global Village, the articulation of such fears surfaces almost immediately in mainstream horror cinema. Whether the vampires of the 2000s examined here are placed into either secular or religious narratives, they are deployed as reminders of current cultural and geopolitical divisions. Furthermore, the vampires discussed here act once again as barometers of fear – whether they are representative of evil prophets, military brutality, chastity pledge members, or paedophiles – they narrate the terrain of uncertainty we tread in our society.

9/11

The uncertainties and fears which have dominated the cultural terrain in the 21st century stem largely from the events of 9/11; a catastrophic televised terrorist attack, which shifted perceptions on political and cultural blocs considered stable since the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. 9/11, in all of its key unedited live images, transmitted worldwide for all to observe in

[5] Samuel P. Huntington. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. 1996. New York: Free Press, 2002.

horror, will most likely become the historically definitive image associated with the first decade of this new century. According to novelist Martin Amis,

> It was the advent of the second plane, sharking in low over the Statue of Liberty: that was the defining moment.... That plane looked eagerly alive, and galvanised with malice, and wholly alien. For those thousands in the South Tower, the second plane meant the end of everything. For us, its glint was the worldflash of a coming future.[6]

The immediate reaction of the terrorist attack was one of anger and questioning, and then assigning blame. The descriptions used to decipher the chaos were steeped in political and religious rhetoric; from World War III to Armageddon, the attacks so resembled images of modern cinema, and a contemporary vision of Hell. The initial scenes and reactions to the attacks recalls paintings of hell; the *Hortus Deliciarum* with its distinct levels of torment, Bosch's triptych *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, or *The Millennium* (1503-1504) its third panel depicting the apocalypse, and Pieter Bruegel's *The Triumph of Death* (1562) illustrating numerous scattered bodies and flames on the horizon

Fig 4.1 *Hortus Deliciarum* (1879-1899)

Fig 4.2 Pieter Bruegel's *The Triumph of Death* (1562)

[6] Martin Amis. "The Second Plane" *The Guardian*, September 18th 2001. Rpt in Martin Amis *The Second Plane: September 11: 2001-2007*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2008. p. 3

Fig. 4.3 Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*, or *The Millennium* (1503-1504). The left section is the Garden of Eden, the centre represents man on Earth, and the right section depicts the apocalypse.

Such imagery recalls the *Left Behind* series by authors Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, in which Nicolae Carpathia, a symbolically and nominally-loaded 'vampire' and Anti-Christ, becomes Secretary General of the United Nations and leader of the 'Global Community' (a singular world government) to dispose of the followers of Christ in a final war. The novels envision the Evangelical 'Rapture', where all those who are to be saved ascend into heaven, leaving those 'left behind' to battle in Armageddon. Amis described the World Trade Centre buildings aflame appearing "opulently evil, with their vampiric reds and blacks"[7] while academic Rachel Falconer described the imagery as Dante's First Circle of Hell, with the resulting action by the US government plummeting things deeper still into the inferno:

> From Dante, Bosch, Brueghel [sic] and Michelangelo, as well as more recent fictions, one recognised the heat and flames, the crowds of souls amassing in terror, the verticalisation of space into distinct levels or circles of entrapment, the physical torments of burning, suffocation and dismemberment, even the

[7] ibid. p. 5

> still living bodies fatally plummeting to earth from the windows of the towers.[8]

Falconer's description uses the language of the apocalypse, and is most certainly apt in the climate of millennial angst and continued growth of the Religious Right towards the end of Clinton's presidency, which became centrally rooted in George W. Bush's presidency. The rise of such powerful rhetoric in the climate of fear in the US was initially reactionary, in response to the 'shock and awe' tactic which has historically been associated with a post-cold war American defence strategy and military doctrine, published by Harlan K. Ullman and James P. Wade in *Shock and Awe: Achieving Rapid Dominance* in 1996. This tactic is used to create widespread disorientation, direct force with surgical precision, and is evaluated by means of technique, use of force, objective, scope, and casualties. However, rather than recognise the 9/11 attacks as an attack of 'shock and awe', it was interpreted by some Evangelicals as a sign from a higher being. This extremism is evident from the remarkable growth in evangelicalism. This growth has been observed in the rise of summer camps for children; one in particular, 'Jesus Camp', which originated in the suburbs of Kansas City (actually held at Devil's Lake, North Dakota) called for President Bush to reintroduce prayer in schools, to reject Darwinian teachings on evolution and promote Creationism and Intelligent Design. The children proclaim that they are being trained as 'warriors'. Jesus Camp aka "Kids On Fire" was subsequently forced to close due to the overwhelming negative reactions against the camp and its pastor, fear of a backlash and destruction of the campsite, and a controversial statement by Pastor Ted Haggard on the political power of the evangelical movement, essentially proclaiming it influenced and 'won' the recent presidential election.[9] Since the events of 9/11, some within the movement have interpreted the terrorist attack as a sign of the coming Rapture:

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[8] Rachel Falconer. *Hell in Contemporary Literature*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005. p. 225

[9] *Jesus Camp*. Dirs. Heidi Ewing, Rachel Grady. A&E Indie Films, 2006. This disturbing documentary, which investigates the vigorous promotion of evangelicalism and brainwashing of the youth who attend the camp, including the encouragement of children to speak in tongues, to cry and wail and scream, to chant and demand the removal of abortion legislation (Roe vs. Wade), and to promote abstinence programs and to pledge allegiance to Jesus (altering the US Pledge of Allegiance). Children were also asked to pray in front of a cardboard cut-out of President Bush, to hear their prayers on the War on Terror, and to elect a Supreme

> Rev. Peter Gomes, a Baptist theologian at Harvard University, is one of this country's preeminent Christian thinkers. Gomes believes that this provides some kind of solace and encouragement to believers in today's society: 'The events of September 11 gave an even greater urgency to believers and some non-believers.' 'I think 9/11 was a wake-up call to America. Suddenly, our false sense of security was shaken. And we're vulnerable. And that fear can lead many people to Christ,' says LaHaye [co-author of the *Left Behind* series], who takes that message around the country.[10]

This shift towards the New Right and conservative Evangelical movement lies at the heart of George W. Bush's support base and was fundamental to his success in achieving the presidency. Since Bush entered the presidential office, vampires have been split into separate camps of representation: representing a return to narratives reaffirming religious values in an increasingly conservative America, and, in opposition, the development of the vampire's involvement in the development of the scientific community. Vampires that straddle this divide often come from one extreme of representation, converting or shifting to its exact opposite, seen explicitly in the conversion of author Anne Rice (explored in detail later in this chapter). Vampires under Bush are substantially different than under the previous republican presidencies of Reagan and George Bush senior; vampires no longer become sick and die as they did under Reagan; they are now re-invigorated and divided, shifting between embodiments of Blue and Red on the American electoral map.

Court judge who would overturn the ruling on Roe vs. Wade. It also includes some dubious footage of Pastor Ted Haggard, President of the National Association of Evangelicals and personal advisor to President Bush, who claims "If the evangelicals vote, it's enough to sway an election". As the documentary was released in 2006, it is assumed to be referencing the 2004 election between President Bush and John Kerry.

[10] 'Rise of the Righteous Army'. *CBS 60 Minutes*. Air Date: Feb. 8th, 2004. Transcript online at: http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/02/05/60minutes/main598218.shtml

Recreating Dracula in a religious light – *Dracula 2000* and *Van Helsing*.

Reintroducing Dracula to the new century in *Dracula 2000* (Dir. Patrick Lussier, 2000), Gerard Butler, in the title role, is awakened from his century-long sleep by a band of opportunistic burglars. His coffin is kept under lock and key, technologically speaking, in Carfax Abbey, over which an aged Van Helsing (Christopher Plummer) has built a vast business empire founded in antiques (much like other previous vampires such as King's Straker and Barlow), keeping the Abbey at its hidden centre. Van Helsing has been prolonging his life through leeching blood from Dracula; injecting himself with the elixir to stave off his inevitable death, Van Helsing poses as his own 'grandson' Matthew to avoid suspicion. As Dracula is awakened and reinvigorated through fresh blood, he begins pursuit of Van Helsing's daughter Mary (Justine Waddell), resident in New Orleans. His attraction to her is based on a psychic link, which transpires as being a lingering blood connection born out of Van Helsing's fusion of his blood with Dracula's own, giving Mary unique insight into Dracula's desires, visions, and eternal suffering.

The film is extremely religious in its symbolism, language and imagery: frequently, in scenes pre-empting the count's arrival in New Orleans, crucifixes, religious banners (from Mardi Gras parades) and churches are highlighted; St. Louis' Cathedral in Jackson Square features heavily in shots, where, in Anne Rice's novel *Interview With The Vampire*, Louis attacks a priest on its alter after seeking forgiveness from God.[11] As Stacey Abbott notes, the film "very cleverly offers a modern rereading of the Dracula story to reinstate the significance of Christianity to the vampire myth"[12]. Even the vampires who claim atheism in the film are informed "God loves you anyway!" indicating a mantra of all-encompassing religious rhetoric that refuses to go unacknowledged. The use of the name Matthew by Van Helsing is also interestingly employed in the film to recall Matthew the Evangelist, who is significantly known by two names in Biblical history; Matthew the Apostle and Levi the tax collector. In particular, the biblical connection is enlarged by the film's religious ending, revealing Dracula not as the familiar aristocratic

[11] Anne Rice. *Interview With The Vampire*. pp. 161-162
[12] Stacey Abbott. *Celluloid Vampires*. p. 239 n4

Count of Stoker's novel, but as Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Christ to the Romans. According to the Gospel of Matthew, Judas, consumed by guilt, attempted to return the thirty pieces of silver in vain, and committed suicide by hanging himself from a tree.[13] Lussier's film also connects the use of silver against vampires (the traditional stake is not used) to Judas's payment in silver coins, adding an interesting dimension to the eastern European belief that vampires are weakened by the metal. Dracula also quotes Christ in Aramaic, paraphrasing his teachings on eternal life: "I am the way to eternity"[14]. Similarly, Judas's kiss, with which he betrayed Jesus, is linked to the vampire bite with quick cuts between the Last Supper and his claiming of Mary as his vampire bride. Framed by a neon-lit cross with an illustration of the crucified Christ upon it, Dracula is hanged and burned by daylight, purified by fire (and we presume God's forgiveness), he succumbs and dies. It is only when Dracula is told to ask for mercy that his death is made possible. A return to this formula of religious rhetoric in horror reflects the cultural fears present in the final months of the Clinton administration: "The new twist on the undead legend has all the hallmarks of a Y2K millennial angst cash-in"[15], yet it also accounts for the rising influence of the Religious Right in the horror genre, recalling the fin-de-siécle millennial Satan films *The Ninth Gate* (1999), *End of Days* (1999) and *The Devil's Advocate* (1997), all effectively pre-dating George W. Bush's ascension to the White House in January 2001.

Butler's Dracula is the epitome of the Wandering Jew narrative, retold in a conservative reimagining of the Count's origins. The overreliance on biblical narrative limits this Dracula's agenda by heavily propagating a conservative Christian moral code and overtly advocating religious membership over any other possible alternatives. The use of heavy metal music in the soundtrack

[13] There are many conflicting versions on the death of Judas. The Gospel of Matthew accounts for his suicide by hanging (Gospel According to Matthew 27:9-10). The Acts of the Apostles (1:18) documents his death by falling over and his bowels spontaneously "gushing out" in the field of Aceldama (Field of Blood) or Potters field, which he purchased with the thirty pieces of silver. The Gospel of Judas attributes his death to stoning for his perceived betrayal of Christ (in this gospel, Judas was ordered to arrange Christ's capture by Christ himself). In popular culture, Judas's demise is typically depicted by hanging with his bowels exposed. This is also referred to in both the novel and film *Hannibal* Dir. Ridley Scott, MGM, 2001, when Lecter disembowels and hangs Pazzi ("bowels in or out... like Judas?") on the balcony of the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, for betraying him for money.

[14] In John 14:6 "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'".

[15] Jane Crowther. *Dracula 2001 review*. Online at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/films/2001/05/18/dracula_2001_review.shtml Accessed on 02/08/08

(particularly when Butler is onscreen) aligns the film with the ongoing conservative Christian opinion that such music is a corrupting influence, extending so far as to allude that all action inspired by such music is sinful or evil. However, the interpretation of this Dracula as Judas is imaginative, but not entirely original. In popular culture, Judas has been identified as a red haired young man; an attribute which, according to anthropologist Paul Barber, was also considered to be one of many markings indicative of vampirism in the middle ages. In Romanian mythology, "people with red hair and blue eyes are said to be viewed (in Romania) as potential strigoï",[16] a particular type of vampire with a ruddy complexion and two beating hearts.[17] Montague Summers also warned of red headed people being vampires and the offspring of Judas Iscariot in *The Vampire: His Kith and Kin*: "Those whose hair is red, of a certain peculiar shade, are unmistakably vampires... Red was the hair of Judas Iscariot and of Cain [who murdered Abel]."[18]

Since the millennium, both fiction and film has accounted a preoccupation with revised interpretations on Jesus and biblical texts. The search for the Holy Grail was one particular thread commonly researched, featuring in both works of fiction and theological scholarship. In particular, the revival of interest in works on the Holy Grail, and the Church itself, broke through to mainstream popular fiction post millennium with Dan Brown's two novels, *Angels and Demons* in 2000 and *The Da Vinci Code* in 2004, explicitly delving into conspiracies surrounding corruption and collusion emanating from the Vatican. Some other representations of end-time narratives involve conspiracies of Vatican collusion in the coming of the Anti-Christ, among them LaHaye and Jenkins' *Left Behind* series in which Nicolae Carpathia becomes Secretary General of the United Nations. Carpathia is represented as being the Anti-Christ through "a chain of associations with evil that includes humanism, academia, the occult, and possibly multilingualism. The Carpathias are scholars of classical languages, [and also speak] Russian and, more disturbingly,

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[16] Paul Barber. *Vampires, Burial and Death*. p. 32

[17] In John Ajvide Lindqvist's novel, *Let The Right One In*. 2004. Trans. Ebba Segerberg. London: Quercus, 2007, the vampire body contains two brains, the second one growing next to the heart to facilitate life after death.

[18] Montague Summers. *The Vampire: His Kith and Kin*. 1928. London: Forgotten Books, rpt. 2008 p. 163

French".[19] This Eurocentric fear also taps into Carpathia's origins as a product of genetic engineering who is only genetically related to his fathers, suggesting a 'queerness' which is furthered when both 'fathers' are also lovers. Carpathia's existence is brought about through an ungodly union of science which compounds his absolute association with sin and evil. In a similar construct, Richard Donner's 1976 film *The Omen* predates this evangelical rhetoric focused on the birth of the Anti-Christ in Europe. Resident in Rome when his pregnant wife gives birth to a stillborn child, American ambassador Robert Thorn (Gregory Peck) is approached by a mysterious priest who offers a living baby to replace his wife's dead child without her knowledge. As the child, Damien (Harvey Stephens), grows up and becomes increasingly sinister and murderous, Thorn attempts to kill the child with the daggers of Armageddon but fails and is shot by police. The coda for the film is particularly evangelical as we see young Damien led away from ambassador Thorn's funeral by the President of the United States. Nikolas Schreck concludes, "The Antichrist has been adopted by the late ambassador's friend, the President of the United States. Thus, *The Omen* places the Devil's influence directly in the seat of world power, presaging the final conflict of the Apocalypse."[20] This relocation of Satan to influential seats of power is central to the Evangelical suspicion of Catholicism and world governing powers.

Both of Dan Brown's novels concerning Vatican conspiracies, but in particular *The Da Vinci Code*, were best-sellers, structured as mystery / detective fiction, successfully tapping into the resurgence in religious culture. The phenomenal popularity of the novel, particularly in paperback edition, made Brown a household name by selling over sixty million copies worldwide by 2006.

Before 9/11, the anxiety of the new Millennium translated onscreen in many horror films as the particular time we should expect the arrival of the apocalypse, or Satan, on earth. Significant increases in cult memberships, scientology and other extremist groups were reported as responses to the unease felt at the turn of the new century, as Michael Barkun argues that

[19] Cynthia Burack. *Sin, Sex and Democracy*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2008. p.19
[20] Nikolas Schreck. *The Satanic Screen*. London: Creation Books, 2001. p. 183

"millennialism has always encouraged dualistic world views, with sharply defined spheres of good and evil."[21] Barkun continues:

> But the millennialism that fastens on the year 2000 seizes upon that date in part because it is seen as a boundary between perfect and imperfect time. And those who believe perfect time will arrive suddenly, in an instant, often join that to a belief in a coming final battle between the forces of light and the forces of darkness.[22]

The vampire body, as an agent of both good and evil at the turn of the millennium was actively illustrated on film and television, and permitted vampirism to be interpreted as an affliction rather than an eternal damnation. Vampires could actively swear allegiance to thinly-veiled corporate powers (*Blade 2*), or to battle against them (*Angel*). Particularly in the case of *Blade* (1998), this vampire superhero uses his warrior strength and self-determinism to defeat evil, and suppresses his urge to feed on human blood with chemical synthetics. However, most vampire narratives since 2000 have dealt with higher orders of power, ancient sects and organisations, which often place the vampire as the hero, who must destroy the evil emanating from within the community. These vampire sects and organisations are not always primitive; in the wake of significant developments in bio-science and powerful technology and weaponry, and in the age of mapping the human genome, cloning and genetic modification, science itself is a platform on which important battles will be continually waged. John J. Jordan's case on the development of CGI in cinema, enabling the vampire to develop into a vampire-cyborg bears significant relevance here, whereby we see the vampire altered from an organic, fleshy and sanguine state to that of a generated (and regenerating) mechanism. Jordan states that in *Blade* (1998) "mysticism is marginalized and devalued, and science is brought in to occupy the now vacant center."[23] [sic]

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[21] Michael Barkun. "End Time Paranoia: Conspiracy Thinking at the Millennium's Close" in Christopher Kleinhenz, Fannie LeMoine (eds) *Fearful Hope: Approaching the New Millennium*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999. p.171

[22] ibid. p.171

[23] John J. Jordan. "Vampire Cyborgs and Scientific Imperialism: A Reading of the Science-Mysticism Polemic in *Blade*". *Journal of Popular Film and Television*. Vol. 27, Issue 2, 1999. p. 10

Abbott, expanding on Jordan's essay, states that vampires "are no longer defined by the boundaries of their bodies but are often able to transcend and redefine them at their will... vampire hunters embrace technology while the vampires come to embody it, as they are transformed, both narratively and aesthetically, into vampire cyborgs."[24]

However, despite this construction of the vampire onscreen, and the overreliance of such special effects in the modern Hollywood vampire film, I would argue that this assimilation is, in part, a cultural extension of the corporate vampire body, rather than a complete evolution in the vampire body or genre. Vampire-Cyborgs are part of the corporate mechanics of film-industry, but reflect only a portion of the vampires represented in the new millennium.

However, vampires in the 21st century court science as an ultimate weapon to spread their particular set of beliefs, or to expand their threatened empire. Both vampire-killers and revenants embrace technology to destroy each other, though the religious rhetoric of salvation and damnation remains present. Despite these technological developments, and an increasing abandonment of religious paraphernalia by the vampire hunter in favour of modern weaponry, traces of religious endorsement or sponsorship remain as a reminder that technology does not entirely replace its significance. While *Dracula 2000* (2000) effectively skips over the 20th century, jumping straight from 1897 to 2000, *Van Helsing* (2004) retraces and revises the Victorian landscape by collapsing popular cultural representations and imagery of that period, created in the 20th century, into one narrative. Science, fiction and superheroism combine in *Van Helsing* in a sweeping attempt to contain all the major gothic narratives of the 19th century via 21st century screen technology.

Richard Roxburgh's Dracula is focused on "The triumph of science over god!"[25] in the film, which combines three prominent gothic and horror texts - *Dracula*, *Frankenstein* and the *Wolf Man* - and self-consciously revisits classic images from the Universal horror films. Sommers' film evokes not the films of

[24] Stacey Abbott. *Celluloid Vampires*. p. 198
[25] *Van Helsing*. Dir. Stephen Sommers, Universal Pictures, 2004.

James Whale or Tod Browning but later Universal Monster Mash films such as *Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman* (1943). The film opens with villagers storming Frankenstein's castle, filmed in black and white, whose grave robbing for body parts for his experiments has invoked local wrath. Accompanied by Dracula (Richard Roxburgh), Frankenstein's monster comes to life, and Dr. Frankenstein is permanently dispatched. Gabriel Van Helsing (Hugh Jackman) is a youthful representation of Stoker's learned professor, discarding his academic background in favour of hunting monsters, becoming much closer to a conventional superhero; first in pursuit of Stevenson's Jekyll (and Hyde), and then ordered by the church to eliminate Dracula. Suffering from memory loss and found on the steps of the church by monks, Van Helsing swears allegiance to defend the church from evil and becomes, effectively, a secret agent and a soldier – "I usually just ask 'What is it?' and 'How do I kill it?'"[26]. Accompanied by Friar Carl (David Wenham), who acts as Van Helsing's aide and weapons expert, in a homage to James Bond's Q (Desmond Llewellyn), their mission is to rid the world of Dracula (who has effectively become an imperishable immortal) who is planning a full scale assault on the world by attempting to breed a legion of vampire children using Dr. Frankenstein's scientific breakthrough.

Abbott and Jordan's vampire-cyborg is at its most prevalent here, not only by means of filmmaking, but in permitting the vampire to become virtually unstoppable: physically re-assimilating and reassembling after being scorched or impaled; impervious to any force which would have physically destroyed previous vampires. But rather than read Roxburgh's Dracula only as a vampire-cyborg, I contend that he has become indestructible because he represents the fear of an unstoppable cultural invasion; his body representing a cultural collective rather than one aspect of it

The use of technology to morph the actors into vampires with great fluidity and ease is the centrepiece of vampiric representation in *Van Helsing*, discarding special effects make-up in favour of this new format. If special effects make up is to be read as a revealing of the true vampire face, while the actor's true face acts as the mask to conceal the monster within, previous vampire films which

[26] ibid.

relied on prosthetics are then codified as revealing dualities in character – something which *Van Helsing* completely discards. No sympathy can be felt for this version of the vampire, as he represents 'ultimate' evil and metamorphic powers previously unseen in cinema. Furthermore, this metamorphosis acts as a camouflage for protection and to evade identification by the vampire hunter, granting this vampire an illusory quality which is extremely difficult to detect. The immediacy of the transformation from bat to human form to vampire allows the viewer to conceive of Dracula as a vampire beyond most physical limitations. Abbott notes that "In *Van Helsing*, it is impossible to tell which is their real face, as they effortlessly move between two appearances, suggesting that their identity, like the T-1000 [from James Cameron's *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* (1991)] is defined by metamorphosis"[27] but this metamorphosis is also a means of infiltration.

In many ways, *Van Helsing* is a return to Imperial Gothic; the stripping away of Van Helsing's academic honours and cunning in favour of an Indiana Jones style costume, physical strength and mercenary-like attitude redefines the character in the terms of the American hero. His moral superiority is also reflected through his sponsorship by the Vatican Cardinals and his name, Gabriel, the right hand of God. Johan Höglund accounts for *Van Helsing* as an overt narrative on the War on Terror, found in the characterisation of Dracula as an anti-Christ and terrorist:

> The Gothic narrative has again conjured up a ghostly image of the current historical situation as constructed by American, neo-imperialist discourse. Dracula in Van Helsing is an anti-Christ who distinctly recalls the popular representation of both Saddam Hussein and Usama Bin Laden [sic]. Like Bin Laden... and Saddam Hussein until recently, Dracula is in cowardly hiding from the justice Van Helsing intends to mete out... Like Bin Laden is supposed to be doing, and Hussein was rumoured to,

[27] Stacey Abbott. *Celluloid Vampires*. p. 210

> Dracula is plotting the destruction of the civilised world through his legion of vampire offspring.[28]

Further still, Höglund examines the landscape of Romania in the film, aligning it to the invasion of Afghanistan by American forces under Operation Enduring Freedom:

> It is rather reminiscent of a barren, cold Balkans or perhaps Afghanistan with hostile and suspicious natives who are less than amused at Van Helsing's arrival... relying on the technological advances of Western industrialised society. His project, meanwhile, is something of an Operation Enduring Freedom in Romania, a project which, as it turns out, is related to the survival of the entire world as the count is planning to fill the world with his own weapons of mass destruction.[29]

Mirroring the actual events in Iraq and Afghanistan in the War on Terror, Bin Laden and Hussein did not, unlike Stoker's Dracula, physically go abroad in order to evoke terror – they are hunted down by invading forces within their own borders. Recalling John Quincy Adams's statement on American values addressed to the House of Representatives on July 4th, 1821, "America goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own."[30] America kept a distance and isolationist position on the geopolitical front because to do otherwise would repudiate or compromise its special moral claim. "The fundamental maxims of her policy would insensibly change from liberty to force," Adams warned. "She might become the dictatress of the world. She would be no longer the ruler of her own spirit."[31] This spirit of isolationism and self-governance has been almost forgotten in twentieth century America. Searching for monsters to destroy, the vampire narratives of the early 21st century are fuelled with monstrous reactions to cultural war and

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[28] Johan Höglund. "Gothic Haunting Empire" in Maria Holmgren Troy, Elisabeth Wenno (eds). *Memory, Haunting, Discourse*. Karlstad, Sweden: University of Karlstad Press, 2005. p. 251

[29] ibid. p. 251

[30] John QuincyAdams. Address to the House of Representatives. July 4th, 1821

[31] ibid.

9/11: racial tension, desires of genocidal retribution, religious fanaticism, technological weaponry and armament, and warring factions.

Warring Underworld Vampires: Hybridity, Race and Global Consumption

Blade (1998), based on the 1970s Marvel comic, features a half-vampire as a 'daywalker', crusading as a political and social renegade against his vicious vampire brethren. The film's cult status (ensuring two sequels) introduced new technological solutions to slaying vampires, while simultaneously disregarding and mocking previous vampire myths and strategies. Indeed, *Blade* is, in many ways, a highly postmodern film in that the true moments of tension and battle take place within the vampire world; in the same vein as Anne Rice, human characters form secondary plots and rarely interfere with the battles of the renegade and the vampire organisation. The language of the film is laced with aristocratic notions of the past, favouring 'pure' blood vampires over 'turned' ones, emphasised in the casting of horror icon Udo Kier (Dracula in Paul Morrissey's *Blood for Dracula* (1974)) as Dragonetti, the head of The House of Errebus. However, juxtaposed against this background of aristocracy and historically weighted cachet and nobility, there is a notable reliance on science to account for the vampire condition and technological weaponry in order to defeat them. The vampire body is reduced to a series of medical allergies, effectively casting aside myth and legend and imposing visceral physical responses:

> [Whistler to Karen] Crosses don't do squat. Some legends are true though. Vampires are severely allergic to silver. Feed them garlic, and they go into anaphylactic shock. Then, of course, there's always sunlight, ultraviolet rays...
>
> [Blade to Karen] Ok, Vampire anatomy 101: Crosses and holy water don't do dick, so forget what you've seen in the movies. You use a stake, silver or sunlight. You know how to use one of these? [Blade gives Karen a gun] Safety is off, round's already

> chambered, silver hollow point filled with garlic. You aim for the head or the heart. Anything else is your ass.[32]

The battle between the House of Errebus and Deacon Frost's vampire faction is central to reading *Blade* as a departure from the Postmodern Vampire texts that precede it. The organisation acts as a key environment for harbouring vampires in high society and business, but also, reads as a gothic space in the modern world: its archives are filled with encrypted ancient texts (including the Vampire Bible), its migrant elders with exotic accents and ancient bloodlines, and its reluctance to permit violent transgressions that jeopardize modern secrecy on the vampire's existence. Blood lineage is heavily weighted in *Blade*, while subtly denouncing any American (or youthful) lineage as merely inferior and 'other'. As Abbott maintains:

> Frost is himself presented as racially other, for the vampire world is plagued with racial prejudice. Split into two camps, born vampires and turned vampires, a hierarchy is maintained by the Noble House of Errebus who consider Frost and his gang of turned vampires to be inferior, a disease rather than a race... [and] are presented as a gang... they embrace their identity as vampires through violence and bloodlust rather than heritage and tradition.[33]

Alongside this tension of history and lineage is the continual reference to Blade as a racially liminal 'daywalker' – a layered signifier suggesting cross-breeding, miscegenation and 'otherness'. Blade's own vampirism originated in the womb, as his mother was attacked by a vampire while pregnant. This transfer of infected blood to the child indicates that vampirism here is a viral infection, and casts Blade himself as the result of a 'rape' of sorts, reinforced by the continued references to skin tone in the film. The word 'daywalker' can be read as racially mixed, half-white- half- black, an anomaly in this vampire world which complicates the structure of blood purity in the narrative. While Blade is physically 'other' because of his abilities – he has vampire strength,

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[32] *Blade*. Dir. Stephen Norrington. New Line Cinema, 1998.
[33] Stacey Abbott. 'Embracing The Metropolis: Urban Vampires in American Cinema of the 1980s and 90s' in Peter Day (ed) *Vampires: Myths and Metaphors of Enduring Evil.* p. 137

speed and regenerative qualities and can walk in daylight unharmed, yet he suffers a thirst for blood, which he suppresses with a synthetic serum - he is denounced by Frost as an 'Uncle Tom' because he refuses to abuse his unique ability to obtain positions of power. Yet Frost's name also implies some racial otherness too, as the colour suggests greyness - a 'dirty white' – not an exact pure white in colour. Further to this, when Frost assumes control of the House of Errebus, he confronts Blade in daylight, smearing himself with thick white sunblock, in order to protect himself, and making his appearance even whiter. Frances Gateward's article on racialism in *Blade* recognises these repeated stereotypical symbols, looking at defining degrees of whiteness and blackness:

> And of course, one cannot deny the pleasure provided an audience, weary of racialized police brutality, in watching a powerful Black man physically subdue both a redneck vampire and a uniformed White cop who is vampire -servant/wannabe. The film's obsession with racial purity is even recognized by the designations of vampires, such as the more aristocratic council, made up of pure bloods, and the lesser beings who became vampires not by birth but by being turned - analogous to the levels of Whiteness that places WASPS at the apex, and Jews, the Irish, and Italians at the bottom. Frost's frustration in the film, which leads to his violence and plan for vampire domination, is fuelled by a pathology that discerns him as "not white enough".[34]

Frost's lack of pure whiteness places the narrative of *Blade* in a Manichaean light. As both vampires are resulting from a lack of lineage - Frost being a 'turned' vampire and Blade being transformed in the womb by a vampire attack – Frost is akin to the lower class émigré while Blade embodies a modern reimagining of the Mulatto: a derogatory term for a child from white and black parentage denoting a mule or half-breed.[35] Blade's blackness is called into

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[34] Frances Gateward. "Daywalkin' Nightstalkin' Bloodsuckas: Black Vampires in Contemporary Film". *Genders* Online Journal, Boulder Colorado. Issue 40, 2004. Online at: http://www.genders.org/g40/g40_gateward.txt Accessed on 18/08/08

[35] The Mulatto is usually a woman in fiction – accepted and afforded privilege as a white woman because of her very light complexion but revealed to be black (due to the 'one drop'

question when he is dubbed an 'Uncle Tom' because of he is regarded as a mulatto and a protector of the historical white master, the humans he wishes to protect from his own kind. Frost's insurrection, despite his lack of lineage, is more ferocious than the conservative rules of the House of Errebus because he cannot satisfy any previously established criteria to obtain power. Blade's blood, revealed to be far more powerful and rare than any other vampire's, is required to bestow god-like power through La Magra (The Blood God). Connecting these obsessions with lineage and ancestry to a narrative of racial mixing, 'White science' emerges as the elite order desiring to control Blade's blood. "Science is encoded as white because not only white people produce and use it...but also because intelligent, rational, philosophical and enquiring white people come to personify science's core transforming ingredients."[36] Science has historically been represented as a white endeavour, from the coding of the scientific space (white labs and white coats) to the underrepresentation of doctors of any other ethnic background in popular culture.

These themes recall the abhorrent and racist debate in early twentieth century eugenics which promoted biological superiority in particular races or groups, mostly northern Europeans, over all others. First coined by Francis Galton in 1883, "Eugenics is the science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race; also with those that develop them to the utmost advantage".[37] The initial scientific studies in eugenics were abused by using such studies to argue the inferiority of black people, 'invalids' and people afflicted with mental disorders. This policy was also employed by the state of California to castrate or sterilize certain individuals under the state's care. While eugenics is commonly associated with horrors of Nazi Germany, it was the defence of those who conducted such experiments at the Nuremberg trials that their scientific experiments had been inspired by Californian state policy.[38]

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definition) and vilified. A similar example, from a male perspective, is seen in Phillip Roth's novel *The Human Stain.* New York: Vintage, 2000.

[36] Sean Redmond. "The Science Fiction of Whiteness" in *Scope: The online journal of Film and TV studies*. University of Nottingham. Issue 6, Oct. 2006. Online at: http://www.scope.nottingham.ac.uk/issue.php?issue=6 Accessed on 21/08/08

[37] Francis Galton. "Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope and Aims" 1904 lecture. rpt in Robert Bernasconi, Tommy L. Lott (Eds) *The Idea of Race* Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000. p. 79

[38] California was the first state to enact eugenic legislation on March 16th 1909, known as the 'Asexualization' act. Soon after, California accounted for the highest numbers of patient

Reading the urban landscape of *Blade*, the vampire gangs that inhabit the city streets, its bland surroundings and police brutality towards black people - recalling Rodney King and the LA Riots –it is reasonable to conclude that the setting is Los Angeles. Whether intentional or not, the use of Los Angeles as a setting for such a racial film in light of the city's history of racial tension, heightens the political space beyond the plot narrative.

Representation of the white body in *Blade* is hardly more favourable than its treatment of the black body. Pearl (Eric Edwards), the white blubbery archivist, is the epitome of white consumption gone amok. With seemingly no bone structure and appearing as literal folds of fat, Pearl is the keeper of knowledge and power, but has become a literal image of gluttony. Sean Redmond's analysis of the racial myths of white and black brains and bodies in science fiction is reinforced in a scene where Blade and Pearl briefly meet. Pearl is configured as all brain and technologically wired; a modern oracle of racial consumption, reluctant to give up knowledge of the vampire origin. "As such, this figure embodies the racial myth that white people are, in effect, cerebral entities; *all brain and no body* entities that can and do solve the mysteries of the universe, and who therefore resonate at the core of the story of creation itself...." Blade, representing hyper physicality, responds to Pearl with torture methods, scorching Pearl with a UV light, because he lacks the knowledge or insight needed to complete his quest, a reading which subscribes to "the myth of the black as all *body and no brain* -- bodies that have no place in the 'enlightened' narratives of science fiction cinema - unless that is, of course, they occur in the symbolic form of the marauding alien creature."[39] As Blade is figured as a liminal being: mulatto, other and hybrid, he is constructed as a powerful alien vampire.

Pearl is not the first obese vampire figured as a white consumer. In Andrew Fox's novel, *Fat White Vampire Blues*, Jules Duchon openly states a preference for consuming black blood over any other type available because of its taste and flavour. Jules, representing a comical take on Red State America,

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sterilisation in the United States; in 1921 alone, it accounted for over 80% of all state hospital sterilizations in the US. See Joel T. Braslow. *Mental Ills and Bodily Cures*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997. p.56

[39] Sean Redmond. "The Science Fiction of Whiteness". Online at: http://www.scope.nottingham.ac.uk/issue.php?issue=6

is a 450 pound vampire masquerading as a New Orleans cab driver. As a hedonistic example of white consumerism, Jules adapts his vampire life around his particularly awkward physical state, prohibiting his ability to morph into animals, and his use of a standard coffin – he ends up sleeping in a piano box. His weight is attributed to his sedentary lifestyle and his particular taste in victims – overweight black women. Representing the commodity culture and its victimization of the working class, Jules treats these women as fast food: picking them up in his cab, gassing them, feeding and then draining the remaining blood into canisters. The taste he has acquired for New Orleans' black blood is his reasoning for his substantial weight gain, which he attributes to his victims traditions of Creole cooking. The poverty which these New Orleans' inhabitants endure directly relates to their weight, for Bessie (Jules's victim) is as large and as hungry as he is. In treating Bessie, an implied prostitute, as a piece of fast food, Jules is mimicking his human counterparts by depending on cheap tasty food without knowledge of its background or health implications. Fox's novel uses many negative stereotypes of black culture in his novel, particularly in the character of Malice X (undoubtedly inspired by Malcolm X, using X as a surname to denote that their given names were in fact slave names), a black athletic vampire depicted as a gang leader and thug, determined to exact revenge on Jules for his consumption of 'sisters and brothers'.

In his book *Fast Food Nation*, Eric Schlosser accounts for America's changing diet: "In 1991, only four states had obesity rates of 15 percent or higher; today [2002] at least 37 do".[40] These figures can be attributed to a lack of physical activity, cheaper prices, car dependency, increased portion sizes and a higher intake of calories and sugar. For example, since the 1950s the size of the standard fast food chain Coke, and its level of consumption, "has more than quadrupled."[41] As this severe dietary shift on the American public has taken hold, it has spawned countless television debates, documentaries such as Morgan Spurlock's *Supersize Me* (2004), and a film narrative based on Schlosser's book of the same name in 2006. It is therefore inevitable that a

[40] Eric Schlosser. *Fast Food Nation*. London: Penguin, 2002. p. 240

[41] ibid. p. 241. The normal coke size in the 1950s was 8 ounces, now a large coke in any US McDonald's in 32 ounces. These figures relate to the soda stream coke in restaurants.

vampire would manifest this destructive relationship with food. Schlosser aptly summarises, "A nation's diet can be more revealing than its art or literature."[42]

Fat White Vampire Blues also constructs the fast food industry's workers as victims of the white consumer. Later in the novel, when Jules is forced to forego black blood for Californian white blood, he remarks on the watery texture and unappealing colour it has, denoting that white blood (which is problematically coded as healthy blood) is less appetising: "Drinking California blood was like downing a vitamin shake; New Orleans blood was like a Christmas ham feast."[43] We are in no doubt that Fox's positing of black blood as tasty and fattening is uncomfortable, and racist; coding it as an African American problem brought about by poverty, Jules is a very willing participant in and consumer of white racist ideology. In an attempt to rouse support against Malice X, Jules seeks aid from Mr. Besthoff, a vampire elder of New Orleans, attempting to convince him that there is a race war brewing amongst the vampires: "There's a new vampire tryin' to muscle in on our territory. A *black* vampire...How much plainer do I hafta make this? We're all *white*, *Caucasian*, *pale-skinned* vampires"[44] [Fox's emphasis]. However, Mr. Besthoff, wholly uninterested in Jules's predicament and harassment by Malice X, resorts to breeding 'invalids' in order to keep a fresh stock of blood for those in his fold. In an identical replication of the film *Thirst* (1979), mentally ill humans are farmed to sustain the vampire's existence, attended to in a horrid, factory farming manner. From Mr. Besthoff's point of view, all inhabitants of New Orleans are unfit for his consumption, irrespective of race:

> 'We carefully control [the invalids] diets, feeding them proper nutrients to ensure their blood is healthful. Thus, the blood we consume is considerably superior to that obtained from random victims. Especially those from the New Orleans area.' He glanced condescendingly at Jules's more-than-ample-gut and wryly smiled.[45]

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[42] ibid. p. 3
[43] Andrew Fox. *Fat White Vampire Blues*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2002. p. 307
[44] ibid. p. 38
[45] ibid. p. 40

Unlike Jules, who is described as a 'free range' vampire, many of the vampire organisations and hierarchies rely both on science and purification of blood for their survival. As Stacey Abbott notes, "blood signifies the potential of modern genetics and the mysteries of DNA"[46], reinforced in 21st century life through continuous debate in the media on genetically modified foods, stem-cell research, 'designer babies', cryogenic and embryonic research, IVF, terminator-seed crops, cloning (of animals and potentially of humans) and the complete mapping of the human genome in 2003. With these developments in science, it must be noted that, since the beginning of the Postmodern Vampire's narrative, blood has been subject to more scrutiny, poisonings, and illness than at any other period.[47] This scientific examination of blood reveals the potential of genetics and mutation, but also highlights the adaptable yet frail nature of blood in the modern world.

In *Blade II* (2002), the vampire mutations of the 21st century become entirely other – combining cyborg technology, eugenic programs, and alien otherness. The technology of film-making allows the vampire body to become a virtually limitless landscape onscreen – spreading, healing, bleeding, stretching the body to new dimensions. The corporeally limited body becomes weak in the two *Blade* sequels as mutations and adaptations are central to the origins of the vampire (*Blade: Trinity*) and any further mutations to the vampire body through scientific intervention (*Blade II*). *Blade II* concerns itself with a new form of vampire, the Reapers – a Nosferatu in appearance, combining a mutated mouth and unending hunger – which feed on both humans and vampires. Blade engages in a temporary truce with the vampire council to eradicate this new 'diseased' vampire, in order to protect the human race. He is joined by the Bloodpack – an elite hunting team trained to match Blade's skill and strength. The Bloodpack are styled on Blade's familiar image of leather and sleekness, emulating his look to distinguish them as an elite hunting team and physically enclosed and clean. Other 'typical' vampires represent pleasures

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[46] Stacey Abbott. *Celluloid Vampires*. p. 200

[47] With the advancement of medicine and DNA patterning, cloning and scientific research of blood and its related diseases, blood drinking has become more problematic for some vampires. In the failed television series of *Blade*, some vampires only use hypodermic needles to extract blood from their victims. "Bite you? No, that's for savages". Anita Gates. "The Vampires on Spike TV's 'Blade' Don't Bite: They use needles instead" *New York Times*, June 28th 2006.

of flesh and viscerally open - through tattooing, scarification, mutilation and sexual hedonism seen explicitly in the vampire club The House of Pain, where vampires participate in razor-bladed bloody kisses, flaying and scarring their bodies and presenting multiple open wounds for others to feed from. Contrastingly, the Reapers are presented as feral, asexual, and uncommunicative, only their leader Nomak (Luke Goss), the carrier of this new strain of vampirism, speaks at all. Its effects on the body are described as being akin to 'cancer with a purpose', passed into the bloodstream which transforms the entire physiology of the body into a separate consuming body; when Bloodpack member Nyssa (Leonor Varela) performs an autopsy on a dead Reaper, the skin-stripped torso violently shudders in response to drips of blood – its diseased body still attempts to feed even after it has been killed. The Reaper vampire body is also radically different internally and externally: the heart is encased in bone preventing death by staking and genetic modification has removed all medical allergies afflicting the 'typical' vampire body such as garlic and silver. Blade's sword, usually cindering a vampire's body with a single deadly blow, becomes entangled in the Reaper body, merely sticking into it rather than damaging it. The physical amour of the ribs protecting the organs housed in the body cavity reveal the Reaper to be a compact 'eating machine'; both wholly physically alien (their blood is a greenish pus colour), and pathologically 'hard-wired'- technologically adapting to protect itself in its fleshy environment. The Reaper mouth is distinctly alien in design, eliminating the mandible bone and using barbs from the tongue to transmit the virus.[48] They also possess a fang secreted poison which transmits a 'neurotoxin', paralysing the victim while they feed. It is also very similar to the technological body of the warrior predator in *Predator* (1987), combining the technological advancement of alien-ware, with the feared, all consuming fanged monstrous mouth; the vagina dentata.[49]

[48] Similarly, in Suzy McKee Charnas's novel *The Vampire Tapestry*, discussed in Chapter One, Weyland, the anthropologist vampire, uses a sharp barb hidden under the tongue to extract blood from his victims.

[49] Predator's distinct look could certainly be regarded as an inspiration for the Reaper mouth, given the distinct 'flaring' open of the mouth when under attack or attacking others. It is also connected through the nickname the predator is given in *Predator 2*; 'Pussyface', marking its features as distinctly and grotesquely feminine. For more on Predator's feminized sexual features, see Christopher Sharrett. "The Horror Film in Neoconservative Culture" in Keith Barry Grant (ed). *The Dread of Difference*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996. p. 272

Fig. 4.4 Amy's (Amanda Bearse) grotesque huge Mouth/Vagina Dentata in *Fright Night* (1985)

Fig.4.5 A 'Reaper Vampire' about to Feed in *Blade II* (2002)

Fig.4.6 Predator's fanged vaginal mouth in *Predator* (1987) aka 'Pussyface'

The evolution of the Reaper body also incorporates elements of eugenic experimentation: every Reaper when 'infected' becomes marbleised white in appearance, becoming a hegemonic replica of a 'Nosferatu' vampire. Again the purity of 'whiteness' is key to the engineering of this eugenic 'master race' of vampires. The regression in the 'look' of the Reaper to that of the 'Nosferatu' is very deliberate in the narrative; for *Blade* is a constructed universe where the development of one's future lies in one's origins, or past heritage. The virus, constructed to create a 'master race' of vampires is considered a vile, failed experiment of mad science, which created to overcome Blade's genetic advantages of hybridity – altering the vampire genetics to be impervious to all other methods of killing except sunlight. Like many other narratives on biological horror or 'body-horror', Eugene Thacker explains,

> Biohorror most often features genetics and biotechnology as experiments gone wrong. The difference, however, is that in biohorror what goes wrong is that everything works perfectly. An engineered virus for instance 'goes wrong' not because it does not work, but because it works too well. The molecular level takes on a life of its own, with aims that are often counter to those of the human hosts they inhabit.[50]

In *Blade: Trinity* (2004), however, the vampire origin is exposed and becomes central to the configuration of the twenty-first century vampire as a visually, aesthetically and physically incorporated entity. While CGI special effects have expanded the boundaries of possibility of the vampire onscreen, vampire allegiances, identities and empires have increasingly deepened parallel links with corporate entities. Blade's blood, the plot catalyst for the first two films, is no longer of any interest or use to the corporate vampire gang; instead they seek out the much coveted body of Dracula (renamed Drake) to empower themselves. Genetic engineering and DNA manipulation of Dracula's blood is desired to empower the gang and phase out weaknesses to daylight and other 'allergies' (as Dracula possesses none of these debilitations). *Blade: Trinity* shares much of its political narrative with *Van Helsing* (2004), in that, Dracula, buried deep within an Egyptian-styled temple,[51] relocated to modern day Iraq and figured as the unspeakable, unstoppable monster. The film's prologue, when Dracula is 'freed' from an accessible yet hidden hole underground, recalls the capture of Saddam Hussein on December 15th 2003, (a year prior to the release of *Blade: Trinity*), from a 'spider hole' bunker near his hometown of Tikrit.[52] The extraction of Dracula (and that of Saddam) is largely used for the benefit of restoring lost faith and power – to restore a confidence in the (vampire) population. Human farming again features in the film, described as 'cleaning the streets' of the homeless and those declared missing – a

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[50] Eugene Thacker. *The Global Genome: Biotechnology, Politics, and Culture*. Boston: The MIT Press, 2005. p. 388

[51] It seems that in order to illustrate that the Middle East is a place shrouded in mystery and instability, any depiction of a temple in blistering heat will suffice. The Middle East, and specifically Iraq, is collapsed inward indicating a borderless, barren and hellish place.

[52] For a detailed report on the capture of Saddam Hussein by US Forces, see "How Saddam Hussein Was Captured" Dec.15th 2003. *BBC News Online*. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3317881.stm Accessed on: 27/08/08

conservative solution to hide the evident injustice and discontents within American borders. The vampire 'final solution', eradicating all free humans from the population, is linguistically charged to encompass a genetic, cultural and racial difference between those within the fold of power (conservatives, corporations, the wealthy elite) and the disenfranchised liberal left. At its conclusion, Dracula is eradicated through a gene-altering chemical compound, designed to kill all vampires with one effective infection. If we are to align this Iraqi Dracula with Saddam's history of biochemical weaponry, perhaps this film indulges a fantasy of revulsion and revenge: Saddam's sanctioning of the gassing of Kurdish rebels in Halabja, north-east Iraq, on March 16th 1988, where, according to Samantha Power, "victims were exposed to mustard gas, which burns, mutates DNA, and causes malformations and cancer; and the nerve gas sarin and tabun, which can kill, [and] paralyze, ... some 5,000 Kurds were killed immediately"[53]. This sickening act of genocide illustrated the depths of Saddam's depravity towards his own people. By poisoning Dracula with this chemical-compound, it infects and eradicates the entire vampire corporation under his sway, and reverses the role of Saddam's actions against his insurgents.

Corporate power is a central thread in *Blade: Trinity*, from the setting of the Biomedica building which houses the vampire gang, to the obvious product placement of iPods and computers used by Blade's new band of warriors, the Nightstalkers; the corporate tentacle is visible throughout. The corporate vampire influence extends far and wide; from local politicians to celebrity-therapists, the police force and the FBI (all revealed to harbour either vampires or human 'familiars'), all forms of power and influence are revealed to be rooted in the vampire corporate agenda. While metaphors of the greedy corporation and the vampirism have been interlinked long before Stoker's *Dracula*,[54] Joss Whedon's television series *Angel* (sister show to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*) centred on the David and Goliath battle between the evil law firm Wolfram & Hart and the champion vampire, literalising and inverting the metaphor. The use and design of costume, specifically identifying Dracula in *Blade: Trinity* has been taken from Coppola's *Dracula.* The Order of the

[53] Samantha Power. "*A Problem From Hell": America and the Age of Genocide*. pp. 188-189.
[54] See Sharon Sutherland "Piercing the corporate veil – with a stake?: Vampire Imagery and the Law" in Peter Day (ed) *Vampires: Myths and Metaphors of Enduring Evil.* pp. 143-157

Dragon armour - depicting a body of armour modelled on the flayed stripped viscera of the human body which I discussed in Chapter Two – is re-envisioned. While Coppola's Dracula costume indicated the unstable body of the post-80s AIDS crisis, its contaminative power ended with Dracula's beheading. In Goyer's visual layering of Dracula's costume, which morphs and shapes both under and around his skin, effectively acting as a shell and bodily signifier of the pixelled cyborg body, only an engineered virus may penetrate and destroy its shifting surface. Stacey Abbott notes, "Karen in *Blade*, Whistler in *Blade II* and Hannibal in *Blade: Trinity* have each been cured of their vampirism through scientific intervention. To fight vampires in the *Blade* universe, therefore, is to embrace a cyborg existence."[55] Dracula's body and image becomes corporately aligned in the film, not only through its digital effects media, but through a specific homage to past familiar images; seen specifically when Dracula enters a vampire paraphernalia store – finding humour in his filmic image emblazoned on t-shirts, vibrators and cereal boxes.

Other vampires also wage war with similarly themed racial and genetic grievances to those which dominate the *Blade* trilogy. Both the *Blade* and *Underworld* films also share considerable overlap in the use of technological weaponry: guns, UV and silver nitrate bullets, ninja stars and symbolic swords all feature. *Underworld* (2003) and *Underworld: Evolution* (2006), introduce a bleak noir world where vampires and lycanthropes have been embroiled in a war for centuries. Mimicking much of the plot construction and style of *Blade*, *Underworld* emerges another example of miscegenation, inter-racial relationships and slave narratives, disguising the mulatto narrative into that of a hybrid lycan / vampire. The vampire 'death-dealer' Selene (Kate Beckinsale), heroine of both films, sustains her thirst through synthetic blood in a similar fashion to Blade. The focus of the film's preoccupation with genetics and racial purity becomes apparent upon the revelation that, centuries before the war, both groups forged a pact to aid each other's existence; lycans protecting the vampires by day, and in turn, the vampires, reneging their share, exerted cruelty upon the 'lesser' beings. This plot history immediately evokes a supernatural metaphor for American slavery; fully realised when Viktor (Bill Nighy), the vampire patriarch, reveals he murdered his own pregnant daughter

[55] Stacey Abbott. *Celluloid Vampires*. p. 200

and declared war on the lycans, because she was carrying 'an abomination' – a "fear[ed] blending of the species" [56], a vampire/lycan hybrid. Another genetic mix occurs when human Michael (Scott Speedman), is discovered to have rare haemoglobin properties which can harbour both traits and strengths of the vampire and werewolf, with none of their weaknesses. As Michael becomes a genetic mulatto of both groups, he is configured as racially impure and outcast. Though initially and racially white, when Michael's transformation into a hybrid occurs, his skin blackens and his actions are savage. Michael's physical configuration is that of the master/slave child – "attest[ing] to the cross racial desire that must be repressed to justify the master/slave dichotomy"[57].

Fig. 4.7 Michael becomes a vampire/lycan hybrid mulatto in *Underworld* (2003)

This legacy is furthered in *Underworld: Evolution* (2006) when Selene, after disavowing her vampire heritage, harbours Michael from the vampire elder Marcus. She fuses her blood with the first true hybrid Alexander Corvinas (Derek Jacobi), which renders her immune to sunlight, and is hinted to be carrying Michael's hybrid child. However, in terms of the vampire evolution, much in the same narrative motif as Anne Rice's vampire elders, the blood of the ancients proves to be as powerful in advancing evolutionary progress alongside the sciences vampires become heavily engaged in.

Illustrating the far reaching, globalised world harbouring vampire infections and influence, Sweden's first ever vampire film *Frostbitten* (aka *Frostbiten*) (2006) also fuses this narrative of genetics and DNA mutation. The film, set in

[56] *Underworld*. Dir. Len Wiseman. Lakeshore International, 2003.
[57] Debra J Rosenthal. *Race Mixture in Nineteenth-Century U.S and Spanish American Fictions*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004. p. 83

the small town in the Norrbotten province in northern Sweden (the name of the town is not mentioned), focuses on geneticist Gerhard Beckert (Carl-Ake Eriksson), a doctor who is perfecting the vampire virus he succumbed to during WWII through a genetic fusion of vampire and human blood. He claims to be the next step in the vampire evolution and, much like the Reapers in *Blade II*, Beckert survives on both species, which transforms him into a powerful revenant. Perfecting the genetic mutations of vampirism, he drugs a comatose patient at his hospital and monitors her adaptation to the experiment, transferring the virus to her in red medicinal capsules. The capsules replace the infecting bite of the vampire, virally transmitting "a rhabdovirus, similar to rabies but a lot more aggressive"[58]. Annika, (Petra Nielson), a new doctor in the town, discovers Beckert's secret, and destroys him, though she has too become infected. One of the student interns, Sebastian (Jonas Karlström), discovers the capsules and, mistaking it for LSD, takes it and transforms into a vampire; trapped in his girlfriend's parents' house, he is fed garlic, feels his flesh burn at the touch of his girlfriend's clergyman father, watches his reflection disappear in the mirror and, in desperation, eats the pet rabbit. At a local college party nearby, the red capsules are being distributed as recreational drugs, culminating in a vicious bloodbath. Only Saga (Grete Havnesköld), Annika's daughter, survives the ordeal.

The setting of the film in northern Sweden's midwinter, where the sun does not fully rise for thirty days, is only referenced once, and because of this reference, the film has been compared to the 2002 graphic novel and later film adaptation of *30 Days of Night* (2007). Despite the similar setting, the vampires in *Frostbitten* are never exposed to sunlight, nor is it referenced as harmful to them. We are merely left with the presumption that the teenage vampires succeed in devouring the townsfolk because of their remote isolation, and because the vampire virus has infected most of the population.

In Steve Niles and Ben Templesmith's 2002 graphic novel *30 Days of Night*, turning people into vampires is vehemently forbidden by the vampire leader Marlow. Humans are for feeding only; their brains dashed out and their bodies mutilated and decapitated to prevent vampirism from spreading. The graphic

[58] *Frostbitten*. Dir. Anders Banke, Genius Products, 2006.

novel is set in Barrow, Alaska, the northernmost settlement in the United States mainland, and 320 miles north of the Arctic Circle. When news spreads that the vampire Vicente is planning a great feast in Barrow, because it will not have sunrise for thirty days due to the Arctic night, he invites all the powerful vampires, hiding among the human populations of the world, to participate. Marlow, Vicente's mentor, is furious because such carnage invites curiosity – in a series of violent punches and blood spattered panels, beating Vicente in rage, he denounces Vicente's feast:

> You fucking arrogant idiot!!! Have you any idea what you've done? ... I came here because I couldn't believe the audacity of what you were going to do. I had hopes of arriving in time to stop you. I can see that I arrived too late... the damage is done. How many centuries has it taken us to mesh with the living world? To make the humans no longer believe we exist? Can any of you tell me? Hundreds! Thousands! Now in a single **greedy** stupid act, you have given them reason to suspect! Suspicion and fear are the seed of our extinction. It killed my brothers and my fathers. And if this gets out it will destroy us again! [Niles and Templesmith's emphasis][59]

While protagonist Sherriff Eben Oleson and his deputy and wife Stella harbour the few remaining survivors, the vampires devour and dismember all that cross their path: "This is how it is meant to be: Humans, like bottles, waiting for their caps to be popped."[60] After Marlow murders Vicente in rage, he commands that all the dead are thrown back into their dwellings, and the town, which lies next to an oil pipeline, is to be incinerated. Eben, injecting himself with a slain vampire's blood, transforms, and challenges Marlow to a fight. Defeating Marlow by puncturing his skull with his fist, Eben chases the vampires out of the town and, as dawn breaks with the arrival of the sun, he disintegrates into ashes in his wife's arms. Despite its initially small print run and cult success, the *30 Days of Night* graphic novel series grew, and gained wider acclaim with the release of the 2007 film adaptation. The film remains largely faithful to its

[59] Steve Niles, Ben Templesmith. *30 Days of Night*. San Diego: IWD Publishing, 2002. pp. 52-54 (all panels) Story by Steve Niles and Artwork by Ben Templesmith.
[60] ibid. p. 37

graphic novel origin; however, there are subtle differences in its presentation of the vampires. Niles and Templesmith are acclaimed within the graphic novel community, working for both Marvel and DC as freelance contributors, and are widely considered to have re-instated interest in the horror graphic novel. Their introduction of a new perspective on presenting a vampire story with blurred depictions of violence in bursts and smudges of reds and oranges, and atmospheric illustrations in black, blue and white tones, rather than graphic clarity of physical destruction, add new tonal elements to the vampire image in the graphic novel medium.

Fig.4.8 Marlow (Left) and Eben (right) in battle in the graphic novel *30 Days of Night*.

Fig.4.9 A vampire child devouring a victim in subtle colour tones in *30 Days of Night*

In the 2007 film adaptation of *30 Days of Night*, directed by David Slade, the images, tones and scenery set by Templesmith and Niles are largely intact, but the vampires are subtly altered to convey a more animalistic physicality and presence. Marlow (Danny Huston) leader of the vampire pack speaks two languages, a vampiric tribal dialect and English, while the remainder of the vampires scream, howl, and nod in communication among themselves. The vampires' invulnerability to all weaponry bar sunlight and UV light also remains. Outlined explicitly in the graphic novel, Stella uses legendary and

expected tools against them; "They tried everything. Bullets, knives, wooden stakes. Stella even tried a cross. The thing just laughed at her" [61], Marlow, repeatedly shot at and wounded, continues on his rampage unhindered. In a similar scene in *Frostbitten* (2006), Saga attempts to make a cross from wooden splinters to fend off an attack by Vega, who, pauses to look at the symbol laughs at her attempt. Vega snorts, "You know, that looks more like an X"[62] and corrects the symbolic alignment. The corrected cross symbol yields no effect. Religious tokens are not present in the film, though Marlow does address the issue of God with a whimpering victim used as live bait – she begs for his mercy and cries out for God, Marlow deliberately looks skyward and listens to the silence. Facing his victim in a moment of pity for her belief, he simply replies: "God? ... No God."[63]

Time is severely dislocated in both the graphic novel and film, both lending to a reading that the carnage has occurred in a single night. While the film does add captions as bookmarks for time towards the rising of the sun, and hints at claustrophobia and food rationing among the survivors, the graphic novel gives no such insight. The dizzying narrative is so frenzied and consuming that it is difficult to imagine the events stretching over a month. As the film climaxes with Eben's transformation into a vampire by injecting infected blood into his own body, he calls Marlow out to fight to protect the remaining survivors until dawn. The physical brutality of the fight between the two vampires is vicious and visceral onscreen. However, the remaining vampires scatter from Barrow among the world's population, underground and undetected once more.

Some vampires need not run into hiding, especially when they form a part of a magical organisation, veiled to protect against impending threat. In Sergei Lukyanenko's Russian tetralogy *Nightwatch* (*Nochnoy Dozer)*,[64] vampires are

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[61] ibid. p. 44

[62] *Frostbitten*. Dir. Anders Banke, Genius Products, 2006.

[63] *30 Days of Night*. Dir. David Slade, Columbia Pictures, 2007.

[64] The complete Nightwatch tetralogy upon publication in English in the UK are: Sergei Lukyanenko. *The Nightwatch.* London: Arrow, June 2007; Sergei Lukyanenko. *The Daywatch.* London: Arrow, Jan. 2008; Sergei Lukyanenko. *The Twilight Watch*. London: Arrow, June 2008, and Sergei Lukyanenko. *Final Watch*. London: Arrow, Nov. 2008. The film series has drastically altered and shortened the plot from the original novels. They are: *Nightwatch* Dir. Timur Bekmambetov, Fox Searchlight, 2005; *Daywatch* , Dir. Timur Bekmambetov, Fox Searchlight 2007; and *Twilight Watch* Dir.Timur Bekmambetov, Fox Searchlight, Due release:

merely part of a secret magical population, bound by truce, between the forces of Light (good) and Dark (evil). The civil war truce between both factions is frail, and must be guarded against infringement – hence the forces of good, The Night Watch, police the Dark Ones, while the forces of evil, The Day Watch, survey the Light Ones. The vampires in the narrative are ranked as a lower form of magical being or 'other', portrayed as undesirable and insatiable. Mimicking the diet of Rice's Louis, Light vampires sustain themselves on pig's blood, while Dark vampires take human life. Whether serving on the side of Light or Dark, vampires, like sorcerers, mages, witches and shape-shifters, 'Others' populating both sides of the warring divide, are observed for the use of their gifts, and only permitted to do so under specific licence. Set in modern day Moscow, the *Nightwatch* novels (and films) are primarily fantasy/science fiction novels, underscoring the frailty of the country's politics in its first decade after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.

Religion bites back: Religious Vampire Narratives and Deviant Sexualities.

It had been thought that Rice's Vampire Chronicles had drawn to a close with the publication of *Memnoch the Devil* in 1995, leaving her 'Brat Prince' Lestat in a 'spiritual' coma after his encounters with both God and the Devil. Rice continued her chronicles through new and familiar vampire characters;[65] exploring revisionist imaginings of the Turkish Empire in Constantinople in *Blood and Gold: The Vampire Marius*, to the Roman Empire of Caesar Augustus in *Pandora* and introducing a new vampire character outside the familiar dramatic personae of Rice's previous novels in *Vittorio the Vampire*, set against the backdrop of Medici Florence - all the while leaving Lestat in his coma. The novels published while her beloved protagonist remained in stasis

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2009. The film release dates correspond to the international release dates for the UK and Ireland.

[65] Rice wrote an adjacent series of vampire novels which are listed above for clarity of narrative continuity, although they are not treated as part of the 'Lestat' Vampire narratives. Lestat features as a character in stasis, merely mentioned in passing, but is not re-awoken until the new millennium. In chronological order from the publication of *Memnoch the Devil* in 1995, and subtitled as 'New Tales of the Vampires', they are: Anne Rice. *Pandora: New Tales of the Vampires*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1998; Anne Rice. *Vittorio the Vampire: New Tales of the Vampires.* London: Chatto & Windus, 1999. However, *Blood and Gold: The Vampire Marius* London: Chatto & Windus, 2001, does not feature the same subheading, but serves the same narrative function; so too does the novel, *The Vampire Armand* London: Chatto & Windus, 1998 until the last chapter when Lestat finally revives.

use the same template of *Interview With The Vampire* (1976); these books are confessionals and chronicles of geographical origins, historically weaving the vampire characters into the hedonistic worlds of maharajas, sexual decadence, kingly patronages and artistic scholarships. In essence, the tales of Rice's other vampires who sporadically appear in Lestat's narratives obsessively look back to, and narratively stay in, the past. All bar *Vittorio*, who dismisses the New Orleans clan entirely – "I have, however, nothing whatsoever to do with the 'Coven of the Articulate'... I know nothing of those heroes of macabre fact masquerading as fiction... you will find no new knowledge of them in these pages, not even, hereafter, a mention"[66] - note Lestat in passing, in 'our' current time as the catatonic demigod, while the rest of the tales are primarily retrospective. The series reads as though it cannot move forward without Lestat's participation, despite the myriad of characters Rice has populated her world with; when Lestat is revived, it seems to be a final recognition that the other tales became stagnant, completely arresting the momentum of the series' narrative. Lestat's eventual revival is staggered in three sections; a brief awakening at the end of *The Vampire Armand*, his full corporeal realisation and part-participation in *Merrick* in 2000, and fully restoring him to the Vampire Chronicles in *Blackwood Farm* in 2002.

Both *Merrick* and *Blackwood Farm* are of particular importance in the later Vampire Chronicles as they are works of fusion, combining characters and legacies from both the Vampire Chronicles and the Lives of the Mayfair Witches trilogy – *The Witching Hour* (1990), *Lasher* (1993), and *Taltos* (1994) – initially written by Rice as separate series of fiction.[67] While *Merrick* is the first of these intertextual cross-over novels concerning witchcraft, voodoo and vampirism, Merrick Mayfair is an outside character previously unmentioned in either world, developed solely to act as the intertextual bridge between both series. Rice further incorporates and envelops the major characters from both series into the final two books of the Vampire Chronicles, *Blackwood Farm* (2002) and *Blood Canticle* (2003). Both novels facilitate a narrative of

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[66] Anne Rice. *Vittorio the Vampire: New Tales of the Vampires.* London: Chatto & Windus, 1999. p. 4

[67] Rice's alternate supernatural trilogy termed, 'Lives of the Mayfair Witches' are; Anne Rice *The Witching Hour.* New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1990; Anne Rice. *Lasher.* New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1993; Anne Rice. *Taltos.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994.

profound religious subscription, which Rice has finally allowed to bleed into her vampire prince's identity.

Blackwood Farm concerns Quinn (Tarquin) Blackwood, a young vampire stalked and tormented by his doppelganger, Goblin, who grows increasingly violent and psychotic as Quinn attempts to live out his immortal existence with Lestat. Mona Mayfair, a teenage witch who gave birth to a Taltos (a ghost who assumes a corporeal body from birth) is diagnosed with a terminal disease and begs Quinn, to whom she professes undying love, to make her immortal. Their love affair is condemned by the Mayfair family, yet, Lestat, upon scrutinizing Quinn's desire for Mona's conversion to vampirism, turns Mona on her deathbed. Goblin is revealed to be Quinn's twin brother Garwain, who died in childbirth; his spirit trapped within Blackwood Farm and growing increasingly jealous of Quinn's life and (im)mortality. In many ways, Rice's doppelganger novel is a product of 1990s popular culture (explored in depth in Chapter Three) but is so tied to the religious conversion Lestat desires after his religious epiphanies in *Memnoch the Devil*, developed further in *Blood Canticle*, that it acts as a cross-decade narrative, a bridge between two popular cultural formations, and two different Americas. In the concluding chapters of *Blackwood Farm*, culminating in the death of Quinn's Aunt Queen, Lestat prays and takes communion at the service, illustrating his new, unwavering faith:

> Lestat and Merrick actually knelt beside me [Quinn], making the Sign of the Cross and apparently praying in whispers, answering the anthems of the Mass.... When it came time to receive Communion...I rose on impulse... and to my utter shock, so did Merrick, and so did Lestat. The three of us received the Sacrament.[68]

More interlinked than any of the other vampire chronicles (a direct two-part narrative) *Blackwood Farm* and, in particular, *Blood Canticle* are Rice's farewell platform to all of her supernatural characters, merging both the Vampire Chronicles and Mayfair witches series to gather and disavow her

[68] Anne Rice. *Blackwood Farm*. London: Chatto & Windus, 2002. pp. 496-498.

'darker' writing, in favour of her new religious interest – Jesus Christ. It is in *Blood Canticle* that Lestat embarks upon his quest to become a saint, to be prayed to and honoured, "I want to have my life-sized plaster statue in every church in the world. Me... looking down with gently parted hands on the faithful who pray as they touch my foot."[69] Lestat, wholly embodying the spiritual conflict of Rice's new return to Catholicism, renounces his past deeds and identity – addressing his fans and readership whom he claims begged him to produce another blood-soaked Vampire Chronicle, Lestat renounces his wickedness: "I DON'T WANT TO BE EVIL ANYMORE"[70] [Rice's emphasis]. Lestat's vanity permits him to imagine his sainthood acknowledged by Pope John Paul II on his deathbed, listening to Lestat's oration on the crumbling morals of the modern world, conjecturing how Christ will triumph in the third Millennium - "we are at the dawn of a sublime age! Enemies will no longer be conquered. They will be devoured and transformed.[71] This conclusion to the Vampire Chronicles, in which Mona Mayfair goes in search of her child Taltos in order to protect him from extermination, and peacefully reunites both the Taltos species and the Mayfair family (previously fractured in *Taltos* (1993)), offers a finale in which both series' narrative patriarch Lestat and matriarch Rowan Mayfair discuss her desire to become a vampire. He declines to give her 'the dark gift', and leaves her as the mortal matriarch of the New Orleans clan – populated by mortals, witches and vampires. Lestat leaves the narrative addressing the reader, much as Rice seeks to finalise her own authorial position on the end of the Vampire Chronicles. Lestat's monologue suggests a temptation to return to it, but the conviction of his religious position indicates a resolute finality: "be gone from me, oh mortals who are pure of heart. Be gone from my thoughts, oh souls that dream great dreams... I am the magnet for the damned... – the blood that teaches life will not teach lies, and love becomes my reprimand, my goad, my song."[72]

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[69] Anne Rice. *Blood Canticle*. p. 7

[70] ibid. p. 6

[71] ibid. pp. 11, 9-13. Lestat's oration is critical of the modern world insofar as the ruthless pursuit of science has, in some capacity, demeaned a moral respect for God. At its end, the oration is a fantasy of impossible purity which Lestat knows he cannot attain; however, it reveals not only the depths of his vanity but also Rice's overt criticism of her fans demands to continue publishing the series.

[72] ibid. p. 306

Rice's conclusion to the Vampire Chronicles met with considerable hostility and negative reviews; some fans claimed that she had utterly betrayed her legacy and readership for ending the series and, in its stead, "only writ[ing] for the Lord".[73] Her subsequent interviews about her renewed faith has divided fans, some considering her new works more conservative and preachy than any of her previous work, and yet, she disavows any subscription to other Christian popular fiction such as *Left Behind* – "I was intrigued. But their vision [LaHaye and Jenkins] is not my vision"[74]. Interviewed in *Christianity Today*, an evangelical magazine, Rice stated that "this book [*Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt* (2005)] means more to me than anything I've ever done... I'm not offering agnostic explanations. He is real. He worked miracles. He is the Son of God! And there is so much more to write."[75] To date, she has written another novel on Christ's life, *Christ the Lord: The Road to Cana* (2008), and envisions continuing her fiction on Christ's life into a trilogy. In tandem, she has very recently (Oct. 7th 2008) published a memoir on her return to faith and Christianity, entitled *Called Out of Darkness: A Spiritual Confession,* in which she addresses her former agnostic beliefs and renewed faith, writing the Vampire Chronicles, and the need to conclude them to write her new faith-based fiction. However, despite this conversion and new direction in fiction, public reaction has been less than kind.[76] This could partially be due to her posting on Amazon.com in response to negative reviews for *Blood Canticle*, where she revealed her new direction in fiction, and concluded her vampire mythology with a harsh, final note: "Yes, The 'Chronicles' are no more! Thank God!"[77]

In 2007, Richard Matheson's classic vampire novel, *I am Legend* was adapted, for the screen for the third time. Both previous adaptations, *The Last Man on Earth* (1964) starring Vincent Price and *The Omega Man* (1971), starring

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[73] David Gates. "The Gospel According to Anne" in *Newsweek*. Oct. 31st 2005.
[74] ibid.
[75] Cindy Crosby. "Interview With A Penitent" in *Christianity Today*, Dec. 1st 2005, Vol. 49; 12. Available online at: http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/december/11.50.html Accessed on: 31/08/08.
[76] See Sarah Lyall. "Fan Power Takes On New Meaning" *International Herald Tribune*. Oct.14th 2004. Online at: http://www.iht.com/articles/2004/10/13/features/anne.php?page=1 Accessed on 31/08/08.
[77] Anne Rice. "From the Author to the Some of the Negative Voices Here."In response to reviews of *Blood Canticle*, Amazon.com forum. Sept. 6th 2004. (The posting has since been deleted by Amazon.com). Reported online at: http://www.biblio.com/authors/574/Anne_Rice_Biography.html Accessed 01/09/08

Charlton Heston, were *relatively* faithful to Matheson's vision of the last man on earth, Robert Neville, attempting to survive in a post-apocalyptic world where plague and mutation have overrun the human population, turning all who survived the nuclear war into vampiric mutants (though, in *The Omega Man*, the infected are most definitely zombies rather than vampires). I am returning to Matheson's novel to facilitate a reading of adaptation and religious concerns which are not present in Matheson's vision, but are significantly present in the novel's only nominal adaptation. In Matheson's 1954 novel, which is primarily concerned with Cold War nuclear anxieties, science is presented as both the cause and a potential solution to the germ-based vampire parasite (originating from a biological weapon) that transforms all survivors, infected by dust clouds harbouring the germ into insatiable vampires. Religion, employed as an effective weapon or used to provide comfort or a solution, is entirely absent in the novel -"The cross. No, that couldn't have anything to do with the bacilli. If anything, it was psychological."[78] Grappling with the survivors, who are determined to kill Neville and drink his blood, Neville becomes a modern Van Helsing; making weapons, conducting rudimentary experiments on infected blood in an attempt to find a scientific answer or cure, and staking and burning the vampires. Enduring the nightly attacks and cat-calls by his former neighbour and friend, Ben Cortman, Neville experiences fits of rage and psychotic episodes, vowing to kill Cortman for leading the continual attacks on his home. It is this hatred for Cortman, and his copious drinking, which gives him enough strength to continue to his battle. The vampires act out of ferocious appetite alone, every night gathering outside Neville's home, tormenting him with "their murmuring and their walkings about and their cries, their snarling and their fighting amongst themselves... and they were all there for the same thing."[79] Their appetite is so fierce and unrelenting that, occasionally when the hunger becomes too unbearable for them, they would eat one of their own: "this constant threat of cannibalism as sign of feral desperation."[80] Neville discovers that the vampire germ, a bacillus that sporulates from the starved vampire body, spreads when the vampire body begins to "metabolize abnormally, absorb water, and swell up, ultimately

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[78] Richard Matheson. *I Am Legend*. 1954. rpt. London: Gollancz, 2001 p. 85
[79] ibid. p. 12
[80] Mary Pharr. "Vampiric Appetite in *I Am Legend*, '*Salem's Lot* and *The Hunger*" in Leonard G Heldreth, Mary Pharr (eds) *The Blood is the Life: Vampires in Literature*. p. 95

explode and destroy all cells"[81] thus contaminating the air and dust storms which spread the disease. As a "characteristic 1950s' document"[82] on the culture of scientific experimentation and fears of cultural invasion, *I Am Legend* casts away any real religious significance on the vampire populace, leaving them as cellular, scientifically altered beings. Neville, in an attempt to uncover the vampire's pathology, collects test subjects, and experiments on them with garlic serums, using crosses and mirrors, all of which the vampire's react to in fear, but mostly only allows temporary reprieve and provides no concrete answers.

Matheson's novel, while secularizing the vampire as a creature born of science gone awry, does comment on the current political culture within American society, visible through his racially charged disgust at the vampire condition. Most notably, Neville's drunken oration on the misunderstood vampire reflects the increasing tensions on civil rights and segregation laws mounting in the United States in 1954:

> Friends, I come before you to discuss the vampire; a minority element if there ever was one, and there was one. But to concision: I will sketch out the basis for my thesis, which thesis is this: Vampires are prejudiced against. The keynote of minority prejudice is this: they are loathed because they are feared... Ah, see, you have turned the poor guileless innocent into a haunted animal. He has no means of support, no measures of proper education, he has no voting franchise. No wonder he is compelled to seek out a predatory nocturnal existence. Robert Neville grunted a surly grunt. Sure, sure, he thought, but would you let your sister marry one? [83]

The novel ends on a note of both relativism and epiphany for Neville, as he discovers that he is the very last human being on earth. His discovery that Ruth, a newfound companion who appears as normal as he, is a living hybrid mutant capable of withstanding the airborne germ and prohibiting its spread

[81] Richard Matheson. *I Am Legend* p. 81
[82] Darryl Jones. *Horror: A Thematic History in Fiction and Film.* p. 159
[83] Richard Matheson. *I Am Legend* pp. 26-27

through drug treatments, reveals that Neville is now a minority of one, and a killer of these new evolutionary mutants as well as the 'dead', hungry vampires. It is *he* who has become the mass killer "who deserves to be hunted and killed.... the monstrosity is his."[84] The vampires and the mutants are the next evolutionary step for life, for science; "[He] looked out over the new people of the earth. He knew he did not belong to them; he knew that, like the vampires, he was anathema and black terror to be destroyed... full circle, he thought... full circle... I am legend"[85]

Sharing the premise of an apocalyptic future, the third film adaptation of the novel, *I Am Legend* (2007), shares a similar narrative of cultural anxieties following a similar scientific catastrophe upon the earth's population, relocating Robert Neville (Will Smith) from suburban Los Angeles to post-9/11 New York City. The adaptation also reverses the racial aspect of Matheson's novel, which Joshua Clover comments on as a critical blindspot: "it has gone without comment that, in pitting Last Man Alive Will Smith against an army of albino humanoids, the long first act is basically *Kill Whitey*. One wonders what Charlton Heston would make of that".[86] Neville is a virologist and army colonel, who options to stay in New York as the virus spreads, desperate to find a cure: "This is ground zero... this is my site and I'm not going to let this happen!,"[87] he tells his wife and child, moments before they are killed in a helicopter accident caused by survivors attempting to escape Manhattan island. The opening images of a desolate New York, abandoned and overgrown amidst signs of mass evacuation and panic stirs an evocative memory of New York on Wednesday September 12th, 2001 – "through the empty streets past the carcasses of cars damaged in the explosion ... I thought that this is what nuclear winter might look like."[88] Unlike Matheson's Neville who conducts his rudimentary experiments on vampire women, which he subconsciously equates with the newfound chastity thrust upon him, Smith's Neville experiments on rats in his subterranean laboratory before moving on to human trials (on many subjects) of his chemical serum.

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[84] Darryl Jones. *Horror: A Thematic History in Fiction and Film*. p. 160
[85] Richard Matheson. *I Am Legend*. p. 160
[86] Joshua Clover. "The End" in *Film Quarterly*. Vol. 61:3. 2008. p.7
[87] *I Am Legend*. Dir. Francis Lawrence. Warner Bros. 2007.
[88] James Estrin. "Behind the Lens: Walking in the Aftermath" *New York Times*. Sept. 16th 2001.

Documenting his progress, Neville seems close to a significant breakthrough. The vampire infection is referred to as KV – the Krippin Virus, named after Dr. Alice Krippin (Emma Thompson) which mutated from a scientific breakthrough in genetically reprogramming the measles virus to eradicate cancer. The virus mutated to become an airborne pathogen, and infected nearly all on the planet. The few who survived have a natural immunity to the virus, and the 'infected' indicate partial DNA mutation. Here, the word 'vampire' is never used; instead the term Dark Seeker and Hemocyte (meaning mature-blood) refers to the affected mutants.

The fundamental difference in the updated adaptation lies with its intended uplifting ending, culminating with a found cure and a clear statement on a renewed world outlook that wholly embraces religion. With each mention of God throughout the film, butterflies are also frequently signalled. Neville's daughter Marley (Willow Smith) repeatedly signals to her father to look at or for the butterfly, a sign he later attributes some religious significance to – a symbol of resurrection because of its three-stage polymorphic lifecycle: larval, pupal and metamorphic. When Neville comes across Anna (Alice Braga) and her son Ethan, he is informed that there is a survivors' colony in Vermont for those who were unaffected by the virus. When asked to provide proof of the colony's existence, Anna replies, "God told me. He has a plan."[89] Neville, declaring his lack of belief in such a God, lashes out in frustration:

> All right, let me tell you about your 'God's plan'. Six billion people on Earth when the infection hit. KV had a ninety-percent kill rate, that's five point four billion people dead. Crashed and bled out. Dead. Less than one-percent immunity. That left twelve million healthy people, like you, me, and Ethan. The other five hundred and eighty-eight million turned into your dark seekers, and then they got hungry and they killed and fed on everybody. Everybody! Every single person that you or I have ever known is dead! Dead! There is no God! [90]

[89] *I Am Legend*. Dir. Francis Lawrence. Warner Bros. 2007
[90] ibid.

When his fortress home is overrun by the vampires, Neville discovers he has found a cure for the virus. Noticing the butterfly tattoo on Anna's neck, he realises that it was God's plan to send Anna to him in New York and gives her a vial of the healed test-subject's blood. In a final act of defiance, he blows up his home and laboratory, dying to protect Anna and his newfound cure. The film closes with specific reference to God enduring all scientific blunders, an ability to 'light up the darkness' of our current age. The closing sequence of the film, Anna and Ethan arrive at the colony and are welcomed inside. In the centre of the shot, a church towers above all other buildings in the newfound congregation, with bells tolling softly. The bells are a sign to welcome those back to religious faith, and that God, through both scientific means and revelation, will endure. *The Omega Man* (1971) has a notable Christological ending in the final physical pose Heston forms before his death, but its tone is far less religious than *I Am Legend*'s coding. Matheson's novel, which disregarded God's role or intervention in the narrative, is completely discarded in Lawrence's *I Am Legend* (2007) in this new age of overt Christian subscription in the US. Science and religion are no longer divorced from each other – but are interlinked awkwardly to provide a lasting conservative tone. In his book *Light Up The Darkness*, Jamin Hubner goes so far to equate the Krippin Virus with biblical sin[91] –in the book of Genesis, after seeing man fall to wickedness, the lord decided to "blot out man whom [he had] created"[92] - and Neville as the Dark Seekers saviour – "I can save you, I can help you, you are sick and I can help you, I can help *everybody*!"[93] In the end, Matheson's Neville is adapted and converted into the thinking of the Christian Right; one who was left behind to find a cure, and through divine intervention is shown the way towards salvation.

[91] Jamin Hubner. *Light Up The Darkness: Christianity, Calvinism and Coherence in I Am Legend*. Charleston SC: BookSurge LLC, 2008. pp. 53-62.
[92] *Book of Genesis*. King James Bible Edition. 6:5-6.
[93] *I Am Legend*. Dir. Francis Lawrence. Warner Bros. 2007

Millennial Vampire Sexuality

In this final section, vampire sexuality returns to an environment of the religious, the forbidden and a re-imagined return of old narratives and myths through young female bodies. In this tide of change towards increasingly conservative and religious dogma, the final texts and films to be discussed; Mitchell Lichtenstein's *Teeth* (2007), John Ajvide Lindqvist's novel, *Let The Right One In* (2004) and Stephenie Meyers *Twilight* series (2005 -) each bear significant narratives on increasing subscriptions to various religious institutions and critically challenging cultural moralities. The themes interlinking these final texts signal a return to culturally established taboos and repressed desires, establishing a new generation of vampires who infiltrate dominant modes of power – adulthood, chastity, sexual expression and exploitation, education, knowledge and religious fanaticism – asking us to critically evaluate our cultural positions and moral authority in this increasingly divisive new century. This final collection of vampire narratives include themes of paedophilia, abstinence programs, Mormonism and creationism, indicating not only the continuance of the vampire narrative as a cultural indicator of current anxieties, but that this new vampire voice established in 1975, seems destined to continue this course.

In Mitchell Lichtenstein's film *Teeth* (2007), a black comedy about chastity pledge group leader Dawn (Jess Weixler) who discovers she physically harbours a vagina dentata (hence its overt vampiric themes). The film critically comments on the teachings and expectations of the pledge group and its members, and highlights the failures of cultural shift towards teaching creationism, abstinence based biology and sex education, and the lack of knowledge available in these school systems. A closer look at the abstinence pledge groups in the United States should reveal the confusing falsehoods propagated by these 'teachings'.

Founded in 1996 in Yuma, Arizona, by Denny and Amy Pattyn, The Silver Ring Thing group advocates sexual abstinence directed specifically at teenagers. Pamphlets are distributed in schools (depending on school district and state laws) and at social events, to counteract the current 'moral decay'

among teenagers and to "ensure protection from the physical, emotional and spiritual problems resulting from sexual activity amongst teens."[94] Participants wear pledge rings on their fourth finger on the left hand, to be taken off only when replaced by a wedding ring. Symbolically, this ring is used as a reminder of the pledge and a deep connection to Christ. The Bush administration, "since 2001 [has spent] $270 million on abstinence-only education, compared with $100 million annually when he took office." [95] Many groups, including the Silver Ring Thing, promote chastity and pledges to 'save oneself for marriage or for Christ', or to 'take Christ as chaperone on a date', attempting to curb the current rate of unwanted pregnancies, abortions, STD and HIV infections that have dramatically increased in the United States.[96] The group culture is faith-based, and wholly rejects teaching which provides adequate information on contraception, biology and human reproduction, explicitly advocating states to teach "that a mutually faithful monogamous relationship in the context of marriage is the expected standard of human sexual activity."[97] Further to this, Carol Siegel notes, "it implies that any other sort of behaviour, or by extension the mere desire for something other than monogamous marriage, is not human, and so those who experience it are not deserving of human rights."[98] Alarmingly, many abstinence programs also deliberately misinform students about sexual health, condemning the use of condoms, masturbation, abortion (which one source claims leads to infertility and suicide), HIV rates in America and how the virus is transmitted. An investigation by Congressional Representative Henry A. Waxman (Democrat – California) in 2004 concluded that significant misconceptions were propagated as fact by such groups. The

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[94] Silver Ring Thing history. Online at: http://www.silverringthing.com/aboutus.asp Accessed on: 05/09/08.

[95] Associated Press. "Bush may double funding to Abstinence programs" in *USA Today*. 13/02/2004. Online at: http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2004-02-13-bush-abstinence_x.htm Accessed on: 05/09/08.

[96] These claims have been explicitly presented as the best method for sexual health and education – explicitly linking vow-breakers as sinners against Christ. Further to this, the Heritage Group (an alarmist, scientifically debunked group advocating Abstinence-Only and Creationist teachings) self- published a list of 'facts' regarding the chances of suicide, depression and addiction relating to a young person's participation in any form of sexual contact. Online at: http://www.heritage.org/Research/Abstinence/wm461.cfm Accessed on: 05/09/08.

[97] Michael Warner. *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life*. Cambridge. Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999. p. 203

[98] Carol Siegel. *Goth's Dark Empire*. p. 42

examples of Abstinence teaching deceptions cited by Waxman's investigators include:

> ... that half the gay male teenagers in the United States have tested positive for the AIDS virus, and that touching a person's genitals 'can result in pregnancy'.... A 43-day-old fetus [sic] is a 'thinking person.' HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, can be spread via sweat and tears. Condoms fail to prevent HIV transmission as often as 31 percent of the time in heterosexual intercourse. One curriculum, called "Me, My World, My Future," teaches that women who have an abortion 'are more prone to suicide' and that as many as 10 percent of them become sterile. This contradicts the 2001 edition of a standard obstetrics textbook that says fertility is not affected by elective abortion.[99]

These shocking statements only reinforce prejudices, reactionary anger and abuse of gay and non- Christians people, attempting to further collapse any remaining boundaries between church and state in public schools.

Teeth (2007) introduces Dawn as a teenager giving a pledge group motivational speech at a local high school, attempting to convince her peers to take the chastity pledge. At her own school, she is mocked by her peers and classmates. Her classmate Ryan (Ashley Springer) places a bet with a friend that he can "pop that cherry".[100] In biology class, the text books are censored to completely conceal an anatomical drawing of the vagina, explained by teacher: "the school-board has rightly ordered it be concealed – the detailed diagram of the..."[101] but he is unable to finish from embarrassment. Dawn explains it to the class as a "girl's in-built modesty", but this is quickly ridiculed also. By censoring the drawing of female genitalia, the reading is clearly one of fearing female sexual capacity, by covering up the "barred and dangerous entrance",[102] the 'void' or castrated lack of woman, "the mouth of hell – a terrifying symbol

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[99] Ceci Connolly. "Some Abstinence Programs Mislead Teens". *The Washington Post.* 02/12/2004. Online at:http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A26623-2004Dec1.html Accessed on: 05/09/08. This article did not cite any particular Abstinence organisation by name.

[100] *Teeth*. Dir. Mitchell Lichtenstein. Lions Gate, 2007.

[101] ibid.

[102] Barbara Creed. *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*. p. 107

of woman as the 'devil's gateway'"[103] - the essence of the 'monstrous feminine'. Her step brother Brad (John Hensley), who was the first bitten by her vagina dentata in childhood when he penetrated her with his finger out of curiosity, has developed a quasi-incestuous desire to have Dawn; his obsession so complete that he only anally penetrates other women. He knows about her vagina dentata though she has yet to discover it. Dawn develops a friendship with a fellow pledge member, Tobey (Hale Appleman), culminating in a date at the lake. Tobey, unable to keep his pledge, rapes Dawn, who unwittingly castrates him with her internal fangs. Giving another motivational speech the following day, she goes into shock, hearing the crowd quote scripture at her:

> Crowd: She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man...
> Dawn: There is something inside of me... which is *lethal.*
> Group Leader: What Dawn has said is important... [leading her offstage]... exile from the Garden of Eden.
> Crowd (hissing): The serpent, the serpent! [104]

It is then that Dawn wets and removes the sticker covering the illustrated vagina in her biology book, and fully realises her genetic mutation.[105] Consulting a gynaecologist about her condition, he too begins to molest her, and upon discovering her teeth, has four fingers severed, and screams "It's true!! Vagina Dentata, Vagina Dentata!!"[106] She begins to associate herself with Medusa, the femme castratrice. According to Barbara Creed, "Medusa and her two sisters presented a terrifying sight. They had huge heads, their hair consisted of writhing serpents, their teeth were as long as boars' tusks... Men unfortunate enough to look upon the Medusa with her evil eye were turned to stone."[107] In Freud's interpretation of the Medusa's head, it is to be read as "a representation of the female genitals, or rather... it isolates their horrifying

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[103] ibid. p. 106
[104] *Teeth*. Dir. Mitchell Lichtenstein. Lions Gate, 2007
[105] ibid. It is hinted at throughout the film that Dawn has adapted or mutated because she lives near a nuclear facility. The film discusses adaptation in the classroom, by exampling the rattlesnakes' development of a rattle to ward off predators, exploring both Creationist and Darwinian teachings. Yet, Dawn's 'condition' illustrates the power this myth in many cultures (in Greek and Native American Indian legends) irrespective of subscription to Darwinian or Creationist teachings.
[106] ibid.
[107] Barbara Creed. *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*. p. 2

effects from their pleasure-giving ones,"[108] leading to a deeper understanding why Medusa's image was embossed on shields to terrify an enemy in battle. When Dawn consents to having sex with Ryan, her teeth do not castrate him because she is in control, and is experiencing the pleasure of sex; when he reveals he used her to win a bet, she assumes the power of Medusa's gaze, castrating him of her own free will for his deceptive actions. Just as Medusa was raped by Poseidon in the temple of Athena, and transformed from a maiden beauty into a serpent-haired gorgon, Dawn too embodies Medusan vengeance, and, in a contemporary twist on the myth, seduces and castrates her half-brother Todd, who has, by every destructive method, disrupted the family home and ignored Dawn's mother's dying cries for help. Dawn's empowers herself through gaining knowledge of her body and her sexuality, using her vagina dentata to rid her world of patriarchal oppression (symbolised explicitly in her encounter with the gynaecologist) and male abuse of female sexuality. This realisation is soundtracked with the sound of a rattlesnakes' rattle, a metaphor for a necessary evolutionary defence mechanism (which was also discussed in her science class), aligning Dawn's mutation with an evolutionary attribute that will protect her from "the penis as an instrument of violence",[109] which an Abstinence program cannot. The film ends on a vampiric note, with Dawn being victimised by an elderly man from whom she has hitch-hiked a lift. Suggestively licking his lips and locking her in the car with him, she remembers her empowering and protective teeth, and, in an image recalling that of both Coppola's Lucy Westenra (Sadie Frost), and of the Medusan bride of Dracula who seduces Jonathan Harker (Keanu Reeves), smiles and gazes seductively towards the spectator.

The sexual victimization of children has received much media attention in Europe in the past fifteen years. Cases emerged of monstrous abductors, including Belgium's Marc Dutroux, who, between 1995-1996 chained, starved and raped six child abductees; allowing two of them to starve to death, and buried his former accomplice alive. Laetitia Delhenz, Dutroux's final victim, was kidnapped while returning home from a public swimming pool; a disturbing image which is revisited in John Ajvide Lindqvist's Swedish

[108] Sigmund Freud. 'Medusa's Head'. 1922. James Strachey (ed) *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud.* 24 Vols. Vol. XVIII. p. 273.
[109] Barbara Creed. *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis.* p. 157

vampire novel, *Let the Right One In*. Similar to the monstrous Dutroux case, Lindqvist's novel explores the taboo subjects of paedophilia and sexual exploitation of children, intermixed with substance abuse, criminality and bullying. Set in Stockholm's impoverished suburb Blackeburg in 1982, Oskar, a twelve-year old child who suffers extreme physical torment at the hands of the class bullies, notices a young girl has moved into the flat next-door. Living with a strange older man, Håkan, the young girl Eli only comes out at night. She and Oskar begin a strange friendship; noticing she has a very distinct odour, and that the windows of her apartment are blacked-out, Oskar becomes inquisitive about her home life and habits. To communicate with her through their shared thin walls, Oskar teaches Eli to communicate in Morse code to keep their conversations private from Eli's 'father', Håkan.

In the nearby woods, close to their apartment block, Håkan abducts and murders a child – stringing him upside down to bleed his body out, he decants the blood and brings it back to Eli. She confesses to Oskar that she and Håkan have a mutual agreement – he will collect blood for her (because she finds the hunt very difficult in a child's body) and he, in return, fondles her on occasion. Their mutually abusive, vampiric relationship culminates in his 'death' at the local swimming pool, after an attempted abduction of a young boy leads to his capture. Pouring acid on his face when cornered to conceal his identity, Håkan's skin is burned off and one of his eyes is melted, exposing the remnants of liquefied nasal cartilage, visceral nerve endings and skull. Despite the acidic burn, Håkan barely survives and is transported to hospital. All the while in Håkan's absence, Eli grows severely hungry and, in desperation to feed, attacks two locals in an underpass. One dies from his wounds but Virginia, the second victim, survives and becomes infected. Eventually discovering Håkan survived his intended suicide, Eli visits the hospital where Håkan begs her to transform him into a vampire to heal himself. His body, so severely disfigured by the burn, and sexually aroused by Eli's presence, becomes permanently fixed in this horrific state, now embodying the faceless, immortal and unrecognisable paedophile so monstrously depicted – in particular, his exposed continuous erection evokes the true horror of his physical depravity.

The vampire body in *Let The Right One In* is remarkably different; the body does not 'die' as such, but rather develops and harbours a second brain, attached to the heart. This brain is designed to take over bodily functions once the human brain and heart cease to function after death. Virginia's transformation in the novel exemplifies the horror of the vampire body and its uncontrollable hunger: "Inside Virginia's heart a separate little brain is forming. In its initial stage of development this new brain was dependant on the large brain. Now it is self-sufficient and what Virginia sensed during a terrible moment is completely correct: it would live on, even after her body died."[110] This physiological change in the vampire body is akin to a genetic abnormality or corruption of the body initiated by the infection present in the vampire bite. Eli, the first vampire in the narrative, inadvertently spreads the vampire infection when she is interrupted feeding on Virginia – only complete death before the second brain develops in the heart muscle will prohibit its spread. The three vampires in the novel are physically and radically different – each possessing a horrific example of the body beyond control: Virginia, a healthy human exposed to infection experiences unending hunger and begins cutting herself and sucking on the wounds, coming perilously close to draining her entire body.[111] In the end, she realises she has become a vampire and exposes herself to sunshine, bursting into flames. Håkan, the monstrous paedophile who, being faceless and immortal, embodies a contemporary fear of underground paedophile rings and relentless abject sexual desire, does not heal from his previous physical traumas. His burned face and sickening ever-erect penis remap the vampire body as an abject site of torn and liquefied flesh and tissue, coupled with his overriding desire to continue his sexual abuse. Eli's body is developmentally rigid and static but permeable – adhering to the vampire myth of being invited into the home, as the title of the novel suggests, her body uncontrollably bleeds when she enters an owned territory uninvited. The body only regains control when the invitation to enter is clearly expressed: "Her eyes looked like they had sunk into their sockets, were filled with blood

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[110] John Ajvide Lindqvist. *Let The Right One In*. 2004. Trans. Ebba Segerberg. London: Quercus, 2007. p. 350

[111] It is interesting to note that many vampire novels do not explore the theme of self-harm or self-suckling. However, in Andrew Fox's *Fat White Vampire Blues*, Jules conducts an experiment to see the outcome of self-consumption on a cult, whom he transforms into vampires. When they consume their own blood in thirst, they die immediately indicating self-consumption is as destructive and abject as cannibalism.

flowing out, running along the bridge of her nose over her lips into her mouth where more blood was coming out...She was bleeding out of all the pores in her body."[112] When Oskar invites her in, the blood seeping from her pores begins to coagulate and forms lumps and scabs, healing the body quickly. Though permeable, Eli's body is also asexual, "between her legs she had ... nothing. No slit, no penis. Just a smooth surface."[113] Eli chooses to masquerade as a girl because it allows him access to victims to feed from; like Claudia in *Interview With The Vampire*, the vampire in the guise of a child will attract prey.

Håkan, now a grotesque revenant, casts off his former sexual repression; ensnaring Eli in the basement of their apartment complex, he fully intends to rape the child –

> Håkan's penis stood out from his body to one side, craving attention, and Eli looked at its stiff swollenness crisscrossed with veins... Håkan's hand pulled the foreskin aggressively up and back, up and back and the head of his penis appeared and disappeared, appeared and disappeared like a jack in the box while he uttered a sound of pleasure or suffering. And Eli laughed with relief. *All this. To be able to jack off.* [Lindqvist's emphasis].[114]

A sudden blow to the head knocks Eli off his feet and Håkan, exposing Eli's buttocks, attempts to forcefully penetrate and anally rape him. Eli fights back and bursts Håkan's remaining eye and escapes. Håkan, now blinded and trapped in the basement, is cornered by the police and killed. To protect Oskar from the bullies he courageously fought against, Eli kills them in retribution for torturing him, and flees from Stockholm in the guise of a boy.

Lindqvist's novel thematically explores nuances in Scandinavian cultural issues; domestic abuse, alcoholism, depression and suicide are significant

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[112] John Ajvide Lindqvist. *Let The Right One In*. p. 376
[113] ibid. p. 378 Lindqvist changes the possessive determiner of Eli's body upon this revelation to 'him' for the remainder of the novel. For the purpose of clarity, the remainder of this chapter will also refer to Eli as a 'he'.
[114] ibid. p.425

social crises in Scandinavia and particularly localised to Sweden and Finland. The bleak midwinter landscapes and domestic crises featured in the novel combine to distinctly align this novel (and its film adaptation released in November 2008) to a Swedish cultural narrative, of which vampires are configured as the lesser evil present. Much like the Arctic Circle vampires of *30 Days of Night* (2007) and *Frostbitten* (2006), the isolation and depression of the dark nights provides an ample space for the vampire to inhabit. It also explains the increasing dependence on substance abuse to provide temporary relief for the inhabitants of these desolate landscapes, yet, in *30 Days of Night*, residents are explicitly forbidden to consume alcohol during the Arctic nights: "we've got enough problems as it is"[115].

The extreme shift of vampire narratives concerning sexuality draws to a conclusion with Stephenie Meyer's adolescent vampire series, The *Twilight* Saga. Consisting of four novels to date, *Twilight* (2005), *New Moon* (2006), *Eclipse* (2007) and *Breaking Dawn* (2008), the series presents vampire relationships and sexualities in an overtly Mormon light, reflecting Meyer's personal religious views. The series has remained on *The New York Times* best seller list for 143 weeks (as of August 2008) and is being adapted into a film scheduled for release Christmas 2008. The publicity surrounding the release of Meyer's books indicate the ever-increasing and fanatical fandom among teenage readers, while its marketing strategy is plainly concocted to rival the success of J.K Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. However, unlike Rowling's series which was publicly criticised by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI), who described the books as "subtle seductions"[116] and attempted corruptions on the young to lead them away from the church, Meyer's fiction attempts to indoctrinate Mormon values and principles on her readers. Unlike Anne Rice's conversion back to the Catholic Church which effectively ended the Vampire Chronicles, Meyer's beliefs are deliberately

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[115] *30 Days of Night*. Dir. David Slade, Columbia Pictures, 2007. It is interesting to note that David Slade's directorial debut, *Hard Candy*. Lions Gate, 2006., also raises concerns about paedophilia and child abuse. However, in Slade's film, the intended victim Hayley (Ellen Page) ensnares the would-be abuser Jeff (Patrick Wilson) and destroys him. Interestingly, the poster art for the film depicts Hayley standing on a bear trap, which distinctly looks like a vagina dentata, to ward off any would-be abusers.

[116] Rhys Blakely. "Pope Criticises Harry Potter". *The Times*. July 13th 2005. Online at: http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/industry_sectors/media/article543521.ece Accessed on: 07/09/08

interwoven into the stories to influence young readers towards Mormon values, such as pre-marital chastity, by sublimating the vampire narrative into one of religious values.

Twilight introduces Bella Swan, a 16 year old girl who has recently moved to Forks, Washington State, to live with her father. At first, Bella feels isolated and lonely in her new school, until she notices Edward Cullen, a young vampire masquerading as an average schoolboy. Edward reveals to Bella that his entire family are vampires, choosing to live without human blood among the townspeople. Meyer's vampires can move about by day, under the dull Washington sky, but must avoid direct sunlight as their skin glistens - "His skin, white... literally sparkled, like thousands of tiny diamonds were embedded in the surface."[117] His eyes also change colour, from gold to deep black, when he is gripped by temptation or thirst.

Bella and Edward's relationship quickly develops into a romantic narrative, but consistently shifts towards a fear of consummation because of his vampiric thirst. Meyer does not overtly condemn sex in the novel (though it is not mentioned) but thinly codes it as a temptation for Edward to lose his restraint and bite Bella. Mormon values dictate the necessity of abstinence before marriage and a total commitment to one's family above all others, which Meyer's indicates through the construct of Edward's family life: "I didn't believe I would ever find someone I wanted to be with... in another way than my brothers and sisters."[118] Confessing his undying love for Bella, he confides that he is constantly challenged by his personal vow not to drink human blood. "And while there was still that possibility that I might be... overcome... I was... susceptible. Until I made up my mind that I *was* strong enough, that there was no possibility at all that I would... that I ever could..."[119] The language used is similar to that of Tobey in *Teeth* (2007), who reveals his pledge of abstinence is almost unbearable, just before he rapes Dawn at the lake. Meyer's own commitment to chastity before marriage is relayed heavily through Edward's pledge not to ever harm Bella, and is explicitly invoked when Bella, in the second book of the saga *New Moon* (2006) is forced to convert to vampirism

[117] Stephenie Meyer. *Twilight*. New York: Little Brown, 2005. p. 260
[118] ibid. pp. 300- 301
[119] ibid. p. 301

by the council of Volturi because of her forbidden knowledge of the vampires' existence and promises Edward she will marry him before he initiates her into his clan. However, Bella is construed as a constant temptation for Edward's sexual appetite, and he is congratulated by the highest ranking among the Volutri for his chastity: "But your *restraint*, ... I did not know such strength was possible. To inure yourself against such a siren call, not just once but again and again ... I would not have believed"[120] [Meyer's emphasis].

With this conservative tone, Meyer's has evoked the wrath of many feminists and writers, who claim her work to be eroding feminism through her protagonist's absolute commitment to Edward beyond that of her parents, and her own welfare. Bella is presented as repeatedly helpless, clumsy and prone to danger, a characteristic which firmly places women in a chauvinistic light, and thoroughly subjugated. Bella's self esteem is also considerably low and, describing herself as 'painfully ordinary', she compares herself to Edward: perfect, beautiful and "good at everything".[121] Such overt anti-feminism led Meg Cabot, author of the adolescent fiction series *The Princess Diaries* to post a blog online about Meyer's representation of women in her series as reported in *The New York Observer*,

> Not paradoxically, it could also be argued that, in their nostalgia for a past that puts agency in the hands of bloodsucking males, Ms. Meyer's books are fundamentally antifeminist. Best-selling young adult author Meg Cabot (*The Princess Diaries*) has written on her blog: "I didn't take my husband's last NAME when we got married. Do you honestly think I'd like a story about a girl considering changing SPECIES for a guy? No offense to any of you, but as a feminist, I just can't go there." [Cabot's emphasis] [122]

In many respects, Meyer's series signals a return to Victorian sexual sensibilities, a repression that must never be acted upon if one's virtue is to

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[120] Stephenie Meyer. *New Moon*. New York: Little Brown, 2006. p. 472
[121] Stephenie Meyer. *Twilight*. p. 301
[122] Doree Shafrir. "Zombies, Schombies! Teen Girls are Vamping It Up!" in *The New York Observer*. March 5th, 2008. Online at: http://www.observer.com/browse/tags/53602?page=0%2C0 Accessed on 07/09/08.

remain intact. Meyer's claims Edward to be a combination of her three favourite fictitious gentlemen, "*Jane Eyre*'s Edward Rochester, *Pride and Prejudice*'s Fitzwilliam D'arcy [sic] and *Anne of Green Gables*' Gilbert Blythe."[123] The premise of a triangular relationship between Bella, Jacob Black (revealed to be a werewolf in *New Moon*) and Edward, mimics the plot of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and places the werewolf as the feral other who cannot exert the self-control and restraint required to remain virtuous. Jacob Black is also represented as yet another mulatto figure, in that he when he morphs into a werewolf, his body explodes into a "russet brown wolf."[124] Compared with Edward's sparkling flesh, Jacob is thinly coded as a bestial sexual adolescent, and revealed to be incapable of restraining his emotions. Presented as inferior being to the vampire, Meyer's religious tones frame Jacob Black to that of the 'unsaved' other, incapable of the necessary requirements to win Bella's affections. Mormonism, prior to 1978, held steadfast to rules prohibiting any of its African American members to participate in rituals such as 'endowments' (a ritual where one is endowed with knowledge by the divine) and 'sealing' (akin to marriage which binds two people or an entire family together for eternity); both are required to attain the highest form of salvation within the Church of Latter Day Saints. By denying African Americans the right to be fully ordained within the Latter Day Saints as priests, "Mormons attempted to maintain a space that was off limits to blacks",[125] especially in the time when unsubstantiated rumours of the Black Panthers' arrival in Utah had spread. The subsequent dissolution of the divine laws by the church was explained as a moment of divine intervention and enlightenment experienced the elders of the church. Meyer's novels subtly coalesce themes of teenage romance, angst and sexual frustration within an old-fashioned, pre-feminist framework, imbibing a moralist viewpoint so wholly adrift within other vampire fiction in the past thirty years. Described as a 'Mills and Boon/Barbara Cartland' novel repackaged with supernatural characters,[126] this series of

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[123] Fiona Purdon. "Stephenie Meyer's chaste vampires lure young readers" in *Courier Mail* (Australian Newspaper) July19th 2008. Online at: http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,23739,24028149-5003424,00.html Accessed on 08/09/08

[124] Stephenie Meyers. *New Moon*. p. 325

[125] Gary Alan Fine, Patricia Ann Turner. *Whispers on the Color Line*. [sic] Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. p. 176

[126] Bidisha. "All Fangs, No Bite" *The Guardian*. August 7th, 2008. Online at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/aug/07/fiction Accessed on: 09/09/08.

novels only reaffirms the malleable nature of the vampire, and the use of the vampire as an agent of a conservative agenda. It also illustrates a blatant attempt to gain access to a young and influential readership, at a time when conservatives in the United States are, with a considerable degree of success, attempting to convert and mobilise the youth towards a theologically bound state.

This claiming of the vampire as a vehicle for a conservative narrative, to function as a means of influence on the young, reveals how malleable and changeable our Postmodern Vampires have become since 1975. From the increasing silence of Christopher Lee's Dracula in the Hammer Horror films, to the thousands of vampire voices and narratives that distinctly capture multiple cultural frameworks, the vampire has progressed and become an exceptionally powerful agent of multifocal representation. The vampire's narrative has come full circle; Nina Auerbach writes that vampires "go where the power is",[127] and, recalling the presidencies of the past thirty years in the United States, this statement remains unequivocally true. Auerbach rightly equates vampires with American presidents "because both are personifications of their age",[128] and reflect the political, social, sexual and economic issues within their own distinct periods of power. It is not possible to offer accurate conjecture or futurology on how the next cultural decade will transpire; one thing, however, is certain – the Postmodern Vampire will be at the heart of its artistic representation.

[127] Nina Auerbach. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. p. 6
[128] ibid. p. 3

Afterword

As I draw this thesis to a conclusion, the question remains, where does the vampire narrative go from here? At present, in October 2008, we are in the midst of a historical American election which, I believe, will form the beginning of a new cultural decade in American history. The two presidential candidates, Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama, will set a new historic precedent, irrespective of the eventual electoral outcome: McCain, a highly decorated former navy captain, is the oldest presidential nominee at the age of 72, while Obama is the first African American nominee representing a major political party in United States history. Their vice-presidential candidates, Sarah Palin (Republican) and Joe Biden (Democrat) are equally divisive, with both candidates appealing to the outer margins of the Blue/Red divide.

In the midst of the continued political debates between the two candidates, vampires have remained somewhat quiet in the margins – they too are waiting for this historical cultural turn to commence. This is not an uncommon occurrence in the vampire narrative: in 1976, when Gerald Ford lost the election to Jimmy Carter, Fred Saberhagen's *The Dracula Tape* and Anne Rice's *Interview With The Vampire* were centred on a confessional mode, mirroring the infamous 'Nixon tapes' that were slowly uncovered and broadcast to the public; in 1981, when Ronald Reagan became president, Whitley Streiber's *The Hunger* featured the vampire body as it began to decompose and rot internally, effectively narrating the destructive properties of the HIV virus that so dominated the 1980s, which was scandalously unacknowledged by Reagan until 1987. Clinton's vampires became two-faced beings, firmly placed in a decade filled with revelations on celebrities (O.J. Simpson), musicians (Michael Jackson), and heinous crimes in the American sanctuary, the home (Susan Smith). Clinton himself was no stranger to scandal: the Lewinsky affair and subsequent allegations of perjury and sexual harassment had brought him to the brink of impeachment in February 1999. All the while vampires mirrored such behaviour, assuming the role of the double. Vampires at the dawn of the new Millennium largely drew upon George W. Bush's subscription to religious rhetoric and this new age of

terrorism and extremism. Vampires have become central in narratives concerned with Christ and his impending return, and increasingly embedded in the ongoing War on Terror in Iraq and Afghanistan; indeed, we encounter Dracula residing in both places, standing in for the dictators and ideological terrorists of the Middle East, barren, hellish and borderless. Their influence has spread to the farthest reaches of our globe, from Iraq to Alaska to the wilds of Swedish Arctic Circle townships. The vampire's influence is felt far and wide in these postmodern times.

At the moment of writing, in the midst of this electrifying presidential election, and the current global economic crises, we may see vampires revisit their yuppie predecessors who survived Black Monday, October 19th, 1987, the last time the bottom fell out of Wall Street. If this is the case, we can expect our vampires to narrate new forms of everyday terror and anxieties – violence, homelessness, and class wars. If the vampire is set to continue within a Republican United States government, we should expect more diatribes concerning homosexuality, abortion and Evangelical Christianity. Undoubtedly, the vampire will continue this pattern of power if we are to see a continuation of social conservatism in the White House.

The archetypal Postmodern Vampire city, New Orleans – home to Anne Rice, Poppy Z. Brite, Jules Duchon, *Dracula 2000*, and Trent Reznor – is no longer the capital city of the undead. Rice, among others, left the city prior to Hurricane Katrina, which devastated the region and permanently displaced an estimated half a million residents. However, since the hurricane's devastation, I have come to notice that vampires have not returned to the city. Vampires have relocated far and wide – to Washington State, to Alaska, and other countries and nations – but, with the conclusion of Rice's Vampire Chronicles, the undead have abandoned New Orleans.

Where can we expect the vampire to surface next? As I conclude this thesis, cinematic adaptations of Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* (due Christmas 2008) and John Ajvide Lindqvist's *Let The Right One in* (November 2008) are soon to be released, and will continue interest in the vampire genre, through drastically differing representations. As stated previously, vampires tend to thrive when

under a Democrat president, while their physical destructions are usually more visceral and violent under conservative Republicans. While I am unable to predict the next cultural decade in American cultural history, our vampire and the future president will mirror each other's policies and cultural influences. Only time will tell, but as we were informed by Stoker's Dracula in 1897: "Time is on my side."[1]

[1] Bram Stoker. 1897. *Dracula*. Nina Auerbach and David J. Skal (eds). *The Norton Critical Edition of Dracula.* p. 267

Appendix: A Selected Cultural Timeline 1974 – 2008

1974 - *Blood for Dracula* (Dir. Paul Morrissey) was released, produced by Andy Warhol. President Nixon releases edited transcripts of tape recordings of conversations in the Oval Office. The 'Smoking Gun' tape (June 23rd 1972, six days after the Watergate break-in) revealed Nixon had asked the Director of the CIA to halt its investigation, essentially incriminating Nixon of participating in obstruction of justice. Nixon resigned once informed he would face impeachment on August 9th.

1975 – Fred Saberhagen's *The Dracula Tape* revises the Dracula legend by placing Dracula at the centre of the novel as narrator and 'in confession' mode. '*Salem's Lot* by Stephen King is published. South Vietnam surrenders with the capture of Saigon. Both American and South Vietnamese troops withdraw. The Khmer Rouge seize power in Cambodia. It is estimated that 1.5 million people died under their tyranny from 1975-1979.

1976 – Anne Rice's *Interview With The Vampire* is published to critical acclaim. Romania celebrated the 500th anniversary of Vlad the Impaler's death, issuing stamps bearing his image. Jimmy Carter is elected the thirty-ninth President of the United States.

1977 – Frank Langella stars as *Dracula* on Broadway; Louis Jourdan features in the three hour BBC feature production of *Dracula*. Jimmy Carter pardons Vietnam War draft evaders on his second day in office. *Star Wars* is released and becomes the then highest grossing film of all time. David Berkowitz aka the 'Son of Sam' is captured in Yonkers, New York.

1978 – Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's novel, *Hotel Transylvania*, introduces a new vampire hero, Count Saint-Germain, in the wake of both Saberhagen's and Rice's successful novels. In Jonestown, Guyana, 909 people die from cyanide

poisoning, committing what leader Jim Jones describes as 'revolutionary suicide'.

1979 – Following his success of *Dracula* on Broadway, Frank Langella stars in John Badham's *Dracula*, also starring Sir Lawrence Olivier. The Goth band Bauhaus record 'Bela Lugosi's Dead'. Klaus Kinski stars in Werner Herzog's remake of *Nosferatu.* Ayatollah Khomeini seizes power in Iran. A nuclear accident at Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania results in partial meltdown.

1980 – The Bram Stoker Society is founded in Dublin, Ireland. Serial killer Richard Chase – known as the Vampire of Sacramento – commits suicide in prison. Whitley Streiber publishes his vampire novel, *The Hunger.* Ronald Reagan defeats incumbent President Jimmy Carter in the US Presidential Election to become America's fortieth president. On December 8th, John Lennon is murdered outside the Dakota building by Mark David Chapman.

1981 – An assassination attempt is made on President Reagan only 69 days in office. Whitley Streiber's novel, *The Hunger*, is published. MTV (Music television) is launched in New York City. DeLorean produce their first motorcar, the DMC 12, in Belfast. Pope John Paul II is shot and seriously injured entering St. Peter's Square, Vatican City. The Centre for Disease Control logged the first known cases of HIV/AIDS.

1982 – The Falklands War beings when Argentina invades the Falklands Islands – while neither state officially declared war, Argentina claimed it was reclaiming its own islands but Britain deemed the invasion to be a hostile act against an overseas British territory. Roberto Calvi, aka 'God's Banker' is found hanging from Blackfriar's Bridge in London. Calvi's bank, the Banco Ambrosiano, had close ties with the Vatican and the investigation into his death, which was originally deemed a suicide, was later ruled as murder. It is suspected his murder was due to secret Vatican funding of the Polish workers Solidarity union under Lech Welęsa, which Calvi was about to reveal to protect himself from prosecution.

1983 – Film version of *The Hunger* (Dir. Tony Scott) is released, starring Susan Sarandon and David Bowie. Michael Jackson releases *Thriller* – The best selling album of the decade. President Reagan launches the 'Star Wars' program.

1984 – Famine breaks out in Ethiopia. 'Band Aid' releases a Christmas song to raise awareness and start a relief fund. The first MTV Video Music Awards are held in New York City. The Soviet Union boycott the Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles. Indian Prime Minister Indira Ghandi is assassinated by her security guards. Ronald Reagan wins his second term as president defeating democratic candidate Walter Mondale.

1985 – Anne Rice's vampire sequel *The Vampire Lestat* is published and reaches *The New York Times* bestseller List overnight. *Once Bitten*, starring Jim Carrey and *Fright Night* starring Chris Sarandon are released. Mikhail Gorbachev becomes leader of the Soviet Union. The Live Aid concerts, held simultaneously in both London and Philadelphia, raise over fifty million pounds for famine relief in Ethiopia.

1986 – *Necroscope* by Brian Lumley is published. On January 28th, Space Shuttle *Challenger* explodes 64 seconds into its flight, killing all seven crew members including schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe. The event was broadcast live on television. The Soviet Union launches the Mir space station. After 37 years, the United States Senate finally agrees on a treaty outlawing genocide.

1987 – *The Lost Boys* (Dir. Joel Schumacher) becomes a box office hit. *Near Dark* (Dir. Kathryn Bigelow) draws a smaller audience, but becomes a cult sensation. On October 19th, 'Black Monday', world stock markets declined rapidly, leading to a series of recessions. *The Simpsons* debuts on the Tracey Ullman show in the US.

1988 – *Vampire's Kiss*, a comedy horror film starring Nicolas Cage is released. George H.W. Bush wins the presidential race against democrat Michael Dukakis. Anne Rice's *Queen of the Damned* is published. The Soviet Union

begins its economic restructuring program 'Perestroika'. Pan Am flight 103 is blown up by Libyan terrorists over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 270 people.

1989 – *Fright Night 2* is released, the sequel to the 1985 film. The Berlin Wall falls after 36 years of segregation effectively ending the Cold War. Violent Student protests begin in Tiananmen Square in Beijing. World condemnation ensued after the lasting image of the 'Tank Man' blocking the path of the military tanks was published world-wide, following a banning of foreign media to restrict news of the uprising. The Corcoran Gallery of Art in Cincinnati removes photographer Robert Mapplethorpe's 'A Perfect Moment' exhibition on obscenity charges.

1990 – *Twin Peaks* airs on ABC television in April. On May 17th, homosexuality is removed from the World Health Organisation's list of diseases. George H. W. Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev sign a treaty to end the production of chemical weapons. Iraq invades Kuwait culminating in the Gulf War of 1991. Nelson Mandela is released from Robben Island prison after serving twenty-seven years for insurgency against apartheid.

1991 – U.S Invasion of Iraq after Saddam Hussein invades Kuwait. Slobodan Milosevic becomes president of Serbia. In March, four police officers are indicted for beating Rodney King during an arrest. Boris Yeltsin becomes president of Russia. Serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer is arrested and Aileen Wuornos confesses to murdering six men. Michael Romkey publishes his first vampire novel, *I, Vampire*. Freddie Mercury dies of a HIV/AIDS related illness. The formal dissolution of the U.S.S.R occurs on Dec. 31st.

1992 – Anne Rice's *Tale of the Body Thief* is published. Kim Newman's *Anno Dracula* is published and *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (Dir. Francis Ford Coppola) is released. The four police officers on trial for the assault on Rodney King are acquitted, sparking the six day Los Angeles riots, in which fifty three people were killed. Bill Clinton wins the presidential election to become the forty-second president of the United States. *The X Files* airs on the Fox network. The Irish artist Francis Bacon dies at the age of 82.

1993 – Guillermo del Toro's *Cronos* is released. Nelson Mandela is awarded the Nobel Peace prize. The Maastricht Treaty comes into effect, establishing the European Union. Toni Morrison wins the Nobel Prize for literature. Actor Vincent Price dies at the age of 83. The fifty-one day siege of the Branch Davidian ranch in Waco, Texas by the FBI results in the death of seventy-six people, including their leader David Koresh. Michael Jackson is embroiled in a lawsuit alleging he sexually molested 13 year old Jordan Chandler at his Neverland Ranch.

1994 – Neil Jordan directs *Interview With The Vampire*. The North American Free Trade Agreement takes effect on Jan. 1st. Lorena Bobbitt found 'not guilty by reason of insanity' for severing her husband's penis. Kurt Cobain (lead singer of Seattle-based grunge band Nirvana) is found dead at his home on April 8th. Former president Richard Nixon dies in New York City. The Rwandan genocide begins in Kigali. It is estimated that a million people are murdered within a hundred days of the genocide campaign. Tony Blair is elected leader of the Labour Party in the UK. Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman are murdered in June; O.J Simpson flees police resulting in a freeway chase. He is later tried and acquitted for their murders.

1995 – *Memnoch the Devil* by Anne Rice is published. Nick Leeson is arrested for his role in the collapse of Bearings Bank. On Oct. 3rd O.J Simpson is found not guilty for the murder of his wife Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman. Both Abel Ferrara's *The Addiction* and Michael Almereyda's *Nadja* are released. Timothy McVeigh bombs the Alfred P. Murrah Federal building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people.

1996 – Seven years after murdering their parents, Erik and Lyle Menendez are found guilty of first-degree murder. Dolly the sheep, the first successfully cloned mammal, is born in Scotland. Robert Rodriguez's *From Dusk Till Dawn* is released. JonBenét Ramsay, a child beauty pageant contestant, is discovered murdered in her parents' basement. The resulting court case raised the debate on the sexualization of children in beauty pageants, but no criminal charges were brought about for her murder due to inconclusive evidence.

1997 – President Bill Clinton is inaugurated after winning a second term. On May 2nd, Tony Blair is appointed Prime Minister of the UK by Queen Elizabeth II, after a landslide victory in the 1997 General Election. Mother Theresa of Calcutta dies and Princess Diana is killed in a car crash in Paris. To celebrate the centenary of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, many essay collections are published and conferences are held in celebration of the vampire. In Ireland, limited edition postage stamps are available commemorating both Stoker and *Dracula*. *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* airs on the WB network.

1998 – *Blade* (Dir. Stephen Nottingham), a film based on a vampire hunting superhero is released. It becomes a cult phenomenon. The novel *Nightwatch* is published in Russia. John Carpenter's *Vampires* is released. Google Inc. is founded by Larry Page and Sergey Brin, two PhD candidates from Stanford University. The House of Representatives Judiciary committee begin impeachment proceedings against President Bill Clinton for committing perjury when questioned about his relations with Monica Lewinsky.

1999 – On April 20th Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold shoot 13 people in Columbine High School in Colorado, ending the massacre with their suicides. The massacre causes tensions and backlashes against Goth communities in the U.S and musician Marilyn Manson. Stephen King was severely injured in a car accident in Maine. Vladimir Putin assumes the role of acting President following Yeltsin's resignation. Widespread panic and confusion is expressed over the Y2K bug, which later proves to have had little effect on technology. *Angel*, the spin off series to *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*, airs on the WB network.

2000 – George W. Bush wins a contentious election against Al Gore to become the forty-third President of the United States. Anne Rice publishes *Merrick*, merging her Vampire Chronicles and Mayfair Witches lineages into one narrative. *Dracula 2000* (Dir. Wes Craven) is released.

2001 – On September 11th, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the pentagon in Washington D.C. are televised and broadcast world-wide. Over three thousand people are killed. President Bush also signs the Patriot Act into law. Timothy McVeigh is executed for the Oklahoma City

bombings in 1995. Apple releases the iPod. Enron files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy as it is unable to pay its creditors following a failed buy-out by Dynegy. It is the then largest bankruptcy filing in US history.

2002 – *Blade II* (Dir. Guillermo del Toro) is released. Anne Rice publishes *Blackwood Farm*. Euro notes and coins are issued in the European Monetary Union (EMS). *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl is kidnapped in Pakistan. He is beheaded a week later, Feb. 1st, and the act is broadcast on the internet. United Airlines files for bankruptcy almost a year after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

2003 – The Human Genome Project is completed. Anne Rice's final 'Vampire Chronicle' novel is published entitled *Blood Canticle*. President Bush orders an invasion of Iraq on March 20th. The WHO issues a global alert on SARS which is contained within three months of the alert. In November, a new warrant is issued against Michael Jackson alleging sexual molestation. Concorde makes its last commercial flight. Saddam Hussein is captured in Tikrit on December 14th.

2004 – Steven Sommers directs *Van Helsing*, with Hugh Jackman in the title role. The horrific abuse of prisoners in Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq is revealed on *60 Minutes* in the US. On May 1st, the EU expands to include ten new member states from Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. Former US President Ronald Reagan dies at the age of 93. The 9/11 commission issues an initial report on its findings. Martha Stewart is sentenced to five months in federal prison for insider trading. President Bush defeats democrat John Kerry to secure his second term as president. On Dec. 26th the Indian Ocean Tsunami kills 225,000 people in eleven countries, recording a 9.3 (the second largest ever recorded) on the seismograph.

2005 – Stephanie Meyer's first juvenile fiction vampire novel is published, entitled *Twilight*. On August 25th, Hurricane Katrina makes landfall in the United States, devastating the city of New Orleans – it is estimated that over 800,000 people are permanently displaced. *Blade: Trinity* is released. Pope John Paul II dies in Rome; he is succeeded by Pope Benedict XVI. Michael

Jackson's trial begins in January in Santa Barbara – he is acquitted of all charges in June. W. Mark Felt, second in command of the CIA during Nixon's presidency, is confirmed to be 'Deep Throat', the infamous insider who leaked information to journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein of the *Washington Post* about the Watergate scandal of June 1972.

2006 – Stephanie Meyer's *New Moon* is published. It is the international year of Mozart, celebrating the 250th anniversary of the composer's birth. Slobodan Milosevic is found dead in his cell in The Hague. The British television show *Top of the Pops*, the longest running music show on television, airs its final episode on July 30th. Saddam Hussein is executed in Iraq – the execution is controversially recorded on a mobile phone and uploaded onto the internet within hours. The American activist and author, Betty Friedan, dies at the age of 85.

2007 – On April 16th 2007, the Virginia Tech Massacre culminates in the death of 32 people. The film *30 Days of Night*, based on the 2002 graphic novel, is released. Stephanie Meyer's *Eclipse* is published. O.J Simpson arrested for burglary and aggravated assault in Las Vegas. The Doomsday Clock is advanced from seven to five minutes to midnight. Madeleine McCann goes missing in Portugal; the story receives extensive media coverage. In July, the Live Earth concerts are held in nine major cities around the world. The Writer's Guild of America goes on strike. The strike is resolved in February 2008.

2008 – Stephanie Meyer's fourth instalment of the 'Twilight' series, *Breaking Dawn*, is published, and becomes a best-selling phenomenon. On Oct. 3rd O.J Simpson is found guilty for burglary and aggravated assault, exactly thirteen years to the day he was acquitted of the murder of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman. Presidential candidates Barack Obama (Democrat) and John McCain (Republican) contest the presidential election, to be held Nov. 4th. Kosovo declares independence from Serbia. Fidel Castro announces his resignation as president of Cuba. His powers are passed to his brother Raúl who is unanimously elected by the Cuban National Assembly. In November

2008, the forty-fourth President of the United States and the forty-seventh Vice president are elected in a historic election.

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