



The Untold Story of the Monster:

A Psychoanalytic Analysis of the Monster through the Anamorphic Lens

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Declaration of Originality Declaration:

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and does not contain the work of any other individual. All sources that have been consulted have been identified and acknowledged in the appropriate way.

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Dedication

I like to think that my desire to ask questions and study modes of representation within the literary sphere comes from my favourite pastime that I share with my mother. Our endless moments of watching *Midsummer Murders* and *Sherlock Holmes* has galvanised the detective in me, one that will always have a passion to investigate and one that forever seeks to unravel the hidden story.

Dissemination of Thesis:

Segments of this thesis have been disseminated in the following conference presentations and publications:

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2017: 'Rehabilitating One's Mentality, Morality and Movie':
Review of Gore Verbinkski's *A Cure for Wellness*
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2017: 'A Visit from Our Inner Demons': Review of J. A. Bayona's
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Guest Lectures:

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Abbreviations and Textual Preferences:

Please note the following abbreviations and referrals that will be used throughout this thesis:

Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus will be shortened to its more commonly known title: *Frankenstein*.

From Dusk Till Dawn will be abbreviated to *FDTD*.

Abstract:

Research identifies the perception of evil as a mechanism to segregate people from inhuman and monstrous transgressors. Luke Russell defines that ‘the evil of the agent is supposed to provide a complete explanation of the agent’s harmful actions’ (Russell, 2010, p. 46). Instead, this thesis will argue that Russell’s psychological conception of evil is somewhat in error, as the category of ‘evil’ is no longer sufficient to describe the motivation of a ‘monster’. It is through the deconstruction of traditional monstrous identities, that new interpretations of what we consider evil or ‘Other’ can be remodelled. This study will contend that the evolution of imaginary monsters represents projections created from the repressed urges in the human mind, and further, that society is informed by these fictional personalities of what is socially incorrect or what is ‘acceptably human’. An intertextual focus on both books and films will examine what seems to be unhuman monsters beyond ourselves, and will look to demonstrate that these beings originate within the Self, and are always intrinsically correlated to the Self. The value of the anamorphic lens, or the skewed perspective, will present the possibility of dual meaning that offers new viewpoints of the monster as Other. Anamorphosis, as outlined in Jacques Lacan’s reading of Holbein’s ‘The Ambassadors’ (Lacan 1977), involves looking at an image from a different perspective in order to unearth a different range of significations. Slavoj Žižek terms it ‘looking awry’ (Žižek 1991), and this project will ‘look awry’ at the epistemology and ethical position of the monstrous subject. By close readings from an anamorphic perspective, the monster can be seen as an allegory for how society treats those that are different from the patterns of normalcy. In societal and cultural terms, the monster is an ‘Other’ of whom we are afraid; and by demonising this Other, whether racial, social or class-based, the need for empathy and understanding is undercut and replaced by a desire to chasten and ostracise.

Introduction:

Traditionally, the monster is perceived as super or subhuman, as Other, as outside the Self and as an object of apprehension. The fictive monster functions as a reminder of social groups that exist on the margins of society, groups that, to many observers, are viewed as the ‘graphic smear’ or the ‘Other’, a distortion that interrupts the normative perception of the homogenous space. Its position as the literary antihero instructs its audience on how societal and cultural norms force a deprecated identity, whether it be the ethnic, gendered or foreign Other, to be seen only as an ambiguous disturbance to the *status quo*. A universal preoccupation with labelling the Other as monster has engendered a plethora of inconsistent meanings for the term. The monster can be seen to act as a metaphor for those who transcend the limits of acceptable behaviour, and subsequently become identified as ‘abnormal’, victimised by inflexible expectations and intolerant stereotypes. It is only when we look at the monster’s narrative through postmodern eyes that we can outline how it challenges cultural signifiers, and underscores the social limitations of othering. The anamorphic perspective allows for the conventional view of evil to be deconstructed, examining the monster instead as a projection onto which we banish the forbidden aspects of our unconscious. Slavoj Žižek terms ‘anamorphosis’ as a ‘looking awry’ (Žižek 1991), and this project will ‘look awry’ at the traditional delineation of the monster. Its foundational insights can be employed to expose alternative representations of the ‘Other’, becoming a ‘transversal’ power that demands social change. It can be seen as rejecting a linear perspective, in other words the *status quo*, only emerging when there is a radical shift of viewpoint. Evidence shows that anamorphosis has the ability to cripple ‘the very concept of the locatable reality upon which we conventionally rely in our mappings of the world’ (Boyle, 2010, p. 3). Hence, its contribution to monster theory, a developing genre within

Gothic Studies, disrupts society's reliance on monstrosity aspects of humanity that we cannot accept, or even admit to being elemental to our very being.

The objective of using postmodern perspectives such as anamorphic theory within this thesis is to assist in a revision of older theories, and to revisit preconditioned meanings through an abstract lens. Being a movement that developed in the late 20th Century, postmodernism is generally construed as being a theory concerned with scepticism due to its rejection of grand narratives and hegemonic ideologies. Francois Lyotard characterises the postmodern as entailing a profound loss of faith in master narratives. Postmodernism accentuates the socially conditioned nature of knowledge and habituated value systems. Its theoretical evaluation shows monstrosity to be a condition of habit, something that is naturalised by societal institutions. Its function within this research offers a deconstruction of the monster archetype, and of the many prejudiced perspectives attached to this marginalised identity. The postmodern monster 'is no longer the hideous other storming the gates of the human citadel, he has already disrupted the careful geography of human self and demon other and he makes the peripheral and the marginal part of the centre' (Halberstam, 1995, p. 162). Thus, a postmodern approach to monster studies interrogates and problematizes the possibility of reliable knowledge concerning what is monstrous and what is evil. The later chapters of this thesis look at how modernity has eradicated the comfort of monsters, where evil no longer works as a system. Monsters within the postmodern world come more from within the self rather than from the outside. According to Halberstam, 'it is the human, the facade of the normal, that tends to become the place of terror within the postmodern Gothic' (Halberstam, 1995, p. 162). Postmodern Gothic or horror rejects clear boundaries and the comfort of a stable social order.

Due to its boundary blurring, the monster is allowed to be seen in a new way. Isabel Cristina Pinedo argues that 'the postmodern paradigm blurs the boundary between good and

evil, normal and abnormal, and the outcome of the struggle is at best ambiguous. Danger to the social order is endemic' (Pinedo, 2004, p. 94). The monster becomes harder to locate, and the banality of normal is confused by redefining definitions of evil. The monster now has many faces where all forms of identity play a part. Monstrosity therefore 'no longer coagulates into a specific body, a single face, a unique feature; it is replaced with a banality that fractures resistance because the enemy becomes harder to locate and looks more like the hero' (Halberstam, 1995, p. 163). Thus, gothic villains and antiheroes can no longer be detached from the Self. Violence is shown through the postmodern lens to be a constituent of everyday life, something to which human nature has become accustomed. In movies such as *FDTT*, the postmodern perspective assists in explaining how justified brutality disrupts our assumptions about normality, where characters such as Seth Gecko almost make violent behaviour seem normal in the face of even darker monsters. Monster studies therefore 'violates our assumption that we live in a predictable, routinized world' (Pinedo, 2004, p. 21). The postmodern is intent on imaging the transgressive body, one that breaks free of cultural limits. No longer can society be submerged within stereotypical categories, where literary figures such as Regan McNeil combine contradictory elements to form an indefinite identity.

To undertake research in the very embryonic sub-field of the Gothic, which can be termed 'monster theory', one must evaluate the epistemological role of the monster in order to allow for an analysis of aspects of culture and politics that are occluded by language; by repression; and by Jacques Lacan's notion of the symbolic order. The etymology of the word 'monster' comes from Latin verb *monere*, which means to 'demonstrate' or to 'warn'. Where this hints at the monster being an outside evil force, the foundation of each chapter of this thesis will inspect the monster as an admonition of the potential for evil that exists within, thereby rendering the traditional Manichean binary opposition set up between good and evil as unstable. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen claims that even though the monster is 'an incorporation of

the Outside, the Beyond-of all those loci that are rhetorically placed as distant and distinct but originate Within' (Cohen, 1996, p. 7). Cohen claims that everything that exists as Other maintains a proximity to the Self, and that our disdain towards what is different is consequent of something we hate within ourselves. The fearful aspects of the monster can be located in its association with the forbidden aspects of humanity, so that it acts as a constant reminder of the inner Hyde that lurks within us all, always threatening to reveal itself. Existing research delineates the epistemological position of monster as 'unable to comply with the norms through which they enter the space of discourse' (Shildrick, 2002, p. 2). The security of categories is demolished by the Other, and hence the practice of monstering begins. Therefore, the idiom 'monstrous' can be seen as a linguistic attempt to control the uncontainable and the unknowable within and outside the self, thus the relationship between monster and the Other is firmly established. However, with the monster representing 'a mixed category' (Cohen, 1996, p. 7), its ability to resist definitive distinctions enables it to refute habituated classifications such as evil or abject.

The monster as a cultural model is abused by political or religious spheres, operating as a derogatory term to bridle and suppress the 'Other'. Throughout his teachings, Jacques Lacan regularly utilises the terms "other" (with a lower-case o) and "Other" (with a capital O) to outline the varying levels from which the subject is distanced from the Ideal I, and the expectations of the Superego. The lower-case other designates the Imaginary ego and its accompanying alter egos. The little other is the other who is not really other, but rather is a reflection and projection of the Ego; it is an aspect of the Self that is usually suppressed. Additionally, when relating to others as alter egos, one does so on the basis of what one "imagines" about them, and on how society expects them to behave. The monster can be set up as an 'alter-ego' of humanity, a creation made from preconditioned meanings concerning abject and repressed thought. These preconceptions can be exaggerated fictions to tame and

control the unknown and the unfamiliar. Society has acclimatised itself to the concept that everything that is different from the standard can only be abject and in some way deviant from the Self. However, the capital-O Other refers to two additional types of otherness, corresponding to the registers of the Symbolic and the Real. It designates radical alterity that cannot be identified. Lacan refers to the disturbing mystery of the Other as an unknowable “x,” an unfathomable subject of alterity that maintains a proximity to the Self. Each monster discussed in this thesis will embody this Lacanian Other, demonstrating that notions of monstrosity can exist within us, rather than being a concept solely associated to the Other.

The attribution of the word ‘monster’ is essentially a form of abuse, which implies ‘a denial of likeness between self and other such that a barrier is put in place between the two’ (Shildrick, 2002, p. 5). The act of categorising the unknown, and monstrosity of the abnormal, can be problematic, as it is seen to solidify the borders that separate human beings. Where the value of the monster is built upon the externalisation of society’s dark tendencies, each chapter will outline how the peripheral force of the monstrous Other can in fact be located within the inner Self. Margarit Shildrick discusses this relationship between Self and Other in her book, *Embodying the Monster: Encounters with the Vulnerable Self*, claiming that this binary opposition of difference is more of a fluid construct in which opposite sides can fuse with one another. She uses the monster to interpret this close encounter with the Other, where the monstrous ‘signal[s] a transformation of the relation between self and other such that the encounter with the strange is not a discrete event but the constant conditioning of becoming’ (Shildrick, 2002, p. 1). The use of the word ‘becoming’ here hints at how our confrontation with the monster, both literary and real, becomes a learning experience through which we discover our true selves, and one that stimulates us to become someone uninhibited by the repressed. By opening the mind to suppressed thoughts, one can be released from the shackles of convention.

The desire to classify and categorise is a basic human impulse that dominates the world today, preventing a transformation in understanding of difference, and crippling the act of 'becoming'. Even the word 'define' is derived from the Latin word '*definire*', which means 'set bounds to' (Williams, 1995, p. 25). As the monster can be a changeable construct that rebels against definition, and hides at the margins of the representational field, the research conducted in this thesis will celebrate the indefinite nature of the monster to disturb the process of racial, social, and cultural stereotyping. Jacques Derrida argues that the use of the term 'monster' in literature is an attempt at categorising the abnormal, and forcing the unrepresentable to be represented. He claims that:

as soon as one perceives a monster as a monster, one begins to domesticate it . . . to compare it to the norms, to analyse it, consequently to master whatever could be terrifying in this figure of the monster. (Derrida, 1992, p. 386)

The monster has many faces, each one ill defined, but all connecting to a different fear or cultural issue. As soon as one is faced with something unknown, without fully understanding it, the label monster is attributed to the subject as a means of obtaining some form of control over it. For Derrida, 'a monster is a species for which we do not have a name', a name given to something that lacks delineation (Derrida, 1992, p. 386). Owing to the failure to describe the Other, the subject is then barbarised to the point that they, in turn, see themselves as only monstrous. A theoretical interrogation of the act of monsterring not only demonstrates an attempt at categorising the indefinable, but also shows how it is used as a tool for redirecting blame and locating evil as beyond the Self.

It is within the domains of both Gothic and horror that Shildrick's 'conditioning of becoming' takes place. These genres function as arenas for tackling what is denied by society and other literary modes. Andrew Smith outlines how the Gothic is an illustration of an

internal experience that voices apprehensions more so to do with ‘the inner emotional world of the subject rather than about the specific objective conditions which give rise to fear’ (Smith, 2013, p. 14). Monsters, both real and imagined, are bound up with our feelings of insecurity and our responses to human disquietude. These social trepidations transfix our understanding of what is monstrous and what is evil, and the image of monster is inevitably influenced by political, sexual and racial conflicts. As inner anxieties are a complex area to address, it is imperative to identify a language that can verbalise these emotions. Mathias Clasen explains this concept further in *The Palgrave Introduction to Horror*, where he concurs that horror targets human emotion and human reaction. He takes an evolutionary approach to this genre in order to explain the reasoning behind these emotions, and locates the cultural anxieties of the horror mode in the realm of biological evolution. Clasen comments on the purpose of horror stating that it ‘is meant to frighten and disturb its audience; it promises to elicit negative emotions- fear, terror, dread, anxiety, disgust – in its readership. Thus, horror is often marketed on its ability to disturb readers’ (Clasen, 2018, p. 356). This ‘promise of negative emotion’ is sustained by the presence of the abject and otherness, elements of the uncanny that speak to a part of our humanity but also show it to us in a distorted way. The monsters of the literary world can therefore serve as a dialect that articulates the truer parts of ourselves and ‘reflect back to us our own faces, made disgusting or, perhaps, revealed to always have been so’ (Mittman & Dendle, 2013, p. 1). Monster Theory then becomes an important theoretical framework to resolve humanity’s difficulty in dealing with their forbidden urges, while also fracturing the illusion of the homogenous space.

The various chapters of this thesis explore the area of Monster Theory from many angles, showing the monster as tied to feminist, queer and race studies. Monster Studies analyses monsters and monstrosity from an array of methodological and theoretical

perspectives across the humanities and social sciences. Although having many parallels with the Gothic, it focuses its attention on the monstrous figure who is identified as deviant or as lacking in some quality. Monster Studies and Monster Literature call attention to socio-political discourse that allows the reader to explore the contextual dominions of the text even further. The production of the monster within literary discourse allows for debates concerning the unspoken or the repressed to be centralised. The monster, as a concept, originated as an unproblematic idea where the monster was always equated with evil. In horror 'the monster arises from confronting the alienated, from facing the other' (Baumgartner & Davis, 2008, p. 1). The automatic response to the monster was always one of fear and disgust; however as their identity has developed over time, our relationship with them has become more confused. As a representational indeterminacy, the monster disallows symbolism to confine it and thereby can point towards the possibility of alternative identifications of human nature. Nicholas Mosley introduces the concept of the Hopeful Monster where he believes monsters 'are things born perhaps slightly before their time; when it's not known if the environment is quite ready for them!' (Mosley, 1993, p. 71). When the archaeology of the monster is traced, beginning with one of literature's primary monsters, Frankenstein's Creature, the monster archetype has evolved into something more difficult to recognise and even accept as merely evil.

The reason for choosing the first three textual chapters from the Romantic Era was to build upon a foundation of traditional monsters, focusing on gothic villains in which society have manipulated their otherness to solidify an image of the nature of monstrosity. The monster is presented as abject so as to 'preserve the conventional order' where 'we consciously or unconsciously deny the presence of the possible disruption of that order, casting the monster into the liminal space created by our own fears or denials' (Baumgartner & Davis, 2008, p. 1). From Chapter Four onwards, my research progresses into the realm of

contemporary horror, whereby the monstrous Other disrupts the inside and outside, convoluting the binary between what is normal and abnormal. Within these texts, we observe the monster become more of an ambiguous concept, that reveals ‘social disunity through bodily multiplicity’ (Punday, 2002, p. 803). There is not only risk at the social order being unravelled but there is also a threat to the individual itself, where what lurks in the deep waters of the unconscious is brought to the surface.

Indeed, I would argue that in the monster’s deconstruction of categories, the notion of the monster is made more terrifying because it ‘awaits at the borders, kneels at the threshold; its true terror is its ability to exceed the frame, to spill out of the confines’ (Baumgartner & Davis, 2008, p. 1). The attempt at representing the monster becomes a difficult task because one is seemingly classifying that which breaks the confines of ordinary representation. However, because the monster protests against classification, it should not be confined to the linear gaze. Therefore, the diverse array of monsters covered by this thesis illustrates how the monster has many dimensions, and that these can be a monstrosity of physicality, morality or psychosis. Monster theory shows how the monster is used as a timeless literary trope that brings ‘together many different elements of the culture in the monster's body for the sake of revealing problems within the society itself’ (Punday, 2002, p. 806). The monster archetype can then be celebrated as that which challenges our everyday models of the world, showing us the very limitations of how we order and structure society.

My final four texts adhere to Punday’s observations on the restricted perspective of the monster and help ‘investigate the paradoxes and limitations of narrative’ (Punday, 2002, p. 810). According Adam Golub, ‘a central tenet of monster theory is that monsters can reveal the construction of normal in a given society’ (Golub, 2018, p. 265). The literary monster disrupts classification systems, as they exist outside of the borders and binaries by which we organise our lives. The significance of Monster Studies becomes more about the

deconstruction of accepted knowledge regarding the monster and about constructing a new way of seeing it. Since the monster moves beyond reason, a skewed viewpoint is needed to reshape its abject body. Due to the monster remaining beyond the spectator's reach, the failure to comprehend the monster leads to misrecognition and misrepresentation. Many of the monsters discussed in the following chapters demonstrate how society monsters a subject when that subject is not adequately equipped to negotiate and engage with something that deviates from the norm. Monster theory then becomes focused on a process of de-monstering, exemplifying how the word 'monster' is exploited for reasons of discrimination and prejudice. It underscores how social institutions have cultivated strategies to secure the monster firmly as evil, as wholly Other.

A mechanism used by horror is to fashion characters that are harder to identify, situating them firmly in the uncanny, and creating monsters that one would least suspect. Freud's understanding of the uncanny is most prominent in the proposition of the evil child, where what is monstrous is something too familiar; something that disturbs our preconceived ideas of the monster as evil and eternally Other, is the presentation as the monster as child. These 'bad seeds interrogate our prevailing ideas about innocence, wonder and child development' (Golub, 2018, p. 265). The pubescent monster, or the adult monster as child, will be observed in order to break down the stereotypical mould of the traditional monster and show how the act of monstering can be quite conflicted. Various texts in this thesis such as *Frankenstein*, *The Shining*, *Halloween* and, more particularly, *The Exorcist*, address images of monstrosity as being connected to maturity and childhood. According to Margarita Georgeiva the child within horror is often depicted 'at the centre of family conflicts and at the source of parental discord' (Georgeiva, 2013, p. 14). This idea is exaggerated even further within John Carpenter's *Halloween*, whereby Michael Myers is not only the cause of family discord, but actually becomes the reason for his own family's demise.

In the opening scene in which Michael is introduced to us, the series of point-of-view camera angles build suspense in terms of a killer stalking the family home, seeking out its prey. It is only when the camera turns the gaze on Michael, that the audience is unsettled by the innocent face of a child on their screen instead of that of a demented adult killer. The innocence of Michael is emphasised by his child-like costume that is out of place alongside the bloody butcher knife in his hand. Horror essentially uses tropes like this where it 'seeks to effect an imaginative recasting of the spectator's beliefs and values in a direction that they do not like' (Kord, 2016, p. 11). It articulates a profound ambivalence towards children and the whole misunderstood area of pubescence. Teenagers are often perceived as deviant and unruly, their monstrous nature stemming from their perceived obsession with sex and drugs. This cultural anxiety of the growing disorderly younger generation is also explored by the film *Halloween*. The nuclear family is depicted by Carpenter as breeding monstrosity, whereby the juvenile generation are seen as bringing forth an era of dissent. According to Shelley Stamp Lindsey, the family was no longer the target of horror or 'a place of respite which offers solace from otherworldly terrors' but instead 'the family is itself the very source of horror' (Lindsey, 1991, p. 33). As a consequence of the repression demanded by societal demands, the oppressed family is transformed into an unfamiliar and monstrous presence.

Another text that challenges the dynamics of the family unit with the installation of the monstrous child is William Peter Blatty's *The Exorcist*. Not only does Regan McNeil offer ambiguity because of her age, but she also targets many anxieties surrounding gender performativity. In similar ways to Stephen King's *Carrie*, *The Exorcist's* endeavour to map the supernatural onto the female adolescent body 'presents a masculine fantasy in which the feminine is constituted as horrific' (Lindsey, 1991, p. 34). Conflating questions about femininity and the monster, *The Exorcist* debates the ramifications of pubescence for the teenage girl where the changing status of her body is paralleled with her transformation into a

demonic being. Her altering and even decomposing adolescent body ‘becomes the site upon which monster and victim converge’ (Lindsey, 1991, p. 35). Even though the innocence of Regan is overwhelmed by images of the grotesque, her childlike appearance nevertheless makes it difficult for the audience to fully monster her being. The excessive mutilation of the child’s body, whether it be the self-mutilated body of Regan, the obscuring mask of Michael Myers, or the stitched together corpse of the child-like Creature, acts as a mechanism within both the Gothic and horror genre that deconstructs our ideas of innocence as well as villainy.

The connection between youthful innocence and monstrosity underscores the darkening influences of society, and how the child is shaped into the dissident monster by means of these societal and cultural influences. Therefore, the child monster cannot be confined to the role of antihero, as it is those that surround the impressionable child that have more of a part to play in the downfall of the nuclear family. Possessed child narratives, such as *The Exorcist*, are ‘parables about how failed parenting allows children to become vulnerable to dangerous influences,’ and Blatty is suggesting with this narrative that failed family structures allow demons to sidle into the home (Renner, 2016, p. 95) The child’s body, at the point of adolescence, undergoes a moment of reshaping and transformation, thus becoming the perfect platform to articulate the concerns of transgression. Where Lindsey determines that monsters typically ‘disrupt and challenge the presumed homogeneity of human identity by confusing or transgressing boundaries’, the child as monster consumes the homogenous perception that child is innocent and spits out a warped understanding of what evil is. (Lindsey, 1991, p. 36). Where Cohen asserts that the monster represents a ‘category crisis’, the monster as child explores the crisis of many categories.

Even though the Gothic has generally been a field of study that has been given only cursory attention by literary experts, Robert D. Hume describes the significance of its narrative as concerning itself with ‘ultimate questions and lack of faith in the adequacy of

reason or religious faith to make comprehensible the paradoxes of human existence' (Hume, 1969, p. 289). The complex disposition of the Gothic villain, as outlined by each chapter, adheres to the ambiguities of human nature and the failure to comprehend society's enigmas. If one were to follow Jacques Derrida's famous dictum '*Il n'y a pas de hors-texte*' ('there is nothing outside the text'), one would lose all meaning that exists beneath the surface (Derrida, 1976, p. 158). This would mean that all importance is confined to textuality alone and that knowledge can only be drawn from language. This thesis chooses to challenge this theory in which observations on anamorphosis will disclose that meaning can be covert and one must look beyond what is palpable to extort the truth. The monster is considered an impossible construct which a text alone cannot succeed in representing. Eugene O'Brien describes the monster existing 'as aporia, crouching in the shadows between the radically other and wholly same' (O'Brien, 2009, p. 144). It is through use of the anamorphic perspective, therefore, that the distorted can be seen more clearly and the monster can move out of 'the shadows'.

Where Derrida's deconstructive theory insists on the borderless nature of a text, the anamorphic perspective reveals how meaning not only exists within what is represented, but also exists within what is not represented. By looking at the monster through the skewed lens of anamorphosis, one can deconstruct the radical notions of the repressed and visualise monstrosity as having a familiar face. Michel de Montaigne reminds readers of their own inner demons when he admits: 'I have not seen a greater monster or miracle in the world than myself' (Montaigne, 1850, p. 503). He further acknowledges that if one were to truthfully know oneself, the inner discovery of the Self would prove to be quite terrifying: 'the better I know myself, the more does my own deformity astonish me' (Montaigne, 1850, p. 503), hence our tendency to dehumanise the Other is so that we can shield ourselves from recognising our own deformities. Based upon this observation, not only did the Gothic

provide an understanding of the inner mechanisms of the mind, but it also allowed for a reimagining of how society viewed 'evil'.

Evil can never be ultimately understood, yet it could be argued to be one of the most powerful words in language. It is a 'strange, versatile and dangerous word' (Morrow, 2009, p. 3). The question is not whether it exists, but rather how and why it exists. Generally, an action is considered to be malevolent when it transgresses the imposing societal codes of the Superego. The dual nature of evil remains an ambivalent concept, where Robert D. Hume determines how the Gothic 'prepares the way and shares the romantic "confusion" of good and evil' (Hume, 1969, p. 89). Therefore, for new understandings of both the monster and villain to take form, the lines of difference must be erased, and the demarcations that connect good and evil must be drawn. In recent culture, horror can often depict a monster as heroic, and through this refiguration, the rigid structure of the Manichean relationship between good and evil collapses. What is most important about the concept of evil is, as Lance Morrow describes, how 'evil had the attraction and frisson of the forbidden' (Morrow, 2009, p. 9)

Similar to how fundamental perspective is to anamorphosis, the survival of prejudiced observations concerning monstrosity is contingent on perspective. With human ignorance and inexperience being a catalyst for the deprecation of cultural difference, Stephen T. Asma confirms that 'an action or a person or a thing is monstrous when it can't be processed by rationality, and when we cannot relate to the emotional range involved' (Asma, 2011, p. 10). Thus, areas that cannot enter the cognitive scope of the human mind such as insanity, criminality and religious deviance are imprinted with the brand of the monstrous. From this, the monster lives as a cultural concept employed in the domains of politics, religion and race that acts as a derogatory appellation to subjugate the 'Other'. This observation questions the very foundation on which the monster is manufactured, and the cultural context in which the monster is born. Stephen T. Asma introduces the concept of the 'accidental monster' (Asma,

2011, p. 13), as his research highlights that not all monsters are intuitively evil, but external influences can often turn them toward malevolence. Frankenstein's Creature, which will be discussed in Chapter Two, is a prime example of someone that is conditioned to believe he is monstrous by the dogmatic reactions to his abjectness. It is not the fault of this scientific monster that he is clothed in the robes of villainy; rather it is the failure of Victor Frankenstein and his society to allow an othered identity to enter into the norm. Thus, through intolerant societal attitudes and perspectives the outsider or minoritised group is barred from entering the realm of cultural ideals.

Cultural context and space have a significant relationship with monstrosity, as space plays a role in the construction and exclusion of said monster. This thesis delves into many varying monsters as well as many different spaces from where they are born. The narratives represent a diverse range of spaces – romantic landscape, urban, hotels, asylums and national borders – and contributes to the construction of perspective towards the gothic villain. Michel Foucault underlines the significance of space, and outlines that 'it is necessary to notice that the space which today appears to form the horizon of our concerns, our theory, our systems, is not an innovation; space itself has a history in Western experience, and it is not possible to disregard the fatal intersection of time with space' (Foucault, 1967, p. 1). To Foucault, space can be both positive and negative influence for the subject, as it can make individuals feel at home, but at the same time cause others to feel displaced. Within Gothic literature, the monstrous and the accepted norm exist within one environment, vying for mastery over the space in question. Foucault determines that 'we do not live inside a void that could be coloured with diverse shades of light, we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another' (Foucault, 1967, p. 3). Society is therefore constructed upon the demands of space where diversity is extinguished in favour of homogeneity. The abject are cast out in order to create a form of utopia, a society without fear or dissidence.

Both Gothic and horror shatter the reliance on the sacred space, transforming comfortable surroundings into places of despair.

Horror and Gothic spaces are similar to what Foucault refers to as ‘crisis heterotopias’, areas that are ‘forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis’ (Foucault, 1967, p. 4). The significance of space is made most prominent in Stephen King’s *The Shining*. Here, we witness both dwelling and person become one where Jack uses the hotel to unleash his unconscious. Gaston Bachelard makes reference to the connection between space and memory in the *Poetics of Space*, where he outlines that ‘thanks to the house, a great many of our memories are housed, and if the house is a bit elaborate . . . our memories have refuge that are all the more clearly delineated’ (Bachelard, 1958, p. 8). The Overlook Hotel, therefore, becomes a hub of repressed memory and thought for Jack, where the rooms of the hotel allow him to engage with his growing anxieties. The correlation between the space of the hotel and Jack’s psyche demonstrates the implications context has over the individual, and how it not only shapes that individual, but also controls our perspective of that person. The many monsters of this thesis are all set up to be antiheroes because they do not conform to the homogenous space and instead use their irregularities to expose the limitations of such a space.

Abnormalities or deviations of the homogenous space are often pigeonholed as monstrous because of preconditioned meanings that falsely equate irregular physicality with monstrosity. This critical examination of unconventional identities prompts associations of the monstrous or othered subject that we find terrifying. We tend to position our fear of the monster in a similar place to our fear of one that we view as crippled, ‘they seem an intrusion in our orderly and healthy society’ (Mittman & Dendle, 2013, p. xxxvi). Due to how the monster destabilises the regulatory ideal, it is confined to the realms of evil and villainy.

Even though traditional monsters are defined by both their physical and mental abnormalities, this research will demonstrate how contemporary monsters are ‘seen as the products of social forces and can be victims, sympathetic, and even heroic and noble’ (Mittman & Dendle, 2013, p. xxxvi). By looking at Robert Rodriguez’s *From Dusk Till Dawn [FDTD]*, in Chapter Seven, the customary practices of monstering are proven to be redundant in an evolving world of tortuous identities. The villain archetype is thus reconceptualised within a postmodern framework and narratives such as *FDTD* makes use of hybrid monsters, embodying both good and evil, so as to decode societal acts of violence and to validate the unruly.

Even though monsters are generally seen to represent the most extreme personified point of unfamiliarity, Sigmund Freud considered that both the *Heimlich* and the *Unheimlich* – the familiar and the unfamiliar – are at work in the formulation of the monster. Even though these two binaries are meant to be distinguished opposites of another, these terms are often prone to deconstructing each other. Thus, what becomes even more unsettling is the breaking down of the boundary between familiar and unfamiliar (Freud, 1995, p. 220). The *Unheimlich* (uncanny), which attaches itself to the literary villain, involves feelings of uncertainty, a flickering sense of something unnatural and mystical. A Freudian reading of the monster situates it, not as an unknown transcendent force, but alternately, as a projection of repressed immanence. Notions of uncanniness in the Gothic will be reviewed from my rereading of Freud’s essay ‘The Uncanny’, in which he claims the ‘uncanny proceeds from something familiar that has been repressed’ (Freud, 1919, p. 247). This psychoanalytic approach, in conjunction with anamorphic theory, will argue that monster theory no longer depicts a supernatural entity, but can now facilitate an understanding of socio-cultural themes. Freud was the first to describe an uncanny feeling as something that was not merely strange, but also as something that was unusually intimate too. Based on this psychoanalytic

framework, the monster will always maintain a close proximity to the Self, and continue to emulate the mannerisms of human nature.

Margarit Shildrick argues that one cannot locate the monster as wholly Other, and proposes that it is ‘a figure that calls to us, that invites recognition’ (Shildrick, 2002, p. 5). The *Unheimlich*'s commingling of both the familiar and the unfamiliar parallels the idea that the monster can be both Self and Other concurrently. Therefore, the uncanny, as part the theoretical constellation of this thesis, will investigate how monsters are so frightening, because, in them, we see repressed, denied and occluded aspects of ourselves. As Andrew Smith outlines in his introduction to *Gothic Radicalism: Literature, Philosophy and Psychoanalysis in the Nineteenth Century*, the Gothic tradition from the 18th Century onwards focused more on the psychological where ‘in this internalisation outward modes of perception were replaced by a new emphasis on introspection . . . and its culmination in Freud’s account of the unconscious’ (Smith, 2000, p. 1). To explain the complex behaviour of human beings and the process of repression, Freud refers to the three parts of the human psyche – the id, ego and superego. With the id constituting the lustful, aggressive part of our personality, the unconscious, it becomes the focus of behavioural suppression in terms of the signifiers of monstrosity. The superego facilitates the exclusion of othered identities in how it crystallises the societal values that marginalise traits of abnormalcy. To avoid the label of monster, the human subject maintains the structure of the ego, the personality that is considered acceptable to present to the world. It is the combination of the ego and the superego that facilitates the suppression of the id, allowing for the projection of the repressed unconscious onto substitute identities. Freud comments on how the id fundamentally represses elements of the ego, inhibiting a component of ourselves:

The ego represents what may be called reason and common sense, in contrast to the id, which contains the passions . . . in its relation to the id it is like a man on

horseback, who has to hold in check the superior strength of the horse; with this difference, that the rider tries to do so with his own strength, while the ego uses borrowed forces. (Freud, 1923, p. 25)

The ego restricts the id, as Freud explains by holding in check the superior strength of the 'id', through the external norms which dominate our way of life. The fictive monster in literature disrupts the oppositional binary of the ego and the id in how it resurfaces the repressed, and shatters the pretence of human perfection. The monster as a concept is no longer a supernatural force external to our reality, but can now exist within the realms of humanity, more specifically in the human consciousness. We become more unsettled by a monster that seems more familiar to us, and in which we can identify segments of ourselves.

These commentaries on the '*Unheimlich*', will argue that monster theory no longer depicts a mere supernatural entity, but can now facilitate an understanding of socio-cultural themes. An inspection of notions of uncanniness will provide a critical understanding of the world around us, and will contribute to an anamorphic perspective of a society which we think we comprehend. Slavoj Žižek speaks of how the uncanny is used to change something so familiar to us and consequently distort our discernment of reality. In his observations of how a painting can be made unfamiliar to us by a change in perspective, he claims 'the alteration of a small detail in a well-known picture that all of a sudden renders the whole picture strange and uncanny' (Žižek, 1991, p. 53). The uncanny can go as far as questioning a person's own sense of self, often occurring at moments of mental turmoil or during moments that interrogate the *status quo*. It disturbs the semiotic components upon which we rely to maintain order in our societal structure. Nicholas Royle describes the experience of destabilising habituated conventions as 'a crisis of the proper' or 'a critical disturbance of what is proper' (Royle, 2003, p. 1). The uncanny often contributes to the process of

defamiliarisation, or ‘making strange’, which inevitably generates the appearance of ‘Otherness’. As soon as the spectator can no longer turn to the usual codes of representation to create meaning, a feeling of isolation and confusion occurs. This is described by Bertolt Brecht as the ‘alienation-effect’ (*Verfremdungseffek*), that is an action that succeeds ‘in turning the object . . . from something ordinary, familiar, immediately accessible, into something peculiar, striking and unexpected’ (Brecht & Willett, 1964, p. 143). Like monsters or the cultural ‘Other’, we fear the uncanny because it cannot be pinned down and regulated. It is instead unpredictable and almost unrepresentable, and as such, is described by Royle as ‘destruction’. Its destructive quality lies in its ability to decimate preconditioned meaning, forcing audiences to re-evaluate stereotypes and habituated norms. By showing that the familiar can be made strange, it also shows that the abject can be something familiar, and at the root of all human consciousness. Therefore, what society tries to repress in fact ‘operates at the heart of the identity, how the strange and even unthinkable is a necessary condition of what is conventional, familiar and taken-for-granted’ (Royle, 2003, p. 24).

By amalgamating their work with anamorphic theory, this thesis looks to expand on the traditional psychoanalytic readings of both Freud and Lacan. In his book *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan introduces the anamorphic perspective as a moment of ‘reconstruction or a restoration, not of a path traversed in the opposite direction’ (Lacan, 1979, p. 81). What can be drawn from this is that an anamorphic vision becomes more about transforming that which is familiar rather than composing something new. By applying this idea to the Gothic villain, the image of the monster can be reconstructed as something that is recognisable to the Self, rather than as an identity that is set up as antithetical or Other. Anamorphosis will provide a ‘double’ action, where it dismantles meaning and agency, but also disturbs us by ‘an intensified affect that is at once viscerally unsettling and familiar, while troubling the representational field’ (Boyle, 2010, p.5) – it is

the classic fusion of the *Heimlich* and the *Unheimlich*, of the familiar and the uncanny. The anamorphic perspective will contribute to pioneering research in how it enables its audience to see what is hidden, and becomes a ‘transversal’ agent which opens perception and understanding to new perspectives. Where existing psychoanalytic theory will observe the creation of otherness, an anamorphic perspective will challenge us to transgress societal stereotypes as ‘it can make social change possible . . . and destabilise multiple conceptual and affective registers’ (Reynolds, 2006).

As mentioned earlier, the idea of the monster becomes central to understanding how humans define themselves and explain themselves with reference to others. Aside from securing the monster in the representational field, the aim of this study is to locate the monster within aspects of selfhood, and to observe a relationship between the Self and the oppressed Self. Monster Theory can also be a useful theoretical framework for an investigation into marginalised groups and cultures, empowering and voicing minorities in ways similar to postcolonial theory. Monsters become symbolic expressions of cultural unease that pervade a society and shape its collective behaviour. Thus, our fascination with the monstrous testifies to our continued desire to probe the realms of difference and the repressed. It is this new anamorphic look at the monster that one can uncover and rethink our relationship with the ‘Other’.

The racial ‘Other’ is an inevitable concomitant of such cataloguing of monsters. Folklore regarding the cultural ‘Other’ or ethnic monster has imbedded primordial and subliminal fears about race. It is said that the ‘projection of fears and fantasies by Western Europeans on to the cultural “others” led inevitably to this concept of “race” and to what today might be called “racism”’ (Mittman & Dendle, 2013, p. xxx). An examination of the work of Lacan will provide a qualitative analysis of social constructivist paradigms such as cultural othering. Lacan comments on how ‘the subject follows the channels of the symbolic

. . . and who, more docile than sheep, model their very being on the moment of the signifying chain that runs through them' (Lacan, 1966, p. 30). In relation to the monster as embodying extreme alterity, the subject lies outside this chain of signifiers and refuses to be compliant in being represented. Study of Lacan's *Écrits* will establish the links between the symbolic order and 'otherness', offering a centralised focus on the etymology of the word 'monster'. It is an expression of language that has helped society categorise the 'Other', so that we understand it and determine it as dissimilar to us. As Jeffrey Jerome Cohen suggests: 'the monster is difference made flesh' (Cohen, 1996, p. 7).

The various texts discussed in this thesis assists in developing a context concerning the patterns of subjectivity that become exemplified in the encounter with the 'Other'. The monster functions as an analogy for identities that surpass the boundaries of acceptable behaviour, persecuted by stereotypical vision. In order for society to maintain the *status quo*, 'it "abjects" the monster and it ascribes to it a transgressive body that cannot be integrated' (Marzouk, 2015, p. 48). However, paralleling Lacan's division of meaning across the Borromean knot of the Real, the Symbolic or the Imaginary, so the monster refuses representation in a fixed manner as it resides only on the borders between each order: therefore, the intersection of all three creates the unnameable monster. Blending existing Lacanian ideas with monster theory can provide a theoretical framework that offers 'a pure meta-language capable of representing the unrepresentable' (Stavrakakis, 2002, p. 93). Monsters are very significant in providing us information on both a cultural and social level, where their warped expression of human nature offers an anamorphic perspective of habituated meaning. We can use them as a theoretical construct so as to disable our cultural mores, and then reconstruct a new perception of society. Mittman and Dendle claim monsters 'not only challenge and question, they trouble, they worry, they haunt' (Mittman & Dendle,

2013). They act as a reminder to us of the darker face of humanity and the potential for corruption within us all.

In contemporary culture, to call the racial ‘Other’ monstrous is to denude them of any context, and as such, it ‘relates to the drive to demonise the other back to an unconscious process whereby we externalise the “foreigner”’ (Beville, et al., 2009, p. 15). The thinking of Lacan will help explain humanity’s exclusion of the monster and similarly the rejection of the ethnic ‘Other’. Lacan recognises the ‘Other’ in relation to its connection with the Symbolic Order, wherein it is devoid of identification or representation. This theoretical observation will coincide with how society tends to monster the ‘Other’ because it is indefinable, therefore, the unknown is controlled by assorting the subject into categories and typecasts. Lacan’s theories on identity and the ‘Self’ will establish a psychoanalytic framework that directs a path throughout each chapter, and consequently delineates a relationship between monsters, both supernatural and human. This area of study will assist in an assessment of each monster discussed within this thesis by offering a greater understanding of their identities through the unearthing of their untold chronicles. It is within these hidden narratives, monstrous representations can offer an understanding of the most confusing aspects of our unconscious and the repressed areas of selfhood. Stephen Mulhall notes the ability of horror, and its many monsters, to divulge areas of the psyche usually closed off to us:

Horror is the title I am giving to the perception of the precariousness of human identity, to the perception that it may be lost or invaded, that we may be, or may become, something other than we are, or take ourselves for; that our origins as human beings need accounting for, and are unaccountable. (Mulhall, 2002, pp. 17-18)

Any discussion of the Other with reference to the Gothic has to acknowledge the contribution of the Female Gothic to the literary sphere. When the female subject is located between shifting categories due to their distance from normative gender, she too can be placed under the classification of monster. As stated in the foreword to *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*, ‘categories of gender that bend or do not adhere to the male-female binary have long been considered monstrous’ (Mittman & Dendle, 2013, p. xxxiv). Mittman and Dendle trace the monstrous feminine back as far as Greek mythology, where the Greeks often correlated women with nature and the wilderness, and where women were seen as existing beyond the boundaries of an ordered civilisation. Fear of the feminine archetype was associated with their mysterious corporeal form, where they were seen as undermining patriarchal rule through the acts of childbearing or menstruation, both of these being natural forces beyond male control. Mythical creatures such as Medusa and Scylla ‘spoke to men’s fear of women’s destructive potential’ (Mittman & Dendle, 2013, p. 105). Following on from the gendered narratives of Greek tradition, the Female Gothic not only represented feminine anxieties, but also negated the social advancement of women by equating monstrosity with the contemporary female. This thesis will identify the presence of gender performativity in both horror and the Gothic, so as to illustrate how these literary genres explore the position of women in culture, and to show how the exaggeration of female monsters mimics the progression of the feminine archetype. It was only in the world of fiction that the female archetype could experience a life without domestic incarceration or patriarchal pressures. Seeing women acting as agents in stories, which feature aspects of the supernatural, is interesting, as it gives women power in this area of access to the supernatural. Traditionally in Western cultures, and still in the catholic tradition, women have been debarred from any sacerdotal roles, at a structural religious level. Women as agents of power

in popular culture might well be an exemplar of change for women in structural religious institutions.

Through an application of tools such as psychoanalytic, deconstructive and feminist theory, the chosen texts of this thesis will re-examine the normative interpretative department of the monstrous subject. The focus will be on one individual enunciation of a monster per chapter; however, cross-references will be made so as to analyse their affinities throughout. Investigating the texts in a chronological order, the first chapter will begin with *Frankenstein; or the Modern Prometheus* in which Alexa Wright's text *The Human Monster in Visual Culture* will assist in explaining how Frankenstein's monster is set up as the antihero, earning the role as deviant Other because of its resistance to semiotic norms. Continuing on with the theme of deviance and resistance, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* will be discussed in Chapter Two. Valdine Clemens' book *The Return of the Repressed: Gothic Horror from The Castle of Otranto to Alien* will be used to analyse Stevenson's novel and implement applications of Freud's theories of repression. This will assist in underscoring how the monster is a representation of that which is condemned by society because of its refusal to be subsumed and categorised therein. Following this, Chapter Three will look at *Wuthering Heights* whereby Alexa Wright's theories of 'otherness' will be further developed to explain why Heathcliff is branded as a malevolent being because he continues to remain indefinable. The fourth chapter will bridge literary and film studies by analysing both visual and textual aspects of *The Exorcist*. Ideologies of Stephen Schneider from his book, *Monsters as Uncanny Metaphors: Freud, Lakoff and the Representation of Monstrosity in Cinematic Horror*, will expose how the monster, especially the female monster, serves a cultural function where societal institutions can maintain control during times of anarchy.

Chapter Five will observe the conflicted character of Jack Torrance from *The Shining*. Markus P. J. Bohlmann's use of the Lacanian lens will support an explanation for the

protagonist's mental decline, and will also outline how Jack's inability to write bankrupts him of agency, thus designing the monster from the ruins of his failures. An examination of *Halloween* in Chapter Six, will agree with the opinions of Mathias Clasen who contends that Michael Myers is monstrosified and animalised as a result of him being accorded no voice or facial expression. Finally, a discussion of the film *From Dusk till Dawn* in Chapter Seven, will examine the racial 'Other' and expose how cultural diversity is used as distancing evil as away from oneself. Thus, J. M Tyree's observations on the vampire genre in *Warm-Blooded: True Blood and Let the Right One In*, will offer a better explanation as to why ethnicity plays a strong role in the creation of the monster. However, Seth Gecko, a construction of human monstrosity, will become central to a concluding analysis of how the categories of both monster and hero become blurred in an evolving society of complex identities. An intertextual focus on both literature and film will be integral to a comprehensive understanding of the monster as a pan-cultural signifier. The former contributes a detailed analysis of 'the gaze' of the narrator, offering judgements for the reader to ingest or discard; whereas the latter allows for us to embody 'the gaze' and supply our own meaning to the monster.

Arguably, the most telling characteristics of the Gothic from the 1790s to the 1890s concerned the internalisation of 'evil'. By the end of this thesis, each fictive monster will show that fear of the monster is not generated by its physicality or by its conduct, but rather comes from deep within the person, through the acknowledgment that evil can come to life within all of us. Hence, the monster is no longer feared as being the violent Other who can do us harm; now the fear is of the potential for depravity within ourselves. Rather than being emblematic of a supernatural external force, the monster is now a projection of an inhibited appetite for darker passions. Wright's analysis of the varying interpretations of the term 'monster' locates the monster as a projection of denied emotions, fears and unconscious

desires, rather than about focusing on the monster as an external anomaly. As Wright explains:

The idea of monstrousness encapsulates the impossible, dreadful, amoral, inhuman, unspeakable and even unthinkable qualities that lie at the periphery of human identity. The monstrous is the inverse or outside of what is acceptably human in any particular social or cultural context. (Wright, 2013, p. 3)

Wright asserts that monsters are constructed from the repressed urges in the human mind and we are thus informed by their personalities of what is socially incorrect, or of what Wright characterises as being ‘acceptably human’. While much of what I am arguing is an original intervention into the discourse, I am locating my own work within a small, but developing corpus of writings, which can be generically termed ‘Monster Theory’. This nascent critical and theoretical genre is multi-disciplinary, and this introduction will conclude with a brief conspectus of the different critical sources from which my own theoretical and hermeneutic matrix is comprised, and I will begin by looking at anamorphosis itself.

Even though anamorphosis is a theoretical trope that is rarely used in literature, it will provide a fundamental contribution to this research in allowing conventional views of the Gothic villain to be contradicted, and instead provide a framework through which to examine the monster as a projection onto which we banish the forbidden conditions of the unconscious. Slavoj Žižek terms anamorphosis as ‘looking awry’ (Žižek 1991), and this project will ‘look awry’ at the traditional epistemology of the monster. He comments on how anamorphosis is described by Lacan as the *point de capiton* (the quilting point). In his book, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture*, he explains this phenomenon as when ‘a perfectly ‘natural’ and ‘familiar’ situation is denatured, becomes ‘uncanny’, loaded with horror and threatening possibilities’ (Žižek, 1991, p. 88). This is

precisely what the anamorphic perspective will accomplish in its interrogation of the monstrous figure. It will subvert previously accepted stereotypes of evil constructs, and instead expose how it is the familiar that embodies all the frightening prospects. Lacan's examination of this *point de capiton* can shed some light on how the 'Other' is created, as he explains it to be a moment of awareness to a detail that 'does not belong, that sticks out, is "out of place", does not make any sense within the frame of the idyllic scene' (Žižek, 1991, p. 88). However, it is through the anamorphic lens that what was once 'out of place', now loses its distorted image, and is seen in an entirely new way. This offers an introductory understanding of what anamorphosis truly means for this thesis, and why an alternative narrative for the monster must be created.

The monster signifies what Julia Kristeva calls the "abject" that which does not respect borders, positions, or rules, 'the place where meaning collapses' (Creed, 1993, p. 2). Horror resides in threats to the boundaries that ordinarily regulate the social order. It accentuates the fragility of order and laws within the symbolic order. According to Kristeva, literature explores the way that language is structured over a lack of understanding and a disinterest in areas of life perceived as confusing. Death or the corpse within horror is, to Kristeva, 'seen without God and outside of science . . . [as] . . . the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life' (Kristeva, 1982, p. 4). The monster, being a reminder of death and the fragility of life, prompts the subject to remember that darkness and decay always lurk on the borders of the everyday. It refers to the human response to a threatened breakdown in meaning caused by the loss of the distinction between Self and Other. It signals 'the loss of the "I" at the hands of something that resides within one's own body, an internal indomitable other' (Goodnow, 2010, p. 36). Kristeva reflects upon how the abject refers to pollution and the 'unclean'. The abject becomes an extension of the self, of repressed instinct and animality. From a Freudian perspective, it is another face of the unconscious self. The

border between normal and abnormal, clean and unclean is seen most succinctly in the film *The Exorcist*. Kristeva proposes that a change in skin signals a change in the subject's internal state. This being so, Regan illustrates that even though her exterior presents utter monstrosity and decay, the real danger lies within. Therefore, the monsters of the thesis act as 'reminders that what we cannot see may be foul and that what is currently safely contained may at any time lose its containing envelope' (Goodnow, 2010, p. 37). Her challenging nature to the patriarchal structures in place offers an abject view to femininity, and presents transgressive attitudes to gender norms. Regan's ability to vacillate between two opposing identities, as possessed subject, introduces the idea of the abject, where meaning is never secure.

Kristeva states that 'we call it a border; abjection is above all ambiguity' (Kristeva, 1982, p. 9). The abjectness of the monster threatens or signifies the disintegration of boundaries, and reminds us of the fragility of social structures that regulate our sense of meaning. This thesis explores the ways in which the subject is constructed through the delimitation of boundaries. The concept of the border, according to Creed, is central to the construction of the monstrous in the horror film . . . to bring about an encounter between the symbolic order and that which threatens its stability' (Creed, 2002, p. 71). It is then the monstrous subject's ability to transgress these boundaries that shows the possibility of new forms of identity, and the impossibility of structured classifications. The abject monster is in fact inherent to understanding human nature as it allows us to see how far the human self can stretch itself outside the limitations of societal semiotic chains. Therefore those we classify as abject and 'whomever we exclude or expel from society in order to be a society is in fact interior to our own identity' (Speed, 1998, p. 133).

Žižek explains how there exists a realm of double meaning that can only be discovered through the employment of anamorphosis. Everything contains a hidden meaning

which can be explored from a different perspective, and each chapter will prove that there is more to the monstrous figure than mere aberration. The full truth can only come from what is between the margins, and reality can only transgress to its real point at the moment of anamorphosis. The consequent uncertainty that comes from the anamorphic perspective is described succinctly in the words of Shakespeare from *King Richard II* 'like perspectives, which rightly gaz'd upon; Show nothing but confusion; ey'd awry' (Shakespeare, 1786, p. 45). This concept of looking awry, in Žižek's own words, brings forward conclusions which spark interest but also dubiety at the same time. The skewed perspective gives us the distorted image, the image we repress and that is far from normal. This thesis intends to blur our preconceptions of reality, and centralise the distorted subject, in an attempt to break down the barrier between the normative Self and the abnormal Other.

Jennifer Ellen Boyle discusses the insight that an anamorphic perspective provides literary sphere in her book *Anamorphosis in Early Modern Literature: Mediation and Affect*. Her research suggests that anamorphosis provides a 'double' action where it dismantles meaning and agency, but also disturbs us by 'an intensified affect that is at once viscerally unsettling and familiar, while troubling the representational field' (Boyle, 2010, p.5) She discusses a widely known example of anamorphosis in her introduction, namely Hans Holbein's *The Ambassadors*. Similar to how this portrait requires a shift of physical position to gain the second perspective, research into the monster will require a shift of normative analysis in order to produce an alternative view of its habituated form. Her outlook on this painting contributes to an understanding of how anamorphosis can be used to dismantle monstrous stereotypes as 'the perceptual doubling of anamorphosis produces a rupture in the viewer's gaze and disrupts the stability of the object under view' (Boyle, 2010, p. 1). Hence, this thesis will look beyond physicality or action and understand instead the animus of the monster, the story behind the horror. Using this theoretical method to produce a perceptual

uncertainty, anamorphosis will assist in unearthing a difficult truth about humanity in its habit of monsterring the cultural or racial 'Other'. Similar to how Boyle deems anamorphic devices as contributing to 'newly-emerging techniques of truth production', so this approach will be significant in drawing truth from my chosen literary and filmic texts (Boyle, 2010, p. 4).

What is noteworthy about this Holbein's painting is how the hidden anamorphic skull connotes the understandings of death and its relative symbolism. The presented picture of idealism is tainted by the Lacanian stain that is positioned at the bottom of the painting, which, from an anamorphic perspective, illustrates how life will perpetually be attached to death, regardless of earthly gains and objectives. Death becomes a monster in itself in how it equates to feelings of negation. Both Gothic and horror modes examine what the most pervasive tensions underlying humanity are, most particularly, the transience of life and the unavoidable mortality of human nature. In similar ways to the Gothic, the anamorphic skull of Holbein's painting, functions as a *memento mori*, a complex reminder that we are all connected to the idea of death. The way that it remains hidden in the painting, parallels the idea of how the perception of death remains concealed by society and suppressed and repressed by the human consciousness. Elisabeth Bronfen describes the consequence of our consistent defamiliarisation to the realisation of dying as 'a retreat from death in a double gesture of denial and mystification' (Bronfen, 1992, p. 86). This idea of averting death is accentuated in Shelley's *Frankenstein*, where Victor attempts to re-animate a dead corpse in his attempt to eradicate death and disease from the world. However, the very matter that brings forth an era of undeath, being that the frightening Creature, also results in the death of many of Victor's loved ones. Therefore, this text proves that 'the unpalatable fact persists: the reality of death may be repressed but remains utterly ineradicable' where 'Victor's literal walking corpse of a Creature reminds us, carry our future corpse within us: all who live must, inevitably, die' (Davison, 2017, pp. 3-4).

With death, comes the practice of mourning, where each text engages with either the mourning of physical loss or the mourning of redundant traditions. In the Romantic era, there was a focus on accelerated cultural change, and in the wake of the Industrial Era, society was mourning the ‘lost belief systems and certainties rendered obsolete due to historical shifts’ (Davison, 2017, p. 6). An abundance of Monster literature, even outside the Romantic Period, addresses a longing for the forgotten sources of life, evoking a nostalgia for older traditions. For example, in texts such as *The Exorcist*, Blatty presents a desire to return to a more conservative time, where gender performativity was still controlled by the patriarchal regime of the conformist Church. Mourning is therefore bound up with ideas of modernity and the death of tradition. As Jolene Zigarovich has accurately noted, underlying the ‘embrace of death was an uneasiness about the rapidity of change. Anxieties regarding the moral, physical, and spiritual decay of people and culture were inevitably personified and figured in narrative’ (Zigarovich, 2012, p. 5). The theme of death within literature can be used as a platform to configure ideas about creativity and interpretation, allowing the individual to explore the unspoken in human nature.

The Gothic’s use of the theme of death allows for self-reflection where according to Smith, ‘the dead can thus be used as a device to explore ideas about life’ (Smith, 2016, p. 2). In dealing with death, it allows us to celebrate moral questions concerning life. Our obsession with death is then linked to our curiosity about elements of society that we cannot control and which we persist on repressing. Death can be meaningful in how it suggests that ‘a contemplation of a past life enables us to reflect upon, and so rectify, the harm that we have done to others’ (Smith, 2016, p. 7). The idea of death allows characters such as Heathcliff and Jack Torrance to unearth the suppressed and repressed consciousness of their true selves. They are haunted by the ghosts of their past, where spectres of the dead function as reminders of their fragile humanity. Where the spirit of Cathy admonishes Heathcliff about his authentic

Self, the ghosts of the Overlook Hotel force Jack to unearth his repressed trauma and face the realisation of his dark inclinations. Where the deviant subject in horror often meets an untimely end, the semiotics of death are used as a means of instilling fear in the reader and of steering the subject to follow the moral path. Yael Shapira comments on how ‘the power of graphic death imagery was clearly harnessed to some kind of instructive aim, such as stirring believers to reflection or asserting the power of the regime against those who defy it’ (Shapira, 2018, p. 3).

Anamorphosis not only connotes to the theme of death but also signals the cessation of given meaning and rigid interpretation. In order to undercut the jaundiced interpretations of the literary villain, anamorphosis can undermine preconceived meaning and look at alternative perspectives outside the homogenous space. It creates doubt in the established truths that reflect who we are and how we must behave. Evidence shows that anamorphosis threatens to subvert ‘the very concept of the locatable reality upon which we conventionally rely in our mappings of the world’ (Boyle, 2010, p. 3). Hence, its contribution to monster theory will take on an anamorphic perspective in order to disrupt society’s reliance on monsterring aspects of humanity that we cannot accept, or even admit to being part of our human being. It acts as a revelatory tool that can reflect upon anxieties that are covered up by the grotesqueness and the bestiality of the fictive monster. Furthermore, the anamorphic viewpoint can be seen as a procedure ‘to see the “trauma” of what symbolisation and representation covers over’ (Boyle, 2010, p. 9). This will be linked in with a discussion on the repressed, and the monster, as a representational mechanism to cover up the pernicious potential within us all. Anamorphosis then becomes the perfect tool to represent the chosen monsters of this thesis, as it shows the disfigured image, which, from a different viewpoint, can reveal what was once unseen. Anamorphosis as a perspective is a ‘monstrous projection, a disfigured representation of an image on a plane or curved surface’ (Hutton, 1815, p. 114),

but yet will always retain some normative and familiar quality. Boyle discusses anamorphosis as a process of creating the double, which will prove useful for a discussion of the monster as the projected double in the case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. The possibility of the ‘double’ reinforces the prospect of dual meaning with any given image. She claims that after the anamorphic perspective is employed, the image ‘is inverted, divided, doubled, emerging as a different “species” . . . a trace of the incompleteness or unfinished nature of the mediated image’ (Boyle, 2010, p. 32). This produces the uncanny feeling as the image is a reflection of what is normal but in actuality is not.

The anamorphic perspective will contribute to pioneering research in how it forces its audience to see what is hidden. Where existing psychoanalytic theory will observe the creation of otherness, an anamorphic perspective will challenge us to transgress societal stereotypes. Burwick and Pape’s book on *Aesthetic Illusion: Theoretical and Historical Approaches* will provide a more comprehensive theoretical foundation of the anamorphic standpoint. They describe it as rejecting a linear perspective, in other words the *status quo*, and stress that it ‘only emerges with a radical shift of viewpoint’ (Burwick & Pape, 1990, p. 334). The reader must abandon the normal perspective on the monster in order to allow for new interpretations to be conceived. Society is influenced by stereotypical illusions when encountering any social group that exists outside the dominant collective. In order for anamorphosis to take place, and to remove prejudice from one’s point of view, ‘the normal perspective is distorted and thrown out of focus’ (Burwick & Pape, 1990, p. 334). Therefore, we must disregard what we consider as the social norm before we can accept this new outlook on otherness. Burwick and Pape describe the true essence of anamorphosis, and explore how it is essential in eliciting the truth from art and literature. In their words, anamorphosis ‘questions the very nature and illusion of art, as well as its ability to represent or arrive at moral, theological, or philosophical truths’ (Burwick & Pape, 1990, p. 334). Thus,

the anamorphic perspective forces the reader to discover the illusory nature of perspectivism. Humanity's habit of othering aspects outside of our normal self is rendered unstable if we take into account that what was once considered as Other is, in fact, an illusion created to fit into reality.

Lacan's vision, in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, will contribute to a valuable understanding of the anamorphic gaze with respect to psychoanalysis. In these seminars, Lacan theorises anamorphosis as a model for introducing new perspectives on how we perceive the world. He refers to the experience of anamorphosis as an attempt to undermine the illusion of the homologous space. His writing highlights how anamorphic paintings such as Hans Holbein's *The Ambassadors* allow for the construction of a different perspective of distorted identities, and he comments on how we become naturalised by certain ideologies and views: 'the moment that this gaze appears, the subject tries to adapt himself to it' (Lacan, 1979, p. 83). Utilising this observation, societal and cultural norms will be exposed as instructing us that the monster should be seen as a threatening force, and we therefore become naturalised to the opinion that they are 'Other'. Through the act of anamorphosis, our presumptions of what a monster should be become misplaced. Lacan did not believe that the anamorphic perspective would allow for 'the pleasure of obtaining . . . the restoration of the world', but he thought it was important as it contributed to how 'we must seek the function of vision' (Lacan, 1979, pp. 87-89). This study will not only offer different perspectives on the monster, but will also investigate the function of the monster as being propelled into the representational field of the 'Other'. In terms of this monstrous Other, there are a number of significant texts which will be germane to my own approach in this area.

Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's essay on *Monster Culture: Seven Theses* will contribute to an explanation of the cultural context that forged society's constructed monsters. His book

suggests that monsters must be examined within the intricate matrix of relations that engender them. He contends that each monster represents a socio-cultural theme and thus, each chapter discusses a different one of these themes. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen notes that ‘for the most part monstrous difference tends to be cultural, political, racial, economic, sexual’ (Cohen, 1996, p. 7). Cohen’s discussion of the epistemology of the monster will provide an understanding of its composition. The predilection to categorise the abject is what results in the Other being masked by falsehoods, which are lacking in both understanding and identity. His research sets up an investigation into the connection between monster and Other, where he dictates ‘the monster signifies something other than itself: it is always a displacement’ (Cohen, 1996, p. 4). This observation brings to light Jacques Derrida’s work on *différance*. The Other’s inaccessible identity refuses categorisation, making them a corrosive force that erodes given meaning. For Derrida, ‘a monster is a species for which we do not have a name’, a name given to something that lacks representation (Derrida, 1992, 386). In accordance with Derrida’s thinking, one of Cohen’s theses outlines how the monster is the ‘Harbinger of Category Crisis’, due to its refusal to be categorised or simply delineated. Their complex architecture does not comply with the regulatory ideal and induces a crisis of representation. Monstrous figures are ‘disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration’ (Cohen, 1996, p. 6). Their very existence threatens distinctions and agitates the representational field. The monstrous figure often appears at a time when words fail in describing an event ‘because of its ontological liminality, the monster notoriously appears at times of crisis’ (Cohen, 1996, p. 6).

Alexa Wright, while engaging in a study that is quite similar to Cohen’s regarding the monster as outside social norms, applies her observations on monster theory to the human subject. Wright’s theories of ‘otherness’, in *The Human Monster in Visual Culture*, will assist in explaining how abject bodies are branded as evil because they remain an indefinable and

unknown corpus. She views our habit of monsterring the Other as consequent to our fear of being overpowered by the unknown, the abnormal and the abject, all of which involve an ‘unthinkable monstrousness that cannot be contained’ (Wright, 2013, p. 21). Constructs of evil reflect the unpredictable nature of the human disposition. The monster’s ability to push boundaries resurfaces anxieties concerning social, political and gender developments. Therefore, we project our internal apprehensions about ourselves and society onto the monster to try to avoid turmoil, both within and without.

Wright identifies ‘the appearance of the monster as a manifestation of that which disturbs the social “norm”, or troubles an existing understanding of what is acceptably human’ (Wright, 2013, p. 2). An image of acceptable human behaviour is set up by others around us, and by labelling something as evil, we can identify ourselves as good, and as inhabiting the ‘normal’ side of the binary opposition. Thus, what is truly monstrous is all that defies representation, and characters such as Frankenstein’s creature and Mr Hyde signify everything that is external to ‘norms’ of self and society. Monsters become social outsiders that defy societal systems, inhabiting the margins of the social order. A psychoanalytic observation of the monster determines it as an articulation of the edges of humanness: it is the embodiment of something deviating from the norm. They ultimately represent the diversity of nature where they provide ‘a tangible site for the inscription of transgression’ (Wright, 2013, p. 17). The inclusion of Wright’s findings will address a fundamental question within this research, specifically whether monsters are merely perceived as such because they do not follow the existing *status quo*.

Maria Beville’s book on *The Unnameable Monster in Literature and Film* will provide a fundamental connection between monster theory and psychoanalysis. Beville determines how as ‘a result of this binary, the monster, although frequently acknowledged as indefinable, remains indefinitely within the cultural spheres of the “repressed”’ (Beville,

2014, p. 1). Beville places the monster in the cultural sphere of the repressed, the abject and most importantly, of the uncanny. The monster shatters the divide between the conscious and unconscious self, externalising abject thought and illicit behaviour. In her introduction, she outlines how the basic function of the monster acts ‘as an embodiment of fear that enacts a purging and a projection of our most basic anxieties’ (Beville, 2014, p. 1). With Darwinian evolutionary theory in mind, we tend to fear the unknown as a primitive instinct to danger. Beville’s approach offers a solid attempt to understand the cultural significance of the Otherness of the monster. Her research determines that we ‘are “hardwired” to fear such deformities in order to maintain our own survival and productivity’ (Beville, 2014, p. 5). It can then be understood that the terrifying traits of a monster seem to reflect more about specific human fears within their cultural context, than about the monster itself.

Beville’s prognosis is that even after all attempts of classification, there still remains a category of monster that refuses to be defined or controlled: ‘the unnameable monster’. This amorphous identity can be difficult to categorise, and defies, as Beville puts it, ‘all attempts to constrain it in naming and, as such, our utilitarian attempts to reduce it to some sense of functionality’ (Beville, 2014, p. 1), justifying its otherness. She describes Heathcliff from *Wuthering Heights* as an ‘unnameable monster’ who embodies an uncertain origin and disconnection within the domestic space. Home is bound to identity and origin, and because Heathcliff’s place is unknown, he can never be accepted by humanity. Heathcliff, like many of the other monsters of this thesis, transforms into an unnameable monster in which his impenetrable identity prevents any true understanding of his predisposition. Using the range of analysis offered in *The Unnameable Monster in Literature and Film*, I wish to work from Beville’s model of the indefinable monster to claim that our association with monsterring the Other is consequent on our failure to comprehend, and our failure to represent. She contests that monstrous as a term is often used to describe what is hideous and abnormal, more

specifically it ‘applies to behaviour when it is seen to have transgressed the limits of what we ourselves can imagine doing’ (Beville, 2014, p. 5). The monster represents absolute difference and extremity; it is a figure who transgresses the limits of the acceptable. Beville’s study on what she refers to as the ‘Thing Theory’ will reflect on society’s attempt at dehumanising the cultural Other. Through categorising the subject as a ‘Thing’, the subject is automatically distanced from the Self, and dehumanised by this type of negation. Therefore, it is ‘through language that Otherness is generally demonised and alienated’ (Beville, 2014, p. 13).

While Cohen, Beville and Wright claim that monsters serve to embody the greatest fears of the human mind, functioning as a sort of projection and catharsis of those fears, my research will go further and determine this projection as not only a representation of inner fears but of a denial of the internal monster within. The objective of this thesis is to identify traditional stereotypes of the monster and subvert ideas of Otherness being linked to social deviance and cultural difference. Through an anamorphic lens, humanity’s inner monster will be exposed, creating a deeper association between Self and Other. By disrupting our dependence on cultural myths, it will liberate the reticent aspects of ourselves, and finally allow the monster within a voice. The next chapter will look at Robert Louis Stevenson’s novel *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* in order to highlight how ‘this monster within’, who is a product of repressed desires, has been projected onto an external embodiment of Otherness and disparity. It will examine an accumulative sense of unease in Victorian society concerning regression of societal decorum, which blurred the boundaries between self and society’s castaways. The monster of this text thus serves as a scapegoat, allowing for the denial of any monstrousness existing within the reader himself, by projecting them onto this scapegoat.

Chapter One: The ‘Other’ Monster

he history of the Gothic has dictated to the reader that what is deemed ‘monstrous’ is fundamentally different and external to all understandings of the Self. Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein: Or, the Modern Prometheus* cultivates a perspective on patterns of subjectivity and ostracisation that become personified in the encounter with the Creature, the socially constructed ‘Other’. The Other is thus formed through a significant relationship with manifestations of the monster, and with concepts of evil. A universal preoccupation with labelling the monster has engendered a plethora of inconsistent meanings of the term. A prescribed view of Frankenstein’s Creature is programmed into the mind of the reader where ‘corrupted language facilitates an implosion of the grammars of alterity’ (Baumann & Gingrich, 2005, p. 144). The monster can be seen to act as a metaphor for those who transgress the limits of acceptable behaviour, and subsequently become identified as ‘abnormal’, and are victimised by inflexible expectations and intolerant typecasts. Shelley’s antihero therefore serves as the denotation to the unrepresentable and the unknowable. Her text can be used to identify traditional stereotypes of the monster and subvert ideas of Otherness being linked to abnormality and cultural difference. This critical analysis of the monster within the literary space will prompt an observation into associations of the monstrous we find uncomfortable and formidable.

Jacques Lacan can assist in a better understanding of our predisposition to monster the Other, and its ruinous imprint on human conduct. Lacan writes in his essay, ‘The Freudian Thing’:

A truth, it must be admitted, is not easy to recognise, once it has become accepted. Not that there are not established truths, but they then become so easily confused with the reality that surrounds them that no other artifice has yet been found to distinguish them from it than to mark them with the sign of the spirit, to pay them homage, to regard them as coming from another world. (Lacan, 1977, p. 120)

In the case of the monster, an attempt at representing its alterity has become reliant on ‘established truths’ that confuse our placement of empathy towards its character. Therefore, distorted perspectives interfere with our exploration into truths concerning monstrosity. We readily welcome habituated truths that relate to the monster as being an affirmation of what is dangerous and malevolent. This restricted perspective becomes normalised and encumbers the possibility of alternative outcomes. The monster exists as a cultural concept, exploited in the domains of politics, religion and race, that functions as a deprecating term to govern and suppress the ‘Other’. Ideologies of the monster and the Other ‘are effective only if there is something in it for us’ (Castillo, 2001, p. 127). Consequent to this, the monster is moulded to fit into a secure illusion that prevents the realisation that evil can exist within the familiar and the known.

We tend to monster the Other so as to enlarge, enhance and protect the image of the self, and to deceive ourselves that humanity remains above evil tendencies and adverse desire. Andrew Smith considers how the dissemination of terms such as ‘evil’ or ‘monstrous’ becomes ‘a necessary concept that ensures the well-being of the “norm”’ (Smith, 2013, p. 6). The demonisation of a person’s or group’s behaviour is strategically organised to disseminate the covert political agendas of the chosen texts in this thesis. Smith asserts that the Gothic is a ‘counter-cultural form’, one with a ‘rebellious tendency [that] transcends any overt political message’ (Smith, 2000, p. 177). In Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, the physicality of the child-like Creature is assumed to be monstrous, and thus generates a mechanical response, inviting

the spectator to feel threatened by his drives and motivations. An artificial structure of identity is created in the Creature, falsifying the foundations of his being. When Victor Frankenstein's brother is murdered, and culpability falls on a household female servant, the doctor dismisses the prospect of evil existing within a human, foreclosing all possibilities other than that the Creature must take on the role of miscreant because history dictates that this is what he is. Frankenstein states 'I was firmly convinced in my own mind that, Justine, and indeed every human being, was guiltless of this murder' (Shelley, 1994, p. 76). According to naturalised opinions on criminality, only someone subhuman and grotesque can be capable of murder. This predisposition occludes our perspective of the monster, where established expectations dominate our reading, and the Creature is prevented from instituting his own authentic identity. The voids of language are exposed in the case of Shelley's monster, where misrepresentation shapes our engagement with the Creature.

Jonathan Culler outlines this relationship between reader and text, noting that for 'the reader the work is not partially created but, on the one hand, already complete and inexhaustible' (Culler, 1982, p. 76). Our perception and interpretation of the subject, therefore, is dominated by preconceived definitions that already exist. The framed narrative used by Shelley ensures that the reader – much like Frankenstein himself – is prejudiced towards the Creature. According to David Wengrow the word 'monster' is set up as a cultural signifier that can be used to categorise notions of otherness that lacks classification. He outlines how the 'Latin root "monstrum" links the monstrous to intimations of misfortune – portentous signs and evil omens' (Wengrow, 2011, p. 134). Therefore, without experience or understanding of Shelley's monster, his category automatically sets us up with a negative attitude towards the scientific creation. This narrative outlines how use of the word 'monster' is what in fact makes the monster, bringing to life the expectations of the word's meaning.

The process of categorising the Creature is never complete due to the actual monster rebuffing containment, and continuing to evade our semiotic grasp. From its very moment of birth, the Creature is a walking contradiction, an Other and outsider to everything that has a heartbeat. Similar to that of the zombie figure, the walking dead, the Creature ‘violate[s] our intuitive understanding of death as the cessation of self-propelled motion and agency, as well as death as an irreversible event’ (Clasen, 2010, p. 4). This essentially deepens the divide between society and Shelley’s scientific experiment because, from a bio-psychological perspective, he is far removed from what we expect of a human life. Furthermore, Victor does not give the monster a name, a signifier of identity, and therefore any human connection to his character is denied, leaving no opportunity for empathy. He is automatically labelled as evil, as a ‘daemon’ from the outset where Victor describes the first moment he encounters his manufactured child: ‘I beheld the wretch – the miserable monster whom I had created’ (Shelley, 1994, p. 56). Understanding the monster becomes problematised by the general cultural inclination to compare the monster to notions of abject, and to project evil onto that which is fundamentally Other. The failure of Victor to even describe his own experimental construction reinforces the idea of the Creature as unknowable and as an example of the ‘Lacanian stain’, a distortion in the semiotic field. Jeffrey Cohen outlines in his book, *Monster Culture*, the idea that a monster’s very existence constitutes a ‘refusal to participate in the classificatory order of things’ (Cohen, 1996, p. 6). He becomes a menacing threat that disrupts definition and resists comparisons to cultural criterions. The inability to conceptualise the Other casts the subject off as the monstrous identity. Mary Shelley’s Creature expands beyond boundaries and violates categories, encouraging the reader to recognise his body only as ‘evil’. Victor fails to even describe him stating ‘How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form’ (Shelley, 1994, p. 55).

A monster is often regarded as a monster because it surpasses the limits of the normative possibilities, and of their representation, defying our attempts to manage it. Similarly, the Other is the state of being different from and alien to everything that is known and familiar universally. Frankenstein's Creature is thus born into a system of binaries, which inevitably determine his place in the world. Alexa Wright underlines that what is truly monstrous is all that defies representation and identities that encompass sameness are thus 'good'. Wright claims that 'all that is familiar and similar to the self is considered good, whilst what is other is thought to be strange and evil and must be avoided' (Wright, 2013, pp. 17-18). The Creature is a shadow obscured by obscurity and darkness. The absence of a name makes his existence surreal and his representation almost impossible. He 'exists in the borderland of the "it"' (Grand, 2013, p. 137). Frankenstein's Creature represents everything that is peripheral to the 'norms' of self and society, resulting in his mistreatment and rejection by the human community. His quest for a female counterpart to be formed by Victor is an attempt by the monster to seek representation, and to ascertain a recognisable sense of selfhood. The Creature's frightening anonymity is also consequent on him existing as an a-sexual being, who in essence does not fit under category of woman or man. The line between monstrous and feminine is indistinct, 'in Frankenstein's sexually ambiguous place – the site where maternal and paternal forces of procreation vie for mastery' (London, 1993, p. 258).

The non-specificity of gender is what evokes fear in the reader, and dictionary definitions are lacking when it comes to assigning Shelley's creation a sexual identity. This gender obscurity dehumanises the Creature, where it exists as more of an object than a subject, confined to be viewed as an inanimate being without an emotive register. Bette London comments on the creature's lack of sexual recognition stating:

Frankenstein creates a being "complete in all parts of a man," the absence of the markers of sexuality leaves the creature incomplete, facilitating its installation into the

female economy- the traditional locus for “the monstrous” and “the body”. (London, 1993, p. 256)

The monster’s incompleteness and male impotency cements his position as the ‘mysterious body’. London’s commentary on ‘absence’ and ‘incomplete’ sexuality reveals the ways in which masculinity and similar concepts are founded within the structures of the ‘normal’ self, whereas any reference to absent masculinity is seen as ‘other’. The Creature’s undecided masculinity is reflective of Victor’s crisis of identity, where he uses science as an outlet to solidify his own manhood and sense of self. The pursuit of meaning of identity is carried out by Victor through his reanimated corpse and his exploration of science ‘functions as a trope for the construction, and concealment, of identity’ (Smith, 2004, p. 172). Thus, *Frankenstein’s* place in literary history is seen to stage male anxieties with ‘the relentless concern with questions of authority and bodily limits’ (London, 1993, p. 256). It can be contested that Shelley’s text is not about demons and the superhuman, but a critical reading might initiate some discussion of what society suppresses: stories of the broken foundation of masculine privilege. This refers to the idea that Frankenstein’s fractured body alludes to the impotency of men, an unfulfilled identity and the unrealised Lacanian mirrored image. This disunited body becomes a site of contestation, but an ambiguous one as there is confusion surrounding whose body does the text represent? Fear of the fragmented male body can highlight the reason why film and other modern adaptations of Shelley’s book have chosen to exaggerate the Creature’s form so that it becomes disassociated from the male corpus, whereby ‘the male body drops out of sight, consigned to a condition of aberrancy’ (London, 1993, p. 261).

Without the characteristics to determine a classification for the monster, our reception of the Creature is dominated by a superficial engagement with his identity. The status of the monster depends upon familiarity and without traits of recognition our attention is drawn to

the appearance of his corporeal form. Our gaze dominates our perspective of Shelley's Gothic creation, where his physical ugliness determines how our interaction with the marginalised being. Daniel L Collins comments on how the:

object becomes a kind of repository for the gaze-or what Jacques Lacan calls a 'trap of the eye' The seductiveness of an image (in a painting, for example) would cause rational observers 'to lose' themselves to the demands of 'an aesthetic experience'. (Collins, 1992, p. 75)

This statement outlines how society can often 'lose themselves' to appearances, and their perspective of the monster is often clouded by what they expect from an image based on exterior presence and a sense of prior ideological expectation. The Creature's monstrosity results, not only from his grotesque appearance, but also from the unnatural manner of his inception. The Creature is essentially seen as a distortion, a fragment of the ideal, an aversion to the natural. By close readings from an anamorphic perspective, we see the monster possibly as an allegory for how society treats those with physical and intellectual challenges that make them different from the rest of us. The monster can be seen, not as an outside and dehumanised objet to be feared, but rather as a projection onto which we banish the forbidden and repressed aspects of our unconscious selves. Anamorphosis, which provides a different viewpoint, will show even seemingly obvious monsters who are outside of the self, are conceived from the self. Used often in art to expose the dual nature of the image, the anamorphic perspective in Gothic literature can be used to present the idea of the dual perspective that offers newfound perspectives of the Other.

From a single linear perspective, automatic restricted assumptions are made about the Other, because it is unknown, and hence it is equated with something deviant that must be controlled. After the death of Victor's brother, the presence of myths surrounding the abject

adds to the monster being held accountable for the crime: 'He was the murderer! I could not doubt it. The mere presence of the idea was irresistible proof of the fact' (Shelley, 1994, p. 73). Due to intricate connections between illusion and reality, society sets up rigid expectations of the Other. As a result, the Creature within Shelley's novel has taken a great leap from literature into mythology, entrapped in the semiotic field of monstrosity and evil. Oates asks the question 'how many creations of sheer language have stepped from the rhythms of their author's idiosyncratic voices into what might be called a collective cultural consciousness' (Oates, 1984, p. 548). Hence, the monster is immediately a part of a subjective and biased experience; from this, we are disallowed from truly knowing the actual monster because of how our ordinary perspective is dominated by fable and stereotypes. The monstrous figure in Shelley's novel outlines how we are blinded by these cultural myths saying 'a fatal prejudice clouds their eyes, and where they ought to see a feeling and kind friend, they behold only a detestable monster' (Shelley, 1994, p. 129). As human beings, we generally prefer simple interpretations, and are ruled by habit and naturalised meanings. In order to destabilise these preconceived fantasies, anamorphosis can be understood as a truth discourse in narrative fiction; as a means to subvert the system of habituation. It is through anamorphosis, this structure of alternative knowing, which one can only truly know the monster. Anamorphosis undermines classical perspectival representations, and thus becomes a significant mechanism in destabilising traditional illustrations of the monster. The use of the anamorphic perspective demonstrates how the skewed lens functions as a critique of some of the basic presuppositions underlying the narrative-ideological shape of the novel *Frankenstein*. Acknowledging how our gaze / perspective of the world is limited (as if we choose not to alter our stance or position in society, then our minds will continue to be imprisoned by hegemonic language and culture), anamorphic vision thus enables the spectator to transcend cultural signifiers.

Even with the changing face of the monster archetype, Frankenstein's Creature to this day is dominated by an embellished reshaping of its original literary form. We continue to place the monster in the position of Gothic villain, so as to bathe in the pool of familiarity. By the time we read the novel:

the images from various films are so firmly imprinted on our minds that it is almost impossible not to filter the events and images of the book through the familiar ones of the film. We are apt to distort the novel to fit a familiar mould, miss what is fresh or unfamiliar in it, and react with discomfort and disappointment. (Levine & Knoepfmacher, 1982, p. 243)

We abhor unfamiliar and unsettling illustrations that disable our expectations of reality, therefore closing ourselves off to the possibility for alternative modes of representation. It then becomes difficult for the Creature to escape his typecasting, and for the audience to accept re-imagined depictions of Frankenstein's monster. Due to its placement in the semiotic field, the monster is weighted with histories of cultural difference and portent threats of the 'Other'. Varying interpretations of Frankenstein's scientific experiment demonstrate an exaggeration of these myths that place the Other further out of the Self's reach.

In his introduction to the Penguin edition of *Frankenstein*, Maurice Hindle exemplifies the typical scholarly response to the discrepancy between Shelley's monster and his dramatic successors:

It is ironic that the Creature's narrative, so vital to the moral underpinning of the whole work, has been ignored in the numerous theatrical and filmic reworkings of the story ... [It] has simply been left out, unwanted by an audience which prefers the more frightening (and 'simpler') grunts of a threatening monster. (Hindle, 1992, pp. xxix-xxx)

The shifting interpretations of Frankenstein's scientific experiment demonstrate an exaggeration of cultural myths that places Shelley's Gothic villain firmly in the role of Other. Shelley's original creation is not the one with whom we are familiar today; indeed, there is a complete disconnect from the proverbial mumbling simple-minded Creature of the filmic adaptations. Our first impression of the Creature is one of beauty and strength, something far removed from the usual delineations of monstrosity. In our first encounter with this antagonist, Victor describes how he 'had selected his features as beautiful . . . his hair was of lustrous black; and flowing; his teeth of pearly whiteness' (Shelley, 1994, p. 55). In the contemporary reworkings of the Gothic tale, the monster's original form has been exaggerated to the point that the author would not even recognise the Creature himself. In filmic variations of the primary form, we are not given the narrative voice of the Creature and responses tend to be that he is evil, it 'makes him a stock figure of danger, a pure "other"' (Bissonette, 2010, p. 108). This monopolisation of our understanding of the Creature insists on distance and dissociation from the monster.

The visualisation of the monster through film instantly evokes more fear than sympathy, as multiple narrative viewpoints are removed and the voice of the monster is diminished. Consequently, our gaze dominates our interaction with the monster and the ambiguities that surround its identity are discarded, making him the unavoidable villain. Jeffery N. Cox highlights 'the transformation of the creature from Shelley's articulate being who defines himself through Milton to the bolt-headed half-man, half-machine monster of the film tradition' (Cox, 1985, p. 67). The distorted reimagining of Mary Shelly's text has conditioned society to envisage the monster as always muttering with hands outstretched, very far removed from both humanity and its authentic version. Boris Karloff was the first to imbed bolts in the Creature's neck in his 1931 version of *Frankenstein*. It is this combination of monster and machinery that removes all traces of humanity from the Shelley's antihero.

The bolts exemplify a 'hybrid' identity, combining the two most prominent threatening forces in the Victorian era, namely those of science and technology. John Logan's *Penny Dreadful*, is an adaptation, however, that allows the Creature of Frankenstein's experiment to move out of the restricted territory of 'villain', and escape his typecast role. This is a more civilised version of the monster, one that presents an accurate illustration of Shelley's conception, embodying humanistic traits such as emotion and understanding. The monster is not the bumbling ignoramus as depicted in older adaptations, 'he is no lumbering, shuffling, grunting monster mired in the primitive' (Levine & Knoepfmacher, 1982, p. 243). Marked with the mind of both an intellect and poet, the Creature [played by Rory Kinnear] could take his rightful place as the Romantic hero, but is instead forced to the margins of what is considered to be 'acceptably human'. He is once again Shelley's 'accidental monster', representing more 'a fallen angel' than the mumbling simple-minded antagonist that dominates Gothic discourse today.

The process of othering has long been a part of our conceptualisation of the monster, that which disrupts categories and violates limits. The Other acts as an anamorphic skull, 'in its intrusion into the frontal perspectival "reality"', enlarging the cultural divide (Kliger, 2007, p. 312). In order to see the anamorphic skull in Hans Holbein's 'The Ambassadors', the viewer must abandon the normal viewing perspective on the painting, and anamorphically look awry so as to reform the distorted image. An analysis of Frankenstein's monster will similarly force the reader to abandon the normal perspective and look past the distortion in locating the buried meaning. Where Burwick and Pape describe anamorphosis as revealing what is hidden by the typical point of view, a postmodern view of Shelley's Creature will elaborate more on what constitutes the normal perspective, and on how the monster does not fit within it. An anamorphic reading of portraits such as 'The Ambassadors' demonstrates the disruptive power of the Lacanian stain and the precarious nature of any given static

representation. In a similar way, the monster's ability to stain habituated conventions outlines how meaning is never fully secure. Anamorphic research into monstrous identities looks to provide a more objective and sympathetic view so as to distort rigid interpretations of the Other, where 'the anamorphic distortion questions the very nature and illusion of art, as well as its ability to represent or arrive at moral, theological, or philosophical truths' (Burwick & Pape, 1990, p. 334). From an anamorphic standpoint, Frankenstein's Creature questions, in a similar sense, one's impression of human behaviour. The employment of the anamorphic lens functions to elevate every distortion, such as the monster, to a new plane of understanding.

This skewed perspective deconstructs the significance of the monster, and analogies can be made to the development of cultural alterity. Ilya Klinger summarises the spectator's experience with anamorphic art such as Hans Holbein's *The Ambassadors*:

First, the viewer sees two imposing figures against a background of objects that allegorically represent the Quadrivium of the liberal arts. In the midst of the pomp and luxury, however, a strange object at the bottom of the painting remains undecipherable and disturbing. Both impressed by the vividness of the portrait and disconcerted by the unreadable blot, the viewer is about to exit the room through a door on the right when she casts one last glance at the painting, and everything becomes clear. (Klinger, 2007, p. 294)

This interaction with the portrait is exactly the approach this research will take in the case of Frankenstein's Creature. Monsters are seen as the 'imposing' figures in fiction as well as in our society. They protrude a strange identity that is both 'identifiable and disturbing', disconcerting the spectator from achieving further understanding. It is only from a skewed perspective that 'the unreadable blot' can be seen in full clarity and the monster can be formed again. Klinger further divulges that the 'formerly unreadable object is suddenly visible

as a skull . . . while the rest of the painting is reduced to a blur' (Kliger, 2007, p. 294). Once the monster is made fully visible, our view of reality becomes clouded. As soon as the monster is recognised as the 'anamorphic skull' rather than as the 'anamorphic stain', the foundations of reality are destabilised. Societal conventions that classify evil become blurred at the cost of seeing the true representation of the monster through the anamorphic lens. To see Frankenstein's Creature in a new light, devoid of cultural categorisation, one must embrace 'a verbalised anamorphic vision that rejects linear perspective (Burwick & Pape, 1990, p. 334). From a singular perspective, the monster is seen as a stain or fault in normality: however, from a skewed angle, the 'Lacanian stain' is shown to be another side of humanity. Anamorphosis therefore reminds us that monstrosity is not something that is created externally, but comes from the inner mechanisms within.

The reality put forward by the Gothic genre exemplifies how implausible visions of monstrous Others seek to proliferate adverse stereotypes of despised groups, and support invidious hierarchies of social control. An insight into the othering of Frankenstein's Creature can offer deeper understanding of the linear perspectives that enhance the practice of racial profiling. Through the literary depiction of Shelley's antihero, the orientalised of the monster solidifies the fear we have of the Other, and increases our animosity towards cultural difference. The Creature is unable 'to claim identity from childhood experiences, a family, a father, or a nation, the creature offers sensory confusion' (Benford, 2010, p. 328). Examining the Creature as a cultural Other, the oriental Other, the monster is seen as a being who emanates fear because of its difference and indefinite identity. There is much in *Frankenstein* to suggest that it responds to contemporary debates and discussions about the lines of division within the cohesive mechanisms of modern society. Subject to social exclusion, 'artificial and made up of parts, the creature can be read as a figure for the populace or the proletariat' (Benford, 2010, p. 326). The fear of the foreign Other is symbolised in the Creature's

inability to linguistically connect to a human being, and by his physicality being far removed from that of the ordinary Caucasian male. Thus, the conflict between the Creature and his creator is richly suggestive of such a polarised model of social connections. By setting Frankenstein's creation up as the alien Other, it becomes difficult for the reader to connect with his customs and behaviours.

According to Stephen T. Asma: 'an action or a person or a thing is monstrous when it can't be processed by rationality, and when we cannot relate to the emotional range involved' (Asma, 2011, p. 10). Areas that cannot enter the cognitive scope of the human mind such as insanity, sexual freedom and religious deviance are thus branded with the mark of the monstrous. The complexity of the monster in narrative terms exceeds rationality and obstructs our full reading of the text. Frankenstein's monster is viewed as the distorted anamorphic stain, where society determines its relationship to the Other as 'an encounter with the exhaustion and collapse of representation' (Dorrian, 2003, p. 106). The monster is often seen as difficult to understand because it brings ambiguity to the representational field. This link between monster and the complexities of society sets the monster up as a metaphor to correspond with tensions concerning the cultural Other, or alternative correlations of the unknown. Traditionally, we produce monsters so that formations of malevolence will reside far from what we acknowledge humanity to be. Through the process of labelling something as evil, we can then identify ourselves as good. The monster is needed to preserve the moral standard of human beings and anything that descends below the acceptable criterion can be projected onto this shunned identity. By othering deviant behaviour onto the monstrous figure, it can be expelled to the margins as a means of deprecating transgressive human conduct. The construction of the Other can be said to be a dual process 'whereby an imagined included us is created through the construction of an excluded other' (Haynes, et al., 2005, p.

113). This interrelationship is substantial to identity formation as the construction of the self can only be determined by our distinction to the Other.

There is often a conflation of identity with ‘sameness’, leaving no place for Other to establish any sense of identity outside the norm. A postcolonial approach to the character of Frankenstein’s Creature would see him as ‘transformed into a referent for colonised others, by imperial discourse and identified by their “difference” from the centre’ (Baumann & Gingrich, 2005, p. 10). Anything deviating from the usual patterns of reality invites feelings of foreboding and vulnerability. Thus, this text expresses a cautionary tone towards transcendence, seeking to prophesise rather than to entertain. Where the Latin verb ‘*monere*’ means to ‘demonstrate’ or to ‘warn’, Bissonette deduces that the monster ‘might also be a warning, the prophetic embodiment of a nightmare of progress, the visual emblem of momentous change’ (Bissonette, 2010, p. 112). Progress in the realms of science and technology was seen as a frightening force, that made the familiar something unfamiliar, and its uncanniness was thus encapsulated by the monster. Any content buried in anamorphosis is perceived as uncanny, thus rendering the monster perfect for analysis, where its discourse ‘is ideally suited for the depiction of difficult or illicit subject matter’ (Collins, 1992, p. 77). It is from this perspective that monsters can be seen to embody human fears while at the same time facilitating the understanding of socio-cultural motifs.

Joyce Carole Oates succinctly describes how ‘the monsters we create by way of an advanced technological civilisation “are” ourselves as we cannot hope to see ourselves-incomplete, blind, blighted, and, most of all, self-destructive’ (Oates, 1984, p. 550). The monster identity, therefore, becomes a scapegoat for detaching aspects of the self that we cannot admit to being a part of ourselves. Employing a different perspective, it can be seen that monsters, both fictional and real, are in fact all too human: they are projections of the fears, desires and drives of which humans are often terrified. To see the monster as Other is

quite normal; however, to see the monster as a form of projection of the self is more radical, and probably more accurate. The monsters in these texts and films will be seen as projections of the self, as part of us, of the normal reader and viewer, and the implications of this altered view will be traced in our cultural discussion of monsters. *Frankenstein's* monster not only exists as an external force that the doctor spends the narrative escaping, but also lives within the doctor himself, a lurking inner Hyde and 'an invisible source of potential destruction' (Ellis, 2011, p. 4). The novel shows the inescapable relationship one has to the darker aspects of the unconscious, which, when exteriorised, cannot be evaded. In terms of *Frankenstein*, the 'Other' refers to the unconscious self, a powerful force over the human mind. It illustrates the disparaging potential within us all and how humanity is capable of evil. As G. H. Ellis puts it:

Shelley contacted a deep mythic presence of destructive power present in the human psyche, an entity that exists in all of us. This entity is "the monster", a living part of our shadow capable of vengeance and injury. (Ellis, 2011, p. 1)

The monster can no longer be viewed as an external entity, but its attachment to the Self is as contiguous as one's own silhouette. Shelley outlines how terror is not something that exists only in the supernatural realm, but rather is a component of all human beings. Victor Frankenstein stresses this notion in his understanding of how horror is not only a thing that remains in fiction:

Before, I looked upon the accounts of vice and injustice that I read in books or heard from others as tales of ancient days or imaginary evils; at least they were remote and more familiar to reason than to the imagination; but now misery has come home, and men appear to me as monsters thirsting for each other's blood. (Shelley, 1994, p. 88)

Horror often depicts human fear of the monster, but what is rarely mentioned is the monster's fear of the human. What was advanced and more horrifying about *Frankenstein* was that monstrosity had now become internalised, residing in the familiar and the ordinary. This position taken upon deconstructing the binary of Self and Other, refocuses the gaze away from the monster and onto humanity itself.

Where monsters are often seen as adversaries, Asma chooses to deconstruct this familiar perspective, and introduces the concept of the 'accidental monster'. His research underscores that monsters are not intuitively immoral, but that external influences turn them toward malevolence. It is consequent of society's prejudiced stance and perspective that disallows the outsider to enter the realm of cultural norms. Mary Shelley's Creature is a prime example of a shunned identity being forced into the role of monster. On the basis of our understandings of monstrosity, an analysis can be made of the official practices of exclusion and marginalisation of social elements. It is not the fault of the Creature himself from turning down a path of darkness; rather it is 'the failure of Victor Frankenstein and society generally to provide a space for him in the human family that turns the creature into a monster' (Asma, 2011, p. 11). Frankenstein's monster establishes a pretext for discerning the mechanisms in which the Other is marginalised, their basal needs being neglected. The Creature 'is the howling embodiment of loss' (Grand, 2013, p. 137), existing at the very apex of loneliness. Abandoned by his creator and confused, the monster tries to integrate himself into society, only to be shunned universally. He is:

a vision of a man as victim and outcast, innately good and open to the joys of nature and human society, but cut off from the positive emotional responses and severed from society, a tormented and pitiful creature. (Levine & Knoepfelmacher, 1982, p. 244)

The monster therefore exists as the cultural Other, as a victim of society, forced to the margins because of its failure to be categorised. The Creature begs Victor to create a mate for him, a monster equally grotesque to serve as his sole companion. The desire of Frankenstein's Creature to have a mate in the likeness of his own image is an attempt at seeking representation in the human and natural sphere, it is an attempt at belonging. The monster states 'my companion must be of the same species and have the same defects' (Shelley, 1994, p. 139). This stresses the idea that our society is constructed upon collectives, where the need for sameness stretches its manipulative reach to the Creature who wants to feel a part of something. The status of the Creature being seen as aggressor is no longer sufficient to explain his actions; instead, the lack of nurture in his life can be seen as a catalyst that fuels his revenge-filled actions.

The condition of 'Otherness' results in the subject being alienated from the centre of society, and being placed at the margins of inclusiveness and compliance. Shelley ends her narrative of the Creature asking the question 'Am I to be thought the only criminal, when all humankind sinned against me?' (Shelley, 1994, p. 213). Shelley shines a very dark light on humanity and its interaction with the Other. The Creature, being shunned by humans, starts to believe he is the monstrous Other and must act as such. He asks of Victor:

but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed. Everywhere I see bliss, from which I alone am irrevocably excluded. I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous. (Shelley, 1994, p. 95)

The Creature's reference to itself here as a 'fallen angel' demonstrates how the monster is not entirely impure, rather, he is just a damaged being, seeking acceptance. Shelley's Gothic villain outlines that he has committed no crime or evil 'misdeed', and yet society condemns

his very being because biased attitudes towards the monster hint at a potential for evil. Where ‘the Creature is still good, Frankenstein imagines him as evil’ (Grand, 2013, p. 142), to the point that servant ultimately fulfils his master’s wishes.

The monster being seen as a fallen angel also highlights how the Creature is aware of human mythology and religion: in other words, his psyche is culturally aware. Since morals, ethics and religion are seen as markers of humanity, our positioning of the Creature as inhuman is rendered inaccurate by this knowledge. By invoking this frame of thinking, the monster, from its own words, is deconstructing its predefined representation as monster. It is said that our moral compass is what separates us from animals, however, even with an ethical awareness, the Creature continues to be animalised and denied any form of admittance to everyday society. Probity alone is no longer considered enough to be deemed as ‘acceptably human’; one must follow the religion and morals of the collective, denying notions of individuality, to avoid the label ‘monster’. Thus, this underlines ‘demonisation of the “Other”, in the image of the monster as a political device for scapegoating those whom the rules of society deem impure or unworthy- the transgressors and deviants’ (Gilmore, 2009, p. 14). The Creature’s deviation from the accepted path compels society to clip his wings, disallowing the falsified antagonist the privilege of sharing any bond with human beings, and ultimately becoming the ‘fallen angel’.

The Creature of *Frankenstein* adheres to the concept of ‘Tabula Rasa’, an idea drawn from John Locke. This revelation suggests how our consciousness is a “blank slate” and after the moment of birth, life experiences fill in this vacant space, shaping our personality and character. Upon observation of a family of cottagers, in addition to acquiring language from them, the Creature learns the possibility of true bonding and human language, feeling the possibility of goodness within. This othered figure observes the ‘gentle manners and beauty of the cottagers greatly endeared them to me; when they were unhappy, I felt depressed;

when they rejoiced, I sympathised in their joys' (Shelley, 1994, p. 108). As soon as the Victor's creation is born, he seeks refinement and the inclusiveness that humanity can offer. The Creature is not a monster but a pitiful outsider that attempts to follow traditions of the norms to avoid the label of 'Other'. He is terrified at being placed outside of societal norms, 'but the uncouth and inarticulate sounds which broke from me frightened me into silence again' (Shelley, 1994, p. 99). There are many parallels between the Creature and representatives of the racial Other who seeks integration by embracing the language of the colonial superior – English. In disguising the deformity of his appearance, the Creature attempts to perfect his own language, 'I ought not to make the attempt until I had first become master of their language, which knowledge might enable me to make them overlook the deformity of my figure' (Shelley, 1994, p. 109). The monster adapts a persona that would allow his abject body to participate within society; however, the inevitable condemnation of the Creature was already decided before he could even speak. The Creature is then not born evil, but is conditioned by external forces, learning only degenerative behaviour from the human race.

Sue Grand reflects on the Creature's dismal position in her book *The Reproduction of Evil: A Clinical and Cultural Perspective*, commenting on how 'human encounter simply promises the renewal of annihilation' (Grand, 2013, p. 141). The encounters the monster has with representatives of humanity augment his self-hatred and facilitate his burning desire for retribution. Indeed, some argue that this Gothic villain shows itself to be more of a 'man' than humankind itself. Joyce Carol Oates reflects on how 'he requires love in order to become less monstrous, but, as he *is* a monster, love is denied to him' (Oates, 1984, p. 546). The Creature is entrapped in an inescapable cycle of semiotics and stereotypes that allows for no happy ending. The monster's 'evil' nature is not intrinsic to his being; it is instilled by the many ordeals he suffers from the moment he is shunned at birth. After his disconcerting

confrontation with the cottagers, his journey of hate begins where ‘evil became my good’ (Shelley, 1994). Therefore, the basis of the ‘accidental monster’ subverts preconditioned meaning concerning victimhood, redefining the premise of moral legibility. After an exploration into the ‘accidental monster’, no longer are our preconceptions of the monster sufficient in justifying the motivations of Frankenstein’s Creature. This re-examination of the monster through the anamorphic lens produces a distorted observation of habituated ideologies, representing ‘an unreadable element that disturbs our vision of what appears to be reality’ (Kliger, 2007, p. 295).

Looking at the Creature as an anamorphic image, the viewer must split its perspective in two, like the character of Jekyll and Hyde, in an effort to explore the oppressed and repressed meaning of his hatred for humanity. In this sense, the reader must also fulfil this double task – namely, to extract repressed meaning from the monster while also making sense of its relativity to society as a whole. Anamorphosis seeks to explain and transverse the complex relationship of the observer to the problems of perception of the monster. Collins refers to this as the ‘secret perspective’, where just as the unconscious is repressed, so too is the truth about the construct of the monster. He underlines that anamorphosis is a tool to put a light on the graphic smear, or in other words, so that the untold story of the monster can be told. He notes:

It is in these ‘wrinkles in the field’ that an opportunity for giving expression to those things that stand to the side, that have been literally and figuratively marginalised, is found. Anamorphosis is a technique for bringing that which still remains outside of the field of the gaze into the line of sight and into consciousness. (Collins, 1992, p. 81)

An anamorphic look at Shelley's text depicts how Frankenstein's scientific monster acts as a 'wrinkle' in the semiotic field, and as an aversion to the linear perspective. It is through the anamorphic gaze that this traditional monster, that was once placed at the periphery, is now brought into the 'the line of sight and into consciousness'. The centralisation of this character therefore delegitimises humanity's opposition to the monster and in fact justifies the depraved intentions of the Creature. As Collins explains: 'the crucial difference from classical perspective is that an observer positioned to receive the undistorted view of an anamorphic image would have to be at a radically oblique angle to the picture plane' (Collins, 1992, p. 73). Thus to provide clarity to our distorted view of Frankenstein's monster, we must radicalise our ways of thinking and our ways of seeing humanity.

This radical point of view is exactly the objective of Mary Shelley when writing this book. In the Penguin Books edition of the novel, an author's introduction written in 1831 identifies how she wanted to write a narrative that would disrupt the reader's perception of reality:

I busied myself to think of a story . . . One which would speak to the mysterious fears of our nature and awaken thrilling horror – one to make the reader dread to look round, to curdle the blood, and quicken the beatings of the heart. (Shelley, 1994, pp. 7-8)

An analysis of Shelley's text will present to the reader that the monster's distorted body was not the focal point which would 'quicken the beatings of the heart', but it was the signifier of how monster and human were alike, with even humanity being more corrupt than monster. This nonconformist angle taken by Shelley exposes how the gap between self and other is not as clearly defined where the monster is created in the image of man and shares a commonality and bond. When Victor Frankenstein looks at his creation, and sees a reflection

of his own monstrosity, the sight horrifies him. This horror can be related to the universal fear of detecting an inner vileness if a deeper look is taken into our own consciousness. Applications of the anamorphic perspective produce this reflective effect in both literature and art, where the message that is hidden often emulates what we fear most, while also mirroring humanity in its purest form. Similarly, Shelley's narrative 'provides a watchtower's view that allows the reader to see beyond the deceptive nature of appearances' (Castillo, 2001, p. 35). We have become so paralysed by what we consider to be 'normal', that an authentic sense of self has been lost in the process. Burwick and Pape investigate the illuminating quality of anamorphosis, and how it breaks down the operation of habituation. They highlight how the 'anamorphic perspective is hidden within the normal perspective and only emerges with a radical shift of viewpoint – a reforming of viewpoint' (Burwick & Pape, 1990, p. 334). A dramatic stance is therefore needed to unsettle the reader's predefined reality, and dismantle their long-standing cultural obsession with naming and categorising the monster.

With this in mind, David R. Castillo highlights the interdisciplinary branches of the anamorphic perspective and its potential contribution to literary texts. In his introduction, he comments that during the process of anamorphosis where the spectator is faced 'with unstable and changing images, the spectator is invited to distance himself or herself from fixed interpretations, and to reflect on the uncertainty and the artificial or constructed nature of meaning' (Castillo, 2001, pp. 1-2). Hence, we need to envision a substitute viewpoint of Shelley's Creature conducive to freeing ourselves from misrepresentations constructed from our own expectations. In an attempt to maintain rationality over potential inflated depictions of the monstrous, we as the spectator must be open to the possibility that our presented linguistic reality is false. It is only after we anamorphically look at the monster in *Frankenstein* that the newfound perspective 'reveals the error of our first impression of the

depicted image' (Castillo, 2001, p. 78). Therefore, our perception of evil and monstrosity is in fact an error theory, and this mistaken perspective distorts our view of the world in such a way that we see hidden authentic identities. Žižek 'argues that we must aim to reveal the ideological error of perspective by creating awry views of the field of identities' (Castillo, 2001, p. 105). It is only after literature distorts our reliable perception of the world that distortions such as the monster can be re-evaluated.

The anamorphic perspective of the monster allows for this escape from myth, and through analysing the ambiguities surrounding notions of evil and monstrosity, this theory allows for the unravelling of repressed meanings. The employment of anamorphosis thus provides multiperspectival forms of discourse and 'challenge well-established beliefs about the world in much the same way that certain forms of perspective anamorphosis reveal the arbitrariness and incompleteness of any total view' (Castillo, 2001, p. 2). Similar to how fundamental the notion of perspective is to anamorphosis, the survival of ideas of monstrosity are also dependent on perspective. Shelley anamorphically looks to the margins of society, attempting to voice the oppressed and deligitimised. Through this perspective, the monster is deconstructed, thereby allowing the emergence of an authoritative voice and the ability to control one's agency. In the same way, anamorphosis 'seeks to deny the usual conventions of "looking"' (Collins, 1992, p. 73), Shelley sought to alter the operation of 'looking' at the monster by allowing the monster to not just be a subject of the gaze but to also command the gaze.

The focus of the gaze must be altered so as to decipher the mechanisms that bring the concept of monster to life and reveal the reasons behind our dependency on demonising the unknown. Just as in 'the anamorphic painting it is impossible to decipher the stain from the same position from which the rest of the painting makes sense, so in narrative it is only with the shift of perspective' (Kliger, 2007, p. 295). Society chooses to keep the Other in the

position as monster, or the unreadable anamorphic stain, so that they can manipulate and control the gaze of the spectator and prevent understanding of notions of otherness and alterity. Frankenstein's Creature is never given control over his own body because he is not given the relevant knowledge by his creator. When Victor first encounters his creation, the monster 'muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out' (Shelley, 1994, p. 56). Uneducated in the beginning of the novel, the muteness of the monster closes off the possibilities of signification. The marginal voice of the monster compensates for the ideological distortion. Voice and silence therefore become significant determiners of monstrosity. The justification behind demonising a voiceless being is rooted in a primitive instinct that sees one who lacks linguistic control as more animal than human. As the text develops, Shelley complicates our engagement with the monster by providing him with intellect and speech, something we were forbidden to see in the character of Hyde. We can identify the potential for acumen and emotion within the animated corpse, so that the reader finds it more difficult to judge him negatively, or see him as non-human. No longer is good and evil a distinct binary, but Frankenstein's creation transgresses conventional understandings of behavioural impulses. Melissa Bloom Bissonette comments on how 'a monster is inherently a thing of contradiction' (Bissonette, 2010, p. 117), something that we see as unnatural because we are confused about whether to sympathise or despise its alterity.

Like the anamorphic perspective, the monster makes strange what is otherwise familiar and invisible. The Creature, when allowed a voice, deconstructs the illusory perspectives we have of humanity, and exposes the reality that monstrous imperfections can also be located within the human being. Shelley's antihero is terrified of the barbarity of man and repulsed by aspects of humanity commenting how for 'a long time I could not conceive how one man could go forth and murder . . . but when I heard details of vice and bloodshed,

my wonder ceased and I turned away with disgust and loathing' (Shelley, 1994, p. 115). It is from the perspective of the Creature that roles are reversed, with the monster's humanity coming to the fore, and society being subject to condemnation. Without the words of the monster, providing the skewed perspective, the reader would permanently be bound by the subjective view of the 'Other'. Michael Booth confirms that the Creature is falsely misrepresented and is in fact the victim of cruelty rather than being the instigator of destruction. The articulation of this character reveals that he will always be the 'sympathetic figure with a terrible and mysterious past who is meant to evoke great pity' (Booth, 1965, p. 71). Where traditional representations of the Creature often depict him as a dark shadowy monster, far removed from the human race, the monster's perspective shows an innocence and sense of vulnerability. The significance of speech is important in humanising the monster, and therefore the untold story of the evil body must be voiced. A way of enunciating the monster's hidden trauma is through anamorphosis, 'the necessary condition for obtaining a real image' (de Vries, *et al.*, 2013, p. 50). Through the anamorphic lens, an attempt can be made to obtain a valid and objective perspective of the monster in *Frankenstein*. The monster's eloquent narration of events reveals his remarkable sensitivity and compassion. Utilising anamorphosis in this way, can contribute to the process of knowing, revealing the unspeakable and ultimately prevent a prejudiced blindness from consuming our correlation with the 'Other'.

If one were to look at Lacan's 'mirror phase', it designates the 'Other' as a resemblance of the Self, which is initially discovered when a child looks into the mirror and becomes aware of itself as a separate being. What is fundamental about this theory is that even though the 'Other' is separate to the Self, there is still a connection and also a familiarity between both identities, and also, crucially, there is a constitutive connection as the image has an effect on the creation of the Self. Where humanity tends to distance themselves from the

Other, Baumann and Gingrich determine that difference and identity are not external to each other as, from a Lacanian viewpoint, difference is always a part of identity. Their book *Grammars of Identity / Alterity: A Structural Approach* determines ‘identity is a part of difference insofar as its own formation is subject to the basic relation with a powerful and distinct “Other” whose gaze defines the terms’ (Baumann & Gingrich, 2005, p. 11). Both creator and creation, both Frankenstein and monster, are in fact each other’s double, a reminder to each other of the levels of evil that are present in the world. From Lacan’s studies on the ‘Mirror Phase’, the monster can be seen to act as the mirror image of Victor, as Victor identifies with this image, as it serves as a *gestalt* of his emerging perceptions of identity. In turn, Victor represents the imago, an Ideal-I, which the Creature perpetually strives to become. Upon this observation, the Creature’s monstrous nature is seen to develop from an unconstructive perspective of selfhood, one that is shown to him by Victor, one that is both destructive and damaging.

Their bond is undeniable as both are slaves to passion and emotion, and both succumbed to isolation because of their own individual alterity. In one of the many letters to Mrs. Saville in England, an account of Victor’s unusual and erratic behaviour is written stating having ‘conquered the violence of his feelings, he appeared to despise himself for being the slave of his passion’ (Shelley, 1994, p. 27). Their anomalous actions and behaviours make them both perform as outsiders and outcasts in society. However, as it is the Creature’s physicality that ostracises him, Victor purposefully marginalises himself, recognising the deviance of his work and the evil within himself, ‘and the same feelings which made me neglect the scenes around me caused me also to forget those friends who were so many miles absent, and whom I had not seen for so long a time’ (Shelley, 1994, p. 53). Smith identifies how Victor’s disconnect from conventional society is augmented by his relationship to the Creature, and by his abject fascination with death. It is suggested by

Shelley 'that the Creature is produced from Victor's inner life and that it enacts his horror of domesticity by killing those who are associated with it' (Smith, 2012, p. 158). Victor attempts to break the repetitive chain of expected societal ideals of the Victorian man and creates a monster that convolutes both his relationship with himself and those around him. The doctor exiles himself from human affiliation because he can no longer recognise his place in society after defying male limitations. Victor is aware that his desire for knowledge compromises his reputation and his ability to fit into society's conventional reality:

A human being in perfection ought always to preserve a calm and peaceful mind and never to allow passion or a transitory desire to disturb his tranquillity. I do not think that the pursuit of knowledge is an exception to this rule. (Shelley, 1994, p. 53)

Frankenstein chooses to isolate himself and be consumed by his work, wherein 'denying the realities of loss and separation, he refuses the renewal of human interaction' (Grand, 2013, p. 140). Shelley establishes her two main protagonists as doubles so that the gap between human and monster dissipates.

There are stages in the book when even Victor transforms into the motionless corpse. After an encounter with his friend Clerval, he faints and comments 'for I was lifeless and did not recover my senses for a long, long time' (Shelley, 1994, p. 59). This moment symbolises his intricate connection with the Creature, signifying their inseparable bond and shared modes of identity. Ultimately, Victor Frankenstein does not shy away from the darkness, and it is he himself that severs the divide between humanity and monstrosity. His character can in fact be presented as the true monster as he allows for the death of two innocents, as, even though not killed by his own hands, his inaction could be seen as monstrous. Victor admits this in his words 'I, not in deed, but in effect, was the true murderer' (Shelley, 1994, p. 89). His presence in the text reflects on how an act or a person is not evil in essence, but it is the

behaviour of Victor, his unhealthy curiosities and his repression of his sinful deed, which makes him the human monster of the story. He even admits the extent to which his obscene thirst for knowledge will take him, confessing 'One man's life or death were but a small price to pay for the acquirement of the knowledge which I sought' (Shelley, 1994, p. 27). Unlike the character of Mr Hyde, the embodiment of repressed desire, Victor Frankenstein does not inhibit the darkness of his own humanity, but instead he 'pursued nature to her hiding-places' and chooses to engage with the concealed pleasures of society (Shelley, 1994, p. 52). The paralleling of both characters confuses the deduction of who is man and who is beast. As the novel progresses, the inhuman creation becomes increasingly human while the creator becomes increasingly inhuman. It is only when Victor's perspective is substituted for the monster's one, that the oppressed agendas regarding abjectness are revealed. The strategy behind doing this 'perspective reversal that is characteristic of anamorphosis' (Castillo, 2001, p. 6) is so that the reader's expectations of both characters becomes unhinged and therefore allow new observations to fill this moment of confusion.

Where anamorphosis reveals hidden realities created from the unconscious, the monster represents the hidden self within the unconscious. The monster then can be seen as the human from another perspective. The hidden face of humanity is exposed through the character of Victor, darkening our view on humanity. While the distorted image of the Creature is given more focus, the surrounding perspectives created by Victor become blurred. This anamorphic altering of the distorted image allows the scientific monster to be transformed from villain to victim. Dawn Ades notes 'such inventions as anamorphic perspective, as we shall see, posited a "hidden reality" which was to suggest analogies with the unknowable of the unconscious' (Ades, 2000, p. 17). Frankenstein's Creature is an embodiment of the projection of what society casts off as 'the unknowable of the unconscious'. Through applications of anamorphic perspectives concerning representations

of the monster, this examination of the Creature aims to ‘make us more aware of “what we see” is to a certain extent a function of “our way of seeing” and, consequently, of “who we are and / or want to be”’ (Castillo, 2001, p. 10). Therefore, this interdisciplinary approach has the potential to alter our dominant ways of thinking, and to restructure explanations of human behaviour. Where the spectator must play a part and re-form the representative body themselves, it is up to them alone to criticise their own behaviour and alter their own preconceived ideas, which can be a difficult task to undertake.

Placing a magnified lens on the acts of monsterring the Other and the dislikeable aspects of humanity will show how observations of the cultural Other are rendered incomplete, as any true understanding of the Other will locate them outside the realm of unknowable and unfamiliar, making the subject harder to dehumanise and marginalise. It is this repositioning of the monster, in this case Frankenstein’s creation, which alters the cultural signifier proposed by David Wengrow earlier in this chapter. His sourcing of the monster’s meaning as ‘portentous signs and evil omens’ is no longer viable after the anamorphic lens casts a shadow upon humanity, and upon the underbelly of society. The boundaries between human and monster, self and other, become less distinct. In the context of Monster Studies, manifestations of the monster as the cultural Other places emphasis on the ongoing debates in the humanities and social sciences regarding cultural difference. It is through the process of anamorphosis that the placement of the monstrous ‘Other’ in the practices of evil becomes more of an incompatible concept. After exposing the transgression of rigid binaries and categories, the anamorphic perspective of the Other introduces discourses of resistance and change.

Chapter Two: The Monster Within

Nineteenth century Gothic literature produced anxiety in relation to the deviant subject. By constructing Gothic monsters that symbolised deviance and abnormality, it instilled fear in the reader, and warned them of the dangers of straying from the norm. While considering Tim Burton's view that 'monsters are liminal and evolving symbols of anxiety that reflect society' (Burton, 2015, p. 167), it can be contended that monsters from the Victorian era were a projection of growing concerns relating to the abandonment of modesty and demureness. Individuals lacking in decorum, or in adherence to hegemonic Victorian ideals, were shunned from society and demonised for being different. Richard Allestree notes in his book, *The Ladies Calling*, that 'an impudent woman is lookt [*sic*] as a kind of monster, a thing diverted and distorted from its proper form' (Allestree, 1677, p. 16). The Gothic monster's embodiment of carnal desire demonstrated to its reader that amoral behaviour would be deemed as monstrous, and thus facilitated societal command over the spectator. By classifying deviant or transgressive behaviour as abject, diversity became a frightening concept.

In William Wordsworth's autobiographical poem *The Prelude*, he deemed this to be 'the impressive discipline of fear' in which civilisation enforced its social codes onto the mind itself (Wordsworth, 1799). Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* demonstrates a cumulative restlessness in reaction to the modernising world, and to the decay of human decorum. With the boundaries of human possibility now a more flexible structure, the individual began to experiment with once prohibited fancies. This narrative therefore can be seen to expose the existence of an adherence to a moral code where, according to Abigail Burnham Bloom, the character of Mr Hyde sheds light on how 'many Victorians were flirting with the desire for more exotic tastes' and releasing their own

Mr Hyde within (Bloom, 2010, p. 42). Furthermore, Stevenson's construction of Hyde will be dissected to reveal how his Gothic antihero acts as a warning to humanity that any deviance from traditional etiquette would spur a decline in the moral state of the individual, resulting in anxiety, depression or even desolation. This exploration will not only observe concerns surrounding the rejection of human propriety, but will also inspect how the monster aids in the process of displacement, facilitating the refutation of monstrosity being attached to the homogenous self. The fear and abhorrence directed at this protagonist becomes less about the criminal acts Hyde perpetrates, and more to do with what his representation meant for Victorian England in 1886. In addition, it will interrogate what makes his identity grotesque while also looking into missing identities in the novel such as the noticeable absence of women from the text.

Similar to how anamorphosis presents a warped image or perception to its audience, postmodern interpretations of Hyde distort the available preconceptions of his villainous tendencies. The word 'anamorphosis' is derived from the Greek prefix *ana-*, meaning back or again, and the word *morphe* meaning shape or form. Therefore, the structure of Hyde will be looked at again through a skewed lens so as to reshape the once concrete mould of Gothic villain. The theoretical frameworks of psychology and deconstruction will operate as the curved mirror in the process of anamorphosis, and will allow for the monstrous subject to be viewed from an alternative standpoint to reconstitute a rigid reflection of this established trope. The relevance of employing anamorphic theory in the investigation of this text is the agency that the reader / viewer plays in the construction of perspective. Instead of meaning being primarily a 'given', this theoretical foundation warrants plural notions of meaning to be interpreted. The significance of dual meaning precludes stereotypes from taking form, and prevents the established typecasts of monstrosity from dominating our attitude to Mr Hyde. We have systemised ourselves through words and language, and specifically the word

‘monster’ is used to project our subjective view on the nature of evil, and on what anything outside the norm represents. The monster becomes a fable to whom we give a name, and therefore endow with meaning.

According to David Chandler ‘we seem as a species to be driven by a desire to make meaning’ (Chandler, 1999, p. 16). We are programmed to respond to an idea that we can recognise in a straightforward manner, therefore generations of literature on monstrosity have taught us to approach something indefinite and unknown as perilous. An engagement with the anamorphic will, therefore, allow for meaning to be interpreted in an alternative way, and to understand that the presented image is often not the only one at hand. John F. Moffitt confirms the importance of the spectator in the process of anamorphosis in his book, *Painterly Perspective and Piety: Religious Uses of the Vanishing Point, from the 15th to the 18th Century*, where he asserts how they ‘must mentally play an active part in order to conceptually “reshape” the deformed, even dematerialised images placed before the eyes by his artist’ (Moffitt, 2008, p. 235). It becomes almost impossible to break societal chains of habit; therefore, anamorphosis becomes essential in how agency is given to the reader to create their own interpretations of the abject Other. It is within this active participation with the text that literary deception can be exposed, and from where truth can be extracted beneath the superficial surface. According to Lyle Massey, in his essay, *Anamorphosis through Descartes or Perspective Gone Awry*, ‘anamorphosis requires the viewer’s movement from visual confusion to visual clarity’ (Massey, 1997, p. 1186). Thus, research into the character of Dr Jekyll / Mr Hyde will seek to unsettle the reader, but only for the purpose of bringing them to a realisation of the hidden principle that the monster can be located both within and without. This ‘visual confusion’ mentioned by Massey can be interpreted in a literary sense to be the blurring of naturalised opinions after an anamorphic viewpoint is presented. It is only

after this 'confusion' takes place that habituated conventions may be negated and the individual is awakened from his / her anesthetised state.

Anamorphosis is an unconventional way of viewing the subject, and since in this case, the subject is the monster who rejects the regulatory canon, the anamorphic perspective is essential to understanding the alternative faces of the Gothic villain. Webster's dictionary defines anamorphosis as 'a distorted or monstrous projection or representation of an image ... a deformation of the image'. Similarly, a distorted view of Hyde that highlights the Gothic villain as a projection of the monster within and a reflection of evil inside us all, inverts our perceptions of traditional evil. The idiosyncratic perspective of anamorphosis shares a common bond with the complex space that is the Gothic. It is a genre that disturbs its audience because it presents a disordered world where conventions are erased. Hence, an abhorrence for the monster emanates from humanity's inclination towards order and ordinariness. Lawrence Wright confirms this stating:

We prefer an ordered world, regular patterns, familiar forms, and when flaws or distortions occur, provided they are not too gross, our mind's eye tidies them up. We see what we want or expect to see. (Wright, 1983, p. 27)

Our way of 'tidying up' the darker side of humanity is by placing it into a category, and labelling the subject as monstrous. This appetite to classify and represent unwelcome notions evolves from a need to find some order in the disorderly.

The monster Hyde is a representation of the unconscious self in its purity, often misrepresented as a purely evil entity unattached to a more rational humanity. He is a manifestation of the potential for evil that exists within all of us, and of how an inner monster is always lurking in the shadows ready to show itself. A Freudian reading of the text introduces the notion that Mr Hyde serves as the id, or in other words the 'hidden self'. Freud

says that ‘Where id was, there shall ego be’ (Freud, 1953-74, p. 80). If one were to apply this to monster theory, Freud confirms the proposed idea that the self (ego) cannot exist without its inhibited inner monster (id). Dr Jekyll’s second self relates to the darker side of humanity, the uncomfortable reflections that the mind involuntarily represses from the unconscious. Stevenson’s Gothic text, in effect, allows for a liberating experience to occur in which unconscious desires can be confronted without risk of scrutiny. In Horace Walpole’s preface to *The Castle of Otranto*, he suggests the importance of the Gothic in how it ‘paved a road for man . . . capable of receiving greater embellishments than his imagination or conduct of the passions could bestow upon it’ (Smith, 2013, p. 19). Hence, the role of the monster must be probed so that all that is occluded by language can be resurfaced and reformed. Even though repression was a concept not yet introduced by Freud, his work on the unconscious, and the suppressed nature of the unconscious, is significant to an analysis of Stevenson’s text which explores the cultural complexities concerning human behaviour. Therefore, horror stories such as *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* ‘are not really about monsters and ghosts at all; those are mere symbols and symptoms to be penetrated in order to deal with repressed materials’ (Clasen, 2010, p. 114). Repression thus becomes a defence mechanism, which precludes the self-destructive aspects within us taking shape. It is what cultivates our humanity and imprisons the monster within.

In the late nineteenth century, for a person to have a mastery over the self and be respected, they had to deny themselves opportunities for the appearance of emotion or dissipation, whereby ‘by denial of the flesh, they hoped to feed their spirit’ (Bloom, 2010, p. 44). Society was conditioned into believing that only by refuting one’s primitive nature, could one live a productive and favourable life. The most intimate parts of Dr Jekyll’s tormented soul are represented by the sealed cabinet in the upper storey of the laboratory building. This becomes metaphoric of the cage within which his abject and othered persona

must remain enclosed. The red colour of this cabinet even ‘gives additional emphasis to the sinister unholiness of his propensity for evil’ (Egan, 1966, p. 31). It can be argued Hyde is not a demonic figure at all, but rather an illustration of the natural self without limitation. Jekyll negates the process of repression and creates his alter ego in Hyde in order to transgress the expectations of the Victorian man. Jekyll understands that suppression of even the most base sins can result in a tortured psyche, and consequently, an erratic release of immoral acts: ‘my devil had been long caged, he came out roaring, I was conscious, even when I took the draught, of a more unbridled, a more furious propensity to ill’ (Stevenson, 1886, p. 80). Hyde serves as the threshold to darker instincts; he serves as the key that unlocks the cabinet doors of Jekyll’s own subconscious.

The many references to doors throughout the novel are metaphorically significant in their representation of either opening up or closing off the corridors of our own psyche. Utterson represents someone who chooses to shut the door to his repressed self and trap his very own Hyde within. In one of the novel’s opening paragraphs, he admits that ‘he enjoyed the theatre, [but] had not crossed the doors of one for twenty years’ (Stevenson, 1886, p. 9). This line is indicative of how Utterson, an embodiment of the civilised man, chooses not to surrender to his indulgent appetites and instead, decides to lock away his unrefined desires, with the door trope serving to reinforce this sense of emotions being closed off. He admits:

Hence it came about that I concealed my pleasures; and when I reached years of reflection, and began to look around me and take stock of my progress in the world, I stood already committed to a profound duplicity of me. (Stevenson, 1886, p. 52)

Utterson embodies an attempt made by Stevenson in acknowledging humanity’s desire to distance itself away from primordial urges and project its own potential for darkness onto something far removed from understandings of selfhood. Additionally, the two entries into Dr

Jekyll's home reflect the alternative and competing modes to his identity, with the battered back door being symbolic of Hyde's place in society, while the front door of his dwelling represents the false face Jekyll that needs to maintain the ideals of the Superego. The front doorway 'which wore a great air of wealth and comfort', solidifies his position as the respectable Victorian man (Stevenson, 1886, p. 23).

Even though Utterson sets up barriers to protect his position as a reputable man, his breaking down of the doorway into Jekyll's abode is indicative of his desire to break down his own structured front and transform into his own version of Hyde. We see this desire in the words 'Down with the door, Poole!' (Stevenson, 1886, p. 56). Regardless of how forcibly one shuts the door to their inner demons, there will always be gaps in the unconscious through which repressed thought can filter through. The novel therefore outlines how the monster is always lurking within the depths of the unconscious, and can never truly be distanced from the Self. Mr Hyde's entering and existing through the postern of Dr Jekyll's home can be taken as a metaphor for the malevolence that lies behind the facade of a refined society. In the opening scene, we witness this dark side to society where even though they make the moral choice not to kill Hyde, they find other ways of incriminating his manhood. Enfield recalls 'killing being out of the question, we did the next best. We told the man we could and would make such a scandal out of this, as should make his name stink from one end of London to the other' (Stevenson, 1886, p. 12). As Victorian society perceived criminal behaviour as being on par with social humiliation, Hyde is unable to escape the category of monster, because external influences 'make his name stink', therefore demonising his character through the medium of language and culture.

Stevenson brings to light the repercussions resulting from the social obligation of inhibiting one's own true nature. He reveals the impossibility of detaching oneself from one's natural being, suggesting that the repressed will always return, because the 'Victorian man

could not for long confine himself beneath the domestic covers' (Saposnik, 1971, p. 730). Irving S. Saposnik's observation outlines how man can only maintain the facade of decency for so long until a Freudian slip occurs and their erratic unconscious is unleashed. By looking at the Gothic villain anamorphically, the familiarity of the distorted monster is given more focus, and consequently the human psyche is shown to be more vulnerable to degenerative impulses. This novel is all about a revisit to the repressed or in other words an encounter with 'the ghost of some old sin' (Stevenson, 1886, p. 25). The unpredictable nature of the subconscious becomes a more frightening matter than the physical monsters of our reality. The fact that the mind is a precarious construct in which repressed thoughts can resurface at any moment contributes to Utterson's unease. He admits to fearing his own unconscious and his forgotten memories:

scared by the thought, brooded awhile on his own past, groping in all the corners of memory, least by chance some Jack-in-the-Box of an old iniquity should leap to light there. (Stevenson, 1886, p. 25)

Unlike Utterson who refutes his uncivilised character, the serum Jekyll concocts gives him the freedom to satisfy his cravings, and thereby allows for the return of the repressed. Even though the doctor manipulates his knowledge of science to facilitate his darker motivations, his preparation of an antidote hints at his desire to be good. However, the ultimate failure of the anecdote is suggestive of Jekyll's buried aspiration to surrender to his unconscious and let the monster within consume him, proving the fruitlessness of removing evil wholly from humanity. The spectator's attraction to horror therefore evolves from a desire to alleviate the pressures of normalcy. Just as individuals confront repressed material through dreams, so the Gothic genre functions as a way for individuals to challenge and resolve what society inhibits where '[t]he monster is the symbolic reassertion of that which civilization has sexually and

economically oppressed / repressed or “othered” (Becker 2006). We will always as a species have an unceasing desire for the forbidden fruit; a desire that makes us a friend of the darkness; a desire that invites our own Mr Hyde to disclose itself.

Application of anamorphic theory to this text will shed light on both the processes of revelation and dissimulation in literature. According to Lacan, language can be the tool for both discovery and concealment. The process of anamorphosis is often considered to be associated with unravelling an artist’s disguise, a trickery enacted so as to shield his / her own privacy or personal interests. Paintings were often composed in an askew manner so that it could only be identified anamorphically by placing a polished cylinder in a particular position. The illustration’s clandestine message was often obscured so that the spectator could take control of the interpretive process, manoeuvring their own perspective so as to facilitate their understanding of the distorted image. There is a sense of autonomy that comes with the power to conceal, and it is within the unseen that true meaning lies. Dr Jekyll can only be his genuine self when he learns how to hide his unrefined self. His other persona has a strong etymological and symbolic connotation to the word ‘hide’ which further strengthens the argument that he represents that which is repressed by Victorian society. Utterson draws our attention to the meaning of his name in which he claims ‘If he be Mr Hyde . . . I shall be Mr Seek’ (Stevenson, 1886, p. 21). Concealment within the literary sphere proves its significance in how it leads to discoveries, and highlights truths that may have been ignored if made too obvious. Therefore, it becomes an obligation in monster theory to analyse covert meanings due to valuable interpretations being drawn from inadequacies and insignificant nuances.

The phenomenologist Edmund Husserl writes ‘a certain *inadequacy* belongs . . . to the perception of things, and that too is an essential necessity’ (Kwan, 1990, p. 367). The very limitations of perspective lead us to speculate about what lies beyond what we see.

Anamorphosis makes the reader more self-aware and conscious of the processes through which meaning is constructed; it also makes the reader aware of a need for different perspectives. The tradition of the anamorphic perspective can be used to trace the influences of the sublime effect, and unmask previous blind spots in the contextual dominions of literature and art. Where the anamorphic perspective is often seen as revealing ‘a gap or stain in the perceptual field’ (Barney, 2010, p. 5), a similar deconstructive approach highlights a gap of understanding in the character of Hyde. Jennifer E. Boyle in her book, *Anamorphosis in Early Modern Literature: Mediation and Affect*, states that anamorphosis exposes how our vision is mediated by the ‘Lacanian stain’, represented by the flattened skull in Hans Holbein’s *The Ambassadors*. Where the anamorphic skull represents what is hidden, the main portrait symbolises our constructed reality and what holds mastery over our vision. In deconstructing Stevenson’s text, if Mr Hyde were presented as the hideous creature, or the Lacanian stain; it becomes even more important to use anamorphosis to ascertain the man behind the monster. The most significant deception or rather the ‘anamorphic skull’ in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is the lie Jekyll tells himself, that the character of Mr Hyde is separate to himself, an external body to his own self. He cannot accept his own duplicitous nature and the ‘inescapable conclusion that man must dwell in uncomfortable but necessary harmony with his multiple selves’ (Saposnik, 1971, p. 274).

The focus of examining the monster Hyde will be more about what is revealed than what remains hidden. Anamorphosis, as well as enabling meaning to be concealed, holds the power to recover histories that have been repressed, delegitimised and minoritised. In this case, Dr Jekyll / Mr Hyde will be anamorphically unveiled so an attempt can be made to humanise this infamous figure that has so long been dehumanised. Jekyll promises to Lanyon ‘if you will but punctually serve me, my troubles will roll away like a story that is told’ (Stevenson, 1886, p. 62). He admits here that the disclosure of his true entity, and the telling

of his story, is what acts as his remedy, yet Hyde is never allowed the same courtesy so that he can absolve his own self. Freud's notion of the 'Talking Cure', whereby one talks oneself into full knowledge of the self, explains Jekyll's desire at conceding his true character. This term originated from work done by Freud and Joseph Breuer, on their patient Anna O.; they found that after comprehending the origin of her illness and giving words to her symptoms, her medical condition improved, and thus the term 'talking cure' came into being. When applied to the case of Dr Jekyll, Hyde acts as Jekyll's own form of therapy whereby he can finally give voice to a part of him that has been suppressed by societal ideals.

Stevenson not only divulges what Jekyll is concealing within himself, but in a broader sense, he reveals what society disguises beneath its own pious exterior. The novella sets up a mirror for us to look at a reflection of ourselves, where the fictive monster exposes the unwanted aspects of humanity. A passage from Stevenson's text introduces the idea of how a mirror is symbolic of looking into the deepest aspects of the self:

Next, in the course of their review of the chamber, the searchers came to the cheval-glass, into whose depths they looked with an involuntary horror. But it was so turned as to show them nothing but . . . their own pale and fearful countenance stooping to look in. (Stevenson, 1886)

Martin Danahay succinctly determines that Utterson and Poole's 'involuntary horror' from peering into the mirror is rooted in what their own reflected image may disclose to them. Their reaction reflects the apprehension of shattering the illusion of the ordered self, revealing one's own fragmented psyche. They fear expressing their own 'inner vileness' if they look too deeply into the mirror' (Danahay, 1993, p. 144). Applications of the anamorphic perspective produce this reflective effect in both literature and art, where the message that is hidden often exposes what we fear most, while also mirroring humanity in its

purest design. Therefore, even though the individual creates an illusory image to fit in with the normative progression of society, they cannot trick their own minds into believing the illusions themselves. Elaine Showalter discusses how Utterson sees in the mirror ‘the image of the painfully repressed desires that the cane and the axe cannot wholly shatter and destroy’ (Showalter, 1999, p. 111). For Jekyll, however, Mr Hyde acts as his metaphorical mirror, reminding him of the unavoidable abject self that cannot be destroyed. Being a representation of his inner potential for evil, Hyde serves as his doubled image and infrangible connection to untamed emotions. He is ‘a sign of the repressed half of the Victorian male’s double existence’ (Danahay, 1993, p. 144).

Lacan confirms that without the mirror image, a binary of self and desired self cannot be set up. Devoid of notions of difference and with no juxtaposition established, deeper understandings of identity would be lost. His ideas on the Mirror Stage in psychoanalysis explains this further whereby without his observations on ‘the mirror image we can never learn the difference between “I” or “other” as distinct to oneself’ (Colakides, 2008, p. 10). Thus, without the presence of our inner Hyde, or our unhindered unconscious, we will never know what constitutes the true version of ‘I’. Just as Utterson prefers the avoidance of revelations to scandal or chaos, so too does Victorian society prefer to deny the existence of an uncivilised or savage ingredient of human nature. As Lanyon tells Utterson, ‘I sometimes think if we knew all we should be more glad to get away’ (Stevenson, 1886, p. 41). Therefore it is easier to not comprehend a subject fully before categorising that subject as evil, because with understanding comes the fear of being presented with an image we might recognise in ourselves.

Due to this book being concerned with the ‘double’ and double identity, an analysis of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* cannot ignore the valuable conclusions of the double perspective. Richard Devetak remarks how anamorphosis’ ability to create a dual

image diminishes our reliance on concrete representations. The deceptive anamorphic skull that is presented in Hans Holbein's *The Ambassadors* outlines how representation is not always secure, and can become a 'sign of the disturbing presences that haunt Realist ontologies of international relations, and a reminder that discursive "props", like skulls or ghosts or monsters, contain a destabilising potential' (Devetak, 2005, p. 631). Similarly, the dual identities existing within Jekyll outline a disturbing reality that every human being is haunted by an unconscious psyche that has the potential to splinter the falsified image we present to society. The existence of Hyde acts like the anamorphic skull in how it undercuts the naturalised perspective of the Victorian man, who is expected to put forward an image of respectability and principle. According to Richard A. Barney, Holbein's painting 'requires taking two physical positions as viewer in order to gain its full effect' (Barney, 2010, p. 5). In the case of Jekyll and Hyde, we must understand both personalities to comprehend either man's story, and consequently acknowledge the disunity of the human subject. The divided self exemplifies the idea that we do not exist on a solitary side of the binary of good and evil, but one can simultaneously be both. Jekyll asserts this by stating that 'man is not truly one, but truly two' (Stevenson, 1886, p. 70). Hyde is the image through the looking glass. He reflects an image of humanity that relentlessly denies the true aspects of the self, due to reinforced guilt caused by the Superego for possessing repressed urges.

Hyde represents, as Saposnik suggests:

that shadow side of man which civilisation has striven to submerge. He is a creature of primitive sensibilities loosed upon the world bent on denying him. A reminder of the barbarism which underlies civilisation, he is necessary component of human psychology which most would prefer to leave unrealised. (Saposnik, 1971, p. 728)

The need to deny one's 'primitive sensibilities' is to ignore the existence of corruption in the everyday. Similar to how Jekyll betrays his own psyche by projecting his inner Hyde onto another body, so human beings also choose to separate themselves from the affiliations of evil. Their reliance on delusions concerning monstrosity only sustain themselves through the process of displacement or the construction of a second self. Capone, Lo Piparo and Carapezza say 'in order for self-deception to be possible, it is necessary to posit some sort of splitting of the self' (Capone, et al., 2013, p. 577). What can be concluded from Jekyll's self-mutilating experiment is that even though Hyde separates the indecent from the moral, Jekyll's split identities will always be in competition with one another: the good fighting back the evil and the evil unrelenting in its attempt to break free. Smith underscores the overlooked malfunction of Jekyll's scientific exercise, where 'the self collapses into itself because it has not been properly separated so that Jekyll and Hyde contaminate each other as they meet' (Smith, 2000, p. 7). Consequent to this failure, both personalities are then forced into a debate in which the body becomes an arena for the battle between the self and the unconscious self, 'one entity that argues with itself, playing the alternate roles of proponent and opponent' (Capone, et al., 2013, p. 578).

The ability to understand the relationship of Jekyll and Hyde is to truly understand the identity of both. Like Dr Frankenstein and his Creature, which will be discussed in Chapter Two, Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde polarise the self into diametrically disparate halves. They become an 'allegory for the evil and good in mankind, two parts that are inextricably linked in everyone' (Bloom, 2010, p. 42). The word 'everyone' is significant here, as it establishes how the potential for evil exists within us all, and that humanity as a whole shares a connection with the monsters we create. It is this double perspective that undermines preconditioned definitions of good and evil. The novella's use of split personality advocates a scientific view that the human mind exhibits 'contrasting desires and moral inclinations'

(Stiles, 2006, p. 882). The double is created from the idea that individuals can have both an outer and inner existence, one that exhibits a socially accepted face, and one that conceals the subject's desires from public scrutiny. Thus, the idea of the binary complicates the notion of distancing evil away from oneself, as the double is inherently connected to the human body. Stevenson comments on the duality of human nature, stating that 'with even a deeper trench than in the majority of men, severed in me those provinces of good and ill which divide and compound man's dual nature' (Stevenson, 1886). There is no escaping the double, which parallels the realisation that there is no escape from the repressed unconscious.

The monstrous double that is Mr Hyde becomes an agent of the destructive potential of Dr Jekyll, and in turn of humanity itself, exposing the 'tarnished side of all men as well' (Egan, 1966, p. 28). This Gothic villain forces a realisation that the duality of good and evil exists within us all, and even though we choose to bathe in light, darkness is always within close proximity with the inner monster lurking in the shadows of our unconscious. The theme of the double is oversimplified in Stevenson's novella, however Saposnik sees it as a mythic expression of the battle between good and evil. He reminds the reader that it was instead 'an imaginative exploration of social and moral dualism' (Saposnik, 1971, p. 715).

The question then stands that if there were no societal codes or categories to restrict liberated expressions of one's identity, then would there even exist such a word as 'monster' or 'other'? We become synthesised by institutional influences so much that we are ignorant as to how they shape our perception of anything strange and unusual, and this is seen as how classic ideology works to replicate citizens in a society that needs to remain the same. The preconditioned need to categorise is a response to the pressures of societal gathering and cultural segregation. David Punter has observed that the split of Dr Jekyll's identity 'has derived much less from the presence within his psyche of an uncontrollable, passionate self than from the force with which that self has been repressed according to the dictates of social

convention' (Punter, 1980, pp. 2-3). The shadow archetype evolves from Mr Hyde, and he essentially becomes a repository of subjugated habits. Within this incarnation, characteristics of the ego disintegrate, and provide Dr Jekyll with a new sense of self, giving him newfound autonomy to carry out actions without the limitations of conscience. As Jekyll admits, it was an 'unknown but not an innocent freedom of the soul' (Stevenson, 1886, p. 72). Stevenson delineates the inevitable dispute between natural impulse and societal pressures, demonstrating the consequence of surrendering to either. The presence of both Jekyll and Hyde within the one body demonstrates 'a pair of conflicting doubles [that] represent modern civilisation and primitive appetite' (Clausen, 2007, p. 249).

Perhaps Stevenson's conclusion is that man is ultimately a primal being, only disciplined by the laws of society: the darker, congenital component of humanity will always remain strong enough to consume anyone who, like Jekyll, chooses to unchain it. Hence, fear is not located in the encounter with the unknown monster, but rather stems from an observation of ourselves and the ambiguous conflict between outer and inner Self. Judith Halberstam suggests that the fear produced from this novella is not simply 'a fear of the other, but . . . a paranoid terror of involution or the unravelling of a multiformed ego' (Halberstam, 1995, p. 55). This scrutiny of the self is strengthened by an investigation into the repressed unconscious. Hyde represents this embodiment of hidden (*hydden*) desire, acting almost like a silent storehouse for Jekyll to access whenever a longing for liberation takes hold.

Another psychological reading of this book identifies the two personae within Hyde as not merely two identities, but as two sexual identities: the gendered identity that we perform for others and the corporeal form we hide from the world. Showalter argues that the 'dominant side of the brain represent[s] the dominant gender, and the other the repressed gender' (Showalter, 1999, p. 75). The dual sexuality present in Dr Jekyll is exaggerated by

the absence of women in his life, forcing us to analyse the gender binary through his relationship with Mr Hyde. Stevenson's exclusion of any predominant female in the text forces us to locate the feminine archetype somewhere within his patriarchal macrocosm. Since their identities exist only at the margins of the page, we look to the marginalised Mr Hyde to tell us more about the sexualised other. Showalter's studies imply that Mr Hyde, acting as the voiceless outsider, encapsulates a sought after representation of the female figure and transforms into Jekyll's 'Mrs Hyde'. Jekyll also says that his relationship to Hyde was one of wedlock, 'that insurgent horror was knit to him closer than a wife' (Stevenson, 1886, p. 86). Even though women play no major role in this novella, there are still minor links to their monstrosity and deviance, with hints of female prostitutes who attack Hyde and the old woman with 'an evil face, smoothed by hypocrisy' (Stevenson, 1886, p. 32). The shadowy women represent the hidden Other or the sadistic double of the Victorian man. They incorporate an image of urban malfeasance, symbolising man's bodily weakness. Since the story's framework is built on the repression of social corruption, women become associated with this depravity, and their exclusion results in 'the suppression of sexuality and the resulting sadistic behaviour of men' (Campbell, 2014, p. 310). In the beginning of the novel, the trampling of the little girl by Mr Hyde can be seen as a physical representation of suppressing the female subject, as well as hinting at violent lustful urges towards an improper object of desire.

Additionally, Hyde can be related to the feminine double when he begins to show symptoms of hysteria, a human ailment that has traditionally been associated with the female body, the term being etymologically related to the Latin idiom for womb. Stephen Heath comments that 'hysteria had served in the nineteenth century as the representation of woman and sexuality', with the 'hysteric's voice' as 'the woman's masculine language' (Heath, 1986, p. 99). Thus, the 'hysteric voice' and actions of Hyde not only act as a platform for the

transcendence of the masculine body, but help also demonstrate the potential revolutionary aspects of the feminine model. His body becomes a site of contestation, for both the dominant male and the female subsidiary. Hyde's indecipherable monstrosity can be rooted in man's disconnection with the rising 'New Woman', where monstrous Other and female Other carve up a common threat – a deterioration in manhood. As Doanne and Hodges explain, in their essay *Demonic Disturbances of Sexual Identity: The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr / s Hyde*, with 'the arrival of the New Woman, terror and division threatened within the home—the angel was also the demon within the house' (Doane & Hodges, 1989, p. 70). Hyde becomes a metaphorical association of woman's intimidating force within the domiciliary space.

Like Victor Frankenstein, Jekyll's practice of human reproduction without the presence of a woman hints at man's inability to produce progeny, and his fear of the consequent dominance woman has in advancing the patriarchal lineage. The threatening persona of Hyde reflects a moment in time when male control is wavering, and boundaries are being transcended. Julia Kristeva remarks in her book, *The Powers of Horror*, that repressing evil in Victorian society also meant repressing women and their developing agency:

two powers attempted to share out society. One of them, the masculine, apparently victorious, confesses through its very relentlessness against the other, the feminine, that is threatened by an asymmetrical, irrational wily, uncontrollable power . . . That other sex, the feminine, becomes synonymous with a radical evil that is to be suppressed. (Kristeva, 1982, p. 70)

Stevenson's expressed anxiety towards subverted gender identities can be traced back to his essay 'Virginibus Puerisque'. He negates the system of marriage stating it 'certainly narrows

and damps the spirits of generous men' (Stevenson, 1903, p. 1). Here he addressed the dangerous blurring that occurs when both man and woman marry, resulting in the subversion of gender identities due to the clashing of different moralities. Consequent to this, man's patriarchal stance was weakened through the conformist bond of husband and wife. For this reason, the binary opposition represented by Dr Jekyll's splitting of personality is not just the battle between the right and the unjust, but it also becomes a platform for the fight for dominance between man and woman within the household. Showalter further discusses how, in relation to the theme of split identity, it was not 'the split between good and evil that fascinated Stevenson and Wilde, but the split between male purpose and female passivity that reflected feminist conflict' (Showalter, 1977, p. 192). The conflicting personalities within Jekyll reinforce the existence of male imbalance, undermining a masculine dominance that disassembles the coherent gendered identity. The ineffectiveness of suppressing one half of the double reminds us that opposing forces in the binary of outer and inner self, as well as feminine and masculine identity, are interdependent and hence render any sense of overall dominance unstable.

Ambiguity surrounding the character of Mr Hyde is what renders him as both monster and Gothic villain. Charles Campbell perceives the ominous fog that permeates most of the novel as mirroring the clouded nature of Hyde, describing it as 'the mist of indefinite human identity' (Campbell, 2014, p. 317). The relationship between human uncertainty and monstrosity is a generic trait of horror fiction, and can be seen in other texts such as *Frankenstein* and *Wuthering Heights*. Linguistic definition is at the centre of social control, and without definition, the monstrous is labelled as more threatening without even the chains of language to contain it. Willy Maley outlines how 'definitions are arguably the most difficult exercises to undertake' (Maley, 2014), and even though obtaining an understanding of an unknown identity can be often impossible to achieve, humanity is conditioned to make

this process easier by categorising the foreign as ‘monstrous’. According to a structuralist belief, with simple meanings being more attractive, the difficult construct that is the Other is disallowed any true level of recognition. Even though multiple narratives exist, the voice of either Hyde or Jekyll is never fully articulated. The book is instead an incredible mental catalogue of attitudes towards Hyde’s repulsiveness and Jekyll’s decline. The unheard perspective of Hyde could help explain his indefinable monstrosity where even the narrator finds difficulty in describing his appearance:

He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something down- right detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why. (Stevenson, 1886, p. 15)

All that encounter Mr Hyde characterise him as repulsive without even understanding the origin of his repugnancy. This tendency to dislike a subjective identity without wholly knowing the subject is something that infects cultural relations even today.

M. Kellan Williams comments on Hyde’s indistinguishable nature stating his ‘body repels not only everyone who sees it, but all the words mustered to describe it’ (Williams, 1996, p. 412). It is not only a complication of appearance, but also a complication of language. Williams contests that ‘Hyde’s capacity for eluding language is precisely what makes him an outstanding menace’ (Williams, 1996, p. 417). Hyde fails to belong to the rational world, and therefore it becomes impossible for him to enter into the representational field in order for language to delineate him. Even though he avoids simple categorisations, it does not strip him of serving a significant function. Richard A. Barney’s commentary on the splenic sublime assists in explaining the indecipherable nature of Hyde. In scientific terms, due to its impenetrability to analysis, the spleen is deemed as having no real purpose, while at the same time being able to explain physiological operations throughout the human body

(Barney, 2010, p. 16). Where the spleen is irrelevant in medical terms because of its refusal to supply any valuable agency, the monster is viewed in a similar light where its value is often overlooked. In relation to the monster, the 'anamorphic spleen' is a way of describing how, even though representation is often impossible and impenetrable, the monstrous figure serves a function of explaining operations of the human mind, most notably the unconscious. This comparison of the monster to the anamorphic spleen shows how there are innumerable possibilities associated with the Gothic antihero. These previously occluded possibilities can be accessed through an anamorphic lens, demonstrating that the monster functions outside the realm of fear, and instead serves a greater purpose in examinations of cultural Othering. Hyde can then be viewed as the return of the repressed, and as an aspect of the psyche made more accessible to consciousness if only through a glimpse from a different perspective.

The difficulty in representing Hyde resides in how he blurs the boundaries between civilisation and savagery, establishing an inextricable rapport between good and evil. This book mirrors society's repression of condemned instinctual desires, and reflects a fascination with the darker side of life. Mr Hyde is automatically construed as being 'really like Satan' (Stevenson, 1886, p. 12), with him being thrust into symbolic fields of both the malevolent and the monstrous. This restricted perspective of Hyde firmly places him in the role of villain, without the tools of language or semiotics to free him from his unfavourable fate. Jekyll's burgeoning evil persona throughout the novel is paralleled by his growing weakness to his forbidden desires. Joseph J. Egan states that a 'significant relationship exists between the increasing ferocity of Hyde's sadistic attacks on his victims' bodies and the awful growth of his own "energy of life"' (Egan, 1966, p. 30). Stevenson uses the metaphor of a vampire to elaborate on how Jekyll's sustenance eventually comes from his ability to feed off the repressed indulgences of life. His yearning for the impossible is seen as an illness, an infection, which continues to weaken his moral purpose. Jekyll describes his waning capacity

to fight the urges within: 'I became, in my own person, a creature eaten up and emptied by fever, languidly weak both in body and mind The powers of Hyde seemed to have grown with the sickliness of Jekyll' (Stevenson, 1886, p. 86). The book acts as a warning to those with a curiosity concerning the mechanisms of evil, and to those who deviate from ideals of the Superego. Dr Jekyll becomes a victim of his own curiosities that eventually leads to his own downfall and definitive end. The thirst for knowledge is quenched by a habituated fear of pushing boundaries to their extreme. Utterson outlines that 'it is one thing to mortify curiosity, another to conquer it' (Stevenson, 1886, p. 43).

In an attempt to separate the conflicting elements of good and evil within himself, Jekyll brings on his own destruction, and the cessation of his life. Thus, one of the central purposes of Stevenson's narrative is to call attention to impossibility of detaching oneself from human weakness and monstrosity entirely. As much as we disassociate ourselves from evil trajectories by setting them up as Other, or by transforming them into something monstrous, there is a more intimate relationship between our lighter and darker self. Jekyll's scientific research provides a valuable insight into humanity's unattainable goal to distance itself from the irregular scopes of the psyche:

each I told myself, could be housed in separate identities, life would be relieved of all that was unbearable; the unjust might go his way, delivered from the aspirations and remorse of his more upright twin, and the just could walk steadfastly and securely on his upward path, doing the good things in which he found his pleasure, and no longer exposed to disgrace and penitence by the hands of this extraneous evil. (Stevenson, 1886, pp. 70-71)

This idea of the caustic battle between the binary opposition of self and other can expose how modern day disputes between social entities can only enforce the eradication of one of those

identities. Cultural conflicts and ecclesiastical rebellions throughout history highlight this ideology brought forward by Stevenson, namely that we must accept diversity or risk destruction. Humanity will forever be synonymous with the struggle of good and evil, but in accordance with the case of Dr Jekyll, evil is an essential part of human nature and failure to recognise this leads to self-destructive repercussions:

‘I have been made to learn that the doom and burthen of our life is bound forever on man’s shoulders, and when the attempt is made to cast it off, it but returns upon us with more unfamiliar and more awful pressure’. (Stevenson, 1886, p. 71)

Hyde’s actions and physicality are deemed hideous and demonic and thus, through language, he becomes a dehumanised figure who is incapable of evoking compassion. However, a modern perception of Hyde determines Victorian categorisation as exaggerated, and thus sees his case as distorted. The process of animalisation begins in the moment that Jekyll’s double-self abandons social decorum and cordiality with others. His knocking down of a small child without apologising demonstrates a disregard of moral conduct, and automatically defines his character as strange. Dr Jekyll refers to his dilemma and illness when speaking to Utterson saying ‘my position is very strange – a very strange one’ (Stevenson, 1886, p. 27), and even Stevenson titles the book as ‘The *Strange* Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde’. Furthermore, while the anamorphic perspective ‘has the capability of making the familiar seem “strange”’ (Collins, 1992, p. 179), it can equally expose that the strange is something most familiar, thus further blurring the boundaries between the known and unknown.

Freud’s notion of the *Unheimlich* becomes fundamental in locating an understanding of Hyde as the ‘unnameable monster’, where his abjectness not only demonstrates an aversion, but also a recognition. Mr Hyde epitomises the uncanny effect as he continues to

evade definition, and demonstrates to us that the monster is us, but not really us. Examination of the *Unheimlich* reveals why monster culture is a product of what becomes intangible, and often results in the manifestation of the 'Other'. In the book, Hyde's indistinguishable nature is the strongest element of horror in the narrative:

his family could nowhere be traced; he had never been photographed; and the few who could describe him differed widely, as common observers will. Only on one point, were they agreed; and that was the haunting sense of unexpressed deformity with which the fugitive impressed his beholders' (Stevenson, 1886, p. 33)

Thus, the main disturbance in the identity of Hyde is how the usual modes we use to help us with representation remain unattainable. The failure to find a category for Mr Hyde causes the observer to label him with the only category they see fit – the monster. Williams denudes that Jekyll's second self 'is a kind of illegitimate or degenerate copy whose dubious origins and indefinite form deeply problematise the bond between signs and their referents' (Williams, 1996, p. 418).

Due to misrepresentations of diseases and disabilities being located within the supernatural order, remedies were often procured through religion rather than through medical means. This meant that there was an unconscious association between disease and disability with sin and evil, where many of the segregatory instincts of different societies can be traced back to this association. We tend to position our fear of the monster in a similar place to our fear of one that we view as crippled, 'they seem an intrusion in our orderly and healthy society' (Mittman & Dendle, 2013, p. xxxvi). In literature, there is a widespread pairing of disability and monstrosity, similar to the inaccurate connection made between insanity and notions of evil. Society therefore has become habituated to the concept that anything existing outside its norms can only be different and an outsider to the Self.

According to Danahay, Hyde has an ‘unexpressed’ deformity that people cannot name and part of his horror ‘is that he embodies that which should not be spoken’ (Danahay, 1993, p. 142). Similar to the case of Hyde, when looking at a deformed image in art, we can often lose sight of a true meaning that is shrouded by the overall image. The process of anamorphosis assists in removing the distortion and bringing the image back to the way in which one normally expects to see it. Hence, the anamorphic perspective of Mr Hyde removes the stereotypical perception of the monster, and instead locates traits of humanity in the Gothic creature. The evil and uncanny subject is often perceived as an inexplicable phenomenon; however, what we choose to ignore is how evil can in fact be closely connected to humanity also.

The character of Mr Hyde is first announced to the reader through an unfavourable lens where spectators describe him saying: ‘it wasn’t like a man’, and that his physical appearance is ‘so ugly it brought out the sweat on me like running’ (Stevenson, 1886, p. 12). The exterior monstrosity of Hyde ties in with Showalter’s research on the intricate connections between corporeal deformity and human sin. With beauty being the trademark of innocence and purity, the flawed subject would be forced into the binary oppositional category of outsider, set up as society’s miscreant. Thus, Showalter suggests the degenerate and diseased body offered confirmation of late-Victorian psychiatry’s belief in ‘visible vice’ (Showalter, 1990, p. 89). However, the ugly element of Mr Hyde does not lie in complete grotesqueness; instead, his deformity comes from his unusual appearance and the actions that reside outside the *status quo*. The reasoning behind Hyde’s categorised monstrosity derives from him being a manifestation of that which subverts habituated norms, or disrupts preconditioned understandings of what it means to be human: Utterson explains in horror how ‘the man seems hardly human’ (Stevenson, 1886, p. 23). Thus, Stevenson associates Hyde with colonist ideologies in how he views his character as a species whose savagery

needs to be tamed. Postcolonial criticism would deem monsters such as Hyde to be misunderstood Others, produced by a rising fear of rebellious forces that look to threaten the ruling class.

Hyde's abhorred irrational behaviour is further exaggerated when paralleled with the protagonist of the story, Mr Utterson, a man who is determined to restore society to its normative function. The ordinary world, which becomes endangered by the dual nature of Dr Jekyll, is epitomised by the characters of Dr Utterson and Richard Enfield. Utterson's status as the essence of acceptable behaviour norms also stems from his devotion to rational thought, his devotion to locating a phenomenon's *raison d'être* and his devotion to common sense. He persists in pursuing justifications of reason, instead of being weakened by the uncanny forces at play in the text. Despite all malevolent happenings, Utterson perseveres with his loyalty to respectable behaviour, and chooses to evade dishonouring Dr Jekyll rather than exposing him as a murderer. However, even with Utterson's suppression of indulgent behaviours, there are still moments where his unrepressed self comes to the fore, wherein 'something eminently human beacons from his eyes, something indeed which never found its way into his talk' (Stevenson, 1886, p. 9). This book undoubtedly draws attention to the deviant body, a body that opposes collective norms and confronts definition. The monster is an impossible creature where rational explanation of its character is unattainable because of its uncanny nature. It embodies a similar definition to that of an anamorphic image that 'is so distorted and skewed that when viewed directly the picture becomes almost impossible to decipher' (Deats, et al., 2004, p. 84). It is only when we see the anamorphic monster in an unconventional way, and from a different perspective, that we may interpret hidden meaning and concealed truths. We are governed and become naturalised by dominant ideologies of unknown entities even though these ideologies may ultimately prove to be false. Therefore,

the anamorphic perspective also assists in outlining ‘the ambiguity that exists between a real object, one’s mental image of it, and its painted representation’ (Seckel, 2004, p. 16).

As the narrative develops, Hyde’s features become more monstrous and deformed, and his character becomes dehumanised in its entirety. Thus, as the narrative has evolved, his image has become more misrepresented and dictated by ‘painted representations’ of his true form. If one were to document the progression of adaptations of Stevenson’s texts, the development of Hyde’s character can shed light on people’s changing perceptions of the monster, and of notions of evil. In contemporary illustrations of this Gothic villain, Hyde possesses demonic features that leave him devoid of any human traits, whereas in the original text, he is instead described as possessing an indescribable deformity. Stevenson’s original skewed portrait of Mr Hyde is rooted in his inability to conform; however, adaptations of the text have exaggerated his monstrosity to the point of bestiality. Therefore, this dehumanisation of the Gothic antihero becomes a strategic technique for generating a distance between the monster and the reader.

After an anamorphic viewpoint is taken, signifiers of victimhood in Hyde become more apparent. Saposnik states that the central issue of this narrative ‘is the necessity for moral and social flexibility in a society which dictates rigidity’ (Saposnik, 1971, p. 715). He is a fatality of the austere standards set up by societal ideals, standards that force him to inhibit the man he is. He is victimised by inflexible behavioural paradigms and by intolerable perspectives concerning difference. As a lawyer, Mr Utterson represents that legality which identifies social behaviour established by law ‘tempering rigidity with kindness, self-denial with compassion’ (Saposnik, 1971, p. 719). He acts as a fortified reminder of how society dictates the manner in which one should behave, and sets up restrictions to which conventionalists adhere. Thus, this book becomes a cautionary tale endorsing the notion that a man should not act as himself, but as the society wants him to act. Stevenson’s novella can

then be seen, as not instilling fear in the reader, but as offering them a ‘concomitant critique of moralistic middle-class sexual repression or the overall condemnation of patriarchal power and privilege’ (Clemens, 1999, p. 125). With Hyde representing the corrupt underbelly of the human psyche, Stevenson’s novel exposes the deficiencies of late-Victorian perspectives, and the worries concerning issues of a decline in civility. It produces a new breed of Gothic fiction that reflected anxieties concerning the effectiveness of science in releasing evil and the consequent weakening of societal decorum. Hyde becomes an embodiment of how ‘scientific attempts at progress in human nature have merely led to regression’ (Clausen, 2007, p. 244). The ambiguity concerning social progression can be depicted from the metaphorical techniques used by Stevenson. The obscure fog that permeates the minds and the city of this Victorian tale can be seen as symbolic of humanity’s attempt to conceal the ambivalence surrounding human monstrosity. The ‘shifting, insubstantial mists that had long so baffled’ (Stevenson, 1886, p. 18), reflects the confusion of the period and the complexity of new developing identities.

A method that assists in understanding the complex image is anamorphosis, and its ability to offer more than the singular perspective. Daniel L. Collins believed that by investigating the function and ability of anamorphosis, one could ‘uncover the skewed rules that condition (and at times determine) how we experience the world’ (Collins, 1992, p. 184). Anamorphic theory allows for a break with convention, and liberates us to interpret the world with eyes void of any manipulation. His argument further outlines that when looking at something with only a single restrained linear perspective, all one would see is an obstruction or ‘graphic smear’. To many observers, the monster is viewed as a ‘graphic smear’, a distortion that interrupts our engagement with any given narrative. (Collins, 1992, p. 184). It is only when a skewed perspective is taken that the monster no longer becomes a dark intrusion, but rather produces meaning that alters our perspective, our understanding and our

sense of what is actually being represented in the text. However, by looking awry at the given image, pre-existing perspectives of that image are then put into disarray. Lyle Massey goes on to suggest that ‘although anamorphosis first engenders a moment of radical doubt, visual uncertainty and opacity give way in a cathartic game that reinscribes the viewer in an apparent position of visual mastery’ (Massey, 1997, p. 1186). However, this movement towards clarity collapses our previous hold on reality and preconditioned ideas. The individual is thus reawakened from their societally-numbed state, and visualises the monster from a constructive optical standpoint. Furthermore, ‘anamorphosis thus represents a rejection of the visual’, a rejection of the given perspective of humanity and the Other (Massey, 1997, p. 1186). This analysis equates ordinary vision to a form of blindness, where an anamorphic insight can restore sight to the reader’s blind vision of the monster Hyde.

What is most significant about anamorphosis is how it reveals ‘the concept of reality as shifting and multifaceted’ (Deats, et al., 2004, p. 84). This notion proves to be an uncomfortable truth, with the possibility of the monster exposing something concrete and long naturalised to be untrue. The inability to rely on convention in understanding the Gothic villain is what deters the person from the monster. Richard A. Barney, theorising anamorphosis as well as the sublime, ‘asserted they both rely and surpass the basic elements of empirical experience’ (Barney, 2010, p. 8). The reader can no longer depend on cultural myths and must seek new definitions that exceed preconceived ideas. Even though anamorphosis avoids a traditional reading, it provides a more unsettling analysis in which meaning is not given and has to be interpreted independently. It empowers a new sense of vision that is able to elude the strictures of naturalised ideology. The anamorphic perspective became even more popular in the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries by supplying an ideal means of camouflaging dangerous political statements, heretical ideas and even erotic images (Seckel, 2004, p. 11). For the purpose of this argument, it can be recognised that monsters

serve a similar function in which they help conceal the darker aspects of human nature and contain it within a stereotypical category. A Derridean deconstructive view proposes that an internal reading is no longer sufficient and one must look at the periphery to gain a more candid insight.

Due to no explanation being given for Jekyll's choice to deviate from the norm, the truth of his existence and identity is silenced. This chapter's anamorphic offering of the untold story inaugurates a more humanised account of Hyde, the unvoiced Subaltern, and exposes covert agendas within Stevenson's text. It endeavours to alter our perceptions of the dual nature of good and evil so that new meanings of monstrosity can be introduced. As Derrida would interpret it, 'it is an analysis which tries to find out how their thinking works or doesn't work' (Caputo, 1997, p. 9). Therefore, it can be argued that Stevenson's text serves as a mechanism to reinforce social codes that threaten any deviance from the normalised system, and that the presence of the Gothic villain is a means to keep otherness at bay. To counter the observation that Hyde is in fact evil, it should be considered that in Jekyll's declaration of crimes to Utterson, he never refers to what he has done as being monstrous. Instead, he confesses 'it came about that I concealed my pleasures' (Stevenson, 1886, p. 69). This sheds some light on how different perspectives of the literary antihero reveal the multifaceted form that is the monster, and that there exists many stories and not just one.

Chapter Three: The Uncanny Monster

Where scholarly discourse has depicted the character Heathcliff as the racialised Other in Emily Brontë's illustration of 19th Century England, his function in *Wuthering Heights* transcends the idea of just evoking a 'bad feeling' in the reader. His very presence challenges how we define human nature, where social categories become insignificant in an evolving climate. Heathcliff being presented as monster illustrates a symbolic expression of cultural unease that pervades a society, and a fear that shapes the collective behaviour of the ruling class. It is the indeterminate nature of his being that designates him a disruptive force in the text, where outside the parameters of society, his fate as 'monster' and 'Other' is sealed. He is set up as 'a lying fiend, a monster, and not a human being' (Brontë, 1847, p. 179). Heathcliff functions as the 'outsider' or 'monster' due to his representation as the unidentified intruder within the familiar domestic space. Embodying both human and inhuman qualities at the same time, he becomes a manifestation of our fear of hybrid identities that refuse participation in the natural order. He is the half-civilised Other that illustrates debates concerning fear of the unknown racial Other and serves as a complicated image of ethnic otherness, the incarnation of 'foreignness' in the eyes of the native British.

The Gothic as part of *Wuthering Heights* can be seen to be the 'internalisation of that which is supposed to be foreign to thought' (Cottom, 2003, p. 1067). Reflecting the menace of alien identities that threaten the dominant social order, Brontë's novel subverts preconditioned understandings of cultural difference, and challenges rigid categorisations of the racial 'Other'. Attributing foreign features to Heathcliff, the novel marks him as the ethnic outcast, disallowed entry into the homogeneous space of British tradition. Heathcliff as Gothic figure fits into recent studies on monsters that present them as telling products of their

time and ‘embodying the anxieties and exhilarations of the moment in which they are born, they are ciphers for the culture, misshapen blank slates who tell us everything about their world while revealing next to nothing about themselves’ (O’Connor, 2000, p. 212). Due to the exclusory politics performed against him, Heathcliff is refused an identity and firmly positioned on the fringe of society, where he must exist as the foreign monster. He is essentially the deviant Other, a body whose radical aberrations work to reveal the limits of what is considered as acceptably human. From his decentralised position in society, Heathcliff can draw other characters, as well as the reader, away from a homogenous way of thinking. He is constantly on the border of structures and categories, diluting and blurring the lines of power. His place in the narrative serves as a representation of the disorderly aspects of human nature and the potential for a ‘wuthering’ taking place within the Self. The twofold nature of good and evil is diluted by Heathcliff’s position as tortured villain, damaged by a childhood of discrimination and familial neglect. His position as victim of racial othering both subverts and undermines the notions of virtuousness, redefining locations of moral legibility. Not only does this chapter discuss the mechanisms of Heathcliff as the uncanny monster, but it will also investigate his role as the human monster, and probe what that meant for the development of the Gothic genre.

Anxieties surrounding the internalisation of evil became a more telling characteristic of the Gothic between 1790 and 1890. In this genre, evil constructs and monstrous figures were no longer seen as external impetuses, but could now exist within the individual and the domestic sphere. Smith argues that ghost stories developed during this period reflected how ‘the “monster” lives within you, invading your domestic spaces, so that “evil” acquires a proximity to the self which it did not necessarily have in earlier Gothic’ (Smith, 2013, p. 87). Habitual and recognisable entities were now formidable subjects, with familiar territories such as the ‘home’ becoming dangerous spaces: the *Heimlich* was becoming *Unheimlich*.

With *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Brontë achieves the domestication of the Gothic novel, wherein R. S. Sharma outlines how she gave horror ‘a local habitation and a name, planting the uncanny machinery firmly into the English landscape and English life’ (Sharma, 1999, p. 62). Being a prime illustration of Freud’s uncanny effect, *Wuthering Heights* destabilises the boundaries that externalise the supernatural. Even though monsters are commonly identified as exemplifying the most personified point of unfamiliarity, Sigmund Freud considered that both the *Heimlich* and the *Unheimlich* – the familiar and the unfamiliar – are equally fundamental to the configuration of the monster. Where these are meant to be distinguished polar binaries, *Wuthering Heights* shows how each can slip into one another, making the unfamiliar familiar, or the familiar strange. Freud claims the author engages with the uncanny in how he / she ‘tricks us by promising us everyday reality and then going beyond it’ (Freud, 1919, pp. 156-157). Brontë essentially ‘tricks us’ by offering an ordinary setting situated in the home, and then shifting it to a place of terror.

It is in this deconstruction of boundaries between fiction and non-fiction that Freud believed the *Unheimlich* to live, claiming that the ‘uncanny effect is often produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced’ (Freud, 1919, p. 133). Emily Brontë thus engages with the uncanny in how she tricks us by engaging in the everyday and then surpassing it. This delicate line between fantasy and realism is most prominent when Lockwood narrates his first night at *Wuthering Heights*, where he experiences a tapping on his window and ‘stretching an arm out to seize the importunate branch, instead of which, my fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand’ (Brontë, 1847, p. 29). From this, it can be observed that appearances can be deceptive and our familiar understanding of regular structures are destabilised. Transcending the expectations of the traditional Victorian novel, Brontë surpasses the familiar, and forces the reader to distinguish the distorted face of humanity. The home, for example, is seen as unhomely as it is continuously associated with

grotesque and violent images where Heathcliff declares his desire to ‘paint the house-front with Hindley’s blood’ (Brontë, 1847, p. 56). *Wuthering Heights* essentially undercuts reliance on categories that set up the reader with recognisable tropes when reading a novel. Embodying an imbalance in genre, it poses a serious threat to the reader’s stereotypical vision of horror and the home. Emily Rena-Dozier contends that the novel ‘breaks down this opposition between Gothic and domestic modes by illustrating the ways in which the domestic is predicated on acts of violence’ (Rena-Dozier, 2010). This ambiguity and mystery surrounding genre, context and character therefore contributes to the discourse of monstrosity in the novel.

Human nature continually seeks methods to solve problems in the semiotic field, such as optical and linguistic complexities present in the unknown ‘Other’. The predisposition to categorise and define is what results in the Other being shrouded in darkness, lacking in both understanding and identity, because representation has been imposed on the subject. As Punday suggests ‘the monster is an entity created precisely by suppressing agency’ (Punday, 2002, p. 817). Forced to the margins and denied a narrative voice, Heathcliff becomes the deprecated subaltern whose identity is constructed solely by his superiors. Fulfilling any classification assigned to Heathcliff, such as ‘demon’ or ‘monster’, he acts as such for the rest of the novel so as to acquire some form of agency within *Wuthering Heights*. As a result of stereotypical characterisations in the novel, the reader’s movements and thoughts become robotic because they are conditioned to act and think the way of the universal body. Daniel Punday delineates that ‘all human beings are “cyborgs” existing within and constructed by many different information circuits’ (Punday, 2002, p. 803). We are directed by these ‘different information circuits’ to become inordinately subservient to traditional tropes, continually relying upon these familiar recognitions. Heathcliff exists outside these circuits, and can no longer be recognised as human because he is in essence living beyond the social

norm. Hence, the aversion to Heathcliff and the need to marginalise his being is consequent of ‘a general impulse to ignore someone disagreeable by averting one’s eyes’ (Sonstroem, 1971, p. 52).

The familiar modes of representation, such as origin and name, that are absent in Heathcliff reduce him to an unknown alien presence. He becomes the personification of a ‘tabula rasa’, the blank slate on to which insecurities surrounding unfamiliar identities are imprinted. Heathcliff is designed as the faceless Other who encompasses uncertain origin and disconnection with the domestic space. In an attempt to construct an identity for Heathcliff, Nelly can only imagine foreign correlations to describe his birth:

Who knows’, says Nelly to Heathcliff, ‘but your father was Emperor of China, and your mother an Indian queen, each of them able to buy up, with one week’s income, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange together? Were I in your place, I would frame high notions of my birth; and the thoughts of what I was should give me courage and dignity to support the oppression of a little farmer! (Brontë, 1847, p. 67)

We are never authorised entry into his mind, and must rely upon the prejudiced perspectives of other characters. David Sonstroem states that none of the doors to understanding ‘opens wide enough to let the whole Heathcliff through’ (Sonstroem, 1971, p. 56). Knowledge of his motivations and ambitions are never allowed to fully surface. The refusal to accept Heathcliff’s abject thoughts, and the desire to remain ignorant of his transgressive attitudes, are exemplified by Isabella Linton’s marriage to Heathcliff. She separates entirely from her husband and prohibits both the physical door and the metaphorical door to understanding Heathcliff from remaining open stating ‘let the door remain shut and be quiet’ (Brontë, 1847, p. 208). It is in this action of forcibly excluding Heathcliff from the domestic space, there is emphasis placed on humanity’s tendency to overlook any sympathetic consideration of the

cultural Other. An accurate reading of the Other is therefore sacrificed so as to ensure the door to alterity will 'remain shut'. As a result, the reader is disallowed from seeing any personal growth in Heathcliff's character. Barbara Munsen Goff outlines that Heathcliff is 'not very complicated psychologically and does not "develop" at all' (Goff, 1984, p. 483). He becomes the 'unnameable monster' where endeavours to penetrate beyond his otherness proves futile.

The general failure to understand Heathcliff, as well as other characters in the text, is referred to by Sonstroem as the 'nowt'-device in the perceptual field. In *Wuthering Heights*, the belligerent Joseph calls everyone a 'nowt', a nothing, denying everyone a place in society, as well as an identity (Sonstroem, 1971, p. 51). Heathcliff's inaccessible identity refuses categorisation, making him a corrosive force that parallels the decaying house. The broken down walls of Heathcliff's dwelling are suggestive of the unstable boundaries and binaries within the text. Brontë emphasises this decay through the descriptions of the home 'when beneath its walls, I perceived decay had made progress, even in seven months – many a window showed black gaps deprived of glass; and slates juttet off' (Brontë, 1847, p. 394). Consequent to the reader's inability to identify Heathcliff, he is dehumanised to the point that he, in turn, cannot distinguish any humanity existing within the self. Representing an invasion of both ambiguity and the uncanny, Heathcliff is essentially an 'out-and-outer' where Lockwood even mentions how he 'did not feel as if [he] were in the company of a creature of [his] own species' (Brontë, 1847, p. 191). Brontë constructs her infamous antagonist upon the foundations of misplaced information and vacant perspectives. The incongruity of his character can be placed at the heart of our fear of the unfamiliar and unknown Other. However, where his rebellion against definition may be interpreted as monstrous, his ability to transgress reductive categorisation allows conservative perspectives to be challenged. In similar ways to the literary monster, Heathcliff manifests 'confusion about what might

constitute the boundaries of human society and the limits of acceptable human being' (Wright, 2013, p. 15). More than being seen as inhuman, Heathcliff is also uncontainable and attacks all endeavours to name and categorise him. He effectively complicates our fixated efforts to reduce the Other to a non-identity and to ignore its profound alterity. By infiltrating the domestic space, Heathcliff problematises society's attempt to disregard the foreign Other and all that he / she represents. His lack of a second, or family name, is an ongoing index of the inability of society to domesticate and categorise him. He essentially embodies the forces of Gothic fiction that disrupt civilised society, the symbolic monster that threatens the fabric of the patriarchal order that has excluded him.

What was formerly born in the supernatural realm is now presented itself as the face of our close neighbour. Heathcliff serves as the 'uncanny monster' due to his representation as the unidentified intruder within the familiar domestic sphere. He is described as breeding 'bad feeling in the house' because of how he embodies an irrevocable change. His function in the text reveals that the monster has always a proximity to the Self, so there will always share some element of recognition. He can be essentially connected to the unconscious – that which is repressed within us, but which can reveal itself as monstrous. The monster or anti-hero therefore figure as a 'double' of humanity, one that mirrors back the darker mechanisms of the psyche. The double and the repressed are robustly linked where the double 'suggests that the self is haunted by repressed feelings which threaten to disrupt commonplace notions of everyday reality' (Smith, 2013, p. 6). However, with no one able to decipher who or what he is, he sets up residence at Wuthering Heights as the nameless monster. Reflecting on Brontë's observations on the complexity of human nature, Goff comments on how the novel 'is about far more fundamental, eternal human problems and overwhelms us with its remorseless-if not easily definable-sense of the workings of things' (Goff, 1984, p. 481).

Similar to Frankenstein's monster, Heathcliff arrives into the narrative without a name or any form of status. His lack of origin and home reduces him to an unknown alien presence. In a notion of home that is bound to identity, Heathcliff is designed as the faceless Other who encompasses uncertain origin and disconnection with stereotypical categories. However, by looking at Heathcliff through the anamorphic lens, representations of his character can be reformed. Due to monocular vision, Heathcliff's form has been inadequately represented to the point that he becomes unrecognisable, and is projected far outside the reaches of the normative self. An incomplete identity, Heathcliff represents the disembodied image juxtaposed with the embodied vision of the upper-class. Understanding of his character fragments him and disunites the bond between reader and protagonist. It is only through the anamorphic perspective, when Heathcliff is seen as an actual man, that he transforms from being an incorporeal being to a character who is more human than most of the inhabitants at Wuthering Heights.

Heathcliff's bodily transformation in the text is made to serve a political rhetoric designed by Brontë, an indication of the political problems to be remedied. In doing so, his character reveals the limitations of our ways of ordering the world and the insufficiency of traditional categories in attempting to define subjects of alterity. Before the eighteenth century, the Gothic monster was often perceived as an evocative symbol deliberately designed to disseminate contextual truths. Monstrosity is a fact that must be interpreted by considering what message it sends. As the Latin word of 'monster' connotes to the monstrous as being a sign, Heathcliff as the 'uncanny' monster acts as a warning of the internalisation of monstrosity within both the human being and society as a whole. His bodily transformation in the text is made to serve a political rhetoric designed by Brontë, an indication of the political problems to be remedied. In doing so, his character reveals the limitations of our ways of

ordering the world, and the insufficiency of traditional categories in attempting to define subjects of alterity.

In *The Encyclopaedia of the Gothic*, the Gothic genre, and its constructed monsters are defined as pursuing ‘a seemingly messier version of what it means to be a person than that articulated in early natural philosophies’ (Smith, et al., 2016, p. xxxiii). These ‘messier versions’ of the Self are centralised and discussed through the medium of the literary anti-hero. The contradictions brought forward then by Heathcliff address the abstract areas of human life and the complex mind of the individual. The fundamental debate challenged by *Wuthering Heights* is why we choose to monster the unknown and exclude the cultural Other. The monstrous body is assured of meaning because of its participation within a network of established assumptions concerning the complexities of human nature. Chris Baldick explains the purpose of the abject identities, in this case Heathcliff, was to reveal ‘the results of vice, folly, and unreason, as a warning . . . to erring humanity’ (Baldick, 1991, p. 256). Heathcliff’s indistinguishable origin and race makes him an unquestionable source of ambiguity and danger. With Heathcliff being defined as an aporia, as a definitively unknowable being, Brontë contests established assumptions concerning the complexities of human nature.

Heathcliff serves as a cautionary sign that informs the reader of a change in the architecture of class and status. Therefore, the significance of the Gothic within the Victorian era was in how it became a platform for resistance, and a stage to perform subversive narratives. Its oppositional writing was shown in how its:

fantastic extremity opposes the middle-class ideology of the mainstream novel’s domestic realism; its dark passions and nightmarish scenarios contest Enlightenment rationalism and optimism or destabilise the liberal humanist subject. (Garrett, 2003, p.

1)

Wuthering Heights further defied normative function as it not only opposed domestic realism, but also brought the ‘dark passions and nightmarish scenarios’ of the Gothic into the domiciliary domain. The fundamental debate challenged by *Wuthering Heights* is why we choose to monster the unknown and exclude the cultural Other. Heathcliff as the cultural Other addresses the socio-limitations of cultural difference. Paul Goetsch states that the monster ‘dwells at the gates of difference’ and polices the border between inside and outside, known and unknown (Goetsch, 2002, pp. 17-18). Therefore, monstrous bodies, such as Heathcliff, symbolise the strangeness of the Other, and help to structure the self and the group to which the self belongs. Accordingly, they draw boundaries between us and them, between ‘I’ and ‘not I’. Heathcliff is confined to monocular vision attributed to race where he is introduced to the reader as being ‘a dark-skinned gypsy in aspect, in dress and in manners’ (Brontë, 1847, p. 6). The gaps in Brontë’s explanation of Heathcliff are filled by prejudiced perspectives concerning the abject, focusing the viewer’s attention on him as the outsider. He exists always at the threshold, as an in-between identity, remaining forever an ambiguous construct that proves difficult to understand. This positions him as manifestly different from all other characters in the text where ‘not a soul knew to whom it [Heathcliff] belonged’ (Brontë, 1847, p. 43).

Consequent of the malfunction in identifying Heathcliff, he is dehumanised to the point that he, in turn, cannot distinguish any humanity existing within the self. Due to the exclusory politics performed against him, he is refused an identity and firmly represented on the fringe of society, where he must exist as the foreign monster. However, where his rebellion against definition may be interpreted as monstrous, his ability to transgress reductive categorisation also allows conservative perspectives to be challenged. The concept of monster, as demonstrated by Heathcliff, can be difficult to categorise, and defies, as Beville puts it, ‘all attempts to constrain it in naming and, as such, our utilitarian attempts to

reduce it to some sense of functionality' (Beville, 2014, p. 1). His indistinctness can be linked to understandings of anamorphic perspective whereby 'the uncertainty of appearances . . . corresponds to the idea of the inconstancy and the vanity of this world' (Baltrušaitis, 1977, p. 70). Through the anamorphic lens, Heathcliff is then set up as the ambiguous figure based on changeable worldly views concerning difference and acceptable behaviour. His uncanny presence is thus far removed from the socio-normative understandings of tolerable human performance. The uncanny element can be further explained by amalgamating its research with anamorphic theory. As discussed previously, Slavoj Žižek names the *point de capiton* in the anamorphic process as the moment when 'a perfectly "natural" and "familiar" situation is denatured, becomes "uncanny", loaded with horror and threatening possibilities' (Žižek, 1991, p. 88). Utilising this observation in terms of Heathcliff, he catalyses the 'quilting point' in *Wuthering Heights* by contaminating the familiar domestic space and supplying it with a menacing atmosphere.

As discussed previously, the monster functions as a social construct and manifestation of cultural anxieties. The narrative of Heathcliff's identity can be taken apart to expose the aspects of humanity we attempt to suppress. The narrator, Nelly Dean, is the first to label Heathcliff as 'Monster!' and wishes that 'he could be blotted out of creation and out of memory' (Brontë, 1847, p. 204). This desire to eradicate examples of human destructiveness evolves from man's fear of distinguishing his own inner fallacies. There is an obscure void surrounding forbidden perspectives where society chooses to remain in the dark, ignoring the repressed desires of the unconscious. Within *Wuthering Heights*, this metaphorical darkness is accentuated by the darkness that pervades the text where there:

was no moon, and every thing beneath lay in misty darkness; not a light gleamed from any of the house, far or near; all had been extinguished long ago; and those at Wuthering Heights were never visible. (Brontë, 1847, p. 148)

With the fear of delving too deep into the unconscious, there is a predilection to ignore the darker elements of life. This extinguished thought therefore denies authentic identities to be realised and results in Brontë's characters never being fully 'visible' in the text. As Heathcliff acknowledges 'You'll neither see nor hear anything to frighten you, if you refrain from prying' (Brontë, 1847, p. 384). Therefore, we determine not to interfere into the unknown or unfamiliar, preventing self-recognition in the process of protecting our minds from the darker psyche.

In a similar way to Hyde, Heathcliff embodies the return of the repressed, a liberated force that survives on forbidden desire. Beville determines that personalities who have been attached to the semiotics of monstrosity, are confined to such, because they are 'the monster, although frequently acknowledged as indefinable, remains indefinitely within the cultural spheres of the "repressed"' (Beville, 2014, p. 1). Heathcliff shatters the divide between the conscious and unconscious self, externalising abject thought and illicit behaviour. He interrupts this denial of self-exploration, as he forces characters to acknowledge their concealed 'inner Hyde', so that they 'hardly knew what to hide, and what to reveal' (Brontë, 1847, p. 310). Where the anamorphic skull acts as a '*momento mori*', a reminder of death, Heathcliff serves as an admonition of the darker aspects of the human the mind, representing all that is forcibly inhibited. He becomes an emblem of untamed otherness, representing internally and externally all that is subjugated by the dominant class.

It is Heathcliff's uncontrolled character that makes him a significant source for critical analysis into challenges of Victorian ideologies and a digression from social limitations. Much of the recently analytical attention to Heathcliff dwells on his oppositional stance and moral dissidence, figuring him as 'a form of protest against the bourgeois capitalist forces of Thrushcross Grange' (Vine, 1994, p. 342). Even though Heathcliff achieves the same social standing as his fellow counterparts, he never succumbs to the

behaviourism or mannerisms of the elitist class. His disposition remains a rebellious one throughout the narrative, where his role as outsider never dwindles. It is noted that ‘though his exterior was altered, his mind was unchangeable and unchanged’ (Brontë, 1847, p. 118). It is his ability to threaten established ideals that casts a dark shadow over *Wuthering Heights*. From the outset, his mere presence and physical exterior cause discomfort where Lockwood comments on how he ‘beheld his black eyes withdraw so suspiciously under the brows’ (Brontë, 1847, p. 3). The use of the word ‘withdraw’ sets the premise of Heathcliff’s position throughout the text, taking the place as outsider and withdrawing from the inflexible frameworks through which society operates. On the margins, he haunts the landscape and serves as an unwanted mirror that reflects back the uglier elements of all other characters. Like the ‘undefined shadows [that] lurk in the corners of the numerous projecting portions of the building’ (Brontë, 1847, p. 108), Heathcliff stalks the novel, a shadow of the unconscious self. He acts as the anamorphic image, which is often seen as a silhouette of the original normative image. He delineates repressed indecencies and reminds the reader that humanity is a flawed system. As Cottom elucidates ‘in Emily Brontë’s portrayal, the unhuman is the foundation of modern identity; the misanthrope is the character demanded by its world’ (Cottom, 2003, p. 1081). It is thus through the anamorphic lens that Heathcliff can separate from his monstrous label and be visualised as only a human who introduces something new.

In looking at Heathcliff in a similar way to the anamorphic skull, his function therefore becomes more intelligible to reader when looked at from an alternative perspective. To view him more clearly, ingrained conventions must be destabilised and the structures of reality must take its place as the ambiguous deformation. A way of explaining this more clearly is by returning to look at the previously mentioned Hans Holbein’s *The Ambassadors*. Bruno Latour states that once Holbein’s anamorphic skull is reformed, the ambassadors appear as ‘a grotesque and distorted medley of bright and meaningless shapes’ (Topper,

2000, p. 116). Applying this anamorphic thought to the monster, if we are to change our depiction of the monster, all functioning of society must also be altered. Similar to this idea, once a skewed interpretation of Heathcliff is set up, the surrounding structures in place at *Wuthering Heights* become blurred. It is the transgressive power of anamorphosis that generates a radical doubt of the senses. It is the unknown purpose of the Other, as seen in the case of Heathcliff, that creates doubt in our preconceived perspectives of the world, becoming a threatening entity where:

the black space of the Thing in itself is . . . something extremely dangerous to approach—if one gets too close to it, ‘world’ itself loses its ontological consistency, like the anamorphic stain on Holbein’s *Ambassadors*: when we shift our perspective and perceive it ‘as it is’ ... all remaining reality loses its consistency and turns into an amorphous stain. (Žižek, 1992, p. 137)

The idea of the anamorphic perspective consists of a profound abandonment of traditional interpretations, implying that all representations must yield the power of dual information. Heathcliff displaces the world of the heteronormative function and introduces something new. It is his embodiment of the anamorphic ability to transcend linear perspective that enables the reader to reassess Brontë’s world as well as notions of selfhood. In the process of describing the anamorphic process of destabilising well-established beliefs, Lyle Massey comments on how a ‘true confrontation with the objectness of the world would entail the complete loss of a centred or perspectival sense of self’ (Massey, 2007, p. 18). Therefore, if we are to change how we have been conditioned to perceive the monstrous figure, then we will necessarily experience a loss in our own sense of self, where the familiar is made strange.

The defamiliarisation process, that is conducive to the uncanny effect, is a significant element to the Gothic. Peter K. Garrett determines that the aim of the Gothic is ‘to disturb its readers, and the disturbance it produces can be cognitive or ideological as well as affective, but is always accompanied by a strong concern for control’ (Garrett, 2003, p. 2). We witness many failed attempts to control Heathcliff, mirroring the impossibility of containing the repressed desires of the Victorian mindset. His untamed animalistic character is further emphasised by the feral dogs that reside at Wuthering Heights. Rena-Dozier digresses that ‘dogs represent all who would resist or despoil the perfection of domestic cleanliness and purity: they are opposed to the forces of domestic authority and must be punished and tamed’ (Rena-Dozier, 2010, p. 772). In turn, Heathcliff is seen as an intrusion that despoils the perfection of domestic cleanliness and purity. He is the undomesticated animal that changes the sacredness of the family unit and refuses all attempts to be trained in the customs of Victorian etiquette. Even in Heathcliff’s final moments, he remains a force of resistance. In the moment where Nelly tries to shut his eyes ‘they would not shut – they seemed to sneer at [her] attempts’ (Brontë, 1847, p. 392). This opposition even in death is symbolic of Heathcliff’s refusal to shut his eyes to the injustices and prejudices of the world. He ‘sneers’ at those who grasp onto linear perspectives and inflexible traditions, forever avoiding the stereotypical gaze. Even upon his death, he forces the reader to keep their eyes open to accepting cultural difference, and not allow others to shut off that perspective to them.

Cultural studies and monster theory have made monsters newly visible, helping to frame their purpose and even giving shape to their future in the literary sphere. Monsters are demonstrative subjects ‘the spectacular arbiters of social and political tastes’ (O’Connor, 2000, p. 210). One could argue that Heathcliff is employed by Brontë to fabricate an alternative ideology concerning the relationship of Victorian gentry to social and racial diversity. Heathcliff is the half-civilised Other that illustrates debates concerning fear of the

unknown racial Other. The idea that he is set up as the evil antagonist in the text is symptomatic of the societal need to justify a disinterest in othered and foreign identities. Mathias Clasen considers the use of the idiom 'evil' to be 'a psychological artefact, a "false image" that is projected onto an antagonistic out-group, probably because characterising an opponent as evil tends to dissolve painful self-blame' (Clasen, 2014, p. 39). This distorting of the Other emerges from a primitive need to de-rationalise the behaviour of an unknown identity. Through Heathcliff, the monstrous is identified as 'Other', set apart from self and society. Through his foreign features, the novel marks him as the ethnic outcast, disallowed entry into the homogeneous space of British tradition. The monstrous figure outlines the complex relationship between Self and Other, and how we can determine our own identity by setting up an image of what is Other and what is essentially evil. As a fundamental element to the social struggle of Brontë's time, through Heathcliff, the mechanics of alterity and the monsterring of the racial Other can be examined. Heathcliff is an example of the desire to contain Otherness and the repercussions of society's attempt to repress the transgression of cultural limits.

In order to understand the uncanny and foreign Other, one must banish all previous traces of definitions of cultural difference so as to promote new means of social acceptance. For the successful apprehension of the anamorphic image casts the observer in an active role. Daniel L. Collins contrasts the central gaze required in viewing classical perspective with the eccentric point of view from which anamorphic perspective is viewed. He claims the process needs 'an observer who is willing to sacrifice a centric vantage point for the possibility of catching a glimpse of the uncanny from a position off-axis' (Collins, 1992, p. 73). One must abandon the comfortable singular view and replace it with an anamorphic view that is both distorted and misshapen. Examining *Wuthering Heights* through the lens of the anamorphic perspective, this alternative approach will reposition the reader's viewpoint of Heathcliff in

order to re-examine the way society monsters the cultural 'Other'. This representational tool will challenge readers 'to readjust their spatial, sensory and cognitive engagement with the text and, by extension, the extrafictional world' (Zuese, 2010, p. 563). Forced to the margins and denied a narrative voice, Heathcliff is refused agency in the novel, as the deprecated subaltern, definition is forced upon his identity and is constructed by his superiors. Fulfilling any classification assigned by Victorian society, such as 'demon' or 'monster', he acts as such for the rest of the novel so as to acquire some form of agency within *Wuthering Heights*. His function as monster therefore, creates a platform for examining discriminatory practices performed against the Other. His position as the distorted Victorian man, or 'Lacanian stain', is seen to be an exemplar among many of postmodern treatments of human subjectivity. Anamorphosis then becomes a significant tool in this investigation into cultural difference in how it becomes 'a popular analogue used by many postmodern theorists, functioning chiefly as a metaphor for the relativity of vision or the subjectivity of the human experience' (Topper, 2000, p. 115). It is constructive in its reinterpretation of the monster figure, revealing the restricted limits of vision and linear perspective, as well as subjectivity in relation to encounters with Otherness and alterity.

Linear perspective is explained in more detail by Lyle Massey in *Picturing Space, Displacing Bodies: Anamorphosis in Early Modern Theories of Perspective*. He notes how perception 'cannot be infinite rational calculations of the mind because of its limited reliance on sense impressions' (Massey, 2007, p. 1). Therefore, the linear perspective is restricted in how it is affected by external influences, and this makes the proliferation of stereotype easier to enact. Allowing for physical reactions such as fear to define the unknown Other, in this case Heathcliff, these superficial reactionary emotions prevent any rational thought from surfacing. Finding it difficult to look beyond the first depicted image, we have become reliant on stereotypes and given meaning, allowing the stereotypical vision to manipulate our

interaction with the cultural Other. This is emphasised in Brontë's observations on Heathcliff's social conditioning of Hareton, where he 'was attached by ties stronger than reason could break – chains forged by habit, which it would be cruel to attempt to loosen' (Brontë, 1847, p. 376). In order to break societal chains of habit, anamorphosis then becomes essential in giving agency to the reader to establish their own interpretations of the Other. Anamorphosis reveals the profoundly ambiguous premises on which theories of representation are based. According to Massey 'the perspective viewpoint is nothing more than a mask behind which the subject falsely imagines his or her true self to reside' (Massey, 2007, p. 2). As a society, we don a mask of decorum, choosing to repress our authentic and uncontrolled self – the inner Hyde. However, it is anamorphic vision that leads the viewer back to questions concerning the limited perspective, observing what remains unresolved in visual experience and perspectival judgements. Where in art, anamorphosis looks at what lies beneath the painted surface, this research seeks to analyse what lies beneath the character of Heathcliff.

As Martin Heidegger states in 'The Age of the World Picture', 'hence world picture, when understood essentially, does not mean a picture of the world but the world conceived and grasped as picture' (Heidegger, 1977, p. 128). This reflects how reality is not something that exists but rather, is shaped and moulded by how humanity chooses to perceive it. It highlights the systematic submission of the world to a critical and restricted gaze, one which does not portray accurately the reality of the situation. However, anamorphosis undermines the classical model of representation because it challenges the certainty associated with the perspectival viewpoint. It is successful in how it 'stretches perspective theory to an extreme' and 'illustrates the rules of regular or normative perspective even as it tests the limits of perception' (Massey, 2007, p. 42). The word 'limit' is extremely important here, as it

confirms how interpretations and representations are limited and it is through anamorphic theory that these rigid definitions may be stretched.

By highlighting the viewpoint's instability, the reliance on stereotypes and linear perspectives becomes insufficient in dealing with cultural otherness and alterity. Perspective is contingent upon human beings, and will therefore be always a subjective experience and conditional to change. The importance of anamorphosis is how its 'perspective positions the viewer as the origin and controller of the gaze, one who at once inhabits and stands outside the closed systems' (Massey, 2007, p. 23). Thus, through use of this theory, the monster can be looked at with eyes void of manipulation, outside the closed systems of stereotype. Challenging prevailing assumptions about perspective, one can equate vision with truth rather than false realities and misrepresentations. Martin Jay encapsulates the linear perspective stating how it is 'a monocular, unblinking fixed eye, rather than the two active, stereoscopic eyes of embodied actual vision, which gives us the experience of depth perception' (Massey, 2007, p. 24). This statement underlines the significance of dual perspectives for the achievement of depth perception. Doubt in perception is the primary basis for how anamorphosis works, opposing our usual and commonplace expectations of reality. As Massey outlines: doubt is 'the testing ground of self-certainty, it is because, through doubt, the mind escapes the closure and confinement of the single, fixed viewpoint' (Massey, 2007, p. 31). It is through the anamorphic lens that the mind of the reader can then be free from closed and rigid interpretations of Heathcliff as monster. In order for the reader to doubt Brontë's construction of Heathcliff as the antihero, we must be able to conceive of the possibility that something may be different from the way in which it presents itself to us through the author. *Wuthering Heights* can be read as a limit of vision, only allowing the reader to see Heathcliff through discriminatory eyes. An anamorphic analysis of Heathcliff highlights how not all traditional representations of the monster prove trustworthy.

Lockwood's preconceptions, based on his bookish background, are lacking in assisting an understanding of the affairs at Wuthering Heights and the monster that resides within. Thus, a linear perspective of Heathcliff, drawn from hardened conventions and norms, is insufficient in describing a man that casts off the shackles of his rigid typecast. According to Emily Rena-Dozier 'much recent criticism has focused on Wuthering Heights as an instance of necessary readerly failure, a rehearsal of inevitable interpretive inadequacy' (Rena-Dozier, 2010, p. 757). The inability of seeing Heathcliff as anything but a distortion is consequent of society refusing to accept the transgressive body.

It is from this that our movements and thoughts become robotic because we are conditioned to act and think the way of the universal body. Even though Heathcliff does not share the corporal deformities of either Frankenstein or Mr Hyde, his existence in the text still evokes reactions of both horror and abhorrence. Apprehension surrounding his character is instead rooted in behavioural malformation rather than in physical abnormalities. Brontë's novel exposes that the monster is no longer defined by physical deformity alone; as abnormality could lie beneath the surface infesting the mind and the subconscious. Alexa Wright counters Michel Foucault's view that monstrosity is manifested in bodily distortions and advocates that monstrosity is more to do with the inner workings of an individual. She calls this form of modern monstrosity a 'monstrosity of the character' or a 'moral monstrosity' (Wright, 2013, p. 4). Alicia R. Zeuse explains 'the impossibility of escaping the distortion' in relation to the anamorphic perspective is because it 'alters the straight forward initial image or reading' (Zeuse, 2010, p. 565). However, where a skewed perception of Heathcliff may be difficult, it does not necessarily mean that it is impossible.

The very existence of anamorphic theory and studies of the Other validates the prospect of substitute viewpoints that destabilise structures of the world informed by semiotic tradition. According to Daniel Punday, 'critics have long recognized that literary monsters

serve to challenge the homogeneity of society by revealing its tensions, inconsistencies and gaps' (Punday, 2002, p. 803). The anamorphic perspective illuminates these gaps in the semiotic field, allowing for the inconsistencies concerning the cultural Other to be centralised and clarified. It challenges previous preconceptions of Heathcliff's character that have clouded our judgement of his function in the novel. Highlighting the existence of 'a duality at the core of human visual perception', it demonstrates the need for the dual perspective when it comes to misinterpretations of the original image (Topper, 2000, p. 115). Acting as a perspective mechanism that reverses well-established principles, anamorphosis allows monstrous figures such as Heathcliff to be seen through the contemporary eye, recovering him to his true authentic form. It is only when given an external alternative to the restricted viewpoint, that the prejudiced mind can be remedied. Nelly recognises that Catherine's deteriorated state is a result of her limited perspective and lack of freedom. She notes that 'long confinement to a single place produced much of the despondency, and it might be partially removed by a change of scene' (Brontë, 1847, p. 158).

After being confined to the regulatory practices of Thrushcross, Catherine enters into a state of psychosis where she 'increased her feverish bewilderment to madness, and tore the pillow with her teeth' (Brontë, 1847, p. 143). She then transforms into the subject of fear and monstrosity, as she moves further away from societal expectations of female propriety. Her intricate connection to Heathcliff can be then seen as born from their shared uncanniness and status as the monstrous Other. Upon Nelly's observation, we witness an appreciation for the dual perspective and engagement in alternative possibilities outside monocular representations. For the human mind to flourish, one must break free of restricted observations of human nature. Hence, anamorphosis becomes essential due to its engagement in perspectives outside the linear viewpoint. It is from such alternate perspectives that social

despondency dissipates, and is removed by ‘a change of scene’, or more accurately by a change of vision.

Heathcliff demonstrates the prospect of a change in vision in his ability to transgress socio-limitations. According to Peter K. Garrett, one of the main appeals to Gothic was how it came from ‘such resistance, from its promise of release from the limitations of cold reason and the commonplace’ (Garrett, 2003, p. 1). Thus, the presence of the abject Other in any text is used to reimagine the power relations that mediate, and all too often determine, the limits of human possibility. Its contribution to literature is how it disputes binary oppositions and represents the extremes of identity. The monster, especially in the case of Heathcliff ‘describes the simultaneous violation of physical and metaphysical boundaries’ (O’Connor, 2000, p. 210). A psychoanalytic observation of the monster determines it as an articulation of the edges of humanness; as the embodiment of something deviating from the norm. Due to Heathcliff’s name being ‘the name of a son who died in childhood’ (Brontë, 1847, p. 43), his very title signifies something unfavourable and is reflective of the pervasive darkness that haunts the Heights. Heathcliff is essentially the deviant Other, a body whose radical aberrations work to reveal the limits of what is considered as acceptably human. His ability to disobey conventional definition is seen as an infection that weakens human morality, and he becomes an uncanny presence that convolutes standards of decency. Edgar comments on how his ‘presence is a moral poison that would contaminate the most virtuous’ (Brontë, 1847, p. 134).

Solidifying the link between monster and Heathcliff, James Twitchell compares his parasitic nature to that of a vampire. He contends that he evidently is not a vampire, but ‘his relationships with other people can be explained metaphorically and that the metaphor Emily Brontë developed was one of parasite and host, oppressor and victim, vampire and vampirised’ (Twitchell, 2004, p. 81). The plague that Heathcliff carries infects and weakens

the systematic routine of social convention and tradition. Heathcliff falls under the category of monster because he infringes upon cultural limits and escapes the semiotic field, rendering established boundaries unstable. Due to the discomfort he causes to other inhabitants of Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff becomes ‘the scourge, the infector carrying the plague to all he meets’ (Twitchell, 2004, p. 87). He scourges aristocratic customs in how he climbs the social ladder and obtains ownership over two estates, enabling a transgression of class prejudices. Reducing difference to a negative, Heathcliff is confined to be nothing more than a strange outsider who is disallowed entry into the realm of the upper class. From an early age, he is a victim of exclusory tactics where his position within Wuthering Heights depends on his ability to follow the rules. Catherine gives an account of his tainted childhood where her brother Hindley would not ‘let him sit with us, nor eat with us anymore ... and threatens to turn him out of the house if we break his orders’ (Brontë, 1847, p. 26). It is on the margins of the *status quo* that Heathcliff goes beyond the limits of what is acceptably human. He disrupts this social paradigm in a Machiavellian way where ‘so much had circumstances altered their positions, that he would certainly have struck a stranger born and bred gentlemen’ (Brontë, 1847, p. 173). The irrational terror that he provokes emerges from his attempt at violating boundaries and forcing others to abandon naturalised beliefs.

David Sonstroem comments on how, during the reader’s encounter with Heathcliff, he / she experiences ‘vacillating allegiances, his sense of being afloat on a troubled conceptual and ethical sea’ (Sonstroem, 1971, p. 51). This ‘troubled conceptual and ethical sea’ reflects the semiotic field with which we are habitually familiar, yet Heathcliff’s character creates ripples that both unsettles and confuses the reader. His narrative function is to open up fixed meanings and identities to otherness, to invade the seemingly natural and turn it on its head. Victorian ideology taught the individual to observe transgression as an infringement upon morality and a product of evil. To Fred Botting ‘the effects of such novels are that they warn

of dangers of social and moral transgression by presenting them in their darkest and most threatening form' (Botting, 1996, p. 7). This poses the question as to whether monsters are merely perceived as such because they do not follow the existing social order and escape the dialectics of the general economy. It is Heathcliff who seems most insistent to shake the fixed structures of the novel's world. As Vine contends:

An unquiet and contradictory presence, Heathcliff can be seen as a trope of radical displacement: lacking a knowable origin ... Heathcliff comes from outside, from the other, introducing an instability into the world that precariously incorporates him, and he is never stably lodged in any of the social places he assumes. (Vine, 1994, p. 341)

Throughout the novel, Heathcliff's unquiet presence articulates and exacerbates the internal instabilities of the world he invades.

From his decentralised position in society, Heathcliff can draw other characters, as well as the reader, away from a homogenous way of thinking, encouraging the abandonment of upper-class ideologies. He is constantly on the border of structures and categories, diluting and blurring the lines. Upon the margins of traditional behaviour, Heathcliff transports others to the outskirts of the norm, manipulating his relationships to destabilise class definitions. In the case of Catherine, it is after she falls in love with Heathcliff's untamed quality that she abandons 'the elegancies, and comforts, and friends of her former home, to fix contentedly, in such a wilderness as this' (Brontë, 1847, p. 177). It is Heathcliff's presence at Wuthering Heights that allows others to challenge their given role. His arrival at the Heights divides Catherine from her father's governance, reconstituting her as 'a wild, wick slip' who transgresses Earnshaw's will and repudiates her own role as the quiescent daughter of patriarchy. According to Steven Vine, Heathcliff 'metaphorises Catherine's otherness to the patriarchal world of the Heights – and Catherine "is" Heathcliff insofar as he images her own

eccentricity to that world' (Vine, 1994, p. 345). Catherine as the unusual feminine is an othering presence due to her challenging stature towards patriarchal structures. In their different trajectories, both Heathcliff and Catherine move from a position of deviant subordination to socially dominant positions, thus interfering with the prevalent stable hierarchy. Catherine's statement that Heathcliff is 'more myself than I am' can be seen as a collapse in the barrier between Self and Other, as well as another example of how the monster is not just an external force but in fact lives within us. As seen with the case of Jekyll and Hyde, the doubling of identities in *Wuthering Heights* 'discloses the ambiguity of identity and the instability of the social, moral and scientific cues that are used to manufacture distinctions such as "I" and "the monster"' (Scheider, 2015, p. 6).

Catherine and Heathcliff encompass a love that denies difference and the binaries that force them apart. They share an intrinsic bond that stretches as far as Catherine admitting she is Heathcliff. She does not say 'I love Heathcliff', but 'I am Heathcliff' (Brontë, 1847, p. 96). Their love can be seen as the Lacanian imaginary where one person is everything to the other, to the total exclusion of anyone and anything else in the world. Catherine's intricate connection to Heathcliff stems from her own feeling of isolation within the household unit of Thrushcross Grange and her marriage to Edgar. She reflects on her difference to Edgar saying 'whatever our souls are made of, Linton's is as different as a moonbeam from lightening, or frost from fire' (Brontë, 1847, p. 94). Catherine's estrangement from the social structures that constrain her does not propel her toward insurrection but toward illness. With her condition being both uncanny and indefinable, Catherine becomes more terrifying than Heathcliff, transforming into the uncontrolled or monstrous feminine. Catherine sees herself only in a position of alterity stating 'My God! Does he know how I'm altered' (Brontë, 1847, p. 142). In her disorientated state, she becomes incapable of recognising her own face in the mirror. In contradiction to Lacan's 'Mirror Phase', Catherine's recognition of herself in the mirror

fragments her being rather than finding unity in the moment of seeing one's reflection. Only when placed alongside Heathcliff, can Catherine surpass the regulatory ideal, including the rules that clearly define and separate man and woman. However, as soon as Catherine inhabits Thrushcross Grange, she loses her source of transgressive power in Heathcliff and falls from female autonomy into conformist femininity.

The transcendent nature of both Heathcliff and Catherine can be connected to the sublime effect, that which is seen as without boundaries and beyond the imaginable. With the 'sublime' being a fundamental element of the Romantic period, Heathcliff cannot be examined without reference to its rationalisation of elevated thought and untamed emotion. The connection between the *Unheimlich* and the sublime is made most apparent in the character of Heathcliff. Andrew Smith argues that the *Unheimlich* is most relevant to the Gothic genre because of its intricate affiliation with the Gothic sublime, and also because of the subsequent terror attached to this theory. He notes 'the sublime becomes uncanny and the uncanny becomes sublime in a relationship which meets its most comprehensive expression in the postmodern' (Smith, 2000, p. 5). Similar to anamorphic thought, the sublime allows us to perceive an imposing object or figure in a different light, so that it may 'be ultimately transformed into a self-enlarging, quasi-spiritual transcendence' (Barney, 2010, p. 2). It looks at digression from the norm, not as a deviant encounter, but as a transformative experience. Therefore, a re-imagining of the character of Heathcliff looks into how he shares a common purpose with the sublime in his transgression of cultural limits. Heathcliff exploits a number of contemporary insecurities, among which is the fear of being outside the ordinary. As mentioned in chapter one, the 'splenic sublime' assists an understanding of our concern for the unknown while also uncovering the need of the unidentifiable subject for the functioning of all society. Linking mystery and the sublime to the human spleen, Richard E. Barney reflects on how it 'provides a dislocated, ungraspable centre around which is palpable'

(Barney, 2010, p. 4). Heathcliff can be put forward as embodying the ‘splenetic sublime’ in how he constitutes an unknown and incomprehensible presence who is able to transcend his ‘ungraspable’ identity as Other and utilise his abjectness to offer new meaning and challenge the dominant modes of thinking. Redeploying the anamorphic tradition and amalgamating it with elements of the sublime seen in *Wuthering Heights*, Heathcliff will be shown to be the ‘anamorphic spleen’ that disengages with all that recognisable in the domestic domain.

What Barney sees as the link between the sublime and anamorphic theory is how they ‘share the feature of having emerged from the contentious function of stretching, distending, and pushing to extreme limits the historically dominant modes of representation or perception’ (Barney, 2010, p. 8). Heathcliff, therefore, embodies the threatening sublime by stretching Victorian thinking, and testing prevailing representative classifications. Heathcliff becomes a catalyst for the personal suffering of other characters in the narrative, inducing both a sombre and sublime experience. He is the embodiment of the sublime that emerges from both uncertain and inexplicable mannerisms. He is positioned as ‘an unreclaimed creature, without refinement, without cultivation; an arid wilderness of furze and whinstone’ (Brontë, 1847, p. 120). Even though his association with monstrosity is linked to his tentative behaviour, he still serves as a universal explanation for humanity’s tendency to monster the outsider, and to equate uncanniness with evil.

In Jacques Lacan’s own studies of the sublime, he defines it as an object raised ‘to the dignity of the Thing’, where the ‘Thing’ is an uncanny embodiment of what cannot be symbolised in human language or other communicative systems (Lacan, 1992, p. 112). It is Heathcliff’s unfamiliar presence and lack of definition that sets him up as the Lacanian Thing, the anamorphic stain in the representational field. Slavoj Žižek describes how the Lacanian Thing assumes the ‘form of the repressed life power to be unchained’ (Žižek, 1992, p. 123). Heathcliff’s ability to ‘stain’ the image of Victorian idealism proves unsettling to

other characters in the text, as well as the reader. Emphasis is placed on Heathcliff's connection to the stained image when he learns of Catherine's death:

He dashed his head against the knotted trunk; and, lifting up his eyes, howled, not like a man, but like a savage beast . . . I observed several splashes of blood about the bark of the tree, and his hand and forehead were both stained . . . it appalled me. (Brontë, 1847, p. 199)

His associations with the grotesque and the malformed separate him entirely from the accepted Victorian man. The erratic behaviour and violent inclinations of Heathcliff set him up as the 'anamorphic stain', tainting the English landscape with the possibility of human indecency. By looking at Heathcliff anamorphically, it will illuminate all that does not make sense in his engagement with the semiotic field. Žižek describes the unsettling experience of seeing the stain in the perceptual field remarking 'there is always a point where "I see nothing," a point which "makes no sense"' (Žižek, 1992, p. 15). Like the anamorphic spleen, Heathcliff represents a subject that is impenetrable to analysis, an identity that 'makes no sense', but which is still imperative to the operation of narrative development. He becomes a subject in *Wuthering Heights* that is associated with manifestations of anxiety, disturbance and disorder. According to Barney:

the term spleen was the name of a specific human organ prone to dysfunction or it was the expansive label for associated symptoms including anxiousness, listlessness, mental distraction, and, most prominently, the affliction of melancholy. (Barney, 2010, p. 16)

Heathcliff, in a similar way, becomes a catalyst for the personal suffering of other characters in the narrative, inducing both a sombre and sublime experience. Even though Heathcliff's association with monstrosity is linked to his tentative behaviour, he still serves as a universal explanation for humanity's tendency to monster the outsider, and to equate uncanniness with

evil. It is his combination of both the sublime and the uncanny that inflicts a metaphorical ‘wuthering’ upon narrative development.

Ambiguity not only surrounds his character but also permeates the framing devices of the text. The name of the house even accentuates the uncanny atmosphere that invades the text, highlighting its geographical inaccessibility. *Wuthering Heights* is skewed by extremity: it is an architectural torsion wuthering between stability and instability. In Brontë’s own words she states “‘Wuthering’ being a significant provincial adjective, [is] descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which [the house’s] station is exposed in stormy weather’ (Brontë, 1847, p. 4). The narrative is full of interruptions, with the perplexing transfer from past to present disallowing a fluidity and progress in both plot and character development. Lockwood even highlights how ‘time stagnates here’ (Brontë, 1847, p. 32). Heathcliff serves as a representation of the disorderly aspects of human nature and the potential for a ‘wuthering’ taking place within the self. David Sonstroem states that ‘far from wholeheartedly endorsing an order, Emily Brontë depicts conceptual wuthering’ (Sonstroem, 1971, p. 51). The term ‘wuthering’ simultaneously describes both nature and human nature, and when used to describe Heathcliff, it in many ways acts as a metonym for the place which he eventually comes to own. It is consequent of confusing identities and the inability to categorise abnormal elements in the text that demonstrates a failure in storytelling. Knowledge of the Other, in this case Heathcliff, is denied to us through narratorial failure and narrative inadequacy. According to Scheider ‘fragmentation seems to refuse to tell the story from one reliable point of view, mirroring the confusion of what to believe and the possibility of erring fatally’ (Scheider, 2015, p. 10).

Heathcliff represents an outside force that enters into the internal world of the prohibited gentry, attacking and convoluting it. The chaotic weather can be paralleled with the anarchy that follows Heathcliff, demonstrating an instability of both internal and external

contexts, where ‘a high wind blustered round the house, and roared in the chimney: it sounded wild and stormy’ (Brontë, 1847, p. 49). He mirrors the corrosive storm in how he too can invade the home as an exterior force, disrupting every corner of the family household. In a similar way to the tumultuous weather, he threatens *Wuthering Heights* with his unpredictable and uncontrolled strength. Vine suggests that the ‘wuthering’ embodied by Heathcliff ‘becomes a movement of othering: a passing of boundaries that takes the outside in and the inside out, where the familiar is made strange’ (Vine, 1994, p. 340).

It is Heathcliff’s ability to ‘wuther’ narrow definitions of identity, which allows for him to participate in a multi-faceted identification process. Brontë’s novel adopts the multi-narrative voice that opens a forum for multiple perspectives, and demonstrates through this narrative device the possibility of alternative interpretations of Heathcliff’s character. Drawing on anamorphosis that can be identified as ‘the interpretive process elicited when text changes perspective and presents simultaneous viewpoints’ (Zuese, 2010, p. 565), Heathcliff changes from victim to villain each time the focus of the gaze changes. If the reader were to rely on the perspective of Lockwood or Nelly alone, then Heathcliff would only be seen in a negative light. In *Wuthering Heights*, Brontë outlines man’s refusal to overlook his prejudices is what augments his inability to discern what lies beyond his limitations. Nelly and Lockwood present the limited view from which the reader must actively reshape their interpretation of Heathcliff through the anamorphic lens. According to Müller, during the process of anamorphosis ‘mind and eye participate in an extraordinary epiphany that has as theme the death and resurrection of form’ (Müller, 2004, p. 97). Thus, an anamorphic inspection of *Wuthering Heights* allows for the eradication of Heathcliff’s monstrous identity and permits him to be reborn. To a contemporary audience, the distorted form of Heathcliff can therefore be transmuted into a recognisable image. Rather than just being ‘evil’, when looked at from an alternative view, Heathcliff can be seen to be a product of his upbringing.

Following on Asma's research on the 'accidental monster' as discussed in chapter two, Heathcliff also underscores that monsters are not intuitively immoral and are pushed by external influences toward malevolence. Lockwood admits how fear and anger can turn someone into the 'accidental monster', and how external forces that are out of our control dictate to us how to behave. In his words 'terror made [him] cruel' (Brontë, 1847, p. 29). It is consequent of society's prejudiced stance and perspective that disallows the outsider to enter the realm of cultural norms.

From the very beginning of the novel, Heathcliff is cast in the role as the hostile foreigner, and is demonised for being in this position outside the norm. From the moment of birth, external forces condition Heathcliff to see himself as unworthy and monstrous. Even before Lockwood is allowed access to this outcast's full history, he is aware that a series of unfortunate events have shaped his aversive character. When speaking to Nelly he acknowledges Heathcliff 'must have had some ups and downs in life to make him such a churl' (Brontë, 1847, p. 40). It is only his passion and emotion that shows us Heathcliff is not the presented 'unfeeling child', and validates to the reader the victim existing beneath the attributed and projected villainous facade. Nicholas Mosley introduces the idea of the 'hopeful monster' that is not inherently evil, but is simply born too early to be accepted by a conventional society. Mosley notes that there is hope that the Gothic villain will be received by modern audiences where progressiveness is translated through contemporary perspectives, such as the anamorphic theory. It is from this observation that monsters 'are things born perhaps slightly before their time; when it's not known if the environment is quite ready for them' (Mosley, 1993, p. 71).

For Heathcliff to be transformed, his position as tortured victim must be considered in any debates concerning his role as the antagonist. He represents everything that is peripheral to the 'norms' of self and society. Even though his intentions are injected with revenge and

immorality, his position as a Gothic villain remains an ambiguous factor. It is these superficial categories, set up by both the Gothic and horror genre, that confine identities to one role, and disallows alternative modes of representation from being formed. From these postmodern viewpoints, Heathcliff can be shown to no longer be someone that is inherently evil or a manifestation of otherness, but instead is a falsified persona shaped by a misconception of deviance and difference. Current criticisms now see Heathcliff as victim as opposed to the negative illustrations of him in previous analytic literature. According to James Twitchell 'the second generation of critics sees Heathcliff in shades of grey' (Twitchell, 2004, p. 80). Essentially Heathcliff cannot be labelled as a monster because his ferocity spawns from him being a victim of his own misery. It is only Nelly who recognises that Heathcliff is a victim of his own dismal situation. She notes 'you have nobody to love you; and, however miserable you make us, we shall have the revenge of thinking that your cruelty rises from your greater misery' (Brontë, 1847, p. 337). Contemporary literature and thinking thus contends that people are not born cruel but become transformed into these vindictive beings as a result their own persecution. Readers therefore see Heathcliff from a different angle, from an anamorphic perspective, through which he can be seen 'as a mortal, as a fallible man who does his best in a scurvy world' (Twitchell, 2004, p. 80).

Nelly also refers to how it was the maltreatment of Heathcliff, caused by the strict regime of eighteenth-century English life, which turned him into the monster he became. Heathcliff even ponders his existence and inner monstrosity, asking whether his situation would be as dark 'had [he] been born where laws are less strict, and tastes less dainty' (Brontë, 1847, p. 317). Nelly notes that the upbringing of Heathcliff, as well as Catherine, encouraged the deviant and darker self to be released from within. She notes that 'the master's bad ways and bad companions formed a pretty example for Catherine and Heathcliff. His treatment of the latter was enough to make a fiend of a saint' (Brontë, 1847, p.

76). It is through language and the semiotic field that the categories of self and other are solidified. Through the demonisation of Heathcliff, he metamorphoses into what people expect of him, conforming to the category assigned to him. This verbal conditioning of the monster is passed down onto Hareton where he confesses:

papa talks enough of my defects, and shows enough scorn of me, to make natural I should doubt myself- I doubt whether I am not altogether as worthlessness as he calls me. (Brontë, 1847, p. 298)

The internal chaos Heathcliff possesses is that of a tormented man, and not of what we might traditionally term a monster. He is more human than most of the characters because he expresses his mortal passions and only instinctively acts on the emotions he holds. He is dominated by ardour, and his decisions are wrought with animal instinct and primal urge. *Wuthering Heights*, then, becomes a psychological study of an elemental man whose soul is torn between love and hate.

Misguided readings of Heathcliff's characteristics have driven audiences away from his representation as victim. However, a re-reading of the novel both subverts and undermines the relationship between normalcy and the abject, redefining his role as the antihero. Heathcliff essentially incites a debate on the contributing agents to aberrant behaviour, and challenges whether it is a socially constructed attitude or born from the deeper scopes of the mind. Through the postmodern lens, one can thus re-evaluate why we are uncomfortable with representations of otherness and how any form of difference will continue to be demonised by prejudiced eyes. The anamorphic perspective, however, allows a different reading entirely. According to Massey 'the very nature of perspective lends itself to Lacanian terms and can be taken as a demonstration of desire in the gaze – of both the mythical element of subjectivity, and the failure of the centre' (Massey, 2007, pp. 17-18).

The research of Lacan can assist in a clear reading of Heathcliff that avoids myths and prejudices and looks at deligitimised and decentralised issues concerning his character. Through use of the anamorphic lens, or as Massey calls it ‘distorted perspective’, Heathcliff is taken from the margins and put forward in the centre. Even though Heathcliff is without a narrative voice or any distinct identity, his actions speak to many transgressive ideas concerning gender, otherness and understandings of the abject. Where he lacks in definition, his obscure identity allows Brontë’s audience to displace their own trauma onto this tragic Gothic villain. Thus, the once unfamiliar Other is exposed to share a familiar face to the differing insecurities of the reader.

Chapter Four: The Deviant Monster

Following on from a discussion of the fear of evil acquiring a proximity to the self, as seen in the first three chapters, this chapter will concentrate on the monster occupying the corporal self. Although there are many narratives that discuss the cultural implications of the monster in horror, the female monster has lacked attention in Gothic dialogues. Using William Blatty's text to examine female monstrosity, this chapter demonstrates an understanding of anxieties concerning feminine evil, the labels and stereotypes attached to this, and more importantly, society's failure to reliably engage with, much less overcome, these apprehensions. Phallogentric observations on the monstrous-feminine have constructed ideologies that suggest a link between deviance and sexual divergence. Deconstructing the character of Regan MacNeil, both visually and conceptually, feminist theory alongside a psychoanalytic reading draws parallels between female ambition and monstrosity. With the semiotics of female monstrosity proffering negative typecasts, the horror genre also becomes a medium through which women may explore a more liberated sense of self, 'a mode of feminism in which its heroines strive for some version of a better, more emancipated, life' (Smith, 2013, p. 31).

Becoming a site of contestation, Regan's body is seen as monstrous, as the reader is forced to engage with a more sexualised account of female signification. With this transformative understanding of female performativity in a postmodern culture, gender boundaries are being violated and in turn, the horror film inverts preconceptions of victim as something essentially feminine. Therefore, *The Exorcist* not only expresses the importance of monster as female, but also focuses on the inaugurated victim: the male gender. It is through the anamorphic perspective that this redefining of gender roles takes form, whereby previous distorted representations of female identity are looked at again. To see Regan as something

other than a distortion, and to realise the repressed agendas concerning her bodily form, the anamorphic perspective seeks new angles. It demonstrates a transgressive purpose within the horror genre that attempts to break down rigid expectations concerning the knowledge of woman.

Horror goes ‘beyond simply providing audiences with emotional and physical reactions of revulsion and disgust or fear and anxiety’, and instead provides ‘more complex and intellectual relations as viewers consider the monster’s presence in relation to the true evils that exist in the real world’ (Olson & Reinhard, 2016, p. 4). The social anxieties of the era finds expression in the illusory worlds of the Gothic and the celestial domains. With the monster being a figure of transformation, this genre transforms our engagement with cultural identities by providing the reader with anamorphic directions. The corporeal confrontation with demons in *The Exorcist* mirrors humanity’s psychosomatic struggle with its own abstract uncertainties. It concerned itself with the manifestations of immorality in the modern world, and revived the notion of internal evil and the existence of monstrosity within. In *The Exorcist*, the monster is no longer distanced from the self, as throughout Regan’s possession, the monster exists always within her. Hence, the purpose of Blatty’s text is to hold up a mirror to expose the disfigured face of humanity itself. The author speaks about personal sin through the voice of Father Merrin:

I think the demon’s target is not the possessed; it is us . . . the observer . . . every person in this house. And I think- I think the point is to make us despair, to reject our own humanity, Damien: to see ourselves as ultimately bestial; as ultimately vile and putrescent; without dignity, ugly, unworthy. (Blatty, 1971, p. 345)

Like Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, Regan’s character highlights a monstrosity that is unleashed from the inner self rather than taking its place as the external unfamiliar Other. With the

monster signifying the barrier between human and non-human, her body disrupts this assumption with both monster and human taking hold of the one singular identity. The monster is an alluring but confronting figure, where Regan's 'very act of constituting another is ultimately a refusal to recognise something about the self' (Polan, 1997, p. 121).

The proximity of both monster and human accentuates the closer relationship between Self and Other or between innocence and corruption. Regan discloses a repressed truth about humanity – that the monster can be situated both within and without. An anamorphic view of the possessed feminine demonstrates a reflection of an evil that is inside us all, and inverts our perceptions of traditional monstrosity. Emphasis 'is henceforth placed on the inside / outside boundary, and . . . the threat comes no longer from outside but from within' (Kristeva, 1982, p. 114). The monster is challenging in how one can recognise familiarity in the grotesque, however, by embodying the persona of another, the individual is denying something about themselves.

Monster theory essentially articulates uncertainty in explaining human conduct. The monster assists in challenging indefinite conclusions in society and locates answers to the deplorable plight of the modern world (Berliner, 2010, p. 131). Both the horror and the Gothic genre manipulate the most primitive fears and animosities of its audience. Alexa Wright states that at:

times of social and moral unrest in particular, the visible presence of a human monster offers an important form of reassurance that society has a means of dealing with disruptive forces in play. (Wright, 2013, p. 166)

'Moral unrest' concerning sexual liberation in 1960s and 1970s America became a recurrent theme within the horror genre, and offered up new insights into misconceptions of female identity. These misconceptions can be re-evaluated through the postmodern lens in order to

reshape the distorted representations of the past. It is precisely the function of anamorphosis 'to destabilise any single perspective and thus produce multiple, temporally disjointed viewing experiences of one object' (Song, 2007, p. 107). Anamorphic perspectives makes it possible to see the proper image, or the accurate representation, and to ultimately appreciate the true meaning beneath the stereotypical veneer. Thus looking at Regan through the anamorphic lens, one can avoid linear interpretations of her monstrous body, and deconstruct one's disjointed viewing of her feminine persona.

Another level of *The Exorcist*, when looked at awry, exposes the precarious relationship between man and religion, as well as man's fear of women. Fictional monsters, such as Regan, were born at times of social disorder and were then manipulated by governing institutions to send a message of moral dominance over deviant philosophies. In a discussion on the representation of evil within the Gothic genre, Andrew Smith outlines how 'the demonisation of particular types of behaviour makes visible the covert political views of a text' (Smith, 2013, p. 3). Contemporary horror follows on in the tradition of the Gothic and implements political agendas by exploiting the contextual fears of the time. The fact that the time of *The Exorcist's* release occurred alongside the development of the contraceptive pill, illustrates how the book not only concerned itself with fear of the supernatural but also with fear of the female gender itself. With the introduction of this medical phenomenon, woman could now separate sex from its reproductive function, and engage in activities that were before denied to the female body. The book provides a model for seeing representations of female sexuality and abnormal behaviour cemented in the metaphor of the female monster. Critics tend to equate Regan with notions of alterity, and to 'insist on the female monster's status as an ungraspable Other, whose abject body defies comprehension or identification' (Briefel, 2005, p. 24). She rejects her identification as a young woman, and resists the grasp of male-serving classifications.

The Exorcist is put forward as a didactic movie that presents the new generational woman as a perverse sexualised creature. Reflecting upon themes of this narrative, Barbara Creed comments on how ‘possession becomes the excuse for legitimising a display of aberrant feminine behaviour which is depicted as depraved, monstrous, abject – and perversely appealing’ (Creed, 2012, p. 31). Both book and film propagate the patriarchal ideology that woman’s carnal desires need to be tamed, thus justifying monstrous depictions of the feminine form. The book presents an illustration of moral deviance but it is an evil identified and constructed by the conservative Catholic Church. The act of positioning Regan as victim rather than villain, ignores her distorted body, and introduces dual meanings concerning gender performativity. According to Kim H. Veltman, ‘classic examples of linear perspective thus possess distortions when seen frontally which decrease when seen from viewpoints off to the side’ (Veltman, 1986, p. 96). So, the distortion of the first given image becomes more normalised by looking at it from a different position. If this same approach is taken for the monster, they become less like a deformed figure when given the opportunity to be seen in a different light.

Horror deals with themes of possession as a means of reproaching nonconformity to accepted standards of femininity. Newfound experiences with sexuality were negated by the Church, and deemed to be a form of Satanism ‘meaning people who can’t have any sexual pleasure unless it’s connected to a blasphemous action’ (Blatty, 1971, p. 166). Essentially, Regan was seen as a quintessence of the challenges to the Church, paralleling how modern medicine and science were seen to undermine Catholic decree. Through this religious connotation, her character then becomes a symbolic site for anxieties surrounding digression from the Church, and concerning notions of female emancipation from religious, somatic and ideological strictures. This book can be seen as linking sexuality to the decline in the Church during the seventies, where ‘the illness of the body was often the cause of the seeming illness

of the mind (Blatty, 1971, p. 56). In *The Exorcist*, there is a focus on the vulnerability of the female body, which in turn echoed the weakening stance of religious institutions and their moral pressures. Regan becomes a product of this fear, and her over-sexualised monstrosity can be read as a warning to society of the time. Serving a cultural function, Regan's exorcism asserts the power of the Church to achieve control, whereby any transgression of the norm can be diminished and cast out: it is as if the Church has the power to exorcise the monstrous out of the feminine.

It also, by implication, sees female sexual desire as corrupt and as evil, but also as something that is within the power of the Church, and by extension of patriarchy, to delimit and control. Regan is set up as a perpetual danger, whose abject body weakens oppositional perimeters such as the binary of male / female or self / other. According to Steven Schneider, every monster possesses 'a double narrative, two living stories: one that describes how the monster came to be and another, its testimony, detailing what cultural use the monster serves' (Schneider, 1999, p. 13). In Regan's case, she is a monster fashioned to inflict fear on women who possess too much sexual freedom and, simultaneously to protect the phallogocentric order of the Catholic Church. Since anamorphosis possesses the rare quality of being able to disrupt or even shock our accustomed modes of vision, and of laying bare the prejudices such vision involves, an anamorphic look at Blatty's text disrupts the prejudices involved in the way we see Regan. A debate concerning her position as monster outlines how we are blinded by female myths, where stereotypical tropes cloud our engagement with deviant and transgressive illustrations of femininity.

In re-working the Mount Rainier case of 1949, on which the novel is based, Blatty altered the gender of the possessed child so as to move his story into the gendered territory of the horror genre: the female body. Even though the book is based on the accounted real life possession and exorcism of a young boy, Roland Doe, Blatty chooses to follow stereotypical

modes of victim discourse, and employs the female instead as the possessed subject. The fact that women are typically represented as being more susceptible to possession encapsulates the myth of the vulnerable and weak female body. However, instead of it being a phenomenon that positioned female as victim, Moshe Sluhovsky discusses how possession was in fact a cultural model that permitted the voiceless woman to articulate religious concerns within the social order. Through this newly established voice, the possessed female was granted a weapon of strength and resilience in which she could embody alternative identities that allowed her to break the chains of her gendered image. According to Sluhovsky, many cases of possessed women ‘used their encounters with spirits ... to confess their or their immediate relatives’ sins and to mobilise their families to improve their Christian conduct’ (Sluhovsky, 1996, p. 149). With the decline in pious rituals and attendance of mass, this text highlights the danger of society’s deviating faith to issues of religious and social patriarchal control.

This ecclesiastical form of ignorance is seen in both the MacNeil females where Chris refers to a church as ‘Holy Something-or-other’, and Regan challenges religious theories even before the possession takes place. She questions her mother on why people have to die and ‘why does God let them?’ (Blatty, 1971, p. 46). Even though Regan is consumed by an evil spirit, it is through the demon that she is able to transgress her gendered role, and thus express concerns surrounding the waning devotion to the Catholic Church. It is only when she is consumed by another identity that she feels able to speak out as a female. In other cases of possession, it was:

By arguing that someone else is speaking within them, these women expand the narrow space they have in traditional societies to speak out on religious matters and to participate in their society’s theological dialogue and spiritual quest. (Sluhovsky, 1996, p. 1050)

Through the voice of the demon, the female is allowed to operate outside her given role, challenging the heteronormative associations of the gendered body. Deconstructing the myth of possession, horror-fiction illustrates a performativity of gender that is more subversive.

In horror films, the masculine body is usually set up as the rational, conformist subject, whereas woman is seen as the deviant and eternally monstrous being for not submitting to the restrictions of male discourse. Usually masculinity and 'the heterosexual male body function as the default for normality, while anything associated with the feminine or the female body becomes marginalised' (Olson & Reinhard, 2016, p. 12). However in *The Exorcist*, the female body is no longer delegitimised, and it is the male archetype that is pushed to the margins. In similar fashion to *Carrie* and *Psycho*, Regan has no father to supposedly enact the controlling influence as dictated by the patriarchal paradigm. It is this lack of any masculine authority that ultimately brings on her bestial nature. With the position of man being continuously negated in the text, the monstrous feminine is seen as a reaction to male incompetency. Barbara Creed feels that 'the monster as female, appears to be precisely this – constructing monstrosity's source as the failure of paternal order' (Creed, 2012, p. 38). The absence of Regan's father is a prime example of this, especially where Chris continually makes her daughter aware of 'the daddy who never writes or calls' (Blatty, 1971).

The fact that the monstrous anti-hero is a female who holds power over the male protagonists is significant. Filmic narratives, such as *The Exorcist*, metaphorically portray patriarchy's inability to disempower the female gender and control her sexually liberated spirit. Regan becomes 'the castrating girl / woman, a figure designed to strike terror into the hearts of men' (Creed, 2012, p. 40). The non-specificity of gender of the possessed subject is what evokes fear in the male sex, where the recognisable binary of sexed identity is rendered unbalanced. This gender obscurity dehumanises Regan, and she exists as more of an object than a subject, confined to be viewed as an inanimate being without an emotive register. With

its many genderless creatures and victims, horror fiction thus collapses the categories of male and female to the point of inextricability. As Eleanor Salotto argues, ‘out of chaos arises indeterminacy – with the potential to challenge binary modes of thinking, particularly about gender’ (Salotto, 2016, p. 7). Horror and the Gothic disrupt the familiar beacons of gender tropes, turning what was once familiar into something uncanny and strange. Where the home was once the fortress to cement the domestic role of feminine, within *The Exorcist*, the MacNeil house becomes instead a site of transgression and aberration. In Blatty’s controversial text, the home is thus ‘turned into a haunted place because the dream of the stable home actually produced the unfamiliar and the monstrous’ (Salotto, 2016, p. 4). It is only within this space that Regan can challenge phallogentric ideologies, and transcend all that is known about the female body. Therefore, the uncanny element of the MacNeil home allows gender to be viewed in a way that exceeds feminine expectation, and reshapes impressions of the female Other.

Blatty clarifies that the reason why people feared the film adaptation of the book was because it made ‘the unconscious connection between the repulsive monstrosity on the screen and the moral evil in their lives’ (Berliner, 2010, p. 131). It illustrated the typical return of the repressed, the return of the monster, a trope that resists closure. Freud’s theories of repression, as demonstrated in chapter one on *The Strang Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, can also be seen to have resonances in *The Exorcist*. Chris admits that the abandonment and loss of Regan’s father figure would negate her growth as a woman and moral being. She confesses how she was:

fearful that her daughter was repressing both anger and grief and that one day the dam would break and her emotions would erupt in some unknowable and harmful form.

(Blatty, 1971, p. 4)

The 'dam' that society constructs in their minds is what cultivates a normative humanity and imprisons the monster within. The unconscious threatens the divide between normal and abnormal self, functioning only as a reminder that we are never in complete control. Regan fundamentally represses her inner demons to the point that she loses agency over her own body. According to Dr Klein:

certain ideas and feelings are somehow repressed by the conscious mind, but remain alive in a person's subconscious; remain quite strong, in fact and continue to seek expression through psychiatric symptoms . . . call it dissociated material, the word dissociation implying a splitting off from the mainstream of consciousness. (Blatty, 1971, pp. 134-135)

It is Regan's transgression of normative femininity, or her 'splitting off from the mainstream', that sets her up as the perfect model for the monstrous. Eschewing all forms of normative ladylike behaviour, she utters obscene blasphemies and performs inappropriate modes of communication. Creed notes that 'Regan's body is represented as a body in revolt' (Creed, 2012, p. 40). Her body becomes a site of conflict and is used as a tool to rebel against all that is repressed in the feminine. She pollutes the archetype of innocent and vulnerable woman, demonstrating that all identities have the propensity to misbehave.

The fable of the possessed subject is often attributed to a person afflicted with a disease or disorder, where the subject was seen as the apotheosis of otherness. Misconceptions of iniquity are associated with particular dysfunctions of the psyche, as ancient civilisations 'believed that physical and spiritual disorders were caused by invasion of the body by demons' (Blatty, 1971, p. 186). Supernatural explanations, such as possession, are often employed to explain antagonistic attitudes to sameness and the ordinary. Human weakness is perceived as being engendered by the devil's influence, which allows individuals

to detach themselves from human deformity while embracing it simultaneously as an othered discourse from which they themselves are insulated by religious protection. Father Merrin sees possession as a moment of projection, an opportunity to embrace the repressed during a rejection of the Self. It essentially forces us to recognise the darker aspects of humanity, and admit the existence of the monster within. With possession being seen as the plague that afflicted human decency, the Church was set up as the antidote to all behavioural anomalies. Religion was used to decontaminate the abject, to solidify the margins between the human and the non-human, and ultimately return cohesion to society.

Essentially, ‘the whole of creation was seen as assailed by demonic powers which Christianity alone could overcome’ (Levack, 1962, p. 4). The word ‘alone’ is significant here, as the populace were misled into thinking that there was no other option than to rely solely upon religious institutions, where the cure required unwavering loyalty to the Church faith. It can be argued that the Church designed the devil, and the idea of internal evil itself, to instil fear in deviation from their moral conventions. The construction ‘of such monsters promotes a collective identity among the religious and conveys morality lessons that limit the expression of undesirable thoughts, feelings and actions’ (Olson & Reinhard, 2016, p. 8). It was used as a method to manipulate and control the populations, and to create a dependency on the Church itself. It was deemed as a ‘stylised ritual pretty much out of date in which rabbis and priests tried to drive out an evil spirit’ (Blatty, 1971, p. 181). It was often the role of literary discourse to disseminate an exaggerated display of the Catholic doctrine. This novel can thus be seen as a manipulation of the human psyche in how it encourages a return to patriarchal society as one’s only way to survive such monstrous possession.

As the book follows Regan’s weakening moral purpose, religious testimonies take on more prominence in the MacNeil household, where Chris must reluctantly call on the help of a priest to drive the darkness from her daughter. Without her consciously realising it,

religious practices dominate the mentality of Chris where she is seen ‘fumbling with the handkerchief, telling stitches in the hem like linen rosary beads’ (Blatty, 1971, p. 134). As soon as the priests enter into Chris’s home, we witness a change in the mother figure’s behaviour and character. She no longer exists as the independent single mother, but now must rely on the male figure, presented to us as the epitome of piety and holiness, as the person that returns everything to order. Exorcism became a designed way of beating women back into a submissive and innocent deportment. According to Olson and Reinhard, ‘depictions of possession and exorcism reflect the various socio-cultural tensions that often lead to the oppression, suppression, and repression of non-traditional beliefs, behaviours and identities’ (Olson & Reinhard, 2016, p. 12). Similar to how Regan must be ostracised for representing something so abject, her body parallels patriarchy’s attempts to exclude the female because she disturbs the masculine order. Where possession grants women agency in resisting their oppression, exorcism returns them to a marginalised position within society or culture.

Regan’s body being anchored to the bed during the act of exorcism underscores the submissive role of woman where the child’s entrapment within her own body mirrors women’s restrictive and conservative gendered roles in 1970’s America. In a scene where Chris unbuttons Regan’s nightgown to expose a message that seems to be written on the inside of her stomach, we see the words ‘Help Me’ materialise through her skin. This exaggerates the position of the female who is trapped by representations of the body, and confined to restrictions of the disempowering male gaze. The words carved into her skin make it apparent that Regan is trapped within her own body, and they gesture towards the imprisoning expectations of gender performativity for her age. Women are always being connected to sexuality and the body, where they are set up as ‘flaunting [their] much-adored body-makeup-covered long legs’ (Blatty, 1971, p. 34). As an actress, the societal and cultural function of Chris is to be an object of the ‘male gaze’, where her position as woman creates a

low opinion of her acting ability. She confides to her friend Steve that ‘they don’t think I can cut it’ (Blatty, 1971, p. 25). New observations of this text, invite a reappraisal of man’s treatment of woman. Regan acts as the anamorphic skull, the revelatory subject, in how she forces the spectator to look at the patriarchal constructs within which she is continually represented, particularly in terms of the Church, in an alternative way, and to expose its exploitation of women as the true distortion. Similar to *The Ambassadors* painting where ‘Holbein’s skull forces the viewer to see the perspectival figures in a new light’ (Gallo, 2007, pp. 58-59), *The Exorcist* forces the reader to realise that the directed blame at women for ecclesiastical deviance is misplaced.

The traditional exorcism narrative allegorically explores the oppression of various marginalised groups and the non-heteronormative, particularly the female gender. Essentially these narratives ‘commonly situate the possessed girl or young woman as some dreadful thing that a male saviour must dispel or repress, thereby restoring so-called normal life’ (Olson & Reinhard, 2016, p. 3). As human beings, we are conditioned to follow the demands of the Superego, and to suppress all that makes up the Id, the ‘inner Hyde’. The human condition is constrained by laws and principles that dictate how one should behave, and where anything deviating from the norm is marked as monstrous. We are thought to consider the misshapen or deviant subjects as immoral, evil and dangerous. This perception relates to the idea that when something inhabits a dual state it therefore exists outside the normal order. Thus, for the subject to be accepted by society, one ‘must reject or repress all forms of behaviour, speech and modes of being regarded as unacceptable, improper or unclean’ (Creed, 2012, p. 37). Christopher J. Olsen and Carrie Lynn D. Reinhard connect the politics of possession with the deviant female. In their book, *Possessed Women, Haunted States: Cultural Tensions in Exorcism Cinema*, they highlight how a girl ‘on the cusp of womanhood becomes increasingly disobedient and uninhibited, and no longer behaves like the proverbial

“good little girl” (Olson & Reinhard, 2016, p. 1). The fact that Regan is colonised by the persona of another identity constitutes the idea that she is rejecting the normative position of her gender. It personifies her refusal to recognise the repressed position of woman during the eighties, as predicated by the strictures of the Church. Regan is monstrous because she ‘breaks the major taboos, set down by the laws of the symbolic order, which help to establish and maintain the self’s “clean and proper body”’ (Creed, 2012, p. 40).

This idea of ‘proper’ femininity is destabilised by her abject body, and reflects a desire to disturb stereotypical suppositions about gender. Her character essentially deconstructs patriarchal structures such as the Church and the role of the father figure, but more importantly, her deviant identity demonstrates the fragility of those structures. As Creed reflects:

Woman is constructed as possessed when she attacks the symbolic order, highlights its weaknesses, plays on its vulnerabilities; specifically, she demonstrates that the symbolic order is a sham built on the sexual repression. (Clover, 1992, p. 41)

It is from postmodern perspectives that the instability of habituated symbolic orders is made more apparent. Anamorphosis acts as a valuable tool through which to alter our discernment of what is ‘improper and unclean’. It allows the monstrous subject, in this case the female, to be liberated from the margins and seize its place at the centre. Since ‘anamorphic experiments constituted a form of rebellion’ (Gallo, 2007, p. 49), the construction of Regan and her ability to change the way we view society can also be seen as a form of upheaval.

According to Barbara Creed, the film is more than about demons and exorcisms, where ‘connections drawn in the film between feminine desire, sexuality and abjection suggest that more is at stake than a simple case of demonic possession’ (Creed, 2012, p. 31). Blatty accentuates monstrosity’s proximity to the self, where evil is not projected onto

another identity, but is created within the body. Narratives on the possessed subject provoke reflection on issues such as the nature of evil and humanity's propensity to sin. Horror stories such as this 'are playgrounds of the mind, occasions for vicariously living through the worst and for exercising and getting experience with our own negative emotions' (Clasen, 2014, p. 46). Regan's abject monstrosity magnifies issues of repression or of the repudiation of undesirable morality. She constructs this demonic personality in her mind so as to displace all her cultural anxieties and repressed fear onto this entity, where:

the second personality is simply the agent who handles the punishing. If Regan herself were to do it, that would mean she would recognise her guilt. But she wants to escape that recognition. (Blatty, 1971, p. 135)

From this observation, monsters are therefore shaped to facilitate a denial of the nefarious self. They are entities that can explain injustices associated with human behaviour, and to somehow make such occurrences appear to be outside of the natural order. Even when Regan purportedly murders Mr Dennings, society chooses to seek blame in the supernatural rather than to admit to the criminal practice of a child. This shows humanity's predilection to believe in a supernatural murder rather than in a human one. His death is described as having 'his neck wrenched around in a style of ritual murder by so-called demons' (Blatty, 1971, p. 192).

The fictional monster therefore is what cultivates our humanity, and also what cages the inner demons of the human self from taking form. The act of displacement carried out by the possessed subject becomes a defence mechanism to inhibit the self-destructive aspects within taking form. Regan exposes the instability of these psychoanalytic tools, and demonstrates how the unconscious will always show its face in some shape or form. Her possession 'demonstrates that those abject substances can never be successfully obliterated

but lie in wait at the threshold of the subject's identity, threatening it with possible breakdown' (Creed, 2012, p. 40). The return of the demon in the form of Father Karras in the conclusion of the novel confirms how evil can never be fully eradicated, and can always return unsuspectingly. Blatty's refusal to provide a reassuring narrative closure, alludes to a themes of societal ambiguity and the unstable conscious of the individual.

The Exorcist probes the dichotomies and ambiguities embedded within child development, particularly during the stages of female maturation. It is highly significant that Regan's possession takes place on her thirteenth year, the threshold between childhood and adulthood, the moment when sexual questions and female desire find expression (Creed, 2012, p. 40). This pubescent period is even marked by the fluctuation in her speech, which becomes deep and guttural like that of a maturing boy. This alteration of gendered voice, where she freely moves between the masculine and the feminine, makes her identity one of indistinctness and transgression. Sluhovsky proposes that themes of invasion and possession can be directly connected to the female agent's insecurities concerning anatomical development. He maintains that 'possessed women projected their unvoiced sexual anxieties and equated their personal notions of sexual impurity with parallel familial and / or communal dangers' (Sluhovsky, 1996, p. 1051). *The Exorcist* implies that menstruation heralds monstrosity due to the possession happening at the moment of female puberty. Menstruation related to female monstrosity also hints at man's primal fear of the mysterious feminine and the unknown womb. Indeed, it was man's fear of the mysterious female body that initially set up links between traces of femininity and demonic influence.

In her essay 'The Medical Diagnosis of Demonic Possession', Judith Bonzol discusses how 'irregularities in the womb bred "vapours" which drifted through the body, initiating physical disorders with symptoms that were often mistakenly attributed to demonic possession' (Bonzol, 2009, p. 119). Bronzol's statement contextualises the idea that frailty,

nervousness and hysteria were all seen as gendered, only occurring during the female bodily process of menstruation. With even the word hysteria coming from the Latin word 'hysterium', meaning womb, all corporeal deficiencies were seen as related to one's sexual composition. The anamorphic perspective demands a rereading of *The Exorcist* from a different direction. Going back to the painting of *The Ambassadors*, Holbein uses the anamorphic perspective to play with the idea of looking and seeing. When viewing the painting one can never justly see the objective of the image as a whole. The distortion governs our gaze and prevents true seeing and true knowledge. 'True seeing' involves a dialectic between the different positions as what one sees in the picture depends on the position that one occupies - either in front of the image or beside it. One's perspectival standpoint is an important aspect of anamorphosis as the process of 'looking awry' and seeking new meaning can only be done through shifting one's gaze.

In the case of Regan, her anamorphic body prevents the spectator from seeing the information her bodily grotesqueness offers. This mirrors the relationship of the male gaze and the female body, where woman is to be looked at as an object, but never to be seen in full clarity as a subject capable of agency. The development of the female in cognizance and in physique was a phenomenon that the patriarchal society of the 1970s was failing to explain. This phenomenon is manifested by Regan's transformation whereby her precocity of intellect 'was by far the most difficult of all to explain' (Blatty, 1971, p. 245). It was the failure of man to control and explain these gendered elements that proliferated false myths and corporal misconceptions. It was a domain that the male gender could never experience, or control, and was thus understood as a threat to its power. Feminine attributes such as menstruation and pregnancy positioned woman as fragile and susceptible to control by another – whether man or demon. They highlighted 'the Christian mistrust of the body in general and of the female body in particular. Both events also associated the female body with malediction and

uncleanness' (Sluhovsky, 1996, pp. 1051-1052). However, even though Regan's body is commonly associated with the grotesque and the unclean, from an anamorphic perspective, her distorted identity shows the possibility to transgress one's rigid gendered function. She illustrates a performativity of gender that is more subversive and embodies a hybrid identity that allows the female to break free from convention. Similar to how monsters absorb the horror of what is unknown and unregulated by giving form to the unspeakable, so women were creating similar fears in the cultural consciousness. Thus, Regan becomes a product of this fear, and her sexual monstrosity is almost an admonition to society of the time.

Regan's position as monster is made even more disturbing as her persona as antagonist is moulded around the image of a child, emphasising her otherness and her place as a traditional model of evil. She obscures our ideas of fear and evil where Jackson explains that the 'face of evil carries with it an uncanny reminder of the face of innocence' (Jackson, 2000, p. 66). In looking at her as a monstrous character, her transformation from innocent to depraved must be inspected. Embodying the characteristics of acceptable female behaviour, in the beginning of the novel, the child is described as having a 'shy and diffident nature' (Blatty, 1971, p. 10). The commencement of Regan's decline in femininity is signified by her misplacement of her party dress before a social gathering at the house. Her beatific personality contrasts considerably with the carnal damned being into which she converts. Chris MacNeil, the child's mother, comments on how 'it was like she was someone else' (Blatty, 1971, p. 121). The disfigurement of her body is set up as if Regan has taken it upon herself to cast off any traces of her feminine physicality. Her self-mutilation can then be seen as an act of rejection of both the gendered and the vulnerable body. She rejects her preceding horror and Gothic sisters, and rebuffs the semiotic model of the tormented victim. Instead, the possessed child 'becomes the agent rather than the prey of her possession; she is an active participant and not merely a passive victim of the authorities' manipulations' (Sluhovsky,

1996, pp. 1044-1045). The representation of female agency produced by Regan is therefore generated from a woman's neglect of moral codes, and as she moves away from patriarchal influences such as the Church, she is given more power. Regan simultaneously plays the role of both victim and villain. She secures the reader's sympathy, while concurrently polluting her bedroom with violent profanities and secreted bile.

The foremost boundary traversed by Regan is that between purity and impurity. She dismantles the idea of the child as untainted, and introduces a new perspective where the child is no longer considered the corrupted, but instead is re-envisioned as the corrupter: there is a movement from objectivity to subjectivity and from passivity to agency. Regan's position as the novel's antagonist is thus seen in the fear she instils in others, especially men, which derives from her threat to phallogocentric values. Father Merrin describes how Regan's altered persona perturbs him where he describes seeing a 'skeletal thing on the bed that was watching intently with mocking eyes that were filled with cunning and hate and, most unsettling of all, with a posture of towering authority' (Blatty, 1971, p. 251). Adding to the fear of female sexuality, the Church has another concern that was showing more 'authority', namely the deviant youth culture that was gradually finding its voice at this time.

The transformation of a young girl into an incongruous monster reflects America's intensifying concern about the younger generation, and the threat they pose to tradition and norms. According to Andrew Scahill 'parental-replacement anxiety figures strongly in child horror-priming youth to command the future but fearful of what the future will contain' whereby these films represent 'the uncanny terror of creating a version of oneself that will eventually render the Self obsolete' (Scahill, 2012, p. 97). Even the name 'Regan' connotes monstrosity due to its connection to one of the original malevolent children in Shakespeare's *King Lear* who was 'sharper than a serpent's tooth'. Through this association of a snake, the name also refers to the narrative of Eve, and the beginning of personal sin. Evil has always

been inextricably linked to the feminine since the story of Eve in the Garden of Eden. As Kristeva highlights, ‘the brimming flesh of sin belongs, of course, to both sexes; but its root and basic representation is nothing other than feminine temptation’ (Kristeva, 1982, p. 42). Regan is connected to woman’s non-compliance, uninhibited sexuality and duplicity. Her symbolic function therefore represents a thread of female evil that ties itself to the downfall of the male patriarch. Therefore, before Regan’s narrative is even shared with the reader, traces of her semiotic identity solidify her role as the novel’s antagonist. In *The Exorcist*, we see a changed perspective of feminine evil as noted by Barbara Creed when she states that ‘this stereotype of feminine evil – beautiful on the outside / corrupt within – that is so popular within patriarchal discourses about women’s evil nature’ (Creed, 2012, p. 42). Instead, we see Regan as embodying a monstrous identity both on an internal and external plane. This elucidates the threat against the masculine gender and augments castration anxieties, with exaggerated images of the grotesque being imprinted onto her feminine entity.

This in turn prohibits the acceptance of Regan’s transgressive nature by patriarchal discourse and prevents her from being seen as anything but the threatening female. Fear from the reader emerges from the idea that ‘woman has broken with her proper feminine role – she has “made a spectacle of herself” – put her unsocialised body on display’ (Creed, 2012, p. 42). Phallogocentric ideologies, such as some of the creeds proposed by the Church, tend to accentuate feminine fragility and subservience. However, even though a masculine language has conditioned false representations of the woman, it is through Gothic narratives such as this that these rigid identities can be challenged. *The Exorcist* offers an anamorphic vision into othered identities where it becomes ‘a mode of representation that offers an alternative point of view for observing orthodox perspective’ (Grootenboer, 2006, p. 18). Regan, as possessed figure, is not only visually disturbing, but is also semantically disturbing. Her rejection of femininity and innocence attacks the symbolic order and highlights the weakness

of the moral standards of the Church. By creating a new language for women that is associated more with abjection and transgression, Blatty shows the possibility of a discourse that avoids sexual repression.

This text is not only about the supernatural and the invasion of the body; it also becomes a platform for looking into transgression of the gendered body. Chris and Regan essentially perform outside their given roles, demanding more from than what is given to them within their subservient archetype; as Chris shouts out in a dream, 'don't let me be nothing forever' (Blatty, 1971, p. 12). It is only when elements of the uncanny begin to infiltrate the home that Regan can transcend the female condition of passivity. Chris' ability to perform outside her given role is contested metaphorically through the body of Regan. As Dennings outlines 'you live through the works you leave behind, or through your children' (Blatty, 1971, p. 34). Chris defies the gendered role of domestic matron, and casts off the shackles of her rigid typecast predefined role. Transgression of the corporeal identity is manifested in the monstrosity of Regan's physicality and behaviour. She is evidently presented as an unnatural being, violating limitations of her body and more particularly, of her sexual body. The terror surrounding demonic possession 'arose from witnessing the demoniac's pathological symptoms, the transformation of their personalities' (Levack, 1962, p. 925). This 'transformation of personalities' demonstrates how possession becomes a mechanism for overcoming limitations of gendered identities. Not only is it one's personality that is altered, but the very understanding of Self also transforms. By becoming a bisexual identity, that fulfils the requirements of both genders, Regan destabilises the male / female binary. What is even more transgressive about her situation is that of the cross-gendered voice she takes on at many moments in the film. It is her ability to move between the masculine and the feminine that makes her even more terrifying.

According to Creed ‘when the subject is invaded by a personality of another sex the transgression is even more abject because gender boundaries are violated’ (Creed, 2012, p. 32). The physical deterioration of her body, full of oozing sores and green bile, mirrors the deterioration of boundaries and binaries. Infantile bodily experiences that happen to her while possessed, such as the secretion of bile, demonstrate an embodiment of the abject and a rejection of what constitutes the semiotic norm. Through this spectacle of bodily excretions, the reader is forced to recognise the fact that these characters have become an Other, and thus something to fear. Regan’s grotesque features almost manifests man’s fear of female transgression. As Salotto outlines ‘the uncontained woman is not far from the idea of disease, the horror of which is that it cannot be contained’ (Salotto, 2016, p. 17). Her uncontrolled functions relate to the untamed and liberated female, a version of the feminine that seemed to be polluting the sanctity of womanhood. Regan’s transformation into an ambiguous and multi-faceted monster complicates the othering process due to our encountering her before she is set up as the abnormal Other. Even though her perplexing identity creates uncertainty in the reader, her role in the narrative offers clarity about female resistance. Jurgis Baltrušaitis tells us that anamorphic works ‘make uncertainty certain, and in so doing bear witness to the necessity for the revision of ideas and values. They contribute to doubt’ (Baltrušaitis, 1977, p. 69). Regan introduces doubt to categories of the female body and re-envisioning woman’s role in both the Gothic and the horror genre. Where the abject is presented as something that must be expelled or excluded, Blatty’s representation of the MacNeil women shows the inescapable presence of the abject in the construction of the feminine self.

From a skewed perspective, one can look beyond Regan’s distorted figure and recognise a body of resistance and transgression. It is anamorphosis that gives the impression of radically breaking with linear perspectival conventions, and that assists in breaking the chain of habituation. Anamorphosis and its alternate perspectives ‘teach us that it is possible

to look at the margins of our own visual field, insofar as we are willing to marginalise our point of view' (Grootenboer, 2006, p. 100). Therefore, by looking at Regan from a different viewpoint, we can look past the linear perspective presented to us of a young girl destroyed by sexuality and immorality, and can instead see the oppositional stance Regan embodies. Imatiaz H. Habib defines anamorphosis as the 'art of curious perspective' in his book on *Shakespeare's Pluralistic Concepts of Character: A Study in Dramatic Anamorphism* (Habib, 1993, p. 17). Similar to Jacques Derrida's theory of deconstruction, it plays on the curiosities of individuals, and allows for an interrogation of representation to take place, where meaning is not given but created for oneself. Within the novel, Regan is described as having an inquisitive eye, as challenging given meaning and as preferring to search for her own truth. Essentially she has the anamorphic eye where she was 'like a curious bluejay' that would 'peck relentlessly through the verbiage to find the glistening, hidden fact' (Blatty, 1971, p. 11).

It is through the medium of the supernatural that societal conventions can be contested within a safe space, where our reality is blurred in search for the 'anamorphic skull' – the repressed truth. Regan's use of the Ouija board is demonstrative of her curious nature, and of her inclination to challenge religious rituals. Chris outlines her need for the supernatural board as being because she was 'as curious about herself as she was about others' and 'she'd originally bought it as a possible means of exposing clues to her subconscious' (Blatty, 1971, p. 39). In an attempt to bridge two worlds, both the natural and the supernatural, Regan disturbs the reader's hold on reality. Her curiosity about her own subconscious leads the spectator to question their own unconscious, and what we choose to submerge in this vast pond. Describing the spectator's reaction to an anamorphic painting, Habib comments on how 'the effect on the viewer is often one of amazement and wonder, and even of perplexity, as that which had seemed easy and familiar suddenly seems difficult,

disturbing and serious' (Habib, 1993, p. 19). As human beings, we prefer comfortable and simple meanings, so when confronted with something that transforms our view of reality, we tend to look the other way. What is more 'disturbing and serious' than Regan's monstrous features are the social issues she represents. When looking at her anamorphically, her character seems to represent the demonization of women who transgressed archetypal expectations. More than just being an object of change or symbol of uncanny transformation, the possessed Regan becomes a mirror against which the rest of the characters must stand in front of and be judged for their fears and shortcomings.

In a similar way to an anamorphosis that forces 'the viewer to confront his own limitations, his inability to understand, his incapacity to ever see the entire picture' (Gallo, 2007, p. 49), Freud's notion of the uncanny forces us to recognise the limitations of all that is familiar. We are often limited by simple interpretations, and prefer to rely upon binaries such as good and evil. This restricted vision often obscures our way of seeing the world and of interpreting identities. In the same way that the skull in *The Ambassadors* challenges the subject's mastery of vision, Regan's uncanny body confronts preconditioned meaning regarding the female corpus. The presence of the *Unheimlich*, illustrated by the abject body, in the horror or Gothic novel, signals an indeterminacy in representation. The abject represents that which 'disturbs identity, system, order' (Kristeva, 1982, p. 4). It is as within this undefined and uneasy space that habituated conventions and naturalised meanings can be challenged. Regan's possessed self is not terrifying because she is hideous and evil, but because she, like many other Gothic creatures, implies a lack of order in society. They do not frighten 'because they depict abject imagery, but rather because they portray abject ideas that challenge the *status quo*' (Olson & Reinhard, 2016, p. 6).

Regan undergoes a moment of abjection, becoming a focal point for the transgression of boundaries, and representing both the familiar and the unfamiliar. It is therefore not the

misshapen physicality that creates the monster, but rather the grotesque metaphor it represents. According to Olson and Reinhard, abjection occurs ‘when something transgresses the boundary separating the human from the non-human or the normal from the abnormal, which in turn reveals such traditional boundaries as porous and fragile’ (Olson & Reinhard, 2016, p. 5). Personifying the uncanny experience, Regan shatters the divide between human and non-human, and redefines representations of the normal. Stacey Abbott, writing on representations of the possessed body through performance and special effects, states that ‘the possessed body in cinema is by definition categorically interstitial, and if not formless, its boundaries are blurred as the body contorts, pulsates and extends beyond its traditional shape’ (Abbott, 2015, p. 143). Regan’s capacity to contort her head in a full 360 degree rotation demonstrates the possibility of seeing and interpreting from a multitude of angles, never being confined to the linear perspective. Her ability to evade linear vision demonstrates the possibility of multiple perspectives, particularly in the area of identity formation.

From a postmodern perspective, Regan’s position as the anti-hero can be deconstructed so that the narrative of victim can be located. Blatty’s text depicts a girl as both a threat to those around her, and as a victim of forces beyond her control. Her abnormal aversive behaviour is born from her distrust in phallogocentric identities, represented by her failed relationships with both her father and the Church. In Aviva Briefel’s opinion:

Female monsters do not inflict pain on themselves before undertaking their sadistic rampages. On the contrary, they tend to commit acts of violence out of revenge for earlier abuse by parents, partners, rapists, and other offenders. (Briefel, 2005, p. 20)

Regan’s acts of violence could be seen as her repressed identity being unleashed in the form of another identity taking command of her body. Her rejection by her father evokes sympathy from the reader, and confuses our monsterring of her character. Both the book and the film

adaptation ‘simultaneously portray the possessed girl or woman as both the monster and the damsel in distress’ (Olson & Reinhard, 2016, p. 3). When engaging with the monster that is neither woman nor child, it complicates our tendency to disconnect with this female antagonist. We are offered more intimacy by the female monster and are allowed to understand the identity of Regan, which was denied to us with Hyde, Frankenstein’s Creature and Heathcliff. Briefel suggests that ‘the female monster denies us the space and numbness afforded by the male monster’s masochism’ (Briefel, 2005, p. 22). Regan is unlike any of these traditional Gothic villains who are consistently shown as monstrous, and instead shows a change in character, and a movement from innocent to immoral.

This transformation is significant as it demonstrates the earlier argument of the accidental monster, whereby no one is born evil, but rather becomes a victim of unfortunate circumstances. Instead of being supplied with a limited overview of Regan’s growth, we are instead offered a dual perspective- both light and dark. Boyle argues that ‘perspective is not just a metaphor ... but an interactive system and procedural aesthetics that requires a continual renegotiation with a formal and technical limits of perception’ (Dodds, 2010, p. 191). With the development of postmodernism, and newly established feminist theories, Regan’s tormented body must be renegotiated. Where the anamorphic perspective renounces categories, Regan in fact refuses both the label of monster and victim. Her deformed body is thus reformed as a platform for female transgression, a misunderstood symbol of feminine deviance. She is a perfect illustration of the anamorphic image – where beauty and distortion are a part of the same body, providing multiple perspectives at the same time.

Anamorphosis highlights that we do not have to be passive in cognitive experience, and can construct alternative possibilities for the perception of any image or subject matter. Since the linear perspective is seen as convention, any other depiction that is shown to us from an anamorphic angle, or alternative viewpoint, is seen to defy habituated norms.

However, Kim H. Veltman analyses anamorphic drawings and explains in her essay, 'Perspective, Anamorphosis and Vision', that 'paintings in linear perspective when seen from different viewpoints off the side are not as distorted as one would expect' (Veltman, 1986, p. 94). This is Veltman's way of highlighting how linear and obscure perspectives are not that different, meaning that convention and alterity are basically one in the same. Building on Derrida's idea of 'inauguration', it is only a reformed idea of the original representation. It only acquires new meaning when looked at anamorphically, and shows an old structure new light. Lars Müller highlights the paradox of anamorphosis in how it turns something that was once recognisable to us into something that is unrecognisable so that we may be able to recognise the image in a new form. He states that:

as a perspective mechanism that reverses its own principles, anamorphosis constitutes a process of returning to a form that seems to have been projected outside itself in such a way that it becomes unrecognisable. (Müller, 2004, p. 96)

It is from this that the monster can be projected outside its stereotypical trope, moving away from a once recognisable distortion to something completely new. If we were to move past the deformity of Regan's physical appearance, then we can view her body as a site for metaphors that are both enlightening and revealing.

Anamorphosis manipulates the linear perspective in such a way that illuminates the restrictive gaze through which we view the world. It is 'a double vision that defeats and transcends single-minded comprehension' (Shaaber, 1979, p. 434). Bringing about a radical transformation in meaning, this perspective in the genre of horror fiction thus deconstructs a single-minded understanding of the monster. What anamorphic vision highlights is that realities of representational composition are more complex than has been previously accepted. Anamorphosis is a trick of perspective that allows one to see the non-singular

possibilities of any given idea or image. Its dynamic ability opposes all that is static, where one has either physically or mentally changed their course of vision. Anamorphic theory demands movement and a dynamic form of understanding. It is important to apply this to the role of the Regan who has been pigeonholed into category of the monstrous-feminine. Her grotesque exterior and dialogue has offered the reader no other option than to loathe and fear her where sympathy is never a possibility amongst a narrative that is drenched in vomit and obscene language.

The Exorcist is essentially about deviating from the norm, deviating from restrictions of social institutions. By looking at this narrative anamorphically, it introduces an idea of dealing with concepts that we often avoid and occlude ourselves from seeing. As Todd Berliner states, it ‘gathers much of its potency from the conflict between two opposing inclinations: the desire to see and the desire not to see’ (Berliner, 2010, p. 129). Regan’s narrative is never fully told, and we must manoeuvre around the inappropriate and uncomfortable displays of aberrant behaviour in order to source her true function in the narrative. We learn nothing of her past trauma and the reasons that may have led to what appears to be a psychotic episode. She becomes yet another faceless and uncanny monster among many other antagonists of the horror genre. According to Eleanor Salotto, this horror ‘becomes internalised, and the novel serves as a repository for obsession, fetishism, and displacement, in which repressed desires are figured’ (Salotto, 2016, p. 7). Delving into her untamed unconscious further, an anamorphic reading looks to relinquish what has been displaced and delegitimised. By justifying and explaining the deviant Other that is Regan, this theoretical approach seeks to challenge what we are preconditioned to believe is the accepted manner of behaving. One could argue that if there were no societal codes or categories to restrict liberated expressions of one’s identity then would there even exist such a word as ‘monster’ or ‘other’? Anamorphosis has ‘served as a convenient trope for

representing the instabilities of early modern subjectivity' (Dodds, 2010, p. 190). It can be used as a practice to that can solve the critical problem associated with female subjectivity and human ignorance. Blatty's book offers a transgressive anamorphic understanding of femininity, sexuality and religion. With postmodern eyes, it can be used to threaten the habituated discourse of the symbolic order and more importantly the seeming stability of the rational subject. It leaves a mould for anamorphic theory to shape, reforming what was once misshapen.

Chapter Five: The Insane Monster

While the previous chapter deals with the aberrant associations of the female body, this section will examine the deviating mind of man, and the misconceptions of madness. Where misunderstood perspectives of insanity often render an individual devoid of humanity, the unsettling and disturbing aspects of our psyche find a place within the horror genre, which equates all that defies understanding to monstrosity. An abstract examination of identities displaying symptoms of psychosis will offer up questions concerning how societal and cultural norms instruct us that mental illness should be seen as a graphic smear, or a disturbance in the *status quo*. Misrepresentations of diseases or disabilities has encouraged the segregation of those with physical or mental handicap in many cultures, and the adequation of human impairment with notions of monstrosity are the strong seeds of such discrimination. Characters such as Regan MacNeil and Jack Torrance demonstrate the tendency to attach misconceptions of evil to abnormal mannerisms or physicality. Their human weakness, and deviation from routine behaviour, establishes each of these anti-heroes as demonic forces to the natural environment.

Focusing a magnified lens on the thin line between sanity and insanity, Stephen King's *The Shining* offers an intensified debate on rigid masculine expectations, and the destabilising potential of maintaining these gendered ideals. His dark reflection on the human mind reveals more than just a shattering hold on reality, but also embodies the detrimental anxieties that chip away at this deepening crevice between man and society. It presents to the reader the feuding battle between conscious and unconscious, an incessant conflict that disallows Jack Torrance from ever feeling fully complete as his identity oscillates between the 'conscious on one side of the net, [and] subconscious on the other, serving some cockamamie image back and forth' (King, 1977, p. 388). Jack is created by King to facilitate an

understanding of why we choose to abject, exclude and other atypical human behaviour. The social tensions of the era find a voice in the illusory worlds of the Gothic and the supernatural. King outlines in his introduction to *The Shining*, in the Hachette Livre edition, that ‘these stories exist because we sometimes need to create unreal monsters and bogies to stand in for all the things we fear in our lives’ (King, 1977, p. iii). With the monster functioning as a chassis of transformation and alterity, the horror genre transforms our engagement with cultural identities by providing the reader with anamorphic viewpoints.

Stated as a general principle, anamorphosis is the idea that multiple meanings can support unexpected conclusions, transforming a once-accepted assumption into something entirely new. Through the paired narrative of both book and film, Stephen King and Stanley Kubrick prevent any linear perspective on Jack from taking form. Their conflicting statements of his character redefine locations of moral legibility associated with madness, allowing for ambiguities concerning his role as villain to evolve. Where the anamorphic skull in Holbein’s portrait of ‘The Ambassadors’ cannot be seen without casting the main figures into obscurity, so too must these presumptions made about mental illness be cast into obscurity, in order to see Jack Torrance through unclouded vision.

Madness is often considered as a foreign state of mind, set up as some kind of infectious disease that could taint our nature at any time. People who struggle with an unstable mind are not only hindered by their illness, but are also encumbered by misconceptions about their identity. Literary depictions of the insane individual tend to exaggerate the animalistic and savage characteristics of the character, often dehumanising their very existence. In 1842, while staying in New York, Charles Dickens proved this tendency to monster the insane subject, by depicting a lunatic asylum as a scene of absolute horror:

The moping idiot, cowering down with long, dishevelled hair; the gibbering maniac, with his hideous laugh and pointed finger; the vacant eye, the fierce wild face, the gloomy picking of the hands and lips, and munching of the nails; there they were all, without disguise, in naked ugliness and horror. (Dickens, 1987, p. 109)

This reflection on the deviant psyche, positions the irrational mind as something frightening and uncomfortable because of its ‘naked ugliness and horror’. The use of the word ‘naked’ here is intentional on the part of Dickens because it demonstrates how insanity could also be a catalyst for revealing hidden truths regarding the uglier faces of society. Madness exposed the extremity to which human behaviour could travel, ‘uniting the fascination of the strange and the abnormal with the familiarity of the known and the shared’ (Pedlar, 2006, p. 1). It introduces a classic fusion of the *Heimlich* and *Unheimlich* – an area of the psyche where Freud considered the familiar to be made strange. *The Shining* forces the reader to visualise the existence of horror in the everyday, where the monster is no longer a peripheral body to the self, but is now envisaged as another aspect of the face of humanity.

Due to Jack’s sudden shift in behaviour, his family can no longer recognise the once loved father and husband, who is transformed instead into an uncanny ‘stranger they had never seen before, possibly a dangerous one’ (King, 1977, p. 441). What is most unsettling about Jack’s hysteria is how his identity can no longer be confined to a single state as he now simultaneously embodies self and Other. Presenting scenes of the hotel that transition swiftly in and out of the worlds of both the real and the fantastic, King highlights the thin line between sanity and insanity. He outlines how one can cease ‘to be a creature of the mind and become a creature of nerve endings; from college-educated man to wailing ape in five easy seconds’ (King, 1977, p. 158). Therefore, this text underscores the melding of the normal and the abnormal self, where Jack succumbs to his repressed thoughts and liberates himself from the shackles of societal expectations. The supernatural forces that pervade the Overlook Hotel

nurture his growing instability and his movement down the deviating path towards madness. The text ultimately is a reminder ‘that the human psyche is forever painfully vulnerable, never fully immune to assaults upon its stability’ (Magistrale, 1998, p. 6). Therefore, the most frightening aspect of King’s horror is how it conveys the fragility of the psyche, and how one’s mind is always vulnerable to the pressures of the Id. In order to understand the uncanny and insane Other, one must banish all previous traces of definitions in terms of cultural difference so as to promote new means of social acceptance. An insight into Jack’s body provides a valuable platform to discuss society’s confusion with the insane subject. It examines the monster as a manifestation of that which disturbs the social ‘norm’, or troubles an existing understanding of what is acceptably human. No longer being overshadowed by the linear perspective of stereotypes and categories, the anamorphic angle allows for ideas of mental illness to be viewed in a new light.

Brought into focus in Holbein’s painting, the clarity of the anamorphic skull becomes more defined the further away one moves from the image. Therefore, our separation from the linear perspective constitutes an accurate reworking of what was once an ambiguous concept. Dragan Kujundzic notes:

an anamorphic projection makes visible the distorted image inherent in any linear gaze, but also prominently displays the temporality of the gaze, which is otherwise lost or not obvious in representations or perceptions of specular, linear scopic identity. (Kujundzic, 1997, p. 159)

Demonstrating the ‘temporality’ or the transient nature of meaning and perspective, anamorphosis motivates a desire to challenge the structures upon which we rely in interpreting the world. It challenges the thresholds of our conscious that serve as the limit beyond which thinking is compelled. Jack essentially prompts an investigation into whether

aberrant behaviour is born from within or is it fundamentally a product of the autocratic demands of society.

King's leading antagonist is a representation of modern monstrosity that in other words could be deemed "a moral monstrosity . . . a monstrosity of behaviour" which is no longer visual' (Wright, 2013, p. 4). Where Jack does not exhibit the strong visual monstrosity of previous monsters discussed in this thesis, he undermines one's reliance on the cognitive possibilities of sight. We are threatened by these monsters that share the same face as us because of how they dismantle the paradigm of Self and Other, where evil is no longer situated in the grotesque unknown identities. Jack even admits he 'no longer knew which side he was on, or how things should come out' (King, 1977, p. 414). In similar ways to Mr Hyde and Regan MacNeil, Jack Torrance introduces ambiguities concerning the construction of evil and demonstrates how abnormal behaviours are continuously attached to misconceptions on monstrosity. Their human weakness and inability to avoid the dark offerings of society's position posits each of these anti-heroes as the demon of their environment. Their perverted engagement in drug use, sexuality and alcohol is exaggerated to the point of complete unsympathetic bestiality. The correlation between alcohol and violence in *The Shining* emboldens this concept of human sin as the catalyst for unleashing one's inner demon. King's use of wordplay, with the word 'red rum' which spells 'murder' backwards, solidifies the reader's belief that monstrosity lurks within society's attraction to the spoils of the world. As Matthew Warner Osborn highlights, it strengthens 'the association of alcoholic depravity, delirium tremens, and pathological murder' (Osborn, 2014, p. 213). Even though Jack's relationship to alcohol is seen as another layer to his monster image, it in fact tempers his role as someone in pain and not in control over his own body. It is through the childhood naivety of Danny that we receive a demonised depiction of Jack whose incident of unfiltered anger is continually referred to as the 'Bad Thing'. His antagonism is what connects him so

deeply to a dehumanised and primitive state where 'his temper was like a vicious animal on a frayed leash' (King, 1977, p. 53). The 'frayed leash' of human discipline is what cages all nature, and once this loses its effect, the subject is cast in the role of barbaric villain. The more disconnected he becomes with the regulatory customs of the societal ideal; the more his character is shrouded in vagueness as he thwarts boundaries set up by the mind.

The twofold nature of good and evil is diluted by Jack's position as tortured villain, damaged by a childhood of repressed secrets and familial violence. He describes his poisonous relationship with his father as 'the unfurling of some flower of beautiful potential, which, when wholly opened, turned out to be blighted inside' (King, 1977, p. 327). This reference to the 'blighted flower' hints at the idea that beneath every ideal I, the repressed self taints the mind, and eats away at one's psyche or morality. This observation contests the unrealistic worldly view that only two kinds of people in the world exist – those that are morally good and those that are purely evil. It is a contradiction of Philip Cole's *Myth of Evil*, in which he says 'evil people are motivated to inflict harm for its own sake, and they are capable of such incomprehensible malevolence because they are inhuman monsters whose nature is radically different from our own' (Russell, 2010, p. 46). Therefore, it is through the scope of the anamorphic lens, that one can centralise the marginal understandings of evil and mental illness. Slavoj Žižek states, in *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*, that from an anamorphic perspective, something that was once ordinary and familiar can acquire 'an air of strangeness'. Our once rigid view on insanity and immorality can be configured in a new way, and provide an uncomfortable truth. He says that 'suddenly we enter the realm of double meaning, everything seems to contain some hidden meaning' (Žižek, 1992, p. 88). *The Shining* does this in how it demonstrates weaknesses within the human psyche, but at the same time, highlighting the possibility of personal virtue.

King's fiction illustrates an unwavering reality that suffering is intrinsic to our being, yet simultaneously can be read as a celebration of the human potential for good.

Without control over his professional and familial life, Jack seeks another form of agency by means establishing a relationship with violence, where masculinity and dominance is re-established through acts of terror. It is his attempt to deny his own 'victimhood', and adopt other methods of empowerment, that can make it difficult to empathise with his cause. According to Nick Cronbach, 'serial killers, as understood in both slasher movies and true-crime novels, are extreme examples of the American obsession with work and productivity' (Cronbach, 2008, p. 76). Situated outside the domain of the stereotypical male, Jack's insanity stems from his frustration in finding a place within the symbolic order. A monster is created from the ruins of his failures, where his inability to write bankrupts him of agency, forcing him to locate a new identity out of the abject. Jack searches the reaches of the hotel's histories and memories to unearth his new sense of self where 'the failure to create leads to his own recreation' (Kuberski, 2007, p. 148). In a similar state to that of a child, Jack becomes linguistically bankrupt to the point where his own voice disappears, and he appropriates the personality of a fictive character. In the final scenes of complete brutality, Jack is infantilised as he uses an axe to down the door to the bathroom in which Wendy is hiding, performing the role of the Big Bad Wolf. He projects his own wrongdoings onto imaginary monsters in order to dislocate blame away from the Self. Jack takes on an infantile state towards the end of the novel to counterbalance the hardships of adult life. Within the novel, he highlights how:

grownups were always in a turmoil, every possible action muddied over by thoughts of the consequences, by self-doubt, by self-image, by feelings of love and responsibility. Every possible choice seemed to have drawbacks. (King, 1977, p. 295)

He wishes to assume the blissful ignorance of a child, who is sheltered from the consistent pressures of everyday life. His abandonment of his original sense of self results in Jack losing complete control over his corporeal form.

In the final scene where we see Jack transfixed and frozen in time, we are left with an image of him as monster, grunting, and being incapable of agency even over his own body. The image of his stationary form alludes to his lack of progress in all aspects of life, as he is underdeveloped when it comes to his family, his work and most importantly his mind. A re-examination of Jack as victim of circumstance, displaces his heteronormative function as the atypical villain, and introduces something new. It is his embodiment of the anamorphic ability to transcend linear perspective that enables the reader to reassess Jack's notions of selfhood. The idea of the anamorphic perspective consists of a profound abandonment of traditional interpretations, implying instead that all representations must yield the power of dual information. To transform his disfigured motives into something more logical, one must sacrifice the security of one's pre-existing perceptions concerning mental illness, and re-evaluate the contributing factors to aggressive lunacy.

The overwhelming sense of emptiness in the hotel becomes an extension of Jack's own desolate state of mind. His lack of agency is reflected in the landscape where the many vacant rooms reflect his many empty goals and ambitions. Mirroring his deficient and impotent nature, the immensity of the setting conjures a sense of foreboding rather than a moment of liberation. Time stagnates in the hotel, freezing all the characters in a never-ending cycle of repetition. The building itself is a labyrinth, where everything connects together in a continuum of space, emphasising the sensation of entrapment. According to Lutz 'the repetition of the same line – All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy – registers his entrapment within an ideological system' (Lutz, 2010, p. 175). Similar to the character of Heathcliff, Jack is moulded by the hostile environment that surrounds him, experiencing

extreme psychic strains caused by displacement and decontextualisation. The Overlook Hotel almost becomes a living force, pulling the strings of Jack's unconscious, forcing its puppet to forget all notions of humanity. As in the words of King: 'this inhuman place makes human monsters' (King, 1977, p. 142). The hotel functions as a Lacanian mirror that reflects back the atrocities performed by human nature within its walls. Each room is an echo of the unconscious, with the repressed seeping through the cracks of every opened door.

The power of Jack as a protagonist lies in his deep desire, and great potential, to be a good person. The deterioration of Jack's relationship with his own family stems from how they remind him of his failure to be a father and husband; the form a living memorandum that he will never be the person he yearns to become. Thus, King's text is more than just a supernatural threat that pervades the Overlook Hotel; in fact, it primarily addresses issues at the core of humanity such as the disintegration of the family unit. Frederic Jameson outlines this thematic device in horror and how:

the sequence of dying generations is the scandal reawakened by the ghost story for a bourgeois culture which has triumphantly stamped out ancestor worship and the objective memory of the clan or extended family. (Jameson, 1990, p. 90)

Jack's social standing is therefore threatened by his impending, unpredictable future in which Danny's increasing intellect contributes to his father's growing and inevitable irrelevance. He wrestles with controlling the advancement of his son's mind, as he possesses the talent of 'shining'. This results in the castration of Jack's position and sense of masculinity and incites his maddened state. Representing a disruption to the symbolic order with his psychic abilities, Danny becomes an othered figure who manifests all of Jack's cultural anxieties, and is an impending threat to his role as patriarch.

Characters such as Danny obscure our ideas of fear and evil, whereas Jackson explains the ‘face of evil carries with it an uncanny reminder of the face of innocence’ (Jackson, 2000, p. 66). Being the hidden monster of this text, the intergenerational conflict is amplified by Danny’s strength in governing the mind of his mother. Thus in Jack’s case, the presence of Danny renders him insignificant in the eyes of Wendy and in the world itself. Danny essentially is juxtaposed as Jack’s double, sharing experiences of horror and history through the medium of the boy’s psychic visions. Their united experiences can be seen in the fluid transfer of narrative between father and son, where the interchanging voice happens so frequently that it is hard to distinguish at times, who is actually speaking:

He went back out to the car and gave Danny his slightly melted Baby Ruth. Daddy? . . .
. . . Danny hesitated, looking at his father’s abstracted face . . . But it was no good.
Daddy’s mind was someplace else, not with him. (King, 1977, p. 63)

As Bohlmann puts it, these ‘inexplicable commonalities between Jack and Danny prohibit Jack from controlling his own agency’ (Bohlmann & Moreland, 2015, p. 164). Both father and son act as each other’s monstrous double, a shadow of the self whose very existence haunts their every movement. Throughout the narrative they are continuously in conflict with one another, suppressing the other’s masculinity in order to crystallise their own male form. Thus, young Danny becomes a target of his father’s murderous ambition in order to re-establish his instrumental role as patriarch and in turn restore his lost identity.

Marking a moment of disconnect between father and son, this text explores the anxieties between father and son, where Danny calls attention to Jack’s incapacities while being burdened by the demands of the socio-symbolic order. In John Lutz’s observations, young Danny’s experience at the hotel conforms to the period of child development known as ‘family romance’, whereby the child’s imagination is ‘occupied with the task of ridding

himself of his parents, of whom he now has a low opinion, and replacing them by others, usually of superior social standing' (Lutz, 2010, p. 163). Jack's failing as a human being is prompted by his inability to govern and understand his son Danny, and because of this, Jack's agency dissipates with every year the boy gets older. The supernatural elements within the Overlook Hotel mirrors Jack's fear of Danny's challenging power, in which the ghost of a past caretaker, Grady, highlights to him that 'he's crossed you at almost every turn, hasn't he? And him not yet six' (King, 1977, p. 517). Ultimately, Jack's volatile nature is intricately connected to his role as father, and his inability to ascertain the nature of the masculine role that society dictates his position should have. Jack is thus paralysed by the weight of his gendered identity. Steven Bruhm argues that 'Jack's fatherhood, constructed as it is out of prohibitive utterances, is arbitrary, self-justifying, and prone to self-destruction if questioned' (Bruhm, 1996, p. 62). His biology governs the actions and motives of his character, where he at times feels strangled by the impending judgment for not honouring the expectations to which his sexual identity must conform. This horror novel is ultimately a re-evaluation of the American nuclear family, in which the rigid hierarchies on which we usually depend are disabled.

Fulfilling the horror-film recipe, *The Shining* exploits the anxieties of male impotency and unfulfilled identities. In between the intermittent scenes from the hotel's metaphysical residents, King offers up a social critique on society's construction of manhood. What his novel demonstrates is more than just horror; indeed, it becomes a forum to illustrate 'the meaning of masculinity and about the difficulties men may face in living up to the ideals of masculine behaviour' (Pedlar, 2006, p. 21). The author's examination of the male form, as a fragile body, opens up debates about pre-existing suppositions regarding gender ideologies. It is either Jack's powerlessness to talk about his emotions, or the longing to express his anxieties, that leads to a psychotic break. Constrained by habituated conventions, the male

gender must suppress a large part of their consciousness, because any display of vulnerability becomes an abnormal display of masculine identity. Danny draws attention to this narrow-minded ideal where he, too, needed to sustain his composure, or be seen as mad:

He had started to cry and hadn't been able to stop so the men in the white coats had come to take him away because if you couldn't stop crying it meant you had lost your marbles. (King, 1977, p. 431)

Within the world of language, Jack exists on the threshold of an identity crisis. Hardened by generations of emotionless masculinity, Jack represses his childhood trauma and loses a part of himself in the process. His feeble hold on an ideal, and equally false, sense of selfhood registers a dilemma in the production of the self, in particular the male self: 'a crisis of male self-definition that gnaws at the heart of gender stability and throws into question the very category of male heterosexuality' (Bruhm, 1996, p. 57). His failed ambition as a writer mirrors his inactivity in facing the memories of his past, and admits a darkness hidden deep within. As the narrative develops, Jack becomes more emasculated with every failed attempt to write a word on the page. The agency of his being is intrinsically connected to his writing, and it becomes his sole connection to being a moral human being where he 'has to finish his play or he might start doing the Bad Thing again' (King, 1977, p. 125). The inertia of the pen is symbolic of Jack's connection to the phallus, and of how his loss of control over Danny and his wife becomes a moment of castration for him. His de-sexed character stems from the growing power of his family counterparts, who achieve more agency in the novel as he loses his own.

Resting on the prejudices of gendered identities, his misguided belief is that a 'man who cannot guide the courses of his own wife and son can hardly be expected to guide himself, let alone assume a position of responsibility in a operation of such magnitude' (King,

1977, p. 521). Thus, the patriarch must source another means to reassert his masculinity, where he substitutes his pen for an axe. His virility is thus maintained by him assuming the role of predator, stalking his prey through the halls of the Overlook Hotel. Philip Kuberski comments on how the hotel solidifies gender prejudices with the ruling dominion always being male:

The Overlook Hotel provides an excellent opportunity to write, but a better opportunity to recover the lost territory of American masculinity; it is a rich man's hotel from an age of rich men, from the age of unrestricted capital expansion, before women's suffrage, the income tax, civil rights, and other indignities. (Kuberski, 2007, p. 148)

For Jack, the building becomes a receptacle of male privilege, where woman is always secondary to the position of authority, and is always under the observation of the 'male gaze'. Even Danny accumulates more power than his mother does, with his ability to 'shine' and see the future. The predatory gaze of man is exemplified in Kubrick's adaptation during a scene when Danny and Wendy enter the Overlook maze, where at the same time, we see Jack demonically glaring down at a replica of the maze in the Colorado Room. Lutz outlines that 'as he looks down at the maze from a vantage point implying the seemingly omnipotent power of his gaze', that his 'vantage point overlooking the maze suggests a position of complete mastery and rational control' (Lutz, 2010, p. 171).

In a similar fashion, anamorphosis asks the readers to take complete control of the gaze to become the masters of their own meaning. Therefore, if we are to change how we have been conditioned to perceive the monstrous figure, then we would have to shift our perspective and move away from the familiar. In her essay 'Archetexts: Lascaux, Eros and

the Anamorphic Subject', Akira Mizuta Lippit distinguishes the difference between the well-established perspective and the anamorphic viewpoint:

The critical difference between monocular perspective and anamorphosis lies in the fact that the former seeks to maintain harmony, however artificial, between beholder and beholden, while the latter shatters the tranquil illusions of that relation: anamorphosis signifies a violent sundering between the traditional relationship of subject and object. (Lippit, 2002, p. 26)

An anamorphic reading of any text severs our reliance on the traditional binaries that form the foundation of any narrative. An anamorphic view of Jack Torrance asks the reader to move away from comfortable understandings of the subject, so as to shatter the illusions set up by society that create a divide between the parameters of normal behaviour, and all of those that do not fit within it. The novel makes a fatalistic statement about the injustices of everyday life and the dark underbelly of all human nature. Wendy observes how 'terrible things happen in the world, and they're things no one can explain. Good people die in bad, painful ways and leave the folks that love them all alone. Sometimes it seems like it's only the bad people who stay healthy and prosper' (King, 1977, p. 658). This upsets the generic understanding of the binary of good and evil, undermining our dependence on the conventional foundations that cement our social order together.

The Shining becomes a transgressive forum to upturn gender expectations and challenge rigid reflections on both the masculine and feminine form. Where Jack's movement away from predeterminations of the male gender results in his downfall, Wendy's deviation from her inherited identity alternatively leads to her triumph. Her place in the narrative details a woman's survival within the confined patriarchal world of the Overlook hotel. Her isolation in the beginning of the novel is confirmed when she describes how 'she was

deliberately being excluded. With the two of them around she sometimes felt like an outsider, a bit player who had accidentally wandered back onstage while the main action was taking place' (King, 1977, p. 128). In the beginning of the text, the only position that Wendy can occupy in the narrative is one of passivity. It is only when her husband's identity is wholly transformed, that she recognises the full potential of her own gender.

According to Steve Cramer, the significance of Wendy's role is often dismissed in many critical insights into King's text. She states that she is 'represented as the necessary blood link between father and son, an objectified entity whose existence preserves the wholeness of the nuclear family' (Cramer, 1997, p. 132). Refuting all feminine expectations of her role as a domestic victim, her fighting back against Jack's masculine control demonstrates her identity as a contemporary woman. She relinquishes her function as 'objectified entity' in order to protect her son and most importantly her own sanity. Wendy's ability to embody an alternative identity allows her to cast off the shackles of her rigid typecasting. Her abandonment of her gendered role is symbolised by the tearing away of her fingernail because 'her nails were one thing she'd always tried to keep nice' (King, 1977, p. 579). Wendy transforms into the female monster hunter where she overcomes her placement in the category of victim, and eliminates the patriarchal authority in her life: 'now she was a woman, a human being who had been dragged around to the dark side of the moon and had come back able to put the pieces back together' (King, 1977, p. 653). King's exploration of latent meanings concerning the feminine archetype seeks to defy the limitations of socio-normative values and stereotypes. Rather than traditionally highlighting woman as victim, the medium of horror portrays women as independent figures, demanding their voice to be heard in a phallogocentric world.

Without the narrative background of Jack Torrance that is achieved in King's novel, Kubrick denies his audience any real opportunity to connect or sympathise with his leading

character. Instead, his film emphasises the stigmatic equations between mental disorder and violence, without the psychological intent behind it. Consequent to the director's failure to give any real justified explanation for Jack's evil actions, his mental illness is understood only as a product of otherness and horror. There is a void in knowledge that demands a questioning and interrogation of what is left out: it is an eloquent silence that forms an interrogative space. From the postmodern perspective of anamorphic theory, a different approach to this antihero looks to supply these missing gaps with meaning. Adair comments on how 'the anamorphic glance teaches that an object is discernible only by viewing it awry; that is, that a disinterested gaze reveals a void' (Adair, 1997, p. 53). Hence, it is one's refusal to understand the Other that inhibits any true understanding of their character, creating a vacuum in the semiotic field. During the process of anamorphosis, one has to forget previous habituated perspectives and accept new modes of thinking. It is only when one looks at Jack's hysteria in a different light, that he can be seen as a man struggling with his identity, and as someone who has been moulded into a monster by the social injustices of his gender. Highlighting the responsibility of external influences in the reality of moral deviance, Wendy recognised that if her family unit was to become destabilised, then it was not the imperfection of any member that was to blame, but rather that this was the fault of society as a whole. She acknowledges that 'if their three / oneness was to be destroyed, it would not be destroyed by any of them but from the outside' (King, 1977, p. 79). This refers to the belief that human beings are not intuitively immoral, but that peripheral forces turn them toward malevolence. It is consequent of society's prejudiced stance and perspective that conditions the individual to believe they are monstrous and must act as such.

Luke Russell outlines how the line between good and evil is never fully distinct, and one's psyche will always balance between the two, never wholly sure on which side it will fall. He states 'no one is sufficiently strongly and fixedly disposed towards extreme

wrongdoing so as to be irredeemable, hence no actual person is evil' (Russell, 2010, p. 52). He agrees with the idea that someone is trained into a behavioural disposition, and that each person who is considered to have an immoral disposition, is conditioned by their external environment to behave as such. Literary villains, such as Jack, are not born evil but their hostile demeanour is hardened by social pressures, as they learn only degenerative behaviour from those around them. Jack Torrance 'no more appears to be a monster than do the monstrous institutions that Kubrick aims to unmask and expose' (Lutz, 2010, p. 176). These 'monstrous institutions' reveal themselves in form of the supernatural traces of the past. King's clever use of the paranormal, therefore, unveils the hidden brutality of the surrounding institutions, as an uncanny fable mirroring of anxieties that shadow our every move, waiting to unsettle our hold on reality at any moment. We are denied this privilege in Kubrick's adaptation, where the only version we are given is that of a psychotic murderer, with his position as tortured victim remaining on the fringes of the text. We cannot, therefore, become emotionally connected to the events that unfold, remaining only as mere observers of meaning.

Alternatively, King almost vindicates Jack's actions by offering the reader a complex character who contemplates moral legibility and the understanding of blame. In a scene where he reflects on a memory of his alcohol-driven car accident, he describes the culpability of a driver behind a collision with fatalities. He rationalises the actions of the driver by placing blame on an insect bite where 'maybe the driver just loses control . . . the insect, usually completely unharmed would buzz merrily out of the smoking wreck' (King, 1977, p. 154). This inaugurates a validation of Jack's future actions, and demonstrates how his neurotic need to kill his family is born from a force out of his control, peripheral to his own identity. The insect acts as an allegory for the institutional pressures that contribute to an individual's disorientated and disillusioned state, creating the 'smoking wreck'. We are given

an unlikely victim in Jack, a point underlined by Frederic Jameson, when he outlines how notions of innocence are perverted throughout this text. He comments on how we look for the victim 'in the wrong place: not the little boy, "possessed" in some ominous way by his phantom playmate, but the alcoholic father whose weakness opens up a vacuum into which all kinds of baleful initially indeterminable impulses seep' (Jameson, 1981, p. 119). Like Dr Jekyll, Jack has no control over his emotions, and as a result, the resurfacing of his past traumas manifest themselves in acts of contempt. King reveals to us the impossibility of detaching oneself from one's natural being, suggesting that the repressed will always return. In a similar manner, Diamond outlines the culpability and blame associated with acts of aggression from those that are deemed insane. He states that 'an enraged individual and an insane one are both regarded as being out of control, unable to take responsibility of their actions' (Diamond, 1996, p. 172). Suppression of even the most basal sins can result in a tortured psyche and consequently, in an erratic release of immoral acts. By acknowledging the potential of human fallacy, it can be thus argued that a person cannot be defined as wholly evil, as there will always be some aspect of the self that is unmanageable and fractious.

Where Jack's disposition is set up as monstrous, his harrowing upbringing designates him as someone entirely human and empathetic. Jack's childhood trauma solidifies this concept where 'he had not done things; things had been done to him' (King, 1977, p. 107). In King's plot, the father must be continually exonerated from all wrongdoing, and is made into the tragic victim of a purely carnal alcoholism. It is this version of Jack to which we cannot assign the title or category of monster with such ease. King explains his reasons behind making his protagonist a pitiful subject: 'I sensed I could up the book's emotional ante considerably by making Jack Torrance a real character instead of just the Overlook's bogeyman' (King, 1977, p. iv). It becomes more difficult to criminalise a man with a dark past, whose disengagement from his own sense of self, pushes him towards suicidal thoughts.

His depression presents him as a pitiful subject, one with whom we sympathise as well one whom we detest. Jack's alcoholic history, repressed anger, and uncertainty about self-worth are the vital flaws through which the story unwinds. It is his feeling of incompetence, both as father and husband, that leads him to 'times that his mind would turn thoughtfully and sanely to the gun or the rope or the razor blade' (King, 1977, p. 55). The use of the word 'sanely' here disconnects notions of violence from elements of mental psychosis, and thus presents the possibility that darkness is something that can transpire in all of us. Thus, King's horror concerns itself with the manifestations of immorality in the modern world, and revives the notion of internal evil and the existence of monstrosity within. His text makes it very difficult to deduce who the primary antagonist of the plot actually is, because each of the characters has some abnormal flaw that distances them from the role of hero. It forges links between various victims of oppression, as where there is no distinct source of blame or villainy, it must come from a broader source. This shows the thin line between what we consider human and subhuman and how in a moment, the person we once saw as victim is now the hated villain.

Cole argues that 'the more deeply the fictional villain is explored, in genuinely revealing and moving works of literature, the less easy it becomes to regard them as agents of pure evil-they become . . . ambivalent, impure figures' (Cole, 2006, p. 57). Therefore, there is always uncertainty surrounding the archetype of villain, where it becomes even more challenging to condemn the 'evil Other' after an anamorphic perspective is offered. Similar to the case of Regan, Jack is unlike any of the traditional Gothic antagonists who are consistently shown as monstrous, as instead we are given his transformation from innocence to immorality. This evolution of identity is significant as it demonstrates the earlier argument of the accidental monster, whereby no one is born evil, but rather becomes a victim of unfortunate circumstances. Podger likens his moment of metamorphosis to that of Jekyll into

Hyde, and says that the original unaffected mind of Jack is the ‘rock-solid core, [. . .] the center of love which makes us [. . .] recognize his humanity’ (Podger, 1998, p. 26). In the same way that all individuals have this propensity to sin, as discussed in previous chapters, so the line between sanity and insanity is also thin as sanity can so easily shade into insanity. In an attempt to deny this complex truth about humanity, society tends to isolate all notions of lunacy and moral deviation away from normative functions of human behaviour and instead transforms it into a mechanism for ‘warehousing the unwanted’ (Pedlar, 2006, p. 8).

Slavoj Žižek linked anamorphic revelations to ‘the phallic dimension’ relating to any feature that ‘sticks out’, highlighting elements of society that we prefer to ignore (Žižek, 1992, p. 88). However, it is these considered abnormalities in society, or the varying weaknesses of the human mind, which can bring us to revelations about our true selves. Being the embodiment of its Latin origin, the monster is a warning of human fallacy, a manifestation of those occluded aspects of the Self. These revelatory qualities are celebrated by the theory of anamorphic perspective, where distortions are exposed to the point that ignorance is no longer a viable option. Where anamorphosis is often seen as ‘the secret perspective’, Jennifer Nelson contends that this is not necessarily the case. Her claims are that in paintings such as Holbein’s 1533 *The Ambassadors*, the anamorphic stain ‘sits front and centre in that panel, performing the opposite of hiding’ (Nelson, 2015, p. 18). The artist chooses to be abnormal so as to reflect on deeper meanings within the painting or text. Likewise, the objective of horror is to force the unspoken out of hiding. Both King and Kubrick intentionally fashion the character of Jack to be an uncanny figure, one that is equally familiar but uncomfortable to watch. His idiosyncrasies and psychotic state are not there to terrify its audience but anamorphically force them to accept the darker aspects of human nature.

King discerned that to make the monster of his tale more terrifying, one would have to recognise a part of themselves within the dark identity. As he goes on to say ‘that truth is that monsters are real, and ghosts are real, too. They live inside us, and sometimes they win’ (King, 1977, p. iv). King essentially demands that the reader admit the existence of the abnormal tendencies within every individual, where the untamed maddened unconscious can seep through the fissures of the human mind at any moment. This thematic device underscores the proximity of the monster to the Self, whereby the reader will always share some element of identification with the darker forces of both fiction and reality. *The Shining* tells ‘us about ourselves as we really are, rather than as we wish we were’ (Nolan, 2011, p. 181). No longer is evil considered as some supernatural force; now it percolates the corridors of the mind, where each door to the repressed risks opening up to the world outside. An anamorphic view provided by Wendy demonstrates a reflection of an evil that is inside us all, and inverts our perceptions of traditional monstrosity. Wendy admits ‘she was scared of a lot of closet boogymen and jumping shadows But there was no lack of real ones, either’ (King, 1977, p. 394). This provides an important truth about the tyrannical oddities that exist in our world. King makes his monster human so as to focus attention upon how, at some very basic levels, white male violence lies at the foundation of American society.

As Linda Holland-Toll points out ‘it is not the idea that Jack is a monster which is so discomfiting; it is that Jack Torrance reflects so many people in society, who would not like to think of themselves as monsters, and who, indeed, to all appearances, are not monsters’ (Holland-Toll, 1999, p. 137). The depiction of Jack in *The Shining* displays fears of this Dr Jekyll / Mr Hyde condition, as it posits the possibility of the dual persona, where all of society is faced with a conflict between their superficial and darker selves. Within horror, this divergence of personalities is projected onto the confrontation between human and monster, where each side reflects different elements of the human condition. Alexa Wright claims that:

If 'normal' human bodies have acted as a model for interpreting the 'natural' or correct structure of the external world, the unintelligible body of the monster has historically provided an exposition of moral, social or ontological uncertainty. (Wright, 2013, p. 5)

Therefore, the human monster or in this case the insane monster equally are 'unintelligible bodies' that refuse entry into the semiotic field. They exist outside the 'natural', and must be banished to inaccurate readings of their being.

An unintelligible characteristic of Jack's identity is his sexual orientation, whereby the repression of his carnal impulses manifests itself in the many Gothic elements of this book. Evidence of this ambiguity can be seen while Jack reads a *Playgirl* magazine at the exact moment that Wendy discovers two men engaged in homoerotic activities in the hallway. Furthermore, when his violence reaches its climax, he uses sexual threats towards his son saying that he will eat him up saying 'I think I'll start with your plump cock' (King, 1977, p. 494). Repressed homosexuality could be deemed to be a contributing factor to Jack's aggressive nature, where his reflections on his former student George Hatfield are equally ones of affection and hostility. As well as being shown the mangled psyche of Jack Torrance, *The Shining* shows a disembodied narrative where violence can erupt unexpectedly at any moment. It is the past of the hotel and his own darkened past which masters him before 'he is transformed into a frozen figure trapped in the labyrinth of his own self-destructive desires' (Lutz, 2010, p. 174). Similar to anamorphosis, *The Shining* concerns itself with disguises and the search for hidden meaning. Having to abide by the restrictions of everyday life, one's identity is conditioned to be artificial and false. When Jack condemns the unnatural structure of the hedge animals, he is in fact reflecting on how society turns human beings into something they are not, hiding the untamed and wild structure of its original nature. He says how 'it had always seemed slightly perverted to him to clip and torture a plain old hedge into

something that it wasn't' (King, 1977, p. 300). As human beings, we have to present this façade to the rest of the world and repress any authentic entity from taking form. Jack must present a false identity to those around him, so that he fits in with the standards of the regulatory ideal. It is this constant struggle to maintain the mask of perfection that cultivates and imprisons the monster within.

For a person to have a mastery over the self and be respected, they have to deny themselves the flexibility of expressing human emotion or dissipation. In Jack's case, the suppression of his inner thoughts stems from the fear of what his true self might reveal. He 'was afraid of what face might come to light when the time for unmasking came around at last' (King, 1977, p. 452). Thus, Jack must look to other forums to express the inner workings of his mind. The importance of his writing provides him more than agency as a human being but it also allows him to express through fiction what was denied to him in reality.

As outlined by Kay, Mahoney and Shaw in *The Past in Visual Culture*, an anamorphic analysis of this film could exemplify 'the joy of looking below the surface, of searching beyond the obvious for hidden meaning, and the fascination over other people's observations, attention to detail, and understanding of things that we might ourselves have missed' (Kay, Mahoney, & Shaw, 2016, p. 155). Therefore, the genre of horror and language itself is essential to centralising what is marginalised, and it assists in voicing what was once previously occluded. In a similar way, Jack also comprehends the value of the written word, and how fiction can communicate something that is difficult to address. Performing in a manner that parallels the 'Freudian Talking Cure', his literary work is a form of therapy that helps him to deal with the anxieties of society and his own personal turmoil. His Saturday sessions of writing 'let something out of him that might otherwise have swelled and swelled until he burst' (King, 1977, p. 46). Once his ability to put pen to paper dwindles, Jack's unwanted thoughts begin to 'swell' to the point that his inner monster barrages through his

structured composure. In Wendy's description of her husband, she makes it clear that she was always expectant of her husband's darker side 'bursting' through. She comments on how 'he was like a man who had leaned around a corner and had seen an unexpected monster lying in wait, crouching among the dried bones of its old kills' (King, 1977, p. 75). The unpredictable boiler in the basement, that threatens to erupt at any minute, serves as a metaphor for Jack's unstable psyche. The danger of the container exploding makes reference to the threat of the repressed always being at the brink of exposure. It is at this moment, when his mind is at breaking point, that Jack feels 'the boiler would have to be watched more closely than ever' (King, 1977, p. 490).

Furthermore, it is suppressed memories, and the history of the hotel itself, that contribute to Jack's monstrous nature. The iniquity brought forward by the past and the dormant monster inside himself gradually consumes the father figure, taking over his mind, leaving nothing but caustic rage. *The Shining* suggests the price of such repression where Jack:

flees the natural landscape that surrounds him by turning inward and upward into his mind, he paradoxically moves closer to oblivion, and the more he represses his murderous rages, the more fervently he is pulled into the assimilation with death. (Nolan, 2011, p. 185)

This novel instructs the reader on the implications of oppressing one's unconscious, and on how the psyche continues to be dominated by the histories that we choose to repress. Both King's novel, and Kubrick's film adaptation, concern themselves with documenting the ways in which the mnemonics of the past persistently impinge upon and defines the present.

It is through the horror genre that we can vicariously experience a moment of freedom, a moment void of restrictions or rules. Clasen notes that 'humans evolved to

produce and consume narrative fiction because such fiction is a primary means through which we make sense of the world' (Clasen, 2017, p. 78). The use of the word 'consume' here is interesting, as Clasen does not simply suggest that the viewer will witness or experience this uninhibited reality, but rather that the viewer wants to be a part of it, to make that experience their own. The rationale behind why we create any monster, whether human or non-human, is so to challenge and confront issues we do not have the courage to face in reality. It functions as an entity onto which we project all that we refuse as being a part of the Self; it is a scapegoat for admitting any abnormality existing within. Wendy explains this process of deflection regarding her husband, where 'she had accused him of desiring his own destruction but not possessing the necessary moral fibre to support a full-blown death wish. So he manufactured ways in which other people could do it' (King, 1977, p. 269). In a similar fashion to the concealing power of anamorphosis, it must be recognised that our socially constructed monsters serve the purpose of masking the deviant aspects of human nature and containing them within a stereotypical category. By anamorphically looking at King's protagonist, Jack's aberrant mind can be seen in a different way as a moment of transgression. His insanity could be construed as a mode of liberation, challenging conformity and subverting the norm. Since madness is seen as a form of rebellion against the *status quo*, it becomes the opportune moment to explore areas of the unconscious usually forbidden to the individual. Jack is aware that something is missing within him, and of how he is different to everyone else: 'there was a broken switch somewhere inside, or a circuit breaker that didn't work' (King, 1977, p. 155). He is seen as 'broken' because his identity is never complete, fragmented and pulled in many directions, unsure of which face to present to society.

It is only when Jack lets the lunacy take him over, that Wendy sees her husband in his truest form:

For a moment she saw his true face, the one he ordinarily kept so well hidden, and it was a face of disparate unhappiness, the face of an animal caught in the snare beyond its ability to decipher and render harmless. (King, 1977, p. 337)

Throughout *The Shining*, Jack's 'true face' is rarely shown, and instead he hides behind personalities that are both supernatural and real. Similar to Regan MacNeil, Jack performs as an uncanny being, embodying both human and inhuman qualities at the same time. He becomes a manifestation of our fear of hybrid identities that refuses participation in the natural order. Hala notes that 'the process of the conventional horror film, then, is to mirror back either our fear of transgressors of moral or natural law, or desire to transgress those laws ourselves' (Hala, 1991, pp. 212-213). Rather than succumb to the pressures of external influences, Jack understood the need for rebellion and deviance.

With the diagnosis of insanity absolving the person from moral blame, this precarious state allowed the individual to transgress the limitations of the psyche and enter into areas previously closed off to them. As he states: 'you could be stung, but you could also sting back' (King, 1977, p. 167). During Jack's scenes of delirium, either brought on by his mental state or alcohol abuse, he is allowed to escape the pressures of the world and assume the identity of another. Hence, it is within a disillusioned state, mobilised by the effects of psychosis, that the individual is transformed and allowed to transcend their cultural limitations. According to Amy Nolan 'Jack's madness takes shape and is nurtured and exacerbated by the absence of conventional social inhibitions' (Nolan, 2011, p. 188). Jack serves as a figure that represents not only contradiction, horror, and anguish, but also the possibility of overcoming the limits of the profane self. By the end of the narrative, it is not only Jack who has reshaped his whole persona, but Wendy and Danny have also been transformed. They now see the world through a skewed lens and now must continue on with anamorphic eyes. Hallorann comments on their distorted entities saying 'you and him, you're

coming back. Different, maybe, but okay. You ain't what you were, you two, but that isn't necessarily bad' (King, 1977, p. 654). This assertion alludes to how anamorphic perspectives produce unsettling narratives, but also contribute to a learning experience, a moment of becoming. Cicovacki contends that it 'is also the factor that can make our cognitive judgements of the world distorted' (Cicovacki, 1997, p. 46). Therefore, preconceived understandings, or given meanings in the semiotic field, are altered so as to inaugurate new reflections of human behaviour and mental inconsistencies. After exposing the transgression of rigid binaries and categories, the anamorphic perspective of the Other introduces discourses of resistance and change. Anamorphosis allows for a break with convention and liberates us to interpret the world with eyes void of any manipulation.

Ambiguity, brought forward by anamorphic discourses, dominates this text, where almost every scene creates a hole in our perception of reality, and allows for the supernatural to seep through. Misguided readings of Jack's character have driven audiences away from his representation as victim. However, in moving away from the monster category, a re-reading of the novel both subverts and undermines the relationship between madness and the abject, redefining his role as the antihero. The central conflicts discussed in King's horror reflect evolutionary anxieties of human nature, offering an introspective view of our inner demons that negotiate our interactions with the world around us. He illustrates a steadfast truth about how suffering is intrinsic to our being, and how all human beings are vulnerable to losing our hold on reality, and exhausting a part of ourselves in the process. By looking at this narrative anamorphically, it introduces an idea of dealing with concepts that we often avoid and occlude ourselves from seeing. Jack essentially incites a debate on the contributing agents to aberrant behaviour and challenges whether it is a socially constructed attitude or born from the deeper scopes of the mind. Through this postmodern lens, one can thus re-evaluate why

we are uncomfortable with elements of psychosis and how mental illness will continue to be demonised by prejudiced eyes.

Chapter Six: The Faceless Monster

As seen in early Gothic narratives such as *Wuthering Heights*, characters are often dehumanised and animalised because of society's failure to understand them. John Carpenter's *Halloween* constructs its infamous antagonist upon the foundations of misplaced information and vacant perspectives. Michael Myers is attributed no intelligible motivation, and is subsequently depersonalised to the point of savagery. Psychopathology is insufficient in elucidating Michael's condition, and thus, definitions of an indestructible evil haunting the Haddonfield suburbs offer a more relevant explanation. He is the featureless villain whose white mask, as John Kenneth Muir puts it, acts as a 'blank slate' in which 'we imprint our own fear upon' (Muir, 2012, p. 184). Due to Michael being an inscrutable presence, the possibility of comprehending his intentions is denied to us. Therefore, the value of postmodern perspectives in an era of abstract identities is essential to unmasking the hidden agendas of Carpenter's faceless monster. Once we observe the skull in Holbein's painting, Parveen Adams notes that 'a gap opens up between it and the blur which makes the picture incomplete' (Adams, 2013, p. 141). Mirroring the perspective of anamorphic art, this exact process happens with Michael where we are provided with an incomplete image of his character and thus his blurred identity probes postmodern studies to explore the motives behind his villainous nature.

In line with Brigitte Burgmer's understanding of anamorphic theory, anamorphic images are 'a special case: they represent a deviation from a central projection' (Burgmer, 1989, p. 379). To see the villain as something outside our comfortable perspective, one must deviate from naturalised opinions that concern the abject. It is common within the horror genre to solidify the role of villain by withholding information, and presenting nothing more than an indistinct identity. There is an aura of anonymity that surrounds Michael, crystallised

even more so by the mask, a white canvas with dark eyes without any emotion. The mask has resonances of a *Noppera-bō* [no face], from Japanese folklore, who is a faceless ghost that first appears to people as someone they know, but later reveals itself by wiping off its familiar appearance and unveiling a blank face. The blank-faced man continues to be a frightening and resonant image, because it is a manifestation of the uncanny— embodying both the strange and the familiar at once (Yokai.com, 2018). Notwithstanding the fact that the mask Michael wears has attributes of a facial form, the reason for associating him as the ‘faceless monster’ is because we are denied his real face, his emotional register and ultimately his identity. No effort is made to humanise the psycho-killer where his brutality remains inexplicable and innate. The ‘iconic facelessness of the mad criminal is also mirrored in the retreat from the individualisation of the criminal threat’ (Covey, 2009, p. 1419).

His faceless design instils the idea again that evil can exist in anyone, as Michael’s misleadingly normal appearance exemplifies how the unmasked killer can represent the everyday man who shifts into the realm of the abnormal without any reason or cause. Even without the mask, Michael’s face is described as having a ‘blank emotionless face, the blackest eyes, the devil’s eyes. What was living behind those eyes was purely and simply evil’ (*Halloween*, 1978). The premature display of unrepressed aggression that Michael commits as a child suggests how misleading physical normalcy can be. The mask acts as a mental sanctuary in which he can hide from himself, exemplifying a growing detachment from humanity and from a concern for social repercussion. According to Reynold Humphries ‘the mask symbolises Michael’s refusal to be looked at, to become the object of the other’s look, to recognise the other as having the same rights and desires as himself’ (Humphries, 2002, p. 140). It is through this artificial identity that Michael escapes judgement from those around him, and experiences a form of liberation that is usually closed off by societal standards and norms of accountability.

Similar to the case of Jekyll and Hyde, Michael relies upon his constructed alter ego to disengage himself from his repressed desires. His performance adheres to Lacan's understanding of the 'Mirror Phase', where the individual is never satisfied with themselves and always strives to be something more, something other than themselves. The fact that this film is situated during Halloween, a time of imitating others, accentuates this desire to disconnect with one's true self. Similar to anamorphic art, the monster is often exploited so as to present controversial subject matter via hidden symbols and meanings. In art, the distorted image was used as a way so that 'commentary on political figures and erotica were disguised through distorted perspective' (Rossing & Chiaverina, 1999, p. 61). Therefore, repressed ideas and inappropriate subject matter could be discussed under the disguise of horror, a genre that broke through the boundary of the forbidden and the censored. The monster represents the return of the repressed, a forum in which unconscious thoughts can be unleashed.

Monsters have always existed in the margins of our cultural spaces: they are never fully in focus and forever evading the semiotic grasp. In the words of Mary Shelley, when she speaks about how she thought of the idea for *Frankenstein*:

Invention, it must be humbly admitted, does not consist in creating out of void, but out of chaos; the materials must, in the first place, be afforded: it can give form to dark, shapeless substances, but cannot bring into being the substance itself. (Shelley, 1831, p. ix)

As previously discussed, the monster adheres to John Locke's idea of the 'Tabula Rasa', that performs as a blank slate onto which we imprint our own inner demons. Therefore, the monster is not created from a 'void', but is shaped by the chaos of the context in which it is born. Although the monster figure is often a 'shapeless form', it can galvanise many

questions about the contextual space it invades, and it produces meaning from its abjection. Michael, with his indiscernible features, is the embodiment of a formless fear who assumes 'the form of the faceless instrument of death and mayhem' (Covey, 2009, p. 1415). By obscuring the criminals' human features, the viewer is directed away from recognising the humanity of Michael, and instead is consumed by the violence that fills the screen. In anamorphic paintings 'the image had to be distorted in order to give the viewer a perfect illusion' (Burgmer, 1989, p. 380). As in Holbein's painting, when looking at the portrait from the linear perspective, the shape of the skull is distorted so that no features are discernible and look as if they are covered by a mask, something that prevents the true image from being seen. This is what happens with Michael, whereby he is hidden behind the misshapen mask, and assumes a faceless identity, with no possibility of connection or recognition. To give the 'perfect illusion' of monstrosity, Carpenter hides Michael's dynamism behind the image of an amorphous form.

The component of the mask is symbolic of the deceptiveness of society and the façade of human normalcy. Robert Cumbow outlines how 'our complacent lives are mere masks for the terrible order right next door, waiting to ooze in through the slightest crack and destroy us utterly' (Cumbow, 2002, p. 3). This demonstrates that evil extends its reach to all corners of society, and can invade our consciousness through the slightest crack in composure. The horror genre shows the artificial nature of the ideal image, as is just a 'mere mask' that hides the darker truths within. It is during the event of Halloween that the 'tension between recognition and concealment becomes a game' (Zieglar, 1983, p. 774). Society conceals itself behind monsters and fantasy, where one can step in the shoes of another identity. Analogous to the concealing power of anamorphosis, our socially-constructed monsters serve a purpose of masking the deviant aspects of human nature, and containing them within a stereotypical category. It is this unending challenge to maintain the mask of perfection that cultivates and

imprisons the monster within. Similar to the case of Jack Torrance, Michael is able to project his own wrongdoings onto the imaginary monster brought forward by the mask where he can dislocate blame away from himself. Distorted like the skull in Holbein's painting, we are uncomfortable and unsure of the image of Michael placed in front of us. The abstract images sculpted by anamorphic paintings created this perception that what the spectator was seeing was somehow visually 'monstrous', and it was only from the correct angle the 'figures appear normal and correctly posed' (Burgmer, 1989, p. 381). It is only when one changes their perspective that the oddity of the image fades and something new is revealed. With no distinctive features besides the emotionless mask, Michael lends himself to multiple new interpretations. Because his identity is withheld from the spectator, there is a need for Michael to be supplied with meaning. Even though this invites misplaced judgements and prejudiced observations, it still offers the possibility for his place as monstrous villain to be challenged.

Ziegler comments on how 'the most shocking trick in *Halloween*, therefore, is the aggressor's seeming innocence, the monster counterfeited as a child' (Ziegler, 1983, p. 774). Where Michael's choice of a clown costume implies a childlike innocence, he embodies an uncanny presence that equates violence with child-like play. His choice to remain in costume throughout the film confirms his premature mind-set; he is always without the language to vocalise his issues, and he sees the world only through an underdeveloped perspective. This allusion to the child as monstrous complicates notions of innocence, and confuses the expectations of what we think a killer to be. Michael's misleadingly normal appearance as an unmasked figure exemplifies that evil can share its face with the everyday man. Carpenter, when speaking about Michael's character, noted how 'evil never dies' and that Michael shows how malevolence is an eternal concept that can materialise at any moment (Cumbow, 2002, p. 56). The fact that the film concludes with a montage of static images of places that

have been haunted by Michael Myers, overlaid with the background sound of his breathing, suggests that not only is he still alive, but that he could be anywhere. In a conversation between Loomis and Haddonfield's cemetery worker, there is a discussion on the mechanisms of evil, and how no one is safe from the ramifications of its influence. When discussing Judith Myers murder, the worker says on a pessimistic note: 'You know, every town has something like this happen' (*Halloween*, 1978). His eyes gaze everywhere as if searching for Michael all around him, expecting something sinister to be lurking in the darkness that surrounds him. From this observation, the line between humanity and monstrosity are never fully separate, where each side blends into another forming an ambiguous space.

David D. Gilmore mentions that indigenous folklore centres on the belief that 'the human and monster forms are metaphoric counterparts: physically and morally interchangeable, part and parcel of the same evil that permeates the world' (Gimore, 2003, p. 41). What is most frightening about Michael is that he shows the precariousness of the human mind, and how sadistic thoughts are brought to the forefront without reason. Thus, the position of Other and ideas of abjection are never far removed from the presented normal ideal. Michael proves this by embodying 'forces both inside and outside ourselves that can suddenly, sometimes without warning, shatter the lives of ordinary people' (Rasmussen, 2013, p. 4). There are many conclusions that can be drawn from Michael's unexplained criminality; however, the only one we are given is that he is pure evil. We are confined to only view him through this singular perspective, and are therefore debarred from any further reading of his mental state. It is this restricted linear viewpoint that 'allows the mind to create fixed patterns to represent what is otherwise a chaos of arbitrary multiplicities' (Finkelde, 2016, p. 8). Michael's distorted identity is formed from 'fixed patterns' concerning the criminally insane, where rational diagnoses of his behaviour is overshadowed by the fear of

violence and the fear of the outsider. Dominik Finkelde notes that when an image becomes confusing and ‘the mind cannot grasp the patterns of perception, the representations . . . are always hiding a lost object’ (Finkelde, 2016, p. 13), which sees Michael as being always in hiding from the spectator’s vision, and thus both his identity and the remnants of his humanity are lost.

The inability to pin stories of abuse or logical motivation on Michael is the very foundation of what makes him an effective horror figure. The door to understanding Michael remains shut throughout the course of the film, where there is disjunction in knowledge among the audience, the characters and the narrative subject. Remaining intangible and always out of reach of the spectator’s understanding, the control in creating meaning for ourselves is ‘under threat as we are positioned as lacking a place from which we can be sure where Michael actually is or what he might do’ (Grant & Sharrett, 2004, p. 362). Dr Loomis, although a man of science, monsters his charge to the point of bestiality. This need to other Michael rather than understand him is conducive to disinterest in society in terms of accepting the deviant features of human nature. Michael is never given the title of human, so therefore his nightmarish costume functions as his sole identity. Furthermore, he is described ‘less as an individual with a name or history than a kind of apparition, a depersonalised, destructive source of energy that invades and terrorises’ (Zieglar, 1983, p. 775). It is to the horror film we must turn for an exploration into indefinite and abject identities. Given the nature of the horror genre, its preoccupation with monstrosity utilises society’s fear of the unknown and the inexplicable aspects of the human consciousness. Similar to the case of Jack Torrance, Michael is withdrawn, and emotionless, but still thoroughly human. We are never permitted a proper definition of Myers’ character, which allows for Carpenter ‘to render him a mythical metaphor or a wide variety of destructive elements that threaten our peace of mind’ (Rasmussen, 2013, p. 4).

The employment of the mute monster in *Halloween* makes Michael the unattainable figure who evades the spectator's grasp, both on a semiotic and psychological level. Carpenter renders his antihero as being absolutely silent, which forces us as viewers to rely on the explanations of others to classify his behaviour. Without a voice, the process of monsterring Michael's character becomes a less conflicting task. We are never supplied with the narrative voice of Michael which, amalgamated with his absent face, makes him a stock figure of danger, a pure "other". With silence being a significant determiner of monstrosity, this monopolisation of our understanding of Michael insists on detachment and dissociation from his subjectivity. The visualisation of him as monster instantly evokes more fear than sympathy as multiple narrative voices are given but Michael's voice continues to diminish. Consequent to this, the misinformed gaze dominates our perception of this monstrous figure and the ambiguities that surround his identity make him the unavoidable villain. Perspective on any given identity is culture-driven, and consequently shaped and contorted to suit the needs of the environment. Seemingly uneducated and theoretically insane, the muteness of Michael closes off the possibilities of meaning. His marginal voice, albeit a silenced voice, compensates for ideological distortion, and his inability to use language dehumanises him to the point of barbarity.

Justification behind demonising the voiceless antihero is rooted in a primitive instinct that sees one who lacks linguistic control as more animal in nature without discipline of intellect. Dr Loomis makes reference to how it is easier to overlook Michael's potential for human emotion because he cannot speak. He tells the nurse when driving to the asylum, 'you have nothing to worry about. He hasn't spoken one word in fifteen years' (*Halloween*, 1978). However, through an anamorphic perspective, Michael's identity can be deconstructed, allowing for the emergence of new enlightenments concerning his motives to take form. Michael's muteness sets him up as a figure without agency or control, denied the very

mechanisms to vocalise his afflictions. Forced to the margins and denied a narrative voice, he is refused agency in the film, where, as the deprecated subaltern, definition is forced upon his identity, which is constructed by his superiors. Without a means for communicating his perspective, Michael loses that aspect of instrumentality that, otherwise, allows others to demonise him as a menace to society. His silence stands as an allegorical representation of how voices related to mental illness remain muted, and attempts to have these identities recognised by a resistant audience remain insurmountable.

Without the tools to express his anxieties and pain, he turns to violence as a medium for articulating his emotions. These gaps in understanding are filled by prejudiced perspectives concerning the abject, focusing the viewer's attention on the anamorphic stain rather than on the meaning behind the distortion. The deformed image of the anamorphic stain, which the monster embodies, 'becomes for Lacan the hidden property of representation in general' (Finkelde, 2016, p. 14). The ambiguous and deformed representation of Michael adheres to Lacan's understanding that no image is every truly whole, as further meaning remains concealed. It is postmodern perspectives such as anamorphic theory that position the 'hidden property' of any given image to the forefront of the spectator's gaze, thereby allowing for 'a breakdown of boundaries, the decline of master narratives, and the erosion of authority' (Wee, 2005, p. 46). By eliminating the master narrative of Michael Myers as the psychotic 'bogeyman', the authoritative voice that dominates the creation of meaning in the realms of mental illness can be eradicated and new narratives can take form. The anamorphic perspective assists this breakdown of traditional meanings, where previous understandings of any given identity or subject collapse in its wake. Michael's indestructible nature is symbolic of an inexhaustible resistant force, one that continues to reject normative aspects of human nature, such as death. He fulfils the role of the monster who 'can defy, uphold, or break cultural norms, it can serve in a variety of ways, but most often it represents fear, functioning

as threshold guardian and prohibitive figure' (Boyer, 2013, p. 241). He exists always at the threshold, as an in-between identity, remaining forever an ambiguous construct that proves difficult to understand.

His breaking free of the asylum in the beginning of *Halloween* is indicative of his ability to breach boundaries, refusing to be oppressed by the institutional forces of society. In transgressing these cultural restrictions, he is resisting structures, and withstanding imminent social changes. Michael's opposition to categories and the binary ways of looking at the world solidify his role as a threatening force to Haddonfield. Loomis describes the rebellious mind-set of Michael where 'there was nothing left, no reason, no conscience, no understanding, and even in the most rudimentary sense of life and death, of good or evil, right or wrong' (*Halloween*, 1978). His antagonistic place in the text offers new knowledge on the divisions that separate human beings, corroding the rigid representations that place abjectness wholly away from the Self.

Jeffrey J. Cohen delineates how monsters 'are our children . . . they bring not just a fuller knowledge of our place in history and the history of knowing our place, but they bear self-knowledge, human knowledge' (Cohen, 1996, p. 20). Based upon this conclusion, it becomes more difficult to label a monstrous figure as entirely Other, because we displace a part of ourselves onto these constructed identities. They help us discern our darker selves, and engage with repressed desires without the prospect of persecution or judgement. It is therefore, 'by narrating for ourselves and to one another the strange workings of our mind, we make sense of our world and gain a deeper understanding not only of our culture but also of ourselves' (Boyer, 2013, p. 256). The 'strange workings of the mind' are allowed escape through the monster figure so that the modes of otherness can be engaged with, but from a distance. Horror is not just an exhibition of the grotesque, but it also induces a cognitive experience that feeds into our deeper anxieties and fears. It presents the spectator with the

tools to understand social anxieties and then express them in ways that would otherwise be incommunicable. The reason for why we monster abject identities such as Michael's, is because we see a part of ourselves in him and fear we could become him. Tropp comments on how horror gives its audience 'a safe way to exorcise their fears by entering a parallel world, complete with language, imagery, and characters that have become both frightening and familiar, the embodiments of an unacknowledged "other" and old friends' (Tropp, 1999, p. 7). This familiarity that concerns the Other and notions of the abject is something with which horror narratives engage as a means of addressing oppressed societal issues that would otherwise be avoided.

Outlining the distinction between Self and Other, and the divide that separates them, Robert E. Ziegler states that 'toward us, on the near side of the boundary, things stay where they are and people move in their accustomed orbits. But on the far side, rules give way to randomness and incoherence' (Ziegler, 1983, p. 770). With the 'far side' being located in the domain of otherness, it is notions of identity that move away from the 'accustomed orbits' that are condemned to be monsters and outsiders. As human beings, we prefer uncomfortable thoughts and unfamiliar presences to remain entrapped in the 'far side', never being allowed to invade the 'near side' that is the *status quo*. This idea connects to how society finds comfort in deviants remaining quarantined in mental asylums or prisons, thus creating physical barriers between Self and Other. It is referenced by Ziegler that 'the function of penal and psychiatric institutions is less to punish or rehabilitate the criminal than enable us to conceive architecturally clearer terms the distinction made between those who conform and those who threaten to disrupt our lives' (Ziegler, 1983, p. 771). We try to ignore dangerous entities by placing them firmly within systems of containment, both physical and linguistic.

Loomis addresses how society tends to circumvent notions of alterity and push identities of otherness to the margins where we can pretend they do not exist. He says to the sheriff: 'Death has come to our little town, Sheriff, you can either ignore it, or you can help me stop him' (*Halloween*, 1978). Carpenter removes societal ignorance and its sense of security by infusing the domestic space with terror where representations of non-conformity become harder to ignore. Monstrous figures such as Michael upset the stability of a proposed perfect reality, where every community has a dark secret that stalks their every move. What we seem to fear most is social constructs that threaten to contravene the barriers that separate the unfamiliar and familiar. The theme of Carpenter's film 'is the violation or profanation of these junctures' (Zieglar, 1983, p. 770).

Michael's inexplicable psychosis allows Carpenter to exploit a not-uncommon belief that the mentally ill are dangerous. His engagement with themes of criminal madness touches upon fundamental issues concerning psychological issues, cultural anxieties and controversies relating to the Self. Michael being seen as evil can be explicated in terms of 'socially and culturally shared conceptions of psychopathology and murder that allow audience members to recognize their representation in *Halloween* as manifestations of evil' (Pennington, 2009, p. 62). Interpretations of mental illness are profoundly influenced by media imagery within popular culture, where the portrayal of serial killers such as Michael Myers provides the misconception that those with psychological disorders are inherently evil and are society's 'bogeymen'. Films such as Carpenter's horror 'put a face to the great anxieties of the age and helped America to more clearly visualise its monsters' (Covey, 2009, p. 1385). The visualisation of the insane subject as monster is solidified by the failure to observe any human mannerisms in the individual, where humanity is replaced by intimations of an animal nature. Michael's bestiality is accentuated, not in a moment where he kills another human, but after he has mutilated an animal. Presenting him as someone intrinsically

savage, we witness a half-eaten dog in his childhood home where Loomis confirms about Michael upon its sight that ‘this isn’t a man’ (*Halloween*, 1978).

Carpenter builds an inflexible link between insanity and barbarity, feeding into pre-described myths concerning the mentally ill. However, through this postmodern lens, one finds that rules of perspective and cultural assumptions are inconsequential when the spectators take command of the gaze and construct meaning for themselves. Anamorphosis is significant in how it instructs us to look rather than expect to see something, and not to rely upon given meaning and produce our own. It is a theory that validates how ‘a distorted image is important because it demonstrates that there are two moments of viewing, not one as it might seem in everyday life’ (Adams, 2013, p. 141). Thus, there is always dual meaning to any given object, regardless of how many prejudiced opinions dominate our gaze. Even though Michael’s absent identity produces gaps in knowledge that encourage predisposed ideas to fill those voids, his existence as an aporia or ambiguous entity leaves room for new meaning to be established. Dennis Atkinson invokes Holbein’s painting as a metaphor for inquiry and the foundation upon which unreliable perspective is built. He explores ‘this idea of lack at the centre of a field of meaning’ and the ‘apparent void in the midst of recognizable form’ (Atkinson, 2002).

With any given image, there exists a void in meaning that needs further exploration and explanation. No representation is fully complete from one singular viewpoint, and therefore a multiplicity of perspectives is essential to identify what is lacking in the semiotic field. There will always be a ‘blind spot’ whenever we gaze upon any object, and certain content will continue to elude comprehension until it is looked at from a different angle. Anamorphosis, as has been noted, is ‘a technique employed in drawings and paintings from the sixteenth century onward, where perspectives of painted objects and landscapes are stretched so that the actual deformed subject appears natural from the viewer’s perspective’

(Finkelde, 2016, p. 8). When applying this idea to the distorted antihero, an identity that was once unnatural can be transformed into something familiar and even relatable. If one were to calculate Michael's intentions based on the narrative of Carpenter's film alone, then his role as villain would be securely cemented within the framework of the horror genre. However, as soon as we redirect our gaze away from the brutality carried out in Haddonfield, and look towards the catalytic events that led up to Michael's return, then the motivation behind the monster becomes more distinct.

According to Tina Marie Boyer 'monsters do not emerge out of a cultural void; they have a literary and cultural heritage' (Boyer, 2013, p. 240). By definition, the monster is a paradigm that reflects forbidden obsessions and moral problems through the bodily form of an unearthly being. Similar to previous chapters, this text concerns itself with the constructs of morality and those deviate from it. *Halloween* centres on the subject of deviant sexual teenagers and the consequent punishment enacted by Michael for their propensity to sin. He essentially evokes fears of responsibility, as he is designed to be a Bogeyman who exists to frighten people into behaving according to society's moral obligations. Horror films such as *Halloween* introduce themes such as social decay, corrupt authority and violent eroticism, where society's 'guilty memories, secret shames, unwanted responsibilities – all the buried side of their humanity – breaks in again through walls and back into their houses of order and light' (Ziegler, 1983, p. 771). It presents to the spectator with issues of social deviance, the over-sexualised feminine and the consequence of decadent behaviour, where it is man who is adjudicator of this chastisement.

The women of Carpenter's film stand in 'patriarchal culture as signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his phantasies and obsession . . . tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning' (Mulvey, 1975, p. 439). Michael repositions the woman in the secondary role, and denudes her of agency by making

her the object of his 'male gaze' and the targets of his punishment. He reinforces his masculine authority even more by watching his female prey without them having the power to see his true face. Laura Mulvey explains the phenomenon of the male gaze by outlining how in 'a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking is split between active / male and passive / female' (Mulvey, 1975, p. 837). Therefore, female characters, such as Annie and Lynda, serve no other function but to reinforce Michael's purpose within the film. In other words, the woman is always object of the spectator's gaze, never accredited her own perspective and denied any agency in the production of meaning. Their inability to overcome the male threat that is Michael solidifies the conception of women as victims of violence, always a under the gaze of man, being forever placed in the position of submissiveness.

Michael's victims are presented as being sexually promiscuous, where the only survivor, Laurie Strode, is depicted as innocent and pure. Mark Jancovich concurs that films like *Halloween* are seen to promote a form of conservatism, by presenting the profligate women who are killed as merely 'getting what they deserve' (Jancovich, 1994, p. 29). From this, it can be determined that with this film, Carpenter is connecting sexuality with violence, negating woman's indulgence with her body and showing the implications of her carnal desires. It puts itself forward, like *The Exorcist*, at a time of fascination with the sexual liberation of 1960s America, where sex is only mentioned in terms of guilt, transgression and deviance. The 'Rabbit in Red' matchbook, that is seen in nurse Marion Chamber's car as she drives Dr Loomis to the asylum that holds Michael, acts as an early representation of female promiscuity that dominates the context of the film. The Rabbit in Red Lounge, which we learn is an exotic strip club in later sequels, being located near Haddonfield exaggerates the impending danger of immorality to the suburbs. The presence of this symbolic object alludes to the purpose of Carpenter's movie that speaks to the growing sexual freedom of women.

Critics have often disputed that the slasher film signifies an active patriarchal expression against uninhibited female lewdness. Robert Cumbow agrees with this theory of the film's subject matter, outlining how the 'nakedness of the victims seem to suggest punishable sexuality' (Cumbow, 2002, p. 59). Even though Michael is characterised as the suppressor of overly reprobate behaviour, his method of killing and punishment could be seen as sexual in nature, with his use of the symbolic phallic weapon. Methods of homicide include penetration of the female body with the kitchen knife, or physical strangulation, and the two modes can be interpreted as symbols of male dominance. According to Kyle Christensen 'the violent, penetrating weapons of the killers are meant to operate as phallic symbols, showing how the one who thrusts the phallus is the one who is superior' (Christensen, 2011, p. 26). In the scene where Michael preys on Laurie's friend, Lynda Vander Klok, the moment when he attacks her naked body has resonances of a sexual act. While Michael strangles her with a telephone cord as she attempts to call Laurie for help, the sounds of her struggle are misinterpreted to be sexual moan, to which Laurie replies 'first I get your famous chewing now I get your famous squealing . . . are you fooling around again?' (*Halloween*, 1978). With the teenagers of Haddonfield being too preoccupied with the acts of 'fooling around', they remain ignorant to threats that encroach their suburban homes.

Throughout the many emblematic moments of this text, the younger generations are presented as being condemned for their frivolous nature, and are being shown the severity of their deviance through the eyes of Michael. It is in the killing sprees of serial killers such as *Halloween's* antihero that 'the slashers leave behind gory trails of what they found when they arrive: wasted youth' (Gill, 2002, p. 23). The narrative inaugurated by Carpenter instils the idea that, if the spectator abides by the social expectations of gendered roles, then they could avoid being tormented by the harsher implications of life, embodied here and symbolised by the evil force that is Michael. Michael perceives the world through a skewed lens, and

corrects the discrepancies of society by eradicating them entirely through the murdering of the sexually deviant. He performs the role of monster who is:

a reoccurring symbol of social and moral (political, religious, sexual, etc.) questions that cannot be easily categorized in a binary system, but instead is caught in an ongoing conversation where its body and behaviour demarcates what is socially acceptable. (Boyer, 2013, p. 245)

He virtually acts as the moral guardian for those around him, beginning with the killing of his sister Judith in the opening scene, in an attempt to save her from further sin after her performance of underage sex. Her choice in prioritising her sexual needs over the responsibility of babysitting her younger brother makes her Michael's first victim of moral consequence. When asked by her boyfriend if anyone is at home, Judith is uninterested in locating him, responding: 'Michael is around here somewhere' (*Halloween*, 1978). As well as revealing Judith's lack of care for her brother, this scene also demonstrates Michael's elusiveness, and sets the tone for the whole film. Michael locates what is off-balance about the community of Haddonfield and attempts to remove that threat, rather than accepting the complex nature of a changing gendered society. He understands only good and bad, and anyone that teeters on the line between this binary, he punishes them for their weakness. This adheres to Cumbrow's observations on the insane subject who does 'not suffer from a jumbled, confused view of the world around them, but from a tendency to see things all too simply and clearly' (Cumbow, 2002, p. 3). His simplistic vision of the world confines him to a conservative view regarding masculine and feminine ideals.

With an increase in feminine liberation and gay rights in the 1970s, understandings of masculinity were becoming less succinct, and new forms of gendered performativity were taking form. The film 'simply rehearses and restates . . . male aggression and male power and

of male fear of women and female sexuality' (Grant & Sharrett, 2004, p. 367). The growing fear of the castrated man, or the emasculated male, is manifested in the character of Lynda's boyfriend, Bob. He is the only male victim of the text, and Carpenter's reasons for including a male homicide introduces new commentary on the gender debate. In the brief scenes in which we see Bob, he is emasculated by the dominant presence of Lynda and presented as the weaker sex, obeying her every command. After lighting him a cigarette, she orders him to get her a beer, shifting the gender hierarchy in which she acts as the governing gender. It is this display of subservience that makes Bob the only male target of Michael's gaze, where his submission to the opposite sex demonstrates the declining power of manhood. Where Bob represents the dilution of masculinity during 1970s America, Laurie further transgresses gender norms in showing how 'slasher films pave the way for the female monster hunter who embraces both gendered attributes at once' (Duda, 2008, p. 116). It is in the moment that Laurie hides from Michael in the closet, fulfilling the damsel typecast, that her transition from victim to hero transpires. As the light turns on in the enclosed space, something switches in Laurie where she has the courage to attack her stalker, and deny and overcome her normative oppressed role. Her refusal to be confined to any singular identity validates that the passivity and vulnerability of woman can be undermined at any moment within the horror genre.

A gender dimension to horror dismantles gender stereotypes and parallels the demonisation of the feminine subject with the development of female agency and action. Woman could now remove the shackles of her gendered role in society, and utilise the Gothic to distance herself from the restrictions of female etiquette, which was seen as 'a 'middle-class affection designed to inhibit women's conception of a future that did not involve marriage' (Smith, 2013, p. 31). Laurie represents what Carol Clover determines as the 'Final Girl' who 'alone looks death in the face, but she alone also finds the strength either to stay

the killer long enough to be rescued . . . or to kill him herself' (Clover, 1987, p. 35). Breaking the chain of repetition in habituated conventions and 'performativity', the horror genre transgresses such ideological implications through the creation of dissident female characters who exude strong agency. Laurie transgresses the limitations of the societal ideal, diluting the foundations of semiotics on which we rely upon.

Even though Laurie bestows a sense of optimism on the female gender by surviving Michael's castigation, and dispelling ideas concerning the damsel in distress phenomenon, there are moments in the film that force her back into her stereotypical gendered role. Carpenter positions Laurie as this powerful figure because she does not follow the same sexual patterns as her friends, and because she performs her role as babysitter according to patriarchal values. Critics often denounce the idea of Laurie being a true 'Final Girl' because she does not embody feminist agendas completely. The importance of appropriate womanhood is present in many of Laurie's mannerisms, especially where she is concerned about appearing upstanding and moral in the eyes of male authority figures. In a display of her willingness to abide by societal ethics, Laurie is reluctant to smoke pot illegally with her friend Annie. When she finally partakes in the illicit task, it is followed by guilt-induced worry that Annie's father, a local police officer, can smell the marijuana on them saying 'I think he knew . . . did you see the look on his face?' (*Halloween*, 1978). From this, it can be deduced that Laurie retains the antiquated fear of misbehaving in the eyes of the male figure. Carpenter showcases how Laurie can only thrive by performing according to standards of proper femininity. Even in moments of agency, she is entangled in her gendered function as domestic servant. It is household objects that entrap the woman within her secondary role in society, which Laurie uses as tools to fight and survive. She first defends herself by wounding Michael in the neck with a knitting needle, and later with a wire clothes hanger, and finally with a kitchen knife. On the other hand, the female victims of the narrative, they

are all killed in domiciliary situations, exemplifying that the abandonment of their domestic duties is the reason behind their persecution.

Laurie is ‘paradoxically both disempowered and empowered’ (Leeder, 2014, p. 15). Even though she is disempowered by protecting her gendered role according to patriarchal ideals, she is still empowered in how she proves that femininity does not equate to weakness. Where usually the female protagonist must relinquish her femininity in order to disempower the monstrous killer, Laurie uses the tools of domesticity to show how one’s womanhood can be a dynamic force. Her performance in *Halloween* demonstrates that women have more autonomy in horror genre because identities are always ambiguous or a hybrid form. Furthermore, where the binaries of gender are dismantled within the horror genre, other divisions that separate human beings are rendered unstable.

As Slavoj Žižek points out ‘the ultimate traumatic Thing the Self encounters is the Self itself’ (Žižek, 2006, p. 210). What is more fearsome than the monster is the potential evil that resounds within us all. Within the discourse of horror studies, the Self is no longer binary with respect to the Other, but stretches itself into the domains of the abject. This idea contradicts Barbara Creed’s assertion that ‘the place of the abject’ is ‘the place where meaning collapses’, the place where ‘I’ am not’ (Creed, 1993, p. 9). Where familiar modes of representation do in fact collapse, does not necessarily mean that ideas of selfhood are entirely disconnected to horror’s ambiguous and othered spaces. Instead, both Self and Other have an intricate connection where new meaning is produced from the abject blending with the normal. Horror ‘tears at the skin, opening a wound where the internal space of the subjective viewer and the external realm of disembodied representation bleed into one’ (Loh, 2011, p. 329). Like the anamorphic painting, the horror genre is a place where meaning disintegrates and becomes unstable. We can no longer have confidence in established truths concerning the depicted image, because there are always many layers to meaning that can be

deciphered. Similar to the workings of anamorphosis, horror ‘pokes at the vulnerability of the spectator’s vision, cognition, and language while heightening his / her awareness of the affecting force of images’ (Loh, 2011, p. 329). It demonstrates that, like the anamorphic painting, representation is an unstable construct and one cannot rely upon prejudiced stances of the first depicted image.

Therefore, for the purpose of the argument concerning Michael’s pitiful nature, it becomes apparent that one cannot wholly trust suppositions relating to mental illness and the varied forms of psychosis. Susan Stewart states that ‘our hierarchies of relevance, our assumptions of the social, and our faith in the reliability of the self and its potential for apprehending the real are all suspended, put into brackets’ (Stewart, 1982, p. 48). Stewart’s discussion on how the Self is ‘put into brackets’ within the horror genre touches upon how, during our encounter with the abject, notions of selfhood are never lost, and some connection to humanity will always show itself. Michael symbolises the fear of one’s neighbour, and how we can all share familiarity with modern performativity of evil. Movies like *Halloween* confirm the idea that ‘the niggling suspicion that something dark lurks below suburbia’s peaceful facade is dramatically vindicated’ (Murphy, 2009, p. 1).

Justification of Michael’s position as Other moves beyond the realms of science, and can only be explained through the discourse of both fantasy and myth. The worlds of both realism and surrealism collide with the presence of Dr Loomis, who, being a man of reason and rationality, seems to be dominated by superstition and supernatural taboo. His inferences indicate that he has abandoned any pretence to cognitive or neurological explanations for his patient’s actions. When the Sheriff comments on how ‘everyone in Haddonfield thinks this place is haunted’, all Loomis can answer is ‘They may be right’ (*Halloween*, 1978). His interpretation of the criminality of man exaggerates the belief that horror exists within the everyday. Laurie succumbs to Loomis’ irrational observations and comments on Michael’s

character stating: ‘It was the Bogeyman?’ where Loomis confirms ‘As a matter of fact it was’ (*Halloween*, 1978). *Halloween* presents to the spectator the insecurity of our natural environment, and it demonstrates how the everyday can turn into a threatening space. It puts forward the fear of the modern:

the fear of personal endangerment that comes when the places in which they feel safest are somehow opened up and the unknown let in, when their dwellings and routines are invaded and disrupted by the anonymous marauders that lurk outside their gates. (Zieglar, 1983, p. 772)

Discord and confusion percolate through the narrative of Carpenter’s horror, where the ‘anonymous’ threat is never fully surmounted. Similar to that of *Wuthering Heights*, *Halloween* replaces the sacred space of the home with a site of contestation and danger. Being a prime illustration of Freud’s uncanny effect, *Halloween* destabilises the boundaries that externalise constructions of evil. Robert E. Zieglar outlines how Carpenter turns the home into a ‘killing space’ where the ‘security in our places of refuge can be obtained only at the price of the fear we harbour in our minds’ (Zieglar, 1983, p. 770).

Therefore, as soon as our consciousness is dominated by some uncontrolled force, we forget the safety of the domestic space, and only see threatening elements in the shadows. Michael represents more than a sadistic serial killer, but he does exemplify how danger and horror can seep so easily into the unsuspected spaces. The ‘characters’ ignorance is in part motivated by their living in an environment in which they normally would not worry about psychopaths’ (Pennington, 2009, p. 60). No one expects the threat of Michael; therefore, he is always hiding in plain sight, hidden amongst the presupposed security of what we believe to be normal and what we consider to be dangerous. The menace that is Myers represents a buried and unwanted aspect of our psyche, an embodiment of our most primitive impulses.

He shows that ‘the darkest side of one’s own conscience wears not a mask but a familiar face . . . when made to meet their enemy, [they] confront not a grotesque inhuman killer but instead a likeness of themselves’ (Ziegler, 1983, p. 786). Reading the monster figure in tandem with the concept of the familiar, the Gothic villain moves away from ideas of grotesque Otherness and finds a deeper connection to understandings of the Self.

Anamorphic art assists in understanding the need for dual meaning when it comes to interpreting othered abnormal entities, where the first given image is not always the correct one. According to Sinner, ‘tensions inherent between the subjects and objects of Holbein’s painting represent a space that is open to multiple interpretations’ (Sinner, 2011, p. 187). It is by looking at *Halloween* through the anamorphic lens that the spectator is exposed to the blurred edges of representation, where misshapen identities will always consist of an ambiguous component. This facilitates a greater openness to new perspectives and meaning, so that we are no longer restricted to the linear viewpoint. Anamorphosis questions how representation itself works. Christina Rudosky makes an intricate connection between horror and anamorphosis in which she outlines how ‘ghostliness may be understood through the visual paradigm of anamorphosis, or the device of “seeing double”’ (Rudosky, 2015, p. 705). The component of the ghost, the subject that haunts the text, is seen as existing as a double, a shadow self of another existing character. It is this anamorphic ghost that subsists in Michael, who stalks the other characters; who haunts them; and who forces them to look at the world through a skewed lens.

The example of Holbein’s painting can be used to explain anamorphic theory further, finding a different perspective of the image or ‘the second look at the painting [that] offers an alternate perspective that changes the viewer’s comprehension of the work overall’ (Rudosky, 2015, p. 705). This is precisely the function of horror as its anamorphic interpretation of othered identities alters the spectator’s view not just on the identity itself, but also of the

surrounding context as a whole. Even though we are presented with a fictive monster that terrorises its victims, there is still an underlying reality to which the reader or viewer relates.

Christina Rudosky explains this further, stating there exists:

two realities – one literal and one metaphoric – where the secondary version hides behind the first like a ghost standing in for an unconscious dream reality that we know exists but we have trouble seeing simultaneously with the conscious reality.

(Rudosky, 2015, p. 706)

Like the anamorphic skull that can be seen in two ways in Holbein's painting, so Carpenter's film tells two stories. The narrative of the broken home and the deteriorating family unit is suppressed within the tale of a suburban serial killer. Where Michael is able to invade and contaminate the safety of the domestic space, he also symbolises the corrosion of the ideological suburban home. The film alludes to a future in which the illusion of the nuclear family values cannot blockade the growing individualism and sexual awareness of the new generations. According to Pat Gill 'the danger is within, the films seem to say; the horror derives from the family' (Gill, 2002, p. 16). It is further argued by Gill that the absent parent in Michael's life acts as a catalyst for his immoral behaviours, where his relentless neglect as a child awakens the evil force which wreaks havoc. Due to the household not being entirely whole, 'the boundaries of these homes are entirely permeable to evil' (Gill, 2002, p. 19). This lack of nurturing prevalent in the Myers family is emblematic of the high divorce rates in the 1980s.

Barbara Dafoe Whitehead writes that 'after 1960 . . . the rate accelerated at a dazzling pace. It doubled in roughly a decade and continued its upward spiral until the early 1980s, when it stabilised at the highest level among advanced Western societies' (Dafoe, 1997, p. 3). With this emphasis on broken marriages and infidelity, there was a newly found interest in

self-fulfilment that contributed to sexual liberation and women's rights, all areas of development, which Myers tries to deplete in Carpenter's film. This doubleness of narrative mirrors the doubleness of perspective that can be found when examining the film's villainous antihero.

To overlook the distortion and bring the image back to the way one normally expects to see it, one has to view it in a special way. Therefore, to move away from the skewed view of Michael, a postmodern view of his psychosis must be taken so that his position as antihero can be reformed. Where images in the anamorphic painting remain hidden until one examines the painting from another angle, the repressed identity of Michael takes shape and his position as victim is brought to the centre through the psychoanalytic lens. Rob Zombie's 2007 remake of the original film alters Michael's role as villain, and reconstitutes him into the domain of victimhood. He creates a dysfunctional backstory for the infamous antagonist, being presented as a young sufferer of an impersonal, crude and oversexed culture. This display of fragility that Zombie offers is never allowed to surface in Carpenter's narrative. It is only in a brief moment when Michael loses the mask, that he looks incredibly more fragile, exemplifying more a victim than a villain.

David Savran outlines how Michael's lack of familial nurture facilitates his deviation from the norm and his entry into the world of criminality:

The (male) narcissist . . . is the product of an unfortunate weakening of a 'patriarchal authority' in a feminised culture. Because no longer has 'loved and respected' figures to emulate, he retreats to fantasy and develops a 'sadistic superego' that assaults his now masochistic ego. A hapless victim of the 'social changes' wrought by 'the new permissiveness. (Savran, 1998, p. 168)

Michael's experience of disconnection and disdain from those around him contribute to the manifestation of his 'sadistic superego' – the man in the white mask. He retreats to his childhood form, playing in the fantasy of costume as a defence mechanism to deflect the harsh truths of reality. Therefore, Michael's position as monster is complicated by his role as outsider, always watching from the outside in, never allowed to participate in the classificatory order of things. Thus, if he 'is a trespasser, a man who forces homes and bodies with his knife, this role in part seems thrust upon him by his status as an exile' (Ziegler, 1983, p. 775). Carpenter's monster establishes a pretext for discerning the mechanisms in which the Other is marginalised, their basal needs being neglected. Like other Gothic villains such as Frankenstein's Creature and Heathcliff, an anamorphic viewpoint places Michael as a victim of circumstance, learning degenerative behaviour from his mistreatment by others. This looking awry at the grotesque exterior of the monster allows for the mask of horror to be lifted, whereby 'another dimension may open that can offer alternate interpretations' (Sinner, 2011, p. 187). Adopting an anamorphic perspective when viewing any given antihero, especially cases of mental illness, holds the potential to unveil what might not be apparent on the surface.

For Michael to be anamorphically transformed, his position as tortured victim must be considered in any debates concerning his criminal mind-set. The lack of attention given to the intent behind his series of killings confines the spectator to see him as nothing other than a dehumanised Other. Without any hint of a function or moral register, the issue of ethics or discriminatory patterns are no longer obstacles to the monsterring of Michael's character. Dr Loomis disallows any trace of humanity to be seen in Michael by depersonalising him to the identity of an 'it', devoid of name and gender. Highlighting the doctor's lack of sympathy and compassion for a human being, his accompanying nurse questions: 'don't you think we could refer to "it" as "him"?' (*Halloween*, 1978). The absence of a normal signifier makes

Michael's existence surreal, and makes representation almost impossible. In the film's closing credits, his character is referred to as 'The Shape', where he is once again denied an identity, existing only as a an immaterial being that lurks in the darkness, a shadow of the normative self. Carpenter's antagonist is a prime example of a shunned identity being forced into the role of monster. It is therefore not the fault of Michael for his averse nature; rather it is the inability of society to understand him. For Carpenter 'the intruder appears to be a stranger since one makes him so; he is anonymous because one chooses not to know him' (Zieglar, 1983, p. 785).

From the opening scene, Michael performs as the outcast, looking in at his family through a window, forever observing people from the fringes of everyday life. He represents everything that is peripheral to the 'norms' of self and society, moving through Haddonfield among the shadows, always on the margins of the camera lens. These observations on Michael's unexplored victimhood would counter Cumbow's statement that he represented how seventies' 'horror films abandoned the tradition of moral ambiguity and unleashed monsters that were purely evil' (Cumbow, 2002, p. 56). Even though Michael's intentions are dark, his transition into a murderous villain remains an ambiguous factor. In other adaptations of the original film, we see remnants of his past that would suggest his upbringing was one of desolation and abandonment. The film does not invite us to identify with Michael – it only invites us to identify with his victims. Clover comments on the stereotyped roles of victim and villain whose 'roles no less prefabricated and predictable for their being performed by many or one' (Clover, 2015, p. 12). It is these superficial categories, set up by the horror genre, that confine identities to one role, and disallow alternative modes of representation from being formed. From these anamorphic viewpoints, Michael can be shown to no longer be someone that is inherently evil but a falsified persona shaped by a misconception of mental illness.

Horror, according to Loh, is when ‘the production of meaning is questioned and challenged in a constant state of flux’ (Loh, 2011, p. 329). Perspective is shaped by meaning that is presented to us through generations of misinformation and prejudices. No single meaning can be privileged, however anamorphosis shows the many ways we can see one thing even if the anamorphic perspective is not always the correct one. It can be argued that perceptual ambiguity of Michael Myers can be argued and other perspectival possibilities can be determined through anamorphosis. Even though Michael is without a voice, his actions speak to many transgressive ideas concerning gender, madness and criminality. Where he lacks in definition, his obscure identity allows Carpenter’s audience to displace their own trauma onto this tragic monstrous figure. Thus, the once faceless monster is exposed to have many, showing a different face to differing insecurities of the spectator.

Chapter Seven: The Heroic Monster

From Dusk Till Dawn [FDTD], directed by Robert Rodriguez, is a suspenseful horror that has left audiences bewildered by its blending of cinematic styles. It can be analysed from multiple perspectives due to its multifaceted themes, and its ability to transgress genre. Ira Jaffe comments on the general aversion to mixing genres, stating that there was an attempt to 'limit the diversity of style, as it might disrupt the narrative flow and illusion of reality', presumably preferred by the audience (Jaffe, 2008, p. 8). However, by creating an uncanny atmosphere through this disconnected framework, Rodriguez has more freedom to deconstruct familiar modes of representation. As if suffering the transformation of a vampire bite, this film metamorphoses from a standard narrative of American criminality into something dark and radically bestial in nature. The director's choice of a hybrid genre distorts familiar forms to force his audience to recognise the warped face of the modern world: the result is one genre creating an anamorphic perspective from which to view the other genre, and vice versa. Where genres are usually more distinct, *FDTD* instead shows how they each can slip into one another, making the unfamiliar familiar; the familiar strange; and the *Heimlich Unheimlich*.

An examination of Rodriguez's film endeavours to unearth why such unconventional and abhorrent identities capture our attention and figure so prominently in popular culture. Horror movies like Rodriguez's are pervasive because they offer an imaginative location in which we rendezvous with all manner of monsters, both good and bad. Seth and Richie Gecko, presented as monstrous in human form, contradict the traditional narrative focus because here two dysfunctional criminals act as leading stars. Within this ambiguous space, the villain archetype becomes a precarious concept whereby the presupposed links between criminality and immorality are questioned. We no longer view the antihero through a linear

lens, and modern monstrous forms reflect the complexity of human behaviour and difference. Even though demons are what we fear in nightmares, evolutionary studies remind us that humans throughout the years have been the ubiquitous dangerous predator of our world.

The foundation of horror can be seen to cut ‘through our everyday reality, it can turn over our assumptions and show us the underbelly of our world, the darkness, the void, the nothingness that haunts our existence’ (Berman & Dalvi, 2011, p. 1). *FDTD* deconstructs our assumptions concerning traditional genre and character modes, highlighting the gaps in knowledge concerning conventionalised identities and the precarious nature of linear perspectives. By infusing this film with a hybrid narrative form, Rodriguez disassembles stereotypical character formations, and dilutes the boundaries that surround the mechanisms of morality and evil. Where uncertainty is introduced to any given representation, it calls for the spectator to be more active in the process of interpretation and interrogation. Ambiguous identities and narratives have ‘a value . . . because it involves the reader in a creative process’, and encourages more anamorphic viewpoints (Tormey & Tormey, 1983, p. 183). Within *FDTD*’s indefinite space, the constructions of monstrosity and villainy are anamorphically reformed, where the spectator must actively participate in reshaping the traditional image of the antihero. Our suppositions about the antihero are born from a history of othering the grotesque, the immoral and socially deviant. In film, Geoff King outlines the benefits of such categorisations whereby ‘the use of generic or cyclical typing is one way Hollywood has sought to create commercial stability’ (King, 2002, p. 119). The familiarity that genre proffers is something the spectator learns to rely upon where we know our way around the conventions.

Where the first half of *FDTD* appears to inhabit the formalities of a particular genre, it undergoes a sudden shift that ventures outside the regulatory ideal. Rodriguez’s transgression of genre boundaries mirrors the transformation of cultural norms and the ability of villain to

manoeuvre themselves into the realm of hero. The film's indistinct or hybrid identities provide a more decisive foundation for the rejection of the conventional view. Where there exists an indeterminate number of delineations for the antihero, there is an unlimited amount of possibilities for how Seth Gecko might be interpreted. As Jeffrey J. Cohen explains: 'a mixed category, the monster resists any classification built on hierarchy or a merely binary opposition, demanding instead a "system" allowing polyphony, mixed response' (Cohen, 1996, p. 7). The ambivalent nature of the monster, in this case the human monster, is what makes contemporary modes of abjectness both frightening and engaging. The heroic monster resists a clear-cut distinction where the moral questions that separate man and monster evaporates. In an era of changing identities, the need for new perspectives and tools to access them becomes a weighty task. Anamorphic theory becomes a significant instrument to highlight the voids of perspective in relation to the unidentifiable image, something that evades fully being comprehended. Its 'language and tools of perspective were one important means of representing and accommodating shifting views' (Bellamy, et al., 2003, p. 152).

Since the antihero often exists as an amorphous being, it too is never fully understood. The ill-defined and complex versions of immorality invite further speculation. In the case of monstrous identities and villainous archetypes, anamorphosis allows for meaning to be challenged and reformed when looked at awry. According to Derrida, 'a text is a text only if it hides the law of its composition and the rule of its game from the first glance, from the newcomer' (Derrida, 1981). Based upon this observation, most texts have their structures of signification and perception concealed so that the reader is motivated to construct their own meaning, and not rely upon given prejudices. In the realm of horror and anamorphosis, it is about bringing something distorted into focus, reducing the complexity of a subject into perceptible patterns. The key to reading a text anamorphically is 'to decode the system, to discern patterns and fault lines, and to attempt to bring the picture into focus' (Raley, 2001);

it is to deconstruct the unusual designs and transform what was once unrecognisable into something more familiar. Therefore, for new understandings of both the monster and villain to take form, the lines of difference must be erased and the demarcations that connect good and evil must be drawn.

The purpose of categories such as villain and victim is to disconnect, and put a very clear epistemological divide between, what is set up as the 'normal' and 'abnormal' aspects of society. Furthermore, Klapp outlines how:

We can judge that naming a villain has status-placing and defining functions, that is, to set him apart from normal people, idealise or exaggerate his character negatively, create a state of alarm, and call for strenuous role- playing to adequately deal with such a dangerous deviant. (Klapp, 1956, p. 340)

A villain's monstrous nature in a text is often exaggerated so as to repress the face of humanity from taking shape, thereby making the process of sympathetic identification a more difficult task. Their unnatural and unethical approach to life situates them outside of societal norms and places them firmly within the role of Other. A typical view of the monstrous figure would be an identity:

whose existence defies the normal operations of nature, and whose unnaturalness explains the peculiar affective responses we have to them; fear combined with loathing or revulsion . . . which however horrific they might be in our world are perfectly normal in their own. (Berman & Dalvi, 2011, p. 5)

Therefore, this 'loathing or revulsion' disbands when villainous characters are compared to another othered identity, so that the Gecko brothers become more natural when paralleled with the blood-hungry vampire. *FDTD* demands us to re-evaluate our definitions of 'hero'

and ‘monster’, and to reconsider who is the superior evil – human or vampire, or more importantly the ethnic vampire.

Supernatural species such as vampires ‘train attention to naturalised assumptions about socially and legally defined definitions of what passes as “natural” or is legally defined as a “Natural person”’ (Hudson, 2013, p. 677). Since our confidence in binaries is upturned by the hybridity of character and narrative in *FDTD*, ideas of what is normal become more precarious. It is only when faced with a supernatural threat, that the Gecko bothers appear as more human, particularly because they are redefined as vulnerable victims to the predator vampire. Hence, it is through the character of Seth that the nature of the antagonist is significantly challenged, especially where he escapes the mould of character stereotypes. According to Dale Hudson, ‘supernatural species offer the potential to decolonise our familiar habits of thinking’ (Hudson, 2013, p. 662). Similarly, the anamorphic perspective ‘decolonises’ habituated meanings, and calls for a re-examination of ingrained and solidified categories. The classification of villain is anamorphically reformed by the varying contexts of Rodriguez’s film, whereby human monstrosity is re-evaluated and redefined as an abstract form of heroism. In his work on anamorphosis, Jurgis Baltrušaitis outlines that the anamorphic perspective is not so far removed from the norm. He comments on how this postmodern perspective does not offer something new, but rather it reforms or inaugurates something that was already there, something hidden by dominant attitudes and meanings. Anamorphosis is ‘not a deviation from the norm, in which reality is tamed by the mind’s vision. It is an optical trick, in which the visible covers the real’ (Baltrušaitis, 2009, p. 2). Therefore, the normalcy of monstrous figures is only revealed when something more abnormal takes their place, thus revealing how little they have actually deviated from the norm.

Vampires ‘deny the comfort of neat binaries’ or dominant perspectives, whereby they accentuate the fear of the inability to differentiate between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Mutch, 2011, p. 76). Their presence in *FDTD* disturbs our preconceived expectations of the villain, where sympathetic identification is achieved for characters who were once marginalised for their dark tendencies. Seth Gecko, a notoriously dangerous convict, succeeds in obtaining the status as our unconventional ‘good guy’ when juxtaposed with the infringing threat of the Mexican bloodsucker. Regardless of how wrongful an act the Gecko brothers commit, we are reminded there is always something darker at play. The expectations of moral values for any heroic figure are undermined by the protagonists’ need to engage in violent activity so as to overcome the vampiric threat in the ‘Titty Twister’ bar. The monstrous act of killing, which positions the Gecko brothers as villains in the beginning of the film, is then justified when it contributes to the triumph of the human subjects in the face of a supernatural danger.

Therefore, violence is ‘most attractive when it contains an engaging fantasy theme in which disliked characters are defeated by liked characters in the cause of justice’ (Goldstein, 1998, p. 4). Even the Fuller family, who are initially the epitome of religious values, are transformed into the roles of violent predators when faced with an evil subject. Their transition from ecclesiastical advocates to monster hunters highlights the arbitrariness of moral codes in the face of danger. Thus, we can no longer associate the violence of the Gecko brothers with the domains of monstrosity where within a postmodern framework we see ‘violence is inescapably as much part of the ethical good as its opposed’ (Berman & Dalvi, 2011, p. 8). The potential for evil and violence in any human being is made more profound by the vampire bite that turns the most innocent into the most bestial. An individual’s propensity to sin is intensified by the threat to their survival, and thus self-preservation will always awaken a primitive monstrous nature. Kirk highlights how monsters therefore are ‘disquieting miscreations of ourselves. All humans begin their existence not as perfect predetermined

beings but as vulnerable embryos and potential monsters' (Kirk, 2008, p. 7). Seth is introduced into the narrative as a monstrous figure, but he then becomes more connected to humanity, repurposed to serve the needs of mankind, although ambiguously an outsider still.

He is initially presented as a troubling indeterminacy, a man who is antagonistic without cause, but who is also aware that his brother's actions are wrong. Due to the way in which societal ideals have conditioned him to believe he is monstrous, Seth thinks that his deviant nature deserves the same unfavourable end as his brother. When Kate tries to sympathise with him over the death of his brother Richie, he replies 'Bullshit! If it were up to you, if you had half a chance, you would feed us to those fucks' (From *Dusk Till Dawn*, 1996). Seth is characterised as a barbarian in civilised society; however, the further the plot unfolds, and the further the genre becomes distorted, the more questionable his barbarity becomes when paralleled alongside, and juxtaposed with, supernatural evil. Even though he is set up as a dangerous criminal, he is able to define himself in a new way by challenging something more monstrous and abnormal than himself – the vampire. Terry Kirk outlines that the 'challenging negative value [the vampire] also affirms the norm, and helps us define ourselves by resistance to deformation' (Kirk, 2008, p. 8). Seth's humanness, and his refusal to welcome the supernatural evil, are what saves him from being assorted into the category of Gothic villain. Even though he fails to achieve the ideal in accordance with society's moral standards, it is his defiance of a total rejection of this ideal that places doubt in his characterisation as the 'bad guy'.

It is Rodriguez's supplementation of a vampiric threat that deconstructs the traditional view of heroism and the moral dilemmas attached to such definitions. He also introduces protagonists who are essentially corrupt, and thus focuses on locating the monster within and without. Milly Williamson argues that 'to embrace the vampire is also to embrace pain; a painful awareness of outsiderdom, a recognition of inhabiting an unwelcome self, a life at

least partly lived at the edges' (Williamson, 2005, pp. 1-2). Although the monstrous Other contaminates the regulatory ideal, nevertheless this form of alterity is indispensable in society in order to fully understand the multiplicity of our identities. Through the medium of the vampire genre, *FDTD* puts forward thematic devices of self-interrogation as a means to reflect harsh truths back upon ourselves. Susannah Clements notes that 'there is something about the figure of the vampire that attracts us in this metaphorical sense. As a metaphor it hits at the heart of what makes us human' (Clements, 2011, p. 4). Their recognisable human traits, and their ability to hide their own monstrosity, illustrates the thinning divide between the normal and the abnormal. The familiar face that this monstrous figure possesses outlines the proximity of the grotesque and the potential for evil within us all.

The myth of the vampire depicts monstrosity as something beautiful and even erotic, whereby 'the physical representation of the vampire is traditionally human in nature, making it familiar and relatable, the mythic lore malleable enough to adapt to a wide range of rapidly changing cultural, societal, and entertainment needs' (Peacock, 2015, p. xviii). They signify a monster; they function to remind the spectator of the deviant nature of humanity. The threat of the human monster does not stem 'from specific powers, but from an essential unpredictability and unknowability' (Beville, 2014, p. 131). We know what to expect with vampires, and we are accustomed to their weaknesses and strengths, as myth and literature has taught us their motivation for existence. Therefore, what frightens us more is humanity, and the erratic nature of our familiar counterparts. The vampire assists in developing debates concerning the complexity of humanity and the transgression of difference. Williamson states that 'the vampire has become an image of emulation, a glamorous outsider, a figure whose otherness we find versions of (sometimes ambivalently) in ourselves' (Williamson, 2005, p. 1). Both the leading male protagonists, Jacob Fuller and Seth Gecko, develop their versions of selfhood through the battle with the vampires of the 'Titty Twister' bar, who embody a

myriad of very human questions and fears. Even though they are set up as oppositional identities, each performing as abject to the other, both Jacob and Seth establish a kinship and bond during their fight for survival.

The signification of difference of the Mexican vampires is situated so firmly in the realm of the Other that their marginalisation is never eradicated. It is through the refusal to acknowledge the abject being attached to the Self, that understandings of cultural difference become distorted and confused. Based upon this conflict with otherness, both the Gothic and horror genres are marked by an apprehensive encounter with the dark and mysterious unknown. Monsters are made more fearsome by absent knowledge of their intentions. Humanity's omnipresent primal apprehension is that we fear the unknown and unfamiliar aspects of society. Similar to the Gecko brothers, we are supplied with no real history of the Aztec vampires that have made residence at a Mexican strip club called the 'Titty Twister'. This ignorance of their impulses and drives distances the viewer from understanding the vampiric perpetrators, whereby one is only inclined to classify them as 'monsters'.

Examinations of paintings such as Holbein's *Ambassadors* opens up new ways of seeing any given image. Its application to the field of film and literature invites new modes of representation to take form. The anamorphic composition of this painting allows 'us to recognise the fact that concealment is integral to how the painting communicates' (Kenaan, 2002, p. 68). Therefore, its relevance in film adheres to what is absent from the text as the most significant aspect of any form of semiotics relating to the anti-hero. A further examination of the Gecko brothers collapses the border between human and Other due to their possession of similar objectives of self-fulfilment to those of the vampires. Both parties are overwhelmed by self-indulgence and power, so that their moral compass becomes distorted in the process. Hence, the hybrid space that Rodriguez offers contradicts John Allen Stevenson's observation that 'the familiar is the image of good, while foreignness merges

with monstrosity' (Stevenson, 1988, p. 142). Where the foreigner is portrayed as the ethnic monster, the cultural signifier of who is 'good' is less clear. Even though the brothers are not monstrous in exterior, they are monstrous in nature, and exhibit an uncanny impression that forces us to recognise the familiarity of abjectness and criminality.

Likewise, the human facet of the vampire exemplifies the similarity between 'us' and the Other which 'feeds the sensation of the uncanny and forces the acknowledgement that the Other is closer to "us" than our desire to separate and delineate would have us admit' (Mutch, 2011, p. 82). The racial Other is thus demonised in order to humanise our own versions of selfhood, functioning as a defence mechanism to secure representations of evil firmly within the margins of society. Not only do we set up physical barriers to close off the constructs of otherness, but we also create psychological borders that keep the unwanted unconscious at bay. This need to separate oneself from associations of otherness, or the abject, is explained by Winnubst where she outlines that the individual must 'construct clear and distinct and rigid boundaries between himself and the Other, even if this Other resides internally within his own psyche, within his own body' (Winnubst, 2003, p. 4). Therefore, a strategy employed by many horror films is to distort or 'monstrosize' marginalised figures so as to emphasise the normality of the dominant group, in this case, the white American.

Even though race is not a major focus of Rodriguez's narrative, the distinctness of ethnicity in the monster plays out an unconscious debate. According to Jess Peacock 'whether intentioned or not, the vampire cannot help but be saddled with the allegorical baggage that a particular culture requires' (Peacock, 2015, p. xix). Often symbolising the Other, the vampire archetype is one that has established itself in our collective unconscious to represent difference. The horror genre functions as a way for individuals to confront and resolve what society inhibits, whereby the vampiric monster is the symbolic reassertion of that which civilisation has continued to oppress and repress. Prejudiced attitudes towards abject

identities are set up from the opening scene of *FDTD*, before the categories of both supernatural and race feature as signifiers of otherness. In a conversation between a store clerk [Pete] and a Texas Ranger [Earl], the parochial perspective towards people of difference comes to the fore. When Earl discusses how his breakfast was served to him by a ‘mongloid’, a label he gives to a person with a mental disorder, Pete replies ‘isn’t there a law or something about retards serving food to the public? . . . that kid belongs under a circus tent, not flipping burgers’ (*From Dusk Till Dawn*, 1996). There is a misconception that people of difference are more suited as participants in a ‘freak show’ rather than being seen as human beings, in possession of both an emotive and moral register. Both the vampire and monster narratives also point continually to the imperfection of the body. Human deficiency, on both an internal and an external level, confines individuals to only be recognised by their flaws, and everything that makes them different from the norm.

Winnubst outlines that ‘to be Other is to be in the body, to be particular, to be less than the universal, to be flawed, limited, marked, different’ (Winnubst, 2003, p. 6). Visual indeterminacy is something that anamorphosis and contemporary forms of villainy have in common. The inability to comprehend abject and deviant identities is due to our discomfort with how they reveal the limitless nature of human behaviour, as well as the gnawing sense of familiarity that they can generate. Presented as the ‘anamorphic stain’, the monstrous anti-hero ‘takes a visual form unsettling to the eye, presenting itself as that which the eye cannot grasp, as that which the eye cannot settle’ (Kenaar, 2002, p. 68). Often taking place in relation to physical deformity, othered identities also appear more unsettling when there is a failure to ‘grasp’ who they are while reflecting back the recognisable face of normality.

The fact that the monsters are brought to life over the Mexican border establishes a pretext for the burgeoning concerns surrounding the influx of immigration and terrorism. Even the American monster is instituted as being more heroic when paralleled alongside the

Mexican outsider. The film is inscribed with the fear of race whereby Camilla Fojas comments on how it exaggerates ‘the U.S.-Mexico border as a lawless place ruled by a dark mythology, and home to every illicit activity in the industry’ (Fojas, 2008, p. 183). Featuring the ethnic promiscuity of Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, Rodriguez’s Mexican vampire is not exclusively threatening because of its monstrous association; it also exudes danger because of the abjectness of its race. The attribution of the grotesque and extreme deformity onto the Mexican vampire functions to exaggerate cultural otherness, and becomes an act that conceals the deeper connections between the monstrous Other and innocent Self. The transformation of the ethnic Other into a monster is a fundamental ‘metaphor to describe the undeniable human tendency to separate “us” from “them”’ (Stevenson, 1988, p. 140).

With people of ethnicity or of different race being sketched as violent or abnormal, the Mexican of *FDTD* is set up as monstrous so as to adhere to a history of racial discourse. The contrast of the pious Fuller family with the promiscuity of the bar staff exemplifies the deviant otherness of the Mexican counterpart. According to Stevenson, ‘the distinction between the moral excellence of the insiders and the physical peculiarity of the foreignness underlines the outsider’s inherent danger’ (Stevenson, 1988, p. 142). The eradication of the Mexican vampire, through multifaceted forms of violence, discourages a progressive attitude towards multiculturalism and integration. This willingness to exorcise the vampire is grounded in society’s need to reassert patriarchy and racial superiority. The vampire as a trope is used ‘to unravel how whiteness, maleness, and heterosexuality feed on the same set of disavowals – of the body, of the Other, of fluidity, of dependency itself’ (Winnubst, 2003, p. 1). This attempt to control Otherness and the foreign is made more succinct by the battle with the monstrous subject, and our efforts at purging them from society are a reflection of how we choose to displace our most basic anxieties. To consign the vampiric Other to a

historically othered location posits a conversation concerning representations of race and the intrinsic bond set up between monstrosity and the cultural Other.

Cultural ignorance is exemplified in certain dialogues between characters, where the lack of knowledge facilitates an abstract understanding of the cultural signifiers. When Richie tells Kate he is taking her family to Mexico, she inquires ‘What is in Mexico?’, to which he replies ‘Mexicans’ (*From Dusk Till Dawn*, 1996). This form of racism does not exist within the othered space of Mexico alone, but it stretches its reach to the relationship between Jacob Fuller and Scott Fuller. When the Gecko brothers hold them hostage, Seth cannot understand how two men with different skin colours could be father and son. He says when he learns Scott is Jake’s son ‘How does that happen? You don’t look Japanese’, to which Jacob exposes his racial stereotyping stating ‘Neither does he. He looks Chinese’ (*From Dusk Till Dawn*, 1996). Where the Mexicans can hide their vampirism, they cannot hide their race and thus their skin colour others them even before their bodies fully distort.

Seth demonstrates a modern belief that external destructive forces represent a greater threat to society than repressed psychological or biological evils within one’s self. The ethnic vampire problematises the homogenous identity through which ‘monsters are simultaneously universal and particular: they emerge from universal societal needs, including the need to exteriorize fears and build an “us” in contrast to a “them,” but the particular form that monsters take speaks to the specificity of a time and place’ (Harris, 2015, p. 116). The choice by Rodriguez to construct his vampire as predominantly Mexican hints at the American fear of the immigrant, who can endanger the very fabric of their civilised society, an issue that is reverberating in American politics at the time of writing.. Horror films with the same thematic structure as *FDTD* have long been adopted to address threats to racial or national purity. Leela Gandhi maintains that the fear of foreign thoughts overwhelming the American identity often becomes a subconscious element of many Gothic or horror texts. She argues

‘the horrors of hybridity and cultural miscegenation . . . must attend to the unnatural mingling of disparate nation’ (Gandhi, 1998, p. 133). The vampire serves to sensationalise the abjectness of the foreign Other, and the dangers of them diluting other cultures with their own.

The superstitions on which Rodriguez capitalises in this movie facilitate the false perceptions of the ethnic Other, while solidifying the fear of them crossing the borders into our reality. *FDTD* moves away from Hutchings’ understanding of vampire narrative, which he believes ‘are so obviously fantasies set in unreal locations that they do not have any significant implications for our own belief systems’ (Hutchings, 2004, p. 70). Instead, the film addresses pragmatic American concerns relating to ethnicity and immigration. Similar to the idea of Dracula, Rodriguez’s demons remain on the outskirts of metropolitan American culture and invigorate ideas concerning the ‘parable of “polluted blood” – contagious sexual or blood-borne diseases from deviant eastern immigrants’ (Tyree, 2009, p. 31). The purity of culture and the legitimacy of any ethnic identity becomes less secure with the augmentation of immigration patterns in the United States. The vampire allegory accentuates this anxiety of hybrid identity, where race becomes diluted by the inter-racial relations of both human and monster. The amalgamation of bloods performed by the vampire bite mirrors the blending of identities, and thus the very components that reduce the divide between Self and Other. Winnubst outlines how ‘the spilling and mixing of fluids continues to be one of our culture’s greatest fears – projected time and time again all over the racialised and sexualised body of the Other’ (Winnubst, 2003, p. 15).

The vampire averts the spectator’s semiotic grasp and stages the duality of identity and human nature, where both normalcy and abnormalcy co-exist. This glorified monstrous figure grants an exploration into new categories and new meanings that surround the discourse of race. Its dual genealogical make up ‘represents those of us who defy definition

or exist within multiple categories, such as those who identify as mixed race or bisexual' (Boyer, 2011, p. 25). The non-conformity of the vampire is often presented as a symbol of sin, temptation and Satanism, facilitating an implosion of negativity towards othered and foreign nationalities. It exists by crossing the boundaries set up by societal standards and tells us something about how these institutional restrictions are constructed and how they might be dismantled.

The presence of the vampire engenders theological and spiritual uncertainty, dismantling the restrictions held in place by institutional bodies, highlighting their weaknesses. The vampire defies the laws of religion and its very existence promotes humanity's forbidden desires, 'the way a victim gets "unclean" from a vampire bite involves illicit intimacy, and these pictures run the gamut of marginalised sex acts contained in the political unconscious' (Tyree, 2009, p. 31). Throughout *FDTD*, religion is inextricably linked with sexual themes as a strip club is built on the ruins of an Aztec temple, and condoms are filled with holy water as a weapon against the demonic invaders. Alongside this growing disenchantment with organised religion, the vampire, who embodies an alternative form of life after death, reflects the growing doubts about the promised afterlife. *FDTD* can be translated as a social commentary on America's growing disinterest in religion, which is epitomised by the atheist pastor, Jacob Fuller, who experiences a crisis of faith after the death of his wife. The codes of morality are modified by the supernatural danger that threatens to put the Fuller family into an even deeper theological crisis. Ironically, Jacob finds his way back to his devotion to religion through the methods of what he once considered as ethically corrupt.

Geoff King comments on how the preacher represents 'the disillusioned civilisation who undergoes regeneration through the exercise of violence' (King, 2002, p. 126). Therefore, symbols of antagonism that are condemned by the Church are the very constructs

that introduce him back to his faith. It is the ambiguous relationship with God that lessens the divide of decency between Seth and Jacob. They both share a commonality in how they disprove their spiritual nature. Where Seth embraces a life of criminality, a decision to deviate from a pious path, Jacob also chooses to reject his Godly journey after the death of his wife. In the narrative of a priest's dwindling piety, his daughter asks of him 'Don't you believe in God anymore?', to which he replies 'not enough to be a pastor' (*From Dusk Till Dawn*, 1996). He confides in his daughter that his faith is gone after the death of her mother Jenny. He admits 'yes I do believe in him, Jesus, yes I do believe in God, but do I love them? No' (*From Dusk Till Dawn*, 1996). It is only the recognition and belief in evil that infuses both Seth and Jacob with a newly found appreciation of religious values. Seth's promise to kill all the vampires as they are 'Godless fucking pieces of shit' (*From Dusk Till Dawn*, 1996), positions him as a reformed servant of God, attempting to rid the world of evil, an evil he was a follower of before he entered the 'Titty Twister' bar. With this conflicted appreciation of a divine doctrine, the normalised version of villain that was seen in the beginning of *FDTD* is replaced by a more complex model.

Vampires are set up as antiheroes because they dare us to look outside the naturalised and normalised technologies of vision. In similar ways to anamorphic theory, our familiar ways of seeing representational binaries are disturbed by their supernatural presence in the text. Their ability to be both beautiful and grotesque simultaneously demonstrates the instability of perception and naturalised perspectives. According to Orrin E. Klapp, the process of 'making villains is part of a societal reaction to certain kinds of deviance' (Klapp, 1956, p. 340). The vampire as deconstructive figure is an illustration of the permeability of boundaries, and of all that causes problems to those lines of division and opposition. The Mexican bar staff are essentially deviant Others, radical aberrations who work to divulge the limits of what is considered to be acceptably human. Monstrous forms such as this, supply

profitable sites to investigate the collisions of different identities. *FDTD* reveals the symbolic structures that monsters exceed and ‘the cultural boundaries they transgress as they disrupt and delineate gendered, racial, ethnic, sexual, class, and national identities’ (Goddu, 1999, p. 128). The vampire diminishes the divisionary border between the human and non-human subject, existing at the apex of both. The use of the animated corpse in horror thus centralises the transgression of human nature and the ability to demolish boundaries, such as death.

Ruth Helyer outlines how ‘the monstrous undead, present us with “doubles”, the other side to the traits respectable society has chosen to uphold’ (Helyer, 2000, p. 726). The fact that the film is contextually placed on the Mexican border exemplifies an omnipresent threat, while exaggerating the theme of limits. The desired destination of the Gecko brothers is Mexico, a place where they believe they would no longer have to yield to American laws, and be confined by the rules of the regulatory ideal. The location is typecast as being the focal point of criminality and abject behaviour, a location that rebuffs human limitations. According to Barbara Creed, ‘the concept of a border is central to the construction of the monstrous in the horror film’ (Creed, 1993, p. 11). The monstrous is produced at the border, and is perceived as an amorphous or in-between identity. The vampire echoes our fears of changing or dissolved binaries whereby we are not only acquainted with a threat to pure identities, but also with the porousness of social and national boundaries. Fred Botting outlines how the Gothic modes of discourse ‘frequently adopt this cautionary strategy, warning of dangers of social and moral transgression by presenting them in their darkest and most threatening form . . . tortuous signs of vice, corruption and depravity are sensational examples of what happens when the rules of social behaviour are neglected’ (Botting, 1996, p. 7). The vampire falls under the category of the monster because it infringes upon cultural limits and escapes the semiotic field, rendering established peripheries unstable.

Even though Richie Gecko is the one that pushes criminality to its limits, with an appetite for unacceptable and savage acts, it is the vampires who deflate Richie's savagery and re-establish his humanity. They separate him from the domains of monstrosity because 'further beyond the boundaries of acceptability are the vampire hordes, the truly alien and savage others whose principal role is to be exterminated' (King, 2002, p. 126). Their capacity to disobey conventional definition is seen as an infection that weakens traditional stereotypes, and they become an uncanny presence that convolutes our standard perceptions of who is good and who is bad. Taking advantage of the vampire's deconstructive presence in the narrative, Seth feeds off this influence in order to surpass the limiting impact of social expectations, and redefine the heroic figure outside the domains of moral good. The addition of fluid identities and transgressive themes to *FDTD* makes any conventional reading of the text an impossible task. Anamorphic perspectives become essential in establishing a non-linear interpretation of Seth Gecko and the distorted definitions of villainy, where the 'presence of anamorphosis is in itself suggestive of the need to replace one's conventional view' (Kenaan, 2002, p. 68). Our blindness when it comes to othered identities is often a product of a common tendency to feed into false speculations about any given group. Perspective frequently discloses the limitations of human knowledge, in which we readily rely upon given meanings and misplaced information concerning ostracised members of society.

According to McCrystal, the Gothic genre often 'links monstrosity to the inhuman. Essentially creating a hierarchy in which the humans are superior beings to Others' (McCrystal, 2018, p. 236). As seen with previous chapters, bestial and animalistic rhetoric are often used in cementing a misunderstood abject entity into the mould of Gothic villain. Because of an individual's unrestrained tendencies and destructive nature, they are seen to be more inhuman than human, and images of the grotesque are relied upon to reaffirm this lack

of humanity. According to Thurston, it is ‘thus only an estranging twist of perspective . . . [that] allows the emergence of the thing “normally” kept at bay, held in abeyance, by the consensual-discursive signifier’ (Thurston, 2012, p. 15). The ‘visible’ or exterior form, the grotesque nature of the identity, covers ‘the real’ meaning and the true possibility of the individual image. Therefore, when the mind encounters identities that are profoundly dominated by grotesque physicality, and who cannot be trusted wholeheartedly, we tend to shape our perspective of these identities based on their distorted features. The true personality of the identity becomes convoluted by preconditioned meanings concerning how the abnormal being equates to them being evil.

The function of anamorphism, according to Marcin Jonak, is ‘the “destruction” of the object – the real image – and its presentation in an abstract and unclear form in order to read it properly by viewing it in a certain way’ (Jonak, 2017, p. 39). It is an illustrative device that offers new perspectives on the structures of signification. Due to there being an inherent failure of absolutist categories in Rodriguez’s film, he forces the spectator to adopt the anamorphic lens through his series of visual parallels, particularly the mirroring of sex with the grotesque. He eliminates preconditioned assumptions of ethics by locating humanity in those traditionally deemed to be abnormal, and then revealing ‘true’ monstrosity hidden behind a beautiful human exterior. The female workers of the Mexican bar exemplify this, as they are symbols of the monstrous feminine that hide behind the exterior of a sexualised image. An example of this is the introductory scene of a bikini-clad Salma Hayek who appears on stage with an albino snake draped around her neck. Rodriguez cleverly ‘choreographs her movement and body in such a way that creates in her audience (and us as film-going audience by proxy) an intense relationship between her beauty and the repulsiveness of the python’ (Aldama, 2014, p. 59). This relationship underscores how the lines that separate fear and eroticism are never fully separate within the horror genre. Her

morphing into an ugly creature, while retaining her beautiful body, exaggerates this very concept as Rodriguez reminds us that deformities can be found in any display of perfection and normalcy.

This play with categorical perceptions, as seen with the alluring grotesque body of the female vampire, facilitates the merging of other classifications of identity such as heroism and villainy, or villainy and innocence. The premature display of uninhibited aggression that Richie commits, while performing similar scenarios to that of a child, suggests how dangerous and deceptive physical normalcy can be. His sadistic killings are made even more fearsome by the fact he has the same behaviours as a child, linking his violent acts to childhood play. The narrative of his monstrosity is interrupted by moments of pure infantilisation, where he is disciplined by his older brother, and told to wear his retainer because he grinds his teeth. Similar to that of Michael Myers, this irregular association between childhood innocence and violence makes classifications of criminality a more complex issue. This allusion to the child as monstrous or evil complicates notions of innocence and confuses the expectations of what we think a killer to be. The unconventional representation of evil can also be seen in the character of Seth, whose transformation by the end of the film reinstates the idea that identity is always a temporary and fluid endeavour. Villainous figures such as Seth exist within the flexible parameters of society, and from this location, deconstruct the constructs of meaning concerning the modern antihero figure.

Society establishes what is monstrous and evil based on a design to cultivate and engender normativity, whereby individuals are recognised as monstrous when they redefine communally construed codes of social behaviour. According to the studies of Michel Foucault, the monstrosified human is set up as:

the criminal designated as the enemy of all, whom it is in the interest of all to track down . . . disqualifies himself as a citizen and emerges, bearing within him as it were,

a wild fragment of nature; he appears as a villain, a monster, a madman, perhaps, a sick and, before long, ‘abnormal’ individual. (Foucault, 1977, p. 191)

However, the line between human and monster, criminality and civility, becomes more of a precarious entity when reality is infused with abnormal circumstances – such as a vampire invasion. The Gecko brothers are seen as inhuman up until when they are placed into the supernatural sphere, a dominion that removes the rigidity of concrete binaries. This category confusion expels all myths concerning the monstrous and the heroic, and blurs ‘the ways which we choose to abjectify and label monstrosity’ (Koenig-Woodyard, et al., 2018, p. 12). The depravity of kidnapping, murder and theft pales in comparison to the cannibalistic nature of the Mexican vampire, where ultimately, the moral shock of criminality is depleted by the supernatural dangers presented in the *FDTD*. When the human monster is paralleled with a supernatural monster, our perceptions of human monstrosity can fade. McCrystal points out that ‘a monstrous individual is not necessarily a monster and that sometimes, the only way to defeat real monsters is through monstrosity’ (McCrystal, 2018, p. 247).

It is when the figure is able to balance societally productive heroism with aspects of monstrous villainy that the role of monster and antihero becomes an ambiguous form. The power of the modern day anti-hero overturns liminal boundaries, and allows for the once othered identity to be reborn. Rather than the egregious villain being a symbol of evil and social degeneration, this antagonistic figure emerges now as having the potential for heroism and self-worth. Seth Gecko is the hybridisation of the traditional evil character, especially when juxtapositioned against the antiquated vampire narrative, and proves that ‘monsters can extend the ethical and aesthetic boundaries, in this case, of heroism’ (Koenig-Woodyard, et al., 2018, p. 15). In the moment when both the supernatural and real monster collide, the Fuller family can adjudicate where the true deformity lies: within Others or within the familiar self.

The binaries between good and evil become more confused and blurred by the reconceptualisation of the term 'hero'. *FDTD* demands that we re-evaluate our definitions of 'hero' and 'monster', and reconsider who is the superior evil – human or vampire. Rodriguez's film has significant implications for our belief systems, whereby his infusion of the vampire archetype in the middle of a narrative of abduction problematises our moral and ethical norms, and we end up rooting for the 'bad guy'. In the opening scene, the Gecko brothers are described as 'crazy sick fucking bastards' (*From Dusk Till Dawn*, 1996), and yet Seth is returned to a normalised image when he helps to eradicate the vampiric threat. He takes on the role of the anti-villain, a person who achieves good by the end of the film; however, his means of achieving this are predominantly evil. The employment of the anti-villain in any given text almost rationalises their darker tendencies and propensity to sin. Films such as this encourage the spectator 'to redefine monstrosity as being at times requisite of modern-day heroism' (McCrystal, 2018, p. 240). It shows, in similar ways to the monsters previously mentioned in this thesis, that we do not have to be defined by categories, or perform according to who or what society expects us to be.

Seth demonstrates that his deviance has its limitations, and that his awareness of the need to eradicate evil illustrates his attempt at redemption for his crimes. His desire for self-preservation is forgotten as he approaches the battle with the vampires, saying: 'I don't care about living or dying anymore, I just want to send as many of these devils back to hell as I can' (*From Dusk Till Dawn*, 1996). Seth's refusal to be a vampire demonstrates his desire not to be wholly consumed by malevolence and immorality. Even though he once stood in the way of what was right and good, he has now transformed into a servant of justice. In contrast to the previously discussed monsters in this thesis, it is not Seth's position as a victim that separates him from judgement for his acts, but it is his choice to use his sadistic skills for the purpose of valour that redefines his turpitude.

The first time the Fuller family encounter Seth, their reaction is one of fear. Kate Fuller describes him as a ‘creepy guy’ (*From Dusk Till Dawn*, 1996) before they encounter what truly is ‘creepy’ at the ‘Titty Twister’ bar. He is transmuted from the ostracised criminal to the hero who is vital to the survival of others. Where Kate originally described Seth as some sinister threat in the beginning of the film, after the battle is over she beseeches him: ‘don’t leave me’ (*From Dusk Till Dawn*, 1996). This proves that no identity should be confined to the singular gaze, and also suggests that where everyone has the ability to be bad, this also means that everyone has the promise to be good, and McCrystal confirms that ‘all humans have the capacity to be a monster – to appear as atavistic reversions of an uncontrollable version of man’ (McCrystal, 2018, p. 239). Therefore, within the uncontrolled and unpredictable domain of monstrosity, the antihero can surprise the spectator with moments of empathy and redemption.

Our standardised version of any given identity, especially stereotypes of marginalised others, is not always accurate. According to Maurice Merleau-Ponty ‘to seek the essence of perception is to declare that perception is not what we presume to be true, but what we define as our access to truth’ (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 73). The voids and gaps in representation call for, if not demand, further interpretation. Instead of rejecting Seth, who represents the modern villain, *FDTD* embraces his character and uses his violent nature to thwart other, greater threats to humanity. The light that peaks through the bar at the conclusion of *FDTD* symbolises the point of Seth’s complete transformation, and the revelatory moment that our perspective has been reshaped by unconventional narrative devices. Challenging the restricted gaze of the anti-hero, modern cinema explores hybrid genres and abstract identities to provide an anamorphic view of the stereotypical ideologies prevalent in society.

The utility of anamorphosis contests ‘the authority of the eye and [challenges] any literal understanding of what is being seen’ (Kenaan, 2002, p. 61). The deficiency in meaning

offered by the first given image calls for another kind of reading, for a new perspective. An illegible identity, such as Seth, assumes full coherence when viewed from an unexpected view, a perspective that differs from the *status quo*. He is the ‘tough but ultimately decent outlaw put into a situation in which he is forced to make the classic frontiersman’s commitment to the values of civilisation’ (King, 2002, p. 126). The fact that Geoff King addresses Seth as the ‘decent outlaw’, demonstrates the permeable binary of good and evil, where one side can penetrate the other. He is a likable killer whose loyalty to his brother and willingness to reason with potential victims grants him a chance of redemption. Without the presence of the vampire, it can be questioned as to whether Seth would have taken on the role of heroic monster without a more evil monster to challenge. Timothy Beal argues ‘the politically and religiously conservative function of the monstrous is to encourage one to pull back from the edge They literally scare the hell out of us’ (Beal, 2002, p. 195). Seth only changes his view on immorality when he sees how dark the world can be. He confesses to Jacob: ‘I have always said that God can kiss my ass but I just changed my lifetime too about 30 minutes ago because I know that whatever is out there trying to get in is pure evil’ (*From Dusk Till Dawn*, 1996). Therefore, Seth’s potential for heroism is only encouraged by the fear of how grotesque the face of monstrosity can truly be.

People are often positioned as degenerate because they do not follow the normalised moral code, and they ‘are misaligned with society and the expectations of proper human behaviour’ (McCrystal, 2018, p. 236). Human beings’ participation in the other side make them an ingredient of the grotesque, of everything society should not be. By labelling an individual as ‘villain’, the spectator automatically has control over this identity, confining it to their representational grasp. Characters are set up as monstrous because they lack:

the sense of morality and of right and wrong. For them there exists no law, no decency, no modesty. In order to satisfy any momentary impulse, or inclination, or

caprice, they commit crimes and trespasses with the greatest calmness and self-complacency, and do not comprehend that other persons take offence thereat. (Nordau, 1968, pp. 17-18)

Seth's and, more particularly Richie's, deviation from normalcy and lack of morality reveals them to be monstrous figures. However, the dichotomy of villain / hero is rendered unstable because we see villains such as Seth engage in righteous actions aimed at the termination of a darker evil. This amalgamation of abstract gallantry with a more nefarious nature is a testament to the complexity of the human condition in which people can be both moral and monstrous at the same time. This ambiguous grey area challenges the audience's view of traditional morality, and also challenges how this view reflects upon our modern society.

In the concluding dialogue between Seth and Kate, he tells her he does not wish to corrupt her by bringing the young teenager along with him on his continued journey of depravity into Mexico. He orders her to go home commenting 'I may be a bastard, but I am not a fucking bastard' (*From Dusk Till Dawn*, 1996). This proves that his depravity has its limitations, as he is still under the control of what is ethically and morally right. With Seth's confused relationship with criminality, the moral excellence of the heroic figure becomes convoluted, and what separates them as outsider becomes less apparent. Even though he puts forward an image of knavery, we never witness him showing any act of brutality towards an innocent subject. Albeit, the brothers kidnap a bank clerk, Gloria, and hold her as hostage, Seth promises her: 'you hang in there, you follow the rules, and you don't fuck with us, then you'll get out of this alive, I give you my word' (*From Dusk Till Dawn*, 1996). Unlike his sadistic brother, he shows elements of mercy that determine him to be more human than monster. Seth is appalled by his brother's actions involving the murder and the violent rape of their hostage. He does not let violence define him, and he sets himself apart from his brother Richie by outlining the lines he will not cross as villain: 'Do you think that this is what I am?

This is not me. I am a professional fucking thief. I don't kill people that I don't have to and I don't fucking rape women' (*From Dusk Till Dawn*, 1996). Within this indistinct space, the villain archetype becomes a precarious concept whereby understandings of the link between criminality and immorality are challenged. Seth Gecko reinforces the idea of the heroic monster, who is seen as monstrous because of his malevolent tendencies and inclinations towards violence. However, his recognition of religious practices and human valour situates him also in the role of humanity's champion.

Through the perspective of monster theory, it can be recognised that the monster can be positioned as the locus of inquiry and as a critical lens that would help 'reconceptualise the historically, nationally, and generically defined literary canon that scaffolds, and codifies, a set of institutional and curricular traditions, conventions, discourses, and practices' (Koenig-Woodyard, et al., 2018, p. 3). The usual practices and conventions of monsterring have become more difficult in an evolving world full of convoluted identities and complex psyches. Within this postmodern framework, the villain archetype is reconceptualised and *FDTD* makes use of its hybrid narrative form in order to decode societal acts of violence and, more importantly, to justify the unjust. Contemporary horror modes, such as the ones Rodriguez's employs, now humanise the 'monsters' and 'monstrosize' the heroes, thereby corroding conventional barriers between good and evil.

Conclusion

In parallel with the developing and evolving understandings of the Self that are taking shape in a postmodern framework, this thesis identifies the traditional stereotypes of the monster and subverts ideas of Otherness being linked to abnormality and cultural difference. This critical analysis of the monster within the literary space prompts an observation into associations of the monstrous that we find both uncomfortable and formidable. Each text reveals a universal theme in which the monster is placed in the role of a disturbing hybrid, because it produces incoherence, and resists the systematic structures of society. It is the indeterminate nature of their being that makes them a disruptive force, where outside the parameters of society, their fate as ‘monster’ is sealed.

Not only does the Gothic provide an understanding of the inner mechanisms of the mind, but it also allows for a reimagining of how society views ‘evil’ and its socially constructed monsters. Even though monsters are generally seen to represent extreme personified points of unfamiliarity, their *Unheimlich* influence over any text invites recognition, and reflects back the repressed face of humanity. This amalgamation of both familiar and unfamiliar that takes place in the monster genre demonstrates the weakening dichotomy of selfhood and alterity. The monstrous identity facilitates an understanding of socio-cultural themes, where its distorted reflection on humanity contributes to an anamorphic perspective of habituated conventions and meaning. The many faces of the monster, as outlined in each chapter, adhere to the complexity of human nature, and embody how the unconscious has many levels in which monstrosity can filter through.

The ethical and epistemological role of the monster can be evaluated in order to allow for an analysis of aspects of culture and politics that are occluded by language. Based on the gaps in understanding as outlined by this thesis, the act of monsterring the abnormal has been

proven to be problematic. Social apprehensions transfix our understanding of what is evil, and the image of monster is inevitably influenced by political, sexual and racial conflicts. This desire to classify and categorise has negated the indefinite nature of the monster, and in turn, has pushed abject identities to the margins. However, research on how the Other is created allows the spectator to challenge stereotypical models and transgress naturalised meanings

Undermining the illusion of the homogenous space, anamorphosis highlights how we can often become confined by linear perspectives, and how these perspectives often interfere with our encounter with any othered identity. The possibility of double meaning is given focus in any discussion on anamorphosis, and the hidden semiotics of the monstrous subject are centralised through this revelatory tool. With postmodern eyes, it can be used to threaten the habituated discourse of the symbolic order, and more importantly, the seeming stability of the rational subject. It leaves a mould for anamorphic theory to shape, reforming what was once misshapen. Each chapter has employed observations on anamorphosis to expose the notion that meaning can be covert, and one must look beyond what is palpable to unearth the truth.

An anamorphic perspective on the monster can therefore be used as a theoretical construct that can disable our normative cultural mores, and reconstruct a new perspective on society. Even though anamorphosis is a theoretical framework that is rarely used in literature, it is fundamental to the deconstruction of conventional views that concern the Gothic villain. By troubling the representational field, an anamorphic reading requires a shift of normative analysis in order to produce an alternative view of the monster. Upon this observation, its value within monster studies is clear in its disruption of society's reliance on monsterring aspects of humanity that we cannot accept. After exposing the transgression of rigid binaries

and categories, the anamorphic perspective of the Other, therefore, introduces discourses of resistance and change.

The theoretical framework of this thesis provides a language that offers representation to the seemingly unrepresentable. Not only can a monster be reformed through its placement within the role of victim, but also in contemporary modes of horror, the monster is often depicted as heroic, and through this refiguration, the rigid structure of the Manichean relationship between good and evil collapses. Reality is revealed to be multifaceted and forever shifting, and thus the very categories that confine minoritised identities to the realms of monstrosity are now redundant and no longer viable.

Ambiguity, brought forward by anamorphic discourses, dominates each of the chosen texts discussed, where almost every chapter creates a hole in our perception of reality. Through this postmodern lens, one can thus re-evaluate why we are uncomfortable with elements of abnormalcy, both physically and intellectually, and how the abject individual will continue to be demonised by prejudiced eyes. Therefore, the value of postmodern perspectives in an era of abstract identities is essential to unmasking the hidden agendas of these obscure monsters, allowing for their untold story to be told.

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