**Bodies without Borders: Body Horror as Political Resistance in
Classical Hollywood Cinema**

By

Kevin Chabot

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral

Affairs in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Film Studies

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

©2013

Kevin Chabot

Library and Archives
Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

ISBN: 978-0-494-94622-0

Our file Notre référence

ISBN: 978-0-494-94622-0

NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

Canada

Abstract

This thesis argues that body horror, and the cinematic representation of the mutated body in particular, allows us to experience our bodies as Other and allow us to confront and transcend the constraints of socially constructed notions of normalcy. In order to accomplish this, I investigate films that concern the mutated and mutating body in the 1930s and 1940s. The case studies I employ are *Cat People* (Jacques Tourneur, 1942), *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1931) and *Freaks* (Todd Browning, 1932). These films provide very different representations of the mutating body, which encourage different kinds of identifications between the characters onscreen and the spectator. I investigate the shifting relationship between the mutated body as symbolic, performative and as an actual confrontation with the body as Other. Using this model, I designate *Cat People* as a symbolic representation, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* as iconic and *Freaks* as indexical.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to the guidance of my supervisor André Loiselle whose patience, understanding and constructive feedback made this thesis possible. His passion for horror is contagious and always a motivator to do my best possible work. Thank you to my external examiners Marc Furstenau and Grant Williams who facilitated a lively discussion and debate regarding the issues addressed in this thesis. Additionally, I'd like to thank professors Erika Balsom, Charles O'Brien, Malini Guha and (again) Marc Furstenau who provided much needed advice and support not only academically, but also in the far scarier prospect of "real life". My fellow graduate students Mary O'Shea and Amy Jane Vosper as well as Frederick Blichert, Devin Hartley, Emily Gleeson, Dan McKenna, Chelsea Churchill, Dylan Cousineau and Caleb Hopkins. Our many pub nights (and pub afternoons) were welcomed escapes from student life.

Of course, I could not have made it through the semesters without my pub trivia team with Diana Macecek, Jamie Lee, Darcy Corbin, Craig Macnaughton, Mandi Gingrich, Scott Marchant, Christel Doubleu, Sheila Molnar, Dan Boccaccio, and Dan Baker. Our weekly nights of fighting, shouting and cheering for sweet victory was intellectually stimulating in its own unique way. To my friends back home, Mal Ali, Dan Nayda, Jess Brain, Reed Collis, Krista Parsons, Ben Schattmann, Dennis Moore, Sean Kidnie and Nicholas Pearson for keeping me grounded as well as ensuring my visits back home were amazingly good times.

Thank you to my family who, although not fully understanding what it is I do, are supportive nonetheless. My mom and dad, brothers Jason and Daniel, sister-in-law Allecia, and my brand new niece Charlotte. You are a safe haven I can always return to, and for that I am eternally grateful.

Lastly, thank you to the government of Ontario, to whom I will literally be indebted for the foreseeable future.

Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Introduction	1
Why 1930s and 1940s Body Horror?	6
Symbol, Icon, Index	8
The Interpretation of Screams: Symbolic Psychoanalysis in Jacques Tourneur's <i>Cat People</i> (1942)....	13
Val Lewton and RKO's Horror Cycle.....	15
<i>Cat People</i> and Psychoanalysis.....	21
"She Never Lied to Us": Conclusion	33
Performance, Sexuality and Class Consciousness in <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> (1931).....	35
Mamoulion and his Cinematic Adaptation	41
Performing Jekyll	42
Becoming Hyde.....	47
Conclusion	51
The Enfreakment of the Spectatorial Body	53
Freak Shows and the Development of Cinema	58
Degeneration Theory and the Construction of 'Freaks'	62
"One of Us": Conclusion	72
Long Live the New Flesh.....	75
Works Cited	80

Introduction

Linda Williams argues that horror film, along with melodrama, musicals, comedies and pornography, place particular emphasis on “body movement” and “body spectacle” to warrant their inclusion into a specific generic categorization: the body genre. She writes that these genres exhibit visceral emotional states onscreen and produce similar involuntary reflexes in the viewer including, “musical rhythm, terror, [laughter and] sorrow”.¹ Similarly, Steven Shaviro contends that cinema is firstly an affective experience in which the spectator *feels* and *responds* to the images on the screen before he or she knows, understands or reflects upon the image: “film shows before it says.”² Although I do not share Shaviro’s wholesale dismissal of psychoanalytic film theory as a means to explore the significance of cinematic images,³ his emphasis on the corporeal reflexes of film spectatorship is an essential characteristic to consider, particularly in the horror genre. Indeed, the horror film is so named for its provocation of fear, anxiety, screams and physical jumps and shudders the spectator experiences. Although these visceral responses undoubtedly occur in other genres,⁴ horror is unique for its emphasis on the destruction and corruption of the human body.

What both Shaviro and Williams lack in their interpretation of the horrific body, however, is a consideration of how the body is *actually represented* on screen. While the horror film certainly has a tendency to emphasize gory depictions of corporeal disintegration, which would likely cause the type of affective response that Shaviro describes, there are many instances of

¹ Linda Williams, *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure and the “Frenzy of the Visible”*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), xv.

² Steven Shaviro, *The Cinematic Body* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 28.

³ Shaviro writes, “It is time to recognize that not all problems can be resolved by repeated references to, and ever-more-subtle close readings of, the same few articles by Freud and Lacan. The psychoanalytic model for film theory is at this point, utterly bankrupt; it needs not to be refined or reformed, but to be discarded altogether.” *The Cinematic Body*, ix.

⁴ For example, the excitation of suspense and anxiety are central emotional responses to the crime and thriller genres.

cinematic horror that avoid such graphic depictions and therefore trigger different types of responses. Counter to Shaviro's argument, then, I demonstrate in this thesis that some horror films emphasize the metaphorical or symbolic meaning of the monstrous body and thus appeal *first* to the spectator's cognitive abilities rather than their bodies. Additionally, other films might incite a direct visual alignment between the spectator and the body on screen. This strategy would be more likely to trigger self-reflexivity on the part of the audience than an automatic visceral response. This thesis proposes to explore some of these various responses by focusing on a specific type of monstrous body: the mutated and/or mutating body. By analyzing different representational modes of this particular type of corporeal monstrosity, I intend to identify three kinds of monstrous representations: symbolic, iconic and indexical, to which I will return below.

For the past twenty years or so, the typical approach to the examination of the visceral responses to horror films, as well as their ideological implications, has been inspired by Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection. In her book *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva describes the abject as that which, "does not respect borders, positions, rules", and that which, "disturbs identity, system [and] order."⁵ The abject, then, represents a transgression of socially constructed borders and that which transgresses these borders, such as the humanoid monster or mutating body, is represented as threatening precisely because the borders are revealed to be malleable. As Barbara Creed elaborates, the abject threatens life as it represents the collapse of meaning and, therefore, must be "radically excluded from the living subject; propelled away from the body and left across the imaginary border."⁶ Creed adopts a feminist theoretical framework in which she utilizes abjection in order to assert that the female body poses a specific threat to (male) subjectivity. The ideological project of most horror films is, for Creed, to defeat the abject

⁵ Julia Kristeva, *Powers Of Horror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 4.

⁶ Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 9.

female and re-establish boundaries, which reinforces patriarchy and dominant ideological constructs.⁷

Creed fails to acknowledge, however, that because horror films reveal the mutability of these boundaries, they essentially emphasize the instability and artificial nature of such boundaries. If these are broken down during the course of the horror film, there is an opportunity to reconstitute and reform these boundaries in progressive ways. As Tina Chanter writes, “Abject moments can put into crisis imaginaries by exposing their instability. As such, they can provide opportunities for reworking identificatory mechanisms.”⁸ Chanter goes on to assert that by paying attention to abject moments, “we can contest the forces that tend to gain hegemonic power over us” and that “privileged moments of abjection can help to reveal the ways in which [we] have been unconsciously shaped by forces over which [we are] never in complete control.”⁹ The horror that arises from a confrontation with the abject, then, ultimately provides the liberating opportunity of recognizing and reshaping ideological constructs. This confrontation with the abject, therefore, is not exclusively visceral and embodied. It can also be abstract, and stimulate critical thinking and identification. The films I examine in the subsequent chapters provide enlightening examples of how the mutating and mutated body can offer opportunities for reflection and reconfiguration of normative discourses.

According to traditional body horror scholarship, the subgenre’s visual and thematic preoccupation centres on the corruption, violation and destruction of the body from within, that is, the central threat of the film’s narrative resides within the body itself rather than an outside force. As such, Cronenberg’s *The Fly* (1986) is perhaps the quintessential body horror film; the protagonist Seth Brundle (Jeff Goldblum) inadvertently combines his DNA with that of a

⁷ See chapter one, “Kristeva, Femininity, Abjection” in Creed’s, *The Monstrous Feminine*.

⁸ Tina Chanter, *The Picture of Abjection* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 3.

⁹ *Ibid*, 6.

common housefly, which results in the gradual disintegration and mutation of Seth's body. The film graphically depicts Seth's corporeal transition, including scenes in which his appendages metamorphose and become bulbous and grotesque as well as scenes that depict Seth's use of corrosive vomit to ingest food. By the film's end, the transition is complete and Seth is no longer recognizably human, but is a wholly new, organic species: Brundlefly.

The film thus embodies the central tenets typically associated with body horror in its graphic depiction of the deteriorating and defilement of the human body from the inside. This narrative and thematic preoccupation has come to define the work of Cronenberg as he has variously been referred to as the 'father of body horror' and the 'baron of blood'. However, it is important to acknowledge that body horror was not invented by Cronenberg, nor was it a *nouvelle vague* arising from the 1970s and 1980s. Rather, representations of body horror exist as early as the 1930s and 1940s during Universal's monster cycle of horror films.

Unfortunately, because these films did not rely as heavily on gruesome special effects as post-"New Hollywood" productions, they have been ignored. Given the technical limitations of special effects at the time, as well as self-imposed censorship, the films of the classical era could not appeal as directly to the senses as the films of Cronenberg and his disciples. However, it is precisely because they are less obviously involved with direct bodily experience than later films that the horror films of the 1930s and 1940s can offer an enlightening object of study for the exploration of other types of audience response. The bodies shown in those early horror films are certainly aberrant; however, the manner in which they are depicted allows for a consideration of a kind of spectator response that is not exclusively affective. Classic monsters such as Frankenstein's monster and the wolf man in 1930s and 1940s, for example, are manifestations of the abnormal body that challenge our conceptions of normalcy and the proper physical form.

While those monsters are not as shockingly disgusting as later incarnations of the abject, they are unquestionably portrayed as *visibly* different from the norm. The difference might not be strictly speaking “abject”, but there is no denying that the appearance of those classical monsters clashes with normality.

Therefore, the aim of this thesis is not only to demonstrate that classical Hollywood films also fit the category of body horror, thus refuting Shaviro’s argument of the purely visceral ontology of horror film, but also to investigate how the aberrant physical body problematizes conceptions of identity and subjectivity. I argue that non-abject (or at least less abject) body horror, most evident in the classical representation of the mutated body in particular, allows us to conceptually identify our bodies as Other and allow us to confront and transcend the constraints of socially constructed notions of normalcy. In order to accomplish this, I am limiting my investigation to films that concern the mutated and mutating body in the 1930s and 1940s.

Cat People, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *Freaks* (1932) provide very different representations of the mutating body, which encourage different kinds of identifications between the characters onscreen and the spectator. As I explain below, I designate *Cat People* as a symbolic representation, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* as iconic and *Freaks* as indexical. Through employing these differing representative strategies, these films all exhibit an encounter between the socially constructed notion of the normal, proper and disciplined body, and the true conditions of its existence as an incongruous and perpetually disintegrating organic composition. The protagonists’ bodies in each film defy normalcy and in doing so, reveal that the very idea of normalcy is an ideological construct. Each film, however, appeals to the spectator at a different level. *Cat People* encourages the spectator to *think* (symbolically) about bodily difference as a distinctive incarnation of sexuality. *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* visually lures (iconically) the

audience into *identifying* with the mutating body. And *Freaks* compels the audience to recognize (indexically) the actual existence of *different* bodies. Therefore, the function of these films is to convey to spectators – intellectually, subjectively and experientially – that all bodies are essentially monstrous, thus providing a potential point of resistance to, and liberation from, the constraints of ideological impositions on the body.

Why 1930s and 1940s Body Horror?

As previously noted, in contrast to other horror subgenres the threat in body horror lies inside the body, rather than as an external threat such as a serial killer. As Philip Brophy writes, “The contemporary horror film tends to play not so much on the broad fear of death, but more precisely on the fear of one’s own body, of how one controls and relates to it.”¹⁰ Indeed, the threat in *The Fly*, as well as in the classical films I examine, is within the protagonist’s own body and thus his or her own materiality and corporeality becomes the antagonist of the film and ultimately produces the fear and horror response. Rather than an external threat that can be killed or defeated,¹¹ the futility of taming the *body-out-of-control* becomes the emphasis of body horror. As the narrative of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* progresses, for example, there is no stopping or controlling the transformations Jekyll experiences; once the mutations are triggered by his ingestion of the chemical mixture, there is no possibility of escape or reversibility. Jekyll has no choice but to simply witness and endure his bodily mutations and accept the inevitability of his transformation.

However, Brophy regards body horror as a phenomenon specific to more contemporary horror cinema of the 1970s and 1980s. Likewise, Andrew Tudor writes that the “breakdown of

¹⁰ Philip Brophy, “Horrority: The Textuality of Contemporary Horror Films” (*Screen* 27.1, 1986), 8.

¹¹ Serial killers such as Michael Myers and Jason Vorhees can be slowed down, injured and even destroyed until, of course, the inevitable sequels.

body boundaries” as a “visible rendering incoherent of the orderly structure of the body” is a novel attribute arising from the context of 1970s and 1980s American horror cinema.¹²

Undoubtedly, the advancement of special effects during this period, such as make-up and animatronics, resulted in more graphic and spectacular visual representations of the transforming body; however, the thematic preoccupation with the *body-out-of-control* as well as the exploration of the philosophical notions of identity, subjectivity and corporeality are firmly established tropes in classic horror films. *The Mummy* (Karl Freund, 1932), *The Invisible Man* (James Whale, 1933), *Dracula* (Tod Browning, 1931) and a host of other monster films, mad scientist films and supernatural thrillers employ make-up and rudimentary special camera effects in order to visualize the monstrosity of the deviant body. Furthermore, these films explicitly portray the transgression of seemingly stable borders such as alive and dead, man and animal, sublime and grotesque. Brophy and Tudor, then, mischaracterize body horror as a distinct genre of contemporary horror cinema and neglect to consider earlier films that clearly concern corporeality and subjectivity.

The reader may ask, however, how the mutating body can be considered both a threat that produces fear and horror, as well as a site of resistance and liberation? The answer is quite simple: if the perception of the mutating body is understood as a signifying event (symbolic, iconic or indexical) as opposed to a mere visceral shock (as Shaviro who have us believe), then the experience of disintegration can be understood as a necessary precursor to the emergence of a higher level of comprehension. To evoke the Greek paradigm, this is the *sparagmos* (the tearing to pieces of tragedy) that must necessarily precede the *anagnorisis* (the bringing together) of

¹² Andrew Tudor, “Unruly Bodies, Unquiet Minds” (*Body & Society* 1.1, 1995), 28-29.

comedy.¹³ To challenge one's conception of something as fundamental as what the body should look and act like is a frightening proposition precisely because the conception of normalcy is perceived as inherently true and taken for granted. However, once one is confronted with the mutating body, or perhaps their own mutating body, one can confront such fears, accept the transformation and thus transcend the narrow and marginalizing categorization of the 'normal'.

Symbol, Icon, Index

The films *Cat People*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *Freaks* are particularly relevant to this study for a number of reasons. Firstly, on a pragmatic level, these films were made during the same period, which allows me to focus my analysis on the films themselves as well as the specific historical moment without having to account for historical difference between films made decades apart. Secondly, although the films all concern the transforming and mutated body, their representation of this transformation and the consequent impact on the spectator vary greatly. As such, I use the term *Symbol* in order to suggest the abstract and cognitive mode of representation that *Cat People* utilizes, I use the term *Icon* in order to convey the artificial, imaginary and performative mode of representation in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and the term *Index* in order to convey the documentary mode of address that is employed in *Freaks*. This latter category, however, requires a more detailed explanation. It is important to state that I do not invoke the term 'index' in the strict manner of Charles Sanders Pierce, from which the term derives, rather, I invoke 'index' as it has come to be understood and utilized in film studies. Rather than addressing the extensive debates regarding the semiotic writings of Pierce,¹⁴ this

¹³ See Northrop Frye, "Archetypal Criticism: Theory of Myths", in *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 146-223.

¹⁴ For a summation of how Pierce's semiotics have been applied in film studies and film theory, see Marc Furstenau, "Film Theory: A History of Debates", *The Film Theory Reader: Debates and Arguments*, (New York: Routledge, 2010), 1-20.

thesis utilizes this term as scholars such as Peter Wollen¹⁵ have done in the past, that is, as sings that point to, and are manifestations of, the real. Keeping these definitions in mind, I now return to the films themselves and outline how they can be considered symbolic, iconic and indexical works, respectively.

Cat People centres on a woman, Irena Dubrovna (Simone Simon), who believes that if she consummates her relationship with her new husband Oliver (Kent Smith), she will transform into a killer panther. This physical transformation, however, is never depicted onscreen. We see Irena perform panther-like behaviour, such as stalking, and she instills fear and violent reactions in animals, but her body remains intact and never molds into that of a panther. Furthermore, the scenes which supposedly feature Irena-as-panther are bathed in chiaroscuro lighting effects which disguise her mutated corporeality. The cinematographic methods employed by director Jacques Tourneur function to completely separate the body of Irena and the panther thus Irena's transformation is merely suggested and entirely constructed in the mind of the viewer. As I argue in further detail in chapter one, we cannot identify with Irena-as-panther and as a result, cannot experience our own body as Other. Furthermore, this symbolic method of representation does not only apply to the treatment of the transforming body, but also characterizes the entire project of the film: the transforming body as well as the film as a whole is a symbolic work -- the symbolic transformation of the body invites the spectator to interpret it as a metaphor. Irena's transformation *stands* for something else; it is *about* her repressed self. The separation between Irena's body and the presence of the panther onscreen furthers the symbolic aim of the film through investing these images with deeper meanings, which, as I argue in chapter one, point to Irena's queer desire and resistance to hetero-normative conceptions of love and marriage.

¹⁵ See Peter Wollen, *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972).

The mutation of Jekyll in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, through my designation as an iconic representation of bodily transformation, is artificial and performative, yet is directly represented onscreen in which actor Fredric March performs the role of the mutated body. The film does not point to the existence of an actual deformed body as in *Freaks*, but emphasizes through cinematographic means the role images play in our perception and understanding of the body. This iconicity is significant as the spectator is invited to identify with, and inhabit the mutated body in ways that are not possible in *Cat People*.

The famous opening sequence of the film consists of an extended point of view shot in which the viewer adopts the subject position of Henry Jekyll and thus establishes a visual motif that runs throughout the film. Perhaps most importantly, the transformation scenes are also represented from Jekyll's point of view as he watches himself in mirrors, therefore implicating the viewer in the act of transformation. We *see* ourselves becoming Other. We *imagine* ourselves as different. However, there still exists a separation between the representation of the body and the existence of aberrant corporealities in profilmic space as the actor's body is simply adorned with make-up and hair effects to resemble the mutated body. As much as we are willing to suspend our disbelief and allow ourselves to play the role of the other, we retain our unified subjectivity and only "perform" otherness along with Fredric March. Rather than constituting an actual encounter with alterity, this film depicts a performance of Otherness which, although to a lesser extent than *Cat People*, maintains a distance between the mutated body and the spectator's experience of their body as Other. As with *Cat People* and its symbolic representational method, the iconicity of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is not limited to the transformation scenes, but defines the operation of the film as a whole. As I argue in chapter two, the iconicity suggests that class stratification and Victorian puritanical morals are artificial and performative rather than natural

truths. Therefore, the meaning of the film stems from its iconicity, which positions hierarchical structures of morality and power as fictitious. However, the film *Freaks* collapses this distance between the image and our experience of the mutated body, through not only employing actual bodies onscreen that are deformed and marked as Other, but also through our empathetic identification with the 'freaks' onscreen.

The mutated body is not brought about through a supernatural curse, as in *Cat People*, or a manufactured potion, as in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, it is simply a fact of nature. Although the film is fictional on the narrative level, it also maintains a sense of documentary realism in the use of actual deformed bodies that exist before the camera. There is no performance or abstraction of the mutated body; it simply is. Indeed, much of the controversy that surrounded the film at the time of its release was due to the use of real freak show performers. The following review, written by Francis Diehl, leader of a women's coalition group,¹⁶ illustrates this point:

At a time when every effort is being made to raise audience standards, a company is attempting to foist on the public the lowest form of amusement -- a circus side show where one may peep at the deformities and abnormalities of human beings. (Larsen and Haller 2002, 168).

The outrage espoused by Diehl in this review is not aimed at the 'freaks' themselves, but at their exploitation by a major Hollywood studio as entertainment for audiences.¹⁷ However, the power of the film lies not in its exploitation of deformed individuals, but in our identification with them in their struggle against the cruelty perpetuated by the 'normal' bodied characters in the film.

The spectator is firmly aligned with the freaks as they are subjected to humiliating treatment by the 'normal' bodied characters Cleopatra (Olga Baclanova) and Hercules (Henry Victor). Through this identification, the spectator adopts the subject position of a freak and

¹⁶ Diehl was the leader of the "Open Door Coalition" that had been organized by the Hays office in order to preview films and either accept or reject them for family viewing.

¹⁷ Diehl ends the review by writing, "It is incomprehensible that a producer [...] will stoop to the disgrace of making dollars out of hurt, disfigured and suffering humanity".

experiences their own corporeality as abnormal and Other. Unlike *Cat People* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, both of which have characters who can pass as 'normal' during points in the narrative, there is no escape from our entrapment in the mutated body in *Freaks*. Paradoxically, however, this entrapment provides the liberating function of collapsing the ideological construct of the normal body through marking all bodies as 'freak'. The narrative of the film depicts the 'freaks' constantly asserting their humanity and the warning title card which opens the film refers to them as "nature's mistakes". This foregrounds the fact that deformities and abnormalities could occur to anyone and, more importantly, that our 'normal' bodies could have been otherwise; it is through sheer luck that normal bodies happen to develop to conform to the Western conception of normalcy. The dichotomy of normal and abnormal corporeality is exposed allowing the possibility for creating a more progressive and liberating conception of the body and subjectivity.

Far from being a genre that gratuitously depicts violence and physical destruction, body horror carries significant ideological and political implications. The transforming and mutated body in these body horror films of the 1930s and 1940s not only attests to the long history of body horror in the cinema prior to the 1970s, but also functions as a site of negotiation between the spectator and the spectator's experience of their own selves as Other.

Chapter One

The Interpretation of Screams: Symbolic Psychoanalysis in Jacques Tourneur's *Cat People* (1942)

You can fool everybody, but [...] you can't fool a cat. They seem to know who's not right, if you know what I mean.

- Pet Shop Owner, *Cat People* (Jacques Tourneur, 1942)

Discussing *Cat People* as a film object in a study of body horror might initially seem perplexing to readers. The film is not particularly frightening, especially when considered in relation to contemporary horror, it devotes much of its focus to the romantic relationship of its protagonists, and any suggestion of the supernatural is left until the final moments of the film's narrative. Furthermore, and significantly for our purposes, the film does not display a transforming or mutating body onscreen, rather, the bodily transformation remains ambiguous and is represented through the sophisticated use of lighting and shadow. Indeed, *Cat People*, according to some critics, is better understood as a psychological drama rather than a proper horror film.¹⁸ Although scholars have written about the film in relation to psychological drama, thriller and film noir genres, its thematic preoccupation with transformation and metamorphosis positions the film within the generic formulation of body horror.

The film follows the relationship of Oliver (Kent Smith) and Irena (Simone Simon) as they first meet, fall in love and eventually marry. Irena, however, believes that her Serbian ancestors were cursed and that if she were intimate with a man, this curse would cause her to turn into a cat person, or panther, and impulsively murder him. This belief prevents Irena from having any kind of physical relationship with Oliver thus putting a tremendous strain on their marriage. Irena, at the behest of Oliver, begins attending therapy sessions with Dr. Judd (Tom Conway) and during

¹⁸ Mark Jancovich, "Relocating Lewton: Cultural Distinctions, Critical Reception and the Val Lewton Horror Films", (*Journal of Film and Video* 64.3, 2012), 26.

a session toward the end of the film, Judd kisses Irena, ostensibly turning her into a panther. Judd is killed and Irena walks to the local zoo, frees a panther from its cage and allows herself to be killed by the animal. Following Tzvetan Todorov's categorization, the veracity of Irena's transformative capability for the majority of the film occupies the interstitial category of 'the fantastic'; the film neither confirms nor denies the possibility of the supernatural. However, the end of the film, which suggests the bodily metamorphosis of Irena, situates the film within 'the fantastic-marvelous' in which the supernatural explanation is revealed to be correct.¹⁹

In accordance with the tenets of body horror, then, the central threat of the film lies in the body itself as Irena's fear of corporeal transfiguration represents the *body-out-of-control* and the dissolution of the supposedly whole and stable human form. What is significant about *Cat People* in particular is its aversion to visual depictions of transformation and its reliance on cinematography and editing in order to suggest the presence of the mutated body without clearly showing its mutation. This method of representing the mutating body adheres to the film's overall symbolic construct: the film is about Irena's queer identity, which is represented throughout the film symbolically; therefore, Irena's corporeal transformation must also be read symbolically. In this chapter, then, I argue that although Irena's transformation is ultimately one that subverts patriarchal and hetero-normative discourses, as I will explain shortly, it does not implicate the spectator in this transformation. The film's representative strategies distance the spectator's identification with Irena's body as Other and opts for an ambiguous and suggestive depiction of the transformed body. Unlike the iconicity of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and the indexicality of *Freaks*, then, the symbolic nature of *Cat People* renders the film an entirely intellectual enterprise, rather than a visceral experience.

¹⁹ For more on Todorov's categorization, see: Tzvetan Todorov, "The Uncanny and the Marvelous" in *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Cornell University Press), 1975.

In this chapter, I first examine the production history of *Cat People* and situate it within the context of horror film of the 1940s. With an emphasis on maverick producer Val Lewton, I trace the aesthetic and thematic elements of Lewton's films that set them apart from typical horror populating movie theatres at the time. I then turn to *Cat People* more specifically and explore its employment of psychoanalysis as an indicator of the fractured and unstable self. Not only is the psychoanalyst Dr. Judd a major character in the film, the narrative, as well as *mise-en-scène* and cinematography, contain obvious allusions to Freudian psychoanalytic theory to warrant its inclusion here. Specifically, I analyze Irena's relationship to Oliver and her resistance to hetero-normative romance, concluding that her fear of transformation is a result of her internalized homophobia and repressed sexuality. Indeed, Irena's belief that heterosexual relationships will unleash an evil that resides within her originates from hetero-normative discourses which advance the argument that homosexuality is aberrant, unnatural and sinister. Irena's attempt at performing the role of heterosexual woman and wife only concretizes and confirms her queer identity thus increasing the potential of her corporeal transformation. The film, then, positions hetero-normativity itself as the aberrant and unnatural element that requires disavowal as the societal demands imposed on Irena are what transform her into a beast.

Val Lewton and RKO's Horror Cycle

Prior to becoming the B unit producer at RKO in 1942, Val Lewton occupied many different positions within the literary field: he was a reporter, a novelist of romance and thrillers and a story editor for David O. Selznick.²⁰ Perhaps most impressively, Lewton served as script editor for one of the most successful and critically heralded American films of all time: *Gone with the Wind* (Victor Fleming, 1939). This literary experience had a tremendous impact on

²⁰ J.P. Telotte, "A Photogenic Horror: Lewton does Robert Lewis Stevenson", (*Literature Film Quarterly* 10.1, 1982), 25.

Lewton's tenure at RKO as he was heavily involved in the writing process of his productions. As Martha Nochimson asserts, "[Lewton's] penchant for polishing the final drafts of scripts, his tireless precision about detail, and his uncanny ability to scavenge the sets and costumes he needed [...] made his the unifying vision of the films he produced."²¹ Associates of Lewton confirm the extent of his involvement in film projects stating he, "rewrote everything that his writers turned in; the last draft [of each script] was always his."²²

His control and involvement in the creative process of filmmaking has cemented his reputation as an auteur producer. To be sure, the eponymous Lewton cycle, including such films as *I Walked with a Zombie* (Jacques Tourneur, 1943), *The Ghost Ship* (Mark Robson, 1943), and *Curse of the Cat People* (Gunther von Fritsch, Robert Wise, 1944), although having different directors, are considered Lewton's own works.²³ His literary background also proved to be valuable in adapting notable novels and stories to fit the horror productions he was assigned to produce. The narrative for Lewton's second film *I Walked with a Zombie*, for example, was adapted from Charlotte Brontë's classic novel *Jane Eyre*.²⁴ Similarly, the inspiration for the narrative of *Cat People* arose from a short story by Algernon Blackwood entitled *Ancient Sorceries*²⁵ and was subsequently used to fit the alluring and suggestive title of the project.

Indeed, the origin of *Cat People* began with its high concept title. RKO executive Charles Koerner assigned Lewton the task of creating a film based on the title that could compete with the recent success of Universal's *The Wolf Man* (George Waggner, 1941). According to writer Dewitt Bodeen, Koerner wanted a film about cats not only because he believed vampire,

²¹ Martha Nochimson, "Val Lewton at RKO: The Social Dimensions of Horror", (*Cineaste* 31.4, 2006), 12.

²² Qtd. in Tolotte, 25.

²³ Robin Wood, "The Shadow Worlds of Jacques Tourneur" in *Personal Views: Explorations in Film* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), 253.

²⁴ Jancovich, 26.

²⁵ Kim Newman, *Cat People*, (London: British Film Institute Publications, 1999), 9-10.

werewolf and monster films were ubiquitous, but also because the title ‘Cat People’ had tested well with audiences.²⁶ Upon discovering the Blackwood story, Lewton changed the setting from a small French town to New York City while keeping intact the ancient curse that threatens to transform the protagonist. The film was shot in a matter of weeks, beginning on July 28th and ending August 21st, 1942, and only cost \$134,000 to produce.²⁷ This modest budget was typical of the RKO B unit productions, which usually received budgets of approximately \$200,000; however, the Lewton team did not necessarily consider this a hindrance; rather, as screenwriter Ardel Wray says, the team approached their limited resources as “a challenge [...] to spur inventiveness”.²⁸ The most notable characteristic that arose from this “spur of inventiveness” would ultimately become a defining feature of the Lewton cycle: the heavy use of shadow and the prohibition of the visible.²⁹

Cat People utilizes chiaroscuro lighting effects and dark shadows extensively in order to create suspense. The presence of Irena’s transformed body is always obscured by shadow as well as the *mise-en-scène*, and the film self-consciously attempts to keep the mutated body from view. These characteristics of the film and the eschewing of typical horror conventions are indicative of the specific style of horror film attributed to Lewton. Rather than incorporating typical grotesqueries and displays of monstrosity and violence, the Lewton cycle of horror films during the 1940s emphasized subtlety and nuance to produce suspense and shock. In an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, Lewton stated:

²⁶ Ibid, 10.

²⁷ Ibid, 13.

²⁸ Qtd. in J.P. Telotte, “Lewtonian Space: Val Lewton’s Films and the New Space of Horror”, (*Horror Studies* 1.2, 2010), 167.

²⁹ I use the phrase “prohibition of the visible” as a reference to Linda Williams’ book *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure and the “Frenzy of the Visible”*. She argues that pornography is defined by its tendency to reveal and show as much as possible. Conversely, then, the Lewton horror cycle is defined by its reluctance to show, or at least show clearly, the monster or threat.

We tossed away the horror formula right from the beginning. No grisly stuff for us. No mask-like faces hardly human, with gnashing teeth and hair standing on end. No creaking physical manifestations. No horror piled on horror. You can't keep up horror that's long sustained. It becomes something to laugh at. But take a sweet love story, or a story of sexual antagonisms, about people like the rest of us, not freaks, and cut in your horror here and there by suggestion, and you've got something.³⁰

Lewton's cycle, therefore, became notable for its aversion to depictions of visual horror as well as its use of sophisticated, stylistic cinematography. As Mark Jancovich notes, today the Lewton cycle is considered among the best of American horror cinema precisely because they avoid the clichés of typical monster films.³¹ Jancovich writes, "The 'poetry' and 'beauty' of these films is crucially linked to claims that they are 'atmospheric' and 'imaginative', in which the films are frequently described also as 'eerie' and 'understated'".³² For contemporary critics, the restraint and prohibition of the visible constitutes the Lewton cycle as genuinely artistic rather than as simply escapist entertainment.

This consensus, however, was not shared amongst critics of the time as the Lewton films garnered ambivalent reviews. Particularly in the *New York Times*, the films' aesthetic ambitions and attempts of quality were criticized as being pretentious and not offering the entertainment value of 'lower grade' horror films. For these critics, the Lewton films were, "too associated with lowbrow horror to be really convincing as quality productions, but also too concerned with association with 'quality' to offer the entertainment value of lowbrow horror."³³ As Jancovich argues, the *New York Times* is essentially advancing the criticism against what Pierre Bourdieu called the *petite bourgeoisie*, that is, the middle class masses who do not "know their place" in the social hierarchy and attempt to access high culture, art and power.³⁴ The Lewton films then,

³⁰ Qtd. in Newman, 37.

³¹ Jancovich, 22.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid, 23.

³⁴ Ibid, 23-24.

for the *New York Times*, represent an unwarranted and ineffectual attempt at producing high art while disguising its lowbrow status. This argument, however, produces an unnecessary dichotomy between horror and quality cinema. The *New York Times*' reaction to the Lewton films suggests that horror is only of value as simplistic and gratuitous entertainment and to aspire to quality is to deny the ontological basis of horror film. Despite such postulations, the suspense of *Cat People* emanates specifically from the stylistic use of lighting and cinematography to create ambiguity rather than the literal portrayal of transformation.

The use of chiaroscuro lighting is particularly important to the symbolic mode of address the film utilizes. Highly stylistic and expressive in nature, the high contrast light and shadow does not denote the actual lighting that would occur in the diegetic space of a particular scene; rather, it is used to evoke a certain mood and atmospheric tension as well as to illustrate the psychological states of the characters. One of the most memorable and celebrated scenes from *Cat People* demonstrates this point. The scene takes place in an indoor pool on the basement level of a hotel building where Oliver's colleague Alice (Jane Randolph) partakes in a late night swim. While standing in the locker room, Alice hears mysterious growling sounds coming from the stairwell. She jumps into the pool and light reflecting from the rippling water creates waves of shadows along the walls and ceiling of the basement. The motion of the shadows barely disguise what appears to be a feline shadow stalking Alice as she helplessly tries to stay afloat in the pool. Indeed, "The masterful use of light and shadow in the rendering of the reflection of the indoor pool on the ceiling above it is fused with the shadow of something that *could* be a beast and a sound that *could* be a feral roar."³⁵ The suspense of the scene, then, stems from the abstract and fantastic nature of the scenario; the shadows and sounds could be completely innocuous and Alice may simply be projecting her fears into the scene, or, Alice could be faced with a

³⁵ Nochimson, 16; my emphasis.

dangerous threat. Once the hotel staff hear Alice scream and come to her aid, the lights are turned on and reveal Irena standing at the edge of the pool. The scene ends with Alice picking up her robe only to find it has been torn to shreds, as though it has been clawed. Were the shadows and the torn robe the product of Irena's transformed body-as-panther, or Irena's purposeful attempt to scare Alice?³⁶ In either case, the film is careful to maintain this abstraction and the employment of shadows and chiaroscuro lighting is integral to the establishment of suspense.

Of course, Hollywood produced many crime and detective films in the 1940s that similarly relied on darkness and stark contrast black and white cinematography in order to convey the sinister and dangerous environment of the city. This 'genre'³⁷ of film, retroactively classified as *film noir*, had many similarities in both theme and style to horror film. As Dain Goding points out, many filmmakers began their Hollywood careers in horror and transitioned to film noir productions during the 1940s. Such notable filmmakers include, "cinematographers Gregg Toland, John Alton and Nicholas Musuraca and directors Robert Siodmak, Robert Wise, Edgar G. Ulmer and Jacques Tourneur".³⁸ Goding identifies *Cat People* as an exceptional 'noirror' film,³⁹ and it certainly contains thematic preoccupations typical of film noir, particularly in its representation of urban anomie and wartime malaise. As such, Alexander Nemerov's book chronicling Lewton's films is titled *Icons of Grief* and argues that the spectre of World War II haunts all of Lewton's films. He writes, "...the war is the singular invisible beast, the Damned

³⁶ At this point in the film, Irena is suspicious of Alice and Oliver's relationship and has expressed her dislike for Alice.

³⁷ There is some controversy as to whether film noir should be considered a distinct genre, a style, or a historically specific cycle of films.

³⁸ Dain Goding, "Shadows and Nightmares: Lewton, Siodmak and the Elusive Noirror Film", (*Horror Studies* 1.2, 2011), 16.

³⁹ Goding defines the 'noirror film' as either a horror film with elements of film noir, or film noir with elements of horror. He acknowledges, however, that these categories may be difficult to distinguish; see Goding, 16-17.

Thing, that stalks around and bends the grass as we look in vain for shade of hide or hair.”⁴⁰ If Lewton’s films are infused with the “all-encompassing cultural darkness”⁴¹ that characterized the American social imagination of the 1940s, this darkness is *symbolized* in the cinematography of the Lewton cycle. In addition to its association with film noir, lighting and shadow perform a specific function within the Lewton canon, that is, as a sign of repression and the unconscious.⁴² This characteristic is crucial in the understanding of Lewton films, and is specifically apt in the analysis of *Cat People* as the questionable psychological state of the protagonist drives the narrative. In this way, in addition to producing suspense, the chiaroscuro lighting functions symbolically to represent the disoriented and ambiguous psychological state of Irena and thus further contributes to the symbolic design of the film.

***Cat People* and Psychoanalysis**

Kim Newman, however, is skeptical and resistant to psychoanalytical readings of the film. He writes, “[*Cat People*] is not – though many commentators have said it is or ought to be – a respectable psychological study of a woman with a neurosis; *Cat People* is a horror film about a woman who turns into a panther.”⁴³ Certainly, on a narrative level, there is no question that Irena is, in fact, a cat person. Toward the end of the film, Irena-as-panther is seen onscreen on three occasions: once in Oliver’s office, once attacking Dr. Judd and lastly lying dead on the ground. Furthermore, one persuasive shot follows a track of paw prints as they gradually transform into high-heeled shoe prints. My argument, then, is not that Irena is delusional or insane for thinking she is a cat person; on the contrary, I argue that her transformative capability is all too real and

⁴⁰ Alexander Nemerov, *Icons of Grief: Val Lewton’s Home Front Pictures*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 1.

⁴¹ Telotte, “Lewtonian Space”, 173.

⁴² Jancovich, 22.

⁴³ Newman, 36.

therefore threatens the stability of patriarchal society. Furthermore, as William Paul writes, “Overlooking the psychoanalytic dimension of many horror films [...] is something like deliberately ignoring any element of the text that can’t be assimilated to a pre-existing theoretical approach.”⁴⁴ This is especially true of *Cat People* in which psychoanalysis is an essential component of the narrative and to disregard such readings of the film is to work against the project of the text itself. Although Irena’s transformation is literally true in the diegesis, the fact that we never see her transform into the panther as well as the plenitude of cat, panther and cage imagery necessitates the analysis of its symbolic meaning. Rather than solely focusing on its most apparent and superficial meaning, this approach allows for a more nuanced and substantive analysis of the film.

1940s Hollywood saw a resurgence of Freudian psychoanalysis represented, either explicitly or implicitly, in cinema. Nathan Hale writes that the ‘golden age’ of the popularity of psychoanalysis in film was between 1945 and 1965,⁴⁵ and *Cat People*, having been released in 1942, certainly qualifies as an antecedent to this golden age. As the foundational figure in psychoanalysis, Freud and his tripartite topography of the human psyche, (consisting of the id, ego and superego), defines the subject as fragmented and divided rather than unitary and whole. In addition to the inherently divided self, the identification of the unconscious introduces an aspect of the self that is ultimately unknowable. By definition, the subconscious exists beyond our cognitive understanding and we therefore do not have access to the desires and traumas that reside therein. It is within the unconscious that our pre-Oedipal experiences of loss and lack, which in turn create desire, reside. With the exception of dreams and *lapsus linguae*, in which

⁴⁴ Paul, 160.

⁴⁵ Qtd in William Paul, “What does Dr. Judd Want? Transformation, Transference and Divided Selves in *Cat People*” in *Horror Film and Psychoanalysis: Freud’s Worst Nightmare*, Steven Schneider, ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 160.

unconscious desire manifests itself symbolically or through slips of the tongue respectively, the subject has no claims to knowledge or understanding of this integral facet of identity. The role of the psychoanalyst, then, is to analyze and interpret the symbolic meanings of dream images thereby assisting the analysand in identifying the source of their phobia or desire. In this way, the psychoanalyst assists the patient in working through, and ultimately changing, “the analysand’s relation to the symptom through a renunciation of the unconscious fantasy that supports it.”⁴⁶ In *Cat People*, Dr. Judd serves this function and attempts to unveil the source of Irena’s fear of metamorphosis.

The significance of the inclusion of Dr. Judd as a psychoanalyst is multi-faceted. As Paul writes, the *AFI Catalogue to Feature Films 1931-1940* only contains eleven entries for psychiatrists or psychologists in significant roles.⁴⁷ As such, Dr. Judd’s substantial role in the film is a break from the previous decade and anticipates the use of such characters during the cinematic golden age of psychoanalysis. In *Cat People* specifically, Dr. Judd is integral in the development of the plot and the initiation of its climax. Before the beginning of the narrative proper, a quotation appears on the screen over the image of a King John figurine that will later appear in Irena’s apartment. The fictitious quotation is attributed to Dr. Louis Judd from *The Anatomy of Atavism* and states that ancient sin lies in the low places of consciousness.⁴⁸ This opening quotation introduces the medical authority of Dr. Judd long before he enters the diegesis and, as Paul claims, suggests to the audience how to interpret Irena, that is, as having psychosexual problems.⁴⁹ During their first session together, Irena, who is placed under hypnosis in

⁴⁶ Susan Swartz, “An Ethics of the Unconscious”, (*British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 28.2, 2012), 225.

⁴⁷ Paul, 160.

⁴⁸ The entire quote reads as follows: “Even as fog continues to lie in the valleys, so does ancient sin cling to the low places, the depressions in the world consciousness”.

⁴⁹ Paul, 162.

order to bypass her conscious mind and attempt to access her unconscious,⁵⁰ explains her incessant fear of transformation. In a clinical manner, Dr. Judd recounts Irena's testimony:

You told me of your village and the people and their strange beliefs [...] and the cat women of your village. Women who, in jealousy or in anger or out of their own corrupt passions can change into great cats, like panthers. And if one of these women were to fall in love and if her lover were to kiss her, take her into his embrace, she would be driven by her own evil to him.

Irena expresses embarrassment stating that it seems childish to hold such a belief. Dr. Judd assures her that her phobia has a simple explanation and, like a true Freudian, he locates the source of her fear in a childhood trauma. Irena's father died mysteriously before she was born and as a result, children taunted her by calling her mother a witch and a cat woman. Having identified the supposed source of Irena's fear, Dr. Judd assures her that he will repair the damage of this "canker in the mind". This first session reinforces popular representations of psychoanalysis in which the psychiatrist enables the patient to work through past trauma, identify the source of their fear through a reading of symbols, and thus overcome the symptoms. However, Dr. Judd is revealed to be a conniving and manipulative psychiatrist who uses his authority to advance his own desires. In keeping with the symbolic function of the film, Dr. Judd will ultimately represent patriarchal authority that attempts to master and control the defiant Irena.

Dr. Judd's next appearance occurs toward the end of the film after the incident with Alice in the hotel basement pool. Alice, who is now convinced that Irena's fairytales of transforming cat people are true, warns Dr. Judd of the danger Irena poses. Judd again dismisses these stories, as well as Alice's belief in them, as the product of "overworked imagination[s]". However, he sets out to have another interview with Irena. Alice advises him that he must be careful around

⁵⁰ Irena awakens from her hypnotic state having remembered nothing of what she told Dr. Judd; this is a testament to the conscious mind having no ability to tap into the unconscious.

her, to which Judd replies, “You want me to carry some means of protection. A gun, perhaps, with a silver bullet. Is that what you mean?”⁵¹ Judd assures her that he has proper protection when he reveals that the cane he carries is also a sword. Significantly, the revelation of Judd’s sword is foreshadowed in Irena’s dream sequence that takes place earlier in the narrative.

In the dream, animated cats crawl out of a spiraling vortex toward the camera as the image of King John holding a sword materializes. King John in this dream, however, is actually Dr. Judd dressed in the accoutrements of a medieval knight. He brandishes his sword horizontally in front of him at which point the sword dissolves into the image of a key.⁵² This transformation, then, is literally represented symbolically within the dream state of Irena thus indicating the thematic and psychological importance it carries. Indeed, the connection between King John and Dr. Judd positions both as authoritarian patriarchs with John possessing the strength and power associated with the phallic image of the sword, while Judd possesses the key to unlocking the human mind. Both characters utilize their positions of power in order to discipline and control those who threaten the stability of existing patriarchal structures.

Judd’s ulterior motive is brought to the fore during his subsequent interview with Irena. Judd asks Irena if she truly believes that she would transform into a cat if Oliver kissed her. Irena says, “I don’t know. I am only afraid.” Judd then puts his hand on her arm, leans into Irena and asks, “And if I were to kiss you?” Irena says she would not want to be kissed by Judd prompting Judd to revert to his authority as a doctor and threaten her confinement. He says, “These hallucinations approach insanity [...] At this moment, I could go before a board and have you put away for observation.” Judd, however, does not follow through on his threat and simply advises

⁵¹ This reference to a ‘silver bullet’ is likely a reference to Universal’s *The Wolf Man* released the previous year.

⁵² It is this key that Irena retrieves from the zoo and uses to open the panther’s cage, killing her in the process, at the end of the film.

Irena to get rid of her obsession with cats and this fairytale. During a later meeting with Oliver and Alice, Judd once again offers institutionalization of Irena as a serious option.

Judd informs Oliver and Alice, "I have pointed out two alternatives Mr. Reed: either have her put away for observation and restraint, or have your marriage annulled." He continues, "As your psychiatrist, I should recommend that you have her put away. As your friend, however, [...] I think you should have your marriage annulled." Clearly, Judd is essentially arguing that either Oliver divorce Irena, thus allowing Judd to pursue her, or have her committed in a psychiatric institution. Oliver opts for the latter option, as he wants to make sure Irena receives the care she needs rather than abandon her. Judd agrees and the three arrange to meet at Irena's apartment later that day to settle the matter. When Irena does not arrive on time, Oliver and Alice set out to look for her while Judd remains at the apartment waiting for her. Sure enough, when Irena eventually arrives at her apartment, she and Judd are alone and he takes this opportunity to make his advances toward her.

Judd holds Irena in his arms, expresses his attraction to her, tells her not to be afraid and kisses her. Importantly, Irena does not speak to Judd; instead, her face is fixed with a knowing stare and slight smirk as she allows Judd to kiss her, fully aware of her imminent transformation. The camera lingers on a close-up of Irena's face as the lighting darkens and her eyes glow. Judd reaches for his sword cane and backs away from Irena; however, as depicted through shadows on an adjacent wall, Irena-as-panther pounces on Judd, and proceeds to maul him to death. Judd's death, then, functions symbolically as a renunciation of his patriarchal authority as neither his medical position of power, nor his phallic sword cane were able to control, tame or defeat Irena. Both the sword and the authoritative patriarch are defeated in this climactic scene and Irena goes

to the zoo and chooses to be killed by the panther rather than live in a patriarchal cage.⁵³ As the only human being Irena kills in the film, Judd is the epitome of male desire and attempts of mastery that Irena's transgressive corporeality is compelled to destroy. In addition to Irena's destruction of a patriarchal figure, her rejection of male desire is also a challenge to patriarchal authority.

Cat People is replete with symbolic imagery as well as subtle narrative allusions that suggest to the viewer the true source of Irena's phobia: her queer sexuality. In the first of many panther and cat images in the film, the opening credits appear over a triptych painting that, like the King John figurine, will later be seen in Irena's apartment. The painting depicts a panther leaping out of horizontal lines behind it, which threaten to imprison the animal. However, the horizontal text of the credits appears over the image of the panther, an image visually representative of a cage. This opening title sequence thus foreshadows Irena's inability to repress her panther-state, but also alludes to the mechanisms of control, such as therapy and societal expectation, which attempt to confine her. Indeed, the most egregious offense Irena commits in the earlier stages of the film is her refusal to comply with the norms of heterosexual coupling by abstaining from any physical relationship with Oliver. The film thus emphasizes that the sinister monster is in fact hetero-normativity rather than homosexuality.

Intimations of Irena's sexuality occur as early as the first scene when Irena and Oliver encounter each other for the first time. The scene takes place at the local zoo and Irena stands in front of the panther cage as she sketches on her pad of paper. Oliver walks over to Irena and asks if she is an artist. Irena tells him that she does fashion sketches, narrative information that will pay off in a subtle, yet important scene later on. The two leave the zoo together and the camera

⁵³ Linda Rohrer Paige, "The Transformation of Woman: The 'Curse' of the Cat Woman in Val Lewton/Jacques Tourneur's *Cat People*, its Sequel and Remake", (*Literature Film Quarterly* 25.4, 1997), 294.

pans down to reveal one of Irena's sketches that she threw on the ground: a panther impaled by a sword. In addition to portending Irena's own death through stabbing, the sketch is also a violent and disturbing representation of penetration, a sentiment Irena holds in her aversion to, and anxiety concerning, physical intimacy with men. In the next scene, Irena brings Oliver to her apartment where a statuette of King John valiantly defeating the evil cat people of Serbia, represented by an impaled cat atop King John's sword, is prominently displayed.

As Linda Paige notes, the sword is a traditional phallic symbol associated with patriarchal power and domination.⁵⁴ As such, the disturbing representations of penetration that occupy Irena's home not only symbolize her resistance to patriarchal control, but also are indicative of her aversion to heterosexual sex. Upon noticing the King John statuette and the penetrated cat, Oliver asks about its origins. Irena explains that the statue immortalizes the Serbian king who "drove the Marmelukes out of Serbia and freed the people." Oliver replies, quite bluntly, "Why is he spearing that cat?" Irena answers, "Oh it's not really a cat. It's meant to represent that evil ways into which my village had once fallen." Significantly, Irena's response emphasizes the metaphorical nature of the statue, thus further suggesting that the images in the film itself carry greater symbolic importance than their denotative meaning. Irena explicitly states that the cat is not a cat, but a symbol of evil, therefore opening up the potential interpretation of Irena's panther state as symbolic of her perceived evil rather than simply being a literal diegetic panther, thus accounting for the visual separation between the Irena and her panther state.

The next evening, Oliver returns to Irena's apartment to take her out to dinner and brings her an unexpected gift: a pet kitten. In the presence of Irena, the kitten reacts violently, hissing as its hair stands on end. Irena dismisses its reaction stating, "Oh it's alright. It's just that cats don't seem to like me." Evidently, it is more than just felines that share such animosity toward Irena.

⁵⁴ Paige, 293.

The couple go to a pet store in order to exchange the kitten for another pet and immediately upon Irena's entrance into the store, the birds, monkeys, and, of course, cats, become irate and frantically scream, jump and thrash within their cages. Once Irena steps outside the shop, the animals calm down and the pet shop owner asserts the psychic abilities of the animals to Oliver stating that they can tell who is "not right". These early interactions with animals not only signal to the spectator the potential danger Irena imposes as a panther and predator, but more importantly, the animals recognize what Irena refuses to recognize about herself; that she is 'not right' and threatens the stability of hegemonic patriarchal culture. Questions of Irena's sexuality are addressed more directly as her relationship with Oliver progresses and expectations of sex become impossible to ignore.

At the pet shop, Oliver exchanges the kitten for a pet canary, and the couple walk back to Irena's apartment where they spend the night together. In the living room in front of a roaring fire, Oliver quite bluntly expresses his concern for their lack of intimacy. He says, "I've never kissed you [...] when people in America are in love, or even think they're in love, they've usually kissed long ago." Irena replies, "I've lived in dread of this moment. I've fled from the past, from things you can never know or understand. Evil things." Oliver promptly dismisses Irena's fear of the Serbian fairytale telling her that she is normal, "you're so normal you're in love with me, Oliver Reed, a good, plain, *Americano*." In order to demonstrate just how normal Irena is, Oliver states that they will be married, have children and that she will be telling the Serbian fairytale to their grandchildren.

Irena's response that she has been dreading this moment is telling as she is directly confronted with the prospect of heterosexual sex and can no longer play the role of a 'normal' woman who desires marriage and children. Independent of her relationship with Oliver, Irena

can pass as a heterosexual woman and appear to uphold societal norms. Prior to meeting Oliver, in fact, Irena purposefully isolates herself from interpersonal relationships in order to maintain her veneer of normalcy. When Oliver visits her apartment for the first time, Irena tells him, “I’ve never had anyone here. You might be my first real friend.” Indeed, through avoiding the possibility of sexual relationships, Irena bypasses, or at least postpones, the acknowledgement and acceptance of her queer sexuality because she does not have to account for her resistance to hetero-normativity. Additionally, Worland argues that this dialogue is a subtle double entendre; he highlights the phrase “I’ve never had anyone” and “You might be my first” to suggest that Irena is actually referring to her sexual abstinence.⁵⁵ When Oliver directly addresses her unwillingness to be intimate, then, Irena can no longer perform the role of ordinary heterosexual woman and must confess her fears to Oliver. Having dismissed her fears as nonsense, however, Oliver and Irena continue the ritual and performance of heterosexual romance by getting married. The ceremonial consummation of their relationship proves to be ineffectual as Irena, much to the chagrin of Oliver, remains distant and impersonal.

The newlywed couple celebrates their marriage with friends and colleagues (all of whom are friends of Oliver’s, not Irena) at The Belgrade restaurant. The wedding celebration catches the attention of a lone woman (Elizabeth Russell) sitting at a nearby table. She is dressed in a long black dress with a black bowtie in her hair, its position on her head resembling pointed ears. As one party guest says to another, “Look at that woman. Isn’t she something?” To which the party guest replies, “Looks like a cat”. The cat woman leaves her table, walks over to the wedding party and addresses Irena directly as “*moya sestra*”, ‘my sister’. As with the scene in the pet shop, Irena is recognized and singled out as representing an aberration; however, the cat woman positions herself as occupying the same status as Irena by referring to her as ‘my sister’.

⁵⁵ Worland, 180.

The cat woman, then, having accepted her own identity, is able to identify a fellow 'cat person', that is, another queer individual. Lewton and Bodeen were well aware of the lesbian subtext to this scene in particular, as Bodeen says, "I was aware [a lesbian interpretation] could happen with the café scene, and Val got several letters after *Cat People* was released, congratulating him for his boldness in introducing lesbiana [sic] to films in Hollywood."⁵⁶ Once again, Irena is directly confronted with evidence of her deviant sexuality emphasizing the façade of her heterosexual relationship.

After the wedding party scene, the newlyweds return to Irena's apartment. Having been disturbed by her encounter with the cat woman, Irena says she cannot consummate their marriage. She says, "I want to be Mrs. Reed. I want to be everything that name means to me. And I can't. Oliver, be kind, be patient. Let me have time [...] to get over this feeling that there is something evil in me." The supportive Oliver agrees, and the scene concludes with Irena and Oliver on opposite sides of the bedroom door, sleeping by themselves on their wedding night. From this scene on, Irena's relationship to her feline self begins to shift dramatically. She begins to exhibit cat-like behaviour and is increasingly unable to control her baser impulses. Furthermore, her relationship with Oliver becomes increasingly estranged prompting Oliver to seek comfort in Alice who quickly becomes a target for Irena.

The first overt manifestation of Irena's panther-state occurs in her apartment. Irena sits in her living room working on one of her fashion sketches. Significantly, the sketch resembles the cat woman from the restaurant with a long black dress and blonde hair, perhaps indicative of Irena's desire for the woman. After completing the sketch, Irena walks over to the birdcage to play with the canary Oliver had bought her. She puts her hand in the cage while the canary flies around the cage attempting to avoid her grip. Irena smiles as the canary flies throughout the cage

⁵⁶ Newman, 31.

however the bird suddenly falls dead having apparently died of fright. Irena then takes the dead bird to the zoo and throws it into the panther cage. She tells Oliver that she could not help but feed the bird to the panther: “I had to. I had to do it,” she says. Irena thus assumes the role of a predator toying with its prey and experiences pleasure at the sight of the frantic bird.

Additionally, as Paige argues, the caged bird also functions as a symbol of passivity that Irena, as a transgressive figure in a patriarchal society, is compelled to destroy.⁵⁷ This incident prompts Oliver to search for a psychiatrist and Alice recommends he go to Dr. Judd. As I have previously outlined, Judd is the authoritative patriarch who not only threatens to commit Irena to an asylum, but also uses his position of power to coerce Irena to kiss him, thus spurring her transformation and violent death. The fact that Alice is the person who recommended Dr. Judd is also thematically important, as Alice becomes the object of Irena’s predatory stalking.

Along with the pool scene, the stalking sequence in which Alice is followed down a dark street by an unseen force is the most notable and famous sequence from the film. After having dinner with Oliver, Alice says goodbye and assures Oliver that she is capable of walking back home by herself. Oliver and Alice part ways and Irena, having seen the pair leave the restaurant, follows Alice down the dark Central Park street. The pursuit contains only diegetic sound as the women’s shoes click and reverberate down the street. Alice, suspecting she is being followed, turns around only to discover there is nothing behind her. Alice walks faster and starts to jog down the street. Suddenly, a bus enters the frame and its loud air brakes, possibly masking the growling howl of a panther, bursts onto the soundtrack. A shaken Alice, noticing rustling bushes next to her, quickly gets on the bus and returns home safely. The presence of Irena-as-panther remains ambiguous in this scene, as we do not witness her bodily transformation or the sight of a panther, but Irena’s predatory stalking of her prey is certain.

⁵⁷ Paige, 293.

Many critics, including Newman and Worland, attribute Irena's behaviour to jealousy of Alice and her close relationship with Oliver. However, this argument is problematic; to suggest that Irena is jealous of Alice is to suggest that Irena has a desire to form a 'proper' heterosexual marriage with Oliver, and Alice threatens the establishment of such a relationship. While Irena expresses her desire to be normal, her marriage with Oliver is only a superficial and ultimately unsatisfying attempt to impose a sense of normalcy onto Irena. As Paige argues, Irena's stalking of Alice has deeper implications. As the person who recommended Dr. Judd, Paige writes, Alice functions as a patriarchal agent and is therefore an opponent of Irena's liberation from constraint and control.⁵⁸ As with her destruction of the canary, Irena is compelled to attack and destroy signifiers of passivity and confinement that seek to impose patriarchal and hetero-normative roles onto her and repress her transformative and subversive corporeality.

"She Never Lied to Us": Conclusion

The ending of *Cat People* ultimately reinforces hetero-normative discourses that Irena challenged throughout the film; Alice and Oliver become the quintessential heterosexual couple, and Irena, having wilfully been killed by the panther, is no longer present to disrupt the stability of normative discourses. The conclusion of the film, then, portrays the deviant body and sexuality of Irena as fundamentally incompatible with the established patriarchal order. Nevertheless, Irena represents a radical deconstruction and rejection of the regimes of power and desire that attempt to impose mastery over her. Although her death could be read as the triumph of dominant normative society over her aberrant subjectivity, such a reading does not recognize the level of agency Irena displays in her fate of the narrative. Irena is not killed by Dr. Judd or the police or any other agent of social control, rather, she chooses to unleash the panther at the

⁵⁸ Paige, 294.

zoo, an animal with which she continually identifies, and allow herself to be killed. In this way, death is Irena's ultimate liberation from confinement.

As a body horror film, *Cat People* utilizes a unique and complex representation of the mutating body. The use of light and shadow as well as *mise-en-scène* cleverly disguises the act of transformation rather than depicting it outright. In contrast to typical body horror, in which the sight of the defiled body is the principle attraction, Lewton, Tourneur and the filmmakers of *Cat People* opted for a more suggestive style that encourage the spectator to create associative links in their own imaginations. As such, *Cat People* is a symbolic representation of the transforming body that privileges intellectual thought over visceral *frissons*. Therefore, although Irena represents an emancipatory and liberating figure, particularly in her destruction of Dr. Judd, this is conveyed on the level of the symbolic. In the chapters that follow, however, I chart the increasingly sutured cinematic representation of the cinematic and actual body in relationship to their experiential effects on spectators. This connection, however, in its iconicity remains imaginary and as such once removed from a genuine experience of otherness.

Chapter Two

Performance, Sexuality and Class Consciousness in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1931)

Gentlemen like me have to be very careful of what we do or say.

- Dr. Jekyll, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1931)

Originally written in 1885 and published in 1886, Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* marked a significant departure from typical gothic fiction that gained popularity in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Following conventions established by Horace Walpole's seminal 1764 novel *The Castle of Otranto*, often considered the first significant work of literary horror,⁵⁹ gothic fiction was characterized by exotic locales, distant time periods, and ominous architecture. Rick Worland writes, "As gothic is a synonym for medieval, novels of this type became so identified because they were set in decaying castles, manors, towers, or other medieval structures."⁶⁰ Indeed, such important works as Ann Radcliff's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Matthew Gregory Lewis' *The Monk* (1796), as well as the classic novels *Frankenstein: or, the Modern Prometheus* (Mary Shelly, 1818) and *Dracula* (Bram Stoker, 1897) are defined by their foreign settings and medieval architecture, which would have carried associations with primitive society and superstition for the Victorian reader. As Robert Mighall notes, "There was an understanding [...] that such horrors were far removed from those who avidly consumed such fictions (middle-class Protestants in London, Edinburgh or Bath), that they could only take place in 'less civilized' ages or places."⁶¹ Conventions of gothic literature, then, located the threats of the monstrous and the supernatural in foreign spaces creating a safe distance between the events of the novels and those who consumed them.

⁵⁹ Robert Mighall ed. *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Other Tales of Terror*, (London: Penguin Classics, 2003): x.

⁶⁰ Rick Worland, *The Horror Film: An Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 27.

⁶¹ Mighall, xi.

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and the subsequent cinematic adaptations, however, subverts this sense of safety and distance by placing the action of the novel within contemporary London itself rather than a foreign village in the past. In so doing, the novel “dispenses entirely with the distancing devices of the traditional Gothic - set ‘over there’ in southern Spain, or ‘back then’ in the near or distant past.”⁶² The novel’s narrative unfolds in the familiar spatial and temporal environment inhabited by the readers therefore disrupting any sense of security within the ‘modern’ and ‘civilized’ world. Not only does Stevenson’s novel situate horror within the urban spaces of London, but also, and more significantly for our purposes, the threat lies within the body of the protagonist. As Abigail Bloom asserts, “...the monster is within Jekyll himself...”⁶³

As with *Cat People*, the narrative preoccupation with the transformation of the human body into that of an animal-like creature firmly constitutes this work as body horror, although critics have neglected to consider these works within the generic paradigm of body horror. Additionally, the representation of the mutating body operates much differently than the symbolic method of *Cat People*. Rouben Mamoulian’s adaptation of the novel is defined by its iconicity not only in the transformation sequences, but throughout the narrative as well. As I will explain in further detail, the film’s meaning is derived from its emphasis on appearance, performance and artifice, which characterizes the film as whole as well as the transformation scenes in particular. For the moment, however, let us begin with Stevenson’s novel.

In the novel, Dr. Henry Jekyll is an altruistic physician who seeks to isolate the two conditions that define the existence of man: the moral, rational and proper gentleman and the immoral and primitive ‘beast within’. In isolating and separating these characteristics from the

⁶² Mighall, xvii.

⁶³ Abigail Burnham Bloom, *The Literary Monster on Film: Five Nineteenth Century British Novels and their Cinematic Adaptations* (Jefferson, North Carolina: Macfarland & Company Inc., Publishers, 2010), 43.

subject, Jekyll contends, the immoral and bestial component of humanity may be eradicated, thus culminating in the perfectly homogenous, moral and proper subject. Jekyll creates a chemical compound in order to accomplish this; however, the experiment goes awry and results in the development of the brutish and 'primitive' persona Mr. Hyde who occupies the same body as Dr. Jekyll. Whenever Jekyll consumes the mysterious chemical compound,⁶⁴ he transforms into Hyde and as the narrative progresses, Jekyll loses the ability to control his metamorphosis. The novel ends with Jekyll's close friend John Gabriel Utterson and servant Poole discovering Jekyll's dead body, in the form of Hyde, on the floor of his laboratory. They also discover a letter written by Jekyll that explains the mystery of the novel's events to the characters as well as the reader.

It is important to state that in the book Jekyll and Hyde are thought to be completely distinct and autonomous characters for the majority of the story. The revelation that Jekyll and Hyde were, in fact, the same person does not occur until the end of the narrative when Utterson reads Jekyll's confession. The majority of the novel concerns Jekyll's close friends and colleagues attempting to ascertain Jekyll's strange behaviour, frequent absences and his curious relationship with the unconscionable Hyde. It is not until the last two chapters of the book, "Dr. Lanyon's Narrative" and "Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case" that readers are given a definitive explanation of the occurrences in the story. Unlike the film adaptations, then, the book treats the corporeal unity of Jekyll and Hyde as a plot twist rather than a premise that is known from the outset of the narrative. Stevenson's major contribution to horror fiction, then, is positioning the threat of the monster within the corporeality of the protagonist, rather than as an external force.

⁶⁴ The novella never explains exactly what this compound is or how it works.

The book was a tremendous success upon its initial release selling 40,000 copies in the first six months in Britain alone.⁶⁵ Additionally, as Charles King notes, “There have been at least 88 film and television adaptations [of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*] including shorts and some less-traditional variations.”⁶⁶ The focus of this chapter is one such adaptation directed by Rouben Mamoulian: *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1931). This version of the story is of particular interest to the present study of body horror in classical Hollywood film for the ways in which subjectivity is represented on-screen. Mamoulian famously employs subjective point-of-view camera shots in the opening sequence as well as in the transformation scenes thus allying the spectator with the experiences of Jekyll. As Mamoulian says, when Jekyll transforms into Hyde on-screen before the eyes of the spectator, “the audience does not see him – they *are* him.”⁶⁷ The point-of-view sequences thus encourage spectatorial identification with the mutating body and position the viewer within the improper and defiant body of Jekyll.

As with Jacques Tourneur’s *Cat People*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* functions as a refutation of the conception of the self as unified, total and stable. While addressing the lecture hall full of students at the beginning of the film, Jekyll boldly announces that, “man is not truly one, but truly two.” He continues, “One of him strives for the nobilities of life. This we call his good self. The other seeks an expression of impulses that bind him to some dim animal relation with the earth. This we may call the bad.” Here, Jekyll advances his theory of the subject as fundamentally split between two distinct forms of selfhood; one characterized by the natural, instinctual impulses inherited through thousands of years of evolutionary development, and the other consisting of societal norms and imposed notions of nobility and morality. Similar to

⁶⁵ Mighall, xxxiii.

⁶⁶ Charles King, “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: A Filmography”, (*Journal of Popular Film and Television* 25.1, 1997): 9. See pages 14-20 for complete filmography of adaptations.

⁶⁷ Qtd. in Tom Milne, *Rouben Mamoulian*, 2nd edition (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 33.

Freud's tripartite model of the self, Jekyll considers these 'selves' to be in direct conflict with each other resulting in the inherently conflicted and fragmented individual. However, the film situates the Victorian ideological constructs of moral purity and righteousness as that which is aberrant and unnatural, rather than the impulses that such ideologies seek to obfuscate and suppress. Therefore, in creating his experimental elixir, Jekyll mounts a protest against the forces that seek to contain and control him and his radical transformation into Mr. Hyde is symptomatic of the failure of puritanical symbolic discourses to oppress his desires. Similar to *Cat People*, as I argue later on, it is the attempt to suppress such desire that initiates the violent eruption of becoming in the film thus producing a critique of puritanical regimes of control.

However, unlike *Cat People* from the previous chapter (which I defined as a symbolic representation of mutation), and Tod Browning's *Freaks* in the next (which I define as an indexical representation), I argue that *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* constitutes an iconic representation of the mutating body. In Mamoulian's film, the abnormal and deviant body is performed by actor Frederic March and accentuated through make-up, costume and optical special effects.⁶⁸ Indeed, concomitant with the visual pleasure of the spectacle of the transforming body in this film is the pleasure in recognizing its artifice, and it is in this respect that the political significance and meaning is derived. The transformation scenes and Hyde's physical appearance function as *trompe l'oeil* effects in which the handsome March performs the role of the violent and barbaric degenerate, while simultaneously pointing to its status as artifice. As Tom Tyler writes, at the time of the film's release, March was a well-known actor appearing predominantly in romances and comedies making his appearance as Hyde, "delightfully

⁶⁸ Karl Struss, cameraman on the film, explains how the transformation scene was accomplished: "When you photograph someone and change them into something else without cuts or dissolves [...] you have to put red makeup on the actor's face. Then, when you put a red filter on the camera, it doesn't show the red makeup at all. The lips of course remain the same, so they are painted a neutral grey. You move the filter up or down very slowly, and as it moves, you see the makeup emerge." Qtd. in Bloom, 68.

repellant.”⁶⁹ The pleasure, then, lies in the performance and the willful suspension of disbelief that allows the audience to accept the metamorphosis of Jekyll into Hyde.

The ideological implication of this iconicity is that the two poles of the intellectual and physical disposition of the subject, which are embodied by Jekyll and Hyde respectively, are socially constructed performances meant to maintain hierarchies of power and control. Indeed, the iconicity of the film is not limited to the transformation scenes, but also characterizes the portrayal of the upper class and wealthy in the film. In this way, the wealthy gentlemen and the aristocracy as a whole are marked as superficial performances that have no objective claims to power. This hierarchy of power and social organization, then, hinges on the performance of roles and appearances; therefore, the iconicity of the film demonstrates the imaginary nature of regimes of power.

As such, Mamoulian’s film differs in a number of respects from Stevenson’s original story in ways that emphasize the liberating and transcendent qualities of the defiant and improper body. As Irena’s transformation in *Cat People* symbolizes her resistance to patriarchal and hetero-normative regimes of control and domination, Jekyll’s metamorphosis into Hyde illustrates a renunciation of the oppressive ideological social performances that attempt to prescribe the proper, moral and obedient gentleman, namely, the repression of human desire. In this chapter, then, I first provide context for the production of the film by highlighting the importance of Mamoulian as a Hollywood director. I then analyze more specifically the use of the subjective camera and demonstrate how the film aligns the spectator with the corporeal transformation of Jekyll, thus allowing the audience to imagine their own subjectivity as Other and deformed. Lastly, I explore the theoretical and ideological implications of the film arguing

⁶⁹ Tom Tyler, “Deviants, Donestre, and Debauchees; Here be Monsters”, (*Culture, Theory & Critique* 49.2, 2008), 121.

that not only does it position the repression of sexual desire by Victorian society as an unnecessary constraint that produces aberrant behaviour, it also situates the veneer of moral superiority as a fiction. Ultimately, I argue that the film's embodiment of iconicity emphasizes the performative nature of puritanical morality as well as socio-economic class hierarchies.

Mamoulian and his Cinematic Adaptation

Rouben Mamoulian's legacy as a film director lies principally in his reputation as an innovator. Born in Tbilisi, Georgia in 1898, Mamoulian studied criminal law at Moscow University before joining the Moscow Art Theatre to work on stage productions.⁷⁰ At the age of twenty-three, Mamoulian made his directorial debut at the James Street Theatre in London with Austin Page's *The Beating on the Door* in 1922.⁷¹ The play was directed with a particular emphasis on realism, and the experience of directing the play fundamentally altered Mamoulian's aesthetic interests and would have a profound influence on his later stage and film productions. Remarking on his experience with *The Beating on the Door*, Mamoulian stated, "This was the first and last production I directed in this [realist] manner. I discovered I had no affinity for naturalism on the stage. In my subsequent work, my aim always was rhythm and poetic stylization."⁷² Mamoulian next traveled to New York to direct operas and operettas for The American Opera Company and for the next several years, he continued to direct theatre productions in both New York and London.⁷³

Upon the development of sound in cinema, Mamoulian was offered an opportunity to direct dialogue scenes for Paramount; however, he refused the offer and requested the

⁷⁰Tom Milne, 6.

⁷¹ *ibid.*

⁷² Qtd. in Milne, 6.

⁷³ *ibid.*

opportunity to direct a film on his own without interference from the studio.⁷⁴ The resulting film was 1929's *Applause* that pioneered dynamic camera movement and cinematography in an era when the technological requirements of sound production, such as the placement of microphones and soundproof camera booths, resulted in static, unimaginative camera shots. As Eleftheria Thanouli writes, Mamoulian continued to advance technological and stylistic innovations through his films, "introducing elements such as 'subjective' sound, subjective camera, non-realistic sound, fluid camera movements and dramatic use of colour, all by the year 1935!"⁷⁵ Indeed, Mamoulian's interest in cinematography, "was in the fantastic and marvellous things you can do with it: angles, dollying, dissolves, the props and the framing etc."⁷⁶ Using these stylistic techniques, Mamoulian continued his propensity for innovation and experimentation, particularly through the extraordinary use of the subjective camera, in his 1931 adaptation *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

Performing Jekyll

The most famous and celebrated sequence from *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is the film's opening sequence. Shot using the first person point of view of Henry Jekyll, the sequence begins with Jekyll playing the pipe organ in his home. The camera, operating as Jekyll's gaze, pans down to his hands playing the notes on the keyboard. The camera pans right as Jekyll's butler, Poole (Edgar Norton) interrupts his playing to tell him that his appointment to give a lecture at the local university is approaching. Jekyll gets up from the pipe organ and follows Poole out of the room and down the immaculate hallway of the wealthy mansion. As Poole assists Jekyll in putting on his cape and top hat, the camera pans to face a mirror on the wall and this is the first

⁷⁴ Eleftheria Thanouli, "Orsen Welles and Rouben Mamoulian: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde?" (*Kinema* 30, 2008): par. 5.

⁷⁵ Ibid, par.6.

⁷⁶ Ibid, par. 9.

image we see of Jekyll: a young, wealthy and handsome man of the Victorian upper class. Jekyll looks directly into the mirror, and thus directly into the camera, further associating the audience's gaze with that of Jekyll. The camera once again pans to the left and continues moving forward on a dolly track to meet a waiting horse-drawn coach outside. Jekyll is then taken to the university where he walks down the hall and into the lecture hall as various colleagues address the camera directly to greet him. The first objective camera shot we see of Jekyll is a medium long shot as he addresses the lecture hall full of students.

This opening sequence serves a variety of thematic functions as well as introduces the motif of the subjective camera shot that will recur throughout the film. Significantly, from the very beginning of the film, the spectator is aligned with the subject position of Jekyll, thus encouraging the spectator to adopt Jekyll as his or her own phantasmatic body. As the camera moves throughout the space scanning the *mise-en-scène*, we follow the vision of Jekyll and adopt his gaze as our own. As Michael Sevastakis writes, "by allowing the viewer to concentrate on the *mise-en-scène*, he, as participant in the action through subjective camera, intimately shares the protagonist's experiences."⁷⁷ Similarly, as Anna Powell argues, seeing Jekyll's hands playing the keys of the organ produces the "haptic sensation" of our hands playing the keys as "we fill the empty space of the organist."⁷⁸ With this shared vision and the presence of Jekyll's fragmented body, this mediated point of view shot allows the spectator to vicariously assume the role of Jekyll.

The opening sequence also conveys important narrative information through the *mise-en-scène*. As Jekyll moves throughout the space, the audience views close-ups of the pipe organ, the classical sheet music, a library of books and various statuary and paintings adorning the rooms.

⁷⁷ Michael Sevastakis, "The Stylistic Coding of Characters in Mamoulian's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde", (*Journal of Film and Video* 37.4, 1985): 16.

⁷⁸ Anna Powell, *Deleuze and Horror Film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 32.

Not only does the *mise-en-scène* convey that Jekyll is very wealthy, but also that he is a *cultured* man with *taste* who appreciates the high arts of orchestral music, literature and painting. This opening, then, clearly identifies Jekyll as an exemplar of the Victorian gentleman thus making his transformation into Hyde that much more dramatic as it represents a corporeal mutation as well as the loss of his privileged socio-economic status.

Both the film and the novel carefully reconstruct the moral milieu of the Victorian era in which gender and class roles are clearly defined. As Mighall reminds us, Stevenson's novel is a product of its time as the narrative is "constructed out of historical circumstances and class relations."⁷⁹ As such, Jekyll in the novel, as well as Lanyon, Utterson and other upper-class characters, embody the role of the 'gentleman', that is, the self-denying, restrained and 'decent' individual. In Mamoulia's film, however, the character of Jekyll is far less restrained. Indeed, one of the major differences between the novel and the film is the inclusion of female characters in the latter. As King writes,⁸⁰ women are entirely absent in Stevenson's novel, as is any sexual content altogether, as the narrative emphasis in the novel centres on the relationships between the male characters.⁸¹ However, Mamoulia's film includes Jekyll's fiancé Muriel (Rose Hobart) and barmaid Ivy (Miriam Hopkins) who function as romantic interests for Jekyll. Although earlier film and stage adaptations of Stevenson's book also incorporated female characters as love interests, sometimes utilising either the fiancé, or the barmaid, or both,⁸² Mamoulia's film is unique in its criticism of austere moral righteousness and its emphasis on the inefficacy of such self-denial imposed by the moral elite.

⁷⁹ Mighall, xxii.

⁸⁰ King, 10.

⁸¹ Some scholars have suggested that the novel contains suggestions of Jekyll's homosexuality, particularly in references that he is being blackmailed, a common threat faced by homosexuals in the 19th and 20th century. For more, see Elaine Showalter, "Dr. Jekyll's Closet" in *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (New York: Viking, 1990); and Mighall, xix-xx.

⁸² Ibid, 10-11.

Near the beginning of the film, we learn that Jekyll is engaged to Muriel, the daughter of military general Danvers Carew. Carew, however, insists that the couple must wait eight months in order to have their wedding ceremony on the same day as his own wedding anniversary. Jekyll, as well as Muriel, are adamantly opposed to this adherence of tradition and Jekyll asks if Carew would choose an earlier wedding date. Carew is troubled by such an 'indecent' proposition and reminds the couple that he waited five years before marrying his wife. Carew urges Jekyll to be patient and refuses to move the date any earlier. Clearly, Jekyll is experiencing sexual frustration and does not wish to wait another eight months before consummating his relationship with Muriel.

The next scene depicts Jekyll and his colleague Dr. Lanyon (Holmes Herbert) walking through the gas-lit streets of London. Jekyll mocks Carew's prudish conservatism saying, "It's a pity I didn't strangle the old walrus. Did you hear him? 'Wait, wait'. What the devil does one wait for?" As they walk, they witness a man push Ivy down to the ground. Jekyll comes to Ivy's aid and brings her to her apartment to examine her injuries. In the sexually charged scene, Ivy flirtatiously places Jekyll's hand on her bruised thigh. Jekyll stammers and says, "You mustn't wear so tight a garter, it...impedes circulation". Ivy smiles and begins to disrobe, telling Jekyll to turn his back as she does so. In a subjective camera shot from Jekyll's point of view,⁸³ Ivy looks directly into the camera and slowly removes her stockings. Once under the covers of her bed, Ivy grabs Jekyll, pulls him into the bed and kisses him. Dr. Lanyon walks into the room at this point and is appalled by the display. Jekyll and Lanyon leave Ivy's apartment and, with Ivy's bare leg superimposed over the image, thus iconically representing where Jekyll's focus and attention remains, Lanyon chastises Jekyll for indulging his baser instincts. "I found your conduct quite

⁸³ Although Ivy tells Jekyll to turn around as she undresses, she looks directly at the camera lens as she slowly and seductively removes her leggings for his (our) viewing pleasure. Is this a subjective camera shot from Jekyll's point of view, or his imagined fantasy?

disgusting, Jekyll”, Lanyon fumes as he warns him to control his instincts, “perhaps you’ve forgotten you’re engaged to Muriel.” “Forgotten it?” Jekyll asks, “Can a man dying of thirst forget water? Do you know what would happen to that thirst if it were denied water?” Lanyon responds, “If I understand you correctly, you sound almost indecent!” This subtle, yet clearly sexual double entendre further identifies the repression of desire as the source of moral misconduct. Of course, had Carew simply allowed the couple to marry when they wanted, both Jekyll and Muriel would be able to consummate their relationship and alleviate the sexual frustration that has served as nothing more than a detriment to their well-being. While the film does not advocate infidelity as an acceptable or appropriate response to such an obstacle, it certainly portrays Victorian asceticism as contributing to, and exacerbating, sexual misconduct rather than its alleviation.

Even before the transformation scene, then, Jekyll challenges the dominant ideology of Victorian purity in ways that are not present in Stevenson’s novel. Of course, the iconicity of film is not available in a novel, which relies upon written words in order to convey its message. The iconicity available in the cinematic medium, therefore, allows Mamouljian to *show* the repressed desires of Jekyll and in so doing, implicate the spectator in the pleasures of this desire. Furthermore, the iconicity of the film adaptation has important implications in the representation of the Victorian gentleman.

For Stevenson, the status of ‘gentleman’ is intimately connected with the “conduct of the body” in which one’s bodily disposition is constitutive of one’s socio-economic status.⁸⁴ However, the rising consumer culture of the 19th century put the supposedly stable category of the gentleman into crisis. Having previously been defined by inheritance, the ‘gentleman’ became increasingly defined by the acquisition of commodities, and of particular importance was

⁸⁴ Martin Danahy, “Jekyll’s Two Bodies”, (*Nineteenth Century Contexts* 35.1, 2013): 23-25.

the function of clothing in order to mark one's social position.⁸⁵ As the market economy developed, such commodities became increasingly available to lower-class individuals thus destabilizing identity categories and foregrounding the concept of performance in identity politics.⁸⁶ Indeed, in the film we see Jekyll and various upper-class men wearing suits, capes, top hats and using canes that function as ostentatious and iconic signifiers of wealth. However, Jekyll emphasizes that the Victorian upper-class identity is a façade erroneously allying superior morality and ethics with the accoutrements of the wealthy. Jekyll, although adorning the same clothing, does not conform to the restraint and self-denial that his costume demands. His failure to perform the role of the chaste and refined gentleman garners criticism from his peers thus reinforcing the imaginary conditions of status stratification. It is this criticism that motivates Jekyll to create his concoction, and his subsequent metamorphosis into Hyde demonstrates that one's status as an upper-class gentleman, in addition to displays of status, also depends upon displaying the 'proper' body.

Becoming Hyde

Jekyll sets out to create a chemical mixture that will separate the two natures of the self thereby isolating and expelling the instinctual and animalistic portion of the individual. In doing so, Jekyll hypothesizes that he will become a truly disciplined and proper Victorian gentleman. However, Jekyll's chemical solution fails to rid him of his desire and results in his transformation into Hyde who acts solely on desire without any recourse to conscience or morality. Significantly, it is Jekyll's attempt to conform to societal codes and conventions that precipitates his violent transformation into Hyde; therefore, it is the normative discourses of what

⁸⁵ Ibid, 25.

⁸⁶ Judith Butler is, of course, the doyenne of scholars regarding performance and identity politics, especially in relation to gender. For her arguments regarding gendered performance, see *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

constitutes the proper and acceptable body as well as the pressures of puritanical morality that compel Jekyll to seek a cure. Once he develops the mixture, Jekyll writes a note to Muriel as a precaution reading, "If I die, it is in the name of science. I shall love you always through eternity." Jekyll then goes on to consume the liquid and undergo his corporeal metamorphosis.

The subjective camera technique reaches its dramatic apotheosis in the transformation scene in which we once again adopt the vision of Jekyll and watch the mutation occur. As Sevastakis notes, "From the opening [of the transformation sequence], the camera is almost always in motion" as Jekyll walks over to a mirror hanging on his wall and we watch from Jekyll's point of view as he consumes the mixture. That Jekyll watches himself as he transforms in front of a mirror is significant as the transformation is rendered an iconic one, even within the diegesis of the film. Jekyll pants heavily as his face begins to contort and develop deformities and he grabs his neck with his hands in distress. The camera then begins to spin around the room dizzyingly as echoes of Carew's and Lanyon's moral sentiments are juxtaposed with images of Ivy's bare leg swinging seductively on the screen.

Once the transformation is complete and the vertiginous camera stabilizes, the camera, still in subjective perspective, inches toward the mirror and displays the new countenance of Hyde. The camera then cuts to an objective perspective as Hyde looks at his image in the mirror and shouts with exuberance "free at last!" This first transformation, however, is cut short before Hyde can indulge in his newfound sense of freedom. Poole, having been startled by a strange noise, rushes to the laboratory door to check on Jekyll. Before Poole enters the laboratory, Hyde transforms back into Jekyll and assures Poole that everything is normal and he need not be concerned. Although this first transformation is brief, Jekyll is now fully aware of the effects of his mixture and this knowledge proves to be significant as, once Jekyll learns that Muriel will be

out of the city for a month, Jekyll chooses to ingest the mixture once again. In contrast to the transformation of Irena in *Cat People*, over which she had no control, Jekyll willingly transforms into Hyde under his own volition.

Upon ingesting the mixture the second time, Hyde ventures out into the streets of London and goes to a working class pub, a venue that would have been entirely unacceptable for Jekyll to visit as an upper-class man. While at the pub, Hyde encounters Ivy who serenades the crowd of eager drinkers with her song, “champagne Ivy”. Hyde tells the waiter to bring Ivy to his table for a drink and, after having received a verbal and physical thrashing from Hyde earlier in the scene, the waiter offers no resistance to his request. The waiter brings Ivy to Hyde’s table and Ivy immediately exhibits fear and apprehension at the sight of Hyde. Ivy has a drink and attempts to leave the table, but Hyde physically forces her to stay, pushing back into her chair.⁸⁷ He tells her, “Forgive me, my dear. You see, I hurt you because I love you.”⁸⁸ I want you, and what I want, I get!” The next scenes depict Ivy as a prisoner in her apartment as Hyde verbally and physically abuses her for his pleasure. Jekyll’s descent into moral depravity and sexual violence as Hyde is not only exhibited by a dramatic shift in personality and disposition, but also by physical deterioration.

The corporeal mutations Jekyll experiences in becoming Hyde are severe: his skin darkens, his teeth become crooked and bulge through his mouth, his nostrils flair and he develops thick body hair on his torso. As critics have suggested, the transition from Jekyll to Hyde is represented as a degenerative and atavistic return to a ‘primitive’ stage of human development.

⁸⁷ It is not exactly clear if Hyde maintains the memories of Jekyll. However, Hyde references Ivy’s apartment address to which she responds, “How do you know where I live?” Hyde stammers, “I saw you on the street in front of it.” This could suggest that Hyde does, in fact, retain the memory of his previous existence as Jekyll.

⁸⁸ This phrase echoes a similar line delivered by Jekyll to one of his patients at the beginning of the film. While speaking with an elderly female patient he is treating, Jekyll says, “It hurts, doesn’t it? Sometimes a doctor must hurt you a little to make you well.” The similarity between the two lines of dialogue suggest a further continuity between the Jekyll and Hyde personalities.

As Mighall asserts, “When embodied, Hyde naturally resembles the simian and ‘degenerate’, hardly human form of the criminal type described by medico-legal experts.”⁸⁹ As I detail in the following chapter, the theory of degeneration stated that corporeal and physiognomic characteristics determine the moral character and intelligence of an individual. As such, those born with defects or physical anomalies were not only considered to be more dangerous and violent, but also as a step backwards in human evolutionary progression. The representation of Hyde in the film certainly serves as a reflection of this highly problematic and offensive theory; however, just as Jekyll was performing the role of the proper gentleman, so too does Hyde perform the role of ‘primitive’ and bestial. It is in this sense that the film is an iconic representation of the abnormal and defiant body. Frederic March is adorned with make-up, false teeth and artificial hair in order to ‘pass’ as a primitive and animal-like being. Quite literally, Hyde’s body is a costume that is utilized in order to perform the Other. As Danahy argues:

Dr. Jekyll’s experiment turns his body into a piece of clothing that he believes he can put on or take off at will, so that bodily identity itself is unstable. Both clothing and the body in Jekyll and Hyde can be used to conceal the class status of the wearer, and thus belie a faith in exterior class markers.⁹⁰

Importantly, as Danahy suggests, this bodily mutation is accompanied by a demotion in status:

Dr. Jekyll becomes Mr. Hyde. Because of his physical appearance and association with degeneracy, the title of doctor and its societal benefits are out of reach for Hyde.

Following his abusive encounters with Ivy, once Hyde reverts to Jekyll, he decides to give up drinking the mixture and vows to live his life with Muriel. However, Jekyll loses control over his body and spontaneously transforms into Hyde without drinking the mixture. In one such spontaneous transformation, Hyde returns to Ivy’s apartment and strangles her to death,

⁸⁹ Mighall, xxiv.

⁹⁰ Danahy, 25.

prompting the London police to investigate her murder. In the climactic scene at the end of the film, Jekyll inadvertently becomes Hyde and attacks the Carew household, including Muriel, and is chased by the police to Jekyll's laboratory. The police break into the laboratory only to discover Jekyll standing before them rather than Hyde. Further demonstrating the assumptions inherent in bodily signifiers of class and status, the police naturally assume that the true culprit has escaped rather than consider Jekyll as being involved in the crime. Although Hyde leads the police back to Jekyll's laboratory, they do not question that Jekyll is an innocent man and do not think of him as a suspicious person of interest precisely because he comports himself as a gentleman and, according to dominant ideological constructs, gentlemen are noble, rational, and non-violent. It is not until Jekyll once again mutates spontaneously before the eyes of the police that they take action and Hyde is shot and killed. His body transforms into Jekyll as the police stare in astonishment and the camera pulls back to reveal a pot of boiling water engulfed in flames, a fitting metaphor for the failure of normative discourses to master and control the deviant body.

Conclusion

Stevenson's original tale of the fragmented self has had a significant influence in the development of gothic literature and horror cinema. Indeed, as Mighall writes, "from H. P. Lovecraft to *Psycho*, *Nightmare on Elm Street* and *The Silence of the Lambs*, versions of Mr. Hyde have leaped forth from the pages and screens of the horror industry."⁹¹ Particularly in the body horror subgenre, Stevenson's novel, and Mamoulian's cinematic adaptation in particular, are important works that explore the relationship between the body, subjectivity and the representation of the self. Because of Mamoulian's extensive use of the subjective camera as

⁹¹ Mighall xxxv.

well as Frederic March's performance, I have argued that *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is an iconic representation of the mutating body due to its emphasis on performance and resemblance.

The first act of the film portrays Jekyll as being unable to conform to the strict moral guidelines that govern the behaviour of upper-class gentlemen. Although he desires to marry his fiancé, he is forced to submit to societal constructions of decency and morality thereby causing him to pursue a method of transformation. As King argues, "Moderate sexual desire and moderate sexual fulfillment are therefore affirmed as virtues; their restriction doomed Jekyll and might doom others."⁹² Indeed, the film represents Victorian asceticism as producing the deviant sexuality and deviant behaviour of Hyde therefore locating the source of deviance within normative discourses that attempt to control the individual.

Jekyll's physical mutation into Hyde further demonstrates this argument. Jekyll begins the film dressed in tuxedos, wearing capes and top hats as external displays of his privileged class position; however, once Jekyll becomes Hyde, his body 'devolves' into an ape like creature thus placing the stability of established hierarchies into jeopardy. Jekyll's performance of an upper-class gentleman and his inability to subscribe to the character attributes that define his social class is mirrored in the performance of Hyde which, on the level of the profilmic, is defined by make-up, body language and special effects. Both representations, then, are marked by artifice thus indicating that societal associations between corporeality and quality of character are ideological constructions that can be challenged.

⁹² King, 11.

Chapter Three

The Enfreakment of the Spectatorial Body

They are going to make you one of them, my peacock.

- Hercules, *Freaks* (Tod Browning, 1932)

The “Golden Age” of Hollywood horror cinema, beginning in 1931 and lasting the remainder of the decade⁹³, was ushered in by two major Universal Studios productions that garnered considerable box office success and mainstream popularity: *Dracula* (Tod Browning, 1931) and *Frankenstein* (James Whale, 1931). Owing a large debt to German Expressionist films of the 1920s, these horror films displayed a sophisticated visual style characterized by fantastical *mise-en-scène*, chiaroscuro lighting design, and other cinematographic techniques that demonstrated the artistic merit of gothic and horror narratives while challenging assumptions of its disreputable character. Indeed, German filmmakers hired by Universal, particularly Paul Leni and his film *The Cat and the Canary* (1927), had a major influence in the stylistic elements that would come to define the Universal horror pictures.⁹⁴

Carl Laemmle Jr., having acquired control of Universal from his father in 1928, utilized the horror genre as a branding opportunity, one that would both create a concrete identity for the studio as well as provide cost effective production budgets.⁹⁵ Capitalizing on the success of Browning’s films with Lon Chaney during the 1920s, as well as the popularity of the novel and stage play, Universal intended to produce *Dracula* as a major star vehicle for Chaney. However, due to the actor’s death in 1930, Chaney was replaced with Hungarian actor Bela Lugosi whose

⁹³ Rick Worland, *The Horror Film: An Introduction*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 55-69

⁹⁴ David Bordwell and Kristen Thompson, *Film History: An Introduction* 2nd ed, (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2003), 231; Worland, *The Horror Film*, 55.

⁹⁵ Kyle Edwards, “Morals, Markets and ‘Horror’ Pictures’: The Rise of Universal Pictures and the Hollywood Production Code”, (*Film and History* 42.2, 2012), 24.

performance, “accented by his dark good looks and Hungarian-accented speech”, established the cinematic Count Dracula as a veritable pop cultural icon.⁹⁶ Upon the box office success of the film following its premier in February, 1931, (which subsequently grew profits for Universal during the height of the Depression), *Frankenstein* was quickly put into pre-production with avant-garde, experimental filmmaker Robert Florey attached to direct and Lugosi set to star as Frankenstein’s aphasiac monster.⁹⁷ Ultimately, Florey was replaced by James Whale who, after Lugosi declined the role (due to the extensive make-up required and the lack of dialogue), cast Boris Karloff as the monster.⁹⁸ *Frankenstein* proved to be an even bigger success than *Dracula* earning an impressive twelve million dollars while only costing three-hundred thousand dollars to produce.⁹⁹ Both films went on to become major franchises producing many sequels and consequently, Universal introduced more horror franchises with films such as *The Mummy* (Karl Freund, 1931), *The Invisible Man* (James Whale, 1933), and *The Wolf Man* (George Waggner, 1941), thus positioning Universal as *the* studio for quality horror and gothic films.

In response to Universal’s highly profitable horror cycle, Metro-Goldwyn Myer, the studio heretofore known for lavish big-budget productions such as *Ben-Hur* (Fred Niblo, 1925) and *The Broadway Melody* (Harry Beaumont, 1929), sought to produce a “full-scale horror movie” in order to compete with Universal.¹⁰⁰ Producer Irving Thalberg hired Tod Browning to direct the horror film that would become *Freaks*, and, because of his work on *Dracula*, Thalberg allowed Browning to have total creative control of the project.¹⁰¹ Browning adapted the screenplay from

⁹⁶ Worland, 56.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 57

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ Jason Colavito, *Knowing Fear: Science, Knowledge and the Development of the Horror Genre*, (Jefferson, N.C.: MacFarland and Co, Inc., 2008), 212.

¹⁰⁰ Robin Larsen and Beth Haller, “The Case of Freaks: Public Perception of Real Disability”, (*Journal of Popular Film and Television* 29.4, 2002), 165.

¹⁰¹ Ibid

Tod Robbins' short story *Spurs*, which appeared in *Munsey's Magazine* in 1923 and told the story of a little person who, "marries a gold digging European trapeze artist and terrorizes her into a state of slavery".¹⁰² Thalberg was so enthusiastic about the project that in a sales memo, he wrote:

Get the boss started on the subject of Tod Browning's 'Freaks' and he'll keep it up for hours. We don't remember when he has been more enthusiastic about anything than he is right now about this one. Which, so far as we're concerned, is a one hundred percent guarantee that in *Freaks* we have one of our standard box office properties for 1932.¹⁰³

However, this enthusiasm was quickly nullified during the first preview screening of the film in January 1932, in which audience members walked out of the film in disgust.¹⁰⁴ As a result of the disastrous showing, thirty minutes were cut from the film so it could run as a B-picture and as an effort to avoid further public backlash. However, this strategy proved to be ineffectual as not only did it perform very poorly when it opened in twelve cities on February 20th, 1932, in nine of those cities, the film earned the lowest grosses of the month.¹⁰⁵ In addition to its poor financial performance, the film also suffered critically for its depiction of actual freak show performers and real life deformities. *Variety* argued that the romance between Hans and Cleo was "too fantastic" and that "it is impossible for the normal man or woman to sympathize with the aspiring midget."¹⁰⁶ Similarly, the *New York Times* expressed offense at the "underlying sense of horror...that fills the circus sideshows," while *Time* simply described the deformities of the actors in the film and labeled them "the misfits of humanity."¹⁰⁷ Faced with such critical and economic

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ Ibid

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 166

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 167

¹⁰⁶ Joan Hawkins, "'One of Us': Tod Browning's *Freaks*," in *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. Rosemarie Garland Thompson (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 265.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

failure, the film was officially withdrawn from cinemas on March 15th, 1932 and had suffered a loss of \$141,000 on its total budget of \$316,000.¹⁰⁸

During a historical moment in which horror films were popular and reaping large profits at the box office, as evidenced by the Universal horror cycle, what accounts for the significant failure of *Freaks*? Perhaps the film was not marketed to the extent the Universal films were, and certainly *Freaks* did not benefit from public familiarity as the literary adaptations *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* had. However, the critical response and the public condemnation of the film suggest that it was the depiction of actual deformity on the screen that caused such outrage.

Indeed, although *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* are body horror films, their fantastical and artificial narratives rendered them permissible for exhibition, whereas *Freaks* was considered offensive in its portrayal of actual deformed bodies. When the Studio Relations Committee (SRC), in compliance with the newly formulated Production Code, reviewed *Dracula*'s screenplay, they found no objectionable material.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, after a preview screening of the finished film, SRC reviewer James Fischer stated that not only did *Dracula* satisfy the conditions of the Production Code, he also characterized it as a "family picture" noting that, "Dracula is not really a human so he cannot conceivably cause any trouble".¹¹⁰ Similarly, *Frankenstein*, although receiving more concern over its "gruesome" subject matter than *Dracula*, ultimately passed for exhibition largely due to its status as fantasy and the "implausible" nature of its narrative.¹¹¹ Therefore, the encounter with actual deformed bodies on the screen in *Freaks* was the essential characteristic that caused the controversy. I argue that this response is indicative of the film's representational strategies that encourage spectator identification with the

¹⁰⁸ Larsen and Haller, 167.

¹⁰⁹ Edwards, 27.

¹¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹¹ Ibid, 29-31.

‘freaks’ which simultaneously defies notions of the proper, normal body while calling attention to the fact that all bodies are abnormal and, more significantly, that all of our bodies could have been otherwise.

In this way, I argue that *Freaks* represents an indexical relationship between the deformed body represented onscreen and the actual body existing in profilmic space. As the reviews quoted above attest, the outrage over the film explicitly stemmed from the use of performers who had real physical deformities. Unlike the symbolic and iconic representational strategies that occur in *Cat People* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* respectively, *Freaks* is a non-fictional demonstration of the mutability of the body that is a result of natural biological processes and not a supernatural curse or artificially concocted potion. As Reynold Humphries writes, *Freaks* confronts the audience with the “impossible Real” and brings them to the “unbearable realization that any of us might have been in place of the freaks”.¹¹² The film not only brings us into close proximity to the abnormal body, but also elicits audience sympathy as we identify with the ‘freaks’ and their struggle for equality against the conniving and criminal actions of the ‘normal’ bodied villains. Our identification with the ‘freaks’ allows the spectator to experience their own body as ‘enfreaked’ and it is this characteristic and the collapsing of separation between reality and artifice, sign and referent that caused such an uproar.

In the following pages, I first briefly trace the historical precursors for the display of deformity with particular emphasis on the development of freak show exhibitions. Of course, *Freaks* takes place in the carnival and freak show environment; however, with its focus on their ordinary experiences rather than the ‘freaks’ as performers, the film, although with notable exceptions, avoids representing their bodies as spectacle and affirms their status as ordinary

¹¹² Reynold Humphries, *The Hollywood Horror Film 1931-1941: Madness in a Social Landscape*, (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006) 34-35.

human beings. Secondly, I outline the concept of degeneration and its relationship to political and philosophical arguments that justified the discrimination and abuse against those with physical and mental disabilities. For the time of its release, *Freaks* is a progressive and radical renunciation of the tenets of degeneration theory that calls for the deconstruction of how society conceived of normalcy and body politics. With reference to Kristeva's theory of abjection, I conclude that within *Freaks* lies the emancipatory potential of a body no longer beset by the confines of normative discourses. Rather, the deformed bodies present in the film point to the body's actual condition of existence as an organic assemblage of flesh thus highlighting the superficial and oppressive regimes of the 'normal'. In so doing, the spectator is encouraged to recognize their own body as ontologically linked to metamorphosis, atrophy and decay rather than adhering to the privileged status of normalcy.

Freak Shows and the Development of Cinema

In order to fully understand the representation of the body in *Freaks* as well as the public response to it, we first need to briefly sketch the history of freak shows in Europe and North America and examine the strategies they adopted to visually display the abnormal body. As *Freaks* is set within the carnival and freak show milieu, in which Browning himself was a magician's assistant and showman¹¹³, the visual, political and economic framework that constituted such performances as 'freak shows' is essential to understanding the body politics of the film.

As Leslie Fiedler notes, the exhibition of individuals with abnormal and deformed bodies has its roots in antiquity, and, "like other pagan practices, [it] was revived in Europe during the

¹¹³ Hugh Manon, "Seeing Through Seeing Through: The Trompe L'Oeil Effect and Bodily Difference in the Cinema of Tod Browning", (*Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media* 47.1, 2006), 60.

Middle Ages”.¹¹⁴ Although dwarfs were commonly used for entertainment purposes, it was not until the Restoration that interest in the exhibition of dwarfs and other bodily deformations really took hold, so much so that historian Henry Morley asserted that, “the taste for monsters became a disease”.¹¹⁵ One of the most influential venues for such exhibitions was the Bartholomew Fair in London, which ran from 1133 until 1855 and consisted of a “monumental assemblage of the strange and exotic”.¹¹⁶ Although beginning as a public meeting space for recreation, such as jousting tournaments, the venue eventually became a “mecca for monsters” in which abnormal corporealities were featured alongside dancers, musicians, animal trainers and fire-eaters.¹¹⁷ This integration of the display of bodily difference and popular entertainment had a tremendous impact on the exhibition of deformity as not only did the abnormal body become equated with spectacle, but was also constituted as an aberration of nature that warranted scrutiny.

Indeed, it is the display of deformity for the viewing pleasure of ‘normal’ bodied individuals that constitutes the ‘monsters’ *as such*; it is through this juxtaposition that the hierarchy of normalcy is confronted and ultimately reaffirmed. The ‘abnormal’ body can only be considered abnormal in its relation to bodies which are culturally determined to be representative of normalcy. As I discuss in further detail below, this binary relationship between the normal and proper subject versus the corrupt and impaired subject provided the essential function of upholding existing mechanisms of power. Therefore, although biological birth deformity is a result of natural processes, the carnival, circus and/or fairground context in which these displays occurred imparted this notion of the aberrant onto the deformed subject thus relegating them to a sub-human status that is culturally inscribed.

¹¹⁴ Leslie Fiedler, *Freaks: Myths and Images of the Secret Self*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 279.

¹¹⁵ Qtd. in: Paul Semonin, “Monsters in the Market Place: The Exhibition of Human Oddities in Early Modern England”, in *Freakery*, 69.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, 76.

¹¹⁷ For more on the development of the Bartholomew Fair, see: Semonin, pp. 75-78.

Similarly, in the United States the most influential figure in the establishment of modern freak show exhibitions for mass audiences was P.T. Barnum who, until his death in 1891, “firmly held his position as the public manager of nineteenth-century American popular culture”.¹¹⁸ In this era of increasing public spectacle and exhibitions including, “natural curiosities, technological advances, [...] and medical/psychological treatments,” Barnum moved with his family in 1884 to New York City in order to open his own exhibition and capitalize on this growing phenomenon.¹¹⁹ Unlike Bartholomew Fair, which was fixed in a specific location, Barnum created traveling circus shows that brought deviant corporealities, exotic creatures and spectacular performances all around the United States thus expanding the market for freak show exhibitions to wider mass audiences. His traveling circus format as well as his penchant for entertaining showmanship became the archetype for such freak show and carnival performances and thus became standard method of displaying all sorts of abnormalities during the 19th and early 20th centuries.¹²⁰ Such exhibitions of ‘freak’ bodies, however, had cultural and ideological implications beyond simply marveling at difference.

Many performances incorporated ethnographic strategies in the display of ‘exotic’ and ‘primitive’ people in addition to those with physical deformity. Of course, such representations firmly establish European whiteness as the supreme racial category against which all others were judged.¹²¹ Importantly, such representations, as well as degeneration theory, and the related pseudo-sciences of phrenology and physiognomy, “tended to reinstate Western, white humanity at the top of the evolutionary schema”.¹²² Additionally, the *fin de siècle* witnessed a technological

¹¹⁸ Eric Fretz, “P.T. Barnum’s Theatrical Selfhood and the Nineteenth-Century Culture of Exhibition” in *Freakery*, 97.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Colavito, 99.

¹²¹ Joe Kempler, “The Functions of Showmanship in Freak Show and Early Film”, (*Early Popular Visual Culture*, 5.1, 2007), 7.

¹²² Ibid, 9.

breakthrough in the development of motion pictures that would increase the appeal of spectacular displays of abnormality as well as create interest in the novelty of the new medium.

The development of cinema is intimately tied to the circus and carnival culture of the 19th century. Of course, during this period, mass entertainment and visual spectacle expanded greatly with music halls, amusement parks, circuses, and so on, becoming popular attractions for middle and working class people.¹²³ Upon the invention of cinema, then, the new medium entered an environment in which methods of exhibition and display of live entertainment were well established and mass audiences created a demand for visual spectacle. In the United Kingdom, for example, freak show exhibitions were one of the first institutions to employ the cinématographe in its performances.¹²⁴ Within this context, the showman, whose function was to attract audiences to various performances and shows, was an important figure in the promotion and marketing of various entertainment and visual technologies. Most significant for our purposes is the extent to which the showman marketed novelty and difference in order to lure audiences. As Joe Kempler writes, “Film was embraced by such showmen within institutions that thrived on the systematic and formulaic exhibition of otherness and which found in the new medium a potentially infinite variety of striking and bizarre attractions to exploit”.¹²⁵ The abnormal and deformed body was thus incorporated as a subject of cinematic representation from the very inception of the medium.

Interestingly, however, freak shows themselves were rarely the subject of films of the period. Abnormal bodies and ‘freaks’ were certainly exhibited through film, but representations of a live freak show taking place was mostly absent from early cinema, except in newsreel

¹²³ Bordwell and Thompson, 13.

¹²⁴ Kempler, 2.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

footage of the 1920s.¹²⁶ This absence is likely due to the reluctance of showmen to give up control of their performances through the redistribution channels of cinematic exhibition; however, cinema's capacity to display the body in motion afforded infinite possibilities for the portrayal of the freak body.¹²⁷

In addition to cinema's historical portrayal of the abnormal body, Tod Browning, before becoming a director, worked as a magician's assistant and as a showman in the carnival and fairground atmosphere, and it is this experience that helps explain Browning's preoccupation with the deformed body that is present throughout his cinematic works. Browning and Chaney frequently collaborated in the 1920s and made a total of ten films together, many of which focused on carnival culture and/or the deformed body, such as *London After Midnight* (1927), *The Unknown* (1927), and *West of Zanzibar* (1928). Perhaps the most influential film the two produced in relation to *Freaks* was *The Unholy Three* (1925), which bears a striking similarity to the film as not only did it star little person Harry Earles, who would go on to play Hans in *Freaks*, but also focused on the behind-the-scenes lives of circus and carnival performers. Given Browning's firsthand experience of the carnival lifestyle, this focus on the private, backstage lives of carnival performers rather than the spectacular body during performance provides a more nuanced characterization and humanization of freak show performers.

Degeneration Theory and the Construction of 'Freaks'

Freaks tells the story of the backstage lives of individuals in a traveling carnival/freak show. The film follows Hans (the aforementioned Harry Earles), a little person who falls in love with the voluptuous, 'normal'-bodied trapeze artist Cleopatra (Olga Baclanova). Once she is made aware of Hans' vast wealth, Cleo and her lover Hercules (Henry Victor) devise a plan in

¹²⁶ Kempler, 15.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 14-15.

which Cleo feigns interest in Hans and agrees to marry him. Subsequently, Cleo begins to poison Hans in an attempt to murder him and inherit his money; however, the other performers of the carnival, all of whom considered freaks in some regard, discover her plan and set out to murder Hercules and disfigure Cleo. The film ends with the revelatory shot of Cleo turned into a 'chicken-woman' thus becoming a freak herself.

The film begins with a title screen that functions as a warning to the audience about what they are about to witness, but also clarifies the ideological project of the film. The following text is the last few sentences of the title card prologue:

The revulsion with which we view the abnormal, the malformed and the mutilated is the result of long conditioning by our forefathers. The majority of freaks, themselves, are endowed with normal thoughts and emotions. Their lot is truly a heart-breaking one. [...] Never again will such a story be filmed, as modern science and teratology is rapidly eliminating such blunders of nature from the world. With the humility for the many injustices done to such people, (they have no power to control their lot), we present the most startling horror story of the abnormal and the unwanted.

From the outset of the film, then, the prologue suggests that conventionally held sentiments regarding the deformed body are culturally inscribed and are not axiomatic truths. Furthermore, the prologue states that those afflicted with bodily deformations are not to blame for their conditions and therefore should not be subjected to ridicule. They are equipped with the same thoughts and emotions as all human beings and thus require the same level of dignity and respect afforded to those who are lucky enough to enjoy bodies outside the frame of mockery and disgust. Even with this liberal and progressive call for equality, the last line of text, while acknowledging the continued oppression suffered by those with physical and mental disabilities, situates the narrative of the film as a "startling horror story". Given the film's pains of establishing its liberating and progressive philosophy, to what extent can the film be considered a startling horror story? Degeneration Theory and Julia Kristeva's concept of abjection help to

elucidate the relationship between the abnormal and deformed body as both horrifying and liberating.

Central to the classification of deformed corporeality as a 'freak' body is the pseudoscientific concept of 'degeneration', which pervaded medical, philosophical and criminal discourse in the 18th, 19th and early of the 20th centuries. The theory describes the inheritance of detrimental biological traits that trigger a regression of the subject to a more primitive state of being and thus threatens the progression of modernity. Degeneration was thought to be particularly dangerous due to its hereditary nature, which could spread the disease of 'bad genes' to the population as a whole. As Christopher Lawrence writes, "alcoholism, syphilis, tobacco addiction, madness, feeble-mindedness, slum-living, pauperism, and criminality" were considered both causes and effects of degeneration by different writers.¹²⁸ The theory therefore pathologized the abnormal and deformed body and constructed it as a threat to morality, civility and the modern state as a whole. In his 1876 book *L'Uomo Delinquente* (The Criminal Man), for example, criminologist Cesare Lombroso defines the criminal as an "atavistic being who reproduces in his person the ferocious instincts of primitive humanity and the inferior animals".¹²⁹ Furthermore, because of the biological determinacy of these traits, the degenerate was believed to be irrevocably consigned to a position of deviance with no possibility of reform prompting Lombroso to recommend that degenerates be executed, or permanently segregated from society.¹³⁰ As with the related pseudoscientific disciplines of physiognomy and phrenology, then, degeneration theory sought to ascribe physical characteristics that deviated from the artificially constructed norm with sinister attributes. In this way, as Roger Lund writes,

¹²⁸ Christopher Lawrence, "Degeneration under the Microscope at the *fin de siècle*", (*Annals of Science* 66.4, 2009), 455-456.

¹²⁹ Qtd. in: Jarkko Jalava, "The Modern Degenerate: 19th Century Degeneration Theory and Modern Psychopathy Research", (*Theory and Psychology Research* 16.3, 2006), 419.

¹³⁰ Jalava, 420.

“deformity [...] posed an implicit challenge to traditional notions of what it meant to be human”.¹³¹

Degeneration was heavily influenced by Darwin’s writing on evolution and was positioned as the Janus-face of evolutionary theory: humanity could either progress into a state of bodily perfection and social civility, or regress into primitive states of deformity and anarchy. Significantly, although the theory seems antiquated and far removed from contemporary social and political discourse, degeneration theory was not entirely discounted until the end of World War II, when the horror of Nazi Germany’s genocidal practices were brought to light.¹³² By 1940, for example, thirty American states had passed sterilization laws in order to “improve society’s gene pool” and these laws were not fully repealed until the 1960s.¹³³ Although degeneration theory began to lose credibility for the serious scientific community after the 1890s¹³⁴, the persistence of these laws as well as the representation of deformity in popular culture attests to the continued influence of degeneration in the public sphere.

During the production and release of *Freaks*, then, the conception of deformity as representing evolutionary regression, a societal threat, and/or as a repulsive sight necessitating segregation and exclusion was ubiquitous. Cast members and crew during the making of the film expressed various degrees of disgust and unease in working in such close proximity with the deformed actors. According to one film editor, “It was bad enough to see them during the day when you went down to the set, but when you had to look at it on the movieola for eighteen

¹³¹ Roger Lund, “Laughing at Cripples: Ridicule, Deformity and the Argument from Design”, (*Eighteenth-Century Studies* 39.1, 2005), 94.

¹³² Ibid 420.

¹³³ Fiona Whittington-Walsh, “From Freaks to Savants: Disability and Hegemony from *The Huntchback of Notre Dame* (1939) to *Sling Blade* (1997)”, (*Disability and Society* 17.6, 2002): 705-706.

¹³⁴ Jalava, “The Modern Degenerate”, 420.

hours a day, it drove you up the walls.”¹³⁵ Due to such complaints from crewmembers as well as MGM staff, the studio provided a separate lunchroom for the ‘freak’ actors in order to limit their exposure.¹³⁶ Despite the behind-the-scenes animosity toward the deformed actors, *Freaks* as a film functions as a rejection of degeneration theory not only in situating the narrative focus onto those with deformities and disabilities, but also, in an explicit reversal of the tenets of degeneration, in portraying the ‘normal’ and classically beautiful characters Cleo and Hercules as criminal, deviant and morally corrupt.

The first interaction between Hans and Cleo occurs at the very beginning of the film in which Hans assists Cleo in putting on a cape as part of her circus costume. Cleo lets out a flirtatious giggle to which Hans asks, “Are you laughing at me?” “Why no, monsieur”, Cleo replies, “Why should I laugh at you?” Hans answers, “Most big people do. They don’t realize I’m a man with the same feelings they have.” Here, Hans articulates his apprehension at interacting with ‘big people’. The ridicule and mockery perpetuated against Hans function as attempts to construct him as categorically different and thus inferior to ordinary men, and therefore assign Hans to a role undeserving of respect and dignity. In one scene, for instance, Cleo pretends to strain her shoulder and calls Hans over to massage it for her. As he complies with her request, Cleo exchanges looks with a group of men playing cards nearby as they both attempt, and ultimately fail, to conceal their laughter. This laughter is indicative of the perceived absurdity of a little person and big woman being in a relationship, a position espoused by the *Variety* film critic quoted earlier, but also serves a more significant psychological function.

Simon Dickie argues that laughter aimed at the disabled and deformed serves as a defense mechanism that allows the ‘normal’ bodied subject to constitute themselves as a natural and

¹³⁵ Larsen and Haller, 167.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

proper body in opposition to the deviant body. Dickie writes that this kind of laughter, “discharge[s] for a moment one’s own fears of physical degeneration, one’s own sense of the precariousness of the body, of the proximity and near inevitability of disease and disability”.¹³⁷ The men laughing at Hans, then, temporarily dispel their own sense of inadequacy and buoy their egos by subordinating Hans to a primitive level of humanity. Therefore, contemptuous laughter, ridicule and derision at the expense of those with deformities, according to Dickie, performs a necessary psychic function in its construction of an oppositional, binary framework: the fully formed and proper subject defines him or herself as such precisely because they fit into artificial constructs of normalcy.

This argument conforms to Kristeva’s theory of abjection, which posits that abjection produces a fully constituted subject through an encounter with that which threatens the stability of the subject. As I have written in previous chapters, the abject is characterized by transgression and liminality in which various socially constructed borders are revealed to be permeable. For Kristeva, the biological functions of the body are particularly apt examples of abjection as bodily fluids transgress the border of interiority and exteriority and thus expose the body as being penetrable and porous rather than whole and homogenous which is the privileged conceptualization of subjectivity. Abjection is that which, “disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite.”¹³⁸ The deformed corporealities displayed in *Freaks*, then, operate as abject in that they allow the non-disabled and non-deformed characters to define themselves as superior relative to the deviant corporeality of the ‘freaks’. However, as the abject confronts the subject with the existence of these borders, it provides the opportunity to either reaffirm and strengthen them, or, deconstruct

¹³⁷ Qtd. in Lund, 93.

¹³⁸ Julia Kristeva, Trans, Leon S. Roudiez, *Powers of Horror*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 4.

and rebuild them in different and perhaps progressive ways. I argue that *Freaks* performs the latter function as it demonstrates that the bodies on screen are natural rather than monstrous.

There are some scenes, however, that require discussion as they seem initially to conform to exploitive representations of the freak body. However, these occur during the beginning of the film when people with various physical deformities are only first introduced and as the narrative continues, one becomes accustomed to the abnormal bodies displayed in the film allowing spectators to focus on the emotional drama. The first such scene occurs at the beginning of the film when multiple 'freak' bodies are displayed onscreen for the first time. The scene begins with a man, Jean, complaining to Mr. Duval, (who appears to be in a position of authority, although it is not made clear what position he occupies), about "monsters" who have been gathering in a park. Jean says, "Oh Monsieur, there must be a law in place in France to smother such things at birth." Following this, there is an extreme long shot of multiple people, including the 'bird woman' (Elizabeth Green),¹³⁹ the 'pin heads' (Simon "Schlitze" Metz, Elvira "Zip" Snow and Jenny "Pip" Snow),¹⁴⁰ 'half-boy' (Johnny Eck) and 'the human torso' (Prince Randian), dancing and playing next to a pond. Jean yells at the 'freaks' causing them to run to their guardian, Madame Tetralini, for protection. Once Madame Tetralini explains that these people are simply members of her circus and not monsters, as Jean suggests, Mr. Duval allows them to carry on and leaves with Jean.

During the scene, the 'freaks' are filmed in medium shots and close-ups that emphasize their bodily difference and the pastoral setting, Joan Hawkins argues, along with Madame

¹³⁹ Interestingly, on the DVD commentary, David Skal says that Green was medically normal and did not suffer from any kind of disease or deformity. Rather, she simply capitalized on, and exaggerated, her appearance for employment in carnivals.

¹⁴⁰ 'Pinhead' is a term used to designate someone with microcephaly; see: Robert Bogdan, "The Social Construction of Freaks" in *Freakery*, 31.

Tetralini's maternal guardianship portray the 'freaks' as weak, defenceless and childlike.¹⁴¹ The use of the word "children" in this context is not meant to belittle or infantilize the 'freaks'; however, as Madame Tetralini tells the them, "God takes care of all His children". Here, the term 'children' serves an egalitarian function as it emphasizes that all human beings share the same status and deserve to be treated as such, rather than as monsters. Furthermore, as Hawkins acknowledges¹⁴², this innocent representation of the 'freaks' is subverted in the film's climax, which I discuss in more detail shortly, in which they assert their power and strength over the able-bodied Cleo and Hercules.

The other notable scenes which seem to objectify the 'freaks' both consist of long takes that depict the person performing an everyday activity, but because of their deformity, the activity is represented as a spectacle. The first focuses on Prince Randian who, as his stage name 'the living torso' suggests, does not have any arms or legs. In the scene, he is causally listening to the clown Rollo (Edward Brophy) discuss the acts in the circus and suggests moving to larger venues. As Rollo speaks, Randian lights a cigarette with a match using only his mouth. In another scene, the 'armless girl' (Francis O'Conner) is having dinner with the bird woman. They engage in casual conversation while O'Conner eats and drinks with her feet. Both of these scenes portray the performance of ordinary activities that become spectacle when performed by the abnormal and deformed body. However, the scenes also demonstrate that the abnormal body is not necessarily 'disabled' as they perform functions that are seemingly impossible. Moreover, the notion of a man without arms and legs lighting a cigarette and a woman without arms eating and drinking comfortably is perfectly ordinary and mundane, and it is only in relation to the 'normal' body that these actions are spectacularized. Although these scenes of the abnormal

¹⁴¹ Hawkins in *Freakery*, 268.

¹⁴² *Ibid*

body performing various tasks do hold a degree of spectacle and capture the spectator's curiosity, they also establish that these people are not 'disabled'; rather, they are 'differently-abled'. These scenes, then, further the ideological project of the film in that they expose the fallacy of weakness and impotence imposed through dominant ideological constructs onto the abnormal body and call for its reconfiguration.

The beginning of the film spends some time establishing the antagonistic relationship between the 'freaks' and the able-bodied Cleo and Hercules; however, the majority of the film is concerned with portraying the tremendous sense of community that exists among the 'freaks' as well as their normal, everyday lives. Significantly, the 'freaks' are never depicted performing their circus acts as the film concentrates on their personal lives, which is represented as conventional and ordinary. For example, much of the narrative is devoted to the various characters' relationships: Hans' former fiancée Frieda (Daisey Earles) is upset and jealous that Hans is interested in another woman, a conjoined twin, Violet (Violet Hilton) becomes engaged, and the bearded woman (Olga Roderick) has a baby with her husband, the human skeleton (Peter Robinson). Additionally, in one of the most famous scenes from the film, the community of 'freaks' put on a banquet in order to celebrate the marriage of Cleo and Hans. Although some are suspicious of Cleo's intentions, the 'freaks' come together and declare Cleo "one of us".

Around a long banquet table, all members of the circus show are eating, drinking and celebrating the marriage of Cleo and Hans. People play music, dance and some perform their trademark acts, such as sword swallowing and consuming fire. Frieda, however, is visibly upset as she knows that Cleo is taking advantage of Hans for his money. She grows increasingly upset and eventually leaves the celebration when Cleo gives Hercules a kiss. Of course, this is another attempt by Cleo to embarrass and emasculate Hans in a public setting. Importantly, this portion

of the scene is structured mostly in shot-reverse-shots of Frieda watching the interaction between Cleo and Hans. By this point in the film, then, the narrative emphasis is on the emotional drama between the protagonists as Frieda begins to cry and excuses herself from the table. Furthermore, because we have been introduced to all of the characters previously in the film, the shock and spectacle of their abnormal bodies subsides. Once Frieda leaves, the 'freaks' begin an initiation performance for Cleo in which they all drink from a chalice while singing, "one of us, we accept her". Cleo becomes horrified at this display and disgusted at the prospect of becoming 'one of them'. For Cleo, the initiation would rid her of her privileged status in the circus hierarchy and thus destabilize her sense of self. In order to combat this process, she gets up out of her chair and refuses to drink from the chalice yelling, "you dirty, slimy freaks!" She throws the drink at the 'freaks' and tells them to leave. When Hans says to Cleo that she is making him feel ashamed of himself, she picks him up like a child in an effort to humiliate him further. Cleo's outburst, then, functions to reaffirm her sense of self as an 'authentic' and 'proper' human being in opposition to the 'freaks'. The scene also prompts the community of 'freaks' to monitor Cleo as a form of self-defense and, when one of them witnesses Cleo poisoning Hans, the 'freaks' vow revenge.

In another famous scene from the film, the 'freaks' attack Cleo and Hercules with an assortment of knives and chase them through mud during a thunderstorm. Cleo runs into a forest while the 'freaks' crawl through the mud toward Hercules. Although we do not see what happens to Hercules, his murder is strongly suggested as he struggles to back away from the quickly approaching 'freaks'. The fate of Cleo, however, is revealed at the end of the film with a shot of her as a circus sideshow with a disfigured face and chicken body now occupying the role of 'freak'. The revenge sequence is a reversal of the pastoral and innocent opening of the film and

demonstrates that the ‘freaks’ are not defenceless and weak, but are perfectly capable of posing a serious threat to the able-bodied characters in the film.

Significantly, this sequence is principally what establishes *Freaks* as a horror film as it uses the conventions of a dark and stormy night and characters screaming and running through the woods. Hawkins argues that this sequence undermines the progressive project of the rest of the film as the ‘freaks’ truly become monsters. Recalling Jean’s complaints and disgust at the sight of the ‘freaks’ in the beginning pastoral scene, Hawkins writes, “Pursuing Cleo through the mud and rain, the freaks here *do* crawl and glide; and given the fact that it is night, they *do* resemble ‘horrible twisted things’ rather than differently formed people”.¹⁴³ Although I agree with Hawkins that the ‘freaks’ are represented as frightening and threatening in the revenge sequence, I argue that the threat they embody is a form of empowerment in which they refuse to be subjugated and actively defend themselves against those who seek to belittle, undermine and pervert their community. It demonstrates that their bodily deformation is not as limiting as able-bodied people would like to believe and it is this characteristic that is both frightening as well as liberating. In terms of abjection, the power and strength of the ‘freaks’ collapses the seemingly stable boundary of the abled and disabled body thus calling our culturally defined notions of normalcy into question.

“One of Us”: Conclusion

Freaks is a unique and extraordinary body-horror film that crystallizes debates regarding subjectivity, identity and body politics that surround the genre. In its depiction of real life deformity on the screen, the spectator is confronted with an actual, existing body that challenges and refutes normative discourses that consign abnormal corporeality to a position of inferiority. Indeed, the ‘freaks’ in the film demonstrate emotional realism, intellectual thought and

¹⁴³ Hawkins in, *Freakery*, 269.

conviction of purpose, all of which refute the conception of the 'Othered' body as grotesque and subordinate to the abled body. Indeed, degeneration theory, along with phrenology and physiognomy, advanced the marginalization and oppression of individuals with deformed corporealities as they were categorized as representing a primitive stage of human evolutionary development. More significantly, however, individuals with deformities were especially threatening, according to proponents of degeneration theory, as they could spread their defective genes to other generations and thus arrest human development and throw the entire notion of progress, modernity and humanity into question. However, *Freaks* provides a powerful attack against this ideology as it continuously asserts the freaks' humanity. As the 'freaks' achieve their revenge in the end, the spectator *experiences* through indexicality the profound pleasure of long-awaited retribution: the callous 'normals' finally get what they deserve.

Furthermore, the public outrage during the release of the film as well its categorization as a horror film, are potent examples of Kristeva's theory of abjection. The corporeality of the 'freaks' transgresses conventional borders of human/non-human, and man/animal, and in so doing confronts the spectator with the artificial nature of these binary constructs. Rather than reaffirming and strengthening these cultural and hierarchical binary oppositions, *Freaks* instigates their deconstruction. The representational strategies in the film, in stark contrast to the history of freak shows and displays of Otherness, are decidedly non-spectacular, focusing on the day-day lives of the 'freaks' rather than on their performances. Portraying the emotional and psychological complexity of the characters contributes to the spectator's identification with the plight of the protagonists Hans and Frieda, allowing the audience to experience their own sense of self and body as 'freaked'.

As the film continually asserts, bodies are a result of nature; it is only through sheer accident that 'freak' bodies happen to develop and through acknowledging this fact, the film emphasizes that 'normal' bodies could have been otherwise and it is only through luck that they happen to conform to socially constructed definitions of normalcy. In this way, the film has a liberating philosophy that aims to emancipate the subject from the oppression of normative discourses thus allowing the subject to define him or herself without the constraint and imposition of dominant ideologies.

Conclusion

Long Live the New Flesh

In Barry Grant's edited collection *The Dread of Difference*, Lianne McLarty asserts that postmodern horror films since *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960) and *The Exorcist* (William Friedkin, 1973) constitutes an important shift in the aesthetic and thematic trajectory of the genre. She writes, "[The] threat is located in the commonplace, and the body is a site/sight of graphic images of invasion and transformation (no doubt generated in part by advances in special effects)."¹⁴⁴ McLarty goes on to write that in contemporary horror, "the monster is not simply among us, but is us."¹⁴⁵ Similarly, as demonstrated in the introduction to this thesis, many scholars¹⁴⁶ have identified contemporary horror films as representing a unique generic cycle that foregrounds corporeality and the destruction of the human body. Although the advancement of special effects has certainly been influential in the visual representation of the mutating body, I have argued that it is erroneous to suggest that body horror emerges out of the postmodern horror cycle of the 1970s and 1980s. Rather, as I have demonstrated, body horror was prevalent in cinema well before the 1970s and the emergence of David Cronenberg, yet classical Hollywood film is largely absent from studies of the genre.

Body horror emphasizes the material condition of human existence and, in the case of the mutating body, violently depicts the instability and atrophy of the individual as an organic composition. The horror of this genre, then, lies partly in its graphic images of the defiled and mutilated body as well as in the incessant presence of human mortality; however, the *body-out-of-control* is the core threat in these films. When one is bitten by a vampire, bitten by a zombie,

¹⁴⁴ Lianne McLarty, "Beyond the Veil of the Flesh: Cronenberg and the Disembodiment of Horror", in Barry K. Grant, ed. *The Dread of Difference: Gender in the Horror Film*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 232-233.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 233

¹⁴⁶ See Brophy (1986), Creed (1993), and Tudor (1995).

possessed by a supernatural entity or beset by a curse, one loses all agency and mastery over their body and must suffer through the imminent consequences. Kristeva, Creed, Clover and Wood argue that the ideological and political implications of such representations is to defeat and expel the aberrant body thus reconstructing a sense of normalcy and order. In this way, they argue, hegemonic discourses of the 'proper' and 'natural' subject are upheld along with the power structures of the status quo.

The films I analyze in this thesis, however, employ the mutating body to much different ends. In my analysis of *Cat People*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *Freaks*, I argue that the deviant bodies onscreen can have various effects on the spectator. They can appeal symbolically to the spectator's intellect as a means to encourage a critique of sexual normativity. Or they can work iconographically to expose the performativity of the social self. Or they can serve as an index through which righteous vengeance can trigger an enlightened experience of natural justice. All these modes of address can, however, similarly function as political resistance to normalizing discourses of control. In each case, the existence of the aberrant body and the failure of their respective societal mores to account for and suppress them, points to the inefficacy and artificiality of such ideological constructs. Therefore, rather than consider these films to be conservative and reactionary responses to the disruption of social order, I argue that they are manifestations of the liberated body that call for the reconceptualization of the power relations that permeate society.

In *Cat People*, Irena's resistance to hetero-normative conceptions of love, family and relationships as well as to patriarchal authority, epitomized by the psychoanalyst character Dr. Judd, is symbolized through the presence of the panther that cannot be tamed. Attempts to regulate and literally confine Irena ultimately fail as her defiant corporeality manifests itself and

attacks the agents that threaten her. The film, then, is meant to be read symbolically as a struggle against normative discourses, and the visual motifs as well as the narrative preoccupation with Freudian psychoanalysis specifically positions the film as a symbolic text. Unlike Kim Newman's myopic reading, *Cat People* is not simply "a horror film about a woman who turns into a panther",¹⁴⁷ but carries depth and meaning in its symbolic method of representation.

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, however, employs a different mode of address throughout the film in order to convey its political significance. Rather than the symbolic approach of *Cat People*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* relies on iconicity thereby emphasizing the performative and artificial nature of class stratification and Victorian puritanical ideology. Throughout the film, Jekyll and his upper class colleagues adorn themselves with markers of wealth and privilege through clothing, accessories and behaviour. However, Jekyll, even before his transformation into Hyde, struggles to adhere to Victorian notions of the righteous gentleman, particularly in the repression of sexual desire. Even though Jekyll conforms to the appearance of the proper gentleman, he fails to abide by its moral standard thus emphasizing the performative nature of elitism and upper class civility. This artifice is further exhibited through Jekyll's transformation into Hyde in which Jekyll's skin becomes darker, his body becomes hairier, and he develops a grotesque visage. These two contrasting personas, therefore, are marked by contrasting physical characteristics that function as costumes; Jekyll can shed his proper and disciplined bodily costume through ingesting his chemical concoction and adopt the deviant physicality of Hyde in order to justify his brutish behaviour. The film's iconicity, both in the representation of the mutated body as well as in its overarching depiction of class and morality, situate hierarchies of power and class as ideological and performative rather than as a natural and justified organization of society.

¹⁴⁷ Newman, 36.

The final film I analyze employs the third category of representation that, unlike *Cat People* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, emphasizes the visceral experience of the film, rather than a symbolic or iconic method of meaning. *Freaks* is defined by its indexical method of representation, which depicts the abnormal body as it exists in the real world rather than as a performance or as a symbol. As I have argued, the critical response to the film as well as the public outcry against it directly corresponds to the encounter with authentic deformity rather than a fictitious portrayal of the abnormal body. The film's significance and its meaning lie specifically with its depiction of existing bodies that problematize dominant conceptions of normalcy. Rather than exploit and objectify individuals with abnormalities and deformities, *Freaks* explicitly aligns the spectator with the plight of the deformed characters and casts normal bodied characters as the antagonists of the film. Throughout the narrative, the 'freaks', particularly Hans and Frieda, assert their status as human beings and call for equal treatment and respect from those who continually discriminate against them. Ideologically, then, the film challenges the notion that individuals born with deformities are monstrous or unnatural by emphasizing that they have no control over how they were born and, more importantly, that anyone could potentially acquire deformities either through birth or direct action, as Cleo discovers at the end of the film. The 'freaks', then, are indexical signs of unstable corporeality as well as testaments to the ideology of normalcy as cultural constructs rather than objective truths.

Because of the spatial limitations of this thesis, I am required to limit my investigation of classical body horror to three films. However, many other films are certainly relevant to the arguments presented throughout this work. In addition to the Universal monster cycle discussed in chapter three, films such as *The Ape Man* (William Beaudine, 1943), *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Robert Lewin, 1945), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Don Siegel, 1956), and *The Fly*

(Kurt Nuemann, 1958), to name a few, all qualify as classical body horror films. It is my hypothesis that the majority of these body horror films occupy the category of the iconic as, even in classic films, they rely largely on make-up, costume and performance in order to represent the mutating body. Further research is needed to identify films that primarily function symbolically and indexically, the latter of which is perhaps the most difficult task as, to my knowledge, *Freaks* is the only classical Hollywood film to feature deformed actors as protagonists. However, expanded studies of the Val Lewton horror cycle, such as *The Leopard Man* (Jacques Tourneur 1943), *I Walked with a Zombie* (Jacques Tourneur, 1943), and *Isle of the Dead* (Mark Robson, 1945) would also be fruitful, particularly as the films mentioned here are all works of body horror. Additionally, further research could examine how body horror functions in industries outside of Hollywood and to what extent these films accept, alter, or reject dominant ideological constructs of their given societies.

The primary contribution of this thesis, then, is in its rereading of these canonical texts not only as body horror films, but also as ideologically and politically charged films that challenge hierarchies of power. Each film employs the body in their distinct ways in order to reveal normative discourses as a fallacy and as a false consciousness. With the radical transgression of bodily discipline displayed in these films, as well as their narrative and stylistic focus, *Cat People*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *Freaks* all demonstrate that resistance is possible and cinema is an essential conduit through which subversive and incendiary content is able to reach the masses.

Works Cited

- Bertens, Hans. *Literary Theory: The Basics*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Bloom, Abigail Burnham. "The Duality of Good and Evil". *The Literary Monster on Film: Five Nineteenth Century British Novels and their Cinematic Adaptations*. Jefferson, North Carolina: Macfarland & Company Inc., Publishers, 2010: 42-82.
- Bordwell, David and Kristen Thompson. *Film History: An Introduction* 2nd ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2003.
- Brophy, Philip. "Horrority: The Textuality of Contemporary Horror Films" *Screen* 27.1 (1986): 2-13.
- Chanter, Tina. *The Picture of Abjection: Film, Fetish, and the Nature of Difference*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008.
- Colavito, Jason. *Knowing Fear: Science, Knowledge and the Development of the Horror Genre*. Jefferson, N.C.: MacFarland and Co, Inc., 2008.
- Creed, Barbara. *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*. London; New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Dain, Goding. "Shadows and Nightmares: Lewton, Siodmak and the Elusive Noirror Film". *Horror Studies* 2.1 (2011): 15-23.
- Danahy, Martin. "Jekyll's Two Bodies". *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 35.1 (2013): 23-40.
- Edwards, Kyle . "Morals, Markets and 'Horror' Pictures': The Rise of Universal Pictures and the Hollywood Production Code". *Film and History* 42.2 (2012): 23-37.
- Fiedler, Leslie. *Freaks: Myths and Images of the Secret Self*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978.
- Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

- Halberstam, Judith. *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.
- Humphries, Reynold. *The Hollywood Horror Film 1931-1941: Madness in a Social Landscape*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006.
- Hustis, Harriet. "Hyding Nietzsche in Robert Louis Stevenson's Gothic Philosophy". *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 49.4 (2009): 993-1007.
- Jalava, Jarkko. "The Modern Degenerate: 19th Century Degeneration Theory and Modern Psychopathy Research" *Theory and Psychology Research* 16.3 (2006): 416-432.
- Jancovich, Mark. "Relocating Lewton: Cultural Distinctions, Critical Reception, and the Val Lewton Horror Films". *Journal of Film and Video* 64.3 (2012): 21-37.
- Kempler, Joe. "The Functions of Showmanship in Freak Show and Early Film". *Early Popular Visual Culture* 5.1 (2007): 1-23.
- King, Charles. "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: A Filmography". *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 25.1 (1997): 9-20.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.
- Larsen, Robin and Beth A. Haller. "The Case of Freaks". *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 29.4 (2002): 164-173.
- Lawrence, Christopher. "Degeneration under the Microscope at the *fin de siècle*". *Annals of Science* 66.4 (2009): 455-471.
- Lund, Roger. "Laughing at Cripples: Ridicule, Deformity and the Argument from Design". *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 39.1 (2005): 91-114.

- Manon, Hugh. "Seeing Through Seeing Through: The Trompe L'Oeil Effect and Bodily Difference in the Cinema of Tod Browning". *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media* 47.1 (2006): 60-82.
- McLarty, Lianne. "Beyond the Veil of the Flesh: Cronenberg and the Disembodiment of Horror". *The Dread of Difference: Gender in the Horror Film*. Barry K. Grant, ed. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996.
- Mighall, Robert, ed. "Introduction". *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Other Tales of Terror*, (London: Penguin Classics, 2003): x-xxxviii.
- Milne, Tom. *Rouben Mamoulian*, 2nd edition. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Nemerov, Alexander. *Icons of Grief: Val Lewton's Home Front Pictures*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
- Newman, Kim. *Cat People*. London: BFI Publications, 1999.
- Nochimson, Martha P. "Val Lewton at RKO: The Social Dimension of Horror". *Cineaste* 31.4 (2006): 9-17.
- Paige, Linda Rohrer. "The Transformation of Woman: The 'Curse' of the Cat Woman in Val Lewton/Jacques Tourneur's *Cat People*, Its Sequel and Remake". *Literature and Film Quarterly* 25.4 (1997): 291-299.
- Paul, William. "What Does Dr. Judd Want? Transformation, Transference, and Divided Selves in *Cat People*" in *Horror Film and Psychoanalysis: Freud's Worst Nightmare*. Steven Schneider, ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Powell, Anna. *Deleuze and Horror Film*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005.
- Schwartz, Susan. "An Ethics of the Unconscious". *British Journal of Psychotherapy* 28.2 (2012): 221-234.

- Sevastakis, Michael. "The Stylistic Coding of Characters in Mamoulian's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde". *Journal of Film and Video* 37.4 (1985): 15-26.
- Shaviro, Steven. *The Cinematic Body*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
- Showalter, Elaine. "Jekyll's Closet". *Sexual Anarchy: Gender in Culture at the fin de siècle*. New York: Viking, 1990.
- Telotte, J. P. "A Photogenic Horror: Lewton Does Robert Louis Stevenson". *Literature and Film Quarterly* 10.1 (1982): 25-37.
- . "Lewtonian Space: Val Lewton's Films and the New Space of Horror". *Horror Studies* 1.2 (2010): 165-175.
- Thanouli, Eleftheria. "Orson Welles and Rouben Mamoulian: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde?" *Kinema* 30.0 (2008): par. 1-34.
< <http://www.kinema.uwaterloo.ca/article.php?id=421&feature>>
- Thompson, Rosemarie Garland, ed. *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*. New York: New York University Press, 1996.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. Richard Howard. New York: Cornell University Press, 1975.
- Tudor, Andrew. "Unruly Bodies, Unquiet Minds". *Body & Society* 1.1 (1995): 25-41.
- Tyler, Tom. "Deviants, Donestre, and Debauchees; Here be Monsters". *Culture, Theory & Critique* 49.2 (2008): 113-131.
- Whittington-Walsh, Fiona. "From Freaks to Savants: Disability and Hegemony from *The Huntchback of Notre Dame* (1939) to *Sling Blade* (1997)". *Disability and Society* 17.6 (2002): 695-707.
- Williams, Linda. *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure and the Frenzy of the Visible*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.

Wood, Robin. "The Shadow Worlds of Jacques Tourneur: *Cat People* and *I Walked with a Zombie*" in *Personal Views: Explorations in Film*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006.

Worland, Rick. *The Horror Film: An Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.