



(model and artist: [Blxxd Bunny](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#))

Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism by Persephone van der Waard
Volume One, first edition v1.02d2; released: 4/17/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](#)

Disclaimer

"If it was not good, it was true; if it was not artistic, it was sincere; if it was in bad taste, it was on the side of life."

—Henry Miller, on criticism and the Supreme-Court-level lawsuit he received for writing *The Tropic of Cancer* (1934)

Regarding This Book's Artistic/Pornographic Nudity and Sexual Content: *Sex Positivity* thoroughly discusses sexuality in popular media, including fetishes, kinks, BDSM, Gothic material, and general sex work; the illustrations it contains have been carefully curated and designed to demonstrate my arguments. It also considers pornography to be art, examining the ways that sex-positive art makes iconoclastic statements against the state. As such, *Sex Positivity* contains visual examples of sex-positive/sex-coercive artistic nudity borrowed from publicly available sources to make its educational/critical arguments. Said nudity has been left entirely uncensored for those purposes. While explicitly criminal sexual acts, taboos and obscenities are discussed herein, no explicit illustrations thereof are shown, nor anything criminal; i.e., no snuff porn, child porn or revenge porn. It does examine things generally thought of as porn that are unironically violent. Examples of uncensored, erotic artwork and sex work are present, albeit inside exhibits that critique the obscene potential (from a legal standpoint) of their sexual content: "ultimate sexual acts, normal or perverted, actual or simulated, masturbation, excretory functions, lewd exhibition of the genitals, or sado-masochistic sexual abuse" ([source](#): Justice.gov). For instance, there is an illustrated example of uncensored semen—a "breeding kink" exhibit with zombie unicorns and werewolves (exhibit 87a)—that I've included to illustrate a particular point, but its purposes are ultimately educational in nature.

The point of this book isn't to be obscene for its own sake, but to educate the broader public (including teenagers*) about sex-positive artwork and labor historically treated as obscene by the state. For the material herein to be legally considered obscene it would have to simultaneously qualify in three distinct ways (aka the "Miller" test):

- appeal to prurient interests (i.e., an erotic, lascivious, abnormal, unhealthy, degrading, shameful, or morbid interest in nudity, sex, or excretion)
- attempt to depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way (i.e., ultimate sexual acts, normal or perverted, actual or simulated, masturbation, excretory functions, lewd exhibition of the genitals, or sado-masochistic sexual abuse)
- lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value

Taken as a whole, this book discusses debatably prurient material in an academic manner, depicting and describing sexual conduct in a non-offensive way for the express purpose of education vis-à-vis literary-artistic-political enrichment.

*While this book was written for adults—provided to them [through my age-gated website](#)—I don't think it should be denied from curious teenagers through a supervising adult. The primary reason I say this (apart from the trauma-writing sections, which are suitably intense and grave) is that the academic material can only be simplified so far and teenagers probably won't understand it entirely (which is fine; plenty of books are like that—take years to understand more completely). As for sexually-developing readers younger than 16 (ages 10-15), I honestly think there are far more accessible books that tackle the same basic subject matter more quickly at their reading level. All in all, this book examines erotic art and sex positivity as an alternative to the sex education currently taught (or deliberately not taught) in curricular/extracurricular spheres. It does so in the hopes of improving upon canonical tutelage through artistic, dialectical-material analysis.

Fair Use: This book is non-profit, and its artwork is meant for education, transformation and critique. For those reasons, the borrowed materials contained herein fall under Fair Use. All sources come from popular media: movies, fantasy artist portfolios, cosplayer shoots, candid photographs, and sex worker catalogs intended for public viewing. Private material has only been used with a collaborating artist's permission (for this book—e.g., [Blxxd Bunny's](#) OF material or custom shoots; or as featured [in a review of their sex work on my website](#) with their consent already given from having done past work together—e.g., [Miss Misery](#)).

Concerning the Exhibit Numbers and Parenthetical Dates: I originally wrote this book as one text, not four volumes. Normally I provide a publication year per primary text once per text—e.g., "[Alien](#) (1979)"—but this would mean having to redate various texts in Volumes One, Two and Three after Volume Zero. I have opted out of doing this. Likewise, the exhibit numbers are sequential for the entire book, not per volume; references to a given exhibit code [exhibit 11b2 or 87a] will often refer to exhibits not present in the current volume. I have not addressed this in the first edition of my book, but might assemble a future annotated list in a second edition down the road.

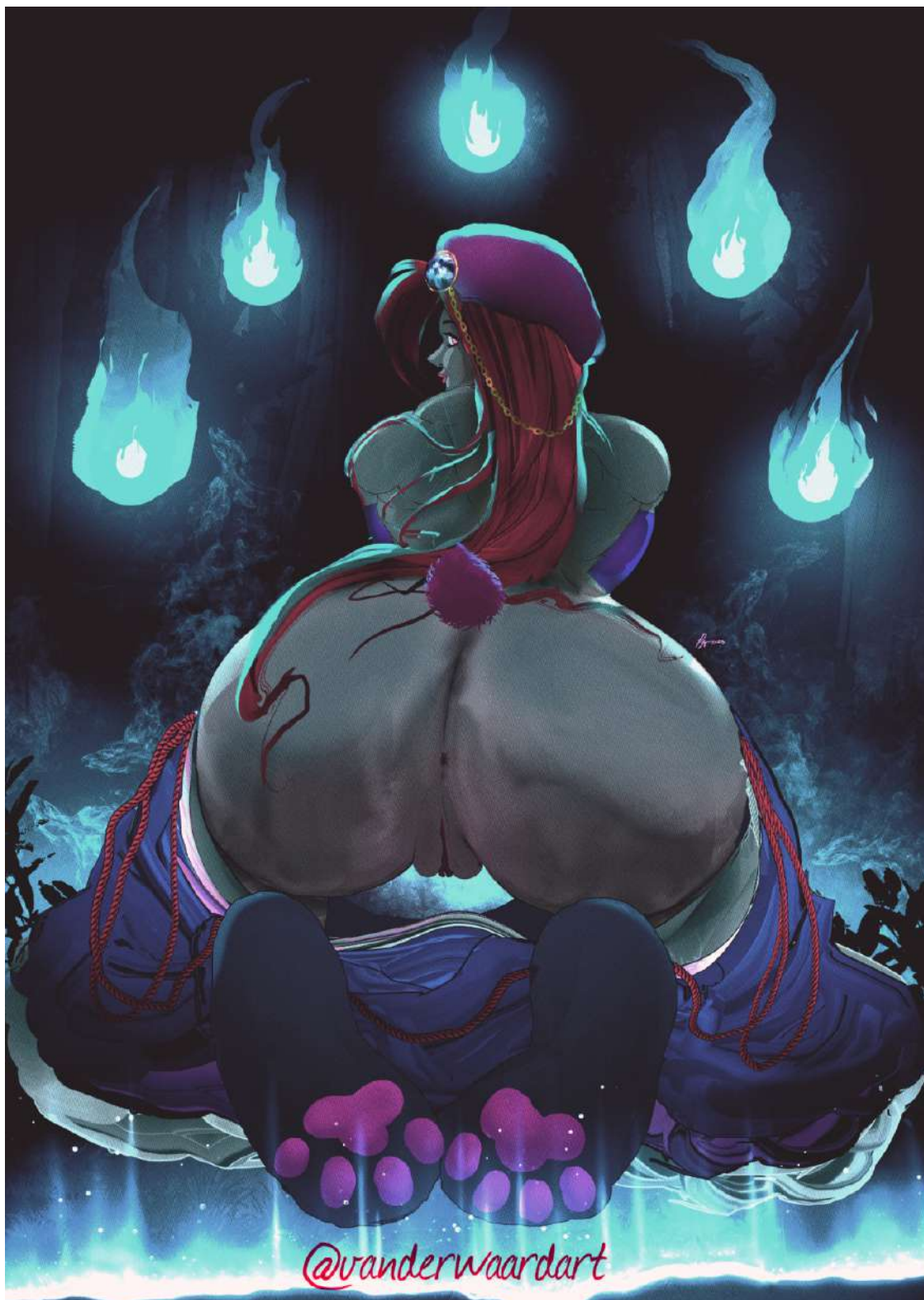
Concerning Hyperlinks: Those that make the source obvious or are preceded by the source author/title will simply be supplied "as is." This includes artist or book names being links to themselves, but also mere statements of fact, basic events, or word definitions where the hyperlink is the word being defined. Links to sources where the title is not supplied in advance or whose content is otherwise not spelled out will be supplied next to the link in parentheses (excluding Wikipedia, save when directly quoting from the site). One, this will be especially common with YouTube essayists I cite to credit them for their work (though sometimes I will supply just the author's name; or their name, the title of the essay and its creation year). Two, concerning YouTube links and the odds of videos being taken down, these are ultimately provided for supplementary purposes and do not actually need to be viewed to understand my basic arguments; I generally summarize their own content into a single sentence, but recommend you give any of the videos themselves a watch if you're curious about the creators' unique styles and perspectives about a given topic.

Concerning (the PDF) Exhibit Image Quality: This book contains over 1,000 different images, which—combined with the fact that Microsoft Word appears to compress images twice (first, in-document images and second, when converting to PDFs) along with the additional hassle that is WordPress' limitations on accepting uploaded PDFs (which requires me to compress the PDF again—has resulted in sub-par image quality for the exhibit images themselves. To compensate, all of the hyperlinks link to the original sources where the source images can be found. Sometimes, it links to the individual images, other times to the entire collage, and I try to offer current working links; however, the ephemeral, aliased nature of sex work means that branded images do not always stay online, so some links (especially those to Twitter/X accounts) won't always lead to a source if the original post is removed.

Concerning Aliases: Sex workers survive through the use of online aliases and the discussion of their trauma requires a degree of anonymity to protect victims from their actual/potential abusers. This book also contains trauma/sexual anecdotes from my own life; it discusses my friends, including sex workers and the alter egos/secret identities they adopt to survive "in the wild." Keeping with that, all of the names in this book are code names (except for mine, my late Uncle Dave's and his ex-wife Erica's—who are only mentioned briefly by their first names). Models/artists desiring a further degree of anonymity (having since quit the business, for example) have been given a codename other than their former branded identity sans hyperlinks (e.g., Jericho).

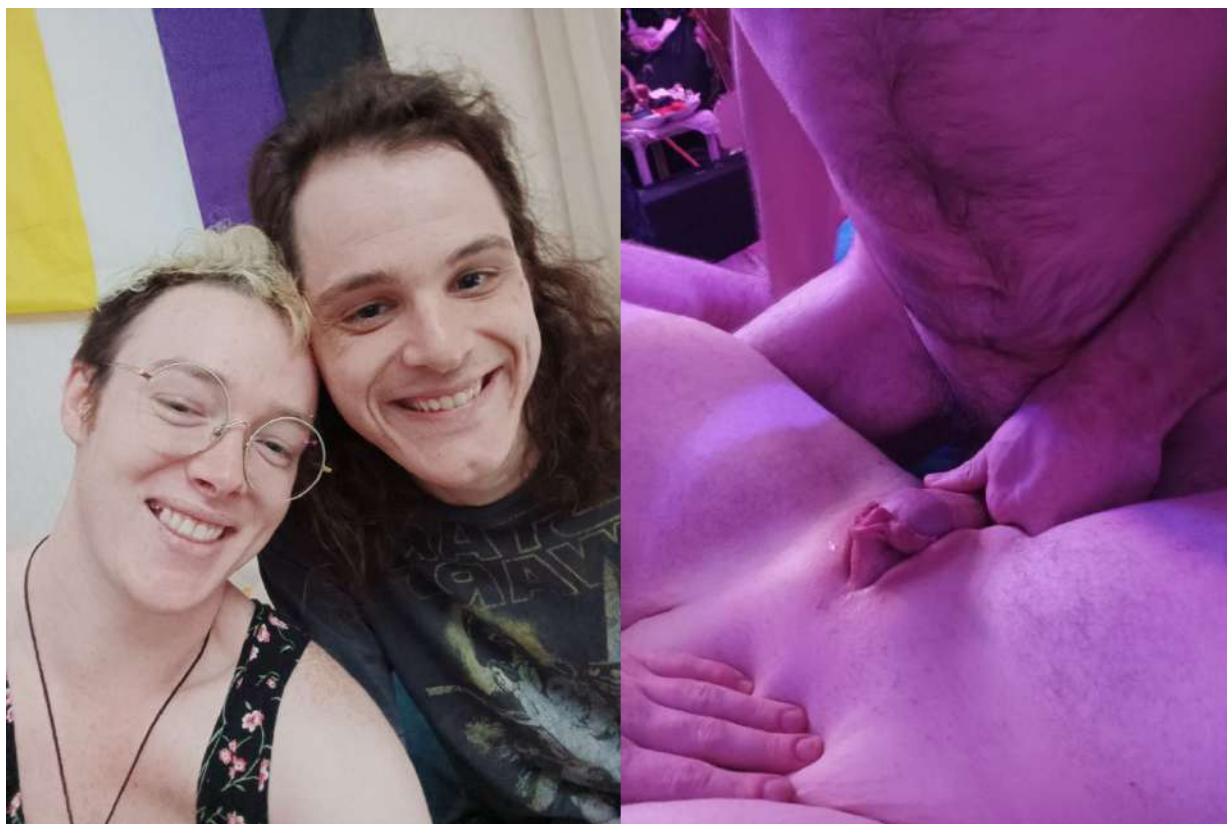
Extended, Book-Wide Trigger Warning: This entire book thoroughly discusses xenophobia, harmful xenophilia (necrophilia, pedophilia, zoophilia, etc), homophobia, transphobia, enbyphobia, sexism, racism, race-/LGBTQ-related hate crimes/murder and domestic abuse; child abuse, spousal abuse, animal abuse, misogyny and sexual abuse towards all of these groups; power abuse, rape (date, marital, prison, etc), discrimination, war crimes, genocide, religious/secular indoctrination and persecution, conversion therapy, manmade ecological disasters, and fascism.

To Zeuhl, who begged me to stop talking about the Gothic: Eat my ass.



(artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#))

To [Bay](#). I wanted to include a small addendum, acknowledging your contributions once per volume; i.e., what attracted you to the project, me to you, and what we appreciate about each other as partners in its making (and as lovers). For this volume, here is the second slice of the pie: You say you never expected to get so swept up in it, and for a variety of reasons—one, that it's tremendously validating to feel academically useful regarding this thing I had with me that I was already doing myself; two, that we think alike and reach similar conclusions ("We [neurodivergents] jump on each other's trains of thought and go for a ride," as you put it), doing it eloquently and well, and that you feel like you riff off my ideas, which I'm good at using to open up points of conversation you can branch off of (the feeling is mutual, cutie); three, that your ADHD makes it hard for you to know where to begin and when to stop and that I help with that. In your own words, if I opened up your skull and looked inside, I'd see a circle of skeletons dancing. This book, then, is the dance of your skeletons with mine; you are the breath in my flute, our bones rattling in the wind.



(artists: Bay and another partner, Beat)

Abstract

"This castle is a creature of Chaos. It may take many incarnations." —Alucard, Castlevania: Symphony of the Night (1997)

My book, *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism: Liberating Sex Work under Capitalism through Iconoclastic Art*, examines the various differences between sex positivity and sex coercion in sexualized media. Its "Gothic (gay-anarcho) Communism" combines a wide variety of theories in order to critique capital and capital's sexualization of all workers: anarcho-Communism, Marxism and fourth wave feminism with the sharpness of Gothic academic theory, the immediacy of online political discourse, as well as postcolonial, posthuman and queer theory, ludology, sex education, antifascist (thus antiwar/anticapitalist) sentiment, poetry and a variety of ironic, xenophilic sex worker illustrations and negotiated labor exchanges that illustrate mutual consent in Gothic/BDSM language. As such, it employs these theories (and their respective language) holistically and intersectionally to dialectically-materially examine and combat unironic xenophobic mental enslavement during the Internet Age.

Specifically *Sex Positivity* tackles how neoliberal state-corporate proponents, TERFs (trans-exclusionary radical [fascist] feminists) and cryptofascists use canonical imagery created from coerced sex work to affect imagination as a socio-material process; i.e, using canon to generate complicated linguo-material arrangements that

- continuously exploit sexualized workers through widespread xenophobia under late-stage Capitalism; i.e., Capitalism sexualizes all workers to heteronormatively serve the profit motive, commonly through harmful Gothic poetics and BDSM theatrics.
- canonically exploit said arrangements to enshrine their abuse in abject, cryptonymic-hauntological crypts/chronotopes that "incarcerate," "lobotomize," "infantilize" and "incriminate" the public imagination; i.e., Mark Fischer's Capitalist Realism, or myopic inability to imagine a world beyond Capitalism even when Capitalism is in decay (whose maxim regarding Capitalist Realism reads: "It is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of Capitalism"; [source](#): *Capitalist Realism*, 2009).
- simultaneously condemn sex-positive artists who seek to liberate sexualized workers through their own iconoclastic, ironically xenophilic praxis; i.e., camping the canon to escape its brutal historical materialism through their own creative successes, achieving praxial catharsis regarding systemic abuse and generational trauma.

Sex Positivity illustrates, similar to how oscillation is a key component of the Gothic, that Gothic Communism is the oscillation between Capitalism and anarcho-Communism as dialectical-material forces felt in Gothic language by real people: oppositional praxis, or the practical application/synthesis of theory in dialectical-material opposition. To combat nation-states as the ultimate foe, Gothic Communism's chief aim is to be campier (thus cooler, sexier and funnier) than Marx; i.e., camping *his* ghost to develop a holistically intuitive anarcho-Communism begot through a widespread, collective and solidarized emotional and Gothic intelligence/awareness that recultivates the Superstructure and reclaims the Base through intersectional resistance and *de facto* (extracurricular) reeducation.

Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism:



Liberating Sex Work under Capitalism through Iconoclastic Art

written and illustrated
by
Persephone van der Waard

(with her original artwork [& art
for this book] made in
collaboration
with fellow sex workers
and artists)

edited and co-written by
Bay Ryan

1st edition

**contains
academic/erotic &
triggering materials!**

for purposes of critiquing
capital/organized religion; for
promoting
non-coercive sex education, and for providing
parody/transformation of canonical works

**over
1600 illustrations
& exhibits!**

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(artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#))

Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism: Liberating Sex Work under Capitalism through Iconoclastic Art

**Volume One (volume 2 of 4, from 0 to 3):
Manifesto, 1st ed. (v1.02d2¹)**

**written and illustrated
by
Persephone van der Waard**

**(with her original artwork [& art for this book]
made in collaboration with fellow sex workers and
artists)**

edited and co-written by [Bay Ryan](#)

**This book is strictly non-profit/not for resale.
Originally released [on Persephone's 18+ website](#)
for purposes of sex, gender and art education,
transformation and critique.**

¹ Changed a few "sex positive" to "sex-positive" to be consistent. Went over all the exhibits to make their grammar consistent; e.g., "source tweet" followed by a comma if just the year, but followed by a colon just the author is listed, too. Tweaked the volume summaries. Updated [Quinnvincible](#) and [Mercedes the Muse](#)'s hyperlinks (and the Acknowledgements page) to link to their special pages on my website. Also expanded the About the Author section (and my various hyperlinks) in conjunction [with my About the Author webpage on my website](#).

Volume Summaries

Sex Positivity is composed of four volumes: Volume Zero, One, Two and Three (arranged numerically as "volume [1, 2, 3, or 4] of 4, from 0 to 3" on their text-only title pages). Each has a proper title and ordinary noun(s) with which it is referred to; e.g., Volume One is also called "the manifesto," and Volume Two is also referred to as "the Humanities primer," etc. Currently only my thesis volume is live; I plan to release the remaining three volumes over the remainder of 2023 and all of 2024, and all will be accessible through my website's 1-page promo (below).

These summaries are short and basic. To access the entire list of volume/chapter summaries for Sex Positivity and its full table of contents, a separate PDF can be downloaded from my website. [Click here to access my website's 1-page promo, which contains all relevant download links/information regarding my book.](#) —Perse

Paratextual Materials (per volume)

The paratextual materials concern the entire book, and come with each volume. The front of every volume will have: its front and rear cover images, its first disclaimer (legal information, citation facts, and trigger warnings, etc), the abstract, the inner cover image for the entire book, the text-only title page for the current volume, the volume/chapter summaries; an essay about "making Marx gay" and a small explanation on one of this book's oldest and chief aims, illustrating mutual consent; the second disclaimer (what I will and won't exhibit), an address to the audience, essential keywords, and (for Volumes One, Two and Three) a heads-up section with various reminders from Volume Zero, including reading comprehension pointers; and, of course, the table of contents per volume. There's also (for Volumes Two and Three) a small section about losing our training wheels and relying less on theory as we push into the second half of the book; and (for Volume Three, parts one and two), a brief explanation on why that volume was ultimately divided in two. Finally, the back of each volume will include the keyword glossary and the Acknowledgments and About the Author sections.

approximate² length: ~57,000-62,500 words/~204-220 pages³ and ~17 unique images (including the front and rear covers)/~95-104 total images

² The length of the paratextual documents vary slightly per volume. All approximations are subject to change as the volumes are finalized.

³ ~75-95 pages for the front of the volume, and ~128 for the rear.

Volume Zero⁴: Thesis

The thesis volume contains my author's foreword, a small essay on the performance and paradox of power ("Notes on Power"), as well as my book's manifesto tree (scaffold of oppositional praxis), thesis argument⁵ on Gothic (gay-anarcho) Communism, "camp map" and symposium; it uses them to encompass, then articulate, the entirety of my book's theoretical content, using a variety of cited material and keywords (e.g., the Gothic, monstrous-feminine, and *Amazonomachia*) to delve into its broadest/most common arguments as deeply as possible. Written based on years of independent research—as well as older blogposts, essays, [and my master's thesis](#)—Volume Zero essentially operates as my PhD but also my total curriculum, which can be simplified as needed when being taught to others in more anecdotal, everyday forms.

approximate volume length (minus the paratextual documents): ~200,000 words/603 pages and ~282 unique images

Volume One: Manifesto and Instruction

Volume One contains my Gothic-Communist manifesto and outlines a teaching method for synthesizing praxis; i.e., through an *introduction* to simplified Gothic-Communist theory. Written before my thesis but updated in light of its construction, the manifesto takes a more conversational approach to my thesis argument; i.e., presenting said argument through my original preface, manifesto, sample essay and synthesis roadmap as a potent means of teaching others how to develop Communism through the Gothic mode. To this, Volume One merely *begins* exploring the application of my theories when trying to achieve development through praxial synthesis and catharsis; i.e., power and trauma as things to interrogate (and negotiate/play with) by writing about and illustrating them through Gothic poetics in the shared dialogs of contested spaces: ludo-Gothic BDSM serving as a flexible, campy and productive means of teaching empathy and class/culture consciousness through anecdotal evidence merged with dialectical-material scrutiny and analysis—where survival and healing from state abuse (and generational

⁴ When writing the thesis volume, I just called it "the thesis volume"; I also wrote it last, after writing Volumes One, Two and Three (which I wrote out of order). For my own sanity I have decided to continue preserving the original nomenclature: the thesis volume, Volume One (the manifesto), Volume Two (the Humanities primer) and Volume Three (on proletarian praxis). The thesis volume is technically Volume Zero in relation to them and I sometimes call it that in the book; I also call it "my thesis," "the thesis argument" or "the thesis volume," etc.

⁵ (a summary of the thesis paragraph from the thesis volume): "Capitalism dimorphically sexualizes everything under a heteronormative, settler-colonial scheme, one whose Cartesian myopia of Capitalist Realism must be escaped from; i.e., via a deliberate iconoclasm that liberates sex workers (or sexualized workers) under Capitalism through sex-positive art."

trauma) must be expressed through what we create ourselves as stemming from said abuse and its complicated spheres. While the reduction of pure theory to more comprehensible forms remains vital to achieving emotional/Gothic intelligence and class/cultural awareness, their instruction is nonetheless informed by workers living with trauma who inherently distrust the state: the oppressed. Heeding *their* pedagogy remains essential when synthesizing praxis in our own daily lives; i.e., through our personalized learned approaches to Gothic instruction being assisted by those with less privilege merging their poetics (and theatre) with ours.

approximate volume length ("): ~187,000 words/497 pages and ~326 unique images

Volume Two: Monsters

Volume Two is the Humanities primer, which explores the history of Gothic poetics during oppositional praxis; i.e., its (un)ironic manifestation as xenophobic and/or xenophilic: creatively interpreting and negotiating with the Gothic past/Wisdom of the Ancients to better understand our own alien, fetishized world and the exploitation we face within it as dehumanized workers. We will examine two basic monster classes—the *undead* and the *demonic*—and include *anthropomorphic* examples from the natural world as further hybridizing these already intersecting modules (furries, chimeras, composites); e.g., zombie-vampire werewolves, or undead fox demons, etc. We'll also reconsider Mark Fischer's notion of Capitalist Realism; i.e., inspecting how it fosters a plethora of cyberpunk and other dystopic/operatic "canceled futures," whose canonical, myopic hauntologies and cryptonomy must be challenged with iconoclastic monsters operating as a counterterror device: to help people radically imagine, and empathize with, a world beyond Capitalism (and state terror). Instead of simply viewing the current world as ending and labor to blame for it, we can learn why the state is ultimately to blame for a) its own decay and b) its scapegoating of said decay onto demonized workers of decreasing privilege/socio-material advantage.

approximate length ("): ~338,000 pages/~945 pages and ~662 unique images (so close to 666!)

Volume Three: Praxis

Volume Three is the informed, continuous application of successful proletarian praxis as we reinterpret the Gothic past moving forward. Striking a careful, intuitive balance between pure theory and taught instruction, its introduction/summation takes Volume Zero's theoretical backbone, Volume One's simplified teaching approach and Volume Two's past lessons, then outlines the

dialectical-material objectives through which to apply our central Gothic theories—i.e., in a dialectical-material way using updated, posthumanist models (expanded beyond Cartesian thought) in order to achieve Gothic Communism one step at a time. This includes the creative successes of proletarian praxis, which the volume explores in relation to state forces who resist their transformative power to keep things the same; i.e., the state vs workers, generally by pitting the latter against each other. A huge part of proletarian praxis, then, involves a gradual development of emotional/Gothic intelligence and class/cultural awareness during our updated teaching approach and labor negotiations when expressed through Gothic poetics and demonic BDSM; i.e., to counterattack state forces in service to our larger goals—our six Gothic-Marxist tenets—thwarting Capitalist Realism.

approximate volume length (""): ~234,000 words/795 pages and ~394 unique images

approximate book length: ~1,021,000 words/3,061 pages and ~1,681 unique images



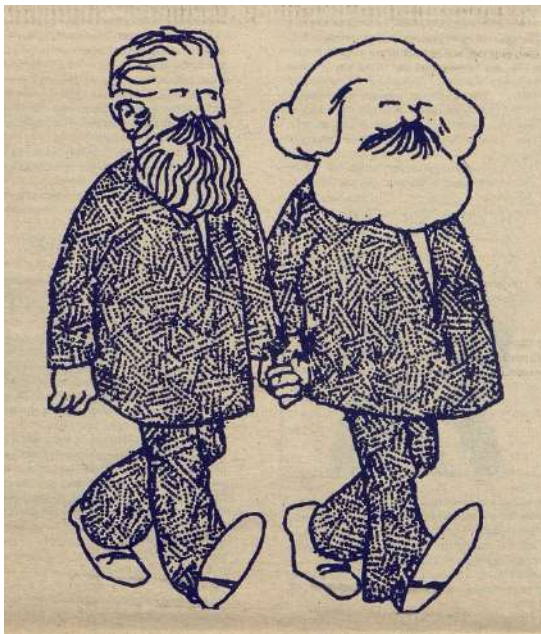
(artist: Angel Witch)

Making Marx Gay

"Why camp canon?" you ask? Because we have to! Canon is heteronormative, thus foundational to our persecution as built into capital out of antiquity's Drama and Comedy into more recent inventions of the staged gimmick; i.e., of the back-and-forth wrestling match versus the Greek play's chorus and musical numbers, but also the opera and castle as an operatic site of forbidden, extreme desire, guilty pleasure and possessive love. Capitalism needs enemies to fight who are different from the status quo and we fit the bill. In short, we fags "make it gay" for our own survival.

—Persephone van der Waard, *Sex Positivity, Volume Zero* (2023)

This short, five-page essay aims to address several key points: a) about Marx's homophobia, and b) inability to say as much about queer rights that we, while camping canon, must address by camping Marx, hence making *him* (or rather, his ghost) gay. I wrote it after thinking on Marx's underlying bigotries and other shortcomings in Volume One (which I mention in that volume's preface). While I had focused on his lack of a conscious Gothic critique [and active anti-Semitism](#) (source: "Karl Marx in the Ludwig Rosenberger Library of Judaica," 2006), I also wanted to address his homophobia, insofar as to camp something is to make it gay *using Gothic poetics*. We must do this to Marx's ghost, lest Communism remain stuck in place, unable to develop away from Capitalist Realism.



([source](#): *The Gay Liberator*, no. 42, 1974)

Fascists tend to say, "make something great *again*," arguing as they do for a return to greatness that is inextricably tied to a conservative imaginary past. Conversely, Marx and his ilk tended to look to the future to escape the ghosts of the past, except their banishment under Capitalist Realism has led them—as Derrida pointed out—to haunt language through spectres of the man himself: his nebulous, shapeshifting reputation. It is *this* version of Marx that we must contend with, because it is the one that we can transform out of the actual man himself as a complicated fixture of history.

To that, this brief reminder stresses something that my thesis discusses repeatedly and should likewise be kept in mind throughout the entire book: Marx

wasn't gay in the functional sense⁶; he *was* to some degree *homophobic*, and bigoted in ways his epistolary correspondence with Engels reveals. And while I think it's entirely worth noting that homosexuality and its formative history merit valid criticism insofar as men with power have often sexually abused children (which Foucault dubiously called "everyday occurrence in the life of village sexuality [and] inconsequential bucolic pleasures," notably lamenting their ending of, following the rise of the bourgeoisie⁷), we must also remember that until the late 1800s gender-non-conformity was entirely synonymous with *criminal activity* (for men, because women and slaves weren't legally considered people at this point); i.e., "sodomy" as a breaking with the ancient canonical codes that stress PIV sex, thus sexual *reproduction*. To this, those who abused children and those who did not were clumped together in the same messy sphere, say nothing of important but tardy modern distinctions such as "trans," "intersex," and non-binary," etc.

Moreover, this malnourished trend (and its inherited confusions) stemmed from socio-material conditions that are *not* set, but rather can change and transform as time goes on. Just as the word "homosexual" didn't spring into formal, written existence until 1870—and words like "transsexual" and "transgender" emerged later still—the *oral, Gothic* traditions that informed them are as old as Humanity itself (certainly far older than Enlightenment thinkers and their disastrous Cartesian models) and have only continued to evolve over time (which Volume Two shall demonstrate). So our praxis (which Volume Three shall cover) must take heed

⁶ I.e., not openly, anyways. Heteronormativity certainly has closeted men endlessly overcompensating for their perceived "lack" of straightness, to which we can only speculate about Marx being closeted or not. What matters is what he said or didn't say regarding the liberation of GNC people from state control. His problem, as we shall see, lay less in how he focused primarily on class and material conditions instead of class and culture combined through socio-material conditions, but that the language hadn't "caught up." As Sherry Wolf points out in "The Myth of Marxist Homophobia" (2009): "It is insufficient, however, to argue that Marx and Engels were merely prisoners of the era in which they lived, though they were undoubtedly influenced by the dominant Victorian morals of the early Industrial Revolution" ([source](#)). Indeed, they fought progressively for the Cause regarding those scandals and crises-of-the-day that society published most openly and clearly. Among these, homosexuality had yet to emerge, and indeed would not until Oscar Wilde's infamous trial (1895) twelve years after Marx had already kicked the bucket (1883).

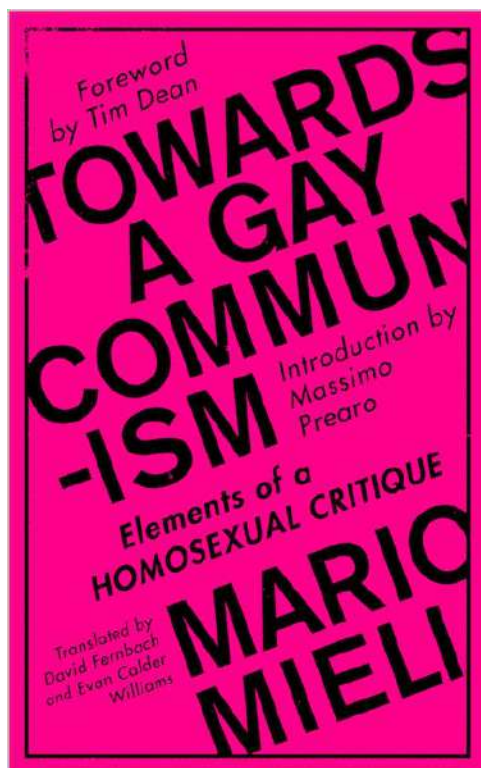
Wolf raises concerns about American slavery and anti-Irish racism, to which Marx and Engels fought for the oppressed; what injustices they saw and had the language for, they fought for the side of workers on *social issues*:

All this refuses definitively the argument that Marxism is interested only in questions of class. Marx and Engels' body of writings and life's pursuit have influenced generations of revolutionaries who have fought for a better world, including a sexually liberated one. Yet there is no reason to defend every utterance and act as if they were infallible gods instead of living men, warts and all ([ibid.](#)).

I'm inclined to agree with Wolf, but won't apologize for the societal ignorance that informed Marx and Engel's private homophobia. Clearly there is room for improvement, which neither man lived to see, and this is best expressed through Gothic poetics; i.e., the open, popular language of monsters and aliens as fetishized by the state, but also workers for or against the state and the bourgeoisie.

⁷ From *A History of Sexuality, Volume One* (1980).

of the updated jargon, but also the imaginary past as something to revive in the present by making *Marx* gay in ways the man himself could not.



([source](#): Pluto Press)

The idea isn't exactly new—Mario Mieli's *Towards a Gay Communism* established the basic idea in 1977 and the Revolutionary Communist Party's admittedly incomplete 2001 "On the Position on Homosexuality in the New *Draft Programme*" discussed the idea towards homosexuals and women⁸, first and foremost, while not having the most comprehensive understanding of trans people⁹. My approach takes things much further through a *holistic Gothic methodology* meant towards ending Capitalist Realism (which hadn't crystalized in 1977, let alone the 1800s). *Sex Positivity* camps canon by "making it gay" using monsters to consciously humanize, thus liberate, workers with; i.e., cooler, sexier and more fun, etc, and in ways that—unlike Foucault or Marx—actively and effectively diminish the state's capacity to inflict harm in service to the profit motive through *Gothic poetics*.

In other words, the state commodifies oppression through monsters, which we must challenge by making our own. Our "making it gay" includes Marx and his ghostly reputation as something to debate with (and improve on) in spectral forms

⁸ The New *Draft Programme* raises a series of rhetorical questions for which no immediate answers are supplied:

Should our goal be to put an end to the subordination of all women, and to liberate all humanity, or to be satisfied with some women laying claim to a few prerogatives historically reserved for privileged males and with groups that have been discriminated against and 'marginalized' achieving some 'self-expression' within a self-limited subculture or community? Should we be seeking to find individual solutions and pursuing illusions like 'inner peace,' or to collectively raise hell and, with the leadership of the proletariat, unite all who can be united, to tear down the old society and build a new one with the goal of uprooting and abolishing all oppression? ([source](#)).

In short, their stance is less hard than it should be.

⁹ "More recently a movement has emerged to take up the rights of transgendered people (people who live or 'pass' as the opposite gender as well as people who actually become transsexuals via medical and surgical intervention). This is a development our party needs to understand better" ([ibid.](#)). Clearly.

that hold these once-living men accountable *now* for their bigotries *back then* (from my author's foreword in the thesis volume):

Marx wasn't gay enough for my tastes, thus could never camp canon to the amount required. In camping him, I'm obviously doing this through the Gothic mode, specifically its making of monsters—their lairs, battles, identities and struggles—through a reclaimed **Wisdom of the Ancients** that represents ourselves during shared dialectical-material struggles that take what Marx touched on before going further than he ever could

However private they may have kept them, it doubtless affected their ability to speak out loud concerning the rights of gender-non-conforming persons and their divergent sexualities. So we, by camping their ghosts, must not be silent like theirs were/are; we must use any means at our disposal to "cry out," including novels and movies, but also videogames and their franchised material (a neoliberal phenomenon)—e.g., *Metroidvania* (which *Volume Zero* will expand upon).

Just because Marx and later, Foucault, were "of their times" and indeed regressing to some degree towards an imaginary (thus possible) world—one where the past-as-problematic informed their incomplete visions of the future—this doesn't mean we must do the same; i.e., blindfolded and crossing our fingers. Indeed, we can openly acknowledge a queerness of the historical past in imaginary forms that speak to a better future than what Marx dared imagine. For he and Engels, queerness was "sodomy" and the third sex (a problematic term) was "Uranians," but *that* view was informed by the present availability of information *at the time*. Even so, Engels—despite calling sodomy "abominable" in "Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" (1883) and lacking the ability to distinguish harmful forms from non-harmful forms—tries in the same essay to imagine a world beyond his own that speaks to our goals:

What we can now conjecture about the way in which sexual relations will be ordered after the impending overthrow of capitalist production is mainly of a negative character, limited for the most part to what will disappear. But what will there be new? That will be answered when a new generation has grown up: a generation of men who never in their lives have known what it is to buy a woman's surrender with money or any other social instrument of power; a generation of women who have never known what it is to give themselves to a man from any other considerations than real love or to refuse to give themselves to their lover from fear of the economic consequences. When these people are in the world, they will care precious little what anybody today thinks they ought to do; they will make their own practice and their corresponding public opinion of their practice of each individual—and that will be the end of it ([source](#)).

In response, Sherry Wolf writes in "The Myth of Marxist Homophobia,"

While here Engels is explicit about how heterosexual relations would undoubtedly be transformed by a socialist revolution, his broader point is that by removing the material obstacles to sexual freedom the ideological barriers can fall. This raises far-reaching possibilities for a genuine sexual revolution on all fronts ([source](#)).



(artist: [Mugiwara Art](#))

Again, I am inclined to agree, but want to critique Engels a bit more than Wolf does. The people he's discussing aren't those born into a world where Capitalism simply "doesn't exist" *when the person is born*. To posit that is to kick the can down the road and shrug one's shoulders. Instead, the *current* generation must try to imagine a better future while developing Communism in the bargain. To that, hearts, minds and bodies *can* change while people are alive, and the trick, I would argue, is through Gothic poetics; I was in the closet once and have needed to work hard while alive to become a better, more authentic person. It's certainly far too late to rescue Marx and Engels the *historical figures* from the embarrassing grave they admittedly dug for themselves, but we *can* transform their *spectres* as living entities inside society and ourselves. Take what is useful and leave the rest. Marx will understand. And if he doesn't, to Hell with him!

Illustrating Mutual Consent

Sex Positivity was founded on informed consent through negotiated labor exchanges. By extension, the book's entire premise is to illustrate mutual consent (and other sex-positive devices) through dialectical-material analysis; i.e., something to learn from when regarding the *products* of said labor whose iconoclastic lessons nevertheless cannot be adequately supplied by singular images (or collages) alone, but must instead be relayed through subtext in an educational environment where these things are being displayed: a gallery. In other words, sex positivity becomes something to exhibit and explain during dialectal-material analysis of sex-positive works prepared in advance by mutually-consenting parties.



(model and artist: [Lil Miss Puff](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#))

Every volume for this book is full of exhibits like the one above; every exhibit that features artwork made in active collaboration amounts to a conscious attempt between myself and others to negotiate our respective boundaries in open cooperation, and each was made while interrogating personal and systemic trauma as something to mark and negotiate with using monstrous language. Regardless of

the exact poetics used, a large part of any exhibit made in collaboration is the deeper context for its construction: that the sex work and artwork being displayed remain just that—work, which requires payment in ways that both parties agree is fair from *fairly argued* and *fairly implemented* positions.

In keeping with the anarchist spirit of things, nothing was arranged from positions of unfair advantage on my end; everything was spelled out up front. In turn, the various permissions that other workers granted me were executed by those who had total say over the material being used/featured: in essence, they controlled how I represented their labor, bodies, and identities. From the cropping of the images and monster design choices per illustration, to the aliases being used and the services being plugged, every personalized exhibit has been devised according to how the models-in-question decided while navigating these exchanges. To that, each transaction goes well beyond commercial goods traded for money and includes whatever we bartered, insofar as labor for labor amounts to a great many things: photographs for art, sex for sex, sex for photographs, art for sex, and acts of friendship and displays of shared humanity and kindness that we discovered along the way.

To all of the people involved, I give thanks; this book could not exist without you. For a comprehensive thanksgiving to all the sex workers involved in this project, please refer to the Acknowledgements section at the back of the volume.



(artist: [Lil Miss Puff](#))

Defining Sexualized Media/Sex Work, and Regarding Hard Kinks: What I Will and Won't Exhibit

"What's in the box?!"

—David Mills, *Se7en* (1995)

Comrades,

These remaining paratextual elements (and their footnotes) are lifted directly from Volume Zero. Given how they discuss the entire book, I've decided to include them in every volume purely for convenience. You may skip them using the hyperlinks, below.

The manifesto's table of contents don't appear until page 93, preceded by the heads-up on page 86. Until then, this second disclaimer explains what I will and won't artistically exhibit in the book

- [What I Will Exhibit \(and related terms\)](#)
- [What I Won't Exhibit](#)

followed by several more small paratextual sections:

- [A Note on Canonical Essentialism](#)
- [The Six Gothic-Marxist Tenets and Four Main Gothic Theories](#)
- [About the Logo \(for Gothic \[gay-anarcho\] Communism\)](#)
- [Concerning My Audience, My Art, Reading Order and the Glossary](#)
- [Essential Keywords, a priori](#)
- [Written Backwards: A Ship of Theseus, a Gothic Castle](#)

[Click here](#) to skip to the heads-up (a small section of things to keep in mind from the thesis volume); [click here](#) to go directly to the table of contents and the rest of the volume.

Love,

—Your "Commie Mommy," Persephone

The manifesto is the second of four volumes for *Sex Positivity* and contains ~326 unique images; all four volumes, when they release, will contain ~1256 unique images (subject to change) and hundreds of collage-style exhibits. These invigilate, interrogate and weaponize sexualized media for proletarian purposes of class/culture war during oppositional praxis (competing applications of theory during dialectical-material exchange, or opposing *material* forces), but especially fetishes, kink and BDSM common in Gothic poetics: monster art/porn and yes, hardcore sex. Given the taboo nature of these things—and that Gothic media habitually explores taboo subjects like dehumanization, murder and rape, we're left with a thoroughly loaded equation whose variables have specific definitions:

Capitalism sexualizes all labor for the profit motive in a heteronormative (thus colonial, dimorphic) theatrical scheme: "sexualized media = sex work as sex-positive vs sex-coercive in the fight for basic human rights centered around debates of universal correctness/ethics and reactionary purity arguments."

To address both the equation and the taboos that Gothic (gay-anarcho) Communism wrestles with, I wanted to provide some definitions and disclaimers, right out of the gate.

To start with, we need to define **kink**¹⁰, **fetish**, and **BDSM** as forms of **roleplay** that we'll expand on (e.g., **chaser/bait**, exhibit 1a1a1h1) in the thesis volume and elsewhere in the book (normally block-quoting keyword definitions is restricted to the thesis volume, but these terms are some of the most vital in the book. As such, these four definitions will not be abridged, nor will any of the others in this second disclaimer as it appears in all four volumes):

roleplay

The playing of roles in social-sexual situations, usually with a dominant/submissive element (as many come from classic stories which tend

¹⁰ In this disclaimer and the entire thesis volume, I have **boldened** and **color-coded** keywords (rather than opt for italics/underlining, which I generally utilize for *emphasis*). Generally this is done when first introducing them, but also when I am about to define/am currently defining or otherwise stressing their involvement (I will also do this as a graphical aid to showcase when a bunch of keywords are being used in tandem, especially during the thesis statement). Regardless of when I do, it's meant to clue you in that we're discussing words that have specific definitions that are about to be expanded on or otherwise invoked (at the present time or later in the document) or *reinvoked* after they have already been explained. Also, while this only happens a few times, a couple of phrases aren't in the glossary because I haven't been able to define some of the more niche or incidental expressions (usually idioms or figures of speech); this is something I'd like to address in a future, second edition.

to be heteronormative; but even iconoclastic stories transmute BDSM, fetishes and kinks to be sex-positive within dominant/submissive models).

kink

Nontraditional forms of sexual activity that don't necessarily involve forms of power exchange between partners (unequal or otherwise).

fetishization

A fetish, or the act of making something into a fetish, is "a form of sexual desire in which gratification is linked to an abnormal degree to a particular object, item of clothing, or part of the body." Generally, fetishes are pre-existing social-sexual trends that people either embrace or reject. They aren't explicitly sexist (e.g., mutually consenting to show feet), but become sexist when used in exploitative ways (e.g., sex workers forced to show their feet to generate profit for someone else).

(demon) BDSM

Bondage, discipline, sadism, and masochism—seemingly nontraditional forms of sexual activity that involve unequal power exchange that has actually been canonized and must be camped in doubled forms. Both involve power, but non-consensual (sex-coercive) variants canonically involve power *abuse*—generally of women and other marginalized workers by white, cis-het men/arguably token queers in romanticized tales thereof (e.g., Stoker's vampire, Barker's Cenobite) that often, according to Susan Sontag's "Fascinating Fascism" (1974), invoke not just the "master scenario" whose purely sexual experience is "severed from personhood, from relationships, from love," but also the fascist language of death: "The color is black [and red], the material is leather, the seduction is beauty, the justification is honesty, the aim is ecstasy, the fantasy is death" ([source](#)). In a sex-positive sense, such rituals regularly invoke demons as a Gothicized means of catharsis, but also practicing impulse and power control during non-harmful euphoria whose painful, physical, emotional, and/or sexual activities occur between good-faith participants; i.e., ironic variants of Ann Radcliffe's classically **xenophobic** and dubiously "consensual" **Black Veil** (hiding the threat badly), **demon lover** (the xenophobic/xenophilic threat of unironic mutilation and rape), and **exquisite "torture"** (rape play).

We'll further unpack Radcliffe's tricky torture tools in the thesis volume (and lay waste to her sacred memory in the process). There's also **dom(inator/-inatrix)**,

sub(missive), "strict/gentle," **topping/a top** vs **bottoming/a bottom**, **regression**, **rape fantasies**, and **aftercare**; but we will likewise unpack these in the thesis volume when we discuss subverting **rape culture** and "**prison sex**" **mentalities** *vis-à-vis* **Man Box**, **good play vs bad play**, and other germane theatrical factors (*ahegao*, *moe*, chasers/bait, etc).

Now that we've outlined the basic ideas of Gothic fetish and kink, the rest of the disclaimer will provide some definitions for what I will exhibit, followed by what I *won't* exhibit. This goes beyond basic nudity like the image below but will involve nudity in either case:



(artist: [Blxxd Bunny](#))

What I Will Exhibit (and related terms)

Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas, Nocturnos lemures, portentaque.

Dreams, magic terrors, spells of mighty power, Witches, and ghosts who rove at midnight hour ([source](#)).

—the pre-preface epigram to Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1796)

Matthew Lewis was a very queer and very educated young man when he wrote *The Monk* (which despite the lack of open queer discourse at its inception, is a tremendously queer apologia written in Gothic camp *par excellence*). Like him, I am very queer and educated (though not as young or closeted, I think); also like him, I like to parody sex in the Gothic mode—i.e., write about campy monsters in sexualized media. Here are some glossary definitions and exhibits to give you an idea of what I mean:

sexualized media

Media that contains sexual and gendered components—of cis-het men and women, but also queer persons/other marginalized groups for or against the state. However, the treatment of sexuality and gender—how it is sexualized by "the Media" or in media more broadly—depends on if it is sex-positive or sex-coercive (some examples, below):



(from the companion glossary, exhibit 3a1: Artist, top-left: Frank Frazetta; top-middle-to-right: [Sveta Shubina](#); bottom-left: J. Howard Miller; bottom-middle: Norman Rockwell; bottom-right: Michelangelo.

Artistic mimicry through homage is a common phenomenon of art, with women being illustrated historically by men for various purposes. A common reason for doing so was to illustrate their place in a

man's world; e.g., as wives, mistresses [the Virgin or the Whore] but also as workers. Whereas open fascism historically relegates women to traditional modes of women's work, American propaganda temporarily made various concessions during WW2. These occurred to support the overall war effort and the material interests of the elite. After the war ended, women's rights were quickly rescinded in favor of a return to the status quo, female workers being demonized by the same male employers and patrons who formerly promoted them [and fetishized by the likes of Frank Frazetta, who started his career during a regression towards female re-enslavement after the war].

Mimesis is a back-and-forth process, borrowing images and symbols for new purposes during oppositional praxis. In Rosie the Riveter's case, promotions of female "equality" were themselves guided by an American sense of righteousness that went on to be co-opted for social movements long after the original pieces aired. Indeed, Rosie only became a cultural icon of feminism in the 1970s—i.e., as a symbol of female empowerment that eclipsed Rockwell's Christianized mimesis of Michelangelo's Isaiah. On Rockwell, Christina Branham writes in "Rosie the Riveter" (2016),

The pose she strikes seems a bit awkward, but it too conveys a message: it was inspired by Michelangelo's portrayal of the prophet Isaiah on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Why? As stated during a Sotheby's 2002 sale of the original art, "Righteousness is described throughout Isaiah's prophecy as God's strong right arm." Rockwell's Rosie is certainly sporting some strong man-arms, but I would say the bigger message is that America was on the side of righteousness [[source](#)].

After Rockwell's upstaging by Miller's latter-day revival, the image of Rosie took on a life of its own. The image itself went on to convey the nostalgia of a reimagined past: the rights of cis-het white women [which second wave feminism primarily represented through its arguments]. In the works of future artists, nostalgia becomes something to reclaim, but also regress towards depending on the context and political leanings of the creator.)



(from the companion glossary, exhibit 3a2: Assorted pieces by Milo Manara and Luis Royo; middle-right: Olsen; far-top-right: [Morry Evans](#). Hauntology presses women into different forms of transgressive servitude—i.e., more about titillating the cis-het male gaze within risky positions of appropriative peril and high imagination/adventure that women are expected not just to perform but compete for under male Pygmalions. Indeed, white, cis-het women assimilate and promote these roles, focusing on the unironic torture of a highly specific and prescriptive industry body type, versus catharsis for women forced to do certain forms of coercively humiliating labor regardless of the genre. Reduced to blind pastiche, these can perpetuate various harmful stereotypes within transgressive media as a means of submitting to formal power rather than resisting and reclaiming it through the same rituals as subverted; e.g., Morry Evan's work of a servile giant for the counterfeit of a nun; or Sveta Shubina's Bowser and Peach, below. We'll examine more iconoclastic subversions throughout the book; e.g., the aforementioned size difference as something to appreciate in different monster types, such as the Amazon/mommy dom, exhibit 51d2.)



(from the companion glossary, exhibit 3a3: Artist, left: [Sveta Shubina](#); right: Don Bluth. The desire to separate the art from the artist and aesthetics from ideology is understandable/possible, but it remains important to remember that when emulating a given style, said style in the past was associated with a problematic belief system and its symbolism; e.g., Don Bluth's damsel-in-distress, Princess Daphne, "needing" to be rescued from the dragon by a man who is still draconian themselves [the knight and the dragon being dichotomized variations of the "walking castle"/human tank]. Shubina is clearly emulating Bluth's visual style but subverts the relationship between the princess and the dragon—i.e., like King Kong but seemingly negotiated through the topos of the power of women [to attract men] as something to toy with. This context, of course, is difficult to glean from the base drawing itself, all but requiring a bit of imagination from us to reinterpret the same old clichés. But even if these stereotypes are subverted, their own work will remain haunted by the sexism of past idols that people unironically love in the present.

The woman as "emasculator" ties to the ironic cuckold of men, having them figuratively "by the balls": "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned." This historically unenviable position becomes canonically enviable among women forced to compete for limited husbands with wealth, being judged by men as "gold diggers" and judged by other women jealously fighting over the same heteronormative prize. Conventionally pretty women become viewed through various double standards: the treacherous beauty as a user of everyone around her to get what she wants; i.e., sex as a weapon. While the narrative reduces the woman to a singular role and personality type, it's one where their intelligence is treated like a concealed weapon behind their sexuality as front-and-center. They're forced into uncomfortable clothes and pitted against other women wearing the same princess-style uniform; i.e., the historical-material reality of women competing for the same bloodline: to be the king's prized broodmare.



This includes Bowser in BDSM circles, [a prime candidate for the "daddy dom" or queer "bear" stereotype](#) [artist, above: Taran Fiddler]. The paradox of the spiked collar is canonized as the master's sigil that simultaneously is an anti-predation device for a large, powerful pet in iconoclastic circles.)

sex work

Any work centered around sexuality and gender roles, including *artwork*. More commonly thought of as "prostitution," patriarchal sexism under Capitalism extends sex work to the broader division of sexualized labor within a colonial gender binary: men's work versus women's work. While the former focuses on war, violence and promotion through socio-material dominance, the latter involves submissive, traditionalized modes of sexual-reproductive labor towards a male authority figure—often a boss, parent or husband. So, while many sex workers perform strictly eroticized acts in this manner, many more are secretarial or marital in nature, performed inside traditional sites of women's work like kitchens, bedrooms, or laundromats, but also banks or hospitals. In the creative world, sexist employers compel female creators (musicians, models, illustrators and writers, etc) to promote prescriptive notions of coercive sexuality and gender tied to heteronormative beauty standards, fashion and music. Regardless of the work, sex-positive workers will resist sex coercion through their own labor.

sex positivity

Sexual/asexual expression that enables individual self-expression (thus self-empowerment) by relatively ethical means—the right to do sex work or partake in sexual activity *if one so desires*. In other words, it is a *positive freedom*; i.e., freedom *for* people to do what they want, specifically "the possession of the power and resources (material conditions) to act in the context of the structural limitations of the broader society which impacts a person's ability to act." Apart from being morally good and materially beneficial, sex positivity empowers marginalized communities (who, amongst other things, are generally exploited for sex as a form of labor); it does so by arguing for mutual consent, descriptive sexuality and cultural appreciation using historically regulated language: bodies and biology, gender identity/performance and (a)sexual orientation.

sex coercion

Sexist, heteronormative argumentation, work and artistry that compels and upholds sexual and gendered norms by abolishing others through various unethical means. This includes corporations downplaying their harmful actions as benign, or fascists framing their openly harmful actions as justified. This freedom to act is a *negative freedom*; i.e., freedom *from* external restraint on one's actions. It is generally repressive towards marginalized communities, the elite exploiting them on a material level while also denying them their basic human rights.

Small idiosyncrasy in terms of my writing: When using "sex positivity" or "sex coercion" (nouns) as adjectives, they will be hyphenated; e.g., "The sex-positive fog crept in on little sex-coercive feet." This is completely arbitrary but my aim is to be consistent. —Perse

basic/civil human rights

The Communist idea that all human/animal workers deserve fair and equal treatment, which nation-states and corporations historically do not give (they are bourgeois and exploit workers). In Marxist terms, these rights are administered through Communism not according to profit, but "From each according to [their] ability, to each according to [their] needs." According to LeiLani Dowell at the Worker's World Forum in 2012, [this existence is planned and achieved through the development phase, aka Socialism](#): "...to each according to their *work*."

ethics, ethical, ethicality

This book treats *universal ethicality* not as canonical societal norms (what is prescriptively "correct" or "morally right" according to canon), but that humans, animals and the environment have basic, unalienable rights. The universality of these rights is what is correct. Anyone's hypothetical ability to systemically "question" or undermine these rights—including the bourgeoisie—is fundamentally incorrect/unethical (what moderates call "compromise").



KASIA BABIS thenib.com

(artist: [Kasia Babis](#))

-phobia/-philia

In Gothic-Communist terms, a *phobia* isn't raw, animal fear—e.g., fear of death or the unknown—but an actionable, social-sexual stigma, bias or taboo assigned to a particular out-group or historical-material victim under the

status quo/inside the state of exception: xenophobia, pedophilia, necrophilia, etc. This extends to various moral panics—e.g., Satanic panic, Red Scares, or the fascist revenge phobia of the backstabbing Jew, etc. Phobias are canonically fetishized. Phobias are often deliberate/accidental misnomers insofar as abuse euphemisms are concerned (again, necrophilia, pedophilia, zoophilia); i.e., used to describe acts of abuse wherein the abuser is acting on a sexual attraction or otherwise abusive compulsion but is acting it out on a party that cannot actually consent (the dead, children, or animals; slaves, wives and other humans legally regarded as property in some shape or form).

purity arguments

A type of reactionary, fascist argumentation tied to manufactured scarcity, consent and conflict as radicalized during moral panics under police states/ethnostates. Think "boundaries for me, not for thee," but attached to limited-time waivers for those who best fit whatever soldiers those in fascist seats of power are looking for (with Himmler anything but "Nordic"). This tends to historically-materially manifest in racial-purity pseudoscience and aggressive recruitment tactics, defending the "purity" of a nation (and its children and women) through racialized supermen, generally with the descriptor "ethnic" attached to them—e.g., ethnic Germans (in Nazi Germany) or Jews (in Israel).

In short, my exhibits and general writing/illustrations concern sexualized media, sex positivity vs sex coercion according to basic human rights (and animal rights/environmental health) according to various xenophobia/xenophilia (whose distinctions—of monster-slaying and monster-fucking—I'll expand on more during the thesis volume) and purity arguments. All are generally relayed through roleplay during kink, fetish and demon BDSM theatre and power/death aesthetics, and while there's room to communicate trauma of all sorts, I have my own comfort levels in terms of what I'll invigilate, exhibit-wise.

What I Won't Exhibit

But my grief was unavailing. My Infant was no more; nor could all my sighs impart to its little tender frame the breath of a moment. I rent my winding-sheet, and wrapped in it my lovely Child. I placed it on my bosom, its soft arm folded round my neck, and its pale cold cheek resting upon mine. Thus did its lifeless limbs repose, while I covered it with kisses, talked to it, wept, and moaned over it without remission, day or night. [...]

Sometimes I felt the bloated Toad, hideous and pampered with the poisonous vapours of the dungeon, dragging his loathsome length along my bosom: Sometimes the quick cold Lizard roused me leaving his slimy track upon my face, and entangling itself in the tresses of my wild and matted hair: Often have I at waking found my fingers ringed with the long worms which bred in the corrupted flesh of my Infant. At such times I shrieked with terror and disgust, and while I shook off the reptile, trembled with all a Woman's weakness ([source](#)).

—Agnes de Medina, *The Monk*



Lewis' camp is violent in the tradition of the Elizabethan/Jacobean theater (e.g., *Titus Andronicus*, c. 1594; and *The Duchess of Malfi*, 1614). As such, he had a thing for the abject, the grotesque as hyperbolic and necromantic—dragged

up and carted about in a thoroughly campy danse macabre. I'm not partial to combining sex and abject gore, and its exclusion from *Sex Positivity* doesn't mean it *can't* be sex-positive¹¹; it's just "not my bag." I'd like to quickly explain why.

¹¹ Consider the postcolonial critique of colonized peoples' being openly raped onscreen during Jennifer Kent's hard-boiled historical drama, *The Nightengale* (2019). The film unflinchingly explores the intersectional complexities of class, race and gender during Australia's colonization by the British empire; i.e., of the Irish indentured servant and Indigenous slave of color by white Englishmen. It's not meant to be entertainment and that's the point. It also doesn't celebrate the rape of the heroine or the various other people who are raped and/or murdered by the villain as an extension of the white, European (Cartesian) status quo. Despite their brutal nature, these frank depictions of rape aren't exploitative, but expressed through a historical drama meant to educate us about the generational trauma that has been whitewashed in recent years; thus, they are abjectly violent and harmful, but patently designed to be sex-positive by expressing the sex-coercive nature of the abusers towards the abused.

Everyone has limits when it comes to kink, BDSM and the Gothic¹². What I explore in this book is informed by my own kinkster's/artist's bias—my artistic **hard limits** regarding **hard kink** (scat, gore, vore, loli, actual rape) intersecting with my gender identity, orientation (demi-pan, polyamorous) and chosen kinks, but also my Gothic writings about these things. So, while I *could* easily write an entire book about "male humor" or literal shit, extreme torture porn and "Male Gothic" abjection, hard kink is not something I prefer to explore in my own sex work, artwork or writing (except for consent-non-consent, which we'll cover a fair bit). Likewise, while I am a "gore hound" when it comes to horror movies ([I once interviewed Vancouver FX for their effects work in "Alien Ore," 2019](#), for example), I don't enjoy exhibiting those things as abjected, then fetishized by capital—e.g., acts of unambiguous rape, but also intensely private things put on display like female bathroom antics as a means of publicly degrading the subject as an unironic object of total humiliation, or demonizing literal human excrement/bodily waste.

Art is shared negotiation, and all the content in this book has either been negotiated or is Fair Use. As a whole, *Sex Positivity* doesn't curate itself to please everyone; it exhibits sex positivity by blurring the lines between porn and art, asexuality and sexuality, pain and other pleasurable responses, trauma and catharsis, lover and associate, etc. Couples and friends can make art. Enemies can, too (friendly and unfriendly). Sometimes I've slept and played with models, but also have friends-with-benefits and platonic friends (my best friend, Ginger, is strictly platonic though we're very open with each other). I engage with all of these things to reflect on praxial synthesis: life drawing and modeling, performance art, homemade porn, cosplay, makeup tutorials, asexual exhibitions of nudism, etc). All this being said, there is no hardcore porn of me in this book (though I generally play with my muses and friends in some shape or form; *that* context is for you to infer through my writing about certain exhibits).

This book constitutes the cathartic exploration of trauma through Gothic Communism; i.e., through iconoclastic, pornographic art made by workers in exhibitionistic-voyeuristic collaboration: exhibits that feature and highlight the context of negotiation, for the monstrous-poetic expression of our rights and pedagogy of the oppressed¹³ (this book features a small number images to critique data theft under the AI boom, but otherwise consists entirely of artwork made by actual humans, not generated by unthinking machines). Even so, while I feel

¹² The Gothic mode/imagination. For our purposes, the making of monsters, though I will unpack other definitions for context in the symposium: "the 'Gothic' [is] a common point of contention as something that historically remains difficult to define that nevertheless is plastered over everything and used off-hand for centuries according to aesthetics whose ownership is equally imperiled among different media types."

¹³ Radical empathy. [Coined by Paulo Freire in his 1968 book of the same name](#), the text is a warning to closeted (and active) moderates to stop talking down to people who know their own trauma far better than moderates do.

thoroughly uncomfortable exhibiting canonical art as a source, endorsement or perpetuation of unnegotiated trauma,

- animal exploitation or abuse (my stepfather forced me to watch as he killed our pet rabbits in front of my brothers and I, then cooked and ate them) but also frank depictions of animal butchery under Capitalism (e.g., *Our Daily Bread*, 2005, and its unflinching examination of an ordinary abattoir)
- abuse, exploitation and fetishization of children and/or persons with physical or mental disabilities
- unironic torture porn in general (e.g., *A Serbian Film*, 2010; *Martyrs*, 2008; *Funny Games*, 1997; *Kidnapped*, 2010)
- necrophilia exploitation films (e.g., *Nekromantik*, 1988)
- the grotesque; e.g., the "geek show" gross-out exhibit from William Lindsay Gresham's 1946 novel, *Nightmare Alley*, or Katherine Dunn's *Geek Love* (1989)

I *do* discuss things like chattel/canonical rape, public shame/self-hatred, murder and unironic psychosexual violence (meaning "battle sex," or warring notions of sex in terms of theatrical codifiers for a belief system, but also coded instructions executed by arbiters of an unironic and ironic nature: cops and victims)

psychosexuality ("battle sex")

The adjacent placement of pleasurable pain and other euphoric sensations next to unironic harm; i.e., rape fantasy or theatre. Just as canon and camp exist in the same shadow zone, performative irony and its absence are equally liminal using the same shared aesthetics of power and resistance, death and rape, heroic (monstrous) violence: the colors of stigma, vice, power and sin. Canonical psychosexuality conflates pleasure with genuine harm, including bigoted stereotypes that further this pathology. These result in widespread misconceptions about healthy BDSM as a result of sex-coercive BDSM (through unironic "demon BDSM" examples, including criminal hauntology news cycles or "true crime" in other mediums besides television), and genuine pluralities that seek out dangerous sex (hard kink) due to confused pleasure responses resulting from extreme prey mechanisms/posttraumatic stress disorder that compel victims to unironically spifflicate; i.e., "to be self-destroyed or disposed of by violence" in an unironic sense. As something to unironically or ironically seek out on and offstage, abuse manifests differently per person relative to congenital and environmental factors which are often accident-of-birth. But general psychosexuality manifests through the Destroyer persona and their utterly devastated victim as part of the same social-sexual equation; i.e., a cultural

pathology or ironic, informed interrogation regarding the proliferation of this extremism in normalized, canonical depictions of heroic sexuality as embattled: as sex-coercive, hence unironically violent and rapacious through warring factions thereof (and against camp in the larger meta conversation).

in writing throughout the book; and there's certainly a place for all of these things in iconoclastic art (trauma needs to be communicated in as many ways as it can); i.e., the digging up of dead things when we feel—in the classic Gothic sense—"buried alive" according to the enforced relationship between sexuality and gender as Gothicized in canonical works:

live burial

The Gothic master-trope, live burial—as marked by Eve Segewick in her introduction to *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* (1986)—is expressed in the language of live burial as an endless metaphor for the buried libido within concentric structures as something to punish "digging into" (which includes investigating the false family's incestuous/abjectly monstrous bloodline; [source](#)). To move beyond psychoanalytical models and into Marxist territories, I would describe live burial as incentivized by power structures in ways that threaten abuse (often death, incarceration or rape) to those who go looking into hereditary and dynastic power structures, especially their psychosexual abuse and worker exploitation: the fate of the horny detective, but also the *whistleblower*.

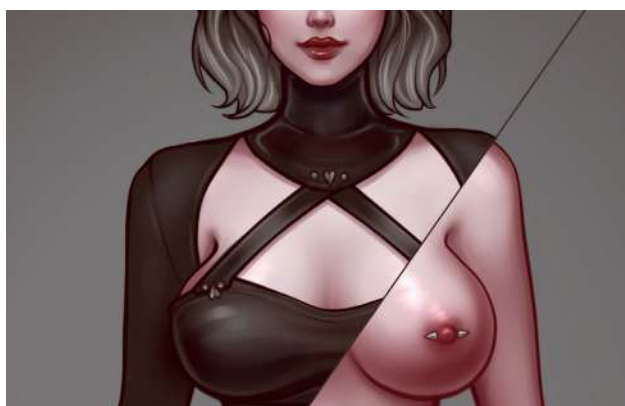
This poetic disinterment and its paradoxical examination of ourselves as abjectly undead *is* critically valid; it's just not the kind of necromancy I care to communicate through, first and foremost. As the kids say, it "gives me the yuck."



For example, porn under Capitalism becomes synonymized with gore and other taboo displays as looked at a particular way—*clandestinely* or otherwise in trashy, "forbidden" stories that communicate through vibes, raw pastiche, recycled conventions, and aesthetics first and foremost. Parody is common, but optional (especially "perceptive"

parody, which goes against the profit motive). As such, I thoroughly recognize several key foils, including the fact that a) non-painful pleasure and harmful/non-harmful pain elide in classic Gothic aesthetics¹⁴ and fiction, but also *apparel* as a core part of these stories; and b) often rely on humiliation kinks that cheerfully play with dead things in a *memento mori*, "happy Gothic"¹⁵ approach to "dead body positivity"—i.e., of the Tim-Burton *Corpse Bride* (2006) sort (to be frank, I prefer

¹⁴ E.g., nipple piercings, which often appear in the shape of spikes—as "phallic," but also as anti-*predation* devices (see, below); they work within human physiology as something to fetishize at various erogenous points that explore "forbidden" sites (and means) of pleasure; i.e., the *pierced* female nipple or clitoris as a visually intense and physically playful means of pleasurable pain that *isn't* automatically linked to biological reproduction, while supplying the viewer, player and owner with liminal cosmetics of death and exquisite "torture": the woman-in-black's heart-adorned fetish gear commonly made from leather and lace (the classic damsel/demon or virgin/whore binary).



(artist: [Honey Lavender](#))

¹⁵ The term "happy Gothic" has been lifted straight from Catherine Spooner's [Post-Millennial Gothic: Comedy, Romance and the Rise of Happy Gothic](#) (2017).

the less-gory-and-more-moody gloomth of the Mancunian postpunks, or Edward Smith's The Cure), but also more "strict" BDSM: "marathon sadism," electrocution, knife play and hard-choking¹⁶ or simulated drowning exercises, etc. These *can* be transgressively sex-positive as a means of psychosexual catharsis—especially when dealing with regressive trauma or confused pleasure and pain responses; i.e., seeking pain for its own sake, or having death fantasies (towards oneself or others in a gradient of unironic and ironic forms) that launch a knee-jerk (so to speak) orgasmic response/*jouissance*¹⁷ that stems from surviving hardcore sexual abuse (and emotional/physical abuse, or intersections of all three).

Yet, despite their validity as provably cathartic within the Gothic mode, abject sexuality and strict BDSM still aren't "my bag" in terms of what I like to study or explore; that is, despite having performed sadistic exercises on an ex-partner by request, said person also traumatized me, making future requests of performing "strict" pain on new partners a potentially unpleasant task. Not my thing. Sex and full-on gore? I'll pass. But sleep sex (exhibit 11b2), societal collapse/Gothic castles (e.g., the danger disco, exhibit 15b1), Numinous consent-non-consent (exhibit 39a2), voyeurism (watching consenting couples fuck [exhibit 101c2] or having others consent to watch *me* fuck) and graveyard sentiment (exhibit 37b)? Hell yeah, sign me up (I hesitate to quote Coleridge because he's a racist prude, but he was absolutely on the money with this snippet from "[General Character of the Gothic Literature and Art](#)" [1818]: "...the Gothic art is sublime. On entering a cathedral, I am filled with devotion and with awe; I am lost to the actualities that surround me, and my whole being expands into the infinite; earth and air, nature and art, all swell up into eternity, and the only sensible impression left, is, 'that I am nothing!'")!

Porn under Capitalism is always a liminal proposition, one where canon conflates gore, rape, and general harm with supposed acts of love (e.g., *Squid Game*'s gratuitous 2021 violence illustrating a generalized violation of human rights through misdirection and pornographic force presented as a "cute" game). As the title might suggest, then, *Sex Positivity* is largely about sex positivity as something

¹⁶ *These kinks are classified as "hard" for a reason: They're potentially dangerous and require not just experience but expertise, meaning if you don't know what you're doing when performing them, you could easily harm or even kill someone. For example, choking is fine when a professional sadist is working with someone they trust, while both parties know the ropes and have safe words (the traffic light system is a safe bet). But experience is the teacher of fools and informed consent requires just that—for people to be informed correctly. The problem is, many people learn from entertainment, especially regarding BDSM as canonically harmful. So while Gothic media can potentially yield critical power within discourse about systemic abuse, it won't actually teach you proper choke technique in terms of giving or receiving erotic asphyxiation (any more than watching James Bond will show you correct espionage). Never try it by yourself and always have someone who won't harm you by accident (or on purpose). Just ask [David Carradine](#) or [Richard Belzer](#)!*

¹⁷ E.g., *frisson*, aka "the skin orgasm" (often felt during so-called Numinous, or "religious" experiences).

to replace canonical forms of abuse with; i.e., *liminal* expressions of sex and trauma that lean towards, and help lead survivors away from, the status quo using cathartic monster poetics and sex-positive "demon BDSM," *not* Radcliffe's demon lover (more on them, in the thesis statement and Volume Two)!

Whether sex-positive or not, monsters are liminal, but their iconoclastic reclamation coincides with ironic rape fantasies and complicated symbols of recovery (fetishes) that reverse-abject state-sanctioned, social-sexual violence through transformative, even pornographic Gothic embellishment. Abject sexuality and exploitation exist squarely outside my invigilator and creator comfort zones, hence won't be featured in this book. That being said, I *will* have plenty of monsters that approach these subjects comfortably for me; i.e., to a *healing* degree, not a "geek show" insofar as the exhibiting and voyeurism of peril are concerned. To that, camp and schlock allow for "rape" to exist in quotes using fetish aesthetics—often with a fair amount of Gothic nostalgia and expertise. Weird nerds tend to know their stuff, and can push into abject spaces in ways that still account for the boundaries of others:



(*exhibit -1a: Artist: [Mercedes the Muse](#). They aren't just a stone-cold fox; they're an incredibly passionate and knowledgeable filmmaker and performer when it comes to schlock and camp! Both genres are equally worthy of study and consideration as things to recreate and learn from.*)

Of course, I *am* discussing the Gothic mode in a sex-positive light; there are some liminal/grey-area exceptions I'll need to make, exhibit-wise. For example, I repeatedly discuss Mercedes's awesomely schlocky creations (and other campy monster artists reclaiming heteronormative stigmas), featuring her "tromette" performances in our book's first exhibit, as well as exhibits 67 and 78, among

others; despite having *some* gross-out qualities, her content is something I'm comfortable recreating in my own work/exhibiting in this book with her permission (she's also incredibly sex-positive, which makes working with her a snap).

So while this book displays and analyzes "vanilla" porn (exhibits 32a or 32b), it tries quite hard to examine dozens of cases of sex-positive *monster* porn (too many to easily list, but Mercede's previous exhibit counts, as does exhibit 1a1a1h3a2). I also exhibit several contentious subjects: one, several drawings of naked, pre-pubescent children/teenagers from Robie Harris and Michael Emberley's 1994 sex-education book for children ten-and-up, *It's Perfectly Normal* (exhibits 55 and 90a); two, [the problematic moe art style](#) (meaning either a child-like appearance, or sexualized children/teenagers in non-erotic media) featured in neoliberal, American-aligned media like *Dragon Ball* and *Street Fighter 6* (1986 and 2023, exhibit 104b) but also canonical porn (exhibit 104c)—albeit as something to be wary of; three, [ahegao or "rape face," which is also examined](#) in the same section, in exhibit 104d towards the end of the book; and four, one example of straight-up murder and torture performed by the Male Gaze of an evil superman called Homelander (exhibit 1a1a1h3a1a1) and several examples where unironic rape scenes are discussed, but not shown. Excluding the Homelander collage, unironic rape and violence aren't openly displayed in this book's imagery (and even then, it's featured to make a point about Man Box culture).

This book has over 250 collages, some of which include liminal, complicated examples of sexualized media that ultimately have something to salvage or transmute away from canonical, sex-coercive forms mid-resistance; e.g., ironic psychosexuality (exhibit 0a1b2b) and catharsis (exhibit 0a1b2a1). For our book's second exhibit (exhibit -1b), here's an example to give you an idea of what you should largely *not* expect moving forward:

- abject, gross-out gore—either as an exploitative dissection of the human form, or as eroticized, psychosexual variants (e.g., Phedon Papamichael's excellent, but hard-to-watch exploitation film, *Inside* [2008]—a movie about a Gothic impostor forcing her husband's killer to have a C-section during an utterly gross scene which makes *Alien's* "birth scene" look positively ordinary by comparison).
- any bathroom hijinks and overt, aggressive rape scenarios involving animals, disabled people, dead bodies, or "non-consenting" persons (excepting *moe* and *ahegao* and some appreciative rape scenarios; i.e., consent-non-consent).



(exhibit -1b: Various scenes of gore from classic horror movies, as well as abject merchandise and gory props, aka [memento mori](#): "remember that you [have to] die." Most are shots of the 2018 *Halloween* [from "[The Horrors of Halloween](#)"] or screencaps from *Alien*, 1979, middle strip; however, the far-mid-left shot of Reagan from *The Exorcist*, 1973, is from [EllimacsSFX](#). Such Gothic craftsmanship tends to form a tradition of recreating death and disgusting things, but also female vulnerability through the Male Gaze—with the bathroom not simply being a place of abject activities like taking a shit, but also a place of profound vulnerability where one's pants/panties are literally down: easy pickings/the sitting duck. These grotesque exhibits have been canonized by male Pygmalions like Stanley Kubrick and Alfred Hitchcock, who both made their lengthy careers by needlessly terrifying/torturing women—so much so that after 180+ takes on *The Shining* [1981] Shelley Duval became a decades-long recluse, [only returning to break the silence in the 2020s](#)¹⁸ [the same "tortured saint" effect happened to Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio [being tortured on the set of *The Abyss*](#)¹⁹, 1989; but also

¹⁸ Cody Hamman's "The Forest Hills Star, Shelley Duvall, Sits Down for an Interview with Grimm Life Collective" (2023).

¹⁹ Brandi Yetzer's "Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio Never Worked With James Cameron Again After Filming a Torturous Scene" (2022).

Maria Falconetti [being forced to kneel for hours on stone during *The Passion of Joan of Arc*²⁰](#), 1928; and taken to awful diegetic extremes with the aforementioned *Martyrs*]. These Pygmalions also tended to take the mastery of suspense away from earlier female examples—e.g., suspense girl-wizard, Ann Radcliffe, who admittedly had her own problems—but also any notion of informed consent regarding their own workers' basic human rights.)

There are plenty of specialized terms in here that I will explain more during the essential keywords paratext, and many more still during the thesis volume (all are defined in the full keyword glossary per volume) but for a quick, handy idea about Gothic (gay-anarcho) Communism, refer to the next two sections: "The Six Gothic-Marxist Tenets and Four Main Gothic Theories" and "About the Logo."



(artist: [Blxxd Bunny](#))

²⁰ Chadwick Jenkins' "Suffering the Inscrutable: The Ethics of the Face in Dreyer's 'The Passion of Joan of Arc'" (2018).

A Note on Canonical Essentialism

...latitude, like genetics and ecology, is not destiny. We echo earlier concerns about the perils of single factor explanations and suggest that chance, and perhaps factors that promoted colonial empires, need to be more seriously considered as potentially important drivers of human inequality ([source](#)).

—Angela M. Chira, *et al*, "Geography Is Not Destiny: A quantitative Test of Diamond's Axis of Orientation Hypothesis" (2024)

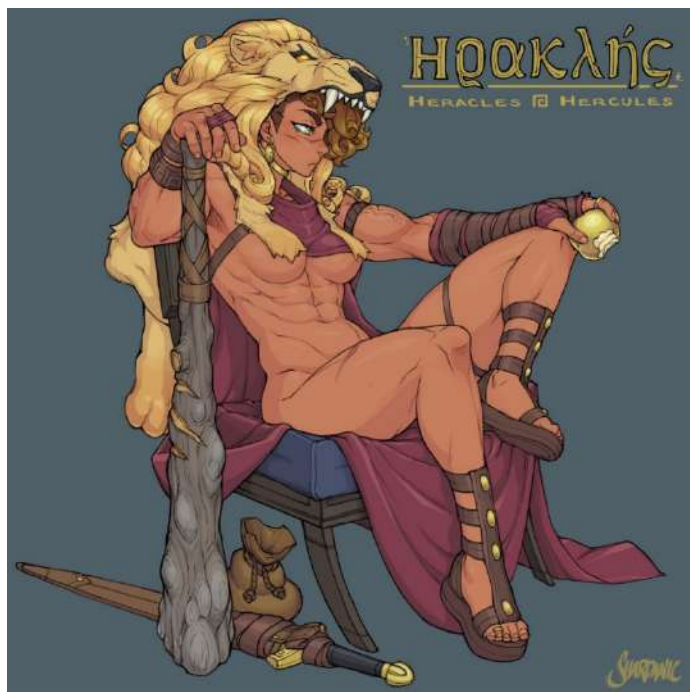
Watching Rebecca Watson first discuss the widespread critical backlash received by Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs and Steel* (1997) after its debut, [then offer up various counter studies since the book's publication](#) ("Study: Guns, Germs, and Steel was Wrong," 2024), I thought of my writings on Capitalism and canon; i.e., as things to oppose through iconoclastic art when developing Gothic Communism, mid-opposition. For the next four pages, I want to quickly mention and reflect on the essentializing nature of canon within Capitalist Realism—both why the latter requires the former to succeed, but also how it manifests in ways we should routinely keep in mind.



(artist: [Alexey Lastochkin](#))

Per my thesis statement, Capitalism sexualizes everything in a heteronormative (vertically arranged, sexually dimorphic) scheme; *canon* achieves heteronormativity by essentializing biology, ecology and geography (economics, etc) in equal measure in order to achieve and maintain a *Cartesian* outcome:

domination of the natural world (and workers) to serve profit. This happens through the routine gendering of Nature vs Society (*vis-à-vis* Raj Patel and Jason Moore) by Cartesian thinkers; i.e., in ways that men like Francis Bacon and René Descartes started, but continue to remain relevant under Capitalist Realism as a more recent affair that neither patriarch lived to see: a raping of nature as Promethean, meaning in this case "primed for abuse, *ad nauseum*." Nature is Medusa; Medusa must obey *and* die (over and over).

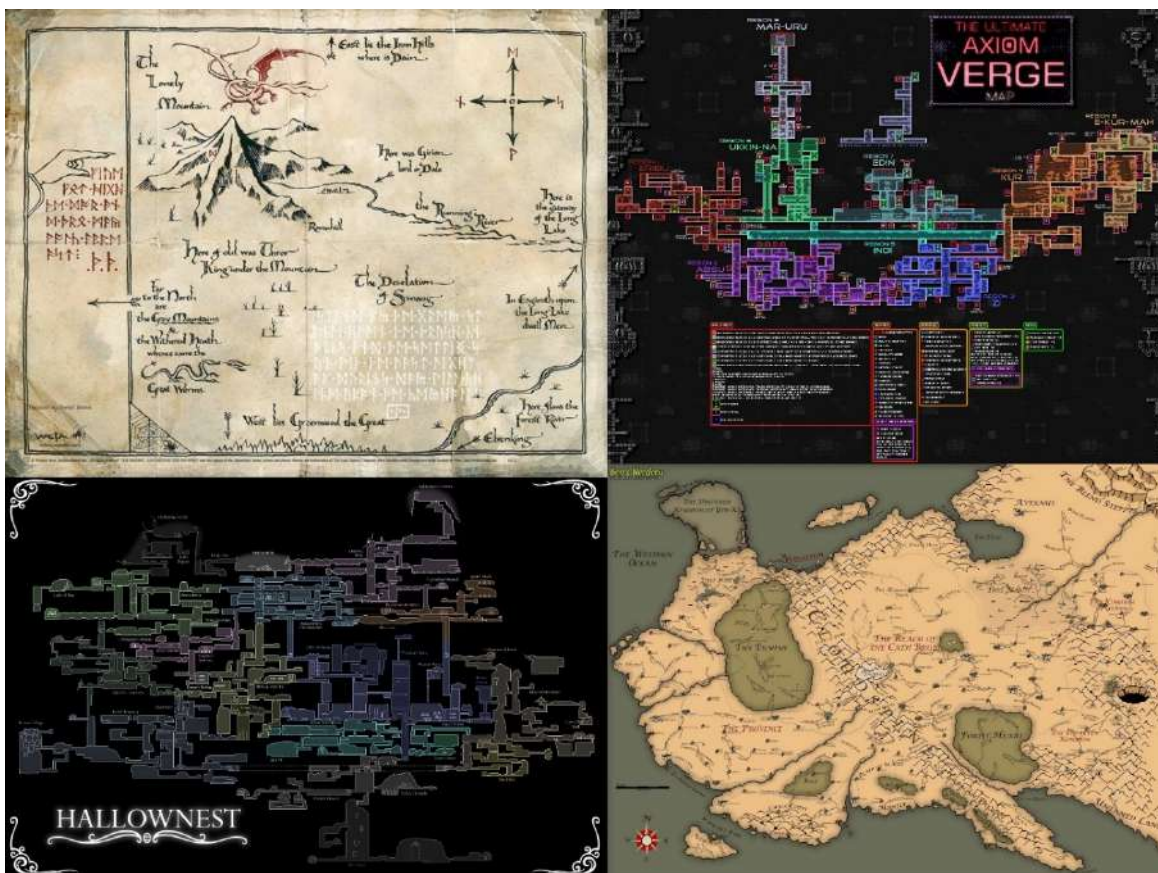


(artist: [Shardanic](#))

In turn, said Realism yields neoliberal fantasies (often videogames) that present nature as good or evil in essential terms, and by extension, gendered ones that are biologically and ecologically divided along problematic moral categories whose territory is geared towards a settler-colonial outcome: the mapping and execution of conquest, thus genocide through us versus them, reliably framing "us" as *human* and "them" as *inhuman* through various black-and-white binaries that serve capital, thus

empire (or humanizing inhuman groups—e.g., white cis-het women [above]—to recruit them harmfully into a centrist story that *prolongs* settler-colonial conflict; i.e., for profit's sake, instead of permanently ceasing hostilities by actually addressing the socio-material conditions that historically lead to them: pro-state workers triangulating through the equality of convenience ["boundaries for me, not for thee"] to unironically punch down in *defense* of the state *against* intersectional solidarity and workers, animals and the environment at large).

It bears repeating that said execution of conquest involves a map of a location, the latter filled with enemies (e.g., orcs) who must be cleared by human agents or token enforcers, doing so step-by-step, person-by-person, room-by-room to effectively "sweep" the entire area of perceived hostilities. Doing so is meant to achieve one cycle of capital in miniature; i.e., moving money through nature to achieve profit as expressed concentrically on *all* registers. Likewise, the basic categories of land, sexual biology and ecology manifest in a variety of refrains canonizing Cartesian dualism (and its harmful divisions) through Capitalist Realism. My book pointedly highlights two: Tolkien's and Cameron's.



(the map exhibit [1a1a1h2a1] from Volume Zero: "...Videogames are war simulators; in them, maps are built not merely to be charted and explored, but conquered through war simulations. The land is an endless site of conquest, war, rape and profit carefully dressed up as "treasure," "liberation" and "adventure," but in truth, brutalizing nature during endless wars of extermination borrowed from the historical and imaginary past as presently intertwined:

- top-left: Tolkien's refrain, "Thror's Map" from *The Hobbit*, 1937
—source: [Weta Workshop](#)
- top-right: Thomas Happ's map of Sudra from *Axiom Verge*, 2014
—source: [magicofgames](#)
- bottom-left: Team Cherry's map of Hallownest, from *Hollow Knight* 2017
—source: [tupkam1](#)
- bottom-right: Bungie's map of the West from *Myth: the Fallen Lords*, 1997
—source: [Ben's Nerderly](#)

[...] Under Capitalist Realism, Hell is a place that always appears on Earth [or an Earth-like double]—a black fortress threatening state hegemony during the inevitable decay of a colonial body. Its widening state of exception must then be entered by the hero during the liminal hauntology of war as a repeatable, monomythic excursion...)

Tolkien's refrain gentrifies war in a fantasy-themed cartography (the map of conquest in novels, movies and games, video or otherwise), which neatly and consistently divide land and occupant between good and bad, human and orc (or spider, demon, ghost, etc). Cameron's refrain, the shooter and the Metroidvania, was first inspired by Robert Heinlein before likewise being injected into popular media as conducting *military optimism*²¹ abroad: insectoid places to go and bomb/shoot into oblivion. Doing so happens while simultaneously popularizing it back home through military urbanism and urban warfare inside the Gothic castle (versus the land *around* the castle, as Tolkien tends to do; i.e., the *open* battlefield). There is always an enemy of nature to kill and destroy in ways that fetishize the larger alienating process, turning "empowerment" into a Promethean Quest through a Faustian bargain. It becomes Romanticized, nostalgic, endlessly remediated (a Cycle of Kings, ruins, graveyards). By extension, war is dimorphically sexualized as us-versus-them, the hunt (and its associate tensions, reliefs and anxieties) celebrated with a lucrative fakery to maintain the lie of Western sovereignty through the ghost of the counterfeit's usual process of abjection. The West, including its fantasies, remain haunted during the liminal hauntology of war as a routine appearance within a structure; e.g., Dracula's castle.

On this generic spectrum and its assorted cartographic architecture, one thing remains constant between the two refrains (and their imitators and offshoots): nature is monstrous-feminine, queer, non-white and non-Christian, etc. This includes its land and various human and non-human occupants being deliberately prepared for endless invasions and harvests by Capitalism's architects and usual benefactors: white cis-het men (and token agents) of various monomythic positions. There is a good land and a bad, a good people and a bad, a good nature and a bad, and the centrist nature of the larger structure sanctions and essentializes canonical violence by the good against the bad; i.e., reliably justifying the former invading and brutalizing the latter to move money through nature by *cheapening* nature. Nature becomes Hell by design, amounting to a documentation process required by Capitalism to function in essential perpetuity.

In short, nature becomes canon, a mandate for how to think, thus behave regarding the usual benefactors and victims within a settler colony and the state of exception found in or between its surrounding areas of influence. There must

²¹ From Persephone van der Waard's "The Promethean Quest and James Cameron's Military Optimism in *Metroid*," (2021):

Just as *Alien* evolved into *Aliens*, the *Metroid* franchise has become increasingly triumphant over time. Abjuring the Promethean myth, it instead offers military optimism—the idea that seemingly unstoppable enemies can be defeated with patience and, more importantly, military resources; the more victories, the more resources there are to use (even if these are little more than looted plunder in the grand scheme).

Samus repeatedly embarks on the Promethean Quest. Over time, this quest has become less cautionary and more professional. The Promethean past isn't something to fear or avoid; it's something to shoot. This attitude removes the quest's cautionary elements, especially where the military is concerned. This creates a franchise much more fixated on Samus as a neutral figure with military ties. Rather than fight them, she does their bidding and is celebrated for it ([source](#)).

always be a good and bad land, but also good and bad occupants according to biology as essential (and connected to gender) in terms of a heteronormative ordering of workers within nature as something to control, thus dominate; i.e., there are white cis-het men and anything else is alien to varying degrees; e.g., white women are alien, but *not* as alien as trans people *provided* they behave within the structure. "Rocking the boat" through intersectional solidarity against capital invites collective (and selective) punishment through reactive abuse to keep these dichotomies not only installed, but constantly enforced through physical, mental and/or socio-ideological forms of menticial violence; i.e., dogma insofar as canonical *essentialism* aids and abets in Capitalist Realism concealing capital functioning as it always does. As something to criminalize and dominate, nature is always alien, fetishized, incorrect, criminal, outside, black, etc...



(artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#))

The proof is in the pudding. Or rather, it appears in the "pudding" of people as expressed through commodities that—when reclaimed by active, emotionally/Gothically intelligent and conscious workers synthesizing praxis—assist in said workers' chaotic liberation (camp) as part of the natural-material world enslaved and exploited by Capitalism through routine, orderly conquest and genocide (canon); i.e., by dissolving the very boundaries, thus binaries, that trap and exploit us in home as foreign: a settler-colonial project for which we are *not* strictly welcome and for which internal and external tensions hyphenate clean divisions like inside/outside or correct/incorrect into something far more liminal, messy and grey. "There is no outside of the text," insofar as people and their interactions with each other (and the various cultural markers of coded behaviors that lead to or resist genocide) become something to acknowledge *ipso facto*. We see the *aesthetic* of torture, for instance, in calculated risk as a proletarian function; i.e., a Gothic fetish that aims to express power through its theatrical absence/disparity as an informed means of negotiating state trauma. In viewing it, we must learn to recognize the human, thus autonomous, person involved in defense of nature, of workers, of our land, sexualities, bodies, genders, etc, as constantly under attack by capital.

My friend, Harmony Corrupted, is but one example. Consider how this book is full of similar people, places and things. Seek them out, but also recognize the ones I do not have time to list. Do so to achieve class and culture war yourselves; i.e., as a cathartic sexual undertaking with non-heteronormative (thus non-Cartesian) results. We're in this together, comrades!

The Six Gothic-Marxist Tenets and Four Main Gothic Theories



(artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#))

Gothic Communism has six Gothic-Marxist tenets (the Six Rs) and four main Gothic theories (the Four Gs). They operate in conjunction, and their collective idea is (to borrow from/rephrase our abstract)

to make Marxism a little cooler, sexier and fun than Marx ever could through the Wisdom of the Ancients (a cultural understanding of the imaginary past) as a "living document"; i.e., to make it "succulent" by "living deliciously" as an act of repeated reflection that challenges heteronormativity's dimorphic biological essentialism and bondage of gender to sex, thus leading to a class awakening at a countercultural level through iconoclastic (sex-positive), monomorphic Gothic poetics.

I've written the Gothic-Marxist tenets *to keep in mind*, not cite each and every time. In short, they provide general teaching objectives that sit between theory and application, and their interpretation and scope is meant to be fairly broad and conversational regardless of your exact approach. They are as follows:

- **Re-claim/-cultivate.** Seize Gothic art as the means of emotional (monstrous) production, tied to cultural symbols of stigma, trauma and fear that abject workers or otherwise emotionally manipulate them to surrender the means of production—their labor, their intelligence and control—unto canonical productions that normally make workers ignorant towards the means of reclaiming these things: the ability to produce, appreciate and cultivate a pro-labor, post-scarcity Gothic imagination, including theatrical implements of torture; i.e., shackles, collars, whips and chains, but also undead, demonic and/or animalized egregores in service of Gothic Communism. As part of their complex, warring praxis, minds, monsters, history and sexualities, workers must hone their own reclaimed voices—a dark poetics, pedagogy of the oppressed, splendid lies, etc—to challenge the status quo (and its war and rape cultures) by attaining structural catharsis during oppositional praxis, thus limit the systemic, generational harm committed by capitalist structures (abuse prevention/risk reduction behaviors).
- **Re-unite/-discover/-turn.** Reunite people with their alienated, alienizing bodies, language, labor, sexualities, genders, trauma, pasts and emotions in sex-positive, re-humanizing (xenophilic) ways; an active attempt to detect and marry oneself to what was lost at the emotional, Gothic, linguistic and materially intelligent level: a *return* of the living dead and the creation/summoning of demons and their respective trauma and forbidden knowledge. This poetic coalition should operate as a sex-positive force that speaks out against Cartesian division, unironic xenophobia and state abuse, while advancing workers towards the development of Gothic-Communism.
- **Re-empower/-negotiate.** Grant workers control over their own sexual labor through their emotions and, by extension things (most often language, symbols or art) that stem from, and relate to, their sexual labor as historically abjected and privatizing under Capitalism; to allow them to renegotiate their boundaries in regards to their trauma through their sexual labor as their own, including their bodies and emotions as a potent form of power interrogation, *re-negotiation* and *re-exchange* amid chaotic and unequal circumstances (worker-positive BDSM and Satanic rebellion, in other words) that fight for conditional love and informed, set boundaries during social-sexual exchanges that heal from complex, generational trauma: the "good play" of conditional offers and mutually agreed-upon deals—not unconditional, coercive love compelled by pro-state abusers; i.e., "bad play" and "prison sex" within rape culture. This doesn't just apply to deals with institutions (e.g., [where I had to make conditional/unconditional offers set by](#)

[a \[money-making\] university](#)—linked arm-in-arm with financial [money-lending] institutions exiting as a part of the same student-exploiting business); it applies to our own lives as sexualized workers, synthesizing our principles with those we work/set boundaries with in relation to our labor, bodies, emotional bonds, etc. Setting individual and collective boundaries is important towards protecting yourself and others during activist behaviors, which automatically pose some degree of risk under capital; don't be afraid to impose your own limits to minimize risk of abuse, even if that means "losing" someone in the process. If they're holding *that* over your head, they weren't really your friend to begin with.

- **Re-open/-educate.** To expose the privatization of emotions and denial of sex-positive sex/gender education to individual workers, helping them reopen their minds and their eyes, thus see, understand and feel how private property makes people emotionally and Gothically stupid; Marx's adage, "Private property has made us so stupid and one-sided that an object is only ours when we have it—when it exists for us as capital, or when it is directly possessed, eaten, drunk, worn, inhabited, etc—in short, when it is used by us." This applies to *de facto* education as a means of facing systemic trauma and dismantling it through Gothic paradox and play teaching workers to be better on a grand intuitive scale.
- **Re-play.** Establish a new kind of game attitude and playfulness during development towards Communism, one that dismantles the bourgeoisie's **intended play** of manufactured *scarcity*, *consent*, and *conflict* in favor of a post-scarcity world filled with "game" workers who can learn and respond creatively to the natural and person-made problems of language and the material world with unique solutions: **emergent play**, or player-developed approaches in games (e.g., [including Communist videogames like Dwarf Fortress](#), 2006) but also game-like environments (our focus is Gothic poetics and BDSM theatrics); i.e., to be willing to try negotiating for themselves through playful forms during social-sexual scenarios of all kinds; to reclaim, rediscover, and relearn, but also teach lost things using iconoclastic monsters that critique the status quo in controlled/chaotic settings; *to enjoy but not blindly enjoy, thus endorse* cheap canonical "junk food" by re-inspecting them with a readiness to critique and reinvent. As Anita Sarkeesian explains, "It's both possible, and even necessary, to simultaneously enjoy media while also being critical of its more problematic or pernicious aspects" (source: [Facebook](#)²²). The idea in doing so is to understand, mid-enjoyment and

²² Original source: The Guardian, 2015—which has since been removed (undoubtedly to appease "Gamergate" misogynists because The Guardian are moderates at heart; i.e., they don't take hard stances against capital, thus can't push back against fascists).

critique, that development is *not* a zero-sum game, but as Jesper Juul puts it in his eponymous book, is "a half-real zone between the fiction and the rules" that allows for emergent, at times *transgressive* forms of good play (me) as a transformative device ([source](#)). To borrow and mutate three more ludic terms, then, the "ludic contract" is whatever the player negotiates for themselves inside the natural-material world, acting like a "spoilsport" by redefining the terms of the contact within and outside of itself²³; i.e., as a half-real, "magic-circle" space where, as Eric Zimmerman explains, the game takes place in ways that aren't wholly separate from real life²⁴—except for us, games occur along Gothic, liminal routes, wherein workers playfully articulate their natural rights in linguo-material ways between reality and fabrication that go beyond games as commodities but are nevertheless informed by them as something to rewrite; i.e., through play as a general exercise that involves a great many things: a *reached* agreement of power and play in Gothic terms, whose luck/odds are defined not through canon, but iconoclastic *poiesis* that can be expanded far beyond the restrictive, colonial binary and heteronormative ruleset of the elite's intended exploitation of workers to challenge the profit motive and all of its harmful effects in the bargain; e.g., genocide, heteronormativity and Max Box culture. The sum of these concepts in praxis could be called "ludo-Gothic BDSM"²⁵.

²³ (from the glossary): The ludic contract is an agreement between the player and the game to be played; or as Chris Pratt writes in "[In Praise of Spoil Sports](#)" (2010): "the more traditional definition of the ludic contract [is] an agreement on the part of players that they will forgo some of their agency in order to experience an activity that they enjoy." Yet, inventive players like speedrunners (which Pratt calls "spoilsports") converge upon intended gameplay with unintended, emergent forms. In other words, the ludic contract is less a formal, rigid contract and more a negotiated compromise occurring between the two; i.e., where players have some sense of agency in deciding how *they* want to play the game even while adhering to its rules and, in effect, being mastered by it (see: Seth Giddings and Helen Kennedy's "[Little Jesuses and *@#?-off Robots](#)," 2008, exhibit 0a2c).

²⁴ (abridged, from the glossary): The magic circle is the space where a game takes place, be that a social game, a sport, a dialog or gender performance onstage, and videogames, etc. The founder of the idea, Eric Zimmerman, writes in "Jerked Around by the Magic Circle" (2012):

The "magic circle" is not a particularly prominent phrase in *Homo Ludens*, and although Huizinga certainly advocates the idea that games can be understood as separate from everyday life, he never takes the full-blown magic circle point of view that games are ultimately separate from everything else in life or that rules are the sole fundamental unit of games. In fact, Huizinga's thesis is much more ambivalent on these issues and he actually closes his seminal book with a passionate argument against a strict separation between life and games... ([source](#)).

²⁵ (from the glossary, abridged): My combining of an older academic term, "ludo-Gothic" (Gothic videogames), with sex-positive BDSM theatrics as a potent means of camp. The emphasis is less about "how can videogames be Gothic" and more how the playfulness in videogames is commonly used to allow players to camp canon in and out of videogames as a form of fairly negotiated power exchange established in playful, game-like forms (which we'll unpack during the "camp map" in our thesis volume).

- **Re-produce/-lease.** To disseminate these tenets through worker-made sex-positive lessons that we leave behind; i.e., egregores, "archaeologies" and other Gothic-Communist "derelicts." As the oppressed, our pedagogy should be centered around the continued production of communal emotional intelligence as a Gothically instructional means of transforming the material world and, by extension, the socio-natural world for the better—by healing from generational trauma by interrogating its structural causes *together*.

I call these tenets the Six Rs because they constitute six things to reclaim from Capitalism through the Gothic imagination; i.e., *vis-à-vis* our own bodies and labor as things to weaponize against capital during praxial synthesis: through our creative successes, whatever they may be.



(artist: [Crow](#))

Underpinning our six tenets are four central Gothic theories, the Four Gs:

- **abjection** (from Julia Kristeva's process of abjection, *vis-à-vis* Jerrold Hogle's "ghost of the counterfeit")

Coined by Julia Kristeva in her 1981 book, [The Powers of Horror](#), abjection means "to throw off." Abjection is "us versus them," dividing the self into a

linguistically and emotionally normal state with an "othered" half. This "other" is generally reserved for abjected material—criminal, taboo or alien concepts: good and evil, heaven and hell, civilization and nature, men and women, etc. Through Cartesian dualism—re: the rising of a dividing system of thought by René Descartes that led to settler colonialism—nation-states and corporations create states of normality (the status quo) by forcefully throwing off everything that *isn't* normal, isn't rational, masculine or even human, etc. Through the status quo, normal examples are defined by their alien, inhuman opposites, the latter held at a distance but frequently announced and attacked (a form of punching down); the iconoclast, often in Gothic fiction, will force a confrontation, exposing the viewer (often vicariously) to experience the same process in reverse (a form of punching up). Facing the abjected material reliably leads to a state of horror, its reversal exposing the normal as false, rotten and demonic, and the so-called "demons" or dangerous undead as victimized and human: "Who's the savage?" [asks Rob Halford](#). "Modern man!" Descartes was certainly a massive dick, but the spawning of endless Pygmalion-generated undead and demons scarcely started and ended with him. Instead, it expanded through the ghost of the counterfeit as wedded to the process of abjection in Gothic canon; or as Dave West summarizes in "[Implementation of Gothic Themes in The Gothic Ghost of the Counterfeit](#)" (2023):

In [the 2012 essay] "The Gothic Ghost of the Counterfeit and the Process of Abjection," Jerrold E. Hogle argues that the eighteenth-century Gothic emergence from fake imitation of fake work is the foundation of what is defined as modern Gothic today. He maintains that Horace Walpole's 1765²⁶ *The Castle of Otranto*, which is considered as the groundwork of the modern Gothic story, is built on a false proclamation that the novel was an Italian manuscript written by a priest. [...] Hogle argues that modern Gothic is grounded in fakery. [In turn,] Hogle's observation of the history of *The Castle of Otranto* forms the basis for understanding the concept of counterfeit as a result of the abjection process.

²⁶ Walpole actually published the original manuscript in 1764 under a pseudonym without the qualifier "a Gothic tale" (which he added a year later after people pitched a fit that he—the son of the first British prime minister—had effectively forged a historical document and passed it off as genuine). The story was based off his architectural reconstruction (thus reimagining) of medieval history, Strawberry Hill House (a cross-medium tradition carried on by Gothic contemporaries/spiritual successors—e.g., William Beckford's *Vathek*, 1786, and subsequent "folly," Fonthill Abbey, in 1796—but also videogame spaces inspired by the cinematic and novelized forms previously build on real-life "haunted" houses: the *Metroidvania*).

Gothic Communism, then, reverses *xenophobic* abjection through *xenophilic* subversion as a liminal form of countercultural expression (camp). Sex work and pornography (and indeed *any* controlled substance—sex, drugs, rock n' roll, but also subversive oral traditional and slave narratives) operate through



liminal transgression; e.g., subversive monster-fucking Amazons (exhibit 104a), werewolves (exhibit 87a) and Little Red Riding Hood (exhibit 52b) or Yeti (exhibit 48d2), etc. Reversing the process of abjection, these monstrous-feminine beings allow their performers to not only address personal traumas "onstage," but engender systemic change in socio-material conditions; i.e., by performing their repressed inequalities during arguably surreal, but highly imaginary interpersonal exchanges that are actually fun to participate in: as a process of *de facto* education in opposition to state fakeries (thus refusing to engender genocide within the common ground of a shared—indeed, heavily fought-over—aesthetic).

(artist: [John Fox](#))

- **chronotope/parallel Gothic space** (from Mikhail Bakhtin's "Gothic chronotope")

Mikhail Bakhtin's "time-space," [outlined posthumously in *The Dialogic Imagination*](#) (1981), is an architectural evocation of space and time as something whose liminal motion through describes a particular quality of history described by Bakhtin as "castle-narrative":

Toward the end of the seventeenth century in England, a new territory for novelistic events is constituted and reinforced in the so-called "Gothic" or "black" novel—the castle (first used in this meaning by Horace Walpole in *The Castle of Otranto*, and later in Radcliffe, Monk Lewis and others). The castle is saturated through and through with a

time that is historical in the narrow sense of the word, that is, the time of the historical past [...] the traces of centuries and generations are arranged in it in visible form as various parts of its architecture [...] and in particular human relationships involving dynastic primacy and the transfer of hereditary rights. [...] legends and traditions animate every corner of the castle and its environs through their constant reminders of past events. It is this quality that gives rise to the specific kind of narrative inherent in castles and that is then worked out in Gothic novels.

For our purposes, Gothic variants and their castle-narratives have a medieval/pre-Enlightenment character that describes the historical past in a museum-like way that is fearfully reimagined: as something to recursively move through, thus try to record in some shape or form; e.g., the Neo-Gothic castle (*Otranto*, 1764) to the retro-future haunted house (the Nostromo from *Alien*, 1979) to the Metroidvania (1986, onwards; my area of expertise). Canonical examples include various "forbidden zones," full of rapacious, operatic monsters; i.e., *canonical/capitalistic* parallel space. Expanding on Frederic Jameson, the *iconoclastic* Gothic chronotope is an "archaeology of the future" that can expose how we think about the past in the present to reshape the future towards a Utopian (Communist) outcome. Although we'll expound on this idea repeatedly throughout the book, a common method beyond monsters are hauntological *locations* housing things the state would normally abject: the crimes of empire buried in the rubble, but also contained inside its castle-narrative as an equally hyperreal, "narrative-of-the-crypt" (from Hogle: "The Restless Labyrinth: Cryptonomy in the Gothic Novel," 1980) *mise-en-abyme*. Iconoclastic parallel spaces and their parallel society of counterterror agents, then, align against state-corporate interests and their "geometries of terror" (exhibit 64c) which, in turn, artists can illustrate in their own iconoclastic hauntologies (exhibit 64b) and castle-narratives; i.e., ironic appreciative movement through the Gothic space and its palliative-Numinous sensations.

- **hauntology** (from Jacques Derrida's "spectres of Marx" and Mark Fischer's "canceled futures," *vis-à-vis* Jodey Castricano's *cryptomimesis*):

A basic linguistic state between the past and the present—[described by Jacques Derrida in *Spectres of Marx*](#) (1993) as being Marxism itself. Smothered by Capitalism, Marxism is an older idea from Capitalism's past that haunts Capitalism—doing so through "ghosts" in Capitalism's language that haunt future generations under the present order of material existence. In *Cryptomimesis: The Gothic and Jacques Derrida's Ghost Writing*, Jodey

Castricano writes how Marx, though not a Gothicism, was obsessed with the language of spectres and ghosts—less as concrete symbols sold for profit in the modern sense and more as a consequence of coerced human language expressing a return of the past and of the dead as a repressed force; she also calls this process *cryptomimesis*, or "writing with ghosts," as a tradition carried on by Derrida and his own desire to express haunting as a feeling experienced inside Capitalism and its language. [The concept would be articulated further by Mark Fischer as *Capitalist Realism* \(2009\)](#); i.e., a *myopia*, or total inability to imagine the future beyond past versions of the future that have become decayed, dead, and forsaken: "canceled futures" (which Stuart Mills discusses how to escape in his 2019 writeup [on Fischer's hauntology of culture, Capitalism, and acid Communism](#), "What is Acid Communism?"). While all workers are haunted by the dead, as Marx states, this especially applies to its proponents—cops and other class traitors, scapegoats, etc—as overwhelmed by a return of the dead (and their past) through Gothic language/affect in the socio-material sphere. For those less disturbed by the notion, however, this can be something to welcome and learn from—to write with; i.e., in the presence of the dead coming home as a welcome force in whatever forms they take: not just ghosts, but also vampires, zombies, or composites, the latter extending to demons and anthromorphs as summoned or made; but also all of these categories being modular insofar as they allow for a hybridized expression of trauma through undead-demonic-animalistic compounds. As Castricano writes of *cryptomimesis*

Although some critics continue to disavow the Gothic as being subliterate and appealing only to the puerile imagination—Fredric Jameson refers to the Gothic as "that boring and exhausted paradigm" [what a dork]—others, such as Anne Williams, claim that the genre not only remains very much alive but is especially vital in its evocation of the "undead," an ontologically ambiguous figure which has been the focus of so much critical attention that another critic, Slavoj Žižek, felt compelled to call the return of the living dead "the fundamental fantasy of contemporary mass culture" ([source](#)).

in regards to ghosts, I would argue the same notion applies to *all* undead, demons and animalistic egregores; i.e., writing with both as complicated theatrical expressions of the human condition under Capitalism.



(artist: Zdzisław Beksiński)

- **cryptonymy** (from Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *vis-à-vis* Jerrold Hogle's "narrative of the crypt" and Jodey Castricano's *cryptomimesis*)

In Cynthia Sugars' entry on "Cryptonymy" for David Punter's *The Encyclopedia of the Gothic* (2012), Sugars writes, "Cryptonymy, as it is used in psychoanalytic theory and adapted to Gothic studies, refers to a term coined by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok [which] receives extended consideration in their

book *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy* (1986)." Sugars goes on to summarize Abraham and Torok's usage, which highlights a tendency for language to hide a traumatic or unspeakable word with seemingly unrelated words, which compound under coercive, unnatural conditions (the inherent deceit of the nation-state and its violent/terror monopolies). For Sugars and for us, Gothic studies highlight these conditions as survived by a narrative of the crypt, its outward entropy—the symptoms and wreckage—intimating a deeper etiological trauma sublimated into socially more acceptable forms (usually monsters, lairs/parallel space, phobias, etc; you can invade, kill and "cure" those. In my 2021 writeup, "[The Promethean Quest and James Cameron's Military Optimism in *Metroid*](#)," I call this false optimism the "puncher's chance" afforded to pro-Capitalist soldiers and *de facto* killers for the state; the odds suck and are either disguised or romanticized through heroic stories/monomyths). Described by Jerrold Hogle in "The Restless Labyrinth" as the *only* thing that survives, the narrative of the crypt is a narrative of a narrative of a narrative to a hidden curse/doom announced by things displaced from the former cause: Gothic cryptonyms; illusions,

deceptions, mirages, etc. Sugars determines, the closer one gets to the problem, the more the space itself abruptly announces a vanishing point, a procession of fragmented illusions tied to a *transgenerational* curse: "a place of concealment that stands on mere ashes of something not fully present," Hogle writes of Otranto (the first "gothic" castle, reassembled for Horace Walpole's 1764 "archaeology"). In regards to the *mimetic* quality of the crypt, this general process of *cryptomimesis* draws attention to a writing predicated upon encryption: the play of revelation and concealment lodged within parts of individual words tied to Gothic theatrical conventions and linguistic functions, but also patently ludic narratives that can change one's luck within a pre-conceived and enforced set of rules; i.e., rewriting our odds of survival, thus fate, inside *exploitative* ludic schemes by pointedly redictating the material conditions (through ludo-Gothic BDSM) that represent "luck" as a variable the elite strive to manipulate for profit under Capitalism.

Unlike the Gothic *mode*—which tells of legendary things (undead, demonic and/or animalized monsters or places) *with, as or within* Gothic media as things to *perform, create, or imagine/reimagine, wear, inhabit, occupy or pass through* (we'll explore all of these variants throughout the book)—Gothic *theory* explains the process behind all of this while it's going on, has gone on, will go on. Guided by these theories, the re-education of sex worker emotions achieves the Six Rs through instructed critical analysis of sexualized art, but also *praxial synthesis* of good social-sexual habits; be it their own, someone else's, or something to cultivate together, these collective sex-positive lessons are designed to teach emotional intelligence through a Gothic mode whose cultural imagination, when used in an iconoclastic sense, becomes a vulgar display of power in defiance of the state: it raises class and cultural awareness mid-struggle.



(artist: [Crow](#))

About the Logo (for Gothic [gay-anarcho] Communism)

If I say that my somewhat extravagant imagination yielded simultaneous pictures of an octopus, a dragon, and a human caricature, I shall not be unfaithful to the spirit of the thing. A pulpy, tentacled head surmounted a grotesque and scaly body with rudimentary wings; but it was the general outline of the whole which made it most shockingly frightful.

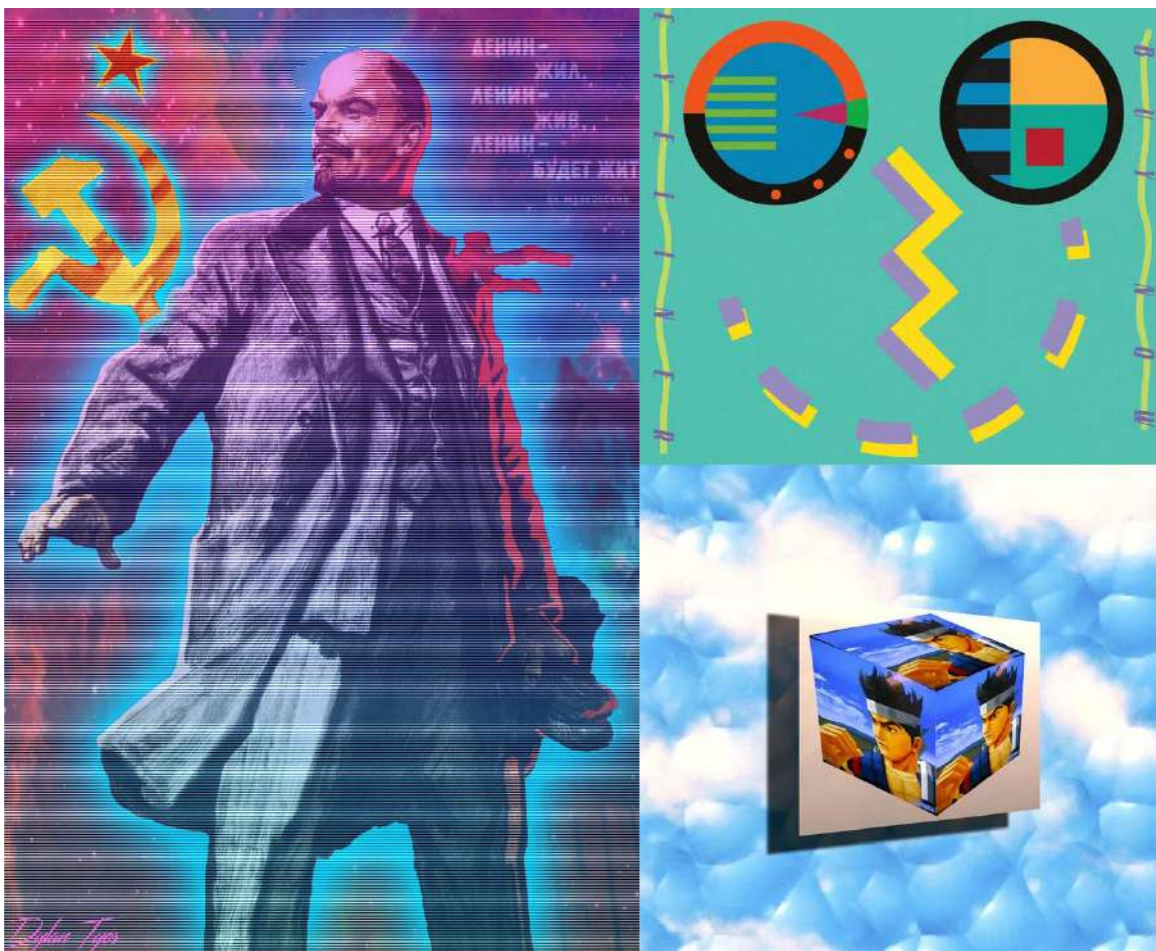
—H.P. Lovecraft, "The Call of Cthulhu" (1928)



(model and artist: [Blxxd Bunny](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#))

For much of this book's construction, I was using the Laborwave hammer and sickle insignia over a red-and-yellow cover to represent the book's concept of

Gothic (gay-anarcho) Communism. However, I decided on 8/26/2023 to design, thus give, the ideology its own symbol (the full PNGs for the Gothic [gay-anarcho] Communism logo by itself—with three different versions [full version w/flame and w/o flame, and the "skeleton key" simplified version] are available [either on my website](#) or [on my DA Stash](#)).



(artist, left: [Leonardo Galletti](#); top-right: [Eyeliner](#); bottom-right: [Esprit 空想 \[Esprit Fantasy\]](#))

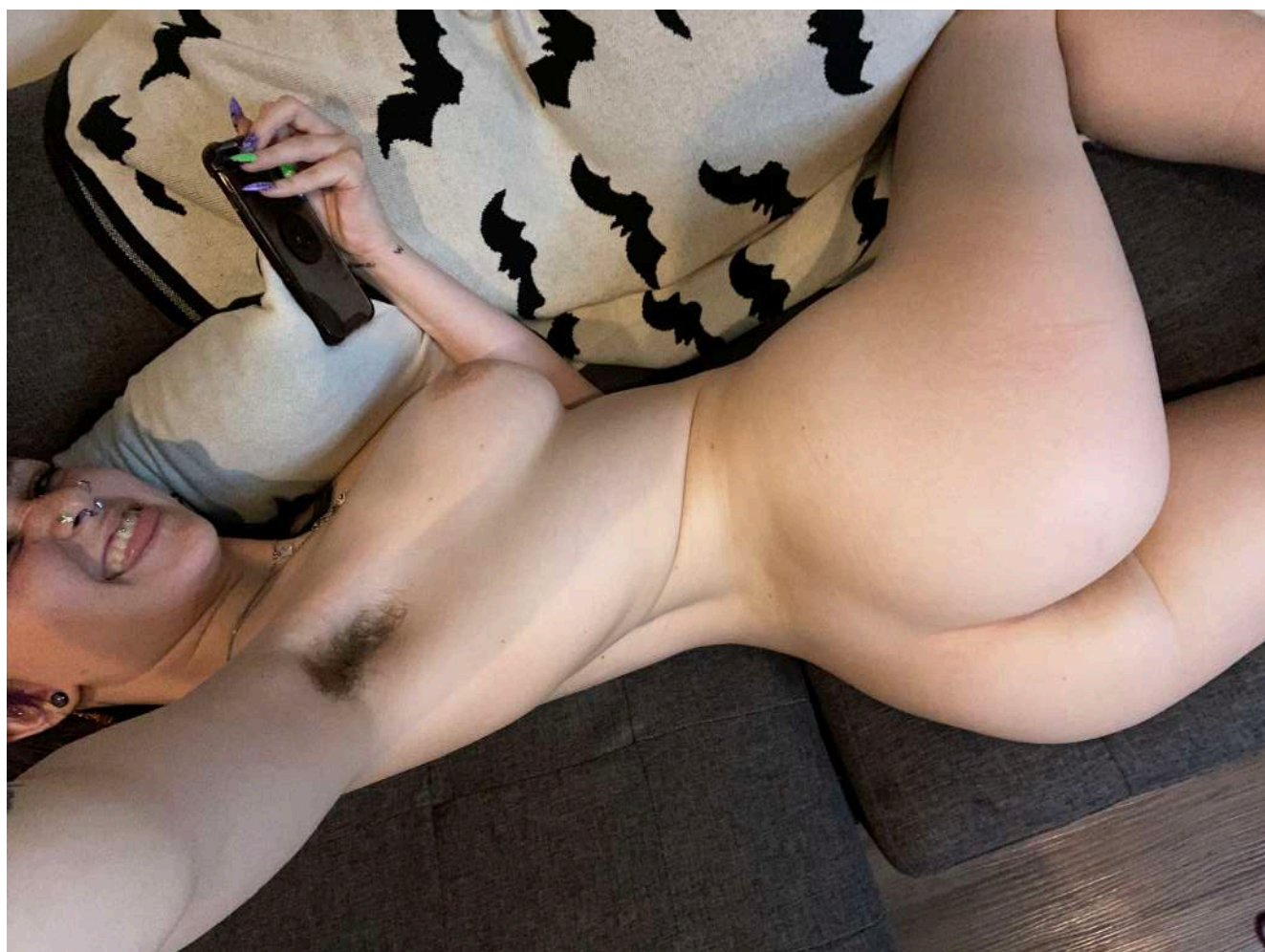
When crafting my own symbol, I wanted to progress further beyond the Vaporware aesthetic ([which emerged in roughly in 2011](#)) than Laborwave had, which, [in 2016](#), combined Vaporwave's signature corporate mood/neoliberalism-in-decay with Marxist-Leninist icons divorced from their historical-material past. I wanted to not simply reflect on corporate/neoliberal fallibility and decay within dead/dystopian postpunk-tinged nostalgia, nor wax nostalgia on the undead pastiche of Marxist-Leninism, but inject a Gothic-queer presence to evoke an anarcho-Communist potential towards ending Capitalist Realism in the eternal drive towards developing Communism.



(artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#))

So I took the iconic hammer and sickle, found an anarcho-Communist variant with the same nostalgic/trans color scheme, and embossed a skull with it over a Wiccan pentacle; the skull I treated as the circle of the transgender symbol, fashioning it from black bones and horns (to symbolize the undead and demonic of Gothic poetics fused with the aesthetics of power and death; i.e., the green flames and purple slime as reclaimed colors of canonical stigma and persecution). If I was going to simply it, I thought I'd lose the flames and pentacle, turn everything black,

and make the an-Com symbol negative space in the forehead. The thought process was, I wanted the embellished version for the book cover (like a monk's monasterial tome) to give it a thoroughly medievalized flavor (the embossed codex). But as part of a logo guide, I included the simplified version of the symbol simply called "the skeleton key." I thought about using just the "A" in the forehead or the hammer and sickle, but that verges on too simple (the "A" being for Anarchism and the hammer and sickle being for Communism); so I went with the more complex an-Com symbol to preserve its meaning. That + the skull and crossbones + the horns + the trans icon = Gothic (gay-anarcho) Communism. It can be drawn all in black with a simple marker in a simplified "bathroom stall" form, but also has a fancier black logo that can be further embellished with ornaments and color if needed. Also, completely by accident, it kind of reminds me of Mercyful Fate's Melissa skull + the Grateful Dead logo, the latter being one of the most famous counterculture rock 'n roll bands of all time: sex, drugs and rock 'n roll all in one package!



(artist: [Bubi](#))

Concerning My Audience, My Art, the Reading Order and Glossary

What should I do with your strong, manly, spirited Sketches, full of variety and Glow? – How could I possibly join them on to the little bit (two inches wide) of Ivory on which I work with so fine a Brush, as produces little effect after much Labour?

—Jane Austen, in a letter²⁷ to her "favorite" nephew, James Edward Austen.



(artist: [Henry Fuseli](#))

For most of recorded human history, women (or beings perceived either as women, or simply "incorrect"; i.e., "not white, cis-het Christian men"; e.g., eastern

²⁷ [source](#): Zoe Louca-Richards' "Two Inches of Ivory: A New(ish) Jane Austen Acquisition" (2020)

cultures, people of color or Indigenous persons, genderqueer entities, etc) have been reduced to sex objects, sources of fear and/or (especially in the case of white women) accomplished pieces of property that could do little tricks, like sew or play the piano (what Mr. Darcy, in *Pride and Prejudice* [1813], smugly calls "female accomplishments"). Generally women were prized possessions, not people, and this reflected in how they were shaped in media as it became more and more widely available (in short, when Europe transitioned from an oral society to a written one): through the gaze of men, or according to women who—in some shape or form—served men by acting like/for them under Capitalism as a developing enterprise. The colonial standard, then, has certainly complicated itself in recent times, but the apples don't fall far from the tree; i.e., allowing the feminisms of older times—the first and second waves—to fight for their (white, cis-supremacist rights) while throwing everyone else under the proverbial bus (or stagecoach, in those days). The equality of convenience during older historical periods became a defense of the status quo enacted upon by women-of-letters, which continues into the present: Britain's "TERF island" is a mirror into the imaginary past, one whose fear and dogma continually uphold its tyrannical historical materialism, thus mass exploitation and genocide; i.e., "Yes, Austen belonged to a slave-owning society²⁸."

If the above paragraph is any indication, books are generally written (and illustrated) with an *intended* audience in mind; apart from that, there's the *ideal* audience (who simply "gets" or understands the material) and the *actual* audience (whoever actually reads the book, regardless of what they know beforehand). *Sex Positivity* was intentionally written for a *holistic* audience, with an emphasis on non-academia/non-accommodated intellectuals (as per Edward Said's notion of the "accommodated intellectual" from *Representations of an Intellectual*, 1993); it doesn't expect you to know everything and provides as much secondary material as it can to help you along. However, because of its size, I've had to cut the book into four volumes, the thesis volume being the volume that actually unpacks the companion glossary's terms (though all four volumes contain the glossary in their rear pages). Even when it was shorter, though, I had written and organized *Sex Positivity* to be read in order—as in, from top to bottom for first-time readers. This fact remains constant. The entire book (all four volumes) is meant to be read as: Volume Zero, Volume One, Volume Two, and Volume Three, head to toe. From there, if you want to jump around, the volumes have been structured and organized to make doing so as easy as possible. Go wild, my little angels.

If you choose to jump around, I'll assume that you've read my thesis volume (or at least browsed its unpacking of the keyword glossary terms). Apart from Volume One, whose full manifesto outlines my book's central thesis on sex-positive, social-sexual activism, Volume Two acts a kind of "prelude" to Volume Three, providing a "Humanities primer" that adjusts you to a more open-minded way of

²⁸ From Edward Said's "Jane Austen and Empire"; [Culture and Imperialism](#) (1993).

thinking that is useful to our thesis argument: "Capitalism dimorphically sexualizes everything under a heteronormative, settler-colonial scheme, one whose myopic Capitalist Realism must be escaped from; i.e., via a deliberate iconoclasm that liberates sex workers (or sexualized workers) under Capitalism through sex-positive art." The primer does so through numerous "monster art" exhibits that show how to think (and how past people thought) openly during oppositional praxis, using specific terms, theories, and formatting devices which apply to various topics broached later in the book when proletarian praxis (and its synthesis) is articulated chapter-by-chapter (and art exhibits are *slightly* less frequent, at least in the first edition).

However, as any artistic exhibit (not just mine) is idiosyncratic, this book is indulgently "me" to make *that* point abundantly clear. This includes iconoclastic porn as something that I've often explored and cultivated in my own body of work—with me actually preferring to cultivate erotic, sex-positive art displays during my own creations. As I write in "My Art Website Is Now Live" (2020):

In my work, I don't like to treat sex separate from everyday life. Instead, I emphasize sexuality and intimacy as being part of the same experience. Not only do you have the intense, raw close-ups during sex one might encounter in a VHS porno; there's also the tender, little details: the smiles, excitement, and other factors that make up everyday sex for people in relationships. I try to communicate all of this in a fantasy or sci-fi setting populated by my favorite videogame characters. It might be a regression of the quotidian into the Romantic, but being a Gothicism I'm not against liminal forms of expression. My work is erotic, forming a balance of the raunchy and tender inside a videogame milieu. These characters aren't fighting dragons; they're having sex, but there's so many different ways this can go about, and I have my own special blend I like to try and capture in my art ([source](#)).

In other words, my campy artistic creations invite you to imagine ordinary behaviors from extraordinary-*looking* people—e.g., Link and Nabooru less as representations of the status quo, and more as a highly flexible performance that can interrogate and subvert, thus negotiate, power using the same-old aesthetics on and off the usual stages where these performances take place. Imagine as I would, then, that Link and Nabooru "save" Hyrule, then talk about laundry and what's for dinner while having sex in a half-real, incredibly playful scenario. Except in our case, there never actually *was* a war to be fought (thus no genocide)—just a roleplay had and costumes worn by two workers who, for all intents and purposes, really look the part but whose function has subtly (or not so subtly) shifted away from the heteronormative scheme to undermine, thus weaken, the state's grip on the Superstructure:



(artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#))

Bear in mind, these portfolio samples come from 2020, when I was still in the closet and trying to uncover/understand my own identity and struggle as a trans woman. But they still contain a certain iconoclastic playfulness that I've since built upon after coming out as trans (as the rest of my exhibits will hopefully demonstrate); i.e., in the dialectical-material context, subverting what's expected in favor of delineating away from traditional heroic activities (such as genocide): make love, not war (except class/culture war). While my focus is often on videogames (the dominant canonical medium under neoliberal Capitalism), the same idea goes for *any* heroic-monstrous character borrowed from a particular franchised narrative: Midna and the Great Fairy from different *Zelda* games (a crossover); Link and Minda from *Twilight Princess* (2006); Squall and Quistis from *Final Fantasy 8* (1999), and so on:



(artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#))

If this basic thought experiment feels too difficult to visualize or understand, it will get no easier from here on out (we'll focus primarily on non-heteronormative/non-tokenized and gender-non-conforming media). Likewise, if you're unfamiliar with the Gothic, ludic/queer theory and/or Marxist thought (and

the glossary keywords), chances are the rest of this book (after Volume Zero; i.e., from Volumes One, Two and Three onwards) will seem incredibly alien and confusing to you; all are either lost and forgotten concepts in relation to Capitalism, reduced by capital to pulpy canon this book does nothing but dissect, or swim around in the grey areas of (which Capitalism and its heteronormative colonial binary discourage). For first-time readers, then, this book *really* is meant to be read in order.

That being said, the thesis volume (as per the heads-up refresher) *is* more academic, thus inaccessible. If you haven't read it yet or found it too difficult, Volume One's more conversational/instructional approach unpacks the same basic ideas in a less dense, but also less *developed* dialog concerning the manifesto tree ideas (the scaffold of oppositional praxis). If you feel lost when reading my thesis, the manifesto (and its additional chapters on instruction and praxial synthesis) may be a better place to start. Try reading it first, familiarizing yourself with the manifesto's iconoclastic ideas, visual aids and various guides, signposts and roadmaps. Then, consider *returning* to the thesis volume, which unpacks these ideas far more intensely and completely. Once you comprehensively understand what Gothic (gay-anarcho) Communism is, try moving onto Volume Two, which explores the *historical* development of the Gothic imagination and its complicated past—of flawed, conflicting poetic expression as something to learn from moving forward. From there, Volume Three outlines the goals and objectives of Gothic Communism as a means of attacking Capitalism and its ideologies directly through solidarized worker *poiesis*.

The goal of Volume One is to outline a *general teaching method* that explains complex things in commonplace ways, which Volume Two expands on through the poetic history of monsters as a dehumanizing tool that must be reclaimed. Everything tied to proletarian praxis is re-summarized after the introduction in Volume Three: in the summation section before Chapter One of that volume. You will need what the manifesto contains when you read the synthesis roadmap in Volume One; you will need what both (and the thesis volume) contain when you read the primer from Volume Two; and you will need the introduction, summation and Chapter One from Volume Three when you Chapters Two through Five of that volume, etc. Last but not least, familiarize yourself with my "artistic exhibit style." First shown during the second disclaimer during exhibit 3a1, 2, and 3 (and exhibits -1a and -1b); and during exhibit 0a1a during the foreword, my exhibit style is utilized throughout entire the book in over 200 similar exhibits covering a broad range of artistic subjects (and monsters).

Last but not least, you do not need to read the entire glossary up front, simply because I wrote the thesis volume to introduce keywords to you, step by step. There's a lot of them, but it explains the most vital one at a time and in (I feel) the most logical order demanded by my arguments. Even so, my book has still had to alter or simplify academic language, terms and theories by combining them

with everyday language. It also deals with groups (fascists and centrists) who frequently employ obscurantism—often through general/Gothic cryptonyms (words that hide), used in bad-faith to control others through sexualized and gendered language that isolate the mind (with isolation being a predator's tactic). So while most of these terms *are* defined in some shape or form inside my thesis statement, word count (and flow) remains an issue. I could only recite the most important in full, and summarize the rest in the thesis volume itself. Therefore, I want to provide all of their full definitions (modified and expanded on/narrowed by me) in the companion glossary, which you can access in the back of whichever volume you're currently reading.



(artist: [Mikki Storm](#))

The keywords are divided into separate sections and you can access individual terms via the bookmarks located on side of your PDF. While the most central are quoted in part or in full within the thesis proper, I recommend familiarizing yourself with all of them before moving onto Volumes One, Two and Three (which again, shall henceforth continue being referred to as such; the thesis volume was written last and I don't feel like changing the names. Instead, think of it as four volumes: One, Two and Three, with the thesis volume as *Volume Zero*). *Do not assume you know what they mean*. A good few are less central but still useful when grappling with these larger topics.

In conclusion, while the keywords are all important to know and understand, there aren't too many that need to be understood *a priori*—as in *before* reading my thesis statement (and the rest of the book). This being said, there *are* a few I

won't be able to unpack in the thesis proper—the simple reason being the unpacking of my Gothic, ludology and genderqueer terms was written with a presumption that you have a modicum of understanding regarding basic queer and Marxist theory. So before we proceed, please peruse the below list to make sure you're familiar with the more essential terms from the "Marxism and Politics" and "Sex, Gender and Race" sections of the glossary.

Essential Keywords, *a priori*

What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me: no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

—Hamlet, *Hamlet* (c. 1599)



([source](#): Clyde Mandelin's "How *Symphony of the Night*'s 'Miserable Pile of Secrets' Scene Works in Japanese," 2013)

Through its motley crew of assorted keywords, Gothic Communism aims to describe sexuality and gender within Marxist, Gothic and game theories. Sexuality and gender are not complicated, then; it's just *not* a binary like heteronormativity expresses, insofar as a gradient is simply a different (and more accurate) arrangement to what sexuality and gender actually are. In the presence of state power and its defenders, thoroughly stupid questions get asked, kettling the oppressed into an asinine, deadly game; e.g., "What is a woman?" in Matt Walsh's

"documentary" of the same name (it's fascist propaganda, my dudes). Well, I certainly *can* humor fascists with my own definition

a woman

That depends ("Beware the elves for they will say both yea and nay"). Keeping the [below] terms in mind, a woman is multiple things at once. On the *bourgeois* side, she's anything a man isn't—i.e., a cis-het sex slave/employee/girl boss, etc (note the gradient of euphemisms to disguise the deliberate marital role of unpaid women's work under Capitalism); on the proletariat side, she's however someone identifies in relation to the state²⁹ as a worker—for or against it to various, liminal degrees (this includes personas, alter-egos, egregores and various other disguises). To reduce it to "an adult, human female" is super gross, Nazi-level shit (and while I *want* to seriously feel sorry for Matt Walsh's probably-battered housewife, assuming she's entirely ignorant of her husband's abuse would assume that she actually puts in the work; however, if she does, it would take total isolation of anything not supplied to her in advance by her "big, strong, powerful, caretaker" husband. That's quite sad and pathetic). I hate Nazis, Matt Walsh; my grandfather fought them during WW2 after they raped and destroyed his homeland and killed most of his friends and family. They prey on fear yet instantly run away like Brave Ser Robin when they're outed as perfidiously and ignominiously stupid. You're cut from the same cloth, you giant, callow man-child.

but that's not really the point of them asking, is it? Their doing so is an invitation for moderates to belittle gender-non-conforming persons, then look the other way while fascists normalize vigilante violence against minorities (which translates to state/police violence when Imperialism comes home to roost). In short, Hamlet—when viewed as the male action hero—is a real "piece of work," alright. He's an absolute, unironic monster³⁰; i.e., mad with grief over the death of his father until

²⁹ (from the symposium): Whenever I say "the state" in this book, I am referring to the state as both a current mechanism for capital, but also the status quo more broadly—a state of affairs that has evolved into its current form (including the Gothic castle as a hauntological advertisement for state hegemonic displacement and dissociation): nation-states, whose sense of national identity in relation to capital had to evolve into itself from the Cartesian Revolution onwards (bringing with them modern war and globalization as they currently exist).

³⁰ "Hamlet begins the play as a possible tragic hero, but as he interacts with corrupt characters, his traits become increasingly tainted until his potential for heroism disintegrates completely. Although Hamlet is depicted at first as a seemingly normal, depressed man, he is influenced by his relationships with Claudius, the ghost, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern until his old virtues are no longer recognizable. His evil actions, whether

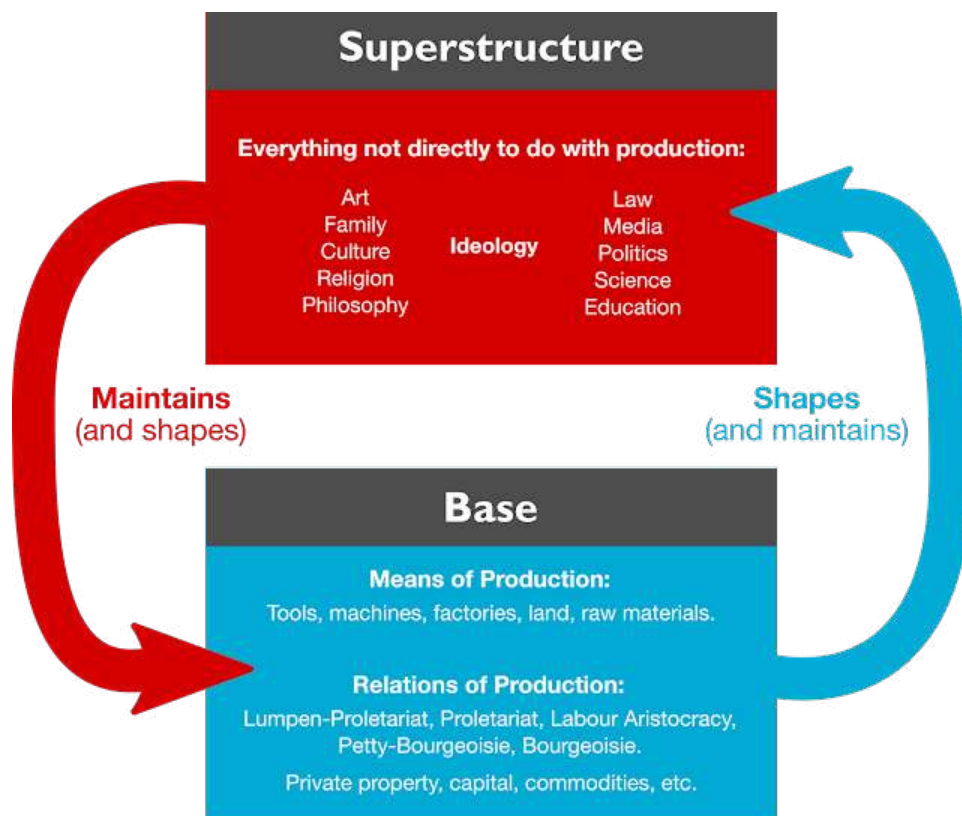
he becomes the anti-hero³¹ who must be unironically sacrificed (along with everyone else) at the end of the play. In modern language, it's a murder-suicide committed by the usual suspect: the entitled "man of the house" acting like a total incel who kills his mother, sister and best friend (Shakespeare is hardly perfect, but absolutely satirizes heteronormativity—i.e., similar to *Romeo and Juliet*, 1597, or *Titus Andronicus*).

The keywords in this list, then, are skeleton keywords; i.e., utterly essential to following my arguments on Gothic-Communism, except I won't have time during the thesis volume to unpack them to the degree that I do the Gothic material (which is hard enough to unpack on its own); in other words, the book assumes you've already read the glossary definitions (at least these terms) ahead of time, or otherwise know them *a priori*. While all of the glossary keywords are useful to some extent, absolutely make sure you have these ones down pat (which I've abbreviated in case if you can't be arsed to actually look at the glossary. You should because many of these shorthand definitions are inadequate; simply click on the in-text links to be taken to their full definitions):

- **[Marxism](#)**: Schools of thought stemming from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, trying historically to achieve Communism through the state first (Marxist-Leninism) instead of direct worker solidarity and action operating in opposition to the state and establishment politics (anarcho-Communism).
- **[material conditions](#)**: The factors that determine quality of life from a material standpoint.
- **[historical materialism](#)**: The normalized, vicious cycle that history is predicated on the material conditions that routinely bring it about.
- **[dialectical materialism](#)**: The study of oppositional *material* forces in relation to each other—i.e., the bourgeoisie vs the proletariat, canon vs iconoclasm, sex positivity vs sex coercion.
- **[the means of production](#)**: Marx' Base, owned by the elite; the ability to (mass)produce material goods within capital/a living market.

with Polonius, Gertrude, or Ophelia, further ingrain his corruption. Horatio's steady, honorable personality emphasizes the demoralization of Hamlet's character. By the end of the play, Hamlet no longer has any traits of a hero but seems more of a villain, full of immoral, evil thoughts and devoid of his former inner goodness" ([source](#): Reverie Marie's "Hamlet Is Not a Tragic Hero," 2016).

³¹ "Anti-hero" can mean different things; it can mean "tragic hero," in the sense of state apologetics; e.g., Oedipus Rex's "feel sorry for me even though I killed my dad and boned my mom" schtick. It can also mean "tragic rebel"; i.e., Satan from *Paradise Lost* (1667) as the rebel devil-in-disguise fighting against the Christian idea of heroism, thus being revered under British Romanticism for being revolutionarily heroic *against* the villainy of state tyranny.



**This moves in a spiral pattern.
The base is generally dominant.**

- **propaganda**: Marx's Superstructure, or anything that cultivates the Superstructure; for Gothic Communists, this means in a sex-positive direction.
- **private property**: Property that is privately owned, generally by the elite through privatization via state-corporate mechanisms; i.e., capital.
- **privatization**: The process that enables private ownership at a systemic, bourgeois level.
- **functional Communism**: The eventual (centuries from now) abolishment of privatization/private property. This process is called development, or Socialism.
- **nominal Communism**: Canonical depictions of Communism—i.e., Communism in name alone, sold to workers through canonical propaganda to scare them into upholding the bourgeois status quo.
- **Gothic (gay-anarcho) Communism**: Coined by me, Gothic Communism is the deliberate, pointed critique of capital/Capitalism using a unique marriage of Gothic/queer/game theory and Marxist ideas synthesized by sex-positive workers during proletarian praxis.

- **[anarcho-Communism](#)**: The gradual disillusion and transmutation of Capitalism into Socialism and finally Communism through direct worker solidarity and collective action, whereupon power is horizontally restructured.
- **[neoliberal Capitalism](#)**: The dominant strain of Capitalism operating in the world today—i.e., Capitalism employed by neoliberal canon, centrism, moderation and personal responsibility rhetoric to achieve the greatest possible division between the owner/worker classes (a re-liberalization of the market through the abuse of state power), as well as infinite growth and efficient profit (more on these during the manifesto proper). Neoliberal Capitalism is founded on a vertical arrangement of power through national-state-corporate leaders operating against worker interests by exploiting them to the fullest using capital.
- **[capital/Capitalism](#)** (a super-important term and often incredibly misunderstood, so I'm giving the full definition, here; it's the longest in this entire list): A system of exploiting workers, nature and the world, whose resultant genocide and vampiric devastation is synonymous with *profit* for capitalists/the elite. The elite parasitize everyone/thing else to generate profit through Capitalism; or to quote directly from Raj Patel and Jason Moore's *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things* (2017):

Money isn't capital. Capital is journalism's shorthand for money or, worse, a stock of something that can be transformed into something else. If you've ever heard or used the terms *natural capital* or *social capital*, you've been part of a grand obfuscation. Capital isn't the dead stock of uncut trees or unused skill. For Marx and for us, capital happens only in the live transformation of money into commodities and back again. Money tucked under a mattress is as dead to capitalism as the mattress is itself. It is through the live circulation of this money, and in the relations around it, that capitalism happens.

The process of exchange and circulation turn money into capital. At the heart of Marx's *Capital* is a simple, powerful model: in production and exchange, capitalists combine labor power, machines and raw material. The resulting commodities are then sold for money. If all goes well, there is a profit, which needs then to be reinvested into yet more labor power, machines and raw materials. Neither commodities nor money is capital. This circuit *becomes* capital when money is sunk into commodity production in an ever-expanding cycle. Capitalism is a process in which money flows through nature. The trouble here is that capital supposes infinite expansion [growth] within a finite web of life ([source](#)).

For our purposes, this "web of life" concerns the privatized, social-sexual exploitation of workers in monstrous language—something to be unironically defended by class traitors preserving Capitalism, thus the state as a means of maximizing capital for the elite (infinite growth); i.e., to serve and protect capital, not people, through the means of production/propaganda's current bourgeois hegemony under neoliberal Capitalism's personal responsibility rhetoric—to regulate the market and empower the state through concealed abuses that accrete out from the center in all directions. As anarcho-Communists, we much critique this canonizing process' profit motive through our own iconoclastic material.

- **capitalists**: Those who own capital, the bourgeoisie (the owner class).
- **Rainbow Capitalism**: Capitalism appropriating queerness, generally through surface-level, inauthentic representation and queer-baiting.
- **recuperation/controlled opposition**: The process by which politically radical ideas and images are twisted, co-opted, absorbed, defused, incorporated, annexed or commodified within media culture and bourgeois society, and thus become interpreted through a neutralized, innocuous or more socially conventional perspective.
- **sublimation**: The process by which socially unacceptable impulses or idealizations are transformed into socially acceptable actions or behavior. Normalization.



- **prescriptive sexuality (and gender)**: Sexuality and gender as prescribed according to various explicit or tacit mandates; i.e., sex, orientation and gender performance/identity are not separate and exist within a cis-gendered, heteronormative colonial binary.



- **descriptive sexuality (and gender)**: Sexuality and gender as describing actual persons, be they sexual and/or asexual. This includes their bodies, orientations and identities, etc, as things to appreciate, not appropriate (thus exploit).
- **praxis**: The practical execution of theory.
- **appreciative irony**: A descriptive sexuality (or gender) that culturally appreciates the irony of queer existence (and other minorities) in various forms.
- **asexuality**: A gradient of expressions that includes *demisexual/grey ace* and *aromantic* persons, asexuality displays orientations and performances or gender identities that diverge from sexual attraction, generally in favor of romantic, spiritual and emotional connections; i.e., a neurodivergent condition, not a disease that needs to be repressed, shamed or attacked.
- **neurodivergence**: A spectrum of atypical brain conditions that diverge from neurotypical persons and brains. Neurodivergent people canonically tend to be demonized, but also shamed as disabled, insane or mendacious.
- **sex-repulsed**: Not to be confused with *sex-negative*/reactionary politics, *sex-repulsed* is the quality through which persons—whether through nature or nurture; i.e., hereditary or environmental trauma factors (these tend to overlap)—are repulsed by sex. This can be partial—can amount to gradient indifference or outright trauma/triggering status depending on its severity. *Important: Sex-repulsion is not strictly a symptom, but a neurodivergent condition with congenital/comorbid factors operating within the brain as neuroplastic.*
- **comorbid/congenital**: The simultaneous presence of two or more diseases or medical/psychological conditions in a patient—congenital meaning "present at birth," inherited.
- **LGBTQ+**: Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Queer, and various other non-gender-conforming groups.
- **queer**: A general, all-purpose label reclaimed from its colonizer origins. For example, I identify as queer/am a queer person. While terms like trans, queer, gay and so on most certainly have specific definitions, in everyday queer parlance they tend to be used *interchangeably* (with idiosyncratic boundaries being drawn up when the need arises); forced conformity/division is to "make things weird" (though marginalized gatekeeping/sectarianism is definitely a thing).
- **genderqueer**: Challenging gender norms; also called "questioning" or "gender non-conforming."
- **monogamy/-ous**: The performance of a singular, happy relationship, canonically structured around marriage, reproductive sex and the nuclear

family structure. In Gothic canon, this structure is often threatened by a Gothic villain—e.g., Count Ardolph from Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya* (1806).

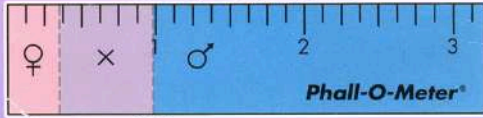
- **poly(amour-ous)**: Non-normative family/open relationship structures that break with the heteronormative structure/cycle of compelled marriage. Historically conflated with swinging or serial monogamy (which are really their own heteronormative practices; i.e., "We're not *poly*, we're *serially monogamous!*"). Note how poly relationships tend to be framed as *polyamorous*, not polygamous.
- **beards**: A relationship of convenience to appear straight, heteronormative, monogamous, nuclear, "Roman," etc. The nuptial variant of a beard is the *lavender marriage*.
- **heteronormativity** (a big one; I will provide its full definition with the thesis paragraph): The idea that heterosexuality and its relative gender norms are prescribed/enforced to normalized extremes by those in power—i.e., the Patriarchy.
- **gender trouble**: Coined by Judith Butler, gender trouble is the social tension and reactions that result when the heteronormative, binary view of sexuality and gender is disrupted. This trouble can happen through the parody of social-sexual norms through ironic or appreciative (counterculture) media.
- **girl-cock (exhibit 7c) or boy pussy (exhibit 52c)/gender parody**: Genitals or genitalia-like artifacts (and various other modes of performance) that fulfill an ironic/gender parody cultural role that interrogates heteronormative gender assignment, performance or identity, as well as sexual orientation.
- **natural assignment**: Accident of birth—i.e., the natural assignment of one's biological sex (and conditions to form one's gender identity around, whether through conformity or struggle); one's birth sex/genitals: male, female, and intersex.
- **AFAMs/AMABs**: Assigned-Female/Male-at-Birth—i.e., one's birth sex. Can be used as a noun or adjective; e.g., "AFABs dislike this" or "an AFAB person," etc. Intersex people are their own category.

what is INTERSEX?

The term "intersex" is used to describe an individual whose chromosomes, hormones, or sexual organs are not in line with the perceived male/female sex binary.

SEX is not binary:  **SEX is a spectrum:** 

Sex is determined by a doctor upon birth using the following guidelines:
(according to the infant's genitals)


it's a girl! (under 3/8")  it's a boy! (over 1")

unacceptable!

Babies with "ambiguous genitals" often undergo inhumane, dangerous, and unnecessary surgeries to "normalize" their genitals, many times without parental consent!

INTERSEX PEOPLE...

- >> are about as common as redheads!
- >> can have any sexual orientation or gender identity.
- >> should never be called "hermaphrodites."
- >> should have their privacy respected.
- >> should not have to be ashamed of their bodies.
- >> deserve to be treated like anybody else.



INTERSEX AWARENESS DAY // october 26

SOURCES: isna.org, actuallyintersex.tumblr.com, sexandgender.net, apcdaily.wordpress.com

(from the glossary, exhibit 3c1: [source](#))

- **intersex:** The existence on a biological gradient between the qualifiers male and female, amounting to a variable "third sex" that presents mixed features of either sex to varying degrees; except, the umbrella term doesn't represent one particular manifestation as a strict third, but all of them together on a vast, complicated spectrum of genotypical and phenotypical elements. They are often depicted as angels or demons in the classically androgynous sense, or stigmatized/fetishized in porn as "shemales," "he-shes" and other canonically pejorative labels; a common, non-insulting label is "androgyne" (though this can apply to trans people and mixed gender performance, too). A common intersex example in Gothic media is the phallic woman or Archaic Mother—e.g., the xenomorph.
- **non-binary:** "An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being

both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, *not all non-binary people do*. Non-binary can also be used as an umbrella term encompassing identities such as agender, bigender, genderqueer or gender-fluid" ([source](#): Human Rights Campaign's "Glossary of Terms," 2023).

- **sexual/asexual orientation**: How people orient (a)sexually/"float their boats" in relation to gender identity and performance. A double helix of two gradients, each having two theoretical "poles," wherein both ribbons descriptively intertwine/intersect within the socio-material world (more on this in Volume Three, Chapter Three).
- **heterosexuality**³²: Orienting towards the *opposite* gender. Classically called "opposite-sex attraction," gender-non-conformity (GNC) treats heterosexuality as orienting towards the gender opposite to *oneself*. This being said, pure opposites do not generally exist outside of heteronormative enforcement (which compels binaries in service of the profit motive/process of abjection) so heterosexual people also tend to be cis; i.e., cis-het, or "straight."
- **homosexuality**: Orienting towards the *same* gender. Classically called "same-sex attraction," gender-non-conformity treats homosexuality as orienting towards the same gender as *oneself*. No binary is required, and the term is generally synonymous with "gay" or "lesbian."
- **bisexuality**: Orienting towards *two or more* genders. Classically called "both-sex attraction" (or something along those lines), gender-non-conformity treats bisexuality as orienting towards the gender opposite to and the same as *oneself*.
- **pansexuality**: Orienting towards someone else *regardless of* their gender. However, this does not preclude exceptions and the phrase is generally used interchangeably with bisexuality in everyday parlance.

³² Traditional orientation terminology is classically binarized, which GNC usage complicates by introducing non-binary potential. Traditional usage ties a specific orientation to sexuality—e.g., *heterosexual*—but descriptive orientation can just as much involve an emotional and/or romantic attraction and generally includes gender and biology as interrelating back and forth while not being essentially connected. So whereas heteronormativity forces sex and gender together and ties both to human biology as the ultimate deciding factor regarding one's gender and orientation, sex-positive usage is far more flexible; orientation isn't strictly sexual or rooted in biology at all. Those variables *are* present, but neither is the end-all, be-all because sexuality and gender are things to *self*-determine versus things the state determines for us (to exploit workers through binarized stratagems; e.g., "women's work"). To compensate for this flexibility inside GNC circles, orientation labels are generally shorted to "hetero," "bi," or "pan" (homosexual is commonly referred to as "gay" or "[a] lesbian"), allowing for asexual implications. Even so, classically binary terms like "hetero" and "homo" tend to be used more sparingly and are often swapped out for more specific identities or umbrella terms; e.g., "I'm queer/gay" or "I'm bi" as something to understand with some degree of intuition, which can later be explored in future conversations if the parties in question are interested in pursuing it. This pursuit is not automatic, though, so neither is the language denoting what can be pursued; instead, sexuality is an option, not a given.

- **heteronormative assignment (gender roles)**: Accident of birth in relation to one's "birth gender" as socially constructed by the state in relation to one's genitals.
- **transgender reassignment (transgender identity)**: Being trans is gender identity wherein one feels, and hopefully one day decides to recognize, that one isn't cis.
- **gender identity**: One's conforming or nonconforming gender identity as a (sub)conscious act; i.e., how one identifies, be that passively or actively.
- **gender performance**: Gender performance is coded in relation to oneself, their identity/orientation, and to society's in-groups and out-groups, aka formal/informal gender roles. Whether one's gender *identity* is assigned to them at birth, or is self-assigned through various non-gender-conforming types—e.g., trans man/woman, non-binary, femboy, agender, etc—their gender *performance* amounts to a coded set of social behaviors (and corresponding materials and language) that adhere to performative rules meant to reinforces one's gender as either self-assigned, or assigned heteronormatively by the state. To that, these concepts do not exist in a vacuum, but intersect and often conflict (which leads to iconoclastic gender parody³³ and gender trouble during subversive exercises).



(artist, left: [Mark Bryan](#); right: [Cursed Arachnid](#))

³³ Classic, canonical gender parody would include cross-dressing in Shakespearean theatre, whereupon (arguably) cis-het men would have played both men and women, the latter often by teenagers/prepubescent boys wearing various costumes and makeup. All the same, Shakespeare was debatably not straight (see: all the gay shit in his work), and the theatre remains a classic site for gender-non-conforming fulfillment and expression.

- **[gender performance-as-identity](#)**: Some identities involve broader gender performances to identify around or as; e.g., drag queens or femboys.
- **[the \(settler-\)colonial³⁴ binary](#)**: Nadi Tofghian writes in *Blurring the Colonial Binary* (2013) that, having evolved beyond Rome's master/slave dynamic, colonialism and Imperialism "separated people into different classes of people, ruler and ruled, white and non-white, thereby creating and widening a colonial binary" ([source](#)). To this, the cis-het, white European/Christian male is superior to all other workers. This binary extends to token marginalizations and infiltrated and assimilated/normalized activist groups, thought/political leaders or public intellectuals, who serve as class traitors, but also functional police for their respective domains.
- **[poiesis/poetics](#)**: "To bring into being that which did not exist before." Art. A commonplace example is "poetry," which historically has granted impoverished, exploited people idiosyncratic voices/parallel societies in times of struggle; i.e., making monsters that voice our trauma and concerns.
- **[canon \(dogma\)](#)**: Marx's Superstructure as normally cultivated by the elite through official/unofficial, state-corporate icons and materials designed to control how people think, behave and feel: heteronormative propaganda/dogma.
- **[iconoclast/-clasm \(camp\)](#)**: Marx's Superstructure, counter-cultivated by an agent or image that attacks established variants, generally with the intent of transforming them in a deconstructive, sex-positive manner. Such a

³⁴ Since Alexander the Great's famous conquests or those of the Roman Empire (a safe starting point, let's call it), so-called "Western colonialism"/Imperialism (the highest stage of Capitalism, *vis-à-vis* Lenin) has existed on the global stage; since the *Enlightenment*, it has—starting with Ireland* and spreading elsewhere around the world—adopted a racialized settler-colonial flavor whose latter-day fantasies' hauntologies help perpetuate (e.g., *Aliens*, 1986). For our purposes, heteronormativity *is* settler-colonial, insofar as there is always a settler-colonial *bias* within Capitalism as it currently exists through nation-states; but that bias also executes differently depending on where and who you are as the story's intended/tokenized audience: the Global North's military urbanism/Imperial Boomerang versus settler colonialism conducted abroad. I confess the words "colonial," "imperial/Imperialism" and "settler-colonial" will be used synonymously and that the word "(settler-)colonial binary" is more or less functionally synonymous/synergetic with "heteronormativity." I will do my best to give nuanced examples throughout the book, but freely admit that settler colonialism is not its chief-and-only focus.

*"The British Empire began developing its colonialization tactics in Ireland and Canada, before exporting them throughout the world. / From the sixteenth through the nineteenth century, Britain developed an empire on which the 'sun never set,' subjugating local peoples from North America to East Africa to Australia. But as three University of Manitoba scholars, Aziz Rahman, Mary Anne Clarke and Sean Byrne, wrote in 2017, it developed many of the methods it used in its colonization much closer to home: in Ireland. [...] Unlike previous invaders, the authors write, these British Protestants regarded the Catholic Irish as racially inferior. The newcomers rarely intermarried with the locals. In 1649, when Oliver Cromwell's forces arrived in Ireland, the result was a brutal genocidal campaign" ([source](#): Livia Gershon's "Britain's Blueprint for Colonialism: Made in Ireland," 2022).

manner is treated as heretical by the elite, but also workers sympathetic to bourgeois hegemony.

- **[centrism](#)**: The theatrical creation of good vs evil as existing within politically "neutral" media—a dangerous preservation of orderly justice whose "moderate," white (or token) voice-of-reason/cloaked racism and discrimination pointedly maintain the status quo: Capitalism.
- **[war pastiche](#)**: The canonical remediation of war as something to sell to the audience (for our purposes) as canon, generally in centrist forms (which we then subvert through performative irony of various kinds).
- **[nation pastiche](#)**: Any kind of pastiche that ties war and combat to national identities; e.g., *Street Fighter*.
- **[heels/babyfaces](#)**: The centrist heroes and villains of staged, professional wrestling and American contact/combat sports—i.e., war personified—but commonly employed through combat e-sports like the *Street Fighter* FGC. Heels normally wear black, fight dirty and talk trash; babyfaces (often called "faces" for short) tend to wear white, fight fair and refuse to talk trash.
- **[kayfabe](#)**: The portrayal of staged events within the industry as "real" or "true," specifically the portrayal of competition, rivalries, and relationships between participants as being genuine and not staged.
- **[neocons\(ervatism\)](#)**: Neoconservatives are liberal hawks who, exposed to menticultural propaganda over time, [despise war protestors and promote peace through strength](#), including neocolonialism and proxy war. It's the centrist, oscillating phenomena of so-called Liberalism turned bloody, routinely demanding its blood sacrifice on the so-called "altar of freedom."
- **[menticide/waves of terror](#)**: From Joost Meerloo's *The Rape of the Mind* (1956), menticide is the animal, "Pavlovian" conditioning that happens through various forms of torture, including "waves of terror," to mold an ideal subject within state mechanisms; i.e., someone not just complacent with state abuse, but *complicit*. Of *menticide*, Meerloo writes (abridged),

The core of the strategy of menticide is the taking away of all hope, all anticipation, all belief in a future [which aligns with Mark Fischer's "hauntology," or inability to imagine a future beyond past forms supplied by Capitalism; i.e., a *myopia*]. It destroys the very elements which keep the mind alive. The victim is entirely alone ([source](#)).

Meerloo describes *waves of terror* as

the use of well-planned, repeated successive waves of terror to bring the people into submission. Each wave of terrorizing cold war creates its effect more easily—after a breathing spell—than the one that

preceded it because people are still disturbed by their previous experience (*ibid.*).

- **Liberalism**: Not to be confused with neoliberalism (though the two generally go hand-in-hand), Liberalism is the disingenuous language of the Enlightenment becoming Americanized, then used alongside Cartesian dualism to obscure genocide under settler colonialism.
- **neoliberalism**: The ideology of American exceptionalism (which extends to allies of America like Great Britain) that enforces global US hegemony through deregulated/"re-liberalized" Capitalism as a structural means of dishonest wealth accumulation for the elite. Laterally enforced by state/corporate power abuse through a public conditioned by these groups to worship the free market, neoliberalism seeks to foster a centrist attitude.
- **fascism**: Capitalism-in-decay aka "zombie Capitalism." When Capitalism starts to "fail" (which it does by design), it creates power vacuums whose medievalist regressions reintroduce scapegoat mentalities on a state level; i.e., the Imperial Boomerang, or "Imperialism come home to empire."
- **pre-/post-fascism**: Pre-fascism is the Gothic imagination that historically was obsessed with the inheritance of a decaying system prior to the rise of fascism in the 18th and 19th centuries, which in turn has become *post*-fascism: the fear of fascism and systemic decay entertained through popular discourse and Gothic poetics in the 20th and 21st centuries, post-WW2.
- **eco-fascism**: The turn towards fascist rhetoric, stowed away inside nature conservatist rhetoric.

Also, familiarize yourselves with [Umberto Eco's 14 Points of Fascism](#) (from "[Ur-Fascism](#)," 1995). It's a really handy guide for spotting fascism, which tends to conceal itself or idiosyncratically manifest within centrist/neoliberal media. We don't go over all fourteen points in this book to nearly the same degree, but there are a few that I like to focus on; e.g., "The enemy is always weak and strong," the obsession with a foreign/internal plot, and the cult of machismo, etc.

Regarding the rest of the keywords not included in these paratextual documents: It would be very difficult and in fact counterproductive to list and define all of them at once. There's simply too many to realistically do this. Instead, I have provided the broadest and most germane/productive before this point—a trend I will now continue. As we proceed into the rest of the volume, the keywords I provide have been given first and foremost to stress their priority while also trying to keep the volume as short as possible. Some that aren't defined in the thesis proper will be defined during the "camp map" and symposium, but please refer to our Four Gs, manifesto tree, and the book's companion glossary for all of their complete

definitions (and for a few smaller terms that I've probably missed or left out for the sake of time).

I've tried to include all of the keywords for Sex Positivity in this volume, and it might seem like both not enough and too much information, but I promise we'll unpack all of these ideas as gradually as we can, and expand on them in the rest of the book (which aims for holistic, recursive nuance over singular brevity). I've done my best to avoid wholesale repetition, but admit and embrace that intersectionality demands a bit of cross-examination; i.e., regarding previously examined ideas from different points of view and theoretical stances that are applied practically and personally in our own lives through Gothic social-sexual expression; e.g., monsters, BDSM and artwork. If that proves to be poor consolation ahead of time, then I'll simply say what Zeuhl told me while we were at MMU: "Embrace chaos." Indeed, it's a process to be enjoyed and explored from a variety of angles, intensities and positions. —Perse

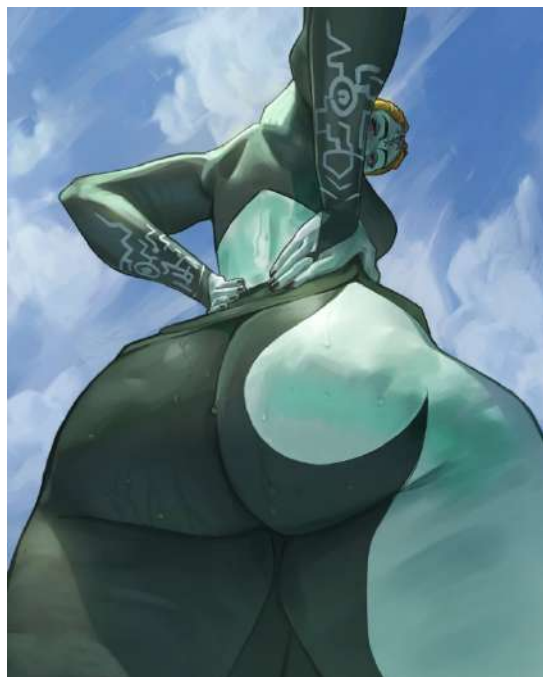


(artist: [Blushy Pixy](#))

Written Backwards: A Ship of Theseus, a Gothic Castle

"[...the infernal concentric pattern has] in Gothic one and the same function: to destabilize assumptions as to the physical, ontological or moral order of the cosmos [... It is like a Mandelbrot set:] finite, and yet from within we cannot reach its end; it is a labyrinth that delves 'down' instead of pushing outwards."

—Manuel Aguirre, "Geometries of Terror" (2008)



(artist: [TMFD](#))

In light of releasing Volume One, changes to the original manuscript have led me to address a fundamental aspect of my book's (re)construction: *Sex Positivity* was written backwards. For a fuller detailing of exactly how, refer to the foreword from Volume Zero, but otherwise just know that I wrote Volume Three first, followed by Volume One, Two, and then Zero. Except the writing of Volume Zero led me to reconsider Volume One as something to *rewrite*, simplifying my thesis in ways that I couldn't do until there was something *to* simplify (that was, itself, based on a previous argument: the original manifesto). This required me expanding on

Volume One to account for these changes, but also rewording older portions of it to account for synonymous terminology that, in my mind, better conveyed the manifesto's original points; i.e., swapping out old "boards" for new ones; the new timber represents the same fundamental arguments, except it has been fine-tuned—honed for further precision and specificity than when I had initially started out. In short, my humble vessel towards the end of its journey will have had most, if not all, of its original parts replaced, while more or less resembling what it once was; i.e., a Ship of Theseus, or better yet, a "flying" Gothic castle with fresh bricks. Unlike a *traditional* Gothic castle, *my* chateau's renovations aren't meant to primarily confuse and overwhelm, but reconsider my own work from new perspectives in a holistic manner through the same chambers, vistas and corridors, but also bodies.

A huge part of this reorientation owes itself to my partner, [Bay](#). His contributions led me to reconsider my own arguments—not to completely *change*

them, but view them from different angles and vantage points. I became inspired to expand on my manifesto and crystalize it into a pure thesis, from top to bottom over and over until I felt satisfied ...except this led me to revisit my manifesto, Humanities primer and praxis volume, leading to our aforementioned Ship of Theseus/Gothic castle! That's holism for you; or, as my thesis puts it, "Returning and reflecting upon old points after assembling them is a powerful way to understand larger structures and patterns (especially if they're designed to conceal themselves through subterfuge, valor and force). It's what holistic study (the foundation of this book) is all about." Alongside my other contributors, then, Bay's presence is felt throughout the entire book, haunting it from within. Having grown and developed inside my original construction, I reflected on Bay's ghost having joined me inside. Piece by piece, said structure changed until all the bricks were new (and stamped with Bay's friendly influence alongside my original mark).

The same idea, then, pertains to bodies as expressed between people, with you viewing a shot of a given individual under circumstances that, while similar to before, are by no means identical. Two bodies can assume the same pose and look vastly different; the *same* body can adopt a previous pose and yield up exciting new discoveries. Combined with my subtle retooling (and adventuresome expansions) of Volumes One, Two and Three through a sharpened thesis *and* manifesto, I think the benefits of applied hindsight should speak for themselves (for a point of comparison, though, compare the manifesto [to the original, unmodified blogpost](#)). Of course, you needn't recognize this hindsight to appreciate my work, but it *does* illustrate the subtleties of change amid consistent arguments that survive over time. For Communism to develop into itself, it will *have* to survive older changes that shift into future forms hitherto unimagined. To that, I am merely



at the starting point of something grand, of which has already changed and evolved into something that, at its inception, I could scarce hope to imagine: a mighty cathedral, represented by our bodies, labor and relationships, abstracted into architectural forms and back into bodies again, but also theatrical exchanges held somewhere in between. Instead of spelling our doom, its "trauma" offers up the knowledge needed to set us free.

(artist: [Doxxasix](#))

Heads-Up (a brief refresher)

"Maybe you haven't been keeping up on current events but we just got our asses kicked, pal!"

—Hudson, *Aliens* (1986)

This seven-page heads-up grants several important reminders as we segue into the current volume: to give a small, two-paragraph history of the remaining three volumes after the thesis volume; a refresher on poetics and mimesis (essentially a tiny excerpt from the thesis volume's symposium); and a small selection of things to keep in mind from the thesis volume overall—namely how this book synonymizes and synergizes its terms and arguments; i.e., reading comprehension pointers.

Reminder one, our volume histories: This volume was initially written *before* my thesis volume, which now serves as the formalized argumentation on which these more conversational volumes presently stand: Volume Zero (which I wrote in roughly a month [from August 31st to October 8th, 2023] based on years of independent research; older blogposts, essays, and my master's thesis; and the three previous volumes). If you haven't read my thesis argument already or found its more academic approach too dense (it's essentially the independent-research equivalent to my PhD), you should find these volumes more conversational. The manifesto/Volume One was written as a looser document that introduces our Gothic-Marxist tenets, manifesto tree coordinates (the scaffold for oppositional praxis) and main Gothic theories that, for the most part, [have been on my blog for the better part of eight months](#); but its instruction portion has been expanded on to better account for and help articulate praxial synthesis and catharsis through the cultivation of good social-sexual habits that we can develop to better confront and process systemic trauma with. The second volume, the Humanities primer/Volume Two, is largely about undead/demonic and animalistic monsters and has yet to be released online in its current, full form. Our final volume—Volume Three, which covers the executing of proletarian praxis in opposition to state forms—was the first volume I actually wrote, and has expanded since initially writing my manifesto and Humanities primer; i.e., it was on my blog until around April 2023, when I separated it from the manifesto along with the primer (then wrote my thesis argument). It is the book's longest volume, and is intended to be the most conversational and applicable in our day-to-day lives.

Volumes One, Two and Three all borrow quotations from the thesis volume. They also introduce new material *in relation* to the cited works, but generally will not introduce new ideas that were not previously introduced in the thesis volume;

they merely unpack said ideas and explore them further. Also, due to time constraints, there will *less* footnotes in the first editions of Volumes One, Two and Three (excepting those in the paratextual materials, glossary and anything else copied directly over from the thesis volume, or from paragraphs formerly preceded by an asterisk [in the blogpost style] that I have since converted into footnotes).



(artist: [Jean-Baptiste Regnault](#))

Reminder two, poetics and mimesis (quoted from my thesis symposium): To be clear, as I am a ludologist, Gothicism, anarcho-Communist, and genderqueer trans woman, *poiesis* wasn't simply a structure for my pedagogic narrative, like Mikhail Nabokov thought of Jane Austen's novel, *Mansfield Park* (1814), in *Lectures on Literature* (1980):

all talk of marriage is artistically interlinked with the game of cards they are playing, *Speculation*, and Miss Crawford, as she bids, speculates whether or not she should marry [...] This re-echoing of the game by her thoughts recalls the same interplay between fiction and reality [...] Card games form a very pretty pattern in the novel.

Nor was it **echopraxis** ("the involuntary mirroring of an observed action") according to the kind of "blind" pastiche³⁵ that plagues canonical thought and proponents of capital; i.e., an empty kind of "just playing" sans parody that stems from what Joyce Gloggin in "Play and Games in Fiction and Theory" (2020) calls "a 'traditional' understanding of **mimesis**" (which we repeatedly eluded to earlier when we mentioned Plato's cave/shadow play during the thesis argument):

Mimesis or imitation therefore, as one form of play, is an essential element of *poiesis*, or the "making" of art, which in turn is instrumental in creating what some now refer to as possible or imaginary worlds, that is, fiction.

This traditional understanding of mimesis as an essential element of *poiesis* places mimetic play at a more distant remove from reality than even the shadows in Plato's famous allegory of the cave from book VII of *The Republic*. Related in the form of a dialogue between Socrates and Glaucon, book VII allegorizes the human perception of reality, likening our reality to shadows projected on a cave wall. These shadows are perceived by human subjects, shackled around the ankles and neck and unable to turn their heads to see the puppeteers who cast shadows on the cave wall before them, which they mistake for reality. In other words, what mortals see and know is merely shadow, and this is what mimesis mimics — not reality.

Importantly, this version of mimesis and reality has long informed the marginalization or trivialization of mimetic arts as "mere play," "just games," or insignificant ludic imitations of reality. Likewise, the marginalization of play and its rejection as a serious object of study are motivated by the suspicion that play and ludic cultural forms are treacherous and capable of rendering us the dupe ([source](#)).

My own mimesis challenged these traditions. As I consumed and learned from older artists/thinkers (and their odes and homages), my own Galatean creations started to change, as did my way of thinking about the process of making them; my countless allusions and allegory became a far less traditional and far more subversively and transgressively playful mode of engagement with others—not just my family in the world of the living but also those long gone, echoing their arguments from beyond the grave: *cryptomimesis*, or the playing with the dead through *perceptive* pastiche and reclaimed monstrous language that is then used in place of the original context; e.g., queer people calling everything "gay" (space

³⁵ Pastiche is simply **remediated praxis** (the application of theory) during oppositional forms. This book covers many different kinds of pastiche types under the Gothic umbrella as canonical or iconoclastic: Gothic pastiche, of course, but also blind and perceptive forms of war pastiche, rape pastiche, poster pastiche, monster pastiche, disguise pastiche, Amazon pastiche, and nation pastiche, etc.

Communism) or black people using the n-word for everything versus white people wanting to do the same thing in an ignorant or hateful context.

The same basic idea applies to monstrous language and materials as things to reclaim from their original carceral/persecutory monomythic functions (which we will thoroughly examine in Volume Two) or from covert/dishonest regression towards this old medieval sense of compelled BDSM and lack of consent/trust; e.g., witches as traditional scapegoats (exhibit 83a) versus regressive "cop-like" variants (exhibit 98a3) that iconoclasts subvert through various sex-positive BDSM rituals, ironic peril and Gothic counterculture (exhibit 98a1a); i.e., as a general practice that turns the death fetish or state officer/thug into something *other* than a fascist-in-disguise through transformative context (e.g., subversions of Shelly Bombshell or Zarya, exhibits 100c2b and 111b). This Gothic-Communist paradigm shift reclaims the unironic imagery at all levels of itself—of actual, non-consenting and uninformed enslavement, torture and rape through their associate handcuffs, leather uniforms, whips or collars; but also insignias and color codes: green and purple as the colors of envy and stigma (exhibits 41b, 94a3) but also black-and-red as pre-fascist (the Roman master/slave dynamic), anti-Catholic dogma (exhibit 11b5) eventually applied to 20th century fascists and Communists during and after WW2 in videogames (exhibit 41i/j) and other neoliberal propaganda (Vecna's *D&D* Red Scare schtick: exhibit 39a2). All exist together in the Internet Age along with their assigned roles—as subverted in liminal, transgressive, formerly exploitative ways (exhibits 9b2, 101c2) that often yield a campy (exhibits 10a) or schlocky flavor married to whatever unironic forms they're lampooning (exhibit 47b2). This exists in duality *and* opposition as a rhetorical device—a conversation, but also an argument.

For example, you've probably noticed said duality in how I alternate between labels or play around or within them when it suits me (which is often). The reason is to accommodate their natural-material functions. Language is fluid in its natural, uncoerced state; there is no "natural order" of the state's design, no "transcendental signified" that "just happens" to favor the profit motive. *That* is installed and enforced through a particular belief system and portioning of codified space and behaviors useful to the elite. Instead things flow in and out of each other quite organically.



Reminder three, how this book synonymizes and synergizes its terms and arguments: Regarding the above organic relationship, I've made a little heads-up guide. It includes a few useful reading-comprehension pointers when exploring my work, which has been included in Volumes One, Two and Three from Volume Zero (indented for clarity):

We'll be code-switching a lot throughout this volume when talking about some very chaotic things. So try to remember that function determines function, not aesthetics. Also remember your *parent dichotomies*—bourgeois/canon/sex-coercive vs proletariat/iconoclasm/sex-positive—as well as your various *synonyms/antonyms, orbiting factors* and *related terminologies* that follow in and out of each other during oppositional praxis; i.e., the productive idea of power as paradox and performance, wherein said performance's games, rules and play remain incredibly potent ways of interrogating and negotiating power yourselves; i.e., through liminal expression's doubles thereof, existing inside the Gothic mode's shadow zone: (sequenced here in no particular order):

the essentialized connecting of biology (sex organs and skin color) to gender and both of these things to the mythic structure as heteronormative/dimorphic, thus alienizing (to weird canonical nerds and everyone else) in service of the state/profit motive > a lack of dialectical-material analysis > willful ignorance/"rose-tinted glasses" to achieve class dormancy through blind "darkness visible" > Capitalism's monomyth/good war > Beowulf, Rambo > the infernal concentric

pattern/Cycle of Kings and Shadow of Pygmalion > carceral
 hauntology/dystopia (myopic chronotopes/Capitalist Realism) > good
 cop, bad cop or cops and victims > assimilation > class traitor/weird
 canonical nerd > Man Box/rape culture > state espionage and
 surveillance/complicit cryptonomy > babyface/heel kayfabe > war
 hauntology > subjugated Amazon/mythical copaganda (female
 Beowulf, Rambo) > TERF > unironic ghosts of the counterfeit and the
 process of abjection's symbols of harm > profit, rinse and repeat

versus

the separation of gender and sexuality from each other and both of
 these things from the heteronormative mythic structure; i.e., Gothic
 Communism's monomorphic subversion of all of the things listed
 above through class war as enacted by our own weird iconoclastic
 nerds > spectres of Marx > deliberately active, class-conscious/campy
 "darkness visible" and dialectical-material scrutiny > shadow of
 Galatea > pro-labor espionage, revolutionary cryptonomy,
 emancipatory hauntology/parallel societies and chronotopes > reverse
 abjection > the pedagogy of the oppressed > reclaimed symbols of
 harm > post-scarcity

As a point of principle, I've left out some stuff and these lists in the heads-up
 are asymmetrical; also, I'm not going to try and include or string everything
 into a grand necklace/dichotomy that I then trot out each and every time a
 given topic comes up; i.e., the oppositional praxis of canon vs iconoclasm (as
 explored during the body of the thesis volume). Instead, I'm using them
 from a position of internalized intuition that I expect readers to learn,
 including relating them to *parallel* parent dichotomies like sex-positive vs
 sex-coercive, canon vs iconoclasm, bourgeois vs proletarian, as well as their
 orbiting factors—e.g., iconoclasm emphasizing mutual consent, informed
 consumption, *de facto* education, descriptive sexuality and cultural
 appreciation as things to materially imagine (often through ironic parody and
 "perceptive" pastiche) in subversive/transgressive Gothic poetics that
 challenge their canonical doubles during oppositional praxis.

If you can't parse all of this intuitively then I suggest you familiarize
 yourself with the thesis proper and "camp map" from the thesis volume
 (which is available on my website; [click here to access my website's 1-page
 promo, which contains all relevant download links/information regarding my
 book](#)).

The above heads-up guide should be useful, I think, as the organic nature of existence and human society and language is aptly symbolized and demonstrated by chaos. It also, in Gothic circles, elides the organic and inorganic in ways that confound the Cartesian Revolution's chief aim: divide and conquer, map and plunder the land and its inhabitants, all while quaking at the witch as an object of revenge (in both directions) or the pumpkin rotting after the harvest as intimations of Capitalism's own superstitious mortality. The occupying army is both weak and strong.



(artist: [Karl Kopinski](#))

Table of Contents

I am the table! —James Hetfield; "The View," on Metallica's Lulu (2011)



(artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#))

Please note: The table of contents per volume will only contain its volume's summary and list of chapters/subchapters. To access the entire list of volume/chapter summaries for Sex Positivity and its full table of contents, a separate PDF can be downloaded from my website. [Click here to access my website's 1-page promo, which contains all relevant download links/information regarding my book.](#) —Perse

Volume One contains my original preface, manifesto, synthesis roadmap and sample essay. The preface will be summarized shortly before it begins; the full summary of the rest of the volume is provided in the "Volume Outline" before the preface. Each volume half will reiterate its contents before starting and include hyperlinks to each chapter/subchapter along with small summaries of each.

—Volume One: Manifesto and Instruction—

[Manifesto/Instruction Volume Outline](#)

[Preface: Gothic \(gay-anarcho\) Communism; or, Synthesizing Emotional/Gothic Intelligence through a Sex-Positive Gothic Mode](#)

[Manifesto: Simplifying Theory](#)

- [The Gist: Our Gothic-Communist Mission Statement and List of Oppositional Praxial Coordinates, Including Our Tenets and Main Gothic Theories](#)
- [The Nation-State: Remediating Modern-day "Rome," Gargoyles, and the Bourgeois Trifectas; also, critiquing Amazons as Liminal Expression \(feat. Autumn Ivy\)](#)
- [An Uphill Battle \(with the Sun in Your Eyes\): Operational Difficulties](#)
 - [An Uphill Battle, part one: Introducing Revolutionary Cryptonymy and the State's Medieval Monopolies on Violence and Terror through Animalized Morphological Expression](#)
 - ["Predators and Prey": Predators as Amazons, Knights, and Other Forms of Domesticated, Animalized Monster Violence \(feat. James Cameron\)](#)
 - ["Predators and Prey": Prey as Liberators by Camping Prey-like BDSM; Its Bodily Psychosexual Expression and Campy Gothic Origins Stemming from Horace Walpole onwards](#)
 - [An Uphill Battle, part two: Concerning Rings, BDSM and Vampires; or the State's False Gifts, Power Exchange, and Crumbling Homesteads Told through Tolkien's Nature-Themed Stories](#)
 - [An Uphill Battle, part three: Challenging the State's Manufactured Consent and Stupidity \(with Vampires\)](#)
- [Monster Modes, Totalitarianism \(menticide\) and Opposing Forces: Oppositional Praxis](#)

[Instruction: Trauma Writing/Artwork, or Surviving and Expressing Our Trauma through Gothic Poetics](#)

- [Manifesto Postscript: "Healing from Rape"—Addressing "Corruption," DARVO and Police Abuse with the Pedagogy of the Oppressed in *Ninja Scroll* and *The Terminator*](#)
- [Gothic Communism, a sample essay: "Cornholing the Corn Lady—*Ghostbusters: Afterlife* and Empire"](#)
- [Paid Labor: Summarizing Praxis as Something to Synthesize by Paying Workers](#)
- [Synthesis Symposium: Nature Is Food; a Roadmap for Forging Social-Sexual Habits, or Cultivating Gothic-Communist Praxis in Our Own Daily Lives/Instruction](#)
 - [Synthesis Roadmap, or Nature Is Food, part zero: Pre-Symposium; or, Synthesis, Equations and Cartesian Trauma \(war and rape\)](#)
 - [Nature Is Food, part one: The Basics of Oppositional Synthesis; or Outlining Girl Talk, Menticide, the Liminal Expression of Subversive Revolution and "Perceptive" Pastiche in the Face of Cartesian Trauma \(feat. Medusa, Stigma Animals and Georgia O'Keefe\)](#)
 - [Nature Is Food, part two: A Deeper Look at Cartesian Trauma in War Culture \(feat. Robert Heinlein and Akira Kurosawa\)](#)
 - [Nature Is Food, part three: A Deeper Look at Cartesian Trauma in Rape Culture \(feat. phallic women/traumatic penetration and sports abuse\)](#)
 - [Nature Is Food, the finale: A Problem of "Knife Dicks," or Humanizing the Harvest; Hammering Swords into Ploughshares \(feat. racist porn and fat bodies\)](#)
- [End of the Road: Concluding the Roadmap and Volume One](#)

[Keyword Glossary](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[About the Author](#)



(artist: [Drooling Red](#))

Volume One: Manifesto and Instruction

Before I learned the art, a punch was just a punch, and a kick just a kick. After I learned the art, a punch was no longer a punch, a kick no longer a kick. Now that I understand the art, a punch is just a punch and a kick is just a kick.

—Bruce Lee, *The Tao of Jeet Kune Do* (1975)



(exhibit 6b1: Artist: [Autumn Anarchy](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#). Gothic Communism is a group effort. Glenn the Goblin and Revana Mireille are two mascots for Gothic Communism; I commissioned Autumn to draw them specifically for this volume, then applied a background and painted additional details.)

Up until now, the thesis volume and paratextual documents have discussed sex positivity and Gothic Communism on a *mostly* theoretical level; Volume One is concerned with manifesto—or the simplifying of theory—and its subsequent instruction through application and poiesis: praxis and synthesis. The preface serves as the bridge between Volumes Zero and One; it will extrapolate further on the anarcho-Communist devices present within Gothic-Communist application, then articulate on the synthesis of said application; i.e., the cultivation of the daily social-sexual habits needed to achieve praxis through Gothic poetics. From there, the manifesto gradually segues into the synthesis roadmap, focusing more and more on trauma writing and artwork (and eventually targeting Cartesian abuses of workers and nature) as forms of synthesis that rely on simplified theory as intuitively understood between worker collectives achieving praxis through shared poetic activities.

Manifesto/Instruction Volume Outline

"DEMON, ATHETOS SAY, KILL."

—Athetos' variants, *Axiom Verge* (2014)

Volume One is functionally divided in two: our manifesto, and the exploration of trauma as a powerful means of instruction. To that, it contains my original preface, manifesto, sample essay and synthesis roadmap, which we shall now outline in this brief section.

Before we do, I quickly (over the next one-and-a-half pages) want to consider the nature of the exhibit style of *this* volume compared to my thesis. More so than Volume Zero, Volume One invites the reader to consider investigating power and trauma through theory and praxis as things to synthesize and express; i.e., through active, informed, collective participation; e.g., through shared exhibits like the one below. Said exhibit was created between Roxie Rusalka and myself, with Roxie being informed of my project ahead of time and agreeing to take part. It was deliberate/planned, and took time, money and work to pull off, but also mutual/informed consent:



(exhibit 6b2: Model and artist: [Roxie Rusalka](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#). Instruction occurs through the interrogation of trauma, wherein power is perceived and performed; i.e., through ludo-Gothic BDSM/general Gothic poetics and simplified theories that incorporate a fair amount of former worker history pushing towards liberation. Said history is typically "lost" under state operations and must be repeatedly reclaimed through a liminal pedagogy—the act of reimagining

systemic abuse received by workers from state forces. This reclamation very much includes monsters that are historically regarded as treacherous to status-quo agents, but especially regarding men under the Cartesian model; e.g., the nymph or siren as a regular emasculator of traditional stations of male agency and authority. To that, Roxie's handle, "Rusalka," refers to a type of Slavic water siren, which Roxie suggested I use as inspiration for depicting her in my book. Seeing as I already recognized the mythology from Thomas Happ's 2014 *Metroidvania*, I drew Roxie as a Rusalki from *Axiom Verge* to instruct viewers with.

My and Roxie's pedagogy of the oppressed, then, constitutes something that you might recognize from elsewhere; i.e., as having threatened male figures and institutions from earlier hauntologies: the Rusalki from Axiom Verge serving as titanic war machines who—in the style of a framed narrative ripped from Frankenstein—instruct and dominate Trace as an avatar/unwitting extension of the game's chief male antagonist, Athetos. None of this is strictly "new" insofar as it has already appeared in fiction in some shape or form, but its present resurrection constitutes unique elements amid ongoing struggles.

The game's narrative installs a psychomachic, psychosexual dialog between all parties, established through play and felt through various positions of ignorance, knowledge and power imbalance. The women of the game are its primary instructors, and teach Trace from a place of darkness: the hellish wellspring of oblivion imparting fatal wisdom and traumatic rememory as much through pain, unequal power exchange and outright lies/subterfuge as they do through open communication. The takeaway isn't that Amazonian women are inherently treacherous, but survivors of immense trauma working with potential allies who, at times, have no idea who they're serving: Trace embodies Athetos, whose desire to conquer space/the universe through the colonial gaze of planet Earth [astronoetics] is initiated, embodied and explored through a position of ignorance; i.e., one that thrives through ergodic, monomythic motion and the shadow of Pygmalion/the Cycle of Kings as something to routinely bring about at the cost of all things.



[artist: [Wildragon](#)]

Within this overarching structure, canon classically challenges the ancient female as an Archaic Mother to behead; to reverse this is to foster a counterfeit of Athena's Aegis that freezes state potential in its tracks: female power as something to behold and learn from through the death of an internalized bigotry and desire to conquer that is often, at first blush, framed as "self-defense," "progress,"

and "empowerment.")

The entirety of the volume contains dozens of exhibits like the one above, arranged inside the preface, sample essay and two volume halves:

- [The preface](#) explains how Gothic (gay-anarcho) Communism differs from older Gothic and Marxist academia/praxis that I wish to modify and borrow from (Marxist-Leninism, postmodernism, psychoanalysis) in order to proceed beyond the myopia of Capitalist Realism using a unique *synthesis* of Gothic theories, Marxist concepts, and various other factors presented with commonplace language as freighted, liminal and already-colonized, but also potentially freeing when used by workers to open up their minds in dated, pulpy ways: the *proletarian* Gothic imagination.
- "[Manifesto](#)" simplifies the complex theory of our thesis volume by providing our manifesto in full; [the manifesto](#) gives our mission statement, as well as a variety of signposts and core ideas I've coined/retooled from older thinkers: the six Gothic-Marxist tenets of Gothic Communism (the Six Rs), four main Gothic academic theories (the Four Gs); its essays/essay groups ("[The Nation State](#)," "[An Uphill Battle](#)," and "[Monster Modes](#)") also explore the topics of the Gothic mode we'll continue to cover through the rest of the book—its monsters, lairs/parallel space, Hermeneutic Gothic-Communist Quadfecta, and phobias—as well as the Six Doubles of Creative/Oppositional Praxis and their *synthetic oppositional groupings* through which to synthesize, thus interrogate state abuses using trauma writing and artwork.
- "[Instruction](#)" focuses on instructing theory once simplified by using trauma writing and artwork as a synthetic, educational means of Gothic poetic expression. [The manifesto postscript](#) tackles generational trauma and police abuse by seeing it in others through *their* pedagogy of the oppressed; [the sample essay](#) uses every key idea in my book to analyze a primary text at full speed; "[Paid Labor](#)" stresses the value of paying workers when synthesizing praxis; and [the synthesis symposium](#) covers how to use the synthetic oppositional groupings to synthesize our general terms and academic ideas, processing them (and our trauma) into idiosyncratic, emotionally and Gothically intelligent social-sexual habits within our own lives; it covers more at length what we illustrated during the camp map finale in Volume Zero, focusing on Cartesian trauma and how its profit motive unironically treats nature as food: (rape and war that harvest nature through monstrous-feminine dialogs).



(artist: [Roxie Rusalka](#))

Preface: Gothic (gay-anarcho) Communism; or, Synthesizing Emotional/Gothic Intelligence through a Sex-Positive Gothic Mode

"You know nothing, Jon Snow."

—Ygritte, *A Storm of Swords* (2000)

Synthesis is vital to good praxis. For our purposes, synthesis can be adequately summarized as the cultivation of emotional/Gothic intelligence and class/cultural awareness; i.e., the deliberate utilization of Gothic poetics during the practical application of simplified theory had between activist workers formulating healthy social-sexual habits to deal with state trauma. But there's still plenty of theory that goes into these habits and their collective instruction/*de facto* education; to that, Gothic Communism is "picky" in terms of what it incorporates. I want to run these habits down during the preface, then conclude said preface by touching on praxial synthesis (and catharsis) before moving onto the manifesto.

First, a few things Gothic Communism tends to avoid, theory-wise. Gothic Communism strongly dislikes pure poststructuralist/psychoanalytical models (though it employs many of their ideas in Marxist ways); not only do these models tend to be dated, vaguely abstracting and sexist, but they are far more common in Gothic academia than I would like (especially in remnants of the 1970s and '80s, when second wave feminism and post-Freudian analysis were all the rage). Instead, I wrote *Sex Positivity* to marry Gothic/queer theory with Marxist, *dialectical-material* analysis/oppositional praxis, a process I have decided to call Gothic (gay-anarcho) Communism. While both sides will be thoroughly explained in the manifesto and instruction portions of this volume, let's quickly run down this book's Communist and Gothic aims to summarize what Gothic Communism is according to me and why.

The *Communist* aims of this book are anarcho-Communist in scope—a combination of Communism and anarchism ([there are other combinations](#), but these are either excluded [anarcho-Capitalism] or fall under anarcho-Communism in my opinion; e.g., queer/feminist Communism). So, not only does *Sex Positivity* seek to abolish private property in pursuit of post-scarcity beyond Capitalism; its chief desire is to end the worker exploitations that reliably happen through privatization—occurring through the nation-state as the chief monopolizer of violence and terror in ways that neoliberal corporations spearhead as their partners-in-crime (neoliberalism being a return to the "freeing" of the market, consolidating wealth in the pockets of the bourgeoisie through state-corporate

abuses of power and personal responsibility rhetoric disseminated by centrist media; neoliberals also disguise, aid and abet fascism, a concept we will explore much more thoroughly in Volume Three).

Everything I propose operates in service of deprivatization and dismantling the nation-state, corporations included. The vertical consolidation of materials and power in state-corporate echelons is horribly alienating and destructive. Both must be gradually replaced by anarcho-syndicalist communes as horizontal arrangements thereof. Doing so amounts to Gothic Communism's chief aim: a *Gothic* (monstrous) mode of expression that is productive, constructive and creatively sex-positive, liberating workers by utilizing the democratization of sexualized labor as something found and fostered among class- and culture-conscious workers, not the state (which historically privatizes labor [and Gothic poetics] for the elite in fundamentally *undemocratic* ways, including Marxist-Leninism's various missteps;



i.e., a "kettling" of *state* powers by capitalist forces into headspaces of paranoia and ultimately the settling of old scores).

([source](#): Julia Kenny's "Stalin's Cult of Personality: Its Origin and Progression," 2015)

In other words, there's to be no cults of personality nominally declaring themselves "Communists" or

"National Socialists" in Gothic Communism, nor genocidal great leaders nor pyramid schemes; no Pol Pot, Chairman Mao, nor Stalin as Marxist-Leninist heads of state; no neoliberal, corporate-born billionaires like Bill Gates or their establishment-politician/corporate-Americanized executives quietly assisting the billionaire class as the great destroyers of the planet (these various heads to the state of affairs are synonymous with "the state/the elite" insofar as I use those terms); no popes nor cult leaders; no venerate, accommodated copycats of various "fathers of [insert academic field, here]" like Jacques Derrida and his god-awful prose (ditch said dreck, but keep his genuinely productive and useful Deconstructionist ideas; e.g., "There is no transcendental signified" [obviously paraphrased, because Derrida couldn't write a straightforward sentence to save his life] from his 1966 essay, "[Structure, Sign and Play](#)") nor the post-Freudians who followed in Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung's footsteps only to have their psychoanalytical models updated by the likes of Slavoj Žižek and Jordan Peterson alike, either man presented as annoyingly

sacred and lame (to be fair, Zizek *can* be a lot fun when picking low-hanging fruit, but he's still not Marxist, anarcho-Communist or queer enough for my taste; e.g., his defending of a two-state solution³⁶ *vis-à-vis* the Palestinian genocide).

The idea of Gothic Communism is to avoid the Foucauldian "torture loop" of a hauntologized, abject disgust mill; i.e., the expectation of medieval, rapey violence post-deconstruction, but also the chickenshit, exploitative power imbalances in academic circles; e.g., Simone Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre working as a team to routinely "deflower" a (much) younger third. As Andy Martin writes in "The Persistence of the 'Lolita Syndrome'" (2013):

It has to be said that Beauvoir's interest in these matters was not purely theoretical (in fact, it is hard to conceive of any philosopher's thoughts being purely theoretical). As a diligent investigator, I am obliged to say that she was dismissed from her teaching job in 1943 for "behavior leading to the corruption of a minor." The minor in question was one of her pupils at a Paris lycée. It is well established that she and Jean-Paul Sartre developed a pattern, which they called the "trio," in which Beauvoir would seduce her students and then pass them on to Sartre. (See, for example, "A Disgraceful Affair," by Bianca Lamblin, in which she recalls being infatuated with Beauvoir, but romanced systematically by Sartre, who cheerfully remarks, on the way to a consummation, that "the hotel chambermaid will be really surprised, because she caught me taking another girl's virginity only yesterday.")

Beauvoir's "Lolita Syndrome" (her personal favorite, she said, among her essays) offers an evangelical defence of the sexual emancipation of the young ([source](#)).

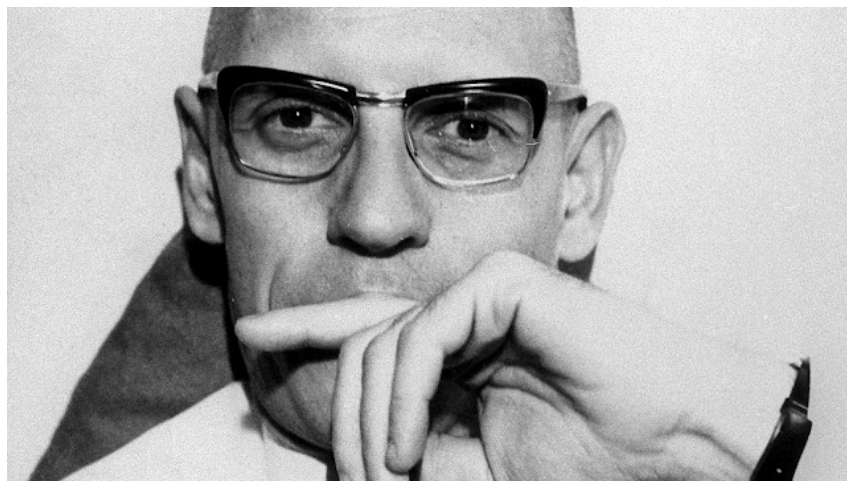
Double standards aside, both intellectuals shamelessly exploited the unequal power structures of academia, but enjoyed a constant postmortem, reverential emblemizing as *the* intellectuals with the final say on feminist matters. Equally gross, in hindsight, is Michel Foucault's 1993 interview with Edmund White, whereupon he delivers a self-confessed and seemingly innocent admission to the

³⁶ When Zizek writes, "We can and should unconditionally support Israel's right to defend itself against terrorist attacks" ([source](#): "The Real Dividing Line in Israel-Palestine," 2023), he's essentially apologizing for the state model and its time-tested monopolies on terror and violence; specifically by endorsing *Israel*, he's defending a fundamentally settler-colonial project, akin to supporting the Nazi regime's right to exist while invading Poland but updated through modern-day proxy-war maneuvers (though the WW2-era US certainly expected Nazi Germany to abolish the elite's enemies in Russia). The two-state solution is untenable because Israel is built on infinite military conquest; they decide who the "terrorists" are, then destroy them with extreme prejudice *and* impunity (thanks to American geopolitical support); e.g., GDF's "[It's Official](#)" (2023): "We are essentially seeing one of the worst bombing campaigns in human history. This is the crime of the century" and it's being committed by the Israeli state and supported by privileged, puffed-up dickwads like Zizek.

chasing of cute boys his entire academic career (echoing Dennis Cooper's twink-in-peril schtick, but in real life *minus* the ironic/liberatory meta):

I wasn't always smart; I was actually very stupid in school [T]here was a boy who was very attractive who was even stupider than I was. And in order to ingratiate myself with this boy who was very beautiful, I began to do his homework for him – and that's how I became smart, I had to do all this work to just keep ahead of him a little bit, in order to help him. In a sense, all the rest of my life I've been trying to do intellectual things that would attract beautiful boys ([source](#)).

All seemingly innocent until you learn about [his predatory sex tourism](#) (Bad Empanada 2, 2022), [desire to abolish age of consent laws in France](#) (The Living Philosophy's "Why French Postmodernists were Pro-Paedophilia in the 1970s," 2021), and what James Miller in *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (1993) called [an addiction to self-destruction and sadomasochist sex](#) (the coercive sort). Likewise, Elliot Swain in 2021 remarks in utter frustration how Foucault [tended to avoid Marxist language altogether](#). Foucault wasn't just accommodated, you see; he was *enabled* and desired intellectual fame similar to what Sartre had achieved before him. It's gross, queer-normative, TERF levels of nasty and needs to be abolished. Good play and sex-positive BDSM are all entirely possible (and something we'll explore more in Volume Three, Chapters Two and Three). However, creepy Gay Uncle Fester ain't it.



Rather, in a reconstructed, post-scarcity world, there is no systemic war and rape. To this, Gothic Communism is also not a regression back into the freed market like Gorbachev did to the U.S.S.R. in the 1980s, but instead a collective push towards universal

degrowth (that means no "as good as it gets" moderates, too). Instead, this is to be an entirely different mode of undertaking development under Capitalism *towards* anarcho-Communism away from Capitalist Realism, but the basic ideas are still the same—re: Socialism's "From each according to [their] ability, to each according to [their] work" to Communism's "to each according to [their] need." Anarcho-Communism simply means class solidarity and collective action performed directly

by informed, intelligent workers of various sorts, aided by bourgeois and petit-bourgeois (middle) class allies—*not* by establishment politicians, academics and state-corporate agents, whose politics/praxis are bourgeois in nature; they serve the state, *not* workers.

For us and Gothic Communism, worker safety is sacred and supersedes *any* icon who came before and iconoclasts absolutely shouldn't hesitate to tear down/camp their harmful reputations. To give some further examples:

- [Milton was patriarchal](#) (Lapham's Quarterly's "Misspent Youth")
- [Tolkien was racist](#) (Anderson Rearick's "Why Is the Only Good Orc a Dead Orc," 2004).
- Marx wasn't overtly a Gothacist (certainly not by current, iconoclastic standards, anyways; he loved ghosts, but these had to be "unpacked" by people like Derrida, Castricano and other Gothic theorists whose work emerged nearly [and after] a century after Marx' death); also, [he was anti-Semitic](#) ("Karl Marx in the Ludwig Rosenberger Library of Judaica," 2006) and homophobic (see "[Making Marx Gay](#)").
- [Oscar Wilde was anti-Semitic](#) (Christopher Nassar's "The Problem of the Jewish Manager in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*," 2005).
- Simone Beauvoir was not only a rapist, but cis-centric ("*woman* is other").
- [Pablo Picasso was a rapist and misogynist](#) (Marta's "The Women of Picasso," 2023), [as was Roman Polanski](#) (Dreading's "The Case of Roman Polanski," 2022).
- [Lovecraft was mega-racist](#): "China Miéville says, 'There is nothing epiphenomenal about racism in Lovecraft.' Put differently, Lovecraft's race thinking cannot be separated from his body of work" (Brown University's "The Racial Imaginaries of H. P. Lovecraft").
- Coleridge was an apologist for the state, scapegoating Matthew Lewis as "terrorist³⁷" from a white, straight man's cis-supremacist, classist and racist position; i.e., "equality of convenience" dressed up as a conspicuous boner for the West using the flowery (and sober, at this point) language of a Poet Laureate:
 - The Romans slowly conquered the more southerly portion of their tribes, and succeeded only by their superior arts, their policy, and better discipline. After a time, when the Goths, to use the name of the noblest and most historical of the Teutonic tribes, had acquired some knowledge of these arts from mixing with their conquerors, they

³⁷ "Nor must it be forgotten that the author is a man of rank and fortune. Yes! the author of the Monk signs himself a LEGISLATOR! We stare and tremble" ([source](#): Pressbooks' "Samuel Taylor Coleridge's review of *The Monk*").

invaded the Roman territories. The hardy habits, the steady perseverance, the better faith of the enduring Goth rendered him too formidable an enemy for the corrupt Roman, who was more inclined to purchase the subjection of his enemy, than to go through the suffering necessary to secure it. The conquest of the Romans gave to the Goths the Christian religion as it was then existing in Italy; and the light and graceful building of Grecian, or Roman-Greek order, became singularly combined with the massy architecture of the Goths, as wild and varied as the forest vegetation which it resembled. The Greek art is beautiful ([source](#): "General Character in the Gothic Literature and Art").

- (from my thesis volume): Fred Botting and Frederic Jameson were/are apologists of science fiction as somehow "not Gothic" (re: [Botting's silly arguments of "Gothic redundancy" as I tackle them](#) [exhibit 1a1a1h2a3] and Jameson's very-dumb 1991 declaration in *Postmodernism*, calling the Gothic "[that boring and exhausted paradigm](#)"³⁸).
- [George Orwell was anti-Communist \(despite knowing virtually nothing about Russia and the USSR\) and a fascist apologist](#) (re: Hakim, 2023).
- Renowned geneticist Richard Dawkins is a [eugenics](#) (Gaia Vince's "Eugenics Would Not Work in Humans," 2020) and [rape](#) apologist (Melissia McEwan's "Dawkins Defends Himself with More Rape Apologia," 2013) and Islamophobe, extending his anti-intellectual, bought-and-paid for bigotry [to](#)

³⁸ The quote is ubiquitous, but consider the opening page for Alex Link's "The Mysteries of Postmodernism, or, Fredric Jameson's Gothic Plots" (2009) for a summary of it:

In the midst, of its definitive arguments, Frederic Jameson's *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991) pauses to consider the Gothic just long enough to single it out as a hopelessly "boring and exhausted paradigm." The Gothic, he declares, is a mere "class fantasy (or nightmare) in which the dialectic of privilege and shelter is exercised" and it should not be mistaken for a "protofeminist denunciation of patriarchy" nor "a protopolitical protest against rape." Although surprising at first, this condemnation is strategic in that it establishes the Gothic as Jameson's critical other; the Gothic becomes an object of ritual sacrifice, imbued with those qualities in Jameson's argument which are most discomfiting. [...] If one regards *Postmodernism* as telling a story about postmodernity, its plot, taken as a whole, is curiously Radcliffean, in that it routinely presents the reader with postmodern objects meant to inspire anxiety before explaining them away. Jameson's dismissal of the Gothic, in other words, resembles nothing so much as his own description of the Gothic, in "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture" (1979), as a means of raising and exorcising an object of anxiety ([source](#)).

In other words, Jameson writes like Coleridge does—like a scared white boy but even more allergic to the Gothic mode, oddly emulating one of its most famous (and white) female authors.

[trans people](#) (Essence of Thought's "Richard Dawkins Promotes Creationism in Anti-Trans Crusade," 2023).

- Bill Gates is a soulless vampire who—along with those who support his utterly draconian privatization of the computer market and gutting of public education, as well as his bogus, parasitic and thoroughly disingenuous "philanthropy" ([source](#): Another Slice's "Bill Gates: King Of Neoliberalism," 2020)—[has ties to child sex trafficker Jeffery Epstein](#) (Behind the Bastards' "Part One: The Ballad of Bill Gates," 2023). Billionaires not only personify the elite; they're a complete and utter scourge on the planet and should not exist—i.e., they're *not* useful to developing Communism; they're lying parasites begot from the Second Gilded Age courtesy of neoliberal hegemony and systemic lies, surveillance, privatization, and genocide dressed up as the banality of evil. Fuck the lot of 'em.
- [Noam Chomsky had ties to then-outed pedophile and sex trafficker, Jeffery Epstein](#) ("Epstein's Private Calendar Reveals Prominent Names," 2023).

We not only have to be better than the West; we have to be better than all these persons and avoid what my friend Sandy Norton lovingly calls the "Imperialism of Theory" (coined when she was sparring with a fellow academic about William Makepeace Thackeray's 1848 novel, *Vanity Fair*):

At its best, theory offers us models that encourage speculative thinking. Many critics assume, however, that the application of theoretical discourses to literature necessarily entails a particular, and limited, set of interpretive practices: reference to a theorist's ideas, for instance, may too easily be taken to mean that a critic subscribes to all the tenets of that theorist's position as well as to those of the better-known practitioners of the theory. This constraining movement unnecessarily forecloses speculative thought and seeks, in a way that mirrors imperialist discourses, to conserve the authority and power of those who have accumulated intellectual and academic capital through association with a theory.

This sort of theoretical imperialism is also methodological: the repeated application of a theory in a particular way quickly comes to constitute an authority which dictates that it should *only* be applied in that way. Although he may not do so intentionally, Perkin employs theory as a constraining force when he takes me to task for using Foucault's work but failing to adopt a strictly New Historicist methodology: "Foucault leads one to New Historicism, which *requires* that one read a text as part of a world of discourses, whereas Norton's article is really a close reading of some strands of a single text" (165; my emphasis). The semantic slippage in this sentence is telling, I think. It is, on an overt level, "New Historicism" or presumably its practitioners that "require" the use of this method. But because "Foucault

leads one to New Historicism," the implication of the sentence is that Foucauldian theory itself "require[s]" this method. This I would deny. Although his work provides a model for some of the methods of New Historicism, neither Foucault nor any New Historicist would claim that his work which is used across a broad range of disciplines may only be appropriately applied using those methods.

I do not believe that I am *required* to demonstrate "a need to invoke Foucault" (and the diction here is interesting precisely why does Perkin use the word "invoke"?). Like Marx or Freud, Foucault is himself an example of what he calls in the essay, "What Is an Author?," "founders of discursivity," figures who have "established an endless possibility of discourse" (154). "To expand a type of discursivity," he proposes, is precisely "to open it up to a certain number of possible applications" (156). Rather than "needing to



invoke" Foucault, I choose to apply Foucault because of the speculative richness such application offers ([source](#): "The Imperialism of Theory: A Response to J. Russell Perkin," 1994).

Simply put, singular and enforced interpretations are dangerous, and we need to be choosy in ways that prolifically and flexibly *enrich* our arguments, not simply dot them with the fancy patriarchal ornaments of accommodated intellectuals. Meanwhile, our ruffling of their collective *feathers* needs to hit a collective *nerve*: their sell-out, privileged status; i.e., sitting in their ivory towers and basically talking amongst themselves in a highly privatized sense. This requires a certain sense of detachment from positions of comfort that historically are used to divide and conquer workers. As Said writes in "Reflections on Exile" (1984):

Because exile, unlike nationalism, is fundamentally a discontinuous state of being. Exiles are cut off from their roots, their land, their past. They generally do not have armies or states, although they are often in search of them. Exiles feel, therefore, an urgent need to reconstitute their broken lives, usually by choosing to see themselves as part of a triumphant ideology or a restored people. [...] Exile is predicated on the existence of, love for, and bond with, one's native place; what is true of all exile is not that home and love of home are lost, but that loss is inherent in the very existence of both.

Regard experiences as if they were about to disappear. What is it that anchors them in reality? What would you save of them? What would you give

up? Only someone who has achieved independence and detachment, someone whose homeland is "sweet" but whose circumstances makes it impossible to recapture that sweetness, can answer those questions. (Such a person would also find it impossible to derive satisfaction from substitutes furnished by illusion or dogma.)

This may seem like a prescription for an unrelieved grimness of outlook and, with it, a permanently sullen disapproval of all enthusiasm or buoyancy of spirit. Not necessarily. While it perhaps seems peculiar to speak of the pleasures of exile, there are some positive things to be said for a few of its conditions. Seeing "the entire world as a foreign land" makes possible originality of vision. Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that – to borrow a phrase from music – is *contrapuntal*.

For an exile, habits of life, expression or activity in the new environment inevitably occur against the memory of these things in another environment. Thus both the new and the old environments are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally. There is a unique pleasure in this sort of apprehension, especially if the exile is conscious of other contrapuntal juxtapositions that diminish orthodox judgement and elevate appreciative sympathy. There is also a particular sense of achievement in acting as if one were at home wherever one happens to be ([source](#)).

Exiting Plato's cave can feel brutal, insofar as its new-felt *unheimlich* is irreversible. From our own "pleasures of exile," though, home is something to cultivate through alienation as a forced consequence under Capitalism. It, like trauma in general, becomes something to live with, often through rituals of theatrical distress:



(artist: [Coey Kuhn](#))

Liberation from the illusions of capital means our prescribed homeland becomes foreign in ways that allow for startling new appreciations; i.e., in terms of how we identify using Gothic language during fresh struggles under old, systemic problems: as monsters. Doing so helps us better voice the chaos inherent to our daily lives under capital,

once the game is up. Yes, we can be "ostracized" by people who frankly care little for our well-being at an institutional level (accommodated intellectuals); but as their cool dismissal of us exposes the apathy and bigotry behind their "soft" arguments, their hard, inflexible stances can be denuded by Gothic Communism's chief weapon: poetics. Canon's combined, "sacred" memories—of powerful men, women and token minorities—need to be expunged³⁹ and criticized, preserving the exhibits of what was while utilizing what is as useful towards development towards a better world than has ever existed; i.e., to be indebted, but not enslaved, towards an imaginary past: the Wisdom of the Ancients as a living document to learn from, but also rewrite as needed.

Said document—and by extension the public imagination/understanding associated with it—is something that workers can actively contribute towards for their own betterment. As such, these borrowed concepts' flexible application works well beyond their original, intended prescription while we make our own monsters (thus historical materialism). Time is of the essence, though; we need to critique power dialectically-materially *yesterday and now* in the kinds of language that the vast majority of workers actively recognize and consume voraciously—monsters, but also sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll as "Gothic." Capitalism commodifies worker struggles through Gothic language as popular but policed, something that we must reclaim from state forces styling themselves (and canon) as genuine and exclusive, but also "safe." Intended readers for the ghost of the counterfeit are habitually its greatest abusers through the process of abjection; i.e., inside a heteronormative, settler-colonial system that has, since its very inception, been designed to exploit, demonize and control others for profit—to rape them through an elaborate series of mind games and lies that have them fearful of, and fascinated with, the imaginary past as a dependable tool of menticide. To this, rape is more than physical/sexual violence; it's the flagrant abuse of power that leads to worker exploitation on physical, mental, sexual and/or emotional levels over time: the *mind* as something to rape according to stations and stances within Capitalism that reflect harmful positions of unfair status, privilege and authority.

Our *Gothic*-Communist emphasis, then, is the class and cultural solidarity of Gothicized sex work in worker hearts and minds—its monstrous artistic output constituting collective labor action as a liberatory teaching device; i.e., proletarian

³⁹ *When I tried taking Lovecraft to task ("Method in His Madness: Lovecraft, the Rock and Roll Iconoclast and Buoyant Lead Balloon," 2017), renowned Lovecraft scholar T.S. Joshi had a fit/refused to publish my work in his annual Lovecraft journal. Joshi seemed to dislike the mere suggestion that Lovecraft wasn't somehow perfect as is—conveniently equipped to do what he did (according to Joshi) for his target audience, and that we pesky kids of today are just ignorant of his sublime genius. Puh-lease! If Lovecraft was "perfect," you wouldn't have New Weird/Next Weird authors like Thomas Ligotti, Jeff Vandermeer and China Miéville; producers like Jordan Peele's Monkeypaw Productions and Lovecraft Country (2020); or developers like Red Hook Studios chewing Lovecraft up and routinely spitting out his racist, useless bones. Take what's useful and leave the rest (without forgetting it).*

praxis operating through internalized class/culture consciousness, emotional/Gothic intelligence, and trauma awareness and expression; and whose subsequent appreciative irony—of xenophilic camp through praxial catharsis—opposes bourgeois praxis and state propaganda's heteronormative canon. "Monsters are real" becomes a labor dispute, insofar as they express through theatrical means how all workers, but especially gender-non-conforming workers, have the right to exist and not be exploited by capital; i.e., the same right deserving to all humans, animals, and the Earth: the satisfaction of our basic material needs and the ability to pursue our own happiness within these material systems under post-scarcity.

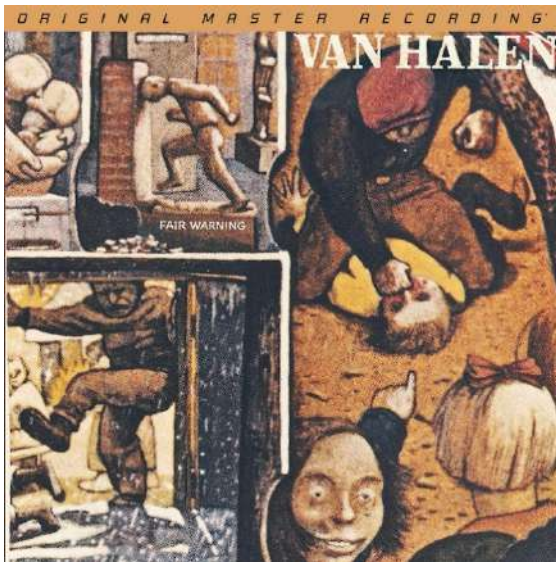


(artist: [La Patte](#))

Said praxis, when synthesized, aims to "rewire" a fundamentally bourgeois Superstructure: by transforming said canon, affecting the Base through daily habits that, when cultivated, express a rebellious class and cultural character (re:

camping the twin trees of Capitalism). While the Base and Superstructure originate from Marx's own work, the Superstructure interests us because—as stated during the thesis volume—it *normally* "grows out of the Base and reflects the ruling class' interests" (re: [Rana Indrajit Singh](#)). As *sex-positive* workers, we want to denormalize worker abuse and alienation by shifting away from generational trauma as a systemic effect; i.e., by transforming the state's capacity to deliver such things, attacking worker minds with sex-coercive canon and unironic, harmful xenophobia and xenophilia. We must directly challenge said education and synthesis according to our own sex-positive, hence iconoclastic, Gothic poetics: recultivating the twin trees by supplying our own in their place. Our liberation is meant to be gradual, occurring through a *proletarian* Gothic imagination that is grown over time, and whose careful cultivation stems from a collective intelligence/awareness that is explicitly developed to function as anarcho-Communist, *not* Marxist-Leninist (or other socio-political and -economic arrangements that remain prone to the historical abuses of state power as a vertical, thus harmful, configuration).

Though proletarian, *Sex Positivity* comes out of an abject past fraught with compromise, the "state Socialism" of Marxist-Leninism becoming increasingly nominal (and abusive) under Capitalism; obviously we want to avoid that as much as we can while developing Communism outside of establishment politics; i.e., through ludo-Gothic BDSM according to our central tenets; e.g., through ironic *Amazonomachia*, emancipatory castle-narrative and the palliative Numinous, etc.



(original artist: [William Kurelek](#))

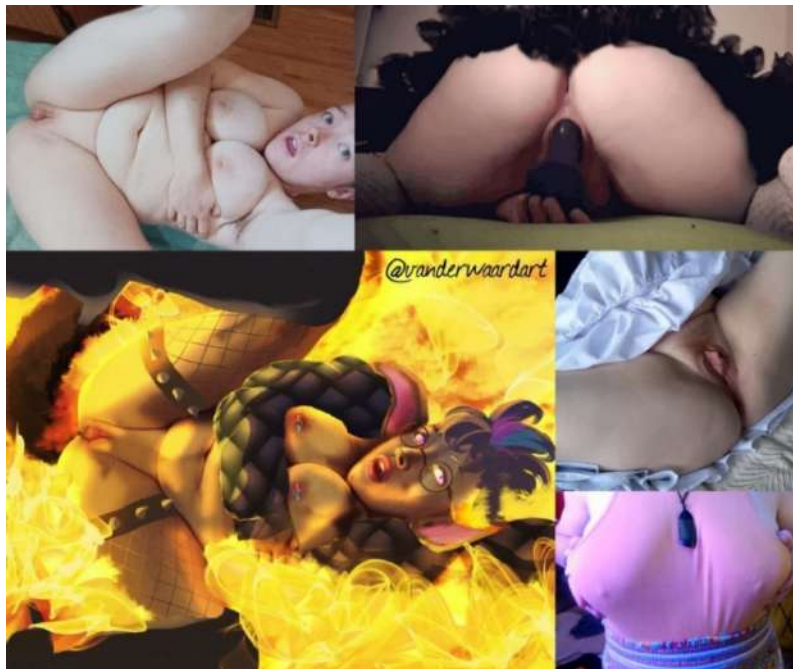
The state and oppositional praxis have many moving parts that complicate the latter's execution, especially since its working often generates friction amid praxial inertia. We'll consider performing proletarian praxis under live, total conditions in Volume Three (first adumbrating its complicated Gothic histories in Volume Two). For Volume One, just understand that that my manifesto tenets, Gothic academic theories, mode of expression, oppositional-praxial model and synthesis roadmap (explained in that order)

are all designed to function through Gothic-Communist iconoclasts re-cultivating a bourgeois Superstructure, which is what praxial synthesis ultimately is: thesis vs antithesis, canon vs iconoclasm; i.e., iconoclastic *poiesis* as a dark poetics/pedagogy of the oppressed intended to make workers more emotionally/Gothically intelligent, sex-positive and capable in terms of recognizing but also interrogating/negotiating power and trauma while instructing good play vs bad play during their own lives. This liminal, ongoing procedure occurs through their own creative output, which helps prevent future abuses by changing the socio-material conditions that lead to systemic harm; i.e., by telling beautiful lies that speak truth to power in "Satanic" ways, but also formulate and embody an active and unified front against state powers (and their monstrous, fetishized media, often with pornographic qualities) abusing all workers: sex-positive monsters that express worker identities attached to ongoing struggles, unresolved under capital and pinned by the boot of state enforcers. In short, we learn from the voiced oppression and lived trauma of others.

This abuse happens to varying degrees, but our monstrous empowerment demands intersectional, solidarized resistance; i.e., praxial synthesis amounts to the cultivated intuition that executes practical theory out of daily habits. Through what we make ourselves *between* ourselves, we achieve praxial catharsis through monstrous theatre as second-nature. Guided by sound theory as an instructional path leading away from systemic oppression, it's something discussed less in Volume Zero because Volume Zero was primarily theory (though the camp map finale gave a brief example of camping canon between [Blxxd Bunny](#) and myself regarding systemic trauma). Volume One aims to reduce said theories to a practical degree, upon which the synthesis roadmap will thoroughly consider trauma writing and artwork as things to synthesize through our bodies as monstrous-feminine (flesh is semantically loaded with fearful-dogmatic qualities that we can instruct

workers away from using said bodies in a sex-positive manner). We'll work towards praxial synthesis as we thread the manifesto, after which the volume's second half considers its instruction towards catharsis; i.e., how praxial synthesis executes practical theory by cultivating good social-sexual habits that simplify and execute theory during oppositional praxis.

This extracurricular instruction/*de facto* education generally requires a "dance partner" to move with in harmonized theory before systemic catharsis can be realistically attained: while wearing costumes that express what we have in mind. The goblin is one such example, with sex-positive versions reclaiming anti-Semitic tropes and stigmatic language through complex social-sexual labor exchanges: between my partner Bay and I during our own attempts at praxial synthesis/catharsis.



(exhibit 6b3: Model and artist: [Bay](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#). Bay is my partner and we make art together to express and interrogate trauma, rendering it visible according to how we identify and self-determine. The goblin, then, is both my mascot monster for Gothic Communism, and the way that Bay identifies with as a monstrous entity that serves their pedagogy of the oppressed: the means to voice their trauma and their power with. Everything

occupies the same space, including resistance and power but also class/cultural character in the presence of state abuse's generational trauma; i.e., as something to overcome through mutual, informed consent and instructional love.)

Oppositional praxis during development reliably leads to liminal conflict and transition—especially in Gothic stories when oscillation is expected. Part of the cliché is how a monster or parallel space's praxial role in Gothic fiction becomes ontologically ambiguous during oppositional praxis; e.g., class allies/traitors and bourgeois/proletarian monsters, witches, zombies, etc. As Gothic Communists, we'll have to learn to tell 'em all apart, but also relate to them from moment to living moment. While historical materialism remains a common introduction for separating traitors and co-conspirators—i.e., the dialectical-material study of monsters across

the Gothic mode over space and time—these warring factors cannot and should not be separate from their social-sexual elements. To that, monstrous language remains utterly essential as we synthesize praxis within our own friendships.

This often has a Satanic function. As the "Notes on Power" essay from Volume Zero argues, the Satanic rebel speaks truth to power by telling beautiful, paradoxical and doubled lies that resist state control; re: to be "of the devil's party" like Milton was (according to William Blake) but *consciously* so; i.e., conducting what the elite would consider thought crimes through dark poetics that are often more interesting (and fun/gender parodic) than blindly submitting to pre-existing authorities: facing one's undead sensations and animalistic hunger while demonically shifting one's shape, effectively offering up forbidden knowledge (of pleasure and trauma) when confronting one's true self as anathema to the status quo under Capitalism. Utilized in this sense, Gothic poetics teach workers how to self-fashion and self-determine through subversive/dissident identities that, far from being controlled opposition, furtively educate audiences on how to question authority whilst forming out of oppressive, gender-troubled struggles against them; i.e., through trauma writing and artwork as a mode of survival *and* reclamation of one's power through darkness visible.

As my thesis also argues, "Despite their poetic nature, performance and play are an absolutely potent means of expressing thus negotiating power through the Gothic mode." Bay embodies that as someone I love and want to depict the way that makes them feel most authentic, but also heard and seen relative to how they feel from day to day as an oppressed person who lives a highly Satanic life. A neurodivergent, non-binary and Indigenous cutie, they treat the term "shapeshifter" as something a paradox—less of something to turn into what never was, and more a revelation of their true self waiting to be shown to others who normally don't have the eyes for it: a possible self tied to a possible world that loves and worships them as a god. "Playing god" includes playing *with* gods, and Bay is my god to worship, appreciate and love as equals in a highly plastic world. We constantly learn from each other while having fun together, our shared performance and play operating through Gothic poetics as an (a)sexual voice; delight and appreciation amid (for us) profound erotic euphoria. Doing so



constitutes an effective means of interrogating trauma mid-synthesis, but also *negotiating* with it; i.e., to teach workers confidence by using their bodies to learn with, but also demonize and play with inside immensely cathartic thresholds. They're someone to dive into and enjoy while synthesizing praxis towards a better world one step (and delicious fuck) at a time.

(artist: [Bay](#))

Manifesto: Simplifying Theory

"One night during my accustomed visit to the neighbouring wood where I collected my own food and brought home firing for my protectors, I found on the ground a leathern portmanteau containing several articles of dress and some books. I eagerly seized the prize and returned with it to my hovel. Fortunately the books were written in the language, the elements of which I had acquired at the cottage; they consisted of Paradise Lost, a volume of Plutarch's Lives, and the Sorrows of Werter. The possession of these treasures gave me extreme delight; I now continually studied and exercised my mind upon these histories, whilst my friends were employed in their ordinary occupations.

—the Creature, *Frankenstein* (1818)



Dearest Reader,

This is our revolution's manifesto. I originally wrote it before the thesis volume, making it more relaxed in its argumentation. So while it's more academically formalized than Volumes Two and Three, my manifesto supplies a

thoroughly simplified approach to my core theories. In doing so, its actionable curriculum aims to apply the grander ideas of my thesis to one's own teaching approach as flexible; i.e., to learn from the trauma of oppressed groups when dealing with our own abuse. All happen while synthesizing praxis and overcoming systemic harm together, using a variety of monstrous expressions to cultivate sex-positive habits to teach others with. These habits generate through Gothic dialogs, whose monstrous theatre constitutes a pedagogy of the oppressed that, when synthesized, aids in the development of Gothic Communism for all. As its name suggests, the manifesto unfurls the manifesto tree of oppositional praxis; understanding this tree is required for when we discuss synthesizing theory and confronting interpersonal trauma through Gothic instruction in the second half of this volume. So learn it well, but take your time. Rome wasn't burned in a day and healing from its vast crimes takes not simply one lifetime, but many in endless succession; i.e., while past abuse lives within and around us and generational trauma is slowly dismantled on a systemic level through Gothic paradox.

Love,

—Your "Commie Mommy," Persephone

For centuries, Gothic stories (and more-recent-but-dated psychoanalytical models in Gothic academia) have warned of vast, indistinct dangers seemingly removed from everyday life yet at the same time frighteningly relatable and close. I argue this myopic division stems from Capitalism, whose elusive, *illusory* exploitation of sex workers (and sexualized workers) happens through Capitalist Realism; said Realism damages the cultural mind, but also its artistic output as something to relate with and respond to in Gothic terms. In turn, this has had a wide range of far-reaching effects in the material world felt through the Gothic imagination: "Something is rotten in Denmark!" This manifesto formulates an active, practical, countercultural process; informed by a collection of assembled theories and research, said process articulates sex-positive activism and education in a series of vital, interconnected things: the mission of Gothic Communism; its goals, theories, and mode of expression (the means and materials of production: monsters, lairs/parallel space, hermeneutics—the means of study—phobias, and mediums); and creative expression through praxial synthesis.

At its inception, our manifesto began essentially as one chapter divided into six subchapters. After it gives our mission statement, it lists the majority of operational coordinates that occur during oppositional praxis: our aforementioned manifesto tree. The goal in listing them, here after we've already discussed them much more deeply during my thesis argument, isn't to provide their complete order exactly as it was examined in Volume Zero; it's to provide them in a simplified form that can be applied through a taught, *semi-anecdotal* approach. The content is essentially the same, albeit more basic and conversational, thus accessible:

- "[The Gist](#)" gives our mission statement, then outlines the entire manifesto (the manifesto tree of oppositional praxis) list by list.
- "[The Nation-State](#)" and "[An Uphill Battle](#)" [part one](#), [part two](#) and [part three](#) outline the many pressures and forces existing during the struggle to synthesize praxis and unify workers using monstrous poetics; the three monsters (and their trauma style) we focus on are gargoyles, Amazons and vampires.
- "[Monster Modes, Totalitarianism and Opposing Forces](#)" revisits oppositional praxis, lists all the monsters, lairs and phobias we will explore in Volume Two and Three, and outlines menticide, a form of brainwashing that the **synthesis roadmap** explores more thoroughly.

Similar to my thesis volume, there is *some* mention of trauma writing/artwork in the manifesto itself. While interrogating trauma isn't the main focus of the manifesto *at first*, it gradually becomes more and more prevalent until the manifesto *postscript* kicks off the second half of the volume. From there, "[Healing from Rape](#)" constitutes the initiation of catharsis through learned instruction as informed by traumatic anecdote; i.e., lived experience and emotional

content. It addresses police "corruption," DARVO and general abuse with the pedagogy of the oppressed as a means of preventing trauma, but also healing from it by listening to those already traumatized on a daily basis: sex workers and workers sexualized by capital as people who can teach us through their own catharsis to be better instructors through the same mode.

Following the postscript, the [synthesis roadmap](#) discusses how to synthesize praxis directly within our daily lives, thus prevent war and rape as a Cartesian byproduct; i.e., by forging social-sexual habits of emotional/Gothic intelligence and class/cultural awareness through what we express, create or otherwise personify and leave behind for others to discover and learn from: our collective, intersectional trauma as previously informed by the trauma of others, including the shadow of state abuses against nature felt across time and space. The complex, difficult emotions that result (fear, doubt, insecurity, superstition, paranoia, psychosexual attraction/repulsion, etc) become things to negotiate with through our poetics having a lasting Gothic footprint that challenges state dogma.



(exhibit 6b3: Artist, top-left, top-mid, and bottom-mid: [Blxxd Bunny](#); bottom-left: [Juice of Yellow](#); right: [Leeza](#). Their squishy bodies serve as a powerful, Gothic means of educating others about confronting trauma and healing from it, but also preventing

successive abuses against such bodies in the future.)

The manifesto *is* modular and holistic, having many moving parts that work on their own and in unison, often intersecting in some shape or form. Point in fact, they're *meant* to be studied, approached and applied intersectionally insofar as expressing trauma goes. However, I've tried to write them in such a way that you can get the gist of certain points before I get around to explaining them (which, to be frank, I've done far more exhaustively in Volume Zero). So regardless if you've only skimmed Volume Zero, all of these devices are central to iconoclasm during oppositional praxis; we absolutely need to cover them in some shape or form before we can delve into Gothic poetics as something to historically understand and learn from in Volume Two, then apply through our own work in Volume Three—i.e., when we "play god" and self-fashion/self-determine in Gothic-Communist terms.

The Gist: Our Gothic-Communist Mission Statement and List of Oppositional Praxial Coordinates, Including Our Tenets and Main Gothic Theories

"But Louis B. Meyer wouldn't be Goebbels' proper opposite number. I believe Goebbels sees himself as David O. Selznick."

"...Brief him!"

—Lt. Archie Hicox and Winston Churchill, *Inglourious Basterds* (2009)

First and foremost, our mission statement is, "As Gothic Communists, *our mission is to protect you!—to expose Capitalism's perfidious design as a structure, thereby protecting all workers (sex or otherwise) from Capitalism by teaching them to liberate themselves through iconoclastic art!*"



Capitalism conceals its own Promethean (self-destructive) nature through heteronormative canon. To critique its abuse of workers through Capitalist Realism, I want to focus on Gothic poetics; i.e., using them in a sex-positive, *Marxist* way that intersects with other schools of thought. These intersections obviously help us address the many ways that

Capitalism sexualizes workers; but given Marx' admittedly dry (and straight) nature, we also want to spice things up: camping canon/"making it gay" by synthesizing communal (anarcho-Communist) emotional/Gothic intelligence as a sex-positive alternative to canonical, thus bourgeois, teaching methods. This reversal requires our manifesto tree from my thesis statement; i.e., an assortment of goals, Gothic academic theories, Gothic mode of expression (monsters, hermeneutics, phobias) and praxial effects, whose lists I will now give in the order I have chosen:

Note: I am stressing a certain priority in what comes first, but the exact order given doesn't really matter as everything is modular and holistic. None should be

neglected, and all are integral to achieving Gothic Communism. This being said, there are several smaller subfactors from the manifesto tree that aren't listed here (though we will touch on them later in the book). For the most comprehensive and in-depth look at all of the manifesto tree ideas, refer to Volume Zero. —Perse

- the six Gothic-Marxist tenets of Gothic Communism (the Six Rs)
- the four main Gothic theories (the Four Gs)
- monsters*
- lairs/parallel space*
- the Hermeneutic Gothic-Communist Quadfecta* (Gothic, game, queer and Marxist theory)
- phobias*
- the Six Doubles of Oppositional Praxis

*the Gothic mode of expression (its means, materials and methods of study)

Of the Six Doubles, these divide into two lists of three: the "Three Canonical Doubles" of Capitalism and bourgeois praxis versus the "Three Iconoclastic Doubles" of Gothic Communism and proletarian praxis (all shown in descending order):

- sex coercion vs sex positivity
- carcerality vs emancipation
- complicity vs revolution

and their various synthetic oppositional groupings

- destructive vs constructive anger
- destabilizing vs stabilizing gossip (and abuse encouragement/prevention patterns)
- "blind" vs "perceptive" pastiche (class/culture blindness versus consciousness)
- unironic vs ironic gender trouble/parody (canon vs camp)
- bad-faith vs good-faith egregores (monsters/doubles)

I'll get to each of these in turn, starting at the top and steadily working my way to the bottom across this manifesto's six sections. This means we won't cover the Six Doubles until nearly the end of the manifesto; we'll introduce the synthetic oppositional groupings during the manifesto, but explore them more during the synthesis roadmap. Certain related factors, such as the canonical reactions to camped canon

- open aggression
- condescension
- reactionary indignation
- DARVO ("Deny Accuser Reverse Victim/Offender")

will be unpacked more, as well. These will either be summarized or abridged quotes from the thesis volume, and I will be resupplying them piecemeal as we go.

Since the Six Doubles of Oppositional Praxis are last on our manifesto list, I'll give a little extra information about them up front: bourgeois and proletarian praxis function in opposition, working for or against the state and its heteronormative propaganda; i.e., canon vs iconoclasm. Proletarian praxis recultivates the Superstructure and reclaims the Base in ways that redistribute power and wealth in iconoclastic language; i.e., in horizontal arrangements that encourage degrowth in favor of stability and worker rights, while also doing away with vertical authorities outright: an anarcho-Communist challenging of the state in ways that Marxist-Leninism historically did not; i.e., with the Gothic mode and queer theory. The basic concept revolves around the "creative successes" of proletarian praxis during oppositional praxis, synthesized into proletarian forms by workers operating within their own daily lives; i.e., not just as workers, but *de facto* social-sex educators detached from state mechanisms—indeed, in opposition to them (never forget: the state isn't just the proverbial enemy but the great destroyer of the planet). The Gothic, then, yields *class* character amid a warring *culture* of weird nerds: weird canonical nerds vs weird iconoclastic nerds. The two clash regarding the sexualized abuse—and liberation of—our bodies, identities and performances under capital; i.e., produced *by* our labor with taboo, stigmatized language as something to endorse or reclaim, and with it, the revelation of various comical truths: nerds are both weird as fuck and *like* to fuck in ways that are certifiably weird; e.g., public nudism as an ace mechanism that interrogates canonical sexuality as harmful.

"Weird" means vastly different things depending on one's class/cultural position. The praxial goal, for weird iconoclastic nerds, is to teach good-play BDSM in sex-positive art, chiefly the interrogation of power/trauma and its negotiation in theatrical, paradoxical forms. Proletarian praxis, then, revolves around camping canon, which goes something like this (abridged, from the thesis volume's manifesto tree):

Camp's assembly and production of cultural empathy under Capitalism happens according to **the "creative successes" of proletarian praxis** (manifesto terms intersect and overlap; e.g., "good sex education is sexually descriptive")

- **mutual consent**
- **informed consumption** and **informed consent**
- sex-positive ***de facto* education** (social-sexual education; i.e., iconoclastic/**good sex education** and taught gender roles), **good play/emergent gameplay** and cathartic

wish fulfillment/guilty pleasure (**abuse prevention/risk reduction patterns**) meant to teach good discipline and impulse control (valuing consent, permission, mutual attraction, etc); e.g., **appreciative** peril (the ironic **damsel-in-distress/rape fantasy**)

- **descriptive sexuality**

as things to materially imagine and induce (often through ironic parody and "perceptive" pastiche) through Gothic poetics; i.e., inside the "grey area" of **cultural appreciation** in countercultural forms (making monsters)

- the culturally appreciative, sexually descriptive irony of Gothic counterculture's reverse abjection with sex-positive, demon BDSM, kink and fetishization; as well as asexuality and the ironic ontological ambiguities of trans, non-binary, intersex, and drag existence

[...] to foster empathy and emotional/Gothic intelligence by **weird iconoclastic nerds** reversing the canonical, unironic function of the Four Gs

- reverse abjection
- the emancipatory hauntology and Communist-chronotope operating as a **parallel society**—i.e., a parallel space (or language) that works off the *anti-totalitarian* notion of "**parallel societies**⁴⁰": "A [society] not dependent on official channels of communications, or on the hierarchy of values of the establishment."
- the Gothic Communist's good-faith, revolutionary cryptonymy

[...] On the flip-side, our would-be killers collectively lack emotional and Gothic intelligence; they do not respect, represent or otherwise practice our "creative successes." As we're going to establish by looking at the definition of weird canonical nerds (in the thesis statement), their conduct is quite the opposite of weird iconoclastic nerds; **weird canonical nerds** don't practice mutual consent; they canonize, thus endorse

- uninformed/blind consumption through manufactured consent
- *de facto* bad education as **bad fathers**, cops (theatrical function: knights) and other harmful role models/authority figures; i.e., canonical sex education and gender education, **bad play/intended gameplay** resulting in *harmful* wish fulfillment/guilty pleasure (**abuse encouragement/risk production patterns**); e.g., appropriative peril (the unironic damsel-in-distress), uninvited voyeurism, etc
- prescriptive sexuality

through their own synthetic toolkits during oppositional praxis. They endorse

- the process of abjection
- the carceral hauntology/parallel space as a capitalist chronotope (e.g., the "blind" cyberpunk)
- the complicit (thus bad-faith, bourgeois) cryptonymy

to further Capitalism's crises-by-design, hence its expected decay, according to a variety of bourgeois trifectas that lead to the banality of evil [through state arrangements of power relayed through the usual neoliberal stores: books and movies, but also videogames.]

⁴⁰ [Source](#): Academy of Ideas' "The Parallel Society vs Totalitarianism | How to Create a Free World," (2022).

So, now that we have our various big-but-basic lists, keep 'em handy and I'll use the rest of the manifesto to conversationally walk you through them one at a time, doing my best to connect them with explanations in between.

Before we start, though, I want to give a couple of small reminders that you should keep in mind:

- One, I want to reassure readers that this manifesto is more academically granular in its flavor and structure than Volumes Two and Three, if only so I'm clear and comprehensive in following and responding to my overall thesis argument (which is the *most* academically granular text in our book). After this, I swear things loosen up a bit (except for [the sample essay](#), which chucks you into the deep end head-first).
- Two, while the word "praxis" is common but has many synonyms/adjectives (creative, oppositional, bourgeois, proletarian), I also don't see the need to exclusively call something praxis, since all four volumes ultimately concern praxis and something being praxis is arguably why I'm mentioning it to begin with.
- Three, despite covering sexual expression and working with sex workers, this book isn't *really* structured around giving dating advice (though it does include bits of advice/personal anecdotes scattered throughout); it's a labor guide that teaches workers not to be dicks to their friends, who they *might* be able to sleep with if everyone's DTF (down to fuck). However, if you wanted to apply its concepts to your own sex life, I can assure you, these are tried and true methods. Trust me, I learned from the nymphs!



([source](#): "Be Not Afraid!" 2010)

Also, while we've had a chance so far (during the preface) to discuss the ways in which Gothic Communism's anarcho-Communist design works in opposition to state mechanisms (which includes Marxist-Leninism, though it's obviously preferable to Western models of capital, but nevertheless remains prone to its own abuses), there's actually a social, therapeutic component to Gothic Communism that relates to our Gothic-Marxist tenets and four main Gothic theories; i.e., as things to interrogate and negotiate in our own lives.

The idea actually comes from dialectical behavioral therapy models introduced to me by a former friend (Cuwu, who we introduced in Volume Zero; more on them during the "Uphill Battle, part three" and "Healing from Rape" subchapters). DBT is designed specifically to prevent self-destructive behavior at a societal level; Gothic Communism as I've conceived it applies this to sex workers, preventing destructive behaviors against them from other workers who are loyal to the state. It achieves this by combining dialectical-material analysis of Gothic stories with four Gothic literary theories (the Gothic being largely concerned with sex in popular monstrous media) to achieve a Gothic *hybrid* of traditionally Marxist goals—all in service of furthering sex positivity through well-educated, emotionally and Gothically intelligent sex workers who can "live deliciously" as a form of proletarian praxis from moment to moment. No Promethean junk food for us! Only the best, but we must learn to make things taste delicious again while subsisting on canonical, plastic garbage that we dialectically-materially scrutinize. Dialectical-material analysis, then, is something to embody in our own lives, specifically through our consumption habits, labor and poetics as extensions of our bodies, sexualities and gender expression having been reclaimed by us.

Reclamation operates through our manifesto coordinates. Starting at the top (as listed here), we begin with the Six Rs and Four Gs. We've already discussed these a great deal in the thesis volume (and will discuss them a great deal more as we continue). For now, I just want to list the tenets and theories and to briefly explain their relationship to each other and to oppositional praxis; i.e., as something for workers to enact during Gothic Communism's camping of canonical forces. As stated during our abstract, our tenets'

collective idea is to make Marxism a little cooler, sexier and fun than Marx ever could through the Wisdom of the Ancients (a cultural understanding of the imaginary past) as a "living document"; i.e., to make it "succulent" by "living deliciously" as an act of repeated reflection that challenges heteronormativity's dimorphic biological essentialism and bondage of gender to sex, thus leading to a class awakening at a countercultural level through iconoclastic (sex-positive), monomorphic Gothic poetics.

Because they are provided in full at the start of every volume (and are explored at length in the thesis volume), I will only list the six tenets:

- *Re-claim/-cultivate*
- *Re-union/-discover/-turn*
- *Re-empower/-negotiate*
- *Re-open/-educate*
- *Re-play*
- *Re-produce/-lease*

I call these tenets the Six Rs, or six things to reclaim from Capitalism through the Gothic imagination. Underpinning these tenets are four central Gothic theories, the Four Gs (outlined in their entirety during the start of every volume):

- abjection (from Julia Kristeva's process of abjection, *vis-à-vis* Jerrold Hogle's "ghost of the counterfeit")
- chronotope/parallel *Gothic* space (from Mikhail Bakhtin's "Gothic chronotope")
- hauntology (from Jacques Derrida's "spectres of Marx" and Mark Fischer's "canceled futures," *vis-à-vis* Jodey Castricano's *cryptomimesis*):
- cryptonymy (from Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *vis-à-vis* Jerrold Hogle's "narrative of the crypt" and Jodey Castricano's *cryptomimesis*)

Unlike the Gothic *mode*—which tells of legendary things (undead/demonic and anthropomorphic monsters or places) *with, as* or *within* Gothic media as things to *perform, create, or imagine/reimagine, wear, inhabit, occupy* or *pass through* (we'll explore all of these variants in this volume)—Gothic *theory* explains the process behind all of this as it's going on, has gone on, will go on. Guided by these theories, then, the re-education of sex worker emotions achieves the Six Rs through instructed critical analysis of sexualized art; be it their own, someone else's, or something to become, its sex-positive lessons are designed to teach emotional intelligence through a Gothic mode whose cultural imagination, when used in an iconoclastic sense, becomes a vulgar display of counterterrorist power in defiance of the state's own terrorist/menticultural antics (re: Meerloo's "waves of terror" and Robert Asprey's "paradox of terror"⁴¹ versus Max Weber's monopoly of violence and Joseph Crawford's [invention of terrorism](#) through the canonical Gothic mode).

Once materialized, iconoclastic displays can reopen worker minds that, once open, fluently drink up good information like a thirsty sponge and leave bad

⁴¹ From [War in the Shadows: the Guerrilla in History](#) (1994): "Not only can terror be employed as a weapon, but any weapon can become a weapon of terror: terror is a weapon, a weapon is terror, and no one agency monopolizes it."

information out while nevertheless remaining aware of it ([a bit like Drake](#)). This results in creative, proletarian-praxial displays—and those who prepare and make them—that offset their bourgeois counterparts to engender emotional/Gothic intelligence in regards to canonical monsters as already being historical-material outcomes in this sense. Our aim as Gothic Communists is to engender proletarian antics/iconoclasm through praxial synthesis; i.e., the daily and informed, intuitive cultivation of

- sex-positive monster porn (monsters are generally dimorphically sexualized in canon, which spreads the complicated, awful lie that porn is paradoxically forbidden *and* available—peddled furtively to people like a bad drug whose "pushers" promise this is the only place you can get it from instead of, you know, making it yourselves)
- safe, trusting spaces
- reasonable forgiveness, preventative justice, and a pedagogy of the oppressed as delivered through a reclaimed language of the oppressor class that normally shames the proletariat's reimagined past

The prime directive of Gothic Communism, then, is to reverse-abject the re-remembered past away from the Western tradition. Though ostensibly "superior," the West is actually Promethean—not simply exploitative, but historically doomed to fail and repeat its Icarian mistakes to the continued detriment of workers everywhere. Eventually the owner class will die, too; it just takes longer. As they burn everyone around them like fuel, the Earth is reduced to a sprawling necropolis of ashes and bones—all to glut the bourgeoisie, who prey on our imaginations like mind-flayer vampires; i.e., by weaponizing manufactured fears of cartoon fascism, general "corruption," xenophobia (the monstrous-feminine) and nominal Communism against workers in *cryptomimetic* forms. Fuck that. We can make our own subversive ghosts/spectres of Marx, our own parallel Superstructure kings and queens, hammers and sickles, cyberpunks, and Vaporwave/Laborwave corporate mood (exhibit 42d1) that challenge and dissipate the skeleton king of Zombie



Rome, the Shadow of Pygmalion, and the boogeyman tyrant of nominal Communism (all of them being endlessly evoked by the state to pacify us).

(artist: Thomas Cole)

Fear not the Fall of Rome; look forward to its

ideological transformation. Canonical Rome absolutely sucks ass/is not to be trusted. For one, Rome is, by modern standards, hauntologized (utterly fake; re: the ghost of the counterfeit). The original lasted for centuries in various forms, but was effectively a city-state; nation-states, by comparison, emerged during the Renaissance formation of national identities, followed by the Enlightenment's settler colonialism appealing to the pre-fascist (Neo-Gothic) hauntology of "Rome" as unified post-fascism—one nation, one army under "God," or some other vertical bourgeois authority (secular or religious) that endures after the "defeat of the Nazi" (the details of their death have been greatly exaggerated; Nazis were *copying* American fascism, which is alive and well). Nation-states normalize Imperialism, thus genocide, rape, war and worker exploitation through canonical Gothic praxis. They compel sexual reproduction through heteronormative, amatonormative, Afronormative, and queernormative lenses, etc—are built on a settler-colonial binary that yields an imperial, dimorphic flavor in everyday language: good vs evil, black vs white, us vs them, "[the creation of sexual difference](#)" by Luce Irigaray and so on.

For our purposes, this binary is remediated within the Gothic mode to communicate Western glory as something to synthesize through pro-state propaganda as *coercion* personified: the fetishization of war, deception, rape and death linked to the hauntology of the state apparatus as a lionized conveyor of traditional Western virtues. Within the Western hegemon, all of these virtues are unironic and coercive; like gargoyles⁴² perched on church spires, their monstrous cultural affect is seen and felt everywhere—in pastiche but also the real world as informed by said pastiche and vice versa (a war happens and someone makes a novel, movie or videogame to capitalize off it in a series of palimpsests; i.e., Tolkien or Cameron's refrain; e.g., *Starship Troopers*, *Aliens*, *Metroid* or *Doom*). As such, they yield a "trident" of bourgeois trifectas

- manufacture
- subterfuge/deception
- coercion

with a neoliberal "handle": the profit motive; i.e., *infinite growth, efficient profit* (meaning value through exploitation, regardless if it is ethical or materially stable) and *worker/owner division* as disseminated through the three tines.

Understanding these mechanisms is fundamental to navigating state abuse through our own praxial synthesis; we'll introduce all of them (and gargoyles) next.

⁴² I.e., "egregores/monsters" as codified in visible, emblematic forms whose function (not aesthetic; e.g., golems) is to communicate heteronormative dogma *when viewed*. My emphasis on "gargoyle" as a state tool of mendicite was more of a conversational focus in this upcoming chapter when I first wrote it. I've since decided to preserve that rhetoric, even though it doesn't appear too much elsewhere in the book (again, the term is more or less synonymous with monsters, simulacra and egregores).



(artist: [Jacques-Louis David](#))

The Nation-State: Remediating Modern-day "Rome," Gargoyles, and the Bourgeois Trifectas; also, Critiquing Amazons as Liminal Expression (feat. Autumn Ivy)

"I have seen much of the rest of the world; it is cruel, brutal and dark! Rome is the light!"

"And yet you have never been there! You have not seen what it has become!"

—*Maximus Decimus Meridius and Marcus Aurelius, Gladiator (2000)*

Rome and its many ghosts are built on conquest—on war, death, rape, and lies, but also *profit* as fetishized expressions of authenticated power in medieval language (aesthetics) and devices (function): the forged performance of sovereignty through gargoyle-esque installations. We'll unpack gargoyles for a bit, then introduce and explore the trifectas themselves for the remainder of the chapter. This chapter also discusses how subterfuge encourages tokenized coercion under manufactured conditions during liminal expression inside weird-nerd culture; i.e., Amazons, and the praxial synthesis of that particular monster type as "gargoyle-esque" when personified by weird nerds. The example we'll explore occurred between me and called Autumn Ivy, a non-binary sex worker who abused me during our own labor exchanges: as weird nerds working in praxial opposition.

Before we proceed into canonical "Rome" and its genocidal remediation through these gargoyles, be forewarned (from my thesis statement):

Capitalism is a *hyperobject*, a structure so big that you can't directly observe it, and whose descriptions through ultimately simplistic metaphors are abstracting at best (for more information on hyperobjects, [consider Timothy Morton's 2013 book on the subject](#)). You can only talk about Capitalism in pieces, from a particular point of view about something you yourself disinterred and reassembled over space and time. Needless to say, the point of Gothic-Communist abstraction isn't abject confusion, nor is it to pull something out of thin air. Rather, it's meant to achieve altered perspective for enhanced appreciation of truths concealed by capital; e.g., [abstract art](#) that isn't tied to having an obvious point, purpose, or monetary value/function under Capitalism.

Unlike iconoclasm, canon is financially incentivized to naturalize itself through Capitalist Realism; i.e., to "vanish" by virtue of workers' "ordinary" perspectives unable to imagine anything else: what they are *meant* to see (and endorse) by those in power showing it to them through the usual means of production and

heteronormative/settler-colonial propaganda enforcing the profit motive through canonical fear and dogma. To this, canonical gargoyles serve as installations of terror to instruct the public with and reflect it endlessly back at them.

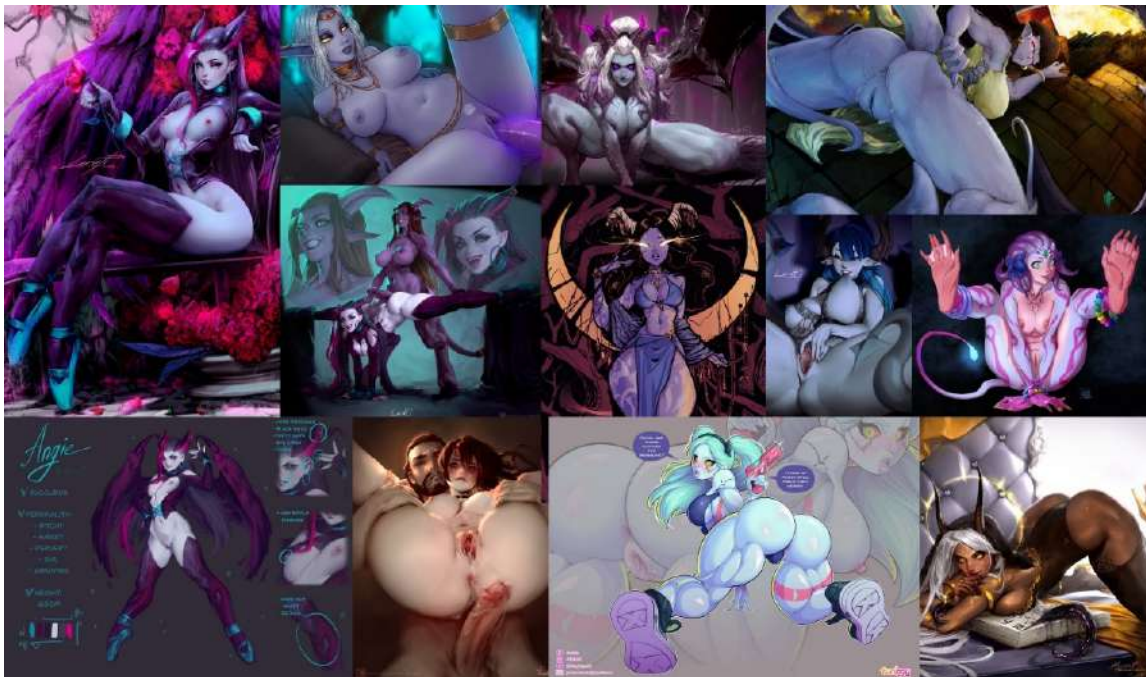
Regardless of their physical form, such outlets routinely celebrate and codify *coercive* arrangements of power *vis-à-vis* sexuality, gender identity and performance; i.e., the clichés and fetishes of the state machine operating as normalized, thus invisible regardless of the open decay exacted upon people, places and the environment (e.g., cyberpunks). Challenging these bourgeois illusions and their legitimized violence and terror is less about saying random "magic words" (and hoping for the best) and more about combining or crafting the *correct* word(s) to achieve the *desired* counterterror effect through oft-abstracting means. Our emphasis will be on Gothic poetics, of course, but it can be likewise be attained through abstract art in general, of which cartoons generally are—e.g., [like Bill Watterson deliberately does](#) in exhibit 6b4a, below (a far less commercially-minded but more thought-provoking man than Jim Davis, let's be frank; [though, as I point out in my own writeup, Garfield is definitely Gothic](#)):



(exhibit 6b4a: Artist, left: Bill Watterson's 1985 *Calvin and Hobbes*; right: Jim Davis and his immortal, inoffensive cat. I read both as a little girl and loved each for different reasons. The joke of "[07/27/1978](#)" [lasagnacat, 2017] lies in how Garfield is blank parody; it's normally empty of critical thought and requires someone else to do the work, but even then, the results are generally a farce. Intentional or not, both authors—when their works are dialectically-materially examined—offer something about our material world that we, as Gothic Communists, can learn from

and pass along to the next generation. Farce isn't useless towards Gothic Communism, provided it assists in its development.)

You're also aiming at a moving target when critiquing capital; like a gargoyle, Capitalism *seems* stationary but is actually alive and evolving on many different registers—a hopelessly complex assemblage of material and natural objects, whose dialogs convey competing schools of thought in statuesque "silence." Further joined by living agents informed by the gargoyle's fear and dogma, this includes the bourgeoisie *and* proletariat, as well as the many allies and traitors to class and culture warfare enacted through a working class joined with/pitted against neoliberals, fascists and gradients of these things. All of them interact back and forth in real time over space and time more broadly—inside a *cryptomimetic* marketplace of recycled ideas that communicate furtive morphological prescriptions that can be challenged, but also engaged with through fiscal exchanges channeled through gargoyles as installations of terror/counterterror that become instructional fixtures in the public imagination once installed; i.e., as mouthpieces and selling points to heavily implied, but nevertheless vivid arguments regarding hidden trauma, power and knowledge *vis-à-vis* workers as colluding with the state or warring back and forth with it to stymie profit, hence exploitation:



(exhibit 6b4b: Artist, top-mid-left: [Otto Marr](#); top-right: [ikerellatab](#); center-right: [Deuza-art](#); bottom-mid-right: [Funboy](#); far-mid right: [Hertz MD](#); everything else: [Lera PI](#).)

Stemming from medieval thought, gargoyles are classically a type of "golem" that constitutes bodily values through a symbolic order as overseen and protected by

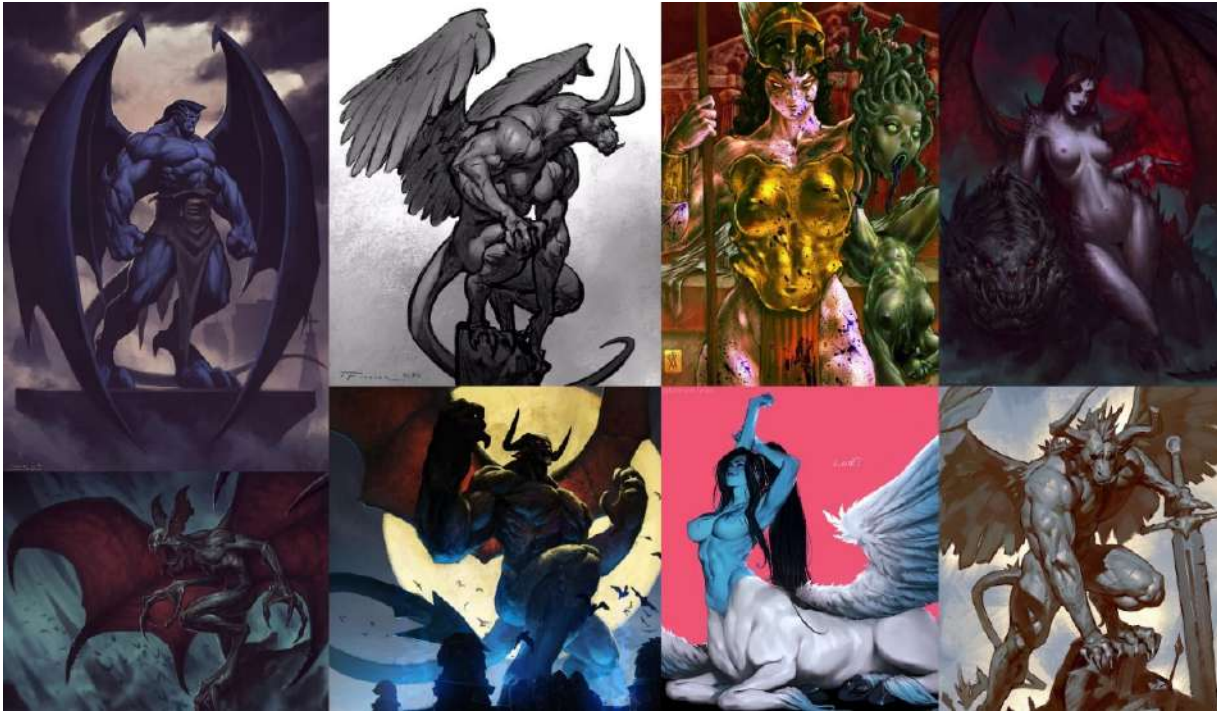
them; i.e., as things to prescribe and sell, but also challenge through liminal expressions attached to Numinous architectural space: threatening immodest morphological freedom as a privileged ability to enjoy forbidden things, express trauma, or survive/enact state-mandated abuse through actionable offenses; e.g., sodomy represented through the clay as something to dress up and treat as "flesh" depicted by non-flesh and vice versa: stone, clay or metal, etc. To this, gargoyles represent socio-material standards of acceptable trespass within fetishized models of sin and indulgence, which can be subverted through an iconoclastic queering of medieval expression.



(artist: [Lera PI](#))

Meanwhile, the material, inanimate stuff can be shaped into whatever outfit, position, or bodily arrangement one so desires/imagines; given horns, wings, tails, claws, halos, ears, feathers, or scales, and dressed in leather or lace as part of the usual damsel/demon [or virgin/whore] dynamic; can seemingly be summoned by magic or otherwise assembled to provide "otherworldly" desires that are normally denied to workers. Through canon, workers and representations of pleasurable activities and power dynamics become alienated from each other, the latter barred from ordinary existence and

intentionally hidden behind paywalls that must be invoked during oppositional praxis; i.e., if not to endorse unironic cash transactions for one's pound of flesh, then to survive under capital's synonymizing of pleasure with harm, while trying to subvert state language during liminal expression as oft-being pornographic, torturous and monstrous: the identity and relative struggle as commodified, and at least partially transformed through venues of commodification within countercultural channels. Imagination is normally constrained by Capitalist Realism, thus must be regained through reclaimed engines of monstrous production, psychosexual eroticism, and equally complex morphological/gender expression and tension.



[Artist, top-left, bottom-left and top-right: [draken4o](#); top-mid-left and bottom-left: [Taran Fiddler](#); bottom-mid-left: [Omuk](#); bottom-right: [Lera PI](#); top-mid-right: [Atom Cyber](#).]

At the same time, gargoyles also constitute complicated [liminal] positions/threats of violence—i.e., as beings to fear, hunt and/or summon/make dealings with in regards to institutional, corporal punishment and flagellation known to dated⁴³ places famous for such dealings [churches as regelations and assignments of guilt and release]—when proletarian liberation is suggested; e.g., the triangulation of angelized/demonized minorities against each other when one side "rocks the boat" and becomes uncontrollable, thus must be put down during canonical Amazonomachia: Hippolyta beheading "Medusa" for her unseemly hysteria. This systemic violence is often felt or suggested through bodies that are rendered as animalistic and prey-like/chattelized (or collared/tame; e.g., the euthanasia effect), or otherwise helpless-looking through fetishized Gothic outfits that either paint them as executioners of the state's will, or present them as targets, thus limit their

⁴³ "Dated" being a paradox, insofar as the abjection of systemic abuse puts it in perceived ideas of the past as in "not now, not here"; e.g., saying corporal punishment happened "back then" before applying that exception globally throughout the entire empire *except for* certain areas dedicated to colonized or otherwise oppressed groups: prisons and ghettos as reliable sites of torture committed by the corrupt, the monstrous, the other. Even outside the state of exception, material reminders of the historical past are all around us in Gothic forms, which condition or otherwise encourage unironic versions of these painful behaviors in present evocations of canonical barbarism; i.e., whose counterfeits synonymize pain with harm instead of granting calculated risks that actually reestablish control for all workers (and not just those in the Imperial Core fearful of abuse from their assigned destroyers *and* "protectors"; e.g., white, cis-het women).

speed, status [as property for men/Man Box proponents to own and use] and/or movement. Sometimes, the bodies are dimorphically sexualized as heteronormative enforcers relayed through a Gothic aesthetic/pastiche tinged with more recent nostalgias; e.g., [Gargoyles](#)⁴⁴ [1994]. The commodified legends of today stamp the imaginary past as eternalized backwards and forwards under capital as blinding consumers to the potential of anything beyond the text currently being retreated into. The regression and its values are presented through the gargoyle as both at home in the structure, and foreign to it—a guardian and invader simultaneously fearful and fascinating amid the ghost of the counterfeit/process of abjection: correct-incorrect, inside/outside, authentic/forged, etc. This can be packaged and sold to pacify workers; or it can embody worker struggles for those trying to dispel, thus escape, Capitalist Realism using Gothic poetics.)

In other words, the state relies on fetishized material reminders of terror and violence to get its point across, sanction itself, and maintain Capitalist Realism—which is then conveyed through menticial perspectives that—through waves of terror endlessly exhausting worker minds during state monopolies—frame the material world as a displaced, Gothic commentary on the present: as informed by an imaginary past ("Rome") that leads into itself, over and over. It normalizes crisis and decay, incarcerating workers inside their own imaginations as informed by state dogma. Liminality during opposition complicates an already formidable and busy equation, and in such a garden of the forking paths, there's no way to cover everything. Instead, I will do my best to field the constant factors whose incessant remediation fosters an *ocean* of plethoras: artistic creations with a Gothic flavor using Marx's notion of dialectical materiality inside historical materialism as something to shift in a better direction. Specifically defined by Jane Bennett in *Vibrant Matter* (2010) "as economic structures and exchanges that lead to many other events" ([source](#)), I contend historical materiality involves workers' constant relations to inanimate things between the natural and material world as "come alive" through praxial synthesis as artistic expression: the gargoyle (synonymous, for our purposes, with the egregore/simulacrum) as a dialectical-material force.

Seeing as we're talking about Gothic doubles, the sensation "it's like this, but different" will occur regularly throughout this book. Identify these constants as part of a larger system whose fragmented, oscillating variables indicate glacial systemic change within the whole over time—i.e., for or against the status quo as it presently exists. As mentioned during the heads-up, I've done my best to connect the dots in a plethora of interconnecting synonyms, but it would be foolish (and completely impossible) to try and connect them all. That's not the point. Rather,

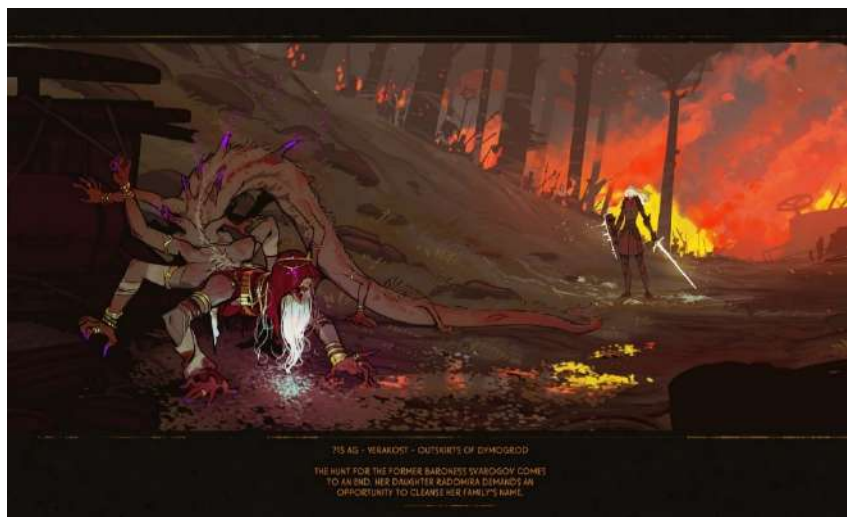
⁴⁴ The series is not without its own fan-made porn; e.g., [this animation by Hammy Toy](#) of Brooklyn fingering his own asshole.

take this manifesto—and indeed, the entire book—as a manual of completed and half-completed sex-positive thoughts. Pursue what I have pursued to your own sex-positive conclusions, authoring derelict archaeologies, oppressed pedagogies, queer camp, and Satanic poetics that transform the world. —Perse

For our purposes, a gargoyle is a statue that sees and is seen—a watcher/sentinel made to symbolize a particular value not just through fear and dogma, but witnessing propaganda as a living document; i.e., according to workers' cultural understanding of the imaginary past as something to view *looking back* at them: the Wisdom of the Ancients given form out of the past as literally set in stone (regardless of that stone's actual age; age is perceived and performed just like power is). *State* propaganda is historically violent and continues to be, but the process of fashioning such things is not limited to *their* poetics; like the chain, whip, slur or fetish outfit, we can reclaim the torturous golems, vampires, and Amazons, etc, for ourselves. We'll cover these pesky gargoyles' *synthetic* role during the synthesis roadmap (and its complicated poetic history in Volume Two). For now, we merely want to address how canonical media is *gargoyle-esque* through the bourgeois trifectas and profit motive. In short, how do nation-states and corporations use gargoyles to abuse workers with—their bad instruction, coercive likeness and myopic vigilance serving the profit motive; i.e., there are good knights and bad knights (cops) who serve the state, and other monsters that—whether they want to or not—*also* serve the state: as things to scapegoat, kettle and

sacrifice, justifying state arrangements of power and language.

(artist: [Waifu Tactical](#))



To do this, we first need to recognize how the state uses linguo-material implements (with language being a *natural* feature of humans that distinguishes them

socially from other species through the *material* world) that are inherently deceptive. While this strongly indicates *cryptonymy* as a feature of concealment regarding state trauma, *that* feature of language is not exclusive to state operations. So we'll focus more on cryptonymy in a bit.

In a more immediate sense of coercion, consider how *state* language sublimates violence through canonical praxis, leading to a fatal cycle of historical

materialism; i.e., one tied to a Promethean oscillation between neoliberalism (a return to market freedom through state power, personal responsibility rhetoric and austerity politics as a means of coerced reformation) and fascism (a fracturing of the state bureaucracy—but not its elimination—during Capitalism-in-crisis/decay through brutal strangleholds on information, power, and human rights) working hand-in-hand. These twin fractals [are not democracy manifest](#) (to once again borrow Jack Karlson's famous phrase); they're Capitalism as an inherently unstable structure built around vertical power, whose construction leads to global instabilities within itself and among its splintered bodies. This regenerates an imperial cycle where power remains at the top, trapped inside the Imperial Core while workers are exhausted, exploited and exterminated at slower or faster speeds depending on where/what they are; i.e., on which side of the fence, and how the state assigns violence to them as a role: giver or receiver.

The operation of Capitalism through the state-corporate apparatus, then, requires varying degrees of bourgeois manufacture, subterfuge and coercion; i.e., commodified extensions of our aforementioned trifectas: canonical "junk food" that children acquire (from Noam Chomsky's [linguistic theories of the LAD—the language acquisition device—and universal grammar](#)) and infantilized adults must unlearn—by consuming new things, but also critiquing what they consume through consumption as a means of retailoring itself. Gargoyles, then, constitute personified extensions of a given structure, of which canon is adopted by people who watch; in turn, they view statuesque performers watching back, tied theatrically to a belief system that bounces between both. Each fearsomely feels unalive during state crisis and decay yet somehow can move and instruct through that paradox; i.e., as something to see and adopt as part of a seasonal operation: sex and violence under

regular conditions of state control, held in place by blind pastiche and praxial inertia.

(artist: [Waifu Tactical](#))



Except, anyone—not just the state—can make a god (or god-like statue) and instruct with it. For our purposes, it's better to get 'em while they're young. Children see and adopt

what is notable in their surroundings, then remember and reenact these sensations when approaching adulthood. Regardless of their age, workers make art in response to art (mimesis). Given the proper push, they shape and maintain the linguo-material order as something to change into something else; i.e., a *post*-scarcity world, versus keeping it the same in terms of its current, albeit ever-

widening disparities. Regardless of its exact measurements, a gulf is still a gulf. To that, our stated aim as Gothic Communists is to iconoclastically rewire the Superstructure's bourgeois coding with Gothic poetics: to resynthesize what the state *feeds* workers, changing its diet (art and other forms of information) into something that *isn't* harmful; re: camping the canon (from our thesis argument) using monstrous instruments made from stone (or similar materials). Stone and its symbols deliver meaning according to how they are viewed, thus understood, so *that* is where class and culture war must take place.

Of course, the elite own the means of production, thus can corner the market of fear and dogma as something to cultivate through imperfect monopolies on terror and violence—their supply and demand, but also people as the product (and the recipients of said product) that go on, in some shape or form, to reproduce it and the material conditions that routinely bring it (and profit) about: the good (centrists), the bad (fascists) and the ugly (states of exception) within the orderly operation that is neoliberal Capitalism (which recuperates genocide). Their control isn't total, but *is* enough to bring seminal tragedies about, which themselves become immortalized by new generations singing about older abuses they never lived to see but still feel the effects of: generational trauma.



To sublimate Imperialism as Capitalism's highest order of operation, the elite (*vis-à-vis* Raj Patel and Jason Moore) have made Capitalism as cheap as humanly possible—*have made "Rome's" remediation/pastiche cheap*. In bourgeois terms, if

something is cheap or even "free," we're the product/propaganda. However, this coding calls for a particular *kind* of propaganda: heteronormative canon—a "junk food" made by state-corporate bodies, but also tied to a "trident" of trifectas driven by the profit motive (the handle): linguo-material strategies used by the bourgeoisie; i.e., the men behind the curtain *standing "behind" us*, less pulling our strings like a banal wendigo and more distracting us with fearsome gargoyles arranged in all manner of didactic terror scenarios (think Ferdinand from *The Duchess of Malfi*, commissioning "dead" wax sculptures of his sister's family to frighten her with). Their canon becomes what we predominantly experience all around us; i.e., our consumption, hence education. We consume, thus embody what we see, eat, fuck and fear, etc, through an elaborate orchestration of manufacture, subterfuge and coercion that leads to Capitalist Realism. Given time, we turn to stone, playing the part in highly repetitive (thus predictable) ways.

The first bourgeois trifecta is the *manufacture trifecta*:

- **Manufactured scarcity.** Not enough resources, space, sex, etc; cultivates a fake sense of supply/demand, but also fear of missing out (FOMO) through exploitative business maneuvers that, in turn, engender fragile, deregulated markets; e.g., games—micro transactions, live-service models, phone games; [manufactured obsolescence](#) (Hakim's "Planning Failure," 2023), hidden fees, privatization—i.e., pay more for less quality and/or quantity and so on.
- **Manufactured consent.** [From Chomsky's book *Manufacturing Consent*](#) (1988); cultivates a compliant consumer base, but also workforce confusion, obedience and ignorance. Chomsky's theory is that advertisers are beholden to their shareholders, aiming consumers towards a position of mass tolerance—tacitly accepting "negative freedom" as exclusively enjoyed by the elite exploiting them: "Boundaries for me, not for thee." In Marxist terms, this amounts to the privatization of the media (and its associate labor) as part of the means of production. They shape and maintain each other.
- **Manufactured conflict/competition.** Endless war and violence—e.g., the War on Drugs, the War on Terror, the Jewish Question, assorted moral panics, etc; cultivates apathy and cruelty through canonical wish fulfillment: "the satisfying of unconscious desires in dreams or fantasies" *with a bourgeois flavor*. To this, nation pastiche and other blind forms encourage us-versus-them worker division, class sabotage and false consciousness/mobile class dormancy ("somnambulism"), *not* collective labor action against the state by using counterterrorist media to rehumanize the state of exception.

Through the manufacture trifecta, neoliberals appropriate peril using *economically* "correct" forms, socializing blame and privatizing profit, accolades, and education as things to normalize the way that neoliberals decide; it's about control—specifically *thought* control—through the Base as something to leverage against workers through bourgeois propaganda: "War and rape are common, essential parts of our world; post-scarcity (and sex-positive monsters, BDSM, kink, etc) is a myth!" Fascists de-sublimate peril in incorrect forms, going "mask-off" yet still running interference for the state; i.e., in defense of the status quo until their true radical nature becomes normalized: the black knight.

Eternal crisis and cyclical decay are built into Capitalism and the nation-state model; the state is inherently unstable and leads to war and rape on a wide scale, but also politically correct/incorrect language selecting state victims for the usual sacrifices that profit demands: the grim harvest. These are dressed up through a particular kind of cryptonym: the euphemism. For the state, political language becomes synonymous with whitewashing or otherwise downplaying the usual operations of the state with inoffensive, sleep-inducing phrases; e.g., "extreme

prejudice" and "military incidents" (false flag operations) as directed at the state's usual victims. The state, but also pro-state defenders and class traitors, reliably use these and other linguistic manipulation tactics (e.g., obscurantism) to routinely make war and profit from it; i.e., by raping or otherwise exploiting workers like chattel.



(artist: [Seb McKinnon](#))

As a site of tremendous cryptonymy (trauma and linguistic concealment), the Gothic castle symbolizes the function of the state doing what the state always does: lie, conceal and destroy. A swirling accretion disk of husk-like chaff orbits ominously around an awesome, concentric illusion: an illusion of an

illusion, a fakery of a fakery whereupon the closer to the center one gets, the more entropic the perspective. Like a spaghetti noodle, one is stretched out (and ripped apart) by how perfidious and unstable every step is; the floor becomes eggshells, a flotilla of chronotopic trash surrounded by danger and oblivion, gravity and shadows, but also gargoyles whose exact function remains to be seen.

This presence of tremendous obscurity inside the infernal concentric pattern/narrative of the crypt's *mise-en-abyme* brings us to our second bourgeois trifecta: the *subterfuge/deception trifecta*

- **Displacement.** Conceal or dislocate the problem.
- **Disassociation.** Hide/detach from the problem.
- **Dissemination.** Spread these bourgeois practices through heteronormative canon.

through which neoliberals maintain the status quo by concealing war as a covert enterprise that has expanded exponentially since Vietnam into the 21st century's own wars and lateral media (copaganda). Whereas *that* war failed by virtue of showing American citizens too much, war has increasingly become a fog through which those in power control the narrative by outright killing journalists, [but also "failing" to report where their mercenaries operate](#) (GDF's "How the US Military Censors Your News," 2023). In other words, neoliberal illusions involve outright

skullduggery and lies to keep their hegemony intact. Much like the lords of old, they rule from the shadows, but have more material power and control than those former monarchs could dream of; i.e., a mythologized existence hinted at by the displace-and-dissociate stratagem of neoliberal copaganda; e.g., *Lethal Weapon's* 1987 "Shadow Company" reflecting on [the very-real Phoenix Program](#) and so-called "advisory" role of the CIA: "We killed everybody."

By reflecting on the recent military abuses of the state during Vietnam, *Lethal Weapon* presents police corruption as a late-'80s cartoon. Mercenaries of privatized war have conveniently distanced themselves from both the CIA (which the film makes little effort to mention) but also the American system's "true function"; i.e., something bad happened *once*, but only because weaker men "gave into" the alleged temptations of war abroad: the drug trade. In doing so, these cutthroats have defiled the very thing that the good cops at home normally represent: a perfect society that has—through the routine failing of greedy, unscrupulous men—fallen from grace. Apparently *they're* to blame for the American atrocities at home and abroad, *not* the state or its arm.

Like pieces on a board, these gargoyles dance to tell a particular story useful to state aims; i.e., as hollow suits of armor inside a castle that chills the viewer in place, but also whose forged sovereignty is in decline. As such, the structure merely becomes a house to clean, to purge of dark forces using benevolent enforcers that resemble the fallen (think Milton's warring angels and demons, minus its rebellious class character but nevertheless utilizing the same powerful principles of animation). But this, too, is a lie, a ghost of the counterfeit whose inheritance anxieties about the Imperial Core can be explained away through outrageous theatre forging the solution; i.e., *vigilante* state violence with—in this case—the badge as a false flag operation levied against invented scapegoats: ghosts of the imperial past whose actions are, themselves, exorcised through the run of the mill.



In true Gothic fashion, the entire operation adopts an explained-supernatural guise, which it then uses to explain away the current militarizing of the police force at home. Riggs and Murtaugh "need" those guns to shield us from the bad cops (who all look like

Wall Street yuppies, apparently). This is police state apologia 101, and the very school of Gothic moderacy used to justify a continuation of normal state operations:

apologizing for its own actions through Radcliffean spectres—a timeless Eurotrash *banditti* conjured into the 20th century by Richard Donner (equally fearsome is Mel Gibson, whose own violence supersedes theirs. Simply put, he's a killing machine).

When the state's manufacturing of theatrical deceptions cannot be concealed in relation to imperial abuse (wherever it occurs), the name of the game is sublimation through state terror as normalized; genocide, rape and war essentialize through fascists as theatrical heels, appropriating war/nation pastiche as useful to the elite: "Get strong and fight the enemy" like a soldier would do, training all their life for that one moment to "actually overcome adversity" (not to be confused with *fairness*, [which atheists like Rationality Rules use when attacking trans athletes](#); Xevaris, 2019).

The statuesque advertisement, then, is a ghostly call to service, not a haunting of generational trauma; i.e., crafted by the elite for workers to fear and obey without question, but also adore and worship: to be the best in a quixotic sense, imitating recreations of the imaginary past as "strong" and obedient, but also a blinder to the kinds of traumatic visions intimated by spectres of Marx. Through this manicured self-delusion, a defender of the homeland (and its liege) participates in ranked contests of martial, sports-like strength modeled after conspicuously *chiseled* gargoyles that, at times, lack the overtly metallic armor of the medieval knight, but whose stone-like bodies denote a physical regression whose "body armor" serves as more literal and antiquated sort; e.g., the Z Fighters from *DBZ* (or its frankly jaw-dropping⁴⁵ fan animations) or He-Man, Lion-O, and their respective friends' struggles within the combat arena as extended to the entirety of the globe: "all the world's a stage."

Here, Shakespeare's passage describes a battleground to lose oneself—in combat but also *worship* of godly actors fulfilling a special *bourgeois* role when set loose: the celebration of dated organizations of power in neoliberal hauntologies⁴⁶; e.g., the Japanese cultural fascination with, and imitation of, Western kayfabe and hegemony post-WW2 as something that survives into recycled variations of itself:

⁴⁵ Fan animations, unlike canonical works, tend to reject efficient profit. For that, [compare this 2022 DBZ fan project by Studio Stray Dog](#) to the animation and art in *Dragon Ball Super* (2017). Night-and-day difference!

⁴⁶ The gargoyle is a hauntological figure insofar as it becomes a humanoid being to relate to *out* of the past while still belong it.



The above image is tellingly summarized by the maker's own synopsis:

Given diplomatic orders by the Grand Council, Vegeta, now king of the Saiyans, sets out on an interstellar assassination mission. TARGET LOCATION: PLANET EARTH / OBJECTIVE NO.1: ERADICATION / OBJECTIVE NO.2: PACKAGE RETRIEVAL / For his life, all his training has led to this. Now, Son Goku will learn the true meaning of the title, "LEGEND" ([source](#)).

In short, Vegeta's status as a conspicuous (and braggadocious) monarch falls into place under a globalized world order that places him *beneath* the elite; he's their lapdog and put to heel, obeys their commands through a common method of instruction: "sic' em!"

Keeping with the kayfabe arrangement, he feels threatened by Goku and wants to be "top dog" while both men work together to defang Broly: a demonic hound on par with Cú Chulainn's fearsome *ríastrad*; re: Sarah Enri's "'Inside Out... and Upside Down': Cú Chulainn and His *Ríastrad*" (2013)":

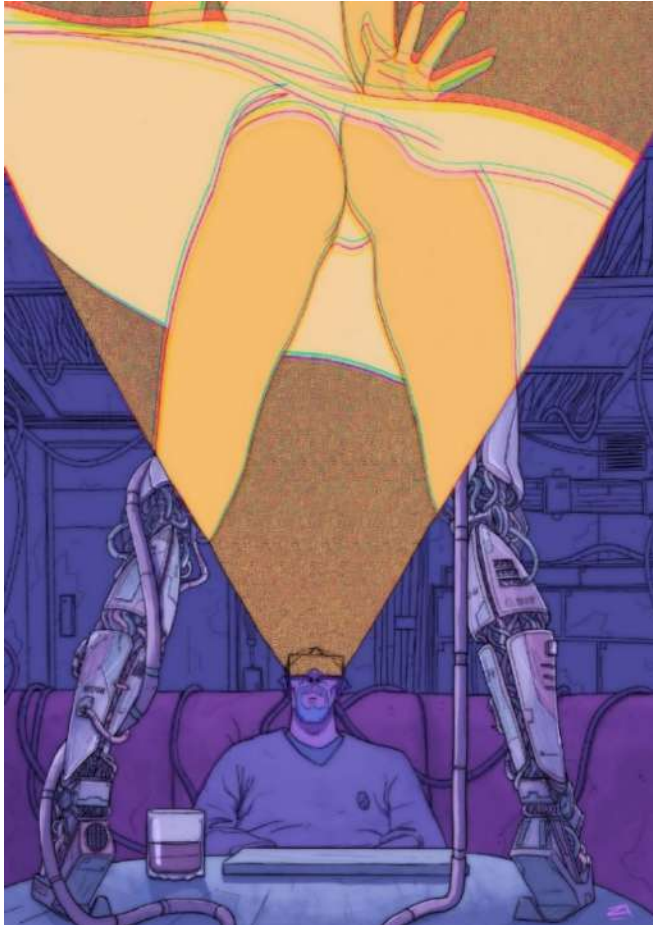
When distorted, Cú Chulainn undergoes a spectacular bodily metamorphosis [the *ríastrad*] and begins to attack both friend and foe because he loses the ability to distinguish between them. At these times, he consequently poses a threat "to order on both an individual and a social level" (Lowe, Kicking 199) and shifts from stabilizing his social network (by defending his province and his people) to threatening it from within⁴⁷ ([source](#)).

⁴⁷ I.e., the *internalization* of the foreign plot in fascist thinking.

The thing that bears repeating is that *all* the Saiyans are monstrous dogs, albeit to varying degrees that serve state aims. The state cannot exist without the good cop, bad cop, and scapegoat as dog-like (the exact nature of Broly varies, but he is effectively the invader mechanism whose corrupt/monstrous-feminine elements demand a euthanizing call to violence against him). In turn, their dogfight becomes something to watch and imitate as left-behind: monsters from "another planet" that curiously evoke a *human* imaginary past on a local, earthly stage.

It bears repeating that said past is sewn with conflict and confusion—not because it is old, but because its ownership is challenged. Its monsters—and the various instructions they supply as gargoyles—are generally at war with themselves, mid-lesson; i.e., psychopraxis, psychosexuality, psychomachia, and *Amazonomachia* through doubles and paradox amid liminal expression as things to view in ways that remain ambiguous. As my thesis argued, "Doubles invite comparison to encourage unique, troubling perspectives that "shake things up" and break through bourgeois illusions." Gargoyles, like all monsters, double people and their conflicted sense of humanity but also supply them with various inhuman qualities that likewise exist within dialectical-material opposition. During oppositional praxis, then, they effectively "go to war." Praxial stances also double through gargoyles, and grow increasingly ambivalent during the maelstrom. It's a war of optics, but also of perception linked to one's state of mind as thrown worryingly into question near positions/statements of power and trauma. Said statements seem both concrete and oddly fluid.

Even so, oppositional praxis allows for a proletarian function to gargoyles, which we'll get to; and the general aesthetic can obviously vary a great deal between variants. However, the canonical *function* (for the elite and their proponents) remains constant: to pacify and police workers under Capitalist Realism—to stare and tremble at what are, for all intents and purposes, killers for the state; i.e., knights and gladiators, but also cops penned up in castles whose owners trot them out for the viewing public to cower before or worse, emulate (re: ACAB—canonical cops *and* castles). Subversions of these stony replicas are liminal, thus complicated (we'll explore this more as we increasingly delve into trauma as something to write about and illustrate). Through the profit motive, however, these simulacra amount to corporatized war clones, offering up good war and sacrifice as valorized through the veneer of freedom, equality and justice; i.e., the façade of American Liberalism and its endless platitudes/canonical praxis as formulaic to an *automated* degree.



(artist: [Deuza-art](#))

The degree of automation varies. For example, the AI boom and its recent proliferation of so-called "art" (theft through search-engine algorithms) highlights the same aesthetic's blind approach enacted through its usual benefactors: white, cis-het men. Automation abuse makes bourgeois-minded workers stupid, but also *expendable* in regards to labor as something to cheaply replicate and consume; or as Sean Collins tweets on January 30th, 2023:

The heart of AI is contempt—contempt for artists, for writers, for sex workers. The user wants to get what they get out of art/writing/porn but they can't stand feeling like they owe anyone anything for their enjoyment, so the artist/writer/sex

worker has got to go ([source](#)).

The horror of the hyperreal is that there *are* no humans behind the digitized simulacrum; they're simply *gone*. The lived reality is far more bleak, with middle-class consumers being entirely divorced from creative labor as a critical-thinking skill while actively advocating for enslavement, neglect and genocide; i.e., behind the image as a desert of the real, where real humans *are* still alive but won't be for much longer.

Automation can be tailored towards Gothic Communism and its development, but the means of production must still be geared towards horizontal arrangements of power and wealth that *don't* automatically reduce everything to soulless privatization. Divorced from nature, empathy and workers-as-people, the paradox of automated art is that it quickly becomes worthless—even to capitalists—if viewed in bulk; there needs to be a human worker to manipulate and appeal to by other humans in ways that don't flood the market with inhuman, hopelessly cheap fakes. The unchecked flood gives Capitalism away (what the kids call "self-reporting"). Work, in artistic terms, is human labor, which gives art its value for Communists to defend and for capitalists to exploit ([the labor theory of value versus the monetary theory of value](#)). "Tech bros," however, defend Capitalism by

seeing value in exploitation (efficient profit), *not* labor as valuable through its human relationship to the natural-material world. According to Arfu, [they see themselves as "free" and other workers as "paintpigs" or "drawslaves,"](#) having bought into the illusion that—by turning their thinking over to machines—tech bros/weird canonical nerds have successfully liberated themselves from the working class (the illusion of the middle class). Quite the opposite; those who tech bros worship as gods (the bourgeoisie, billionaires) have trained them to police other workers around them, but *especially* the rebellious ones.

All at once, pacification becomes active subjugation via the triangulation of assimilated workers against labor at large; i.e., local colonization performed by people who look like you do, and misuse the awesome class-conscious potential of Gothic counterculture poetics for continued state hegemony as merely a commodity to package and sell. Sex and lethal force overlap with state politics, until the decay is not only impossible to ignore; it's an essential part of the image and paradox: unironic death and murder become sexy unto themselves—gargoyles that kill for the state's endless (and bloody) resurrection.



(artist: [Darek Zabrocki](#))

Whereas the elite and their moderate supporters, liberals/neoliberals, only care about profit and capitalistic hegemony (a public mindset that decays into nightmares of itself; e.g., AI Lost Media's "[Pizza Nuggets Ad 1993](#)," 2023), fascists do their part by playing a dirtier version of the same game. Through open xenophobia, slashed throats, and medieval, rapacious calls for "pure," open violence, they preemptively administer draconian countermeasures relayed through state propaganda.

Both they and neoliberals play "bad games" for the bourgeoisie; so do TERFs/girl bosses, queer bosses and other token offshoots whose Man Box/"prison

sex" forms of bad play really don't take geniuses to function—just fear, lies and cruelty to varying degrees that are taught through canonical propaganda and consumption. All further bad faith, bad acting and bad play as a criminogenic cycle stuck on loop. To survive, revolutionary workers must change the system that repeats the cycle; to change the system, they must become game and clever in ways that scare the bourgeoisie and their proponents; i.e., by subversively altering bourgeois propaganda, thus the education, iconography and bad play⁴⁸ that stem from its various entry points; e.g., "thirst traps" (exhibit 7a-8c, next page, but also the furry "mom bod," exhibit 65): subjugated Hippolyta as a bad-bitch girl boss (the virgin and the whore, but also the demon) as a reliable selling point and educational fulcrum within these larger dialogs—the monstrous-feminine.

For the next few pages, I want to exhibit the monstrous-feminine, then use it to explore how subterfuge segues into coercion; i.e., as something to enforce through tokenized agents turning themselves to stone. Adopting hard, rigid functions in defense of capital, these performers often posture as "protectors" of the gargoyle sort: medievalized cops roped into roles that are poisonous to them, insofar as they act like class traitors/rabid dogs who will eventually be closeted, put down, and/or married/carted off. "I am woman, hear me roar!" isn't good praxis by itself, because praxis isn't defined by rebellious posturing and "think-positive" attitudes, alone; it's defined by liberation through an altering of socio-material conditions inside nerd culture while at war with itself: weird canonical nerds and their iconoclastic counterparts.

One of the most famous monstrous-feminine (from the Western perspective) is the Amazon; i.e., a "thirst-trap" girl boss canonically sold for sex, but also touted as warrior muscle that executes the state's will while acting the rebel. All the while, subjugated Amazons simultaneously caution against mommy doms who fail to meet these muscular-servile standards, but nevertheless cow men into equally submissive positions. Said positions are temporary and staged—meant only to incur status-quo wrath and punishment against the monstrous-feminine; i.e., as

⁴⁸ A small note about "good/bad" in ludo-Gothic BDSM language: To be dialectical-material throughout this book, I will be consciously referring to bad/good monsters, witches, education, food, parentage et al as bourgeois/proletarian (or canonical/iconoclastic). This being said, while the qualifier "good/bad" can become incredibly obfuscating during oppositional praxis, "bourgeois play" also sounds incredibly funny and terrifying to me in BDSM parlance. To preserve my sanity I'll stick to good/bad play whenever broaching that subject, as it frankly rolls off the tongue better (and fits with the BDSM idea of shame and praise—e.g., "good girl, bad girl!" etc). Praise and intimacy don't have to be sexual at all; heteronormative canon automatically and coercively sexualizes everything in sexually dimorphic, incredibly abusive/sublimated ways. Despite the binarized roles in BDSM, iconoclastic praise reduces stress for both sides (e.g., me saying "good girl!" to my computer when it doesn't crash as I write this book).

something that, regardless of its presentation, is eventually exposed as hypocritical or untame, then dealt with accordingly by heteronormative forces:



(exhibit 7a: Left: Evil Lyn from *He-Man: Revelations* [2021] or Carmilla from Netflix's *Castlevania* [2017]; middle, artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#) of Autumn Ivy as Striga [the strongest, most fascist-appearing vampire sister from *Castlevania*]; bottom-right: [Autumn Ivy](#); bottom-left and bottom-far-right: [Katie Brumbach](#) and Laverie Vallee. This exhibit will unpack each in turn.

First, as explored at length in the thesis volume, the Amazon is monstrous-feminine, a type of liminal expression that is

often pornographic, but also heavily conflicted and contested within market forces. *Castlevania* season three, for example, is basically pure queer bait, but had they actually continued with the mommy-dom setup, it's a tremendously devilish love letter to queer acts of sodomy that speak to that "freak on a leash" in all of us: "You have only to lose your chains [unless you want to wear a dog collar for sex-positive reasons.]" I loved season three's Gothic sex dungeon as an operatic, classically sinful place to submit to guilty pleasures supplied by powerful women [even if they are framed as inherently duplicitous; i.e., the deceptive faggot [cryptonomy] that is trotted out of and back into the closet over two seasons—real original, Netflix]. [As I write in my review of season three](#) [2020]:

So much of Camilla's conquest is logistic in nature. This might sound dull, but every decision plays out through wonderful dialogue, abetted by the simple fact that each sister has a unique personality and position: the genius, warrior, analyst, and diplomat. Two of them are even lovers. Still, they talk as family members do, knowing full well what games the others get up to (or don't). Their realness comes not from a checklist of outrageous traits, but how these play out realistically inside the fairytale castle.



Smack dab in the middle is Hector, the gullible forgemaster. Once bitten, twice shy, he must be convinced to make [monsters] for Camilla's army. No easy task. This falls to Lenore, the sexy diplomat. The fun lies in her attitude. She's not doing it because she's told; she's having fun, and plays her part superbly. The battles between her and Hector are generally fought with wit and words; they still hold their own against the scrappier melees had by Trevor and Sypha, or Isaac. The style of each makes it distinct, and adds to the show's overall variety.

When they first meet, Hector mistrusts Lenore, and rightly so; by comparison, Lenore is disarmingly soft—a fact she coldly reminds him of after beating him to a pulp. Her job is to make Hector (and us) forget what she is by being herself. She lies to Hector with bits of truth, giving him what he's always wanted. It speaks to her talents that she isn't wrong in this respect. Hector's second deception belies an underlying desire: to be told

what to do. It's arguably why he served Dracula to begin with. Lenore simply uses it to her advantage.

This does involve a bit of sex. When Lenore uses her body to distract Hector, though, he's already bought into the scheme. But so has the audience—at least in the sense that they've been groomed for a narrative climax. Consider what's happening elsewhere: Trevor and Sypha storm the church; Isaac rides into Barad-dur v2.0; and Alucard is molested by his new, horny friends, Taka and Tsumi. All comprise a collective build-up reaching its promised conclusion. Not all promises are kept, but herein lies a lateral pleasure, the chagrin of *coitus interruptus* offset by something comparably delicious to an orgasm: *schadenfreude*.



There's definitely a strict element to the show's mommy doms, and making Hector the "little bitch" [a small, effeminate dog on a leash] is one way to do the Amazon scenario. Aside from genderqueer BDSM apologia, though, the Amazon is essentially a freakshow circus act that has become appropriative in regressive, current-day forms; i.e., whose Pavlovian variant of "I am woman, hear me roar!" *obeys* state mandates through canonical, regressive *Amazonomachia*. Failure to comply during state decay leads to draconian punishment, including the euthanasia effect's double standard: either the tomboy is shoved into a [cis-het] wedding gown and married off, or she is put down like a rabid dog for refusing to conform [unlike "rabid" men, who are generally prized for their violent outbursts]. Collared by the state, the "queen bitch" is a war boss who ultimately fetishizes the state's will,

including its historical-material effects: the ubiquitous celebration and female personification of statuesque war, death, lies and rape in a fascinating but ultimately "lesser" form: a lady cop, gladiator and/or reaper in tokenized spaces.



[[source](#)]

This appropriation took time, starting with a literal circus persona that fixated on the strongwoman as a dated curios tied to an imaginary past not ruled by men; e.g., late-1800s strongwoman [Katie Brumbach](#). Similar to rockstars, pornstars and various other "stage bunnies" of the 20th/21st centuries, she had a stage name: Sandwina, but also "Lady Hercules." People tend to forget that heroes are monsters. Hercules was a monster that Sandwina combined with the woman as a classical monster type: the monstrous-feminine by virtue of having manly strength and female attributes. Her naturally strong female body dwarfed the men around her [thus threatening the heteronormative

order and literally personifying the suffragette movement]. As such, people like Sandwina were regarded in their time as oddities but also potential threats; or, as Betsy Golden Kellem writes in "The 'Trapeze Disrobing Act'" (2022):

for a long time, unusually strong women were regarded as aberrant curiosities, described with wonder in the same breath as bearded ladies and living skeletons." They were literally circus acts—magnetic ones that, Kellem continues, "not only destabilized the white-male basis of physical culture, it challenged popular ideas about female ability, all while showing a discomfiting amount of skin and startling muscle mass ([source](#)).

Meanwhile, the likes of Eugen Sandow [future icon of the Mr. Olympia organization] would represent an "imaginary antiquity" that suspiciously came with the statuesque, rippling muscles of a patriarchal hauntological past—a historically sexist tradition carried forward by "Pygmalions" like Conan author, Robert E. Howard, and famous Conan illustrator, Frank Frazetta. Famously Frazetta started his career in

1944, a time when readily-available synthetic steroids did not exist. Women, at this point, had been largely excluded from professional sports [for beating men]; the subsequent 20th century domination of weightlifting and bodybuilding through the weaponization of science against women [and later, against trans people by gentrifying cis women against them; re: [Rationality Rules vs trans athletes](#)] occurred specifically through [the systemic and escalating abuse of steroids in these sports](#) [Natty Life, 2023] while pointedly excluding marginalized groups from participating. These drugs became not just connected, but essential to the hypermasculine overperformance needed to argue for male superiority⁴⁹ in the heteronormative sports world, and by extension, any embodiments of patriarchal strength on- and off-stage.

Another way to look at this cultural regression towards sexual dimorphism, then, was the enforcement of a specific, idealized body image perpetrated through an abuse of technology—specifically medicine—to maintain the status quo/profit motive and Capitalist Realism through body imagery under global Capitalism as "set in stone." Steroids were originally devised to assist the elderly and the injured, whereas puberty blockers were originally designed for cis children. Eventually the queer community coopted blockers to assist themselves, whereas the Patriarchy fought this measure by demonizing them; the same establishment also coopted hormones to keep cis-het, white men in the most lucrative positions, while also reinforcing those positions under Capitalism to benefit the elite through a homogenized, hauntological male image of strength; i.e., a return to the reimagined past through the cultivation of "beasts" whose war-dog bodies are pumped full of drugs to try and embody the canonical personification of strength to satisfy the profit motive. This double standard extends to tokenized groups; e.g., the "wheyfu" as a warlike, "queen bitch" gargoyle who is simultaneously worshipped and feared for being "not a man" and "acting like a man.")

⁴⁹ This superiority is a harmful body image that is sold to younger and younger people, taught to visualize and connect said physiques [as linked to commercial gain under capital at the sacrifice of longevity and physical health](#) (Dr. Chris Raynor's "Sam Sulek: Recipe For Disaster?" 2023); or as Gen Kanayama and Harrison G. Pope Jr write in "History and Epidemiology of Anabolic Androgens in Athletes and Non-athletes" (2017):

The use of androgens, frequently referred to as anabolic-androgenic steroids (AAS), has grown into a worldwide substance abuse problem over the last several decades. Testosterone was isolated in the 1930s, and numerous synthetic androgens were quickly developed thereafter. Athletes soon discovered the dramatic anabolic effects of these hormones, and AAS spread rapidly through elite athletics and bodybuilding from the 1950s through the 1970s. However it was not until the 1980s that widespread AAS use emerged from the elite athletic world and into the general population. Today, the great majority of AAS users are not competitive athletes, but instead are typically young to middle-aged men who use these drugs primarily for personal appearance ([source](#)).



(artist: Frank Frazetta)

Now that we've revisited the monstrous-feminine, I want to illustrate such an exchange through anecdotes that communicate interpersonal and systemic trauma (a theme that will become increasingly relevant as we push into the second

half of the volume). Before we get to the third-and-final bourgeois trifecta, then, I want to give an anecdote about "thirst traps" and "girl bosses" through my own artistic dialogs; i.e., collaborating with artists playing the part. Thirst traps are canonically scapegoated—punished categorically for being "bad girls"; e.g., Carmilla and Striga (exhibit 7a). Both characters' shows queer-bait some actually-interesting (non-heteronormative) "mommy dom" archetypes—the Gothic Amazon mom and vampire dominatrix—before putting Pandora back in her box. Netflix [forces Carmilla to commit suicide](#) (a bury-your-gays sendoff with lots of fireworks) and shames Evil Lyn for her own "insane" desire to move past the universe as founded on really-boring centrist muscle-dudes duking it out for eternity in Eternia: nation pastiche dressed up as displaced good-vs-evil fantasy narratives, personified by white, cis-het male wrestlers hogging the stage. All the same, subverting these kayfabe narratives by interrogating them within themselves obviously requires working within colonized material and factionalized workers. This process doesn't always "work out," resulting in predictable disputes between marginalized groups, which the elite rely on to remain in power (divide and conquer).

For example, I once drew Autumn Ivy as Striga from *Castlevania* (exhibit 7a, bottom-right) in order to reclaim said character's monstrous-feminine qualities for sex-positive reasons: the strict-looking dominatrix wearing medievalized fetish gear extending to their naked body as weaponized. This is a complicated process for two reasons: one, purely from a theatrical/ideological standpoint; but also because it involves representations of two artists that aren't automatically in harmony. Indeed, their relationship to the state (as something to support or resist through nerd culture) may cause them to fight about the Gothic as something to express; i.e., weird canonical nerds vs weird iconoclastic nerds.

We'll get to that when I describe working with Autumn in just a moment. First, though, the theatrics and Gothic poetics of such a dialog are incredibly liminal. Striga is actually a pretty fascist character in the show's canon—a black knight [carving up "livestock" with her stupidly giant sword](#) (exhibit 1a1a1c) as a member of the ruling elite, but also the delegitimate ruler of a hauntologically reimaged Eastern Europe; i.e., the classical domain of men being threatened by

crazy vampire moms from an older made-up empire threatening the entire West as white, male and eternal: Nazi vampire she-wolves! All-in-all, Striga is thoroughly colonized—a fascist scapegoat made to ideologically defend Patriarchal Capitalism inside a neoliberal production: "Feminists are age-old hypocrites." It bears repeating that token concessions with power are always made under duress to some extent; but also that iconoclastic negotiations away from these concessions require certain theatrical paradoxes: a strip tease using fetish gear and athletic, soldierly bodies as weaponized alongside their actual guns, swords, shields, and spears, etc.



(model and artist, left: [Autumn Ivy](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#); right: [Sleep Depravity](#))

Iconoclastic homages to the Dark Amazon, then, aren't blind masturbation but dialogs of unequal power exchange reversed through codified stigmas and behaviors that *subvert* the thirst trap's usual dogmatic instructions; i.e., sex-positive variations that are patently designed to humanize the insect-like brood warrior as a *sex-positive* thirst trap instead of merely advocating for her unironic, female-coded destroyer persona. Doing so grapples with canon's ordinary utility/function of the war-boss monster girl; i.e., continuously reducing the female variant of a "boss" character to a fearsome "cum sponge" *and* call to war that triangulates the same-old reactionary violence towards the usual groups inside the state of exception. These harmful (and ignominious) outcomes *can* be challenged, but this requires resisting the profit motive, which token agents will do not do; instead, they punch down, attacking members of their own group from "besieged," self-deceiving pedestals given to them by older state proponents. In-fighting is taught and enforced by people who, if not *initially* rigid, become inflexible inside a prison-like structure; i.e., to sell out and sacrifice others in the bargain, while acting like the sole, exclusive victim that other minorities are somehow "against." The

worker assimilates, whitewashing the church while serving as an appropriated member of its phalanx of *returning* gargoyles when Capitalism decays.

For instance, white women/AFAB persons famously facilitate genocide as a protected class along a cis-to-queer gradient, the state granting them diminishing concessions by virtue of their faithfulness to, or breaking from, gender forms. This class betrayal's Faustian bargain certainly includes cis TERFs, inspired by the delicate female novelists of yore penning kernel-of-truth anxieties of an incredibly bigoted, xenophobic nature that calls for outright police violence against queer people in the future; e.g., echoes of Ann Radcliffe spouted by J.K. Rowling (and others) shaping Britain into a 21st century police state: the unironic Gothic castle but also the equally unironic *female* knights inside triangulating against state targets. Beyond cis women, queer people can also play cop and cops make for excellent thirst-trap mommy doms. As we shall see with Autumn, intersections of generational abuse and comprise lead to tokenism, thus praxial inertia; i.e., through minority police needlessly complicating labor exchanges and worker action by bullying other workers to enrich themselves within state hegemony.

Despite these grander miscarriages enacting the Amazon as a harmful monstrous-feminine symbol, I want to stress that the *idea* of the female knight (white or black) can be reclaimed by subverting it away from its canonical, unironically brutalizer function (the militarized fetish). Indeed, it's incredibly sexy to abjure Capitalism's regressive Amazon as a police weapon of state terror and violence/power abuse while keeping "the look," precisely because counterterrorist rebellion uses torturer aesthetics to liberate workers from the same old canonical legends of control through non-harmful sex; i.e., those that present "uppity bitches" as unruly monsters deserving of punishment, going from *before* William Marsden wrote Wonder Woman, into future interrogations of the sort he prompted regarding the canonical Amazon as something *to* negotiate, thus transform, into an increasingly sex-positive force: through iconoclastic⁵⁰ means that maintain the fearsome aesthetic amid changing class/cultural functions during ludo-Gothic BDSM. But these ongoing negotiations still happen between two (or more) people who are often of two minds about the very symbols being used; forget the aesthetics, the people utilizing them might disagree and even fight over their correct usage if one side has been conditioned to (whether consciously or not) serve the state!

⁵⁰ I.e., an iconoclastic concept I've explored in my own graduate/postgraduate work; e.g., "[What an Amazon Is, Standing in Athena's Shadow](#)" (2017) written when I was still in the closet, followed by my subversive train of Amazon artwork throughout the following years: exhibit 7a, but also subversions of Frazetta's artwork with exhibit 0a2c and exhibit 102a1; as well as my OCs Ileana, Revana, Siobhan and Virago in exhibits 7d, 37f, 37g, 61a2, 84, etc; classical myths like the Medusa, 23b; and in subversive movie/videogame fanart like Corporal Ferro, Marisa, Chun Li and Zarya in exhibits 85, 104a2, 111b; etc.



This brings us to our second challenge: worker solidarity and intersectional unity/education threatened by competing labor dialogs mid-exchange; i.e., theatrical disputes centered around material and ideological disagreements tied to our own bodies, gender identities/performances *and* trauma during liminal expression—embodying monsters inside nerd culture as a form of socio-political discourse. To usher Marsden into the present-day struggle of Gothic-Communist development, I based Striga off [one of Autumn Ivy's publicly available shoot images](#) (left). Personally I thought they were perfect for the role (they certainly looked the part), but didn't fully realize or address our incompatibilities as artistic collaborators—that our

shared generational trauma could divide us due to competing and oppositional aims within capital. Despite me being a trans woman/anarcho-Communist and Autumn a non-binary sex worker and both of us living with trauma under capital, we didn't exactly "get along." Point in fact, our voicing of trauma using and regarding the same Amazon aesthetics generally clashed during Gothic liminal expression and I'd like to explain why.

Before I start, though, I want to say that I *don't* advertise any of this about Autumn out of sheer spite; nor do I want to apologize for their harmful actions towards me while telling the truth about them as an abusive nerd. As such, I want to achieve praxial catharsis by confronting their abuse of me to accomplish two intersecting aims: a) to make a point about the bourgeois trifectas, and b) acknowledge that they abused me as a client of theirs both looking for a mommy dom *and* someone who, as a fellow artist/sex worker, aimed to venerate thirst traps by working with Autumn. Given that exposing abuse is a key function of this book, I want to educate readers for the purposes of artistic critique that aims to highlight the factionalized complexities of these kinds of uneven working arrangements that happen "in the wild." What happened between Autumn and I fits that to a tee: generational trauma begetting interpersonal trauma owing to capital as the divisive element through Gothic poetics. To critique power is to go where power is, and Autumn embodies that well, albeit as someone who abused me during our various exchanges.

First and foremost, Autumn is a headstrong and controlling person; i.e., their desire to be *in* control tended to overlook my considerations within our business arrangements. Even when trying to uphold their requests, they tended to walk (and talk) over me while making it seem normal. And yet, despite how their requests seemed fair at face value, they tended to be a one-sided ordeal insofar as my

thoughts, feelings or rights were concerned. Autumn always acted like the boss, even when they had no grounds for it: a queer boss dressed like an Amazon, but also acting like one of a particular kind; i.e., a SWERF and a moderate strongarm/war boss pushing me around while shoving their own sloganized, superhero merchandise through the market. All the while, our trauma and its means of communicating through mommy-dom/thirst-trap *Amazonomachia* were competing *against* each other through monstrous language as something to negotiate: Autumn's needs and wants trumping mine by virtue of their advertised superiority inside the same oppressed community discussing nerd culture.

For instance, Autumn strongly disliked the label "sex worker" being applied to them publicly because it could hurt their bottom line. It didn't matter that they had an OnlyFans full of thirst-trap materials that very clearly constituted sex work; any mention of Autumn being a sex worker (calling it like it is) was something they were very forcefully against. And while this might sound okay unto itself, they were also a) only too happy to take my patronage for sex work, while b) stressing their own *professional* status and using that to tell me *exactly* how to advertise them in my own galleries and writing (which concerns sex worker rights). It honestly felt pretty bossy of them, but also dense; i.e., invalidating of me as a genderqueer artist/sex worker while constantly advertising themselves as a strong-looking enby who honestly was having their cake and eating it, too: showing less skin (no "ham sandwich," in their words) and putting themselves on a pedestal above other sex workers while doing the same kind of work: talking dirty and showing off to make people cum; i.e., voice work first, with nudity as a pay-walled afterthought.



(artist: [Autumn Ivy](#))

The problem here, isn't selling sex, but that Autumn's approach became prescriptive and self-important; i.e., a weird canonical nerd smiling their Hollywood smile, getting fake tits to emphasize their female attributes within the Amazon persona, and treating false modesty like a lucrative virtue exclusive to them and their brand: the bogus and incredibly harmful argument that partially-clothed bodies and implied nudity are somehow "worth more" than fully naked ones are. It wasn't explicitly stated, but nevertheless showed in how Autumn treated me over time: *they* were always the victim, and I could never be one. Regardless of intent, their trauma, their rights, and their business—all trumped my voice in defense of capital (re: intent doesn't matter, actions do, and function determines function). Thus, instead of overcoming

systemic adversity within monstrous language, Autumn actively contributed to it through a coercive heroic-monstrous persona: a moderate Amazon "gym mom" selling strength as a motivational⁵¹ idea—a "feel-good" pill to buy from them while they sought to dominate the market (and its manufactured crises, contests and shortages) through queernormative kayfabe poetics; i.e., monsters that shut down proletarian praxis by being "the best."

Abusive parties will generally sell themselves as paragons, something to aspire to while exploiting others around them. To be blunt, Autumn's exploitation stems from commodifying rebellion, recuperating it with Gothic poetics as something to regard with fear and dogmatic worship (violence and terror). They value "positivity" over liberation, a toxic mindset that reliably yielded material and societal effects between us linked to stigmatic language: an expensive price tag (their photoshoots weren't cheap) and an abusive working relationship regardless of *my* oppressed status while competing over marginalized, nerdy language. There's certainly nothing wrong with charging whatever you want for your work, or deciding how much skin you want to show while doing it; but it was the manner to *how* Autumn controlled me as an erotic artist that rubbed me the wrong way. Anonymity and aliases are one thing but they *wanted* to be in the public spotlight, clearly doing sex work while telling me exactly what to write about them as *the* Amazon/victim; i.e., telling people they *weren't* a sex worker while capitalizing on a profound double standard that left me feeling cheated, but also threatened. I'm sorry but that's absurd *and* unprofessional. "Professional" means more than making money, hand-over-fist; it means treating your clients/co-workers with respect (the two are not mutually exclusive). Not only did Autumn not do this, they treated me *solely* like a client; i.e., I wasn't a sex worker but an artist—in short, to "stay in my lane."

To continue being blunt, Autumn was prioritizing themselves with a self-imposed monopoly informed by pre-existing heteronormative market trends: to, like a gargoyle, be seen and feared through visual instruction, but also open intimidation as a weird canonical nerd. So while there's certainly nothing wrong with *looking* Amazonian as a part of your own public image and using that image to fight for the rights of enbies worldwide, Autumn was a rigid negotiator who prioritized themselves in pursuit of their own livelihood. This reflected not just in their treatment of me through veiled threats, but also their framing of the Amazon as a brand image—not as something to teach workers to liberate themselves with, but something for Autumn to treat as a reliable paycheck while marketing themselves as "queer enough." Their open moderacy bled into their private, professional conduct in ways that frankly felt rude and unprofessional towards me as an artist and genderqueer person invested in sex worker rights; i.e., their business image trumped my own socio-political voice as a weird iconoclastic nerd,

⁵¹ A huge part of Autumn's market is motivational speaking/positive thinking with T&A during workout sessions. Think Richard Simmons, but sexier (no offense).

who they constantly treated as a threat to them. In short, their socio-material struggles took priority over mine, to the point that it made working with them oddly stressful.

For example, after Autumn had agreed to pay me for a short story that I had written for them to perform, we ran into some basic logistic issues; i.e., they were initially unable to pay me for the services being rendered. This shouldn't have been cause for great concern. However, when I merely wanted to know what was going on, they begrudgingly said they had lost their PayPal account, but went on to insist *I* was being unprofessional for asking them to begin with; i.e., trying to secure a means of payment before I submitted the story in question. Per their usual approach, the whole thing felt one-sided—with me being the unreasonable party for asking basic questions and them being well within their rights to take whatever measures they saw fit to protect themselves and their business interests; e.g., their overall business conduct, but also their automated, no-nonsense business contracts when vending their costly sex-work photoshoots. To say they ran a tight ship would be an understatement; that fucker was hermetically sealed.



(artist: [Autumn Ivy](#))

While I certainly get Autumn's frustration at losing their PayPal account, it still wasn't an excuse for them to lash out at me; i.e., by acting like a subjugated version of the Amazon they were constantly touting themselves as. And frankly I wouldn't have cared had their rough treatment of me *not* habitually coincided with their discrediting of what I was about as a sex worker and erotic artist (we all lash out; it shouldn't be a regular occurrence tied to one's brand, however). So while I can certainly understand not wanting to be called a sex worker because sex workers are discriminated against, Autumn's overcontrolling and inconsiderate treatment of me veered at times into SWERF territory dressed up in rebellious symbolism; i.e., me being pushed around by another marginalized sexual worker in the LGBTQ community who not only does sex work by my book (fucking literally in this case), but also isn't exactly hurting financially (owns horses and uses them to sell their own merchandise, above) and is thirst-trapping to gym bros with "Amazon/gym mom" gun⁵² porn (see the

⁵² Settler colonialism, whether American or not, goes hand-in-hand with romanticized, but also *fetishized* weapons as displays of terror (the fascist cult of machismo/weapons). For a melee variant,

eroticized loading of the "love gun"; exhibit 7b, below). Like, you do you, boo, but maybe respect me a little more as a fellow oppressed worker and weird nerd? Except weird canonical nerds don't do that; they police and attack iconoclasts, seeing them as threats to the canonical order people like Autumn hardwire to through the profit motive. Despite posturing as rebellious, their performance becomes a pretense eclipsed by the structure controlling their income as expressed through Gothic poetics, which Autumn polices through subterfuge and coercion.



(exhibit 7b: Artist: [Autumn Ivy](#). Despite the presence of masculine strength and Autumn identifying as non-binary in a subversive Amazonian gesture, there remains a thoroughly regressive, cowgirl component that leans into the raw business side of things. In other words, their precious brand recognition and dissemination is hardly subversive enough. Nothing about Autumn's aesthetic indicates a hard leftist/anti-fascist/anti-corporate stance; indeed, many elements indicate a centrist position appropriating countercultural forms [the tarot and monster tats] for a police/settler-colonial function with Man Box applications: acting and looking like a tokenized cop in service to patriarchal structures and status-quo clients [cis-het men thirsting after queer-coded cowgirls]

while prioritizing themselves as an AFAB sex worker [itself a form of transphobia towards AMAB sex workers].)

My point, here, is that the unresolved and uneven class tensions between us eventually reached a breaking point. This means that when things finally did fall apart, it was actually over something seemingly stupid and small: I had been supporting Autumn fairly regularly—and trying to be a good patron and respect their wishes [e.g. asking permission to show them my cock]—when suddenly I received an impersonal-sounding message from them while I was in a bad place: "I can't respond right now. Please respect my time." It sounded prerecorded (and in hindsight, it was), but I was already frustrated with them *and* going through some heavy shit on my end: a messy rebound right after a tremendously abusive

consider the straight-up TERF queen/war boss, Odessa Stone from [Overwatch](#) (2016), which we'll explore in Volume Three, Chapter Four.

relationship, the temporary banning of my OnlyFans account after sharing artwork on there, and my uncle being hospitalized overnight from a sudden, acute heart attack (the second one in less than a week). In short, I was going through the same kinds of problems that many sex workers go through. Sensing an air of exceptionalism, I spoke my mind and said that I thought Autumn's message sounded rude.

God forbid, right? Needless to say, the ensuing conversation was not a productive or pleasant one. I thought Autumn was rude, they thought I was rude, and despite the two of us agreeing that it was a giant miscommunication (tied to an automated message, no less), there were some pretty bad vibes present between us. I tried to apologize about being in a bad place but Autumn just *had* to get their licks in because I'd called them unprofessional; they acted like they looked: loud and assertive, sending some choice words over two short video recordings telling



me to basically go fuck myself ("I could tell you TO GO FUCK YOURSELF but I'm not going to!"). It was a very offended performance, one where they could do no wrong and I was a dick for daring to suggest that their conduct or place in the universe was somehow in dispute. Clearly I'd hit a nerve, but it only illustrated how things normally were, albeit to a more incensed degree: their way or the highway spoken from both sides of their mouth. In short, it was queer-boss behavior and I wasn't really in a state of mind to turn the other cheek. Autumn was right and I was wrong and their picture-perfect smile spoke for itself. Except its message suddenly felt incredibly fake and harmful to me.

(artist: [Autumn Ivy](#))

I'm mentioning all of this because our dispute was informed by a brand image they were acting out; i.e., as something to protect through tough-guy posturing that generally informed how they treated *me* as a fellow artist and sex worker when things "were good." Obviously there's no clear divide between theatre and real life, but Autumn made no bones about having an image (and livelihood) to protect from *my* conduct. I think their conduct and my response represents just how messily these miscommunications can get when they happen between workers; i.e., how their resultant hangups and ripostes are generally informed by various socio-material factors not entirely or even partially known to both parties. So I mean it when I say there's no hard feelings between us. But there *is* a sex-positive lesson to be taught about worker rights during

artistic solidarity and expression, and one that concerns Autumn's abusive conduct as part of their selling point: the gun-toting, inspirational gym mom, enby aesthete throwing their weight around pretty fucking hard the moment a little femboy artist like me (still in the closet at the time) inconvenienced them, or talked about *her* rights or opinions for a change; i.e., trans misogyny.

To be honest, I had wanted to say more during our falling out to clear things up but Autumn was pissed and so was I. The fact remains, I *didn't* mention my uncle to them because I *didn't* know he was dead at the time; my abusive surviving



uncle didn't want me attending the hospital visit, so I was at home waiting to hear about the results of the incoming brain scan. I didn't know it, but he was legally dead by the time Autumn and I had our fight. And perhaps it's unfair of me to hold that against Autumn, so I *technically* won't. I'll just say that their video messages largely concerned them hurling the most thinly veiled insults imaginable at me (and *not* in a professional manner), informing me in no uncertain terms just how *unreasonable* I had been to voice my true feelings at all.

(artist: [Autumn Ivy](#))

Perhaps there was no place for them in Autumn's mind. Except that's not how humans (or labor exchanges) work. My uncle was probably dead, I was losing my best friend, and still reeling from my last ex's abuses. But Autumn? They just couldn't be *bothered* to put up with me because their *horse* had been difficult that morning! Far be it from me to compare a temperamental horse to a dead uncle, or to expect Autumn to have known about Dave; but the fact remains that they were entirely concerned with themselves and I (and my trauma) were a nuisance. It became something to mute, treating me like a no-good AMAB dickhead while lionizing themselves and encouraging me to keep mum (something that all abusers do; e.g., Zeuhl and Cuwu).

Given the terrible timing of things and me admittedly nursing some bruised co-worker/client resentment (for Autumn's unprofessional, one-sided conduct) on top of what I was going through, it was a perfect storm of self-centeredness from them and denied expectations from me. Shit happens, but there's a still sex-positive lesson to be learned, here. Specifically I want us to reflect on what transpired between Autumn and I in relation to capital and Amazon aesthetics at large; i.e., as a *countercultural* means of interrogating trauma during the potential for labor and cultural disputes. The handling of the Amazon/mommy dom aesthetic

becomes something to improve upon during complex labor exchanges/negotiations while understanding what made Autumn so attractive to me and my work: their brand of Amazon aesthetics as something to reclaim from its owner's bourgeois antics, and indeed *valuing* what Autumn has to offer while healing from their parasocial abuse. Per Sarkeesian's adage, I can enjoy their powerful body and critique their abusive behavior as something to both recognize as part of their person and a thing to separate from the aesthetic: Despite how Autumn absolutely *looks* the part, they do not play it in ways that help workers at large; we can do that *for* them by analyzing and learning from what Autumn puts into the world.

Writing this section has been stressful, and appreciating Autumn's creative output and striking presentation helps me relax in ways that grants me agency having survived to speak on their abuse: fetishizing and enjoying the ghost of my abuser as something that can prioritize healing from trauma through a likeness that *isn't* the original (a tactic that will come up repeatedly from here on out; e.g., Cuwu, exhibit 16b). The takeaway isn't so much that Autumn was an apathetic, high-control diva who was actually pretty awful to work with (they were, to be clear); they and I eventually fought about it and haven't engaged with one another since. Instead, I want you to consider their pulverized solidarity and idiosyncratic stupidity (meaning in the Marxist sense of privatized labor stupefying workers) as connected to their complicated brand image leading to praxial inertia during liminal expression: the weird canonical nerd/enby girl boss (a queer boss acting cis to serve the profit motive) defending their thirst-trap image in blunt-force, centrist, dog-eat-dog ways; i.e., "I am strong *and* right, you are not" embodying class dormancy in favor of the status quo. It's punching down by an enby emulating those who normally punch down: white, cis-het men. By acting like one, enbies like Autumn perform and present as cops, often while wearing a mask-like smile as part of their public image.

The moment I introduced even a *modicum* of tension in defense of myself and my rights, Autumn ditched any sense of manners and doubled down on their usual performance as a veiled means of attack: defending their home and uniform as besieged by little ol' me. That's generally how moderates work, you see; they're polite until they're not. It was like arguing with someone who had fallen in love not just with themselves, but specifically their own sculpted image as a centrist comic book hero. It was, in a sense, a self-deception on both ends (despite my trauma, I could have spoken up sooner), but one whose complicated subterfuge led *Autumn* to coerce me in service of the profit motive; i.e., they didn't give a toss, as long as they got paid and looked good doing it, upholding the current linguo-material order of genderqueer language under capital by acting like a canonical gargoyle. To that, I was *supposed* to keep quiet, but I won't and it feels cathartic to speak out.

Now that we've gone over Autumn as a kind of "queer boss" in the wild, keep them in mind; we'll explore similar dialectical-material tensions in regards to other workers and their own complicated praxis/trauma throughout the manifesto and

remainder of the book. For the moment, let's move onto the third bourgeois trifecta—the *coercion trifecta* that results from these kinds of manufacture and subterfuge:

- **Gaslight.** A means of making abuse victims doubt the veracity of their own abuse (and their claims of abuse).
- **Gatekeep.** A tactic more generally employed by those with formal power, denying various groups gainful employment (thus actual material advantage) or working platforms that allow them to effectively communicate systemic injustices perpetrated against them.
- **Girl-boss.** Tokenism, generally through triangulation: of white, cis-het or at least cis women towards other minorities.

This trifecta is used more liberally by neoliberals (or centrists, *vis-à-vis* Autumn), as fascists tend to default to brute force. However, deception and lies—namely fear and dogma—are commonplace under fascism, as are token minorities (though these will swiftly disappear as rot sets in).

As Gothic Communists, our aim is deprivatization and degrowth—not to abolish everything outright, but move consumption habits gradually away from the neoliberal "Holy Trinity" within Capitalism's fiscal end goals

- **Infinite growth.** Pushing for more and more profit.
- **Efficient profit.** Profit at any cost.
- **Worker/owner division.** A widening of the class divide.

as disseminated through the three bourgeois trifectas. Rejecting all of these, Capitalism becomes something to transmute, proceeding into Socialism and finally



anarcho-Communism through Gothic poetics. This isn't possible unless sex work becomes an open discussion, not a private means of enrichment and control. As Autumn demonstrates, said enrichment and control are things to embody and live by according to a brand image; i.e., an aesthetic with a bourgeois function tied to individual workers punching down with zero empathy inside a dog-eat-dog structure. It's precisely that kind of thing that monstrous aesthetics need to challenge, not support as Autumn does (while encouraging them to charge through "constructive criticism" guided by sound theory).

(artist: [Nat the Lich](#))

To stand against the bourgeoisie and capital is to resist their trifectas and financial end goals, thus stand against "Rome's" self-imposed, endlessly remediated glory as inherently doomed to burn by design (the strongman's toxic stoicism a mask behind which madness historically reigns; and elsewhere, the elite under American hegemony sit far away from the flames). However, like Rome itself, even *that* activity of resistance by us is far more complicated than it initially appears. The basic concept involves our "creative successes" that occur during oppositional praxis, synthesized into proletarian forms within our daily lives as workers; i.e., according to how we treat each other as weird nerds who can come to blows over the confrontation of trauma, but also its interpretation through Gothic poetics, mid-exchange. Rebellion isn't simply refusing to obey the state; it's being kind to each other as a means of monstrous instruction that camps canonical renditions of sex work as monstrous. Doing so liberates workers from systems of socio-material control by first allowing people to imagine the changing of these structures, then implementing said changes in highly inventive ways that are respected and upheld during intersectional solidarity.



(artist: [M Leth](#))

While such poetic strategies double within the liminal expression of oppositional praxis (the Six Doubles), they are canonically denied to labor movements or otherwise recuperated from them to serve state interests. Often, "resistance" is heroically performed—limited to half-real, simulative spaces of containment regarding worker ingenuity as controlled forms of *monomythic* opposition; i.e., descending into Hell with a militarized avatar whose warlike gestures embody state aims *vis-à-vis* Cartesian dualism: nature (and the Global South) as something to conquer through hauntologized force under neoliberal Capitalism. To that, Cameron's refrain (shooters) limits monsters to "scored points" achieved through projectile-based combat against an endless army of zombies, demons and/or anthromorphs inside an obstacle course/shooting range through military optimism: holocaust by bullet. These overtures of state violence manifest in a variety of videoludic exchanges, be that an FPS, TPS (run 'n gun, Metroidvania, platformer) or RTS with shooter elements, and so on. There are no shortage of enemies to educate players (often young men, but also blindly parodic Man-Box proponents that appeal to these men; e.g., waifus/war-bride avatars, above) to kill

unthinkingly for the state, regardless of where the Imperial Boomerang and states of exception are (e.g., *Doom II: Hell on Earth*, 1994).

Power is a performance that upholds through the perception of impossible things like total control, endless enemies, ultimate strength or absolute victory through kayfabe reversals. The same goes for containment, whose paradox of total imprisonment our thesis discussed in relation to videogames as breakable; i.e., how speedrunning and spoilsport gaming attitudes normally contain tremendous invention that canonically restrict the development and execution of emergent puzzle-solving to single texts in gaming culture⁵³, versus applying that mentality to reconfigure larger *extratextual* structures; e.g., Coincident's "[Doom Strategy Guide - Okuplok's Mancubus Cliff](#)" (2023, below) treating player invention more as a hobby on par with a Rubik's cube—or hell, [a human beating Tetris \(1985\) for the first time in its 38-year existence](#) (aGameScout's "After 34 Years, Someone Finally Beat Tetris," 2024)—versus escaping Capitalist Realism by playing videogames (and other such experiments) in ways that *resist* the profit motive within the neoliberal era (with organized speedrunning arguably having started in 1990⁵⁴, just before the fall of the Soviet Union). The puzzle is ostensibly impressive, but the much-touted "progress" of solving it becomes an empty gesture insofar as liberating worker minds is concerned. Doing so has no effect on the external world *unless* the attitude for solving complicated puzzles through emergent gameplay is deliberately taken



outside of the text.

Otherwise, the hauntology (and its canceled future) are entirely self-contained:

In truth, the degree of *conscious* unity against grander historical-material problems can be applied to capital through rebellious worker action and ludo-

⁵³ I.e., "gamer culture," which, as we've established in our thesis volume, is predominantly white, cis-het, and male. Moreover, many "metas" exist within manufactured competition to serve the profit motive; e.g., fighting games and professional teams of the FGC as a globalized operation across multiple countries. If you don't complete, you don't exist.

⁵⁴ As Eric Koziel writes in *Speedrun Science: A Long Guide to Short Playthroughs* (2019):

In March of 1990, Nintendo of America staged an event in Dallas, Texas [...] called the "Nintendo World Championships." While this was mainly a marketing event to capture and further motivate the explosive success of the NES, it grew into a full-on circuit. While the event itself was built around total score, the Nintendo World Championships have a place in history as one of the earliest instances of organized speedrunning ([source](#)).

Gothic-BDSM poetics across *all* mediums and labor forms; e.g., speedrunning, which can work (from my thesis volume) "as a communal effect for solving complex puzzles and telling Gothic ludonarratives in highly inventive ways. As we'll see moving forward, this strategy isn't just limited to videogames, but applies to *any* poetic endeavor during oppositional praxis"; i.e., intersectional, multi-layered strategies of resistance and misdirection that strive to demonstrate there *is no outside of the text*, applying the imagination and effort needed to transform the world around us by any and all means necessary. To that, I think the grassroots culture and non-profit approach to speedrunning allows larger groups of people to solve immensely difficult problems collectively outside of established business practices: thwarting Capitalism Realism by weaponizing the collective ingenuity and incredible puzzle-solving power of speedrunning *against* the elite.

If popular videogames franchised under neoliberal Capitalism, and organized speedrunning began to form right before the end of the Cold War in 1990, then its proletarian utility (and other such revolutionary strategies overlapping within nerd culture) must do so after the end of history's cultural myopia began to thicken. Doing so requires inventiveness in the face of tremendous confusion (worker menticide) and state-sponsored adversity (many speedrunners just want to run their games and ignore the problems of the real world; e.g., Caleb Hart, who we shall examine in Volume Three, Chapter Four). The bourgeoisie might seem to hold all the cards, here, but they cannot kill all workers who resist, nor do they possess the means to completely monopolize violence and terror against rebellious forces; likewise, they cannot hope to alienate us from our own labor as a weapon to levy against them *unless* we surrender its power and poetics exclusively *to* them. Subjugation means total surrender as something of a choice when presented with the facts: submitting to Capitalist Realism in those respects, staying inside Plato's cave. This book's praxial focus, then, is to *enrich* propaganda and sex workers by making them (and the world around them) progressively more and more proletarian through Gothic poetics as something to fearlessly apply anywhere, regardless of who complains or fights back. As part of nerd culture as something to reclaim, we become "awakened," hence emotionally/Gothically intelligent weird nerds aware of class/cultural struggles in relation to each other in continuum. The rewards of gradual, uphill emancipation outweigh the risk of state violence committed by class traitors like Autumn playing it safe inside nerd culture (segregation doesn't prevent genocide; it enables it).

We must not only avoid such incidents, thereby rescuing the Gothic aesthetic from a menticial function that maintains the status quo; we must interrogate and confront our own trauma through similar incidents that occur *regularly* between workers when interrogating power using Gothic paradox. To that, we must gradually become our own dark agents, including killer-rabbit, "Trojan" bunnies who tell splendid, very-gay lies (exhibit 7c and 7d in a figurative sense; 100a4 in a more literal sense) and—as sex workers with subversive fetish props, kink and

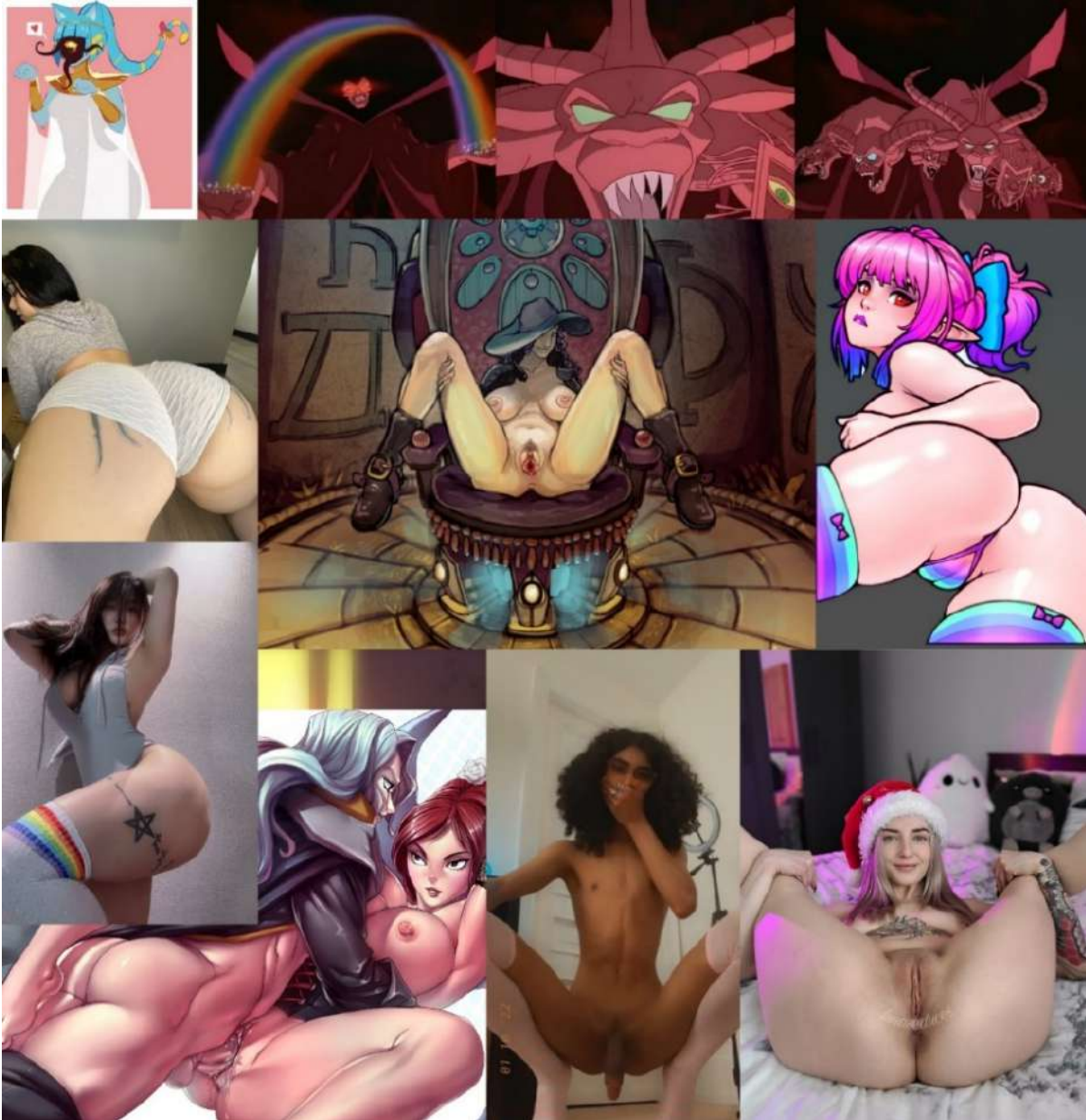
BDSM—weave our own elaborate strategies of misdirection, thread-by-thread, into the praxial fabric of "acceptable" sin, rebellion and vice, but also power, prestige and strength personified: Hell as something to rule over collectively by reclaiming the monstrous language that Capitalism uses to commodify our struggles authored by the system. The state markets and sells Gothic poetics all the time. We just have to *deprivatize* their canonical transactions and framing during our own creative actions; i.e., in Gothic-Communist ways that champion monstrous worker solidarity as fundamental to the development process, deconstructing harmful binaries while encouraging *anti*-heteronormative Gothic expression through iconoclastic monsters, locations and rituals of unequal power exchange.



(artist: [In Case](#))

So put aside the elite's cheap, coercive garbage and work for something better to consume that we make for ourselves. If "you are what you eat," then become something darkly delicious whose consumption actually makes the world a better place; i.e., by openly talking about trauma

through Gothic poetics, whose frankly paradoxical performances and play become utilized in spite of the risks to constitute something that moderates like Autumn (and other weird canonical nerds) cannot stand: a pedagogy of the oppressed that alters societal *and* material conditions. Its engagement occurs between complex, liminal expressions of power in submissive and dominant forms—but also undead, demonic and animalistic avatars—that provide a potent, playful means of voicing things that embody or otherwise speak out about systemic trauma; i.e., as something to express in monstrous, paradoxical language, normally receiving it from similar-looking entities that ultimately serve the state. We must subvert them in far more openly transgressive/dissident language than Autumn dares to (they're a cop); we must "make it gay" by rebelling in revolutionarily meaningful ways, thus achieve liberatory catharsis and release during praxial synthesis—camping the canon through our own identities, labor and bodies, whose Gothic poetics consciously challenge heteronormative (and tokenized, queernormative) standards. It becomes joyous and orgasmic, but also a form of asexual public nudism whose statuesque presentations make our canonical foils sweat:



(exhibit 7c: Artists I have worked with or commissioned, or whose creations have inspired me when making my own sex-positive work. Top-right-to-mid-left: Filmation's 1987 [The Emperor of the Night](#); top-far-left: [Natharlotep](#); mid-top-left: [Nya Blu](#); low-mid-left: [Songyuxin Hitomi](#); bottom-left: [Bokuman](#); bottom-middle: [Zayzay](#); bottom-right: [Luna Seduces](#); upper-far-middle-right: [Ronin Dude](#); middle: Playful Maev. All embody something rebellious in the Satanic sense; i.e., through Gothic poetics, stressing a morphological personal expression that is outside the Cartesian, heteronormative standard. For example, Playful Maev was gynodiverse in terms of the labia she drew in her work; indeed, I specifically commissioned her to draw my OC, [Ileana](#), for that reason!)



(exhibit 7d: Top-left artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#); top-middle: [Miss Misery](#); top-and-bottom-right: [Tatsuya Yoshikawa](#); bottom-left, artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#); bottom-right, artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#). Queens of hell are things to fashion; i.e., great and fearsome witches and demons. The top-left is Miss Misery drawn as a great ruler of Hell; the bottom-left is Ileana, my sex-positive witch queen who uses her tremendous magic powers [and chonk] to fight against evil kings for the rights of all witches; my OC Pickle [bottom-left] was envisioned as a kind of queenly demon in her own right; and Yoshikawa clearly loves their oni and spirits. All embody the sort of queenly entities that patriarchal men demonize and fear but also sing about and commodify in rock 'n roll forms; e.g., Carmilla and Striga, but also Witchtrap's 2012 "[Queen of Hell](#)" being the "queen of her kind!" opposite Helstar's rendition of Dracula/Orlock declaring, "I am the king of my kind!" in their 1989 guitar showcase, "[Perseverance and Desperation](#)." You gotta take that entire process and turn it on its head: "Better to rule in Hell than serve in Heaven.")

While making monsters yourself (thus being a weird nerd), remember how class and culture warfare start with imagination as something previously informed by state-corporate propaganda and its Faustian pacification: "Better to serve in Heaven than reign in Hell" amounting to a kind of "false service" where they eat you (a bit like the old *Twilight Zone* episode, "[To Serve Man](#)," 1962). All the

while, the elite want us to forget how all deities reside in *our* breast, that *we* are the devils of the world and the Gothic imagination is *our* workshop. The world, then, can become one where non-privatized dreams and nightmares come true—that have the collective power to liberate sex workers from bourgeois tyranny and avoid the repeating of older historical materialisms currently unfolding during Capitalist Realism as it presently exists: weird canonical nerds like Autumn, who maintain these structures as they currently function—scaring people through Hell as a monopolized threat of state violence, not creative empowerment. We can all be kings, queens and intersex/non-binary monarchs under a New Order where vertical power arrangements become an awful legend of the tyrannical past; i.e., on par with Richard Matheson's *Commie Zombie-Vampires* finally(?) laying Cartesian dualism to rest in *I am Legend*, 1954 ([according to Debora Christie, anyways](#); source: "A Dead New World: Richard Matheson and the Modern Zombie," 2011).

So, while "Rome" absolutely gargles non-consenting balls, it's completely inadequate for Gothic Communists to say that "'Rome' sucks and so do Capitalism, neoliberalism and fascism." That won't work. Not only is it stating the obvious, but far too many workers defend marriage, war and the state itself as *sacred*—its ritualized sacrifices in all of these fields; i.e., "People die, abuses happen, wives get raped, but the state is *sacrosanct, sovereign, above judgement*." Instead, the hauntological and abject nature of canonical, heteronormative devilry must be critiqued in relation to what pro-state proponents already dominate: the ghost of the counterfeit as an ongoing lie that serves the elite through the process of abjection. As Autumn demonstrates, said process turns potentially unruly workers into stupid backstabbers whose concept of ownership isn't just raw utility for the state, but sublimated exploitation in alienizing/alienating ways. This completely-fucked situation calls for subversive transformation and black magic during liminal expression; it calls for successful proletarian praxis through our creative successes and dark forces—*our* darkness visible achieving praxial synthesis in opposition to the bourgeois trifectas (and proponent gargoyles like Autumn using them to keep dissidents in line)!

Volume Zero thoroughly discusses power as a paradoxical performance, which denotes both nuance and difficulty in its execution as a liminal proposition: on the surface of and inside thresholds that remediate praxis. Like wrestling or boxing, Gothic-Communist development is an uphill game of gradual pressure and inches from both sides cultivating the Superstructure. But rebellious decisions have to be collective, second-nature and informed, or they ultimately serve the state. For the next two chapters, then, I want to outline the operational difficulties present within oppositional praxis when challenging the state; then go over the Gothic mode (and its many lists) in detail, accompanied by my original examination of the nuance present during oppositional praxis (and *its* various lists).

An Uphill Battle (with the Sun in Your Eyes): Operational Difficulties and Revolutionary Cryptonymy

"Only fools buck the tiger. The odds are all on the house!"

—Doc Holiday, *Tombstone* (1993)



This chapter concerns the operational difficulties that emerge during oppositional praxis from a predominantly *theoretical* standpoint; i.e., canon vs iconoclasm. It divides into three parts.

- **Part one** divides into three pieces:
 - **The intro** introduces the problem of state monopolies through violence, terror and morphological expression, and how to fight back as a state victim through revolutionary cryptonymy by using *animalized* Gothic poetics.
 - **"Predators"** considers the state's monopoly of violence (and terror) as told through its animalized soldiers, but also their bodies as things if not depicted in heteronormative ways, then policed as such; i.e., by the Amazon and similar monstrous-feminine entities as relayed in ways that generally "corrupt" and triangulate against/prey on other minorities.
 - **"Prey"** considers those who hide like, and manifest as, animals in the shadow of unironic Gothic castles (whose initial formation and campy subversion we will also examine, *vis-à-vis* Horace Walpole and Matthew Lewis).
- **Part two** concerns arrangements of power that are shared and worn: namely rings and collars of the Tolkien-esque sort, and in various roleplay settings but especially the Gothic castle and vampirism as something to summon and evoke.
- **Part three** takes these praxial factors and considers them in relation to the state's authored stupidities; i.e., as things to challenge through our own Gothic poetics' creative successes when interrogating trauma ourselves.

An Uphill Battle, part one: "Predators and Prey," or Introducing Revolutionary Cryptonymy and the State's Medieval Monopolies on Violence and Terror through Animalized Morphological Expression

And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The fear and dread of you will fall on every living creature on the earth, every bird of the air, every creature that crawls on the ground, and all the fish of the sea. They are delivered into your hand. Everything that lives and moves will be food for you; just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you all things."

—*Genesis 9, "The Covenant of the Rainbow" (c. 400 BC)*

"If you became a shogun, there'd be nothing but devils in this world!" said Jubei Kibagami, criticizing Genma Himuro, his immortal foe in *Ninja Scroll* (1993) for being the worst-of-the-worst (and in the warring-states period, that's really saying something). Jubei wasn't a samurai, you see; he was a *ronin*. Freed from Japan's class structure, ronin were bereft of materials and land—like Jesus, but more brutal. In the tradition of the Western *genre*, Jubei retools his formidable warrior skills to help those less privileged than himself: impoverished small clans, but also women. He's the tyranny of evil men trying to be the shepherd, a bad motherfucker who *chooses* not to be a dick like Genma does. Unlike Jubei, Genma is a class traitor and lying sadist who only cares about gold as a means to an end: achieving *his* police state by becoming the "Shogun of the Dark," ruling through menticidal waves of terror (re: Meerloo) and violence from the shadows. Hell is monopolized by the state and summoned anew, generally through power structures like castles.

A fog on the brain, this darkness harbors state monopolies of violence, terror and morphological expression that apologize for police brutality in the present,



regressing towards ever more antiquated⁵⁵ (and fearsome) forms amid new invasions; i.e., through a fatal nostalgia that consigns the worker mindset to all the usual (and ignominious) dooms within capital's leveraging and structuring of power inside itself: rape, torture and death while systemic racism (and other aspects of Cartesian dualism) invade

the imaginary past (having never existed in the historical medieval period at a

⁵⁵ Because the state cannot conceal its medieval regressions, it monopolizes its usual violence and terror through Gothic romances; in turn, these incarcerate worker minds in crypt-like hauntologies of endless, brutal suffering (e.g., the infernal concentric pattern, Cycle of Kings, Shadow of Pygmalion, Torment Nexus, etc).

systemic level). All sit inside a planned, apocalyptic *structure* to return to greatness with, one filled with the brutal enactors of state abuse built around the traditional sites of regeneration for state agents—castles and knights.

To that, Genma uses endless treachery and lies during the liminal hauntology of war (the summoning of the reimagined Gothic castle and its hellish abuses as things to move through) to recruits greedy warlords to him—the *bourgeois* devils Jubei warns about during their final duel. In the end, Jubei cannot kill Genma, so he buries him alive—trapping his savage nemesis inside a golden prison of his own design: "There is no trap so deadly as the trap you set for yourself." As this subchapter will establish, the medieval character of state violence and terror cannot be destroyed during morphological expression, only subverted or contained through linguo-material "traps" we put into motion during revolutionary cryptonymy as an essential means of counterterrorist liberation; i.e., by throwing the setter-colonial character of heteronormativity into dispute through a rebellious medieval, *postcolonial* imaginary. Taking Hell back while doubling its colonial forms.

This subchapter primarily considers the theory revolutionary cryptonymy through morphological⁵⁶ expression when using *animalized* Gothic aesthetics (with undead and demonic elements too, of course). To that, I want to quote a snippet from our thesis volume that will prove germane as we proceed:

As a kind of deathly theatre mask, something else that's equally important to consider about demons and the undead (and which we'll bring up throughout the entire book) is that *animals embody the canonical language of power and resistance as something to camp through demonic and undead forms*; i.e., stigma animals relayed through demonic BDSM and rituals of power expression and exchange that embody hunters and hunted, predators and prey that play out through the ongoing battles and wars of culture, of the mind, of sexuality and praxis as traumatized: marked for trauma or by trauma that parallel our green and purple doubles onscreen ([source](#)).

So when I say "animalized" *vis-à-vis* Gothic aesthetics, this is predominantly what I mean and primarily what we will inspect in parts one and two of this subchapter. Before those begin, I want spend the next ten pages introducing you to some important concepts on which our investigations are founded.

⁵⁶ I'm specifically focusing on morphological expression, here, because state forces will try to control it in relation to other variables; i.e., in monopolized opposition to workers' manifestations of monstrous bodies during countercultural dialogs that stand up for their basic human rights (and that of animals and the environment). While we obviously want to separate human biology from sexual and gender expression (and allow sex to divide from gender during said expression), it nevertheless remains tied to them during morphological expression as part of overall worker struggles; i.e., to liberate themselves from capital in morphological language that challenges the heteronormative standards normally proliferated in canonical Gothic stories.

As something that predictably rises during material instability and societal unrest, emotional turmoil is very much at home in the Gothic. This includes anxieties about physical bodies and their hauntological uniforms as often having a sexualized, animalistic, psychological element that overlaps with half-exposed, unburied trauma acquired generationally under state domination. This domination occurs within regressive, medievalized positions of crisis and decay that defend and uphold the status quo, but *can* be reclaimed by proletarian agents within weird-nerd culture; e.g., workers embodying knights to reclaim their killing/raping implements inside the state of exception, while simultaneously dealing with state infiltrators fighting to recapture the same devices *back* for themselves and their masters; i.e., Amazons and furies, etc, as forms of *contested* morphological expression that can assist or hamper gyno/androdiversity within Gothic poetics under state monopolies. To that, heroes are monsters, and monsters go hand-in-hand with animals being for or against their own abuse to varying degrees.

The resultant middle ground of this duality grants words like "demon," "zombie," or "animal" a double purpose for which the rest of the subchapter is divided: predator and prey. As we shall see, either classification works as an insult or compliment depending on who's using them, where and why. The fact remains, the differences between them are not clear-cut, especially during medieval expression as something to revive during oppositional praxis. As such, we also need to remember and revisit an idea from my thesis regarding animals and the medieval: "Out of medieval discourse, domesticated animals are also gendered in a sexualized, monstrous sense; i.e., 'The Miller's Tale' from *The Canterbury Tales* (1392)." Domestication invokes a sense of the wild that is reclaimed by state forces to serve the profit motive, which rebellious agents must challenge and reclaim *while being animalized*. The larger struggle involving animalization constitutes an uphill battle that obscures one's vision in the same crowded sphere. Inside it, space and time become a violent circle, one where endless war over state nostalgia constitutes ongoing dialectical-material struggles to keep with, or break from, *current* historical materialisms under Capitalist Realism: state violence dressed up as dated "protection/shelter" during our aforementioned emotional turmoil (stemming from *criminogenic* conditions; i.e., manufactured shortages, crisis and competition tied to images of the decaying fortress and its unholy armies).

While we'll only be introducing revolutionary cryptonymy in this subchapter, it remains an utterly vital aspect of proletarian praxis—one that challenges state monopolies through the very things they try to control: morphological expression through monstrous and heroic performance, but especially animalized, hauntological examples like the Amazon or knight, as well as the more famously operatic, feudal sites of sexual danger to which they represent and/or navigate—Gothic castles as killing grounds for a state predator's prey-like designations. To that, this subchapter considers how revolutionary cryptonymy invokes liminal expression as a cosmetic, conspicuous means of useful disguise within state

monopolies of violence, terror and in connection to those dated things, bodily expression. Together on antiquated stages, the deliberate use of dated masks,



costumes, props and other performative elements hide activism's sorties imperfectly within the trauma of canonical Gothic language and its complicated territories of expression; i.e., as a means of rebellious camouflage, useful for blending in and revealing the bad-faith nature of state proponents in shared, thus policed, spaces and dialogs. On said stage, reactionaries and moderates wear masks to hide themselves in common monstrous language; but when they respond to our Athena's Aegis having

doubled their mask, said mask slips from outrage *defending* state monopolies within nerd culture.

Consider the hero we just mentioned, Jubei. He's a larger-than-life character whose heroic image appeals to our aims as something to interpret away from canonical forces. Doing so unfolds during warring interpretations of the character as a matter of discourse that is not set; i.e., one that yields revolutionary cryptonymy precisely when our enemies disagree with us about the character's mythical applications. Although Jubei amounts to the invincible class ally as mythical in function, his larger-than-life status represents a particular *kind* of splendid lie: the redirection of brutal, animalistic force away from state targets, which the state will thoroughly abhor and, more to the point, complain about in some shape or form. So while Jubei *is* terrifyingly violent, iconoclastic interpretations of the character emphasize how soldiers must learn to turn their weapons away from the state's monopoly of violence, *precisely* because state proponents will openly hate it (thus out themselves as class traitors).

Violence, terror and sexuality converge during these exchanges. Weber's maxim states "a state holds a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence within its territory, meaning that violence perpetrated by other actors is illegitimate" ([source](#)). Combined with Asprey's paradox of terror and Crawford's invention of terrorism through the Gothic mode, the monopoly of violence is sacred to state defenders; i.e., Western *canon* maintains its monopolies in hauntological perpetuity by abjecting "terrorists" as prey to hunt and kill, which we must reverse-abject during guerrilla, asymmetrical maneuvers. We must, because the ghost of the counterfeit is the Gothic lie of state sovereignty presented as a convincing or at least consistent fake; e.g., Tolkien or Cameron's refrain promoting or otherwise assisting fascist palingenesis to essentialize heteronormativity's sexual-gender

dimorphism assisted by centrist forces; i.e., through forceful, toxic compulsion—often physically but certainly mentally as well—relayed by polite *and* impolite actors. This is the sticking point where we can incense them to our benefit, doing so on and offstage.

Outing bad actors is vital. Whether reactionary or moderate, neoliberalism and fascism repeatedly attempt to monopolize terror (which Asprey notes is impossible for any one agency to achieve) and by extension Weber's aforementioned monopoly of violence. Said monopolies automatically place state targets inside Agamben's state of exception, bombarding them with waves of terror with a human face; i.e., calling class/culture activists "terrorists" *vis-à-vis* Crawford's invention of terrorism through the canonical Gothic mode: labor is a zombie horde to shoot (more on this in Volume Two) or dark nation to bomb (exterminate, loot and enslave) through the delivery of said payloads as a business of wider horrors intimated by fantastical stories (e.g., alien invasion scenarios standing in for imperialist powers). As such, it really doesn't matter if such totalities can be practically implemented long-term (efficient profit guarantees that colonies die young), merely that the structure utilizing their apocalyptic, rapacious rhetoric argues *towards* total power for the elite through the bourgeois trifectas. As Richard Overly writes in [The Dictators: Hitler's Germany, Stalin's Russia](#) (2004), "'Totalitarian' does not mean that they were 'total' parties, either all-inclusive or wielding complete power; it means they were concerned with the 'totality' of the societies in which they worked." This goes well beyond the Nazi or Russian



governments he had in mind, and applies to the elite (and any nation-state they operate from) controlling worker bodies through force. It's literally how they organize power according to Gothic poetics: service to the profit motive through morphological expression as heteronormative. Power and materials go hand-in-hand, then, as does the propaganda associated with them as something to cryptonymically "fence" with; i.e., Gothic poetics as the pacifying and subjugating instrument of the elite and (subordinate) middle class, which we turn back at them using Athena's Aegis: showing them our ass, thus where to "stick it."

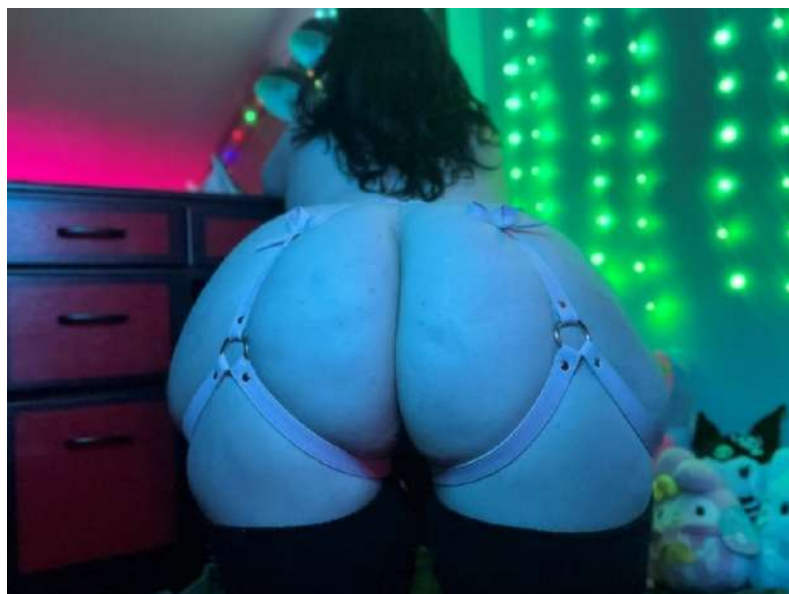
(artist: [Blxxd Bunny](#))

What I mean by this is, our socio-political positions are vulnerable and often associated directly with our bodies and identities as things to control through monstrous forms during Gothic theatre. The state's various religious/secular in-groups associate entirely with exclusive ownership and universal coercion under state territories over state-assigned out-groups: to belong/to have belongings versus to be owned or used by someone or marked for systemic mistreatment, even death if you fail to be useful to them (the paradox being your death *is* useful to profit). Here, the state of exception provides the most basic function of capital: exploitation and genocide in service of the profit motive; i.e., the state eating its population according to heroic arrangements of theatrical power tied to bodily expression as dimorphically gendered. Cultural markers include the conspicuously/flamboyantly queer person (the token hairdresser with a lisp, the interior decorator, etc) as a sign of monitored compliance but also surveilled rebellion versus the subtle/normal-looking gay person as a kind of ordinary (homonormative) disguise to hide from power in a liminal sense: within thresholds/on the surface of monstrous imagery as conveyed by castles, knights, damsels, and demons, etc, but also the enormous *trauma* they frequently impart; i.e., through linguistic detachment, thus concealment, by standing in between viewers and the resultant terrors both are connected to—cryptonymy.

At the same time, this liminality also pervades other groups affected by the state during shared performance and language; e.g., women and the conspicuously slutty whore vs "the angel in the streets/devil in the sheets," etc, as occupying the same danger zones. To avoid the state of exception, thus be preyed upon, imperiled workers cover up but also paradoxically semi-expose themselves when powerful men compel them to—enough to "play along" when one is punished for being sinful/disobedient, while simultaneously hiding one's mark as a member of the state's chosen underclass(es). Submission is tiered within levels of punishment

and reward *provided* one obeys their compelled arrangement by presenting as submissive through marketed exchanges:

(artist: [Wet Little Sub](#))



For example, beings forced to identify as women/monstrous-feminine are taught to wear skimpy clothes, thick makeup, animalized props (cat ears, tail butt plugs) and

uncomfortable shoes (their revenge being to do it for themselves, of course): designed by men to be canonically diminutive, animalistic, impractical (no pockets) and cutesy/form-fitting—i.e., frilly panties, not pants (which Romeo and his companions make fun of Juliet's older governess for not having: "A sail! A sail!"). Wearing these *de facto*, chattelized uniforms, marriage becomes like a prison and prisons—especially American prisons—are synonymous with rape, something to threaten those who steal things that are already owned by the elite, by patriarchal capitalists, by men, and people acting like men: women's own bodies and identities as "dolloed up" in traditionally submissive ways, but also prey-like, monstrous-feminine ways (which extend to tokenized Man Box/"prison sex" mentalities). The paradox lies in how the doll takes its coerced, animal sense of self as something to reclaim; e.g., historically battered housewives would have been expected to wear makeup, but also adopt passive, obedient body language and facial expressions—to cover up their wounds, but also tired eyes from lack of sleep/substance abuse from having to live under an oppressive husband's roof; i.e., the keeping up of appearances for the *husband's* sake, including playing dumb as a survival prey mechanism for the *wife's* (a blinder as well as camouflage/a mask). They also would have been expected not to labor for themselves, but adopt Mr. Darcy's so-called "female accomplishments": sewing, drawing, piano-playing, sitting down and looking pretty (and being quiet), etc. In short, acting like someone's obedient pet.

Even when doing so is forbidden, such a concept can be interrogated by re-illustrating the same-old disputes from a *different* heroic perspective; e.g., a girl who likes how she looks, but not how she's controlled, decides to run away from home, retreating into the imaginary past (and its oft-animalized⁵⁷ forms) to try and find some sense of agency regarding her own body. The Wisdom of the Ancients, then, amounts to a constant, *ironic* interrogation of the *current* cultural understanding of the imaginary past; i.e., negotiations with said past through its aesthetics of trauma that guide workers towards a better state of existence by bringing what they find back with them as something to fluster the status quo with: a hellish bodily expression regained from state forces by bonding with nature in Gothic ways. The point of the *iconoclastic* Hero's Journey is how the Call to Adventure *doesn't* uphold the status quo upon the hero's return; it subverts and transforms it into a post-scarcity world that isn't beholden to the same old heteronormative devices and prey-like abuse of animalized workers. Instead, it lives and abides by a different set of tenets: our Six Rs and their underpinning of Gothic theories. They support and maintain each other as part of a larger movement branching off from the original prison. It's a jail break, insofar as bodies

⁵⁷ Animal masks in theatre are some of the oldest in the world; i.e., totems (a topic we'll introduce here, and expand on greatly in Volume Two when we examine lycans, chimeras and sentient animals).

can become prisons for the people inside them when their presentations are compelled, marking them for violent roles: givers or receivers, predator or prey.

Such forays into pretend worlds amount to an imaginary liberation that challenges Capitalist Realism through avatar-like vehicles; i.e., places to put ourselves and occupy for a time, to better learn how to frame our own experiences (and bodies) in a situation of make-believe. But within that invention lies the ability to think critically about our surroundings, thus interpret the stories already present within our lives that shape how we think, thus act. I want to spend the remainder of this subchapter exploring various ways that cryptonymy can rebel against state forces through animalized bodily poetics, including where these poetics originated.

We'll get to Horace Walpole in a bit. I want start with my own fictions as inspired by an older imaginary past, one built on earlier nerdy stories arguably informed by Walpole and *his* predecessors' medieval, animal-centric palimpsests: Madikken the Milkmaid.



(artist: anonymous)

Madikken belongs to a project I originally worked on for someone else, but came to inherit the character after the original author abandoned her (see exhibit 8b1, page 167). Adventurous and foolish, Madikken's an eighteen-year-old girl who runs away from her wicked stepfather to find some sense of agency and belonging in a *dated* imaginary place; i.e., one populated with talking animals and inanimate things comparable to those from *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1605): the immortal Dorothy Gale and her Cowardly Lion, Scarecrow and Tinman; and Hermia's supernatural, drug-fueled encounter with the forest folk:



(exhibit 8a: Artist, left: [J-Skipper](#) and [J. Scott Campbell](#); top-right: [Robb Vision](#); bottom-right: [John Simmons](#). Fairytales classically consider a child's confrontation with an adult world, oscillating between innocent, asexual depictions of idyllic bliss faced with troubling positions of monarchist authority and force: the parental figure, often portrayed as saintly or wicked while compelling the child's coming-of-age to fulfill a sexually reproductive role within a crumbling homestead⁵⁸ [their stern or lax demeanor accounting for a patriarchal slant, of course]. Even so, the same child-like relaxation is afforded to *regal* agents, enjoying luxurious lives while consuming all manner of mind-altering substances; and party to their tempting

⁵⁸ The chronotope yields a fearsome character of inherited decay tied to a doomed bloodline; e.g., *The Darkest Dungeon's* (2017) opening query to the player: "Do you remember our venerable house, opulent and imperial, gazing proudly from its stoic perch above the moor?"

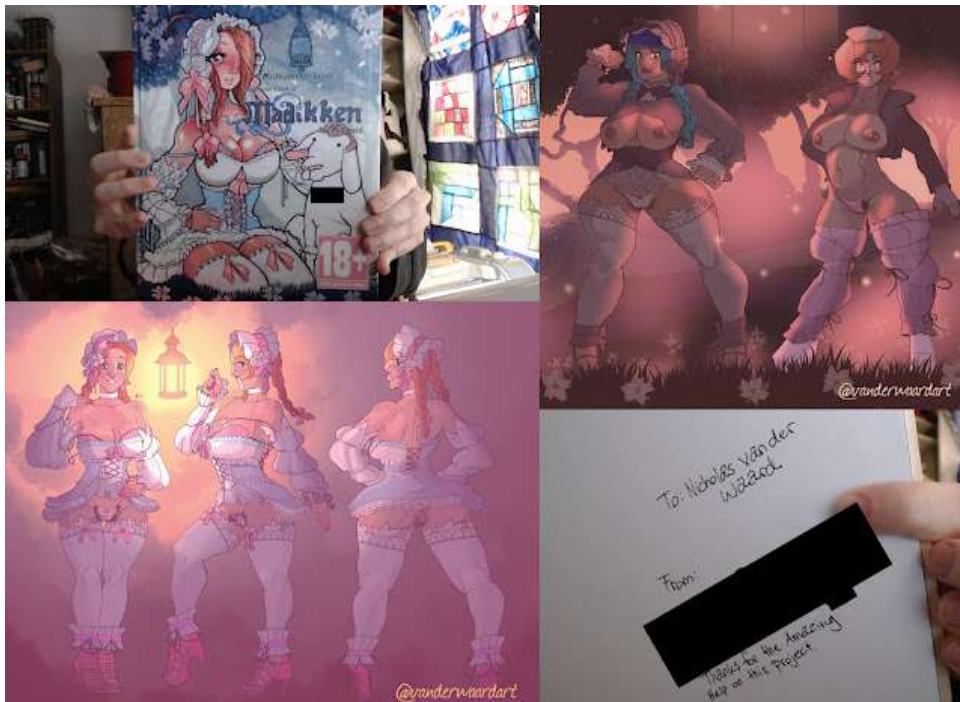
celebration are artists taught to capture and appreciate the human form as forever overlapping and partying with adjacent animal forms during antiquated festivals.)

Magic—as a colorfully potent, if trippy means of communicating with forbidden things cut off to us by the modern world—runs rampant in both stories, and served to inspire me in mine when exploring my own closeted self through Madikken. It wasn't literal drugs, but *themes* of drugs (what Stuart Miller calls "[Acid Communism](#)") dating back to an imaginary antiquity that yield fresh knowledge about one's place in the world as uncertain. Whereas Baum's poppy fields famously imply drug use experienced by the Young-at-Heart, Titania's servants dutifully drug people like Nick Bottom into a sleep-like, suggestible, BDSM state(!)—one housed inside a dark, magical forest filled with animal familiars and inanimate things that get up and move around. It emerged through Shakespeare's Renaissance-era work as inspired by the likes of Ovid, and carried on towards Walpole, towards Baum, towards us. As such, the animal-Dionysian aesthetic and potential for chaotic change endured, carried into the present as something that grew old when viewed backwards by us as trapped in its own configuration of the imaginary past.

In other words, the past and its animals are not set, but can change profoundly per resurrection as something to reflect upon when reviving them ourselves. Each affords new important lessons about similar policed subjects using Gothic poetics; e.g., sexuality and gender expression conveyed through animalistic, fairytale language. The language is the door to things that, in daily life, often go unsaid. So, just as I learned from and transformed Shakespeare away from the unironic rape scenario (marriage or death⁵⁹), I propose we learn from Madikken's curious descent into Hell—not as punishment (as being turned into an ass might denote), but a place of forbidden, animalistic pleasure and knowledge we carry back with us; i.e., into our black-and-white lives under state hegemony. I'm not evoking Dorothy or Hermia through Madikken to endorse a futile surrender to that black-and-white life (one where our magical friends stop talking and become ordinary once more). Rather, I want to alter the canonical promise of eventual submission through my own take on the female runaway as transforming home into a more colorful (thus less oppressive) place; i.e., through the Gothic's animal,

⁵⁹ Hermia is owned by her father, Egeus, and must either marry his chosen suitor or be destroyed *vis-à-vis* the "ancient rites" of an imaginary Athens: "As she is mine, I may dispose of her" ([source](#)) like chattel. This submission is challenged by Hermia running away like an animal into an imaginary space—a rebellion that is quelled at the end of the story by Shakespeare having Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, marry her male conqueror, Theseus. As usual, evocations of an unruly female past are teased through the same language used to quell it; i.e., Picasso's destruction of the painted woman: "Each time I leave a woman, I should burn her. Destroy the woman, destroy the past she represents" ([source](#): Marta's "The Women of Picasso," 2023). Queerness, then, is hauntological *and* seditious, and whose Gothic, animal poetics become something to monopolize by the same-old state forces.

transformative potential found in fairytale language as musical, urgent, transportive and fleeting⁶⁰ but somehow "timeless" and captured in a special, precious moment:



(exhibit 8b1: [Bottom-left](#) and [top right](#), artist: Persephone van der Waard; top-left and bottom left: [photos of the 2016 graphic novel](#) I originally translated, co-edited and helped design front-to-back—with thanks from the original author/illustrator. After a disagreement, they and I reached a private written agreement signing the character rights over to me, as well as the full rights to any future project featuring *Madikken* provided I do the artwork and writing myself.

⁶⁰ E.g., the female singer's lines from Meatloaf's "[I'd Do Anything For Love \(But I Won't Do That\)](#)" (1993):

Will you raise me up? Will you help me down?
Will you get me right out of this godforsaken town?
Can you make it all a little less cold?

Will you hold me sacred? Will you hold me tight?
Can you colourise my life, I'm so sick of black and white?
Can you make it all a little less old?

Will you make me some magic with your own two hands?
Can you build an emerald city with these grains of sand?
Can you give me something I can take home?

Will you cater to every fantasy I got?
Will you hose me down with holy water, if I get too hot?
Will you take me places I've never known?

The drawings included here have been updated from their 2020 versions, which I originally designed as proof-of-concept exhibits within the original legal document: Revana [my alter ego, top-right] and Vallen, two characters from my unfinished fantasy series, [The Cat in the Adage](#). I did not design the original concept for Madikken [top-left] but always enjoyed her for her pastoral, "summer flirt" setting and attitude, but also her prominently beaky nose, lolita maid design and magical-animal friends. Coming up with my own look for Madikken [and fabricating matching designs for Revana and Vallen] while preserving these fairytale qualities about Madikken was a fun challenge. Likewise, she's a symbol of sex-positive expression who literally runs away from her creepy surrogate father in pursuit of her own sexual empowerment—on par with Hermia running away from Egeus in Shakespeare's [A Midsummer Night's Dream](#). As my website reads: "Inspired by stories like [A Midsummer Night's Dream](#) and [The Mysteries of Udolpho](#) (1794), my novel follows Madikken, a young milkmaid, who becomes lost in an enchanted forest. There, she meets all manner of strange characters; she also begins to explore her deepest, darkest desires. Woefully inexperienced and starved for love, Madikken throws caution to the wind and tries to make her wildest dreams come true..."")



(model and artist: Angel Witch and [Persephone van der Waard](#))

For me, Madikken was someone I wanted to fuck, but also perform as/identify with according to closeted aspects of myself. The more I put myself in Madikken's shoes, the more I discovered the two concepts overlapped. I wanted to be like someone I thought was strong in ways that toyed around with strength as something to embody in gender-non-conforming ways; i.e., beyond traditional notions

of predatory force and its cliché delivery through go-to anomalies; e.g., your standard-issue, cis-het tomboys running the monomythic gamut. Madikken was certainly girly and Gothic, but her rousing and happy escape from an abusive homelife still happened by updating the imaginary past away from masculine violence *and* avoiding Radcliffean bigotries. As such, her iconoclastic, prey-animal

forays into Hell preserved the original, adventuresome spirit of Gothic expression, while simultaneously updating it for a wider and more inclusive audience.

Keeping with the spirit of inclusion, then, I want to use part one of this subchapter to project such a freeing mentality back at the things Madikken's tale omitted—towards more warlike, predatory and Amazonian heroics, as well as knightly presentations with *some* animal characteristics, before part two concludes the subchapter by humanizing the increasingly animal, prey-like morphologies shared amongst all iconoclastic forces victimized by the state during its hellish monopolies. The overall procedure requires understanding where both arguably hail from in Western fiction, which part two will explore: Horace Walpole and the queer tradition of the Gothic as something that informs current-day revolutions through cryptonymic expression; i.e., the Gothic castle not simply as a hauntological burial ground, but a reliable site of queer, faux-medieval "rape" whose implements of campy trauma and otherworldly occupants (undead, demons, and anthromorphs) survive well into the present, where they double, hence challenge, state monopolies.



(artist: Richard Corben; [source](#): Bill McCool's "In Praise of Meat Loaf's Ridiculously Awesome Bat Out of Hell Album Covers," 2022)

"Predators and Prey": Predators as Amazons, Knights, and Other Forms of Domesticated, Animalized Monster Violence (feat. James Cameron)

As Edward Said astutely notes in *Culture and Imperialism*, most societies project their fears on the unknown or the exotic other. This barren land, where the viewers are kept disorientated, is threatening. It is a place between the familiar and the foreign, like part of a dream or vision that one cannot remember clearly. There is always a sense of a lurking danger from which the viewers need protection. *Nikita* provides that sense of protection.

—Laura Ng, "The Most Powerful Weapon You Have": Warriors and Gender in *La Femme Nikita* (2003)

Continuing our theoretical examination of state monopolies, we arrive at predators, a class of monster often celebrated within contests of strength.

For example, when Bonnie Tyler sings, "I need a hero," she specifically mentions Hercules. Except, heroism isn't strictly about size or strength, and its mythical qualities denote animalistic displays of predator and prey that are frequently associated with classic animal archetypes; e.g., Hercules and the Nemean lion, but also Madikken and her talking lamb, Casper. As prized possessions useful to patriarchal institutions, heroes are monsters whose Gothic poetics animalize in competing dialogs during oppositional praxis. *Doubles* of antiquated, warrior-class arrangements of status and power appear within *settler-colonial* models, to which animals become reliably *subjugated* status symbols emblematic of state force and its conspicuous givers and receivers inside state land: cops and victims. Both fulfill their animal potential as class/cultural character arranged in different physical forms, whose vivid, poetic nature reliably triggers animal *responses* indicating broader socio-material struggles: fight or flight, but also hunting and sex, captivity and release. The state cannot fully regulate these applications, so it grants their dated symbols positions of weakness and strength linked to material factors like shelter and protection whose animalistic qualities—like a dog with a bone—are fought over in terms of what they represent, and more to the point, for whom they ultimately serve: workers or the elite. Part one will consider two popular arrangements—Amazons and knights—as "sexy beasts" whose conspicuous animal strength either serves worker needs by protecting them during state crisis, or pits them against each other to *enrich* the elite as usual. First, we'll consider their basic, classic forms, then explore how the Gothic works of James Cameron continuously interact with more fantastical (and cosmetic) iterations regarding modern-day police abuse.

Before we proceed, a note about cops; or rather, a quote from our thesis volume concerning Amazons in relation to cops that also applies to knights:

regarding activist hindsight as cultivated by workers, consider the Amazon. While Amazons *are* a classic Greek monster and the word *Amazonomachia* literally means "Amazon battle," Gothic Communism applies it to *any* monster in heroic discourse where competing notions about sexuality and

gender are "duking it out." This includes the heroes themselves as enforcing or resisting the hierarchy of power in heteronormative theatre (there is no functional difference between a hero and villain insofar as canonical heroes are concerned; all canonical heroes function like cops and "All Cops Are Bad," not just the ones that look "evil," because they universally victimize everyone else for the state). All heroes are monsters, thus liminal expressions that are sexualized and gendered ([source](#)).

As such, Amazons are monstrous and *can* be cops, especially in monomythic stories that rely heavily on black-and-white kayfabe language; the same goes for knights, whose domesticated, animalized monster violence becomes something to subvert or endorse in regards to a state's monopolies and trifectas.

Our thesis talks extensively about cops in relation to Amazons and knights in general, and Volume One has so far already discussed the trifectas; here, we want to focus on the monopolized violence, terror and morphological expressions that occur during worker struggles, insofar as animalized Gothic aesthetics factor in. Keeping that in mind, we'll start with Amazons' animalistic qualities, weighing them against Cameron's work before considering various things about knights relevant to oppositional praxis: as an uphill, predator-vs-prey battle for rebellious workers employing revolutionary cryptonymy to protect themselves with *and* attack the state's mimetic means to destroy them through shared, contested language.



(artist: [Emery EXP](#))

First, Amazons. Coming out of ancient, oral, animal-themed traditions promoting or contesting state fears, Amazons remain a complicated mythological figure. Far be it from me to discount the value of a strong sword arm in *service* of workers, but I generally consider workers to be threatened by state-sanctioned variants of such persons; e.g., the girl-boss Amazon cracking down on dissidents, then spouting neoconservative platitudes about equality for *her* kind (usually white, cis-het women) achieved through feats of territorial strength against an invented, dogmatic enemy. The same goes for knights, wherein class-traitor versions of either monster posture as

cop-like "protectors" who predatorily defend property by policing people the state already treats like prey/property (abusing their Gothic aesthetics to do so in modern times).

Police functions aside, I absolutely *adore* a subversive Amazon/strong mommy dom, but after further experimentation discovered I really like *inhabiting* the idea of subby power as juxtaposed against dominant forms with their own animalized signature. Over time, my prey-like preference became something to foster within a liminal space *also* occupied by Amazons: bravely reshaping the world while standing in the *presence* of a hunter-like strength by showing others how I want to exist, and be treated, in spite of the animalized differential; i.e., like Madikken in her fetishized milkmaid outfit (and accompanied by her talking lamb sidekick) bumping anxiously into Revana as a far bigger (and stronger) "cavewoman" who probably enjoys *eating* lamb (and pussy).



(artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#))

Relating to capital through nature-themed language is an important means of survival, except its exercise (and real-world counterparts) are increasingly endangered and replaced by harmful copies that blend in with *our* camouflage against theirs. As such, I deliberately portray Madikken traipsing about a dark forest (one filled with figurative lions, tigers and bears) while presenting like an animal of a particular kind: a lamb. Ripe for "slaughter" within the ancient pastoral framework, I've updated both to account for modern struggles. While Madikken *is* a sexy girl in a pretty dress, she feels entirely vulnerable if only because modern society is conditioned through animal metaphors to own and dress her up for themselves—in short, to unironically prey on her once the costume is in place. And yet, she's someone who can bear it all by acting slutty but *not* be automatically killed for it; i.e., by teaching Amazons like Revana to handle power in animalistic ways that *don't* serve the profit motive while retaining the exciting predator-prey dynamic during theatrical, BDSM tensions: service to the sub as someone to treat well, not actually prey upon, thus harm. Putting "predation" in quotes like this demands discipline and restraint, but also trust and boundaries; building these takes time, because you generally have to subvert what's already present through a different *kind* of Gothic counterfeit—one that fosters empathy towards historically preyed-upon groups.

That's ultimately what Madikken became; while the original author treated her as a guilty pleasure to trot out, then discard, I took Madikken and treated her as a subversive, Aesopian agent—a fabled white rabbit to follow into the future of the imaginary past as geared towards Communism. It might all be a fantastical lie,

but can still transform the world by breaking from tradition in subtler ways that a) don't segregate us from the awesome power of Gothic poetics (which was Frederic Jameson's big mistake, of course); and b) don't get us chucked off a cliff like poor Aesop. Powerful people, or those aligned with them, tend to do that when they feel threatened—not as a question of morals tied to human rights as things to practice, uphold and fairly defend, but according to *unfair* positions of material advantage the elite want to protect *from* workers; i.e., within a medieval, barbaric system built to exploit most of the planet for the betterment of a very select (and cruel) group of persons:



(source: Dr. Lauren Ware's "[Why We Punish](#)")

Appreciative, iconoclastic forms of Gothic stories (friendly magical animals, exhibit 8a) come from appropriative forms, but also liminal, salvageable forms (rebels, exhibit 8b2) to reclaim during socio-political debates whose poetics weigh the upholding of structures

against human, animal and environmental rights. So while neoliberals, for example, famously discourage the welfare state⁶¹, they're constantly exploiting *all* workers under normalized, invisible (meaning "undisputed, ubiquitous") conditions that have a similar myopic effect on the *perception* of the exploitation taking place. In short, everything becomes veiled by neoliberal canon, which conceals its own function as bourgeois propaganda but also projects said propaganda *everywhere* in animalistic dogma. Animals (and their subsequent terror and violence during morphological expression) are monopolized by the state in "polite" forms of the Amazon as a police agent—not just a dog to guard, watch, and hunt with, but a steady, war-like *harvester* who preys on chattelized, vulnerable workers herded⁶² together for easy

⁶¹ The Welfare Mom is a racist trope that scapegoats women of color for manufactured scarcity's generating of criminogenic conditions for those in and outside the state of exception; i.e., divide and conquer *for* the state.

⁶² A common segregative metaphor is the sheepdog—a canine guardian that controls chattel, bloodlessly keeping them in place by obeying but also *doubling* the shepherd; i.e., guarding his flock. Whereas these cryptonyms conceal the state abuse normally taking place under such segregation (domestic abuse), a *black* dog symbolizes death, but also works as an attack animal to a *higher* degree than their fair-furred, babyface counterpart. Both are capable of state violence and indeed are bred for that purpose.

access within the state's self-sanctioned food chain (with the elite at the top, cops in the middle, and everyone else at the bottom).

Such doomsdays might seem to verge on hopelessly cliché, thus can be discounted in the Radcliffean sense as a nightmare to summon and dismiss just as quickly. During Gothic times, however, the harvest becomes grim and visible, an order of operations for which *orderly* extermination becomes its chief goal: "The disposal units ran night and day." This fascist return-to-conquest/tradition (and shivering of the state into barely-contained fragments ran by joint-chiefs/warlords) outlines a convenient map that already exists: the state itself as a *new* territory of colonization over an old crime scene, one ripe for raw plunder (and animal slaughter) as Imperialism comes home to empire. Ruthlessly exacted by the police agents currently inside, state watchdogs prey on its citizenry as freshly *undead* targets during *new* episodes of an *ongoing* genocide. The state victims and enemies become one in the same.

In other words, the state cannibalizes itself, but also defends the elite through heroic narratives bent on debriding the castle of its current "corruption." During this culling of the herd (and its black sheep), cops still defend capital; but this time they roll in with tanks, burning "infected" and uninfected alike. Crushed under armored vehicles and knightly bodies, all are rendered obsolete in the face of those killers best able to preserve power and capital as threatened: the arm of the state as radicalized, covered in trauma as something to behold through a medievalized regression; i.e., inside monopolies of violence and terror as rotting



the bodies (and minds) of workers, sadly soldiering for skeletal kings come back to haunt the world of the living. The *Amazon* decays, as do the sheep she pounces on; like Cú Chulainn, she "begins to attack both friend and foe because [she] loses the ability to distinguish between them," except its very much by design. Healthy relations to nature with animal aesthetics and anthropomorphism are traded for pro-state, weaponized variants, their humane potential impounded in favor of *territorial* forms of aggression.

(artist: [Bruh the Sinner](#))

Such radicalization is normally relegated to the distant frontiers of faraway lands (a crusade). Except when Capitalism enters decay as a matter of routine, state-sanctioned violence becomes an open cycle of glorious revenge in the domestic sphere; i.e., military urbanism triangulating class traitors and "rabid" token assimilators against the usual victims of state violence. Pitted against the pulverized working class, the police force of the imperial homeland treat said land

like Cameron's refrain: an automated grounds for loot, rape and genocide; it becomes a dead garden of stolen, *inedible* goods (the pirate's curse: men cannot eat gold; only lie, cheat and steal it, except this shortcoming spills over into every aspect of their lives; e.g., sex and love. They can swallow it, but not digest).

In the same death-rattle, the us-versus-them mentality becomes something to promote in wholly Gothic forms; i.e., to "save the world" from a dark menace, which unfolds in Promethean, self-destructive ways. Already a watchdog put to heel, subjugated Hippolyta becomes a complicit, braindead zombie, but also the Medusa: a girl boss counterpart baring her own fangs (and furious gaze) at false promotions of former abuse; e.g., trans people. From Victoria de Loredani to Ellen



Ripley or Samus Aran, reactive abuse (and its moderation) push TERF-y, Man Box violence onto much more recent (and populous) iterations. In turn, the state teaches future Amazons to attack its enemies for it, seeking power at the cost of their own humanity.

(artist: [Virgo Vain](#))

I need to stress a state-vs-worker function, here, because Amazons don't exclusively belong to the state; they *are* recruited *by* the state to police their own members within state monopolies. Canonical Amazons, then, are a token monster group that, once subjugated, can be scapegoated (through the euthanasia effect) when they frantically lash out against state targets, chasing them down and brutalizing them through *fetishized* violence. This traitorous, self-loathing behavior is Pavlovian—conditioned and executed through a medievalized position where subjugated Amazons serve a hauntologized police role: a knight whose pure, "white" status becomes wracked with "black" generational trauma and guilt, but also *instructed apathy* in the face of prophesized adversity. Black or white, the police function remains constant when fealty to the state is sworn; but it decays during crisis towards increasingly violent forms.

In the Pavlovian sense, canonical Amazons function as cops or victims; *subjugated* Amazons are cops who trigger to respond to state crisis through bourgeois implementations of force. Per the trifectas, this vicious cycle has *manmade* components, [intimated by neoliberalism profiting off manufactured disasters](#) (Second Thought's "How Capitalism Exploits Natural Disasters," 2022); e.g., FEDRA from *The Last of Us* (the 2023 version, which we will return to throughout this book) being an eco-fascist metaphor for Blackwater and other mercenary groups since WW2's frogmen and Vietnam's "advisors" [from the Phoenix program](#). These watchdogs of American Imperialism obey the elite, violating international laws on command; i.e., through dog whistles. When those are "blown"

through historical-material factors, subjugated Amazons execute on par with pre-Enlightenment mercenaries defending king and kingdom; i.e., through a re-privatization of war that exists entirely outside the democratic process: war as commodified [through corporate seizures of direct power on the global stage, superseding state mechanisms altogether](#) (Bad Empanada's "Johnny Harris: Shameless Propagandist Debunked," 2023) with older forms of neoliberalism having relied on the abuse of state power as something to conceal through neoliberal illusions: superheroes like Amazons exhibiting the theatrical, performative strength and qualities of animals, not people; i.e., dog soldiers.

While rebellion and its recuperation are animalized, pitting "tame/semi-tame" state defenders against "wild" rebels and labor movements, there is a familial, Gothic consequence to this settler-colonial arrangement beyond classic iterations. Faced with these privatized brutalizers or even shadows of them in the appropriative peril of canonical, pre-apocalypse "daydreams," women or other victims of state abuse (who are closer to nature) cozy up to anyone stronger than them in order to survive or feel safe with during Gothic times. Such protectors include ostensibly good-but-actually-bourgeois variants like Ellen Ripley (the James Cameron version), but also bonafide rebels who reject the state in totality as out-and-out, dyed-in-the-wool Communists; e.g., Jubei, but also real-life characters like Che Guevara that billionaire Marxists like George Lucas and James Cameron would mime in their own questionably rebellious⁶³ work:

⁶³ Lucas [explained how *Star Wars* famously took anti-totalitarian/anti-American ideas and communicated them to an American audience](#) (source: AMC+'s "George Lucas on *Star Wars* Being Anti-Authoritarian," 2018). In turn, Lucas inspired Cameron with the *Star Wars* movies to make *The Terminator* films, and later, the *Avatar* franchise. Except the allegory of resistance, per the billionaire-Marxist approach, is regularly obscured by the pursuit of profit (franchising the struggle) and telling it from an exclusively white, American, Pygmalion (male king's) imaginary perspective; e.g., Lucas famously telling Carrie Fischer "[there is no underwear in space](#)" (Hamish Kilburn's "George Lucas Made Carrie Fisher Act in No Underwear in *Star Wars*," 2016) and Cameron capitalizing on rebellious activities by relegating guerilla warfare to humanoid space bugs in *Aliens*, or to white saviors who, according to him, [do the job better than Indigenous populations](#) (Kshitij Mohan Rawat's "Native Americans Boycott James Cameron," 2022).

Furthermore these Pygmalion tendencies would be counteracted by Lucas' then-wife, Marcia Lucas, [editing the original trilogy](#) (source: Elisa Guimaraes' "George Lucas Created *Star Wars*, But This Person Gave It Heart," 2023). A similar Galatea effect also occurred with *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2014), as Rhiannon Thomas writes: "The success of *Mad Max: Fury Road* wasn't just because Margaret Sixel was a female editor. It's because of the magical combination of her female perspective, and her non-action-movie perspective, and her unique world perspective, and her immense talent and hard work and dedication" ([source](#): "Mad Max and The Female Editor," 2023).



(exhibit 8b2: The moderate "anarchist, Amazon warrior moms" of James Cameron are paper tigers. Their anger against the state is all flash, no substance insofar as universal equality is concerned; i.e., they're predominantly white, Rambo-style Amazons, with varying degrees of class character married to more dubious aspects; e.g., Ellen Ripley is a TERF punching the Archaic Mother and exterminating her brood for being an intersex bogeywoman of settler-colonial guilt, trauma and bias. To that, Cameron's refrain is a ghost of the counterfeit that demonizes colonized territories and anti-capitalist resistance movements/guerrilla forces in favor of white saviors from the Imperial Core protecting the usual wards of the state: white children. Sarah Connor's son, John, is yet another example of that, except his plight addresses military urbanism on home soil instead of Red Scare overseas. There, the warrior mother furiously protects her white child from the LAPD as a famously corrupt, and well-documented police force⁶⁴ while simultaneously terrorizing the [admittedly wealthy] family of Miles Dyson, a tokenized black man, before letting

⁶⁴ The LAPD's abuse stretches back over seventy years, as discussed in Max Felker-Kantor's *Policing Los Angeles: Race, Resistance, and the Rise of the LAPD* (2018):

When the Los Angeles neighborhood of Watts erupted in violent protest in August 1965, the uprising drew strength from decades of pent-up frustration with employment discrimination, residential segregation, and poverty. But the more immediate grievance was anger at the racist and abusive practices of the Los Angeles Police Department ([source](#)).

[Such abuse had already been going on for decades](#) (Rocio Lopez' "LA Police's History of Brutality" 2020), thriving in the shadow of Jim Crow and the orchestrated failure of Reconstruction following the American Civil War (which sowed the seeds of neo-slavery and neo-colonialism within the US).

him brutally die. The class character is fascinatingly murky but the stereotypical racial tensions remain, nonetheless.

In doing so, Cameron acknowledges the inherently racialized and incredibly violent function of American police present since their inception, but in a worrying trend carried over from Aliens, choses to focus on the violence against, and survival of, white maternal victims for the film's duration [effectively pitting white and black mothers against each other]. Cameron does this while also showing that Amazons like Sarah are not exempt from racial tensions and class betrayal—Sarah hysterically treating her white child as more valuable than Dyson's. As a whole, holistic solidarity is not Cameron's strong suit. Quite the contrary, he foments worker division, pitting different marginalized groups against each other [white women and people of color] while prioritizing white agents during said exchanges wherever they occur.

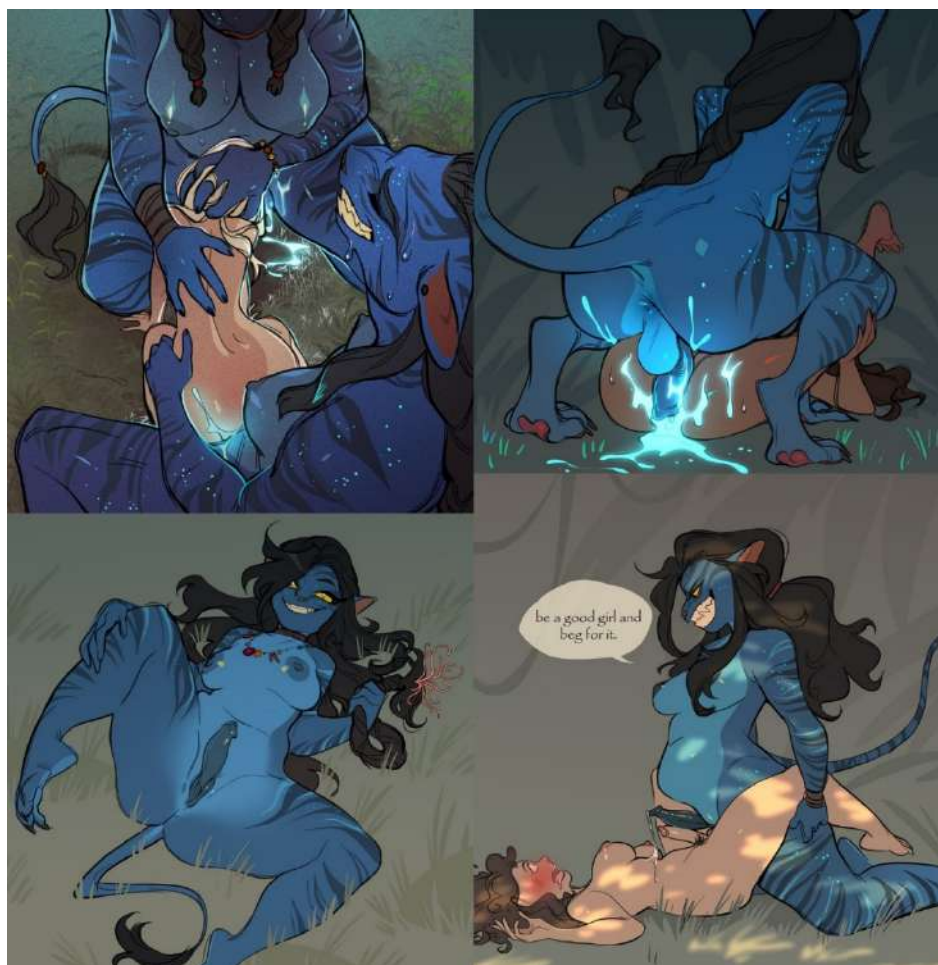
Even so, Cameron's caricatures are founded on real-world heroes. For instance, Che Guevara's constructive anger toward legitimate material change has been appreciated by real-world revolutionaries and appropriated by state proponents, including moderate ones like Cameron. In pursuit of profit and status, Pygmalions like Cameron de-fang Che's revolutionary potential by turning him into "just" a t-shirt [similar to MLK]: an inert, sloganized version of the former folk legend through the Amazon [monstrous-feminine guerilla] as a sloganized brand. This dialectical-material tension can be felt during settler-colonial disputes, comparing human actions to animals as an emblematic, theatrical device; e.g., "crafty like a fox" denoting animalized oral traditions tied to native peoples and their land as simultaneously occupied by an invader force that remembers them as foxlike in opposition to the state: being hunted, but eluding the self-assigned [white] trapper as a systemic, colonial force.



Cameron's Amazons appropriate said tension—either applying useful predatory and prey-like qualities exclusively to white women reversing the role of hunter and hunted while avoiding captivity and abuse, or applying them to women of color embodying Afrocentrist

qualities within other racialized groups; e.g., Bailey Bass, a biracial black actress, playing Indigenous women like Tsireya [from The Shape of Water] who are then fetishized for their exotic, non-white, "huntress" qualities being promised to white men "going native" within the savior fantasy as a predatory means of sleeping with

the colonized princess—sex tourism dressed up as "activism." Whatever transgressive bite they have becomes toothless, but also oddly chaste insofar as nudity in horror is framed as an invitation for open violence; i.e., utterly incapable of open, honest, adult forms of interrogating generational, psychosexual trauma that likewise let trans, intersex and non-binary forms of morphological expression exist under [thus navigate] settler-colonial duress; e.g., the woman of color or female Indigenous person having abject androgynous qualities that can be reverse-abjected during captor/captive fantasies that speak to living in captivity as a hunted, animalized group:



[artist: [Glacial Clear](#)]

Such stances are closed off through complicated psychological positions of fear-fascination from both sides—the colonizer class and colonized classes, but also various intersections insofar as sex, gender, race and religion are concerned—and must be encroached upon through liminal re-engagements with the animal; i.e., as

something that is not an actual threat despite feeling threatening in a multitude of ways: that one is a monster and/or monstrous for wanting to sleep with those the state and its proponents either collar and pit against you; or label as monstrous in animalistic ways to likewise make you afraid, thus desire protection from by appealing to the collared, subjugated variants. In turn, these wicked fantasies mustn't get hung up on the ghost of the counterfeit, but instead be used to bring systemic socio-material change by critiquing praxially inert forms merely by existing: white women sleeping with people of color.)

The animalized rebel, as a genuine proletarian agent, is a regular casualty of centrist stories like Cameron's. Pandering to white, cis-het people/token personalities who have been conditioned to enjoy their starring role (much to the chagrin of minority groups), his "billionaire Marxism" plays both sides: reverse-engineering the wagon chase, John-Ford-style, to centralize Sarah Connor as a white, female avenger of settler-colonial, "slasher-style"⁶⁵ trauma directed at *North Americans*, not the Global South (not to mention appealing to conservative values will reliably sell more tickets by widening your consumer base). Meanwhile, Ellen Ripley's original form as a neoliberal foil (courtesy of Ridley Scott) becomes its fiercest, girl-boss protector in Cameron's Rambo-esque, Vietnam revenge fantasy against the Reds (displaced as killer space bugs and capped off with the dissociative, white-mom-vs-black-mom "catfight"). It's pretty shitty of Cameron in hindsight, appealing to the psychosexual fears (and similar pent-up emotions) of domestic state victims—women and children—by pitting them against classic state scapegoats to achieve praxial inertia, not momentum, during cliché situations⁶⁶ against cliché targets: nominal Communists, and assorted "corrupt" and/or monstrous-feminine entities existing in the same shadow zone as cartoon Nazis. At first glance, they're hard to tell apart, but like a dominatrix wearing fetish gear starts to distinguish herself through inferred function; i.e., through dialectical-material scrutiny according to an informed audience capable of critical thought, hence class/cultural analysis.

Some of these monsters (and their animalistic qualities) intimate our proverbial spectres of Marx; i.e., the camped imagery of state-sanctioned doppelgangers yielding Communist potential during ironic analysis and application. Of course, many more reduce to bourgeois caricatures of anything resembling actual Communism (which, to be clear, Stalin stiffly veered away from during his own cult of personality after Lenin's death and later during WW2 and the Eastern

⁶⁵ The terminator is an infiltrator-style killer that, in the '80s, fits snugly in with the serial killer "slasher" craze, but also police brutality with a friendly human face carried into the early '90s (during the L.A. riots). In the slasher genre, cultural anxieties personify scapegoats regarding the dimorphic qualities of heteronormative society. Men are always big and strong and dangerous; women are always vulnerable damsels, in danger to men, surviving them and eventually surrendering their power to them in the end. In the school of Ann Radcliffe, the danger of a "slasher" story is always sexy and vice versa, stirring up giant feelings of being stalked, hunted, trapped, captured, raped, tortured, and killed by a shadowy, ever-present menace ("like an animal" under such conditions); Cameron links the same fatal dimorphism to the family unit as something to uphold in unison with these destabilizing "homewrecker" threats: "bad home, bad family" versus "good home, good family" with monsters in between (the classical dilemma being one of genuine fidelity and of good faith, versus acting in bad faith). The imagery of home *is* present, but faded, treacherous, *wrong*.

⁶⁶ E.g., the damsel-in-distress; i.e., fight or flight, of feeling prey-like in relation to predators: constantly being hunted, naked and exposed, on the run, kept from thinking about or otherwise doing things that might change our material conditions when confronting state trauma in Gothic forms that, in canonical terms, keep people afraid of the socio-material arrangements, versus changing them.

Front; but those labor plans [and their various successes and failures: their defeating of the Nazis at Stalingrad, but also the Holodomor famine⁶⁷] were begot from reactive abuse/constant interference from Western parties, including Hitler as the United States' intended destroyer of the Bolshevik spirit). Purely on the Russian side, these Soviet cartoons—from Lenin, to Stalin, Gorbachev to Putin—have become increasingly boiled down, condensed by neoliberal hegemony into a vague, constantly threatening punching bag well into the present: the boogeyman of "Communism" waiting outside the myopia of Capitalist Realism.

These invasions are canonically marketed as coming "from beyond," wherein current-day reinventions of the Gothic past disrobe inside intensely xenophobic nostalgia; e.g., seasons two-through-four of *Stranger Things* (2016) churning out their own variants of an evil *banditti* tied to moral panic: Red Scare at home. To that, the show's interdimensional aliens and serial-killer general, Vecna (as well as the Russian goons worshipping the Demogorgon), serve as a giant, messy Red-Scare metaphor threatening *Pax Americana* for... yet-another-doubling of Ann Radcliffe's Scooby Doo gang facing off against the indominable Nothing through nostalgia on top of nostalgia as the "antidote" to Capitalism Realism (an increasingly neoliberalized commodifying of Michael Ende's 1979 novel, *Die unendliche Geschichte*). Eleven is that show's Amazon—a crisis actor isolated and abused, hence conditioned, to bite very the cartoon shadows authored by the state

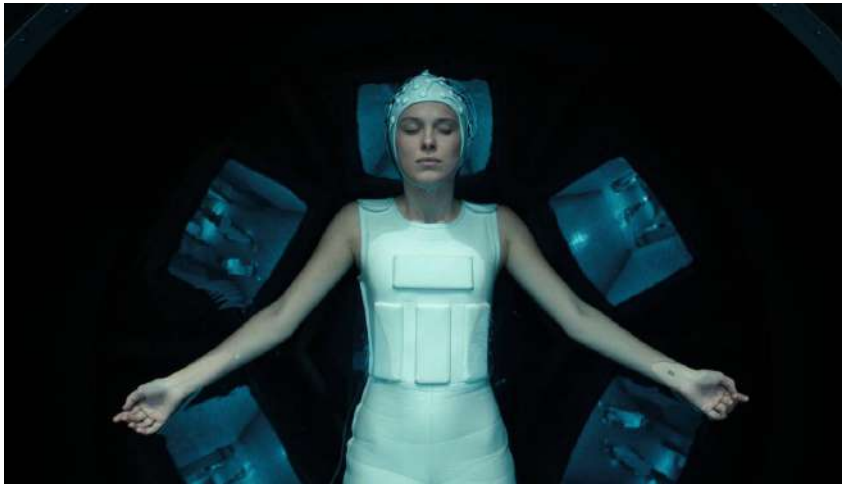
⁶⁷ I say "famine" because the event is not generally considered a deliberate genocide by modern history scholars in opposition to Cold War standards; e.g., Robert Davies and Steven Wheatcroft, who write in *The Years of Hunger* (2009):

Our study of the famine has led us to very different conclusions from Dr Conquest's. He holds that Stalin "wanted a famine," that "the Soviets did not want the famine to be coped with successfully," and that the Ukrainian famine was "deliberately inflicted for its own sake." This leads him to the sweeping conclusion: "The main lesson seems to be that the Communist ideology provided the motivation for an unprecedented massacre of men, women and children."

We do not at all absolve Stalin from responsibility for the famine. His policies towards the peasants were ruthless and brutal. But the story which has emerged in this book is of a Soviet leadership which was struggling with a famine crisis which had been caused partly by their wrongheaded policies, but was unexpected and undesirable. The background to the famine is not simply that Soviet agricultural policies were derived from Bolshevik ideology, though ideology played its part. They were also shaped by the Russian pre-revolutionary past, the experiences of the civil war, the international situation, the intransigent circumstances of geography and the weather, and the modus operandi of the Soviet system as it was established under Stalin. They were formulated by men with little formal education and limited knowledge of agriculture. Above all, they were a consequence of the decision to industrialize this peasant country at breakneck speed ([source](#)).

For more examples (and the conflicts that emerge between them online), consider Bad Empanada's "[The Holodomor Genocide Question: How Wikipedia Lies to You](#)" (2023).

during *regular* moral panics; i.e., Netflix reviving the fatal, lucrative nostalgia of Satanic panic to prime the current youth for an upcoming struggle.



Any way you slice it, Eleven is a child soldier (note the Stormtrooper vest and Kubrick-esque panopticon) who grows into a violent monster who can *only* justify her actions if Vecna is real; he's not, but his triggers are, as are their harmful, historical-material effects

embodied by formerly preyed-upon girls just like Eleven becoming predatory (she's a stand-in for state recruits that only allow for proletarian forms if we consciously critique her canonical function).

Of course, there's room to enjoy all of these things, but neoliberal pastiche lionizing second wave feminism (and its fascist qualities) shouldn't be endorsed and consumed without thought; it should be transmuted through iconoclastic praxis into appreciatively ironic, "perceptive" forms when confronting and concealing oneself with symbols of state abuse: through what artists cultivate (synthesize) themselves using productive, accessible intricacies (not endless detective-story mysteries or the sports-like competitions that, *while* intricate, do nothing to meaningfully challenge the state; e.g., Cameron's Amazonian kayfabe). These elaborate distractions invoke something already noted in my thesis (and earlier in this subsection); re: "Out of medieval discourse, domesticated animals are also gendered in a sexualized, monstrous sense." *New* forms of discourse that invoke Gothic poetics allow us to convey more than rebellious *slogans* like Cameron's, but socio-material *foils* to state-animalized hero-monsters and victims: as strong as a horse or bull, but as sleek and randy as a rabbit or mink. The theatrical potential is all at once incredibly old, and waiting to be tapped (so to speak) during fresh morphological queries that interrogate animalized stigmas and trauma applied unevenly to workers under settler-colonial systems:



(artist: [Akira Raikou](#))

So while it's perfectly legitimate for nerds (or those who otherwise indulge in nerd culture) to desire protection from anyone who gives off "big daddy/mommy" energy as tied to an animalistic, dream-like aura—or even wanting to *fuck* these incredible, otherworldly persons—it's equally important to remember that Ellen Ripley and Sarah Connor (and similar Amazons; e.g., Urbosa, left) are *not* your actual parents⁶⁸. So, whereas *state* nostalgia drifts towards a coercive, social-sexual arrangement of these things, sex-positive

scenarios administer the potential for regressively *therapeutic* rituals: unequal power exchange scenarios brokered between an iconoclast's artistic exhibit and those taking part as the expected audience; i.e., between mutually-consenting adults whose iconoclastic, socio-material arrangements and depictions of predator and prey pointedly challenge the nuclear family structure as unironically medieval beneath the rot (which Cameron does not do).

By extension, subversive Amazons undermine compelled marriage as leading to manufactured consent, conflict and scarcity (which includes systematic war and women/child abuse among those inside the state of exception). As such, sex-positive regression—and the oft-subconscious selection of a "Big" to safeguard someone who feels "little," [in age play terms](#)—is conditional; i.e., *informed* consent. Conversely the historical materialism of the state (and its own myopic regressions) are *conservative* in nature, meaning they are canonically *unconditional*, forcing the socio-material arrangements that exist between violent enforcers doubling as parental figures in conspicuously *neo-medieval* structures (exhibit 8b3) fostered during state collapse. Haunted by the older Neo-Gothic period's pre-fascist occupation of the late 1700s, such heroes return to a medieval (and Gothic) that

⁶⁸ This being said, grooming an heir and incestuously rearing the next-in-line from one's sire *by* said heir is a common fear/fascination inside the ghost of the counterfeit—of one's liege having forged, yet enforced, *parental* qualities suggested by the decaying scenic fabric and faded decorations of the medieval homestead as harmful and false. Such disintegration echoes state variants through more advanced forms of capital that feudalism would evolve (and regress back) into: fascism and the defense of an imaginary feudalistic manor amounting to a marriage towards the fearsome, regal *likeness* of one's parents.

has never quite existed but predicated on older fascist forms that bleed into new post-fascist ones.



(artist: [Glacier Clear](#))

Abuse victims often regress or disassociate, clamoring for protection in complicated, theatrically "dangerous" forms (the calculated risk). Indeed, to shrink in the face of ambiguous power and harm is understandable, as is pursuing healthier variants that still *feel* dangerous; i.e., capable of protecting us *from* trauma by helping us paradoxically regain a sense agency while feeling out of control when confronting trauma as something that lives in and around us, but—as we have seen—can also, like a gargoyle, come alive and attack us. People who feel victimized (or otherwise faced with uncertain destruction) generally desire a return to one's childhood as "better" in connection to a heroic force—a good parent that rewrites what, for many children, is a time of shattered innocence. For better or worse, it's also

normal to feel attraction towards psychosexual power and violence (more on this in part two), and to trauma-bond when you feel frightened, hence infantilized. Indeed, a common regressive fantasy is the myth of the white knight; i.e., a psychosexual force that returns from the hauntological past to save the current world as threatened by ancient monsters during the vicious cycle of Capitalism: the monomyth, Cycle of Kings and infernal concentric pattern, etc. All operate as cryptonymic forms of calculated risk and reward, their canonical heroic instruments apologizing for the state by offering up a noble-yet-sexy parental sacrifice: the paladin. In turn, neoliberalism uses the false hope of the white savior to achieve *future* Faustian bargains, preserving Capitalist Realism for as long as humanly possible. Nothing else matters.

If you want to critique the state and stop the cycle, go where its heroic power is centered: nostalgic spaces. In these spaces, the ending of genocidal nostalgia requires retraining *any* soldier of Capitalism and dislocating them from the structure itself, as Jubei is. While some knights are good/bad in entirely centrist terms, he was not. Except, this revolutionary cryptonymy can be dressed up in ways besides the Amazon *or* Jubei—knights.

In canonical terms, knights are often marketed as protectors, but actually defend property for the state. Reversing this function is not straightforward, and takes many different forms depending on the genre. Posthuman stories, for example, literally reprogram knights from the imaginary retro-future as something to revisit in sequel, franchised outings; e.g., the *Terminator* movies (and their various paratexts). Here, there may seem to be no animals in the future, but the idea of the Gothic berserk—a warrior dressed in animal skins—is not lost on Cameron. While the original *Terminator* (1984) inverts the classic knight's metal exoskeleton for an *endoskeleton* that serves the same purpose (concealed force), the sequel reverses the class function of the same disguise while still having humans be the animal whose skins are worn(!). So whereas the first dad, Kyle Reese, was a skittish, white, prey-like survivor of automated genocide coming home to roost, Arnold is a Germanic lone wolf—a cybernetic predator reprogrammed by rebel forces to protect the children of the future by ultimately sacrificing himself. Doing so lets the Amazon, Sarah, finally lay down her arms and get to mothering John. The familial element (and its dimorphism) are preserved.

The parental themes seem noble enough, but also inventive insofar as Cameron's Pygmalion fantasy deftly reverses the *binary* gender of the statuesque protector/sex object multiple times. Except Cameron pointedly ties the Amazon and knight's *shared* quest to a Roman, thus problematic, concept: the nuclear family as something to defend within capital by martyring its statuesque, surrogate-father figure through childlike platitudes divorced from state critiques: "You can't just go



around killing people!" John says. To which the terminator asks, "Why?" Cameron can't connect the moral to anything resembling material conditions, so he demonstrates it through something of a dog-training session: stand on one foot. Obey.

This basic, rigid argument sums up Cameron's "revolutionary" character. Not only is it incredibly moderate (thus passive), but the nuclear unit's harmful relationship with the Gothic, zombie-like West makes Cameron's vision a *compromise* with undying conservative values: the *state* as something to protect through the family unit. [Despite its infamous price tag](#) and anti-police persona, *T2* merely offers a half-measure dressed up in Hollywood glitz. All the same, Cameron isn't stupid. He understands how a stable household appeals to the victim in all of us. *T2* certainly

resonated with *me* as a little girl, wishing my father was around instead of cheating on my mother and beating me. As a child bred on Gothic fiction, Cameron's fantasies became something of a haunted house to me: something to retreat inside in order to find better copies of my actual parents (or representatives of them, in my mother's case—love you, Mom). The same idea—of wanting monsters to make me feel safe in my own unsafe household—extends laterally to parallel structures Cameron is *less* likely to attack.



Like I said, it's complicated; despite my open endorsement of cool monster parents, I'm still leery of Cameron's expensive compromise (and skilled emotional/psychological manipulation) depicting the Western cycle of marriage as something to salvage through a cliché, and horribly dated, advertisement: parental, *centrist* automation. His "good parent vs bad parent" doubling shtick and "cyborg dads of the retro-future!" gag collectively endorse current political structures by refusing to take them to task, instead putting the blame on everyone: "It's in your nature to destroy yourselves." In the same breath, he replaces "the would-be-fathers who come and go" with a perfect robot dad who never gets tired, never gets drunk and hits John, thus can learn how to "not go around killing people." The lesson inexplicably motivates John to build a better future for his own kids... by joining the suitably brutal and robotic institution, Congress.

This alternate, final ending is a huge red flag and both why I hate the director's cut and distrust Cameron's dubious vision of the imaginary future; it was *his* cut, thus his decision to endorse the magical rehabilitation of establishment politics. Except a single politician acting like a good parent historically doesn't work,

either because the person is killed, replaced, or made to conform to the usual antics of such a place. I call bullshit, but Cameron likes the idea so much he's resold the movie (and *his* cut) time and time again. If it wasn't how he felt, he wouldn't sell it; more to the point, his intent doesn't *matter* if endless war is what the movie ultimately promotes through bad decision-making. As part of the Military Industrial Complex, Congress makes war on purpose; it's a business for them and always has been. To that, Cameron's abuse of rebellious language *conceals* state predation, his white-savior antics meant to restore the public's faith in the system being redeemable "as is"; i.e., something that can miraculously change through established procedures that serve the elite first and foremost. By whitewashing Congress, Cameron smugly implores viewers to imagine a world where the nation-state *doesn't* exist to capitalize on genocide. Please! If John Connor tried to stop *that*, he'd simply get outvoted or shot like JFK.

The fact remains, while the rehabilitation of state killers is a pleasant-enough fiction, Gothic stories like Cameron's scapegoat crooked, false cops (the T-1000 as a serial killer) and marry workers to monstrous parental force (Sarah and the T-800) in *defense* of the state as a heteronormative, thus settler-colonial, structure. No matter how much adventure and pure, psychosexual mayhem occur in dreamland, there's no place like home as it currently exists.

Likewise, the problem merely compounds when you consider actual parents through compelled marital roles that play out in light of Cameron's figurative ones. Compelled marriage generally sucks major ass, especially if the human is a cop (a trained killer *and* class traitor). At best, it's a procedure of convenience. Even so, it effectively sublimates rape and child abuse—a coerced bargain/forced negotiation whose *quid pro quo* is dressed up as "love" with accidental children had by parents far-too-early paying the price. Often, the reality aligns with the female side regressively seeking material advantage by adopting femme, vulnerable performances (the damsel or the princess) and submitting to the male "protector" side chasing possessive, courtly love; i.e., homosocial tourneys had by knights, cowboys, *et al* dueling in jousting fashion, with kids (and wives) being caught in the middle (often incestuously abused by their fathers/male role models as false fathers, protectors, friends, etc). It's standard-issue Man Box culture, which means you can't just tap your shoes and sloganize good parentage; you have to synthesize it in ways that change the system, hence prevent genocide as a symptom of Capitalism.

Gothic poetics paradoxically grant a voice to discuss unspeakable trauma with, doing so through taboo subject matter (rape, murder, torture and incest, etc), while simultaneously existing in contested, doubled theatrical spaces. In Gothic stories, the lover, villain, parent and protector all occupy the same uncomfortable living space (the castle) in animalized forms: predator and prey as confused symbols and mechanisms from moment to perilous moment. Something to remember about Arnold in this reversal is he serves the role of parent, lover and

protector in the perfect sense for a battered single mom: the asexual machine. Conversely the T-1000 is a villain through a great duplicator status that intends familial destruction through homicidal cryptonymy—the stolen identity of past serialized rape victims, including John's foster parents, Sarah's guards, and even Sarah herself (the same mimicking of a parental figure the original terminator did to get close to its victim as a "one-day pattern killer"). "He" and "his" rapacious falsehoods are a facet of state corruption, of the evil within as part of an internal plot invaded by those already inside (a confusion of inside/outside, correct-incorrect, etc) that expands in all directions when the shadow of medieval abuse covers the land.

The rebel's gambit is to send a *friendly* predator to protect Sarah's son, one who looks like a former abuser of Sarah's and attempted killer of John; indeed, he's the same model, therefore physically identical to the 1984 assassin. While the 1991 terminator is also an assassin, his *class* function alters insofar as he fights to preserve the family unit through hypermasculine violence; i.e., the good parent, lover and protector versus the bad.



Cameron's rehabilitative goal is one of complete reprogramming—of a past state soldier to serve a rebel cause attached to the family model. Indeed, they are inextricable, and haunted by the kinds of violence that the T-1000 (and other versions of the T-800) represent: of violent murder and rape through phallic devices, namely bullets, brute strength, and "knives and stabbing weapons" delivered by a perfidious, male, and physically imposing slasher agent serving an ultra-radicalized police state chasing and hunting its usual benefactors: women and children.

(artist: [John Cordero](#))

In other words, Cameron locks the morphology and familial roles firmly in place, as well as the roles of predator and prey in centrist ordeals. They exist on good teams

and bad revolving around the heteronormative family unit and its legendary defenders, destructors, and methods of domesticated, animalized monster violence, terror and morphological expression. For Cameron, all of these things tellingly manifest as white men who help or harm white (or functionally white) women and children in the domestic sphere. He sticks to his guns despite being all too familiar with the Gothic flexibility of Amazons and knights, but also cops as dishonest,

dehumanized, *shapeshifting* (demonic) agents recuperating those symbols through acts of rape that double for the putting on of stolen appearances (for us, cryptonymy is a disguise of "rape" designed to prevent its unironic forms). As Rebecca Keegan writes in *The Futurist: The Life and Films of James Cameron* (2010):

a central theme in both of the *Terminator* movies [is] how people, especially those in violent jobs, like soldiers and cops, can become barbarized. "The *Terminator* films are not really about the human race getting killed off by future machines. They're about us losing touch with our own humanity and becoming machines, which allows us to kill and brutalize each other," he says. "Cops think all non-cops as less than they are, stupid, weak, and evil. They dehumanize the people they are sworn to protect and desensitize themselves in order to do that job" ([source](#)).

And yet despite his own less-than-stellar view of the force, Cameron can't bring himself to think outside the box. His fantastical nightmare is trapped in the Shadow of Pygmalion's myopia—stuck inside a very limited, male, *criminogenic* view of the world even though he understands "to serve and protect" is a lie the state regularly tells. More to the point, the language of anger is gendered in ways that enable singular police agents and groups of them (versus similar numbers of state targets: herds of prey versus packs of hunting animals), but also in official and unofficial capacities⁶⁹ to enact systemic violence through predatory familial likenesses and *their* relations: the infiltrators disguise themselves as family members during rape.

It's important, then, to remember the Gothic mode contains *contested* language; i.e., the campy revival of medieval dichotomies that remains tremendously useful to navigating the enormous emotional pressures present under unequal material conditions. But with that, we must also say quiet, unspoken things from just as loud a critical standpoint, versus things that *sound* loud but are critically inert, like Cameron does (e.g., his standard-issue slasher/rape scenarios). The intense feelings of predator and prey are useless *unless* they can raise awareness towards the socio-material conditions that bring them about, not enact a routine breaking down of civilization towards barbarism. Land and home are both treated as separate and overlapping in conflict, resulting in foreign vs domestic, wild vs civilized, etc. Animals, then, are used in times of state crisis and decay to crack down against workers with workers using animalized language as a delivery method for administering the abuse required to pacify workers with; i.e., out from pictures of home as corrupt, medieval: the liminal hauntology of war.

⁶⁹ I.e., vigilante-style "deputies" during acts of pro-state stochastic terrorism (a concept we will explore thoroughly in Volume Three); e.g., incels.

To that, the Gothic is a return of the fearsome imaginary past, often as a literal castle composed of old dreadful legends and unspeakable deeds. In Gothic-Communist terms, it is the state decaying towards a new imaginary past through the castle as something to summon. Out of it, many monsters may emerge besides just terminators ("they were the newest and the worst"); each swiftly becomes antiquated while attached to the unspeakable horrors it abstracts, shuffled and drawn anew during future revelations. To see the castle is to visit one's mortality as consigned to a grander doom: an ignominious death tied to a space and time that *travels* without moving (a hyperobject, remember) and appears seemingly without warning or resistance.



(artist: Don Ivan Punchatz)

The ghost of the counterfeit nurtures the anxiously privileged through nightmares to summon and banish again in relation to their colonial inheritance: our ancestors were conquerors, but so were our "parents." Except, these fears (and their associate material

conditions) aren't unfounded. Whatever form it takes—a European castle, an Egyptian-style pyramid, or a basic, corporatized logo composed of the building materials of such things—the castle is both a concentration of decaying state power and a fortress-minded condition of waiting for the Imperial Boomerang to swing back 'round, doubly maddening for a nation that hasn't faced a land invasion in over two centuries, and has never been bombed (nuclear or otherwise) from a foreign power. In short, it is like trying to imagine genocide from those who have never been on the receiving end in modern times, shielded by the Imperial Core as slowly disintegrating around them. Its grim historical materialism invokes the Leveler as a future testament to Capitalism's past, present and ongoing potential for self-destruction: the medieval brutality of the West having not gone anywhere, while its grim harvests demand fresh blood on a scale impossible to imagine. Sooner or later, monsters will spill out of the structure, preying upon everyone through a war of extermination, "not just those on the other side."

Beyond Cameron's quaintly heteronormative, "mom 'n pops" yarn and financially predatory fixations in Gothic rape scenarios, the fallen home as

intimating cataclysmic medieval characteristics is commonplace. By extension, canonical fantasy stories more broadly consider the *normalization* of class immobility as something to endorse through *enforced morphological expression* being central to the family unit, thus the state, represented by castles as implacable; i.e., the moderate stance that changing one's material conditions is *already* framed as otherworldly and Quixotic, especially insofar as it deters morphological arguments that enable systemic change through gender-non-conforming bodies and identities as somehow "excessive." Without any transformative bodily aspects, then, the hidden princess threading the Gothic castle's hyperbolic nightmare (e.g., Sarah, inside a ghostly Los Angeles) is an already-alien proposal for moderate audiences, her harrowing story of survival filled with apophenic reminders of tremendous sexual danger tied to a fantastic place and time threatening a conservative bodily expression and social-sexual arrangement: cis-het girlfriends/wives ("better than mortal man deserves") and marriage.



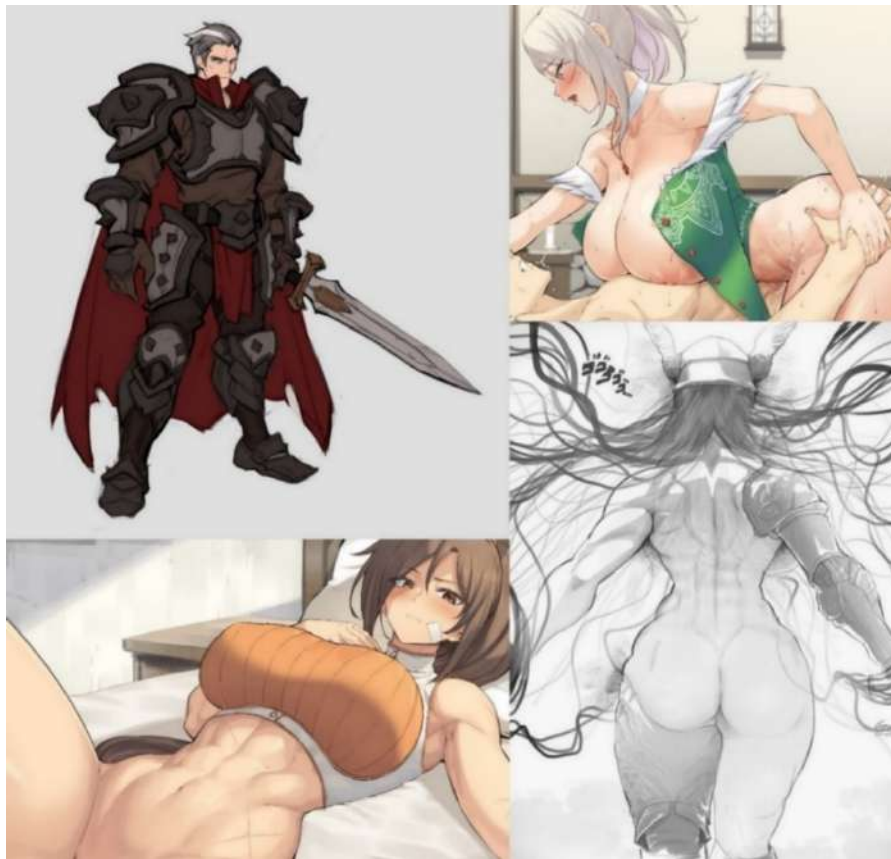
(artist: [Just Some Noob](#))

Meanwhile, anything that remotely challenges that body and gender expression—e.g., the pirate or demon searching for stolen gold or a lost homeland—is treated as an animalistic rogue, owing to their alien body and identity as foreign, often acquiring wealth or status through theft, trickery and conquest, but also non-marital sex.

Our Gothic-Communist critiques, then, seek to change systemic material conditions through subversive fantasy stories, which criticize the inherent, systemic violence that reactionary and moderate Pygmalions threaten when controlling bodily and gender expression; i.e., as an autonomous means of communicating *non*-heteronormative struggles in weird-nerd culture when

marginalized groups are actually allowed to perform and express themselves, mid-trauma and in honest, unmuzzled animalistic language. Except, these feral alternatives and their pedagogy of the oppressed are often muscled out of the grander market equation by more standardized, cis-het, human-looking forms of Gothic morphological expression; i.e., those echoed by men like James Cameron, enforcing harmful industry standards around the world through heroic-monstrous

cultural exports: the cold man of steel and the warrior woman with maternal, erotically subservient aspects.



(exhibit 8b3: Artist, top-left: [Flying Pen](#); top-right and bottom-left: [Kook](#); bottom-right: [Yoracrab](#). Neoliberal pastiche in Japanese media typically yields male knights who are effeminate but nevertheless armored, whereas female knights often tend to be at least partially nude and presented as dominant and subservient; i.e., beholden to a sexualized, animalistic, maternal

role that, in some shape or form, serves child-like effeminate men [whose incestuous aspects endemic to Japanese culture we shall revisit in Volume Three]. As Cameron argues through his work, and *lifestyle*⁷⁰ in connection to his work, women [and AFAB persons at large] must always return to the heteronormative mother role: a sexualized nurturer who can fight when she needs to, but only to protect her children from alien forces. It's fan service to weird canonical nerds, but also an instruction guide [*vis-à-vis* the Gothic Romance] for how girls should behave and present themselves in Cameron's eyes.)

Heteronormative enforcement champions protectors whose bodies (and killing methods) are morphologically standardized: male knights, or female knights

⁷⁰ Cameron married and divorced Linda Hamilton as a perceived *double* of Sarah that didn't measure up to his Pygmalion fantasy as *he* envisioned it:

"I think what happened there is that he really fell in love with Sarah Connor," Hamilton said. "And I did, too." Cameron didn't object, telling the Times, "I fell in love with her initially because I thought she was a little closer to Sarah than she actually is, but that doesn't mean that much once you get to know somebody" ([source](#): Alexia Fernández's "Linda Hamilton Says She and Ex-Husband James Cameron Were 'Terribly Mismatched,'" 2019).

(which Amazons basically are) acting like men in Man Box culture or otherwise submitting to male needs; for them, the imaginary past becomes something to love and defend as a *heteronormative* stomping ground; i.e., by men like Cameron robbing the Gothic mode of its perceptively campy elements through all the usual canonical violence towards the usual victims of state abuse; e.g., Tolkien's Beater and Biter directed at "goblins," or Beowulf's wrath tearing Grendel apart in similar base, animal-grade humiliations⁷¹ mean to demean an already downed, prey-like foe: "Men like you thought it up."

To that, I want to conclude part one by looking at another element common to the knight and Amazon as a fixture of Gothic poetics, regardless of the performance or genre: torture and psychosexual harm. Due to *Amazonomachia* being a dialectical-material phenomenon, we'll introduce its canonical function, here, then devote part two to subverting it through our own uphill expressions of settler-colonial trauma in animalistic language. The canonical knight is commonly "phallic" insofar as he, she, they or it are armed with a penetrative implement of



violence standing to, in, and for patriarchal enforcement as something to recognize by the harm it teases synonymizing with sex through romanticized rituals: the duel over the damsel or the child as both over her/them and about the two men measuring and crossing swords. In the heteronormative scheme of courtship through violence, size definitely matters insofar as its shows off more at first glance (swords, unlike penises, do not tend to "grow"; they unsheathe and seek out new bodies to serve as improvised "scabbards"):

(artist: Kentaro Miura)

So whether good or bad in centrist stories, armored/weaponized male/tokenized duelists operate through "insect politics," enacting "traumatic penetration" against their targets and/or

collateral damage (J.B.S. Haldane once quipped that if a god or divine being had created all living organisms on Earth, then that creator must have an "[inordinate](#)

⁷¹ I.e., bodily dismemberment and bodily functions as the barbaric fulfillment of inhumane threats by inhumane force; e.g., "I'm gonna rip your head off and shit down your neck!"

[fondness for beetles](#)." However, if there is a loving god, then why-oh-why is Gwen Pearson's "[stabby cock dagger](#)" a thing? Cosmic-nihilism-in-action). In terms of wives or girlfriends, but also sexual reproduction as symbolized by knights in connection to real life, PIV sex is the standard, canonical point-of-entry for our "overprotective" (rapacious) predators. Failure to uphold it results in psychosexual violence. Not only will the knight (or more to the point, the person emulating the knight) historically-materially "stab a bitch" if she eyeballs them wrong (or if she's trans), but they—the most powerful and loved-feared family member (usually the father or boyfriend, but also police agents)—will exploit her and the children as *routinely* vulnerable by design. That's what the state does and wants.

Centrist kayfabe portrays various good/evil teams using lances or bullets as "phallic" implements of rape that universally threaten obedient cis women as beings to corral and hysterical women, racial and ethnic minorities, queer people and/or children (e.g., queer children, who tend to have neurodivergent qualities that present comorbidly through abuse targeting them as children, queer and neurodivergent) as corrupt/monstrous-feminine things to execute/retire for not being useful to those in power—i.e., not useful to the *fathers*, but also the state for whom they serve. Of course, there *is* utility insofar as genocide serves the profit motive, but it achieves this through a limiting of what is morphologically correct and an expanding of what is *incorrect*. Cis-het men are violent and canon teaches them (and tokenized agents) to be violent in abject, morphologically standardized ways that chase, attack, and sexually dominate non-standard forms on and offstage: the "useless eater" as a useless animal hogging resources, but also an alien to fetishize⁷² while persecuting it.

This is hardly the first time I've acknowledged this. In "Why I Submit: A Subby Gothicist's Attitudes on Metroidvania, Mommy Doms, and Sexual Persecution" I write,

The majority of violent murders, rapes, and murder-suicides are committed by cis-het men; the majority of their victims are women; and less than one percent of the total United States population openly identifies as trans/non-binary. Roughly 1.4 million adults in the United States [openly identify as trans](#). Out of a population of 328.2 million, that's less than half of one percent. The actual number is undoubtedly higher, but obscured by fear. Not everyone comes out because of potential abuse: murder, wrongful termination from employment, homelessness, and so on. Women are pushed into the periphery by sexist men, and trans people don't exist at all; if they

⁷² State proponents chase after those they dehumanize—a complicated reality illustrated by another telling Cameron movie quote (this section is full of them): "She thought they said, 'illegal alien' and signed up!" "Fuck you, man!" "Anytime, anywhere!"

do, they are generally demonized, even killed, their murderers protected by sexist, transphobic laws, aka [the gay panic defense](#) ([source](#)).

Under this spotlight, queer people hide their identities because they can. Setting aside the extramarital violence committed against them, other marginalized groups—people of color and AFABs—are disproportionately targeted for what they *can't* hide: their skin color, genitals and bodily functions as animalized. Under Cartesian dualism, they are automatically sighted⁷³ and targeted as "of nature" and treated as chattel to varying degrees; i.e., as bodies of discourse that are monitored and controlled to acceptable levels of resistance.

Yet, the oppressed also speak out about morphological standards that convey their oppression as something to reclaim through the usual devices of torture and extermination being used more boldly than Cameron dares. Unlike him, we must haunt the state's territories—both out of the land they seek to dominate, but also through the policed heroic-monstrous agents as more and more alien, but also *unkillable* regarding their rebellious usage. Historically bombs and bullets don't work, and the state's demand for an aura of invincibility when exploiting an occupied territory compounds to such a costliness as to sink them after a handful of deaths. These break the spell, and open the floodgates of counterterror. Once-proud state proponents ignominiously humor mortality and defeat; taunted by us, they envision themselves as conquered, growing sick with the threat of their own abuses promised by the smallest of failures, including a crisis of masculinity that



gives into forbidden, genderqueer pleasures doubling as disguises that perform Athena's Aegis. Tasting of *that*, their spirit and their nerves break and they become afraid of shadows "coming to get them," but also the *state* to punish them for their "moment of weakness" by sleeping with "chattel" (whose animalization is associated with appropriated cultural markers; e.g., the Pride rainbow):

(artist: [Torture Chan](#))

The problem lies in white, cis-het Pygmalions like Cameron moderating rebellion through antiquated language as something to emulate, thus

⁷³ Police and police adjacent factors identify reductively by sight to put you inside one of two basic categories: "a male" or "a female," but also predator or prey.

conceal, state abuse through vivid descriptors of predatory agents. Except similar situations to queer existence are felt through an adjacency to systemic abuse that overlaps with one's own morphology as policed by and large. Alongside queer people, then, sits the combined struggles of other groups whose identities and bodies are controlled through the same state monopolies—violence and terror as a means of enforcing particular forms of morphological expression using Gothic poetics. Native Americans were largely displaced, segregated and killed (even those who tried to assimilate) through colonial methods presenting them as monstrous wild animals, while people of color and other ethnic minorities have likewise been exploited for centuries through similar industrialized maneuvers (today [being disproportionately imprisoned by the American judicial system enslaving them for petty offenses](#) according to Ashley Nellis' "The Color of Justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparity in State Prisons," 2021); e.g., drug wars being an old, borrowed tactic that preys upon chattelized groups using predatory maneuvers learned from past settler-colonial abusers (and embodied within capital by privileged groups; i.e., generally white cis-het men like Tyler Oliveira⁷⁴ grifting against vulnerable groups including homeless people, who often use drugs to survive under systemic criminogenic conditions).

To that, more recent American executives borrowed the War on Drugs from older bourgeoisie and *their* preying on the Imperial Core's *spectrum* of ethnic minorities and dissidents trapped inside the state of exception; i.e. coming out of [the Opium Wars](#) (source: Extra History, 2016) into Nixon's abusive campaigns against his own population; re: as John Ehrlichman, Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs, declared in 1994:

You want to know what this [war on drugs] was really all about? The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. [...] We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did ([source](#): Vera's Drug War Confessional").

Unlike strictly demonized groups, white women who aren't Amazonian are also preyed upon, except *their* predation complicates due to their vertiginous treatment as *liminal* victims; i.e., both a precious property promised to settler-colonist men and killed and raped by them under their so-called "protection" inside spaces of sin comparable to Madikken's own medieval forest refuge (a concept we'll explore

⁷⁴ Thought Slime's "[I Investigated the Biggest Scumbag on YouTube](#)" (2024).

throughout this entire book, but especially in Volume Three, Chapter Two): those perceived both as feminine and weak, but also wild, hysterical and dangerous—witches reduced to safe/dangerous chattel, thus deserving to be hunted down and preyed upon through preemptive DARVO abuse by patriarchal forces defending heteronormativity through hauntological forms of the settler-colonial model.



(*exhibit 9a: Frazetta's "Castle of Sin" [1986]. Commissioned by Playboy magazine, Frazetta depicts our unsuspecting "hero" being led to his doom by three sexy witches [the same number as the Gorgons, aka the Fates]. In other words, the knight and his armored chastity are being absolved and the fleshy women are being cast*

as Original Sin capturing him; i.e., they [and their bodies] are entirely to blame for everything that happens to the "poor, defenseless"⁷⁵ knight inside the castle as an operatic place of "almost certain temptation." Never mind that he's armed for bear and armored from head to toe: the unironically fetishized executioner of the state whose medieval abuses and deathly persona are constantly emulated by state police acting as "good cop, bad cop," but also "white knight, black knight" against their own citizens; i.e., as beings to reinvade through an assigned, entertaining site of crisis within state grounds: the danger disco.

As we explored in Volume Zero, Frazetta's hauntologies generally objectify women and glorify men; i.e., operating through fetishized power imbalances that nearly always have the woman being offered up as a naked, idealized prize to powerful [usually white] men, and presenting people of color as violent rapists or powerful, eunuchized harem guards. I love Frazetta's technical prowess, but his products were definitely "of their time," channeling the same kinds of unsubtle bigotry as Robert E. Howard, but also the magazine that published him: Weird Tales [which also published H.P. Lovecraft]. Both men worked in a racist vein of the Gothic mode, their pulpy stories overflowing with occult flavors that obsessed constantly about a return of calamity as something to counter by heroic, hypermasculine/Cartesian forces: the brains and the brawn. Frazetta illustrated

⁷⁵ Knights ride down their prey and violate them through an amalgam of metaphors and actualities: actual rape versus "rape," and animal metaphors for these things; i.e., through their steed, their lance, their armor as a part of their entirety insofar as it paradoxically threatens and excites their would-be victims.

both heroics in a very Pygmalion way that serves state monopolies in all the usual territories: wild, open land, but also castles as dreamlike sites of violence and rape perpetrated by cops afraid of demonic, otherworldly influences that might undermine the purity of their status and position.)



Faced with crisis, state heroes routinely fail to measure up. The most privileged (and craven) group are cis-het, white Christian men. Scared of anything different/of nature (e.g., *The Great Outdoors*, left: our two Quixotic heroes afraid of a squirrel in their rental cabin) while

simultaneously fetishizing it (the way Beowulf's Spear-Danes would have feared Grendel's vengeful mother while pegged her for a woman), they become infatuated, possessive and lusty as they fight over often-literal maidens (teenagers); i.e., as child-like, defenseless property that one man shall not covet if it is already owned (with "problematic lovers" often chased into the state of exception using racist/transphobic sodomy tropes; e.g., the rapacious black man and the killer "false" woman-in-disguise, aka the "trap"). That didn't/doesn't stop property duels from being enshrined in romantic canon, however (nor does it prevent tokenism through the existence of TERFs acting like cis-het white men, internalizing their bigotry as self-hating dykes, unicorns and tomboys: the monstrous-feminine as something to imprison, abuse and weaponize against various groups even when no threat is posed or conveyed—e.g., twink). Erstwhile, the legends themselves become conspicuously homosocial—at times homosexual, even *pedophilically* homosexual (a knight's squire, exhibit 92b; rape culture as something to subvert but also endorse, including by the LGBA, exhibit 100c2c). All of a sudden, there are far more men fighting over unwilling women than women (cis or queer) who actually want to sleep with the men involved, leading to pedophilia and chattel rape (neither my father nor stepfather sexually abused me; however, while both beat me, my stepfather once hit me in the head so hard with a plastic phone receiver I thought he wanted to kill me). Already covertly genocidal, neoliberalism is a gateway to fascism, which in turn is a gateway to all of these things in the domestic sphere: "prison sex"/Man Box mentalities where cis-het men tend to masturbate to penises going where they ought; i.e., into the vagina, but also the unwilling bodies of those deemed weaker than they are as animals to chattelize.

In other words, *any* show of monstrous hypermasculine force becomes unironically masturbatory when conducted against state enemies whose morphological arguments "rock the boat"; i.e., undead, demonic and/or animalistic poetics that challenge the usual utility and ubiquity of the penis/phallic object. This means anything that is androdiverse, gynodiverse and/or anthropomorphic constitutes a threat that must be checked in all the usual ways; but just as often, these diversities are erased by heteronormative agents like Cameron canonizing camp, or chased after by them within coercive, reactionary arrangements of power that enable the chaser to extort coerced pleasure from their victims to assuage their own unhappy existences. Through the profit motive, the enforcer is alienated from pleasure, and generally envy the pleasurable closeness to nature and the human condition (sex and gender) that gender-non-conforming practitioners exhibit and communicate through all aspects of themselves; i.e., monstrous expression as a profoundly non-Cartesian/non-Vitruvian morphological statement with profound implications of rebellious gender identity expression, mid-struggle (animals, it must be said, are farmed and devoured⁷⁶ under Capitalism): genitals and the prey-like animalized bodies they're attached to as coming out of the same Walpolean, Gothic imaginary that parental, *sometimes*-predatory Amazons and knights do.

We'll explore these in part two, next.

⁷⁶ The butcher's paradox amounts to an animal that is cute, but calmly slain and sliced up by the handler's knife. As much as possible is done to ensure a *minimization* of pain, but death and pain are nonetheless unavoidable; e.g., [Chef Wang Gang's "Stir-fry Bullfrog" video](#) (2023) graphically demonstrating the upfront butchering and preparing of cute bullfrogs. There is a frankness to the confronting of such slaughter to meet a basic, biological need, but also an endorsement of it as a business by a wider culture (Asia) having already suffered greatly at the hands of American Imperialism. In the presence of great trauma (and food shortages), life becomes cheap and delicious, but the fragility lingers in uneasy dialogs (Google-translated YouTube comments from Wang's video): "Such a cute frog tastes so delicious" and "How cruel it looks from the front is how delicious it looks from the back," etc. Such statements acknowledge the turning away of the victim and its inevitable killing from behind to make a meal, while nevertheless adopting a kind of executioner's pride heaped on the chef as a proud master of his craft. The animal quickly becomes an easy casualty in us-versus-them rhetoric, one that slides easily into animal abuse through a system that, for all intents and purposes, rapes nature and its unlucky inhabitants to fill owner and worker bellies with.

Try to imagine and apply this same mentality (and brutal outcome) *vis-à-vis* animalized workers and their egregores; then try to understand their collective, humanized plight to survive inside a system that prioritizes worker butchery for profit through the heteronormative language (and its negotiation) of animalized monsters: to be bred for slaughter—farmed for meat *and* sex as grossly conflated under abusive socio-material arrangements; e.g., "thicc" prized by the sex pest who feels entitled to regular "meals," which he carves up with his dick not as a euphemism for modesty's sake, but a cryptonymic means of concealing rape. Said entitlement isn't to fulfill an attempt to bond with others, but to dehumanize and consume them for his own status and insecurities within the profit motive. Through Capitalist Realism, the prison-sex mentality extends into a myopic and inescapable slaughterhouse that, through the ghost of the counterfeit, becomes something to eat through the process of abjection: the delicious suffering of others mid-chattelization. Such "erotic butchery" is endemic to capital, which shapes our experiences; i.e. how we inhabit, but also see and understand the world. All of this must be fought and resisted during iconoclastic expression that continues to acknowledge the uncomfortable reality that humans are animals who not only kill to survive, but *enjoy and savor* their food as oft-sexualized inside a larger system exploiting these overlapping mechanisms for profit.

"Predators and Prey": Prey as Liberators by Camping Prey-like BDSM; Its Bodily Psychosexual Expression and Campy Gothic Origins Stemming from Horace Walpole onwards

*I wanna fuck you like an animal
I wanna feel you from the inside
I wanna fuck you like an animal
My whole existence is flawed*

*Through every forest
Above the trees
Within my stomach
Scraped off my knees
I drink the honey
Inside your hive
You are the reason
I stay alive*

—Trent Reznor; "Closer," on Nine Inch Nails's *The Downward Spiral* (1994)



The desire for a parental/protector role (and settlement) is not lost during dialectical-material struggles, especially under dreamlike conditions where power is something to interrogate and reify in ways for which we are not always master (the nightmare being the classic source of inspiration for

many-a-Gothic-castle). All the same, as much as one might desire a big-strong protector or warrior "parent," the fact remains that many animals (and their warrior positions) are *hunted* under capital's settler-colonial practices and structures. A common means of negotiating and one day escaping this captive reality—and one this section of the subchapter will explore—is through prey mechanisms during ludo-Gothic BDSM: a playful willingness to camp canon with game-like Gothic poetics, but especially monstrous, painful, unequal forms of power exchange (demon BDSM⁷⁷) that check Vitruvian, European body standards, policies and (for the focus of this subchapter) animalized stigmas.

⁷⁷ "Demon BDSM" is essentially what I call "BDSM with monsters" (even though "demon" is only one class of monster, their class specializes in forbidden knowledge and power exchange); "ludo-Gothic BDSM" stresses the playful, campy nature of iconoclastic BDSM when using ironic Gothic poetics and performance, including not just demons but also animal language (e.g., puppy play) and undead components.

To my knowledge, I coined "ludo-Gothic BDSM" in my thesis, but the idea of practicing it is not exactly new. "Demon BDSM" reflects on many torturous devices penned by Ann Radcliffe, and heteronormative conditions at large have been camped in a very gay way since Horace Walpole's Gothic castle (Shakespeare toyed with such ideas, but Walpole coined "Gothic" as it's currently understood so we're going with him). Unlike James Cameron, who canonized Gothic peril in favor of familial dimorphism, campy monsters—through nakedly exposed, neo-medieval forms—become something to get closer to through rape play/informed consent that subvert heteronormative standards by "making it gay"; i.e., through various forms of palliative-Numinous, torture-dungeon theatre that address modern-day anxieties felt living within (or near) the state: like a captive, thus hunted, animal inside a castle-like home's fatal nostalgia and complicated social-sexual education.

To remind people where we're headed, part two of "Predators and Prey" examines animalistic morphological expression in the shadow of state monopolies and where we can go to subvert them: by building our own Walpolean castles to challenge those built by the state—which the next subchapter will examine, *vis-à-vis* Tolkien's unironic Gothic spaces, torture devices and vampires either divorced from nature or destructive to proper forms of the "natural" world; i.e., in a very Christian, manicured sense; e.g., the Garden of Eden. After that subchapter looks at Tolkien's coercive undead (and their haunts), we'll consider the broader stupefying effects we'll need to take into account when dealing with workers who may or may not assist us when fashioning castle-like dialogs out of the Gothic-Communist theories we've handled thus far in the manifesto; i.e., dealing with vampires (or rather *vampiric* weird canonical nerds) who might just as quickly suck us dry *for* the state as help free its teeth from 'round our throats when these theories are put to practice.

Before the "Prey" section examines camping prey-like morphological expression, I want to give a brief, ten-page note (until page 212) about morphology as it exists inside a Gothic castle's nostalgia and psychosexual education; i.e., as it pertains to such "game" to begin with—the hunted quarry and their cunning ability to playfully outwit the predator pursuing them. That is, such places often canonically instruct predators to target the human body as policed and forbidden, including its prey-like morphological expression in Gothic forms (monsters and "peril"); chased after and forcefully bred for being alien (and feeling alien because of it), receivers of psychosexual violence must escape while confronting aspects of themselves that are not only animalized, but forced to intersect with fears of unironic violence that—for them—may have already collided in the past. Pleasure and harm synonymize.

The canonical Gothic space, then, is a place of institutional violence, forcing its inhabitants to act as givers and receivers of state violence who receive and embody feelings of self-hatred and self-persecution from their dangerous surroundings. Like trained animals, they become conditioned to accept these

harmful positions, thus must challenge them by subverting their coded, Pavlovian instructions in ways unique to humans that nevertheless look and sound animalistic. They must fetishize the sense of feeling alien/monstrous in ways that playfully reclaim their agency during calculated risks; i.e., playful maneuvers that pointedly remove the spontaneous, uncontrolled qualities (and actual harm) from "hunting" scenarios—of suddenly being attacked without warning inside one's habitat in ways that normally happen to historically abused groups (e.g., women, or those perceived as or treated like women, are far more likely to be raped than men are)—while also teaching would-be abusers to see them as human *and* as beings connected to nature who are constantly defined by human customs and complex, contested linguo-material devices from moment to living moment: our holes, roles, and psychosexual predicaments as things to play with, thus camp, using Gothic poetics during liminal expression (the devil and the angel, the thinking animal, the "helpless" actor topping from the bottom, etc).



(exhibit 9b0: Artist: [Puk Puk](#). Rape anxiety relates to female bodies as simultaneously doll-like, animalistic, and undead/demonic, but also male bodies and heteronormative expression at large as having far-reaching and long-standing effects on morphological expression tied to psychosexual rituals; i.e., those that deal with the Gothic notion of inheritance anxiety that stems from being born into a space rife with constant historical reminders of dynastic power exchange and hereditary rites [re: Bakhtin] but also imaginary examples tied to a fearful imaginary past that comments on the present; e.g., the fear of being raped or

otherwise controlled in ways that chattelize oneself as prey to serve the patriarch, the household, the state; i.e., through compelled sexual labor as harming the giver and receiver of work conflated with sexual violence and a continuation of a dangerous sovereign's bloodline: "breeding rituals" performed between predators and prey in the same unhealthy arrangement.



(artist: [Puk Puk](#))

*These become things to camp, opening up a variety of silly counter possibilities to the state's usual bullshit. For example, not only is it possible to be "bred" without a uterus [as Bay tells me and which I know from experience with Zeuhl, who had a hysterectomy] insofar as the act is a performance, but the parties involved can box up their trauma and play with it inside safe spaces that allow for rape play to be had without fear of confusion or harm [while not fixating on physical violence; e.g., *Silent Hill's* Pyramid Head, *Fear and Hunger's* (2018) [rapacious, openly phallic monsters and bodily dismemberment](#)]. In short, we can laugh at things that would be triggering except for the campy context granting them an ironically medicinal quality—to play and relieve stress by imperfectly recreating a silly act of "misfortune."*

The paradox of reclaiming one's power, then, lies in how it is canonically framed as disempowering inside highly traumatic dialogs where power abuse and resistance to power abuse occupy the same theatrical, and at times very silly, space. As our thesis argued, "camping the canon" by "making it gay" camps the Gothic castle as an operatic, psychosexual "'rape' space"—one where the language of animalistic heraldry/war and conquest intersect with class/culture war to double unironic, abusive forms; e.g., "rape," of course, but also, the castle being "razed," the maidens "conquered," the boys "put to the sword," etc, etc. Such playfulness grants both a potent means of interrogating trauma, and a sense of agency to those normally subdued by canonical threats of force: reclaiming their labor power through subversive mechanisms that allow us to question the fatal nostalgia of a traumatic, imaginary past during revolutionary cryptonomy as a daily event. In turn, state monopolies are challenged by parodic, counterterrorist forms, their ludo-Gothic BDSM designed to weaken the state's reign of violence, terror and hellish morphological expression in ways that reeducate workers; i.e., by teaching them to be sex-positive during Gothic-Communist

development: changing socio-material⁷⁸ conditions with demon BDSM, thus camping and recultivating the twin trees of Capitalism—the Base and Superstructure—during oppositional praxis, including its synthesis and catharsis.)

This liminality—and its reclamatory performances contesting state domination through revolutionary cryptonymy—is a very complicated concept we'll only introduce here; we'll unpack it far more extensively in Volume Two (which is devoted entirely to humanizing and reclaiming monsters). For now, just remember that state monopolies on violence and terror—and ultimately on hellish expression at large—concern morphological expression linked to the home as simultaneously one's place of conditioning rooted in fears about animals, the medieval, nature and sexual reproduction as canonized in hauntological forms; i.e., whose bondage enforces total, *harmful* submission by fearing nature, versus the ability to educate playful, healing forms of psychosexual "duress" that allow for discipline and restraint as conscious, informed acts in animalistic language. We can tie each other up and respect the rights of others (and animals as a whole) while confronting



generational trauma; or, likewise, can navigate animal feelings of forbidden desire (outweighing a clear head and common sense) when capital constrains us in prey-like ways. In short, we can alter the curriculum in *extracurricular* ways, learning to work as a team and meet each other's needs while limiting and eventually diminishing the state's capacity to harm us through taught behaviors; i.e., from our own iconoclastic art as a subversive, Romantic⁷⁹ means of *de facto* education that reclaims Gothic poetics and liberates workers from Capitalism with the same pedagogy of the oppressed as both outrageously over-the-top and as serious as a heart attack.

(artist: [Droog](#))

Confusion is a cycle under capital, so it behooves us to learn how to dialectically-materially navigate the lands (and bodies) of confusion, but also menace (thieves, banditti and desperados), superstition (curses and ghosts), buried trauma, forbidden knowledge (demons), dogma, disorder, complicated excitement

⁷⁸ Versus simply material conditions; society and its materials overlap in ways that need to be accounted for beyond Marx's centuries-old theories when synthesizing praxis ourselves.

⁷⁹ Meaning "pertaining to stories of high imagination"; re: Walpole.

and psychosexual pleasure, etc, as torn between ourselves (workers) and our masters (the state). Their desire to rape then prey on our minds (then our bodies) requires we act *unpredictable* when using the same theatrical devices⁸⁰ ourselves; i.e, as masks that paradoxically give us away and conceal/reflect our revolutionary aims in splendid ways. In other words, while the Trojan Horse was gigantic, the



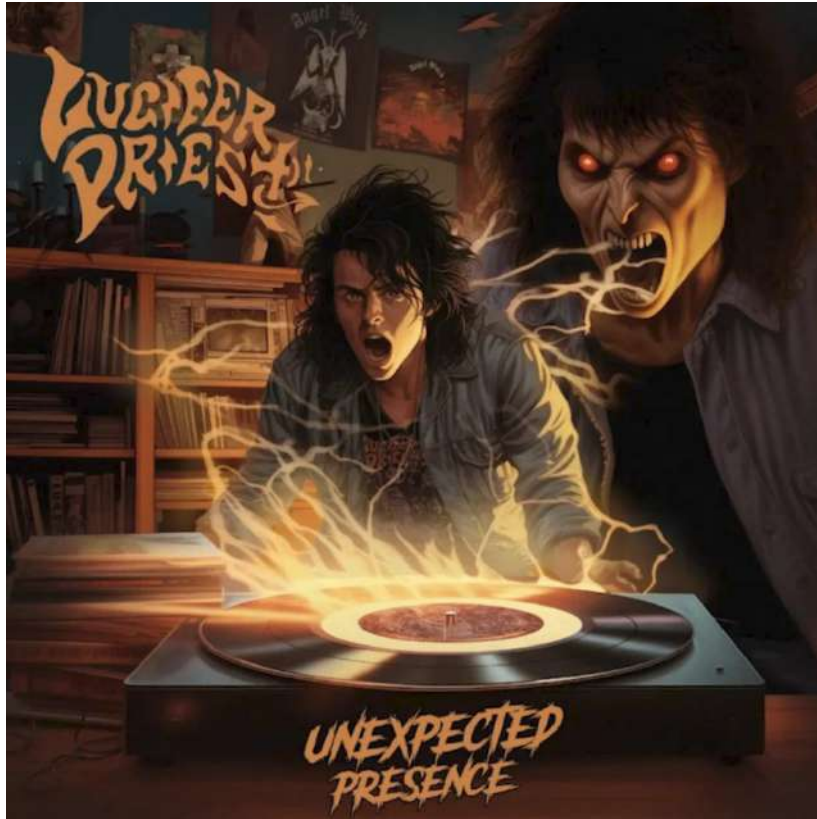
Trojan *Bunny* (from Monty Python, left) was silly and ironic in ways befitting a *splendide mendax* but nevertheless suspended between bourgeois and proletarian usages:

To varying degrees, we've already been exiled,

outlawed, and shamed by the state, so it behooves us to grow accustomed to playing with chaos, fear and taboos in ways that suit us by describing our lived

⁸⁰ Death by boredom is not the Gothic style, and so many things relate to BDSM through the Gothic mode as ours to reclaim. To that, here's an extended taste of things to come, which the chapter after this one will list more completely in relation to the rest of the book: madness, hysteria and persecution mania; zombies and other walking dead, leeches and parasites (vampires); mad science, cyborgs and composite bodies; tricksters, deadly games, puzzles and fatal riddles; black knights (fascists) and false protectors, confessors, penitents, lovers and friends; ambushes, betrayals, and deadly secrets; heists and blackmail, robbery and destruction; fatal attraction and involuntary repulsion; terminal rejection, poison and assassins; riots and mayhem, rebellion and strife; haunting melodies and seductive dances; sirens, succubae, and oracles; clones and shapeshifters; rapists and reapers, brothels and whores, rogues and cavaliers; mutants and executioners, butchers and livestock; jokers and madmen; heroes, cowards, victims, and villains—monsters and maidens and things in between; black vows, forsaken oaths, dire revenge and faithless traitors; lost legends, heavy time, open sadness and secret pain; doppelgangers and fatal portraits; wild animals and talking beasts (and other beings of nature); dreams and nightmares, witchcraft and black magic; ancient monarchs, otherworldly cathedrals, Numinous forces, and lumbering terrors; blood, gore and bodily dismemberment; asylums, prisons, and barbaric surgery and medicine; psychological torture, gaslighting and mind games; cells, crypts and live burial; drugs and incapacitation, shaken spirits, shattered dreams, lost hopes and flagging courage; doom, despair and dread; decay and death, graveyards and rot; mazes and labyrinths, dungeons and traps; giant, open spaces, claustrophobic tombs, shameful closets and endless darkness; perpetual rain, lightning, wind and fog; ignominious death, "mortification of the flesh" and exquisite torture (unironic otherwise). Truly, the Gothic mode is endless in terms of its depth, degree and flavor(s) of peril. And it's ours for the taking.

realities; i.e., as nightmarishly imperiled by fatal nostalgia, its haunted pastiche/endless, echoing copies (*cryptomimesis*) enjoyed by humans during the calculated risk of operatic parallel spaces (the danger disco) that—when retreated into—promise half-hidden threats and otherworldly delights.



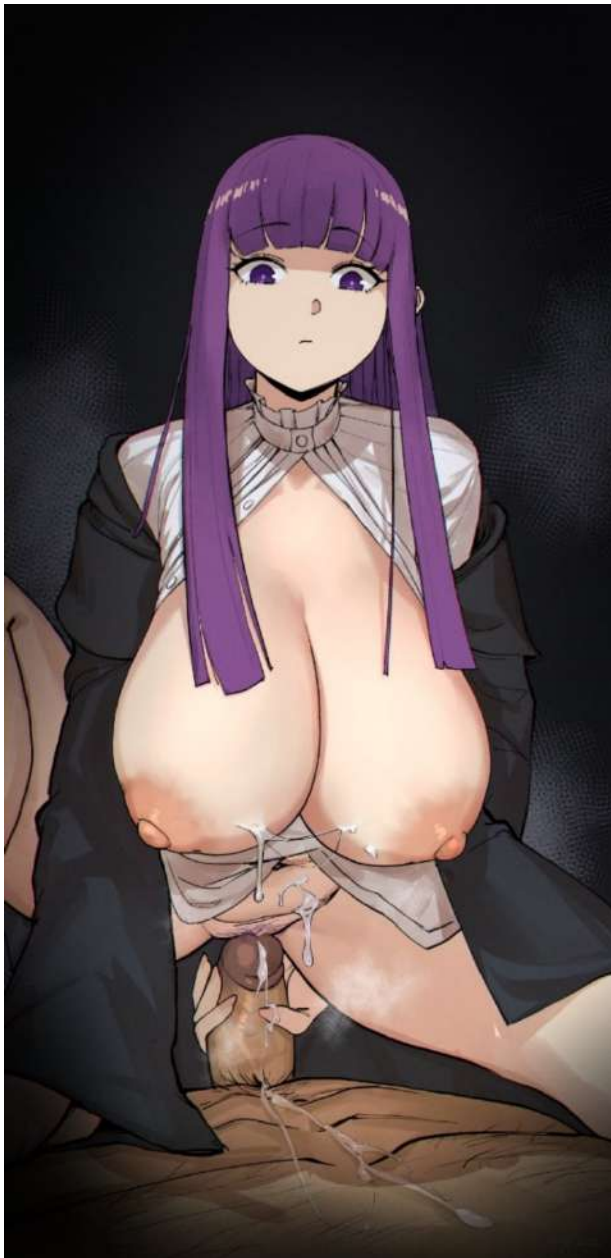
([source](#))

These are at odds within/at home with class and culture war as waged for the state during moral panics. For the elite and their helpers, monsters and lairs are the ghost of the counterfeit—a thing to summon and explain away in unironic Gothic pleasures; for us, the imaginary past is a weapon to pit against the Imperial Core. As something that periodically "returns," the

Gothic castle is a site of animal expression, but also confusion, isolation, alienation and ambiguous danger and excitement as a natural part of the human condition *within* capital's material factors.

Apart from the exhibits of morphological variety that appear in the next handful of pages, I want to spend the remainder of this subchapter stressing how performances inside the shadow zone take on a predator/prey arrangement with visibly animalized forms that cannot be avoided, only subverted and transformed when the state-in-crisis and -decay tries to weaponize our confusion and monstrous labor against us. I also want to consider how would-be places of curiosity like human genitals and their reproductive, but also erogenous functions—so-called "private parts" relegated to the bedroom (*vis-à-vis* Foucault)—are intensely secret, exclusive and chased after under highly uneven and coercive social-sexual arrangements; and finally I want to explore Walpole's castle as a camping ground of the European family unit that we can learn from when challenging canonical forces ourselves. In dimorphic, familial terms, the husband (or those groomed to play such a part) would be expected to do their duty as head of the household; conversely the receiver of this unfair bargain would also have their own part to play—wifely duties, also known as "paying rent," which in liminal territories, comes

with a fair amount of fakery and performance, but also fetishized costumes and kinky roles:



(artist: [Puk Puk](#))

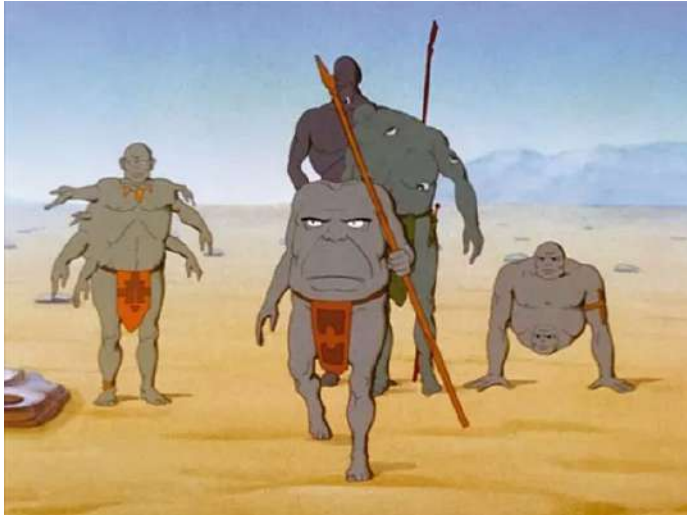
That is, performance and play conduct themselves according to honest threats, but also the generation of "threats" during calculated risks that allow the aggrieved party to confront past trauma as living within and around them in the present space and time. This includes facing fears of wifely duties as animalized: "paying rent," and being "bred," as part of that systematically disparate equation meant to prey upon subjugated workers; i.e., bride price. Not only is there a curiosity to face the fear as something promised to one in relation to their body as animalized, but also a desire to reclaim these characteristics in ways that transform the structure's predatory nostalgia and education to serve future worker needs (and those of nature in association with them). To alter canonical historical materialism, one's body is explored according to a monstrous canonical role inside a fatal structure that needs to change lest unironic harm persist; and said structure will defend itself against revolutionary cryptonymy in complicit forms. All the while, camp's morphology of monsters is a warzone fighting to

describe those actors (and animals) most challenged by state counterfeits (the latter envisioned by very scared/angry⁸¹ heteronormative people):

⁸¹ I.e., "the Straights aren't alright," or Man Box culture from a strictly xenophobic and harmful xenophilic perspective. If you want to know the targets of the status quo, just look at a bigoted person; they'd scared of/angry at pretty much everything (re: Crawford's invention of terrorism through the Gothic mode); e.g., Lovecraft's xenophobia or Tolkien's arachnophobia, etc. Revolutionary cryptonymy helps bring out those hiding in bad faith using shared, mask-like monster language that also intimates, interrogates and addresses state trauma.



(exhibit 9b1: Artist: [Xuu](#). Gyno/androdiversity includes gynodimorphism, which uses anthropomorphic biology to divorce human gender roles from strictly human bodies; i.e., to treat human genitals, gender and sexuality as highly malleable and xenophilic—fetishizing the alien in a sex-positive, non-predatory way that likewise reduces the state's ability to criminalize, thus prey upon, such unironic variants, mid-struggle. We'll examine the social-sexual qualities of anthropomorphism [and the drug-like, chaotic bodies of Giger-esque chimeras; i.e., monomorphism and Acid Communism; e.g., phallic women/Archaic Mothers, exhibit 1a1c] much more in Volume Two.



Also, while our focus will remain on humanoid bodies with mostly symmetrical, if not expressly Vitruvian components, it's worth noting that asymmetrical and "cluster bodies" flirt with plurality and native, physically descriptive and divergent embodiments faced with colonial struggles; e.g., Light Years' [1988] dark-skinned Deformed having multiple heads and limbs, but also a lack of various pieces that are nevertheless

informed by a classical monster framework: akephaloi, or "the headless ones." It also could be an Indigenous, guerrilla, acephalous challenge to the danger of a centralized, Cartesian mind fascistically praying on nature from the future; i.e., a decapitation of the European model of genocide as an endless, predatory cycle repeating itself in relation to capital/scientific exploitation. Its fatal historical materialism is built on mad science vampirically serving the profit motive as capital defends itself, scapegoating decadence and "degeneracy" in a cyclical holocaust.



[artist: [Bokuman](#), commissioned by me to draw the hero and princess of the film]

As the ghost of the counterfeit, Light Years is essentially a Gothic nightmare about scientific overreach with fascist results: a giant, patriarchal brain-in-a-jar that eventually goes mad, builds a time machine and

ruthlessly preys upon local, native populations in the past. These natives are already abused by a moderately matriarchal, Amazonian society who—faced with the armies of the brain they designed—send a white savior away from shelter and safety to overthrow the tyrant during the typical monomyth gauntlet and its rewards: animal-alien friends "relegated to the underworld," whose reverse abjection helps prevent the genocidal cycle; but also the princess [above] whose definitive moment amounts to passively loving the hero.)



(artist: [Bay](#))

Fantastical signatures notwithstanding, art (and especially Gothic art) frequently expresses real bodies that deviate from the Vitruvian standard; as punishment, said bodies (and their associate cultural value/attachments; e.g., Bay and his gynodiverse labia, but also consistent, palliative drug use) are controlled, eclipsed and destroyed, but also fetishized, mid-exploitation, by Cartesian forces tied to various power centers—castles and their recursive genocides' grim harvesting of the systemically vulnerable. In Gothic terms, castles are animalistic sites of captivity and danger with a dynastic, hereditary bent (the chronotope); re: the lover, villain, parent and protector all occupy the

same uncomfortable living space. The same applies to *ontological* spaces—one's body as animalistic in ways that don't endorse, thus resist, state abuse when the unironic (non-Walpolean) castle appears (and with it, the liminal hauntology of war). Heteronormative language outlaws and fetishizes sex-positive animal demons like the ones already shown. In so-called "correct" spheres, there is only white, cis-het men and women, and women exist purely to please men; indeed, sexist men "need" subservient, cis-het women in order to prove themselves (specifically their manhoods) by having PIV sex as an animal act. Men hate and desire women in this respect, seeing the answer "no" as standing in their way to individuation and success. To overcome their childish and unnecessary fears of dying a virgin, the pussy becomes something for men to "slay" according to a mythic gradient; i.e., stemming from Grendel and Grendel's mother as beings to rape in relation to nature-as-alien, but also identify in more seemingly human forms and behaviors that retain an animalistic stamp through Gothic poetics; re: "animals embody the canonical language of power and resistance as something to camp through demonic and undead forms."

In a Gothic-Communist sense, then, overriding state mechanisms to change socio-material conditions becomes a team effort—something out of an animal parable that updates easily enough to the present space and time:



(artist: [Secondlina](#))

This concludes our preliminary examination of Gothic morphologies, relevant to our Gothic-Communist camping of them. I want to use the rest of "Prey" to consider this chattelization as camp through BDSM, and monstrous (demon) BDSM operating as a complex, paradoxical dialog of psychosexual torture exacted for different purposes during oppositional praxis. We'll look at their role as part of a larger aesthetic (exhibit 9b2) that either fits within European, heteronormative beauty standards/myths (exhibit 10a), or camps them (exhibit 10b2, 10b2 and 10c1). This, I will argue, comes from the style of Horace Walpole as located in fearsome, genderqueer doubles of the European castle that invite nightmarishly illuminating-if-troublesome comparisons between the two (from my thesis): "Doubling is the black mirror in action; its confused reflections invite troubling-but-useful comparisons to alien, unhomely things (*unheimlich*), showing less about how

we're different from the things we abject, and more how we're *similar* (albeit in discomfiting ways)" ([source](#)). The castle shows similarities but also potential differences (transformation/death omens) regarding home and homebodies amid imposturous, otherworldly chaos, phobias, uncertainty and change; i.e., "bad," imperfectly decayed fakeries that *don't* further the process of abjection, instead updated for modern forms of Gothic politique that, while Walpole would have admittedly been lost on, still apply his concepts in a monstrous, ludo-Gothic, dreamlike fashion: "fur fags" (exhibit 10a2) portending the death of the state within disturbed thresholds and surfaces complicated by the context of struggle whose shared aesthetic feels invaded, but also occupied by ill will that cannot neatly be divided into clean, discrete categories. The *phenomenology* (experience) of emotional turmoil is the code not just to decipher but *speak with* as a message unto itself, relayed inside a parallel space capable of intense (re)education.



The Gothic castle, then, is the mind and house as intertwined and infused with sickness—an *unheimlich* ("unhomely") site of inhabited destruction, superstition, phobias, taboos, medieval psychology (demonic emotions and psychomachy) and moral panic (stigmas and bias) that can not only change hands, but ownership

and function in ways that demonstrably help workers who feel uncertain about their surroundings and familiar/familial elements; i.e., to unspeakable, repressed degrees that are, themselves, tied to immense locational trauma; e.g., the mother from *The Babadook* (2014, above) half-secretly wanting to kill her son *despite* her presumed protector role. Said position is invaded and shared by buried trauma tied to the home as occupied by unfronted psychosexual forces: objects of the household overpowering the minds of the inhabitants in ways not strictly dissimilar to a demonic possession, nightmare or curse. Mother and murderer synonymize, doubling inside one person as neither one nor the other but both at the same time oscillating in a state of agitated confusion. Conflicts like these are inevitable in such places; if you don't confront them, you'll kill the next in line!

Like Radcliffe, such nightmares are felt *while awake*, becoming something to confront and confirm as being genuine or false, harmful or safe; unlike Radcliffe, we want to weaponize it *against* the state in ways that escape their monopolized cycle of harm (versus "punching the mirror" and effectively ourselves as scapegoated "destroyers" blamed for the "fall" of civilization). Like *The Babadook*, generational trauma becomes something to ultimately face, accept, and live with—to paradoxically befriend. Just as the Babadook's red book appears like magic,

followed by doubt and nightmares that weave spells of moribund uncertainty regarding our place in the world, we can call upon the animalistic, psychosexual powers of the Gothic castle to terrify our enemies with: the state doesn't own those, and the mere fact that the home is a giant, endless graveyard needn't disempower us. We can paint our complicated, half-real experiences, thus giving them shape/a healing⁸² voice to speak out regarding our inherited confusions, injuries and insignias.

For workers, the ritualized, animalistic trauma common to BDSM becomes a historical-material offshoot of state abuse, one that involves women (or effeminate/emasculated persons). Instead of treating sex as an unpleasant task, they can cathartically reify then seek out psychosexual, xenophilic pleasure and pain, hence adjust to the fact that they were once denied control by an abusive partner (or false protector of some kind or another) *chattelizing* them in animal-like ways (which, like a Gothic castle, haunts them in cartoonish forms they at least partially have some control over). The fact remains that impotency and pain unto itself can be an immensely pleasurable experience. Likewise, the ritualized aesthetics of giving and receiving pain within animalistic dialogs doesn't demand costumes that *look* like actual animals, but instead *function* in the manner to which animals are treated under human relations of unequal power exchange: the (to paraphrase my thesis) dog as heroic and obedient, the cat as "catty" and feminine, the rabbit as pagan and fertile, and all of them being combined with various stigmatized species during anthropomorphism; i.e., as a pedagogy of the oppressed with BDSM components of sexual healing that serve as asexual forms of public nudism to confront and interrogate heteronormative, settler-colonial trauma and its



usual actors embodied by fantastical cops: knights, Amazons, and the various animalistic qualities they are recognized, celebrated and feared for during Gothic nostalgia.

(artist: Junji Ito)

In the same vein, there is a campy element to reclamation—to say one's body and holes are one's own, but nevertheless tied up in heterosexual enforcement trapping one inside a body-shaped prison *made for you*. These liminal sensations become medicinal insofar

⁸² Take it from me, such projects—regardless of their size—can ease tremendous suffering.

as they can be evoked as profoundly badass/awesome; re: the palliative Numinous as discussed in Volume Zero and other kinds of calculated, psychosexual risk/informed consent. Embodiments of the Numinous and psychosexuality are ubiquitous in Western culture: the sadist, the masochist, as Gothic. Such implements aren't entirely sex-coercive/Cartesian, allowing the performers (and their bodies) to express complicated expressions of sexual power/trauma and healing wrapped up on the same surface; i.e., in the same thresholds, using the same dark aesthetics tied to an imaginary past where one's exact position (and animal role) is not entirely certain, but *is* heavily commodified during liminal expression under capital as a means of survival:



(exhibit 9b2: Artist: [UrEvilMommy](#). The aesthetics of pleasure and pain [which can be pleasurable]—but also good and evil, freedom and bondage—often elide in Gothic media as fetishizing the woman-in-black for cross purposes; i.e., a "killer rabbit" [exhibit 100a5] phenomenon that predates Sontag's dissection of the Hugo Boss uniform but extends beyond it into sex-coercive and sex-positive discourse. Indeed, Sontag's famous regression to pre-fascist times in "Fascinating Fascism" conspicuously intimates an unstable presence of danger and vulnerability within the recipient of abuse as reverential towards unironic, compelled flagellation and fatal damage. The outfit codifies the exchange of power/resistance and subsequent sensations as ambiguous, thus oft-misunderstood. Instead, unequal power exchange is worshipped for its "unfair" arrangement in nostalgic language that simultaneously subverts or plays with historically incongruent ideas of mutual/informed consent; i.e., performative irony during Gothic counterculture art. Said variants look nigh-identical to unironic, coercive [demon/undead/animalized] BDSM but the contract is respected in ways that

provide for the historically abused party. She becomes worshipped in her totality as a survivor of immense trauma whose plurality denotes tantalizing attractions to pleasurable pain as a forbidden outlet. Difference denotes curiosity towards the "mother" persona [which historically would be synonymous to some extent with the daughter archetype—i.e., the incest trope; below] as something to not exclusively destroy or dominate by men, but rather a volatile force to be reckoned with and enjoyed precisely because she turns the tables on the expected patriarchal dominators. The fragmented, uncertain attraction denotes an arrangement that becomes highly sought after, the dark kitten/queen expertly demanding powerful men to surrender their power [and their wealth] to her [symbolizing a pleasurable relinquishing of responsibility through fiscal means].

Animals, despite being relegated to positions of property [thus harm] in Cartesian frameworks, are prized for their magnetism in human forms; e.g., Amazons as big dumb herbos in appearance [the role is generally divided into brains or brawn] but also as beings to bend over and breed like property during plantation-esque fantasies fetishizing the slave or bride as one-in-the-same. Out of the ancient past, the female [or monstrous-feminine] ass evolved through Capitalism into something to beat, use and discard by European men [or their emulators] claiming ownership of nature as a whole—a bestial treating of sleeping with one's slaves to dominate them in ways that aren't discouraged/demonized because said slaves aren't literal animals; they're treated like them, sitting in an uncomfortable space where they belong nowhere, and—like Satan fallen from Paradise—are painfully aware of that fact. Reversing this ontological configuration and its assorted disadvantages requires an ass that "fucks back" precisely because it faces the animalized components in way that subvert, weaponize or otherwise celebrate their proletarian psychosexual potential:



[artist: [MizzzVega](#)]

In some shape or form, then, Gothic bewitchment communicates worker resistance through Satanic poetics' animalistic allure, affording serious, complicated nuance and degrees of torture as negotiated and unnegotiated: the thrill of "danger" vs actual danger as being up-for-grabs. For one, it sits within a reverse charm offensive against the usual suspects; i.e., in that liminal space between freedom and imprisonment that historically-materially would have been enforced by structures of power that exhausted both parties, yet made the

dom older than the sub. The schoolmaster, priest, general, executive, naval officer, or fast food manager—Capitalism and its precursors would and continue to organize these divisions of labor in arrangements that force both sides to look but not touch, while also a) alienating them from their own bodies, and b) from nature and the imaginary past associated with Man-Box positions of authority that are regularly sexualized unto themselves as animalistic; e.g., being "hot for teacher" and enthralled with said teacher's animalized persona as "ancient." Meanwhile, when abuses against one side by the other did occur, it was always the victim's word against the master's—the animal's against its owner's—because outside of trophies, who takes pictures of their own crimes? They survive through stories that present the animal as something to hunt, and that which sometimes hunts back.



For our purposes, abuse victims are often drawn to trauma during Gothic poetics as a paradoxical, animalized means of catharsis. A ritualized reversal of trauma's interrogation, then, can out the would-be abuser as "cucked" by the dominatrix pinning him to

the bed—taking him like the stud does the mare, or more intensely still, the wolf the lamb. Something violent and out-of-place sits onstage, expressing to colonial benefactors sitting in the audience the uncomfortable reality that sex and harm synonymize within colonial structures for those treated as prey animals by predators just like them. Incredible, systemic trauma overhangs such engagements. Indeed, if the abuse is severe enough, the eliding of not just pleasure and pain, but consent and non-consent, become permanently confused inside the victim's mind while playing out predator and prey responses. This is, on its face, an extraordinary power play couched within Gothic poetics, but it still exists with the devil's courtship as an inescapable material reality. The sex-positive difference is, the animalized bargainer states "show me the money" while holding the devil at arm's length: "[You can hae your silken goon...](#)")

The kind of sex-positive, Satanic nuance featured above is entirely lost on heteronormative actors compelled to enact harmful animalistic treatments of morphological expression on others. For women, it becomes merely a culturally appropriative costume to don and submit within a compelled role: the abuser or the abused relayed, in some shape or form, through the Gothic mode and its lies favoring the status quo. For men, "woman is other"; i.e., a caretaker sex object,

but also a means to an end: societal climbing and homosocial clout. The premeditation of female ownership/enslavement becomes less a way of cheating at the game and more men playing the game of Capitalism as expected.

Consequently, *female* or monstrous-feminine pleasure, agency and intelligence are mythologized/demonized—relegated to the lands of make-believe and stigma-animalized, "furry" bodies" (exhibit 9b1) but also advertised everywhere either as outrageous (re: hysteria/the wandering womb and the creation of sexual difference) or as commodified through the Gothic mode in ways that seem "safe enough"; i.e., ostensibly tailored around men/the Male Gaze (exhibit 9b2).

Medusa's phallic pleasure becomes either death-on-sight or an embodiment of death whose function is not set, and Amazons having sex for their own reasons amounts to "death by Snu Snu" as a kind of silly joke that frames patriarchal anxieties within half-hearted, theatrical (unrealistic) "rape" scenarios.

Except, this effects not just the practitioners, but their *bodies* in a cultural sense; i.e., they are viewed pejoratively in the eyes of xenophobic men, women and token groups fearful of an animalistic postcolonial. Unlike the sex-positively xenophilic, heteronormative bigots consider gender-non-conforming bodies abominable but chase-worthy (the demon/the whore) during gender trouble and



normal bodies (the damsel/the virgin) working as complicated sources of animalistic shame outside of highly specific circumstances: sex—like a bad joke—is harmful. It becomes monstrous in ways that regularly personify through liminal expressions of the revived medieval: dark bodies reconstructed/recoded as sites of sin, animal hedonism, lust, rage, and other intense, alienated emotions out of the medieval period and into a settler-colonial world enthralled by fatal nostalgia.

(artist: [Nya Blu](#))

For example, while being canonically associated with sexual reproduction as things to breed, alienation from nature while sexualizing it means that non-penetrated vaginas, mouths or assholes tend to look a little *alien* to cis-het men (arguably excluding lipstick lesbians, but these utilize dildos, fingers and tongues that serve a phallic role). Especially "atypical" are our aforementioned non-heteronormative vaginas; i.e., external female genitalia as "animalistic" (above). "[The Classification of the Anatomical Variation in Female External Genitalia](#)" (2023) catalogues the sheer *variety* of external female genitals available. Despite this proliferate

biodiversity being public knowledge, said knowledge is framed as forbidden, but also iconoclastic in ways that must be appropriated and sold back during controlled forms of performative "resistance"; i.e., it appears monstrous in ways that are commonly portrayed as deserving of male/tokenized retribution: the Medusa/dark Amazon as something to masturbate to and kill, often by women acting like men *vis-à-vis* the state's fear-fascination with the myth of the dark, savage continent. The morphological argument is worn like an animal costume over an hourglass white body having become "colored" and wild:



(artist: [Alex Pascenko](#))

And yet, there remains the unspoken aspects of the human body that are implied by Vitruvian performers and their wild-animal costumes. I want to move away from standardized body types, and consider those they "speak for" as having been crowded offstage during the Gothic dialogs that emerged from Horace Walpole onwards.

Before we get to Walpole, we'll consider genitals a bit more, as well as other phenotypical components in European belief systems, as well as the heteronormative attitudes to such a cryptonymy as enacted by state forces; then we'll explore gender and queer expression through animalistic monster dialogs (furrries), whose "sodomy" within public discourse emerged from performative locations first introduced by Walpole, then reexplored by Matthew Lewis and others building on Walpole's faithless reinventions: the Gothic castle as an operatic, ghastly site of campy violence and "rape," but also a hunting ground of targeted actions and bodies being tacitly associated with theatrical harm as a *canonical* means of preparing them for state punishment. Like bodies, castles both actual and possible share the same performative zone. They are both welcome and unwelcome, friendly and hostile, male and female, etc, as oscillating back and forth in the Gothic sense.

Before we carry on, then, a quick refresher about Gothic language as a performative device: the Gothic is chaotic and shared among warring factions for or against the state. Camping the canon, then, requires meeting unironic violence with ironic, iconoclastic forms of cryptonymy that foster revolutionary potential during liminal expression: doubling canonical, monstrous bodies, locations and power-exchange scenarios. The language is "sticky" insofar as a castle tower or knightly lance can resemble (and potentially represent) a bare, exposed penis (often as

"knife-like") or a murky dungeon or cave can stand in for a vaginal cavity (and its classically hysterical contents) in mythological, videoludic⁸³ forms. A classic maiden, on the other hand, senses rape through failed modesty as threatening to her virtue; i.e., by her own hand, or when dangerously reflecting on the surface of immodest, demonic persons whose troubling existence before her challenges her own sense of self as prescribed: projection onto that which she fears will destroy her because it is different than her in a way the state will demonize and attack. Its purposeful mess accounts for the organic and inherited confusions coming out of the state's imaginary past grappling with countercultural forms inside the same performative



sphere and ambivalent, medievalized theatrics. During triangulation, the curious maiden becomes a weapon, surrendering her Amazonian potential to rebel in exchange for a state paycheck: a warrior-detective solving civil disputes for the elite with impunity and extreme prejudice.

(artist: [Mike Lucas](#))

Keeping that in mind, let's quickly examine genitals and body diversity under European standards, as well as the at-times incredibly odd belief systems/physiological arguments that go with them when these models remain unquestioned, hence unchallenged. As far as diversity itself goes, exhibit 9b1 introduced some fairly radical forms, except "radical" needn't pertain to overtly animalized variants. External labia, for instance, are granted pejorative labels in

relation to *hysteria* being canonically demonized in *all* its forms. Abject nicknames like the "blown-out" cooter, "lazy kebab," or "roast beef curtains" body-shame the female body in accordance with purity politics that stymie gynodiversity or the representation of female genitalia within art as abjectly "hysterical," but also animalized as property *and* food. Food-as-status has been a regular source of contention for much of human history. In short, food and animals are status symbols that communicate socio-material conditions through themselves. Except there's scant difference between animals and food under capital, and neoliberalism controls the market to better commodify animals and their expression within food

⁸³ Videogames are endemic to (and incredibly common inside) neoliberal Capitalism as having spawned the majority of them on a franchised level; i.e., its Cartesian, monomorphic prescriptions yielding heteronormative clichés through popular iterations; e.g., Samus Aran's missiles and Mother Brain's caves in *Metroid* (see: "[War Vaginas: Phallic Women, Vaginal Spaces and Archaic Mothers in Metroid](#)," 2021).

consumption (tied to famous junk food brands, below): "you are what you eat" being a series of products, including humans consuming whatever the elite use to fatten them up—themselves.



(artist: [Noah Verrier](#))

The aforementioned point of contention regarding animals and food involves morphological expression in Gothic terms; e.g., an AFAB person's control over their own body and environment while being treated as livestock by doctors (and requiring a specialized doctor that men think they do not: a OB/GYN) but also the sexual activity and eggregores poetically associated with these things: cat women (akin to werewolves, but feline in ways that women generally are sexualized as—i.e., big cats as ferocious and wild and little cats as domestic and cute—versus dogs as tied more to protective actions, but also raw "breeding" activities: doggystyle). Gynodiverse labia are mythologized in demonic, fetishized ways on par with the visible/"enlarged" clitoris as emasculating towards men and demonizing cis women against their will. However, the canonical phobias of the latter group often project territorial animosity towards intersex/trans/non-binary people and their gender-divergent bodies; e.g., the intersex qualities of the xenomorph (exhibit 51a), but also the increased hairiness and clit size of witches and furies (exhibits 52f and 68), and androdiversity and gender-non-conformance (exhibit 91b2). By comparison, heteronormativity depicts the "proper" vagina as small, dainty and unformed; i.e., infantilized, but also owned, thus dominated, by men; or policed according to its "proper" roles of PIV, heteronormative sex by men, or Amazonian women like Ellen Ripley who serve the status quo by turning their female rage against queer scapegoats (exhibit 30a): fuck the womb of nature for the state, for the Man, through Man Box culture's passing of "prison sex" mentalities through all the usual methods (trifectas) and monopolies, from a position of male-oriented dominance topping the monstrous-feminine (and nature/the planet), etc.

Ignoring idiosyncratic fetishes, cis-het men don't even tend to masturbate to non-penetrated holes (where they aren't imagining a cock inside the hole-in-question); they tend to jerk off to four main body parts: boobs, butts, feet, and penises, only one of which is even strictly female (during natural assignment). As for penises, this can be penises inside the vagina, but also being pleased by those who "should" be pleasing it with the "appropriate parts" during the appropriate heteronormative rituals: PIV sex, veering into increasingly fetishized and non-heteronormative, thus alien forms (re: Meg-Jon Barker's "[What's Wrong with](#)

[Heteronormativity?](#)" exhibit 3b). So, an unhealthy attraction towards hole-owners, but also trans, intersex and non-binary people, is bound to occur. So-called traps, "transsexuals" and "she-male" porn—appropriated from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975)—is condemned by fascists, but also mistreated in "prison sex" rituals that assert white cis-het male dominance against the things they're masturbating to as a guilty act of self-disgust and genuine loneliness. This void is created by Capitalist Realism under a system that very deliberately privatizes sex through the means of production; its *Superstructure* discourages healthy social-sexual relationships by compelling marriage, thus systemic rape, as something to sublimate, ignore and cover up through violent canon: "Reader, I married him."

This immortal line was said by Jane Eyre *after* Charlotte Brontë had Anne Causeway (Jean Rys' name for Bertha) killed "for the sake of the story" (furthering the white heroine's amatonormative arc by killing off the black villain). To that, white women (or token assimilators) animalize non-European parties during heteronormative Gothic stories in order to prey on them through settler-colonial violence. In *Jane Eyre*, while Mr. Rochester is "tamed," Bertha the demon lover is never humanized; meanwhile, the system that demonizes black people as gender-non-conforming (*vis-à-vis* the European model of marriage) extends to gender-non-conforming people at large during military urbanism. Gothic canon levies settler-colonial violence against *all* of them, albeit to different, intersecting degrees inside the state of exception; there, it conflates them (and their non-marital, sodomic love) as "rapacious" outsiders who, like Anne Causeway, must die for "Jane Eyre" to achieve "her" equality of convenience (thus bigoted, predatory influence over others). Such expansions are commonplace within Gothic canon, insofar as Frederic Jameson's insistence of a "class fantasy (or nightmare) in which the dialectic of privilege and shelter is exercised" feels apt only if it *doesn't* denunciate patriarchy



or protest actual rape. But Jameson only envisions what I call (from the thesis volume) "a class-conscious mirage swept up in its own endless romance, patented by Radcliffe and carried forward into the ages—i.e., to keep things the same by refusing to challenge anything in a dialectical-material sense" ([source](#)). Challenging heteronormativity and Capitalism through the Gothic mode requires some sense of *steady, conscious* engagement—not just with taboo subjects, but visitations, reenactments or imperfect, ironic evocations of texts that many would quickly dismiss outright as exploitative and "trashy":

(artist: [Boris Petroff](#))

It's hardly a secret that critics of the Gothic tend to focus on its pulpy corpus and animation of forbidden topics (rape, incest, and murder) rather than any critical power the overall mode might yield, including when interrogating said trash as symptomatic to Capitalism's slew of commodities (and token enforcers). Even when sensationalized, rape culture can be especially telling. It's precisely these "tells" that we need to be conscious of when subverting them in our own works.

For example, as women start learning to say no to sexual advances, thereby establishing boundaries and knowing their own worth as workers in relation to cis-het men, these same men—as the traditionally entitled, universal clientele—become disillusioned but remain beholden to the very system exploiting men by teaching them to hate what they simultaneously fear/want: women (or beings treated as women, thus "lesser" than men) as welcome relative to an all-boys club, *provided* they conform (as brides near but outside the club, or token enforcers inside the club who eventually become brides); but they will always be seen as a prize, nuisance, distraction, curiosity and/or threat that weakens male power and status (e.g., Sampson and Delilah). Women—and by extension, nature and anything associated with it—must be kept in check lest it awaken and "castrate" men (or



outgun them, left). Except the emasculation comes from capital: No longer able rely on marriage and spousal domination being handed to them on a silver plate, cis-het men fall victim to their own lack of education by the same system branching out through Rainbow Capitalism, which funnels them into fascist groups that conveniently fear everything of nature as gay (which neoliberals do *not* root out because these groups are in cahoots, defending Capitalism—wherein neoliberals/the elite are increasingly *less* expendable than their fascist counterparts).

(artist: [Wildragon](#))

Said fears and alienation from nature leads to a variety of stupid, dangerous, heteronormative myths in Gothic canon that, like a deadly

poison, bleeds into binary public thinking (non-binary thinking is anathema in mainstream discourse):

- Educated women are Medusas that need to be beheaded (exhibit 23a)—less metaphor and more heteronormative code for rape, but also beatings, torture, and murder (or silence/segregation which leads to genocide).
- Men are visually stimulated; women are not/don't like sex or porn.
- Women can't orgasm or experience sexual pleasure/can't cum.
- Women pee⁸⁴ out of their vaginas/butts.
- Men's brains are *totally* different from women's.

First off, feminism is scapegoated/appropriated all the time (we'll discuss TERFs extensively in Volume Three, Chapter Four). Second, the idea that women aren't visually stimulated is bullshit. As women acquire more power, visually-stimulating cuties—catboys, femboys, but also trans, intersex, and non-binary persons—appear by virtue of female demand. Women want us by virtue of idiosyncratic "types," and you can bet your collective asses they get off to us visually (queer people are also more keen to sleep with those who won't pull a Nick Fuentes and kill us, post-coitus). Third, women definitely orgasm (they tend to twitch a lot more than dudes do, which honestly looks a little demonic in a kinky sort of way). Fourth—and I did *not* make this one up, I swear!—but Haz Al-Ghul [really does think that women only have two holes and pee from their butts](#) (Bad Empanada, 2022). He is also friends with Nick Fuentes, avowed hater of women and "lover" of catboys (more on him and his catboy "love" in Volume Three, Chapter Three) whose Cozy.tv is a forsaken lighthouse for dudes like Al-Ghul to go and be weird LARPer together. Fifth, [male and female brains are not radically different at birth](#) according to Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Review's "Dump the 'Dimorphism': Comprehensive Synthesis of Human Brain Studies Reveals Few Male-Female Differences Beyond Size" (2021). We're not different species; men aren't from Mars and women aren't from Venus. Rather, Capitalism divides/alienates workers by manufacturing sexual dimorphism in heteronormative, Cartesian language, including canonical Gothic language as culturally prevalent across space and time: myths, monsters and legends, including the "super gay ones" that *really* shake things up and cross barriers and boundaries—like Doctor Frankenfurter (with Jim Sharman making fun of Mary Shelley's classic Byronic xenophobia much like Mel Brooks did with that "[enormous schwanzstucker](#)" gag from a year prior)!

⁸⁴ Isolation and enforcement of medievalized divisions lead to alienation from nature, but also the human body in all its forms. For example, the monk from Matthew Lewis' titular novel *didn't* know the difference between men and women: "reported to be so strict an observer of Chastity, that He knows not in what consists the difference of Man and Woman" ([source](#)). To this, Lewis—a gay man—was effectively making fun of weird, *heterosexual*, virgin nerds isolated and educated by heteronormative canon to abuse those around them.



(exhibit 10a: Artist, left: Edmund Leighton; right: various ensemble casts for live performances of Rocky Horror.)

Capitalism and Cartesian dualism promote European beauty standards, genders and sexuality but also morphologically abjects anything that isn't these things. "Non-European" includes anything that *isn't* an hourglass figure, skinny and/or pale-skinned (exhibit 10b1); non-missionary⁸⁵ thus "incorrect" sexual positions (e.g., doggy, islander, or anything out of the *Karma Sutra*, etc, as ways that "uncivilized" people have sex); but also, cocks that are "too big" (non-white): the Frankcock/frank(en)furter as monstrous, giant, and made by *white* madmen from spare *criminal* parts (implying a Cartesian function, the original novel by Mary Shelley being positively *rife* with racial tensions and postcolonial potential. More on this in Volume Two). This evokes various racialized porn stereotypes that we'll

⁸⁵ Missionary is common for several reasons. Apart from colonial enforcement through literal missionary work (with the Church telling colonized populations to fuck in a male-dominant way because God [thus the state] approves of it), missionary position is also fairly easy to perform (though doggy is easier); it's also hypercanonical, thus ubiquitous within paratextual "instruction" documents. To be fair, there's nothing wrong with having sex in this position, any more than having standard/non-standard bodies or genders are; the issue lies in violent prescription through a settler-colonial binary that leads to genocide on every possible register/format: those different than normal are punished, including for how they fuck *unlike* missionaries, but also the occupying *armies* that accompany the Church (and invading nation-state) into colonial territories.

examine more in another chapter (exhibit 32b). For now, we'll quickly examine two: the BBC (big black cock) and BBW (big, beautiful woman) as canonical porn staples that become implied outside of porn (through Gothic stories, which are porn-*adjacent*; e.g., torture porn, exhibit -1b) while simultaneously regulating morphological expression to serve the profit motive through threats of settler-colonial violence and control during moral panics.

Gothic fiction was written by beneficiaries of slave labor (whether they wanted to benefit from slavery or not) and tended to fetishize the enslaved groups in ways that follow the underclass into their supposed "liberation." This includes into porn and porn-adjacent dialogues presents in Gothic media, wherein colonized groups would have been fetishized to varying prey-like degrees. As such, it really shouldn't surprise anyone that canonical porn genres are historically body-centric, predatory and bigoted. As a settler-colonial device, BBCs advertise black people as having unusually large cock sizes *compared to white men*. [Despite also being more prone to having smaller cock sizes than white people](#) (according to urologist James Elist), black people are *violently* fetishized, pointedly associated with—if not outright raping white women *using* said cocks—then violating their modesty during pornographic suggestion built on problematic fantasies (exhibit 32). Made popular by American Lost Cause media like *The Birth of a Nation* (1911), the BBC genre was authored collectively by jealous, psychosexual white men who not only want to use



a cock *even if it's not theirs*—i.e., a "[man chooses, a slave obeys](#)"—but also think the only sex that exists is violent penetrative sex and that "bigger means better." The same idea applies to BBWs, except it's often white women (and gender-non-conforming AFAB persons, left) being implied to be "non-European" by virtue of having bodies that, again, are "too big" (thus "not white"). This exclusionary concept is further complicated by superhero comics, which play around with non-human skin colors to codify stigma; e.g., purple or green (exhibit 10b2).

(artists: [Autumn Anarchy](#) and [Sinead Rhiannon](#))

As genres of expression, "BBC" and "BBW" must be reclaimed through iconoclastic porn that raises awareness towards marginalized, thus colonized/preyed-upon groups; i.e., by valuing and enriching them at a socio-material within pornographic dialogues (also left). Unfortunately canonical renditions of either genre are useful to Capitalism, which conflates sex

with war and rape with victory and domination; i.e., like riding a mare or war horse as property "owned" by a male rider serving a higher patriarchal authority. Even Tolkien's "killer hobbit" Bullroarer Took could do that, or George R. R. Martin's injection of the medieval imagination with deromanticized sex, frank depictions of rape, and military scenarios that lionize *manly* men, not feminine ones; e.g., his twink-turned-twunk, Satin, from *A Storm of Swords* (2000) being "too girly" to "man the ramparts" during a siege:

He was pretty as a girl with his dark eyes, soft skin, and raven's ringlets. Half a year at Castle Black had toughened up his hands, however, and Noye said he was passable with a crossbow. Whether he had the courage to face what was coming, though... ([source](#)).

As part of the Gothic mode, such Pygmalions mandate the virtues of *binary* (thus heteronormative) gender during a reimagined medieval rife with *cliché* misinformation.

As said medieval takes many forms, reconsider the "[enormous schwanzstucker](#)" scene—when Frederick Frankenstein speaks out from both sides of his mouth to his smitten (white, blonde) servant: "He's going to be very popular." Like seriously, how would *you* know, Mr. I-Can't-Even-Sleep-With-My-Own-Wife? I call this [Ben Shapiro syndrome](#) (The Majority Report's "Ben Shapiro HUMILIATED By College Student During Debate," 2022), ol' Ben trusting his own wife (apparently a doctor [according to this very creepy 2023 glow-up piece](#)) when she tells him it's "normal" that she doesn't get wet during sex. I'd say she's violating her Hippocratic Oath for that one, but she's already being subjected to cruel and unusual punishment by having to sleep with Ben Shapiro...

Dogmatically favoring penetration and bigger tools for the job⁸⁶ are both grossly outmoded ideas when you consider that many clitoris-owners actually require penises of a specific size for hitting their g-spot with (the so-called "Goldilocks dick") or oral/digital/dermal stimulation (for the clitoris, nipples, skin, etc) when it comes to BDSM and sexual/asexual intimacy. Worse, penis-shaming can adopt an assimilative, racialized quality—with people of color feeling inadequate for "failing" to be the one thing they are constantly marketed as: big, black thugs with BBCs that seek out the coerced pleasure of white women. This infantilizing process—historically linked to slave rebellions as things to fear *and* put down with extreme prejudice (re: Howard Zinn, but also [In Range TV](#) noting that "power

⁸⁶ Male masturbation is generally described by cis-het men in violent, *war-like, monstrous colonizer* language (with the canonical cumshot serving as a "claiming ritual," [as illustrated by this lovely 2002 Robin Williams skit](#)). Also, don't mistake me; sex takes work to be fun, but it should be *non-violent* fun, not a brutal, numbing chore! And yes, "anger sex" can be intense, but it should still be safe and controlled, with the appropriate aftercare post-fuck; otherwise, it's toxic (speaking from experience on this one, but we'll get to that).

aggregates" against potential/actual revolt⁸⁷ in Atun-Shei Film's "Fighting for Freedom: The Weapons and Strategies of the 1811 Slave Revolt," 2021; [timestamp](#): 20:55)—is essentially a more extreme, Americanized version of the

⁸⁷ The aggregation of state power happens between the private interests of the ruling elite and nation-state governments (and proponents) acting in concert. The exact ways this historically unfolded—under *laissez-faire* Capitalism versus the World Wars, Embedded Liberalism and Bretton Woods, or the rise of neoliberalism in 1979—is largely differentiated by the elite's ability to crackdown against rebelling parties. In the mid-20th century onwards, a popular method of quelling potential rebellion are the bourgeois trifectas: the CIA (secret agents), strategic bombing (a misleading term used to disguise the escalation and quantity of dropped ordinance) and trade sanctions, aka "soft power" (a misleading term, as soft power and economic strength historically fare better against hard power/total war than the other way around, but until recently couldn't be waged the way the US does now through global US hegemony/Capitalist Realism). In other words, the recipient of this shared animus is a common enemy to the elite, but also their *servants* (official police agents and *de facto* cops/fascist vigilantes) defending capital: revolting slaves, but also workers in general according to Communism as echoed after the Civil Rights Movement as engaged by women and non-whites, but also the LGBTQ and religious minorities working in intersectional solidarity. There's nothing the state fears more.



(artist: [Justin Gerard](#))

This often conveys in fantasy canon by fearful Pygmalions. Tolkien, for example, framed the dialectical-material arrangement of what *was* WW1 quickly becoming WW2 in the good-vs-evil animal language he used to gentrify war on his refrain (the treasure map); i.e., the goblins, an anti-Semitic symbol merged with fascism (dubiously conflated by Tolkien) and "evil animals/corrupt nature" versus Everyone Else fighting for "good nature" in his famous Battle of the Five Armies (above). Meanwhile, *Cameron's* refrain (the shooter) depicted the barbarian horde as xenomorphic "space bugs," *vis-à-vis* *Starship Troopers* (1959), whereas *The Simpsons* joked, "I'm under attack by Nazi-Communists!" All of these encapsulate American centrism and babyface dialog quite well through Capitalist Realism: the fight is always an exchange between the establishment and the unruly mob turned undead, demonic, and wild; i.e., Nazis and Communists threatening the West's symbolic domination of nature. The code for military industry and propoganda becomes ludic, neat and lucrative (videogames), but also *sacred* unto itself; those who challenge it will be gatekept and kettled until they change their tune.

Gothic villain as a vessel for dark energies and foreboding gut emotions wracking the Imperial Core; e.g. Ann Radcliffe's Father Schedoni—the titular, severe and hulking "Italian" (1796) and his knife dick (the classic male source of pride and angst dueling with other men for women, but also *with* women resisting their proud⁸⁸ advances) already being an Orientalist, xenophobic trope of something "not of the West." Like a goblin (above).

Neo-Gothic stories were written while slavery was still legal in Britain; as such, they tried to skirt racist critique/expression by displacing to an older time, but the threatening nature and aesthetic still remained. So while he's "Italian," not black, Schedoni's powerful, imposing body conflates with his menacing genitals by having the former advertise the enormous dark power of the latter during psychosexual tension (Gothic novels eroticize moral panics during repressed, fatal sexual urges that arise between modest heroines and indecent, frustrated pretenders). By comparison, Zofloya the moor *is* noted for his gigantic stature, quasi-servile demeanor and Satanic presence (all tracking with the treatment of people of color in such stories, literally demonizing them); his body is huge so the threat he poses unto the heroine via his implied cock is also huge, but *inhumanly* so. Or as Parker from *Alien* puts it: "The son of a bitch is huge! It's like a man; it's big!"



As for BBWs, I can't remember them being discussed, as Neo-Gothic heroines are classically thin, modest and delicate; however, Victoria de Loredani from *Zofloya* (1806) was a *tragic* Gothic heroine, thus notable for her unusual height, strength and masculine pride—her *fierté*—being a flaw in the eyes of callous, appraising men; i.e., not "wife material":

⁸⁸ The didactic nature of Gothic stories would have, in the medieval tradition, fixated on deadly sins and emotions like pride and lust tied to sexuality as heavily gendered.

Berenza [...] beheld Victoria such as she really was, unembellished, unornamented; his keen eye that perceived her beauties, discerned likewise her defects. He appreciated her character; he beheld at once her pride, her stubbornness, her violence, her *fierté*. "Can I," asked himself, "be rationally happy, with a being imperfect as she now is?" ([source](#)).

The presence of all-inclusive, preceptive irony is up to debate in Neo-Gothic stories. In short, Victoria's the woman-in-black—the "phallic" destroyer/temptress whose conspicuously intense immodesty leads to a great deal of widespread harm by straying from the snow-white path of bridal, dainty righteousness. In short, she's the demon *and* the whore—a witch-like, sex-demon harpy whose animalistic qualities lead her to literally prey on the men (and women) around her while being underestimated for her female body! Meanwhile, the "black" appearance is generally captivating unto itself; i.e., implying a sense of extramarital excitement denied to Victorian audiences, of which they are swiftly "punished" for letting their guard down and evil run rampant: sexy is dangerous, but "safe" inside so-called "terrorist literature" as easily dismissed for its base cheapness and lack of sturdy moral fiber.



(artist: [Lera PI](#))

Such tropes, it must be said, were upheld by female writers as well as male ones. However, whereas women like Radcliffe or Dacre displaced critiques (or extensions) of their own bigoted society onto an enchanting "once upon a time" before settler colonialism existed (the pre-fascist 15th century or thereabouts), more recent Gothic stories imprint a racial component onto the black figure that is difficult to ignore. Darkness represents many things, of course; and yet, while the state of exception allows for a variety of minority types (religion, ethnicity and gender) to co-exist in the same shadow zone coding them as "black," actual black people are seen as "even less human" than Eastern European or Asian people⁸⁹ are in terms of fascist dogma assigning "bad vibes" to non-white "outsiders" (to be clear, the zombie-like assignment of an underclass *is* limited to whatever's available, which—in Western Europe—would have historically been Jewish people and other ethnic minorities relatively endemic to the region. For example, Holocaust Encyclopedia in 2022 explains how [there were a smaller number people of color living in Germany during the Third Reich from WW1 German colonies](#); conversely the Israelis are genociding the Palestinians *en masse*, the latter having lived in that area for thousands of years before Zionism was recently bankrolled by the British and U.S. governments).

Now that we've examined some of the myths and body standards regarding European morphological compulsion as a form of Cartesian violence, let's discuss challenging it through radical bodies as things to reify (or own if they already exist) and camp the unironic European standard within, then conclude the subchapter by looking at Walpole's castles and their complicated descendants.

Gothic camp certainly applies to genitals. For our purposes, a tremendous amount of guilt and shame are funneled into the penis as a canonical symbol of violence and rape, making sex-positive penis-shaming a useful means of owning one's member (or pussy or any other body part). General-purpose degradation and praise are both perfectly legitimate as long as it doesn't become toxic or lead to abusive habits, post-use. A certain degree of honesty is required to acknowledge that, regardless if it's healthy or not, many AMAB persons are anxious about their penises. Indeed, it's not even generally because of their size, but that they are culturally infused with a predatory sense of unironic torture, making the owner fearful of what their penis represents in regards to themselves; or conversely, a vagina owner can understandably feel small around someone who is or isn't bigger than them, but whose penis makes the AFAB person *feel* small and prey-like. These

⁸⁹ For a videoludic example of gradient xenophobia in relation to zombies, consider the excellent (and lengthy) "[A Thorough Look at Resident Evil](#)" (2022) by Noah Caldwell-Gervais. The franchise's treatment of zombies varies per setting. However, released over time, Capcom's use of zombies reflects displaced versions of real-world, geopolitical attitudes about places demonized by Capitalism, but also exploited like chattel; e.g., Eastern Europe and Africa, in *Resident Evil 4* and *5* (2005 and 2009). They and corporations like them purposefully link cultural anxieties to undead bodies that are summoned up and swiftly and shot for profit.

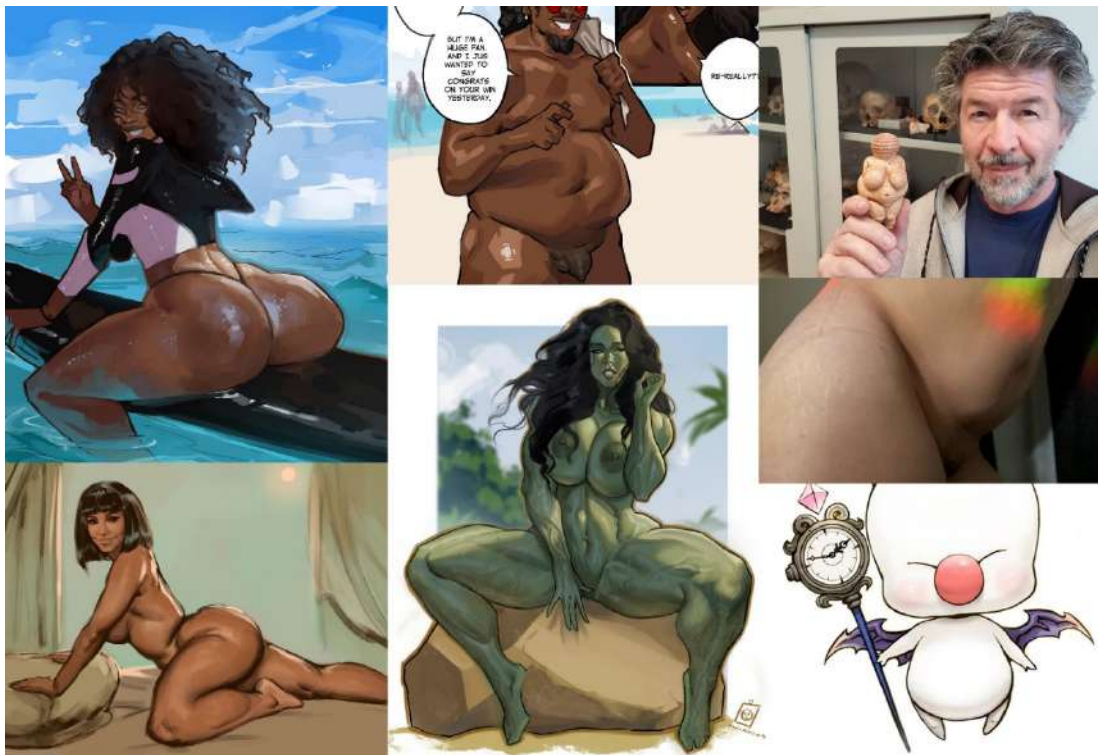
are all things to negotiate through art that is self-deprecating *and* vulnerable in a variety of campy but also liminal, animal-themed scenarios:



(exhibit 10b1: Artist, top: [Jarnqk](#); bottom: [The Happiest Cloud](#). Genital shaming/parody is often an expression of gender euphoria and gender-affirming care within the trans community. This extends neatly to the shapeshifting nature of animalistic/totemic demons, whose size differences involve their whole bodies. We'll examine this concept much more in Volume Two. For now, consider the idea of size difference as alluded to in relation to power and sexuality in Gulliver's Travels [1726] and Alice in Wonderland [1865].)

Beyond the genitals alone, the same campiness applies to various body types, and overlap between all of these things applying appreciative, genderqueer irony to canonical standards; i.e., "making it gay" in subversive ways that challenge heteronormativity during poetic expression; e.g., the green woman as a Medusa

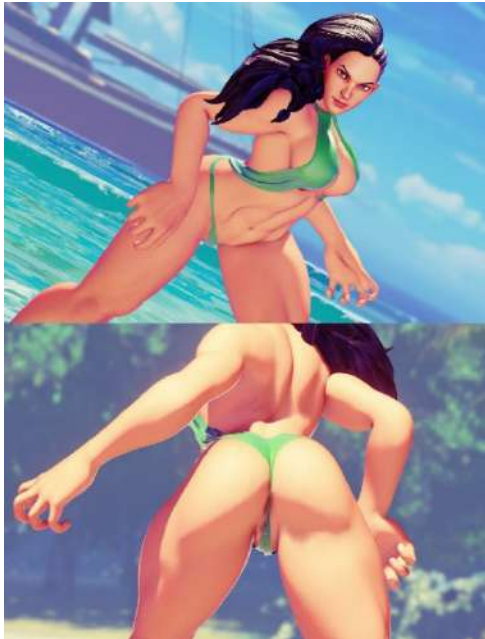
BBW and/or a woman of actual color who is seen as "full of sin, appetite and vigor" in animalistic ways that challenge their white male superiors, but also black men as expected to keep said "phallic" women in line with their BBC ("kaiju sex" having a totemic ⁹⁰ quality to it). All of these things conflict with one another according to what is expected and what actually comes about; i.e., to varying degrees of cultural appropriation/appreciation amid racial stigmas, intraracial/interracial tension and commodification of the human form versus its artistic expression during liminal presentations thereof. During camp, the cartoonish simplicity of good-vs-evil centrism is avoided in favor of theatrical complexities that include the human body in all of its shapes, sizes and colors, including abstract/abject renditions: superheroes, or "heroic" bodies commodified in popular media forms.



(exhibit 10b2: cz Top-right: [the Venus of Willendorf](#); mid-right: [Freakybbygirl](#); bottom-right: Mog, the [Final Fantasy XIII-2](#) version; everything else, artist: [bathmank](#). Comic books and videogames rely on Gothic poetics, which color-code

⁹⁰ Godzilla, in Japanese, is *Gojira*, which literally translates to "gorilla whale"; but also, the vast majority of *kaiju* are either animals or robot animals. As a sidenote, they represent state shift of a particular kind: giant titans of the repressed natural world rising up in the face of human arrogance and interference; e.g., Studio Ghibli's enraged forest demons in *Princess Mononoke* (1997) or *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (1984). Versus a Christofascist spiraling towards rapture through Capitalist Realism, the presence of such monsters (and their hellishly alien, forest-like homes) invite human viewers to recognize a collective erring of humanity and neglected responsibility as stewards of the Earth, which will survive after we kill ourselves off during military optimism (fighting everything, including nature, as an abject threat to capitalist hegemony).

stigma, but also attribute it to exaggerated elements of uncivilized cultural markers tied to physical strength, body fat, wild emotions and gross sexual appetite: curves, muscles and sheer "endowment" associated with animalistic qualities, but also the past [and current] plundering of various [neo]colonial sites: the Caribbean and Africa, but also Brazil and other areas of the Global South personified by a given starlet of the slave class; e.g. Laura from *Street Fighter V* [2016]:



[source: [Eden](#)]

Some heroes are villainous; all are monstrous. Superheroes, like animals, are trapped between two worlds: the foreign and the domestic, the wild and the tame, but also the ancient and uncolonized versus civilization as a colonial ordeal. To that, their animal considerations stem from the ancient world as something to revive in the present under Capitalism, then hide these secret identities under acceptable-albeit-conspicuous personas; to that, superheroes—like the naked wrestlers of Antiquity—supply the performer with animal qualities during kayfabe theatre as a popular-if-disposable commodity [straw dogs] that includes

wearing masks and other performative devices: their statuesque bodies. Some of these animals are so-called "good animals"; others are feared and stigmatized for their inhuman strength, speed or reflexes; e.g., Spiderman. There's also the "spider woman" as an archaic, female deity of darkness in canonical fantasy stories [or one

of its many offspring that carry with them their parent's dark skin and evil nature; e.g., the Drow, exhibit 41b].



[artist: [Jonpadraws](#)]

Purely on domestic soil, this disparity expresses through characters like She-Hulk wanting to assimilate, thus survive, despite being prized and feared for the qualities of a settler-colonial slave: a gentrified woman of color wearing a snazzy business suit in the courtroom, but threatening to explode in animal-like rage. Her green skin is both stigma against her and envy for those who treat her

revelation as a spectacle; i.e., displays of non-white strength fetishized by white culture fascinated with their own barbaric past lingering in the present. Though assimilated into white culture, She-Hulk's elevation is always in doubt—marked not just by her dark skin, but her entire physique. Combined, these express her heroism through a slaver's metric; i.e., the qualities historically prized and feared by enterprising colonists, and which are held against She-Hulk during reactive abusive: her "hulking out" a form of "uppity" behavior she must hide to try and appear more civilized, more white despite her irreversible skin color—[what F.D. Signifier on YouTube calls "Black Capitalism"](#) [2023].



[artist: [Bay](#)]

Muscles aside, a body's basic shape also plays an important totemic role; e.g., having a round bod instead of an hourglass or even pear-shape figure—i.e., not actually a dad, thus not allowed to have a "dad bod"—is generally seen as masculine [with AMABs naturally tending to store fat in their bellies, not their hips, thighs and buttocks, like AFABs do] but also animalistic. Zeuhl once referred to their body as "roumb" like Mog or Monty Mole [from [Super Mario World](#), 1991] and Bay similarly takes pride in his body as squishy, fat and animal-like, but also something to blend with BDSM: pup gear. While undeniably wholesome, such non-white, trans/non-binary

bodies are historically-materially relegated to fantasy by Capitalism, which genocides anything that doesn't fit the European standard: hunting "useless" specimens to extinction, then selling their pelts. When there are no more figurative or literal non-human animals left, modern man will hunt members of his own species he deems inferior to him, regarding those he considers "precious" something to "protect." Whether to kill or control for canonical propaganda purposes, this predation is a historical-material fact.)

The complexity of these countercultural forms help them combat complex canonical stigmas, biases, fears and dogma that generally intersect; e.g., for plus-sized women, fat-shaming's Enlightenment roots are steeped in racialized phobias, but also Catholic demonization by Protestants, including a little-known group of British/Dutch exiles, *the fucking Puritans* (who both countries disliked quite a bit because they were horribly uptight and went on to form the cultural groundwork for American Christofascism, along with various settler-colonial offshoots like the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses).

Furthermore, racialized stigmas and their signature body types are often portrayed with non-white skin colors—a kind of non-black "whitewashing" present inside fantasy narratives justifying violence against singular characters or larger societies:

- vice characters similar to Ester (exhibit 13d) except they actually have green skin; e.g., goblins (exhibit 94b1) but also the Wicked Witch of the West (whose portrayal in *The Wizard of Oz* functions as a form of "spectral blackface" that puts a white woman in green makeup, except it needn't be exclusively racist in its "othering")
- hoard-based savages like orcs (exhibit 37e) and their darker, non-human skin colors—green, black, brown, and ash, etc

Either numeration canonically presents dark-skinned embodiments of evil as being closer to death in the natural world; i.e., as something to fear and punish, their canonical iterations sublimating an appropriated scapegoat from a bourgeois standpoint (which we shall see with Tolkien, in the next subchapter).

From a *proletarian* standpoint, a character of mixed ethnicity often wrestles with their animalized heritage in the face of settler-colonial violence; e.g., Nella Larsen's Clare from *Quicksand* (1928): a "mulatto" in the book's own language and struggling to deal with the guilt/shame of not quite belonging anywhere—what Thomas Happ in *Axiom Verge* called "[Athetos](#)" or "without place" (exhibit 40g) echoing a Miltonic Satanic⁹¹ having lost its rebellious character in exchange for a Cartesian, thus genocidal one. For Athetos, this lack of place meant the scientific community but such an idea can obviously apply to any feeling of pariah-ness. With orcs in fantasy works, the placement of such figures within centrist military struggles has expanded to *some* "good" orcs—i.e., the noble savage (a white-savior colonizer's term). Yet, orc goodness will always be seen as "more savage and brutal" than the white-skinned, civilized men (and elves) of the West, which invariably justifies the Cartesian breaking of agreements after the Big Evil is defeated: "Boundaries for me, not for thee." This happens because the white man is "more Enlightened," thus destined to conquer nature and inherit the Earth by taking it away from anyone different from himself (and all for profit).

⁹¹ A similar tactic to many post-Miltonian works, whose Satanic poetics/darkness becomes blind towards critiquing patriarchal institutions. For example, *Hazbin Hotel* (2024) doesn't even mention God, instead treating good and evil as essential, tediously and unnecessarily reformed by a white "nepo baby" hotel (funded by a serial killer, no less). Worse, her iconoclastic parents, Satan and Lilith, have been chained to the nuclear family unit as bourgeois. The white princess' plan *does* suck, so her plight—of people not liking her stupid, small-minded idea—is an entirely unsympathetic one built on privilege, not rebellion. Its real-life author's hard-fought success is likewise a thoroughly gross compromise with a giant mega-company churning out blind, *Rocky-Horror*-style pastiche. Like Tolkien's sylvan trees, the author canonizes camp, regressing towards outmoded debates and harmful caricatures (e.g., [Angel Dust as the reprobate queer sex worker](#)) while profiting off them.

Indeed, settler colonialism unfolds due to the colonizer's fragile disposition towards what he's been conditioned to fear and dominate through war and rape culture as integral to Capitalism; i.e., those with non-standard body types associated with non-white cultures' closeness to nature, thus supplied the usual lies attached to them through the ghost of the counterfeit's process of abjection. These hostilities can be challenged, but this requires reclaiming one's body and animal self as both a campy source of pride and something associated with various monstrous entities, including animals, that are canonically exterminated by the state to varying degrees.

This holocaust manifests inside colonized parties, wherein the state installs harmful imposters: animal devices that condition the hunted prey to guiltily repress the stigma animal inside themselves, but also identify it among other members of the underclass (and its various axes of oppression), attacking them for presenting said animal out in the open. *Campy* versions of a given animal consciously serve a counter-political function meant to challenge Gothic canon (and its uneven process of extermination) having evolved into itself; i.e., through the exact kinds of unironic monster dialogs that—while they certainly have varied in terms of class, time and geographical location—nevertheless concerned taboos and stigmas of various kinds to voice unspeakable abuses with: accelerated predation committed by the state (and its proponents, including class traitors/token agents punching down) against genderqueer people and various other ethnic and religious minorities treated not simply as exotic pets, but sexually and societally "incorrect."

In natural language, this amounts to the systematic extermination of animals and humans assigned a "pest" status (thus death sentence) while living under Capitalism's profit motive—rats and other vermin, plague-type creatures for colonized peoples to relate to under a shared genocidal struggle:



(exhibit 10c1: Artist, right: [Rattfood](#); left: [Bay](#). Bay has a very short torso, giving them a "shortstack" appearance ["Round and square at the same time," according to them] which they attribute [and enjoy having others attribute] to various monster types such as the goblin [or their fursona](#) [exhibit 10c2] but also various stigma animals like the rat, which represent non-heteronormative existence; i.e., lifeforms historically annihilated or relegated to the shadows under settler-colonial rule, now out for everyone to see and appreciate as a fully human monster that remains haunted by state-sanctioned xenophobia.

For Bay, the xenophilic role of fantasy is something to experience while alive—i.e., the goblin, gremlin and rat as brought forward out of the dark forest of the past to worship and play with in the present. Doing so happens in opposition to canonical forms and their established phobias' euthanizing of these animals. Anarchist-queer furies/"fur fags" [exhibit 10c2] are antifascist in this respect, creating iconoclastic art not just to cope, but subvert the status quo in favor of a better world than currently exists; e.g., the rat as an anti-Semitic stigma that can reclaim both human and animal through ironically xenophilic iterations that take heed of Cartesian stereotypes before consciously subverting them.)

This complex heritage is vital to consider in relation to ourselves, whose own compelled divisions and alienation demand we consider Walpole and those he inspired with his castles as hopelessly divided on various societal issues; i.e., according to sex and gender as it existed *back then* informing our own liberation.

For one, the Gothic dialogic—especially during the 18th century—is famously divided between moderate female/feminine forms and a more outspoken male/masculine counterpoint: the Schools of Terror and Horror but also Male and Female Gothic (outmoded terms, but nevertheless what they're known as in

academic circles). Yet the paradox, here, is that some female authors were often rather conservative (re: Radcliffe, Dacre) and some were not (re: Shelley) in relation to women only having just started to take up writing as a profession, not a hobby—whereas some male authors could be surprisingly gender-non-conforming (re: Lewis) while others toed the line (re: Coleridge) despite men having written openly for thousands of years; i.e., in relation to the latter's longstanding ability to abstain from marriage (a luxury generally not afforded to women, even wealthy ones) but also opening up these same men to risks and labels that woman arguably didn't experience to nearly the same degree (while having their own struggles, of course: women get raped far more often than men do, but generally don't have to experience the yolk of the sodomite label and all that comes with it [male privilege and stigma] in quite the same shapes and forms that AMAB people do). I'd like to spend a few pages unpacking the genderqueer history of male Gothic authors before considering it in relation to our own interrogations of the Gothic mode; i.e., reclaiming it for our purposes, using atypical bodies, shapes and colors to express ourselves as we are born into our collective struggles under capital.

First, these reclamations occur despite our "inherited confusions" begot from "a sinister corner of the Western imagination." Described as such by Chris Baldrick, his introduction to the 2009 *Oxford Book of Gothic Tales* writes of the Gothic period being cited as a time of darkness and unproductive history following the collapse of Rome, but also something decided by the elite in opposition to those they sought to dominate centuries later through settler-colonial xenophobia:

In its earliest sense, the word is simply the adjective denoting the language and ethnic identity of the Goths; [...] Long after they disappeared into the ethnic melting-pots of the Mediterranean, their fearful name was taken and used to prop up one side of that set of cultural oppositions by which the Renaissance and its heirs defined and claimed possession of European civilization: Northern versus Southern, [Dark] Ages versus the Age of Enlightenment, medieval versus modern, barbarity versus civility, superstition versus Reason. [...] Accordingly, by the late eighteenth century "Gothic" was commonly used to mean "medieval, therefore barbarous," in a largely unquestioned equation of civilization with classical standards ([source](#)).

While Baldrick also argues how the likes of Walpole use this dichotomy to both erode the presumed "superiority" of classical culture and to fear the medieval world as a dark and brutal place amid this ghost of the counterfeit, I posit that Baldrick is astoundingly *incorrect* in assuming that

Unlike "Romantic," then, "Gothic" in its literary usage never becomes a positive term of cultural revaluation, but carries with it [...] an identification

of the medieval with the barbaric. A Gothic novel or tale will almost certainly offend classical tastes and rational principles, but it will not do so by urging any positive view of the Middle Ages (*ibid.*).

Yet, this incorrectness stems from the invented, imaginary past as "medieval" in ways that potentially rewrite the conventional wisdoms regarding said past... which Baldrick conveniently ignores. Indeed, the kinds of stories Baldrick is writing about were predominantly written by white, cis-het men and women centuries ago, when queer discourse was in its infancy and racial bias was phased out of the conversation through regressions to a pre-fascist 15th century that was more interested in enjoying one's privilege and playing silly pranks.



([source](#))

This brings us to Horace Walpole, the writer of the first Gothic novel and an ostensibly homosexual (or ace) man who devoted most of his relatively long life to making Gothic not just a label to describe the medieval period, but literally a specific style of

campy fakery used to embellish the present space and time through intentionally ahistorical reinvention: the castle where such oddities could be found and observed. As Thomas Christensen writes in the introduction to the Mercury House edition of Walpole's *Hieroglyphic Tales* (1993):

[Horace Walpole] lived (comfortably, thanks to a variety of sinecures—his father, Robert, had been prime minister of England under King George the 1st) in a house on the banks of the Thames near Twickenham; he called the house Strawberry Hill and made it into "a little Gothic castle" decked out with fake pinnacles, battlements, ornamental facades, and gargoyles of lath and plaster and crammed to overflowing with all manner of antiquities, curiosities, and *objets d'art*. Toward the end of his life and for some time thereafter (at least until a famous auction of its contents in 1842), Strawberry Hill was a tourist attraction. According to his memorandum book, Walpole personally ushered some four thousand visitors through it (complaining all the while of the inconvenience). Often criticized as a cheap, slipshod sham, it has also been lauded as a "subjunctive" edifice, an

"architecture of the 'as if,'" and as a creation that overturns conventional "rigid and stately rules of architecture." [...]

He had a diabolical (and at times rather infantile) sense of humor, demonstrated in his passing off *The Castle of Otranto* as a translation from the Italian and in the evil comedy of one of the *Hieroglyphic Tales*, "The Peach in Brandy." He once faked a letter to Jean-Jacques Rousseau that purported to be from the King of Prussia, precipitating a heated public dispute in which Rousseau, Jacob Grimm, and others participated ([source](#)).

Both a perpetual bachelor and interior decorator (two homosexual classics) living in a "castle" named after fruit and filled with sexual predators and prey-like damsels who run and hide, there's also the campy rape play that Walpole privately plays in, quite literally in a poem written in blank verse (*a la* Milton's *Paradise Lost*):

Besides *The Castle of Otranto*, the other major literary work Walpole published during his lifetime was his tragedy in blank (at first I inadvertently wrote *black*) verse, *The Mysterious Mother*. Byron admired it, calling it "a tragedy of the highest order, and not a puling love-play." It concerns a young man who, through a series of mistaken identities and unfortunate misunderstandings (no fault of his own), ends up marrying the daughter he has fathered by his mother (a bewildering set of relationships outdoing Bill Wyman). Dorothy Stuart, always charmingly sympathetic to Walpole, remarks, "It is, indeed, a little curious that his imagination—though in *The Castle of Otranto* he had toyed with the theme of incest—should have been allured by a story so sombre and so revolting." In a contemporaneous review (1797), William Taylor rhapsodized that the play "has attained an excellence nearly unimpeachable" and that it "may fitly be compared with the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles." Few modern readers would value it quite so highly ([ibid.](#)).

Unlike Shakspeare (who was debatably queer) writing and publishing *Titus Andronicus* as the gay man's parody of Gothic stereotypes and theatrical violence (cannibalism, torture, murder and rape), Walpole never published *The Mysterious Mother* while he was alive. In fact, he arranged for it to be published *once* he was dead.



(artist: [Pierre Subleyras](#))

Given the crime of sodomy that would have overhung Walpole, it might help to consider that Walpole was the man of privilege vamping it up in his own little, ambiguously gay "rape" castle; i.e., a person of means/property (a man) who didn't quite fit in and was reclaiming the stereotypes of past centuries to literally reinvent the cultural imaginary known as "Gothic" through his lifestyle, home, and refusal to wed:

Though Walpole had a penchant for the company of old ladies and un-marriageable or disgraced noblewomen, he evaded matrimony, remaining to his death aged 79 what used to be called a confirmed bachelor. Instead he drew about him a collection of highly cultured "dear friends"—men of sensitive taste but lesser background, who shared his obsessions. Walpole had an especially fraught and jealous relationship with Thomas Gray, of the famous "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," whom he met at Eton and took with him on his European tour.

Was Walpole gay? Is Strawberry Hill the manifestation of a gay aesthetic? The questions linger, even though searching for something akin to a modern homosexual identity is fruitless. Homosexual acts were criminal—sodomy was a capital offense—but virile men were known to take lovers of both sexes, while effeminate manners were seen as a Frenchified heterosexual weakness. Walpole's biographers have often considered him effeminate and asexual, or at most passively homosexual ([source](#): Amanda Vickery's "Horace Walpole and Strawberry Hill," 2010).

Passively homosexual. Take note of that. It really doesn't matter if Walpole called himself gay or not; the markers for what would be considered gay *now* in relation to Gothic poetics were certainly present *back then*: making fun of white married people through a reinvented Gothic style.

Likewise, Walpole's upper-middle-class inheritance was the breaking of the mold; i.e., according to a counterfeit that, if not openly endorsed by him for colonial purposes, went on to be appropriated by the state's usual operations (the process

of abjection). However, the fact remains that some men of privilege⁹² chose to be more openly queer in their campiness, and that's what I want to examine next before applying that to our own Gothic-Communist poetics. For fear of colonial guilt weighing on them in the shadow of colonial horrors yet unspoken, a tremendous doom of utter retribution plagues colonizer brains; regardless of the occupation, then, invention is the means of the colonized to bleed their occupiers dry during asymmetrical warfare, converting them to our cause or sending them as Roman fools into utter panic and retreat for fear of the colonial victim's day of reckoning (at home, abroad or both).

This includes camp. Remember from Volume Zero how we discussed camping the canon, *vis-à-vis* Colin Broadmoor's examination of Matthew Lewis:

The Monk represents Lewis's personal struggle against the sexual politics and constraints of the English literary tradition. As Michel Foucault observed in *The History of Sexuality vol. I*, sexuality-as-identity did not really exist as a cultural concept throughout most of the eighteenth century. However, by the time of Lewis's birth those social and legal constructions of sexuality were shifting:

As defined by the ancient civil or Canonical codes, sodomy was a category of forbidden acts; their perpetrator was nothing more than the juridical subject of them. The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life... Nothing that went into his total composition was unaffected by his sexuality.

This transition at the turn of the 19th century from act-as-homosexual to person-as-homosexual was preceded by a dramatic increase in homophobic violence perpetrated by the state. In the British civil system, sex between men first became a capital offense with the promulgation of the tastefully-named Buggery Act of 1533. For 200 years, the law was rarely enforced—though, when it was, authorities staged it as a spectacle of violence for public entertainment and social control. Victims of the law were ritually humiliated

⁹² The queerness of someone would have been permitted insofar as they were granted an exception as a person of means; e.g., a political, general or aristocrat of some kind wouldn't be taken to task for refusing to follow the canonical laws... provided they didn't "pull an Oscar Wilde" and make their activities open to the public. For example, as Brent Pickett of the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy writes on homosexuality and the ancient world (which involves the canonical codes we're addressing in the modern world through reimagined forms), "Some persons were noted for their exclusive interests in persons of one gender. For example, Alexander the Great and the founder of Stoicism, Zeno of Citium, were known for their exclusive interest in boys and other men. Such persons, however, are generally portrayed as the exception. [...] Given that only free men had full status, women and male slaves were not problematic sexual partners. Sex between freemen, however, was problematic for status" ([source](#), 2020).

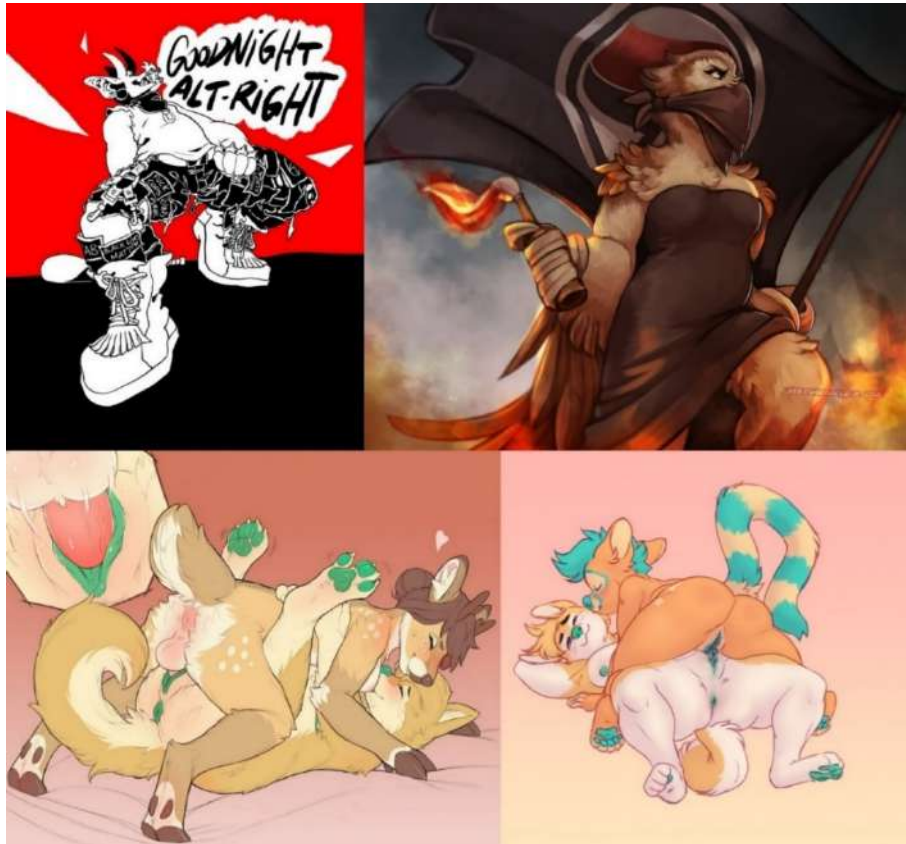
and then murdered in an extravagant and merciless display of state power. Around the middle of the 18th century, the British state initiated a long-running pogrom aimed specifically against gay men that exploded during the decades of *The Monk's* original release. As Louis Compton records in *Byron and Greek Love: Homophobia in 19th-Century England*: "By 1806 the number of executions had risen to an average of two a year and remained there for three decades, though executions for every other capital offense decreased dramatically." In the 1790s, when Lewis was writing *The Monk*, judicial anti-homosexual persecution was at its height in England. Gangs of undercover police officers from anti-homosexual task forces infiltrated queer spaces, sending scores of gay men to the gallows or pillory and creating a palpable sense of paranoia throughout England's underground LGBT communities ([source](#)).

Whereas Walpole was born under queerness as privately aristocratic, Matthew Lewis represented a nigh-singular form of outspoken, *active* queerness when the dialog hadn't really caught up. So he did what weird nerds like Shakespeare and Walpole before him did: he used the iconoclastic language of the imaginary past to communicate queerness through the Gothic mode; i.e., from his own imaginary dark castles as highly structured and deliberate forms of theatrical, psychosexual power exchange, but also through his *considerable material advantage* that let him devise these fantasies as sex-positive, socio-political education devices: he was a legislator and chose to stand by his work very publicly (as Coleridge will never let us forget, the straight man pouncing on the gay man to gag him).

The takeaway is that when drafted by queer creators *now*, the same imaginary capsules operate as something to sex-positively revive in the Internet age: through openly xenophilic, emancipatory hauntologies on par with Lewis, but updated for more current socio-political issues; i.e., a queer castle raised in intersectional, solidarized *resistance* to post-fascist drives towards palingenesis (the latter coercively romanticizing "a new dark age" under the same-old oscillations: the return of the Gothic castle as a xenophobic printing house). This includes our lair-like abodes, but also ourselves as monsters who identify as part of the struggle—to exist, but also to actively fight back using revolutionary cryptonymy to camp canon's idea of what monsters are "supposed" to represent; i.e., by detaching ourselves from the usual synonymizing of queerness with rape, incest and murder that we're called out for by straight folk in their own canon: to, as our thesis describes, "make it gay" in ways that will terrify them anyways, often in animalistic, warlike language (thanks to Capitalist Realism, we are canonically viewed as the end of the world no matter what).

In resistance to canon, we're taking the self-fashioning logic of Walpole and Lewis back from the Western tradition of Gothic forgeries; i.e., by literally forging our own lies in service to workers in ways those men lacked the means (or

perspective) to fully grasp. Our aim in doing so is to give ourselves a campy space to live, work and thrive, but also challenge the state through increasingly iconoclastic variations of revolutionary cryptonymy that speak to our animalized traumas in playful ways that nevertheless invoke the open language of class/culture war and resistance—to turn the tables on our captors, reversing the role of hunter and hunted through predator-prey aesthetics:

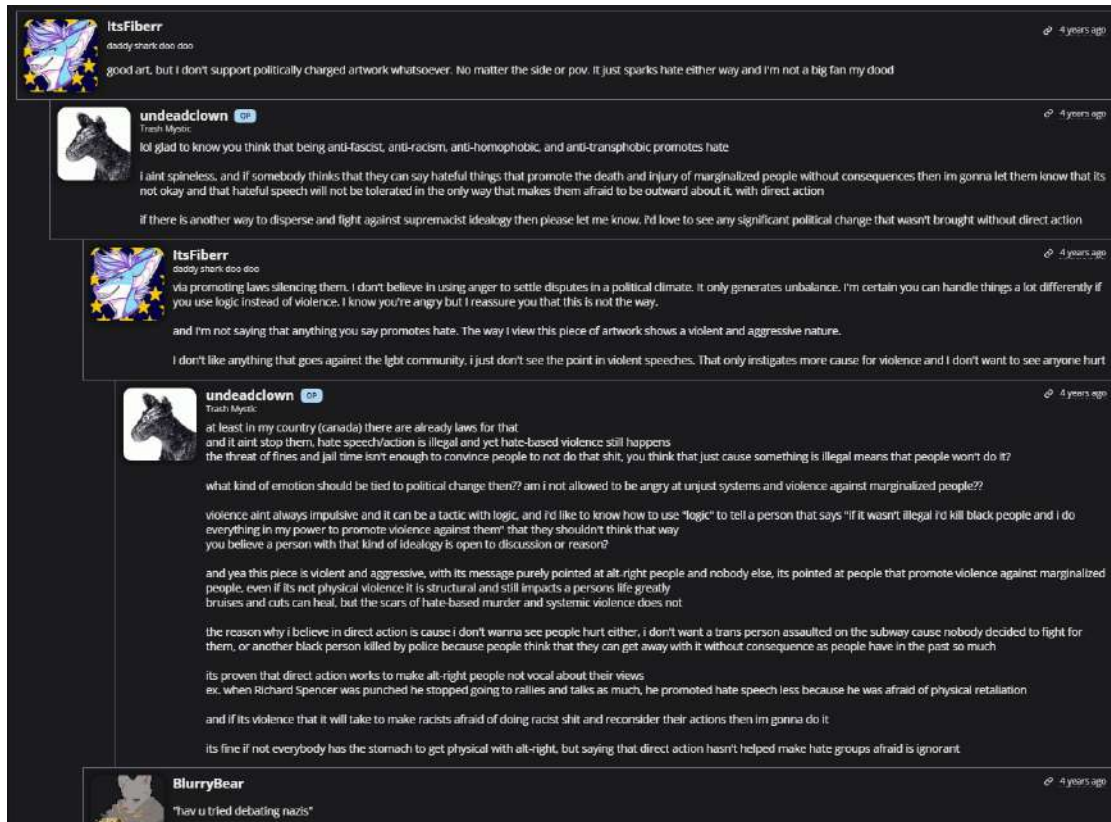


(exhibit 10c2: Artist, top-left: [Undead Clown](#); top-right: [Defiant Drills](#), commissioned by [Barnowlren](#); bottom-left and -right: Bay's fursona, by [Tofu Froth](#) and [Buns Like a Truck](#). Gothic-Communist struggle is defined in its poetic context—of whom commissioned the artist and why—as something that is challenged during paratextual dialogs concerning the pieces and what they stand for or rather,

what they should stand for. For example, in posting his piece, "hit them nazi punks" in 2020, Undead Clown writes,

*largely inspired by CRASHprez's song "Fascists Don't Cry" which is a really great song lmao
but ya imma knock ya out if you come up to me spoutin white supremacist or transphobic shit
human rights aint up for debate*

to which this conversation ensued [if the font is too small, [refer to the conversation itself on FurAffinity.net](#)]:



The creation of art doesn't sit within a vacuum; it is always political, caught between dialectical-material forces during oppositional praxis.)

Canonical Gothic poetics are not just encouraged, but *enforced* by Capitalism's global system of exploitation through its predatory monopoly on socio-material conditions to portray animalistic violence with, but also "legitimate" Gothic fictions and terror dialogs. As we shall see moving forward, these factors must be challenged during uphill battles waged by proletarian counterterrorists who remain critical of the elite in all their forms—the state, but also proponents of the state who uphold its monopolies in bad faith; e.g., Volume Two's examination of the history of vampirism through intellectuals like Foucault, whose own rose-tinted view of the medieval world and its bucolic pleasures enabled him to exploit his own students, thus lend queerness a bad reputation. It's possible to be a counterterrorist without being a bigot or a sex pest.

If you might have already noticed, the fascist pageantry of "European" beauty standards becomes something to advertise amid partial state collapse through a restructuring of state power towards a more "medieval" approach that hunts state enemies to extinction in service of profit dressed up in Gothic language (all non-European standards having been totally genocided or relegated to a culturally-endangered status by now). Apart from the unironic Gothic castle, this also includes legislative preparations made well ahead of time by those in power (from SCOTUS to other areas of the world accreting from global US hegemony):

- lowering the age of consent (which often coincides with a fascist/medieval presence—e.g., [the age of consent in Japan is 13](#). However, the age of consent is 20 in South Korea, [a historically fascist government under Iiminism](#) that was challenged with the rise of the K-pop music that, despite being monopolized by the Korean government [through slave contracts, works as a limited, "bougie/consumer-based" counterculture to fight fascism at the nation-state level](#); source: Jake Hall's "From Kim Jong-Un to Trolling Trump: K-Pop Has Always Been Political," 2020)
- anti-gay/anti-sodomy laws
- [anti-trans legislation](#) Anya Zoledziowski's "Anti-Trans Bills Are Sweeping Across the US With Alarming Speed" (2023)
- prohibiting sex education and prophylactics
- revoking *Roe v. Wade* to reintroduce anti-abortion laws

Fascism leans towards the openly religious/occult, whereas neoliberalism tends to keep religion out-of-sight but close by—i.e., "separate or not, church and state go hand-in-hand," Christofascism being the result. In the process, fear and dogma slowly replace good, proletarian education—with rings, for example, becoming what they historically have always been: collars of compelled bondage/sanctioned sex with fascist, even incestuous elements.

Such a castle's nightmarish presence denotes potential mayhem tied to one's habitat; i.e., through the liminal hauntology of war colonizing nature and those tied to nature. When such a castle appears, it is time to be afraid; the colonial harvest is at hand. Yet, precisely because the state does not hold a monopoly over violence, terror and morphological expression, a demon or castle needn't spell our end; it can represent our sole means of *attack*, reclaiming said poetics' endless inventiveness to turn colonizer fears back into their hopelessly scared brains with counterterror. Adjacent to more classic methods of colonial upheaval, the terrifying power of Gothic poetics can serve our counterterrorist ends through the Six Doubles (of which this subchapter has focused on revolutionary cryptonymy). So before we proceed onto challenging the state, camping its canon with our own monsters and castles, it behooves us to further examine state-sanctioned variations of such tortured bargains; i.e., *complicit* cryptonymy as illustrated by unironic rings, collars and other visible BDSM implements of undead bondage relayed within the Gothic mode, even if the author tries to distance themselves from all of these things.

To that, we'll be taking Tolkien to task once more.

An Uphill Battle, part two: Concerning Rings, BDSM and Vampires; or the State's False Gifts, Power Exchange, and Crumbling Homesteads Told through Tolkien's Nature-Themed Stories

"Fool! Be still! No other witch in the world holds a harpy captive, and none ever will. I choose to keep her! I can turn her into wind if she escapes or snow or into seven notes of music!"

Mommy Fortuna, The Last Unicorn (1982)

This subchapter examines rings within the Gothic mode as famous symbols of power and power exchange. One such example is, of course, Tolkien's One Ring and that is what we will be focusing on, here. Something to pass from person to person, it is as much a vampiric mantle of corrupting power in its more vertically arranged forms as it is a mere giving of material goods. The former function means rings are generally devices to be feared—not for their weight in gold, but for the power they signify through their giving and wearing: problematic alliances, but also the raw function of power when arranged in vertical, capitalistic ways.

Continuing this chapter's initial focus on animals but shifting more towards power abuse, we'll examine power as Tolkien expressed it in relation to nature as something to conquer by proxy—an invented other. In short, Tolkien relied on the vampire legend—but also Gothic castles, BDSM language and harmful arrangements of unequal power (rings and collars)—to dominate nature and those within it. Written in defense of a divided nature in good and evil animal forms, Tolkien's war stories view the vampire a kind of parasite praying upon the conspicuously vulnerable inside Cartesian dialogs; i.e., both in raw animal terms with Shelob the spider as part of "evil nature," but also magical leeches like Sauron, whose ghastly projections have become wholly divorced from "good nature" inside dark, undead fortresses that harvest all good, living things from the land (whitewashing Britain's analogs in the process). Anything else is functionally "dead" (sanctioned for state execution) by virtue of collective punishment. In doing so, Tolkien abjects death as a vital function of nature, but also fascism as a vital function of Capitalism in relation to nature as preyed upon by those behind his undead/animalistic scapegoats: the West. All (canonical) Castles Are Bad, insofar as the grim harvests they bring about (during Capitalism-in-decay) harm nature and those of nature. Meanwhile, death becomes alien, fetishized, badass, and cool, but also necessary within these Capitalist-Realist configurations; i.e., Aragorn (and by extension, Tolkien) needs Sauron to disguise his own tyrannical state. Keeping this in mind, we will unpack the settler-colonial trauma Tolkien's furtively Gothic tools and mythic animal symbols aided and abetted, but also the adjacent dialogs that worked within Tolkien's closeted queerness to undermine his own black-and-white *Pax Britannica* within Bretton Woods and beyond.



First, the Ring itself as a tempting vampiric device and consolidation of unequal power that preys on nature. While Sauron's special ring has the ability to turn persons invisible and theoretically binds those who wear it to the original

maker as removed from the physical world, said maker is largely non-existent; rather, his vampiric shadow is felt through exchanges of power that bring out the worst in people who *are* visible within nature. The Ring, then, is exchanged from person to person like a curse, symbolizing total power as something that can never really be destroyed provided the structure it connects to remains intact.

Tolkien's oversimplification is a neat storytelling device, but also (as we shall see) an incredibly basic way of explaining away settler colonialism in traditionally Gothic ways: a ghost or past anxiety that is conjured up and swept away during the same ritual, often stigmatizing wolves, spiders, bats and similar "evil" animals in the process. It's a cheap parlor trick that tries to separate Capitalism from capital, displacing the system's current atrocities not just to an older time and faraway land, but a *talisman* that seemingly has a will of its own. In short, he rarefies greed, minus the dragon; apparently it's the old male⁹³ *necromancer's* fault that the West isn't prosperous—i.e., isn't normal (meaning an absence of tension, not genocide)! Tolkien might as well have blamed Apep for swallowing Ra's canoe for all the causal sense it makes. He makes up a shapeless devil, then spends three novels chasing him down. Indeed, *Tolkien* (not Sauron) is the necromancer filling the world with orcs ("...if you became a shogun, there'd be nothing but devils in this world!"): through his spin on the ghost of the counterfeit (made from stolen parts) furthering the process of abjection. The Ring is merely a buck to pass, often with a fair amount of guilt by those who know ("Don't tempt me, Frodo!").

Again, as we have noted, this falls to the Eye of Sauron as seemingly described by Raj Patel and Jason Moore in *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things*:

the Cartesian revolution was made thinkable, and doable, the colonial project of mapping and domination. [...] Cartesian rationalism is predicated on the distinction between the inner reality of the mind and the outer reality of objects; the latter could be brought into the former only through a neutral, disembodied gazed situated outside of space and time. That gaze always

⁹³ Always male-centric, Tolkien primarily codifies darkness as male, his largely peripheral treatment of the monstrous-feminine relegating Ungoliant to the footnotes.

belonged to the Enlightened European colonist—and the empires that backed him. Descartes' *cogito* funneled vision and thought into a spectator's view of the world, one that rendered the emerging surfaces of modernity visible and measurable and the viewer bodiless and placeless. Medieval multiple vantage points in art and literature were displaced by a single, disembodied, omniscient and panoptic eye ([source](#)).

Volume Zero described that eye through the map it looked upon; re: Tolkien's refrain enacted by Sauron as simply a dark reflection of the men of the West (and other good races) as colonizers: "There is no life in the void, only death!"



Up to this point, we've discussed the problematic nature of the ghost of the counterfeit when used as a canonical device through the treasure map as a colony under attack by "outside" forces. However, the power of Gothic reinvention isn't strictly

canonical, and at its most proletarian (re: Milton, Walpole) deliberately profanes the sacred to cut through an inability to critique what is in front of us; i.e., slicing through Tolkien's silly trick by using the same rings (or ring-like devices) to counterattack what was ultimately a centrist daydream: "melt the Ring, save the world." This requires using rings in ways that other Gothicists wouldn't have thought twice about, but which Tolkien generally couldn't stomach... or could he? It's certainly true that Tolkien's refrain (the treasure map) gentrified war through a canonizing of Gothic poetics and allegory (from Milton to Tolkien) that only intensified over time; the more Tolkien moderated his own invented world (again, made from stolen parts), the more the Ring ultimately became a regressive device that simplified his medieval critique of capital from *The Hobbit* (which presented the Ring as a simple but convenient way to help Bilbo out of a bind, the real issue being the gold under the mountain). But the guilty exchanges of the Ring still offer up some fairly genderqueer BDSM interactions inside a traditional background, all while *seemingly* holding Gothic poetics (and women) at arm's length.

This being said, there are several basic forms of vampirism in Tolkien's world: the corporeal and incorporeal. His fleshy vampirism is foisted onto female and anti-Semitic entities. There is the great spider Ungoliant and her spawn, of course—female vampirism's parasitism, phallic stinger and paralysis being

animalized in relation to nature; i.e., hysteria and the womb of nature as something to fear according to an Archaic Mother goddess as androgynous. Then, there's Gollum and the goblins/orcs. We'll get to orcs in a second (and Drow later in the book); Gollum is effectively Tolkien's most overt homage to *Beowulf*—i.e., a slimy creature of darkness living in an underground lake, through which the hero, lacking physical strength, must beat the creature at its own game: cheating. After *The Hobbit*, Gollum is unmoored from the Misty Mountains, seeking the Ring as his lifeblood; and it is here that Tolkien, in 1954, evokes the *anti-Semitic* language of the vampire legend in *The Fellowship of the Ring*:

The Wood-elves tracked him first, an easy task for them, for his trail was still fresh then. Through Mirkwood and back again it led them, though they never caught him. The wood was full of the rumour of him, dreadful tales even among beasts and birds. The Woodmen said that there was some new terror abroad, a ghost that drank blood. It climbed trees to find nests; it crept into holes to find the young; it slipped through windows to find cradles ([source](#)).

Both examples are tied to monstrous-feminine arrangements of power exchange: Gollum craves the Ring like a vampire thrall does its master's blood—*Gollum's* blood as absorbed into the greedy artifact as synonymous with the Dark Lord (true to legend, the vampire master is an almighty patriarch who hoards vitality within himself, offering those under him only enough to sustain themselves through their own nightly feasts).



The second form of vampirism is the incorporeal kind, and here is where Tolkien pulls a trick. Although Sauron functions like a vampire, he isn't called one and has no body to speak of, no phallic penetrative device tied to the sexual exchanging of power and essence in animalistic metaphors. In turn his invisibility robs his vitalistic feeding of its corporeal elements, and him of a tangible, visible

status as Master operating through a physical appearance but also a physical, eroticized *relationship* to others. He's simply vampirism in the abstract, a telepathic eyeball, "the Dark Lord on his dark throne / In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie." Meanwhile, women—the classic targets of vampirism in Western canon—are nowhere to be found.

Instead, our thirsty ghost is largely announced by a precession of kingly wraiths (death knights) and batlike fliers that likewise are purely black, lacking any obvious sanguine appearance. Perhaps this paring down of a cardinal-red visual owes itself to Tolkien's Catholic background and harboring a grudge for the anti-Catholic sentiments of the Neo-Gothic period; i.e., scapegoating the Protestant's pure black in the Catholic's place ("I see a red door / And I want it painted black..."). But Tolkien's Master of the Black Castle morphs Vlad the Impaler into a vague, shapeless force operating entirely through rings (sans any Freudian slips, when involving the placing of rings onto fingers) and a pure reduction of BDSM roleplay told entirely in militarized medieval language; i.e., minus much of the monstrous Gothic poetics and centering on the positions themselves in a black-and-white, good-vs-evil framework that scapegoats Nazis for corrupting nature *vis-à-vis* the Christian West. But the traditional framework is still there, "sexiness" being reduced to Sontag's dehumanization of sexuality through the horned death fetish, a living weapon in service of the Dark Lord; i.e., the bad dom who takes everything for himself through these extended, somewhat abstract phallic devices.

As we'll examine throughout this subchapter and the next, I'd say that I think a more fleshed-out darkness (and more adventuresome BDSM aesthetic) might have done Tolkien some good—if only to make his evil more nuanced and less vague in relation to human characters and their physicalities (though I was still magnetically drawn to these dark forces due to my own psychosexual responses); but I think he did so on purpose: he was an anti-Communist Oxford professor who venerated mythical variants of the British monarchy in his work. Smacked with the effects of fascism defending Capitalism, his already bigoted (sexist, homonormative⁹⁴ and racist) worldview became increasingly basic, white and regressive over time, as if nothing after *Beowulf* ever occurred; i.e., black-and-white, but also vanilla, losing its Marxist critique as *The Lord of the Rings* eclipsed *The Hobbit* (a far superior work, in my opinion, due to its critical bite) but fixated universally on the militarized exchanges of power between cis men on the battlefield. There's something to be said for and with that lens, but it still remains incredibly narrow and myopic; i.e., it'd take someone like me (an anarcho-Communist trans woman) to dream up Gothic worlds that filled out the things Tolkien couldn't help but leave out in defense of capital, himself: my own castles and rings, but also allegory and Gothic theatrics that were anything but invisible.

⁹⁴ There *is* a queer element to Tolkien's hobbits, but they ultimately serve the British empire's heteronormative (male-centric) view of the world. They crowned Aragorn.

To that, Tolkien wasn't just allergic to allegory and sex; he policed them greatly in service of empire. His evils are simplistic, unironically dated and vague, and he has a stubborn clumsiness when applying them to his worlds that suggests a very closed-minded way of thinking about his world *and* ours in BDSM terms. It's certainly no secret that Tolkien eventually decided to place the lion's share of the blame on people more so than material conditions or Capitalism and nation-states. He also makes the Ring and then melts it, trying to suggest that everything is somehow "solved"—that "Isildur's Bane" is somehow to blame for the waning strength of men in the face of rarefied greed; i.e., the dragon sickness of the gold from *The Hobbit* having been turned into a simple dissociative trinket that weighs on "all men" to the same degree. He seems to understand how rings function as poetic devices while paradoxically lending them a bit too much credence; vertical power *is* a tremendously corrupting force, but you don't have to essentialize it, nor reduce it to a shapeless *male* darkness that employs throwaway female demons and does away with overt BDSM language and, yes, ironic rape fantasies:



(artist: [Owusyr Art](#))

BDSM isn't just where power is located/stored (e.g., inside the One Ring or Sauron's tower), but instructions for its use within assigned positions, including rape fantasies as a set of instructions given to the dom by the sub issuing various paradoxical commands: the civilized "princess" and the barbaric "invader" as roles to play with in animalistic ways (e.g., the "breeding"/captive fantasy) that expose and interrogate power as a device of negotiation towards better working conditions and healing from the deep traumas that emerge from settler-colonial violence and heteronormative enforcement. Material conditions play an important role in

historical materialism, but power is largely about perception, which cannot simply be destroyed; it must change within society. The catharsis offered by iconoclastic

roleplay grants appreciative irony amid Gothic counterculture as surviving under Capitalism. These forms of roleplay aren't just completely alien to Tolkien, but policed and denied through his own incessant prescription of orcish demon lovers (and Dark Lords); i.e. bad BDSM as a harmful arrangement of power that introduces praxial inertia into the equation. While power can't be destroyed as we just said, it *can* become unthinkable according to ways that challenge the usual runs of the mill. Tolkien and Radcliffe have that very much in common, making anything outside of their worldview as shapeless, dark and unthinkable: the incessant, utterly British fear of the outside felt within their own borders, castles, heroes, etc, as hopelessly forged and ever-present.

To that, Horace Walpole was absolutely right to lampoon weddings and marriage like he did, presenting incest, live burial and rape as commonplace things inside his obviously Gothic castles. He cut to the chase, as it were, playing with taboo things that he could suggest, conceal, or uncover as he pleased; i.e., in tangibly Gothic language that spawned monsters (from other authors who came after him, to be fair) that at least part of the time carried far more critical power than Tolkien's usual replications of "pure evil" (which Ursula Le Guin, and by extension myself, would have to escape by camping Tolkien's own problematic escapism in our own fantasies): via their ability to directly and quickly speak to reader's lived traumas, versus the imagined/inherited anxieties of the status quo speaking "for everyone" according to an Oxford language nerd.

Tolkien's origin myths were entirely unoriginal, exhibiting a very narrow, profoundly inadequate idea of what BDSM even was: officers and batmen; i.e., a British officer and his dutiful servant, exemplified by Tolkien's Samwise the Brave helping his fairly clueless master time and time again out of a bind. It *is* BDSM, but echoes the British castle of the Imperial Core as something to carry out into the battlefield while enduring Tolkien's (fairly vanilla) rape fantasies and childish dreams of captivity with which to (dis)empower the sub as male; e.g., Frodo being whipped and beaten in the orc slaver's tower (the torture dungeons in Mordor conspicuously full of the *British* tools of torture used by the colonized reimagined; i.e., during the myth of a dark, savage continent populated by evil, violent "children"). By displacing these tools off onto a dark "other" world beyond the land of plenty and light, Tolkien is scrubbing his own and blaming the colonized in the same breath). As a male benefactor of British colonialism, he fixates on faraway war as the exclusive site of power abuse exacted upon white men, ranking their abuse above everyone else (women, genderqueer people and ethnic minorities) and everywhere else (military urbanism). For him, these other things simply don't exist; abject *copies* of them do, but their sexuality is largely abandoned inside a chaste, gentlemanly medieval that forces them to address trauma as men were (and are) commonly taught: through lethal force with killing weapons designed purely for harm against state enemies.

Excluding the fact that nonharmful sex is frankly a pleasurable activity whose complete erasure feels very odd and forced, this complete lack of sexual dialog is a serious problem for a second reason: BDSM and kink are regular outlets for sexual healing from trauma as women would experience it (rape, pregnancy and shame), but also men—especially black people who are generally raped in some shape or form by white colonizers. Tolkien provides zero representation, intersection, or even basic acknowledgement of anything other than white men versus the entire rest of the world as something to rape and sacrifice (with white women given a few moments to highlight their societal domestic roles in these men's shadows: marriage⁹⁵).

As such, the problem becomes an incredibly simple one: kill your problems to empower yourself; or in the words of Michael Brooks (regarding Israel and Palestine, though this extends to settler colonialism at large): "It's not a complex issue. It's super simple. There's one group with enormous power. It acts on another population of people with total impunity and is never held accountable for anything" ([source](#)). This is bound to create and offset tremendous amounts of trauma that Tolkien, through his British emulation of American fascism (state apologetics) simultaneously marks, mischaracterizes and buries all at once; for him, the orcs (and other monsters) are pure evil synonymized with rape that must be cleansed from the world through ritualized, self-righteous violence, but they're also humanoid and reminiscent of things he couldn't (despite his best efforts) explain



away in any satisfactory manner. The lie is the West is somehow besieged by these "invaders" at all times, or the peace of the West requires their death. The empowerment of the West, then, is a false flag built on a total fakery that makes Aragorn the paladin and his holy company *seem* incapable of revenge and settler-colonial violence (retreating to their islands after losing imperial control overseas, and falling victim to Isolationist paranoia), but in truth is exactly what they're made for.

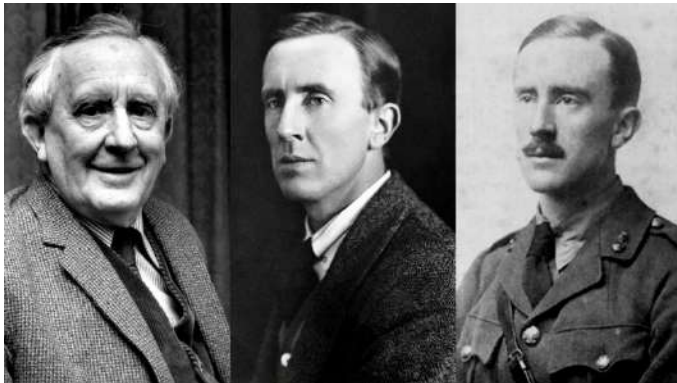
(artist: [Exodus Is Near](#))

It's important to remember that "orcs," like other color-coded monsters, aren't a singular stigmatized group used strictly for purposes of state terror and nothing else; counterterror and sex-positive cultural appreciation (Gothic counterculture) within the orc aesthetic are totally possible, putting "rape" in quotes in light of state atrocities to communicate the "undead" sensation of state victims;

⁹⁵ Arwen is married off without a fight; Eowyn, to Faramir after she kills the Witch-king.

i.e., those living with animalistic trauma inside or alongside the state of exception as a compelled and predatory habitat. The problem with Tolkien is that he does it *exclusively* through an unironic jailbreak, seeing Britain as exclusively white and straight. In the process, he constantly imagines (and has others imagine) white British captives escaping from the prisons of dark-skinned people in settler-colonial fantasies that murder and dehumanize these non-British (non-white) performers during a British (white) cis-het nerd's inadequate, dogmatic idea of unironic BDSM, then acts like that's "good enough." Anything else is ignored, amounting to a strangely detached form of white knight syndrome.

Like Coleridge, Tolkien's Gothic cathedrals are made of grace and light, except he's granted his own an elvish reinvention to displace some of the Teutonic flavor with (and over time, his wood-elves became high elves, assimilating into the pinnacle of the Western spire and shedding from themselves their merry and silly side that Tolkien had clearly given them, pre-WW2). Tolkien whined when people compared his fantasies to the real world; e.g., self-reporting when a critic compared Sauron to Stalin. Faced with that, Tolkien just had to play British schoolmaster and slap down the interpretation as "incorrect" because it's not what *he* designed: "There is no 'perhaps' about it. I utterly repudiate any such 'reading,' which angers me. The situation was conceived long before⁹⁶ the Russian revolution. Such allegory is entirely foreign to my thought" ([source](#): *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, 2006). Of course it was; he was a British monarchist!



To be frank, Tolkien's the worst sort of author in that respect: the one who acts immortal, demonstrating the most rigid, inflexible ways of thinking by someone who was utterly accommodated by the status quo in service of said status quo. By playing dumb, digging his heels in and adopting singular

interpretations, Tolkien stayed bigoted *and* acted like God; i.e., his word was the law of a very British, settler-colonial sort. And many (white people) continue to take his side by acting like allegory (and iconoclastic interrogations of power) suck.

Indeed that's generally how internalized guilt works; you deny it any way you can, saying "that's not what I meant!" But intent doesn't matter, material conditions (and consequences) do, and the fact remains that no amount of

⁹⁶ Note his invocation of the imaginary past to suit his needs; i.e., "his" view of things. This is a fascist tactic, evoking the apocryphal past to justify dogmatic arguments in the present space and time (which are generally attached to systemic abuses of various kinds).

professed ignorance regarding Tolkien's displacement and disassociation with settler-colonial violence can change the fact that his worlds are utterly populated with disposable enemies of a dark racialized "other" that carried over into remediations of the original fantasy that defend a global *Western* superiority. Anything that supports that is legitimate within the usual state monopolies and trifectas, and anything that resists it is relegated to the state of exception.

Dogma is the tool of empire, and Tolkien wasn't shy about using it, his stories not just full of cops, castles and victims but acting as a steady excuse to turn off one's brain as being over half a century old at this point; i.e., Neil Isaacs' introductory essay to *Tolkien and the Critics* (1968): "since *The Lord of the Rings* and the domain of Middle-earth are eminently suitable for faddism and fannism, cultism and clubbism... [its special appeal] acts as a deterrent to critical activity" ([source](#): Anderson Rearick's "Why Is the Only Good Orc a Dead Orc," 2004). Clearly it's a sore spot in academia as accustomed to looking the other way (not a surprise, given how accommodated intellectuals behave), a sign of institutional guilt tied to the castle and those who live there as coming out to commit colonial horrors. The worst castles are the pearly ones; or as I said in my thesis, ACAB: All (canonical) Castles Are Bad. Indeed, the only difference between people like Tolkien and the Nazis is a matter of degree. Regarding the operations of their mythic structures, both worked in service of the status quo; e.g., Gondor is *worse* than Barad-dur because it will last and continue committing genocide. Again, Tolkien believed in the state, even with reduced powers, and the state is the ultimate foe.

For example, as Dr. Stephen Shapiro wrote to Reddify.com in 2003 regarding Tolkien's racism in Jackson's adaptations,

Put simply, Tolkien's good guys are white and the bad guys are black, slant-eyed, unattractive, inarticulate and a psychologically undeveloped horde. In the trilogy, a small group, the fellowship, is pitted against a foreign horde and this reflects long-standing Anglo-European anxieties about being overwhelmed by non-Europeans. This is consistent with Tolkien's Nordicism convictions. He thinks the Northern races had a culture and it was carried in the blood. While Tolkien describes the Hobbits and Elves as amazingly white, ethnically pure clans, their antagonists, the Orcs, are a motley dark-skinned mass, akin to tribal Africans or aborigines. The recent films amplify a "fear of a black planet" and exaggerate this difference by insisting on stark white-black colour codes.

Tolkien wrote *The Lord of the Rings* because he wanted to recreate a mythology for the English, which had been destroyed by foreign invasion. He felt the Normans had destroyed organic English culture. There is the notion that foreigners destroy culture and there was also a fantasy that there was a solid homogeneous English culture there to begin with, which was not the case because there were Celts and Vikings and a host of other groups. We

have a pure village ideal, which is being threatened by new technologies and groups coming in. I think the film has picked up on this by colour coding the characters in very stark ways. For instance, the fellowship is portrayed as uber-Aryan, very white and there is the notion that they are a vanishing group under the advent of the other, evil ethnic groups. The Orcs are a black mass that doesn't speak the languages and are desecrating the cathedrals. For today's film fans, this older racial anxiety fuses with a current fear and hatred of Islam that supports a crusading war in the Middle East. The mass appeal of *The Lord of the Rings*, and the recent movies may well rest on racist codes ([source](#)).

Of course, Tolkien's racism is something Tolkien himself did his best to deny in *displaced* vampiric terms. Apparently he *wasn't* racist because his black-and-white settler colonialism *isn't* planet Earth, it's *Middle-earth*. Well, that's fucking stupid, and a rather weak defense. If his stories were really so anti-racist as he claims, they a) wouldn't be hinging entirely on intent, and b) wouldn't be populated by racist things and racist reenactments: us-versus-them scapegoats. Slaughtered during the British man's defense of home—including said man's love for king and country—



orcs are whatever Tolkien needs them to be⁹⁷ to argue for the superiority (and continuation) of the reimagined Western monarchist hegemon; i.e., through his chiefly British refrain, including *D&D* and videogames, where heroic progression and empowerment is entirely incumbent on racialized slaughter on open ground with melee weapons (versus James Cameron's Americanized refrain, with bullets inside the videogame Gothic castle; e.g., the *Metroidvania*). As the perceived outsiders' blood and gore continues to pool and pile around the alter of a crumbling Victorian empire built on settler-colonial genocide, this "pest control" mentality is what haunts Tolkien's world well into the present. Awfully telling that he pushes all of it off *onto* the colonized group. Very Cartesian, old boy.

(artist: [Boris Nenezic](#))

History, as usual, has been written by the conquerors inheriting old spaces, including the games that white people need to process their own inheritance anxiety mid-genocide: orcs and

⁹⁷ For many examples of why Tolkien thinks orcs suck, consider Jeff LaSala's "[Tolkien's Orcs: Boldog and the Host of Tumult](#)" (2021). The guy's like a broken record.

similar stigmatized animal groups that you frame as undead (doomed to die), then kill and endlessly steal their shit *while* writing your ascendancy in their spilled blood (with Drow being a chimeric, demonic-undead hybrid of vampires, witches, spiders and orcs: subterranean cannibals, practitioners of black magic, ritual sacrifice, blood libel and so on).

As usual, the Western brutalizer is intimidated through the monomythic language of displaced conquest, and its routine purging becomes fetishized in a centrist refrain taming nature into acceptable "good" forms while maintaining the cycle of war inside the monomyth as an altar of sacrifice; i.e., killing "bad" vampire animals and those associated with them, from the lowliest savage orc to supernatural, alien extremes of shadow demons who have no bodies to speak of. Except, even when the meat on the bones is *gone*, ritualized death is still "sexy" (desirable) by virtue of the colonizer's fearful-fascinated seeking of unequal power exchange relative to it; re: Sontag's Nazi death fantasy as bad BDSM *par excellence*, stemming from a fundamental misunderstanding that leads to cyclical harm by the Western party towards everyone else. Tolkien's chaste gentrification of war can't change that; worse, his complete lack of sex just pushes rape to the margins, meaning we can't interrogate its presence. It's simply anathema... except this doesn't change the fact that the West is a giant vampire that kills and rapes everything around itself; Tolkien's monomyth is clearly meant to disguise or censor that fact, including his incessant defense of it as a silly white nerd acting like the First Mover redacting the Gothic tradition towards a pure village pastoral: make Britain Beowulf again. There's nothing polite about genocide, no matter how posh he sounds. He's just toeing the same-old lie of the Western lie in medieval revivals thereof.

In other words, to deal with Tolkien's bullshit we have to try and humanize the pre-fascist, oddly vampiric monsters he created and relied upon in his post-fascist stories, including through sex as a terror device we transform into a *counterterror* device that interrogates Tolkien's harmful configurations of unequal power exchange; i.e., to challenge the Shadow of Pygmalion (the patriarchal vision of those knowing-better "kings" of male-dominated industries) that Tolkien contributed towards. He's dead, so fuck what he thinks; do a close-read and see what you find! Or contribute to his world by making it your own. If Tolkien didn't have the balls to make his hobbits openly gay or the Drow sex-positive, do it for him. Let the old fucker turn in his grave while you desecrate his orderly cathedral, his island fortress's unironic death and rape. He's not God, so tear his corpse a new asshole. Show him just how gay his world can be using his own queer potential; i.e., grant him an ignominious death: hoisted up on his own petard as his fans give Tolkien away with their indignance and bigotry⁹⁸ boiling over on his behalf.

⁹⁸ Read Richard Newby's "A Racist Backlash to *Rings of Power* Puts Tolkien's Legacy into Focus" (2022) to see what I mean.

This is what negotiations of power-as-performance are ultimately about: knowing who you're bargaining with and where they stand. Getting under their skin and inside their head is important, including what they think about power as existing in the blood; i.e., the surprisingly Gothic notion of pre-colonial inheritance that Tolkien relied on in his incessant worship of heroic bloodlines as something to return to; e.g., Thorin, son of Thrain, son of Thrór, but also Aragorn of the Dunedain gifted with long life due to his special blood—a cursed bloodline, I might add, tainted by the folly of Elendil's son, Isildur, giving into the curse of the Ring. The Ring, then, serves as a blood curse that, when destroyed, purifies the blood and the people and places associated with it. It's not the destruction of *all* rings (and marriages) that is required, merely the One Ring and its false line of shadow kings tied to a wraith-like patriarch Tolkien outlines vaguely as "corruption." Faced with the quandary of the Western vampire, he conjures up the ghost of the counterfeit to exorcise it, washing the West of *its* blood by scapegoating Sauron and his Ring for the crimes of the West having preyed on everywhere else.



(artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#) and Lydia)

The paradox of the crumbling homestead (and its spoiled bloodline) is that familial decay is announced by its own crumbling markers of sovereignty *within* the chronotope; e.g., "Ozymandias," but also the chapel from *Diablo 1* (1996) looming over the grim-looking and solemn-sounding Tristram: "The sanctity of this place has been fouled." Even Tolkien had his own mad king inside Rohan, but he soundly tip-toed around the campy sort of Gothic sexuality that Horace Walpole was far more game to experiment with. Incest is terminally common, so much so that Walpole can scarcely be credited with inventing it. But his arrangement of the Gothic castle was the first of its kind that is widely recognized:

Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* of 1764 is still accepted as the "father of the Gothic novel," yet most observers of this novelette see it, with some justice, as a curiously empty and insubstantial originator of the mode it appears to have spawned. It is understandably regarded as thin in more ways than one, as a stagey manipulation of old and hollow stick-figures in

which tired conventions from drama and romance are mixed in ways that emphasize their sheer antiquity and conventionality ([source](#): Jerold Hogle's "The Ghost of the Counterfeit in the Genesis of the Gothic," 1994).

In short, he made it all up and was pretty open about that. Gothic invention, then, was a creative desire to reinvent the past, one described by Mark Madoff in "The Useful Myth of Gothic Ancestry" (1979) as follows:

A myth of gothic ancestry did not simply mean bad history. Those who perpetuated the myth obeyed a stronger call than that of accuracy to historical evidence. The ancestry in question was a product of fantasy to serve specific political purposes. Established as popular belief, the idea of gothic ancestry offered a way of revising the features of the past in order to satisfy the imaginative needs of the present. It floured in response to current anxieties and desires, taking its mythic substance from their objects, its appeal from their urgency. By translating such powerful motives into otherworldly terms, gothic myth permitted a close approach to otherwise forbidden themes ([source](#)).

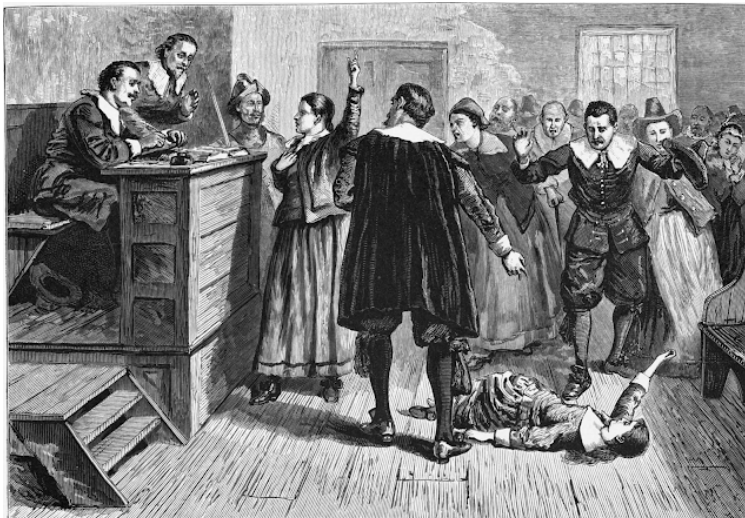
Madoff concludes, "The idea of gothic ancestry endured because it was useful," and I'm inclined to agree. Except I would extend this utility to Gothic Communism as something to fashion through the same myths of ancestry found in the usual haunts; i.e., mirroring the unspoken but still advertised material conditions of *Pax Americana* that Tolkien's "empire where the sun never sets" was suspiciously covered in shadows and bathed in blood. To touch on those, you often have to go somewhere else when formulating your own critiques (the monsters, psychosexual predicaments, and lairs of various kinds). This can seem purely ahistorical, but generally the goals of any historical play (re: Shakespeare) or historical Gothic novel (re: Bakhtin's chronotope) utilizes some degree of invention and informative chaos (re: Aguirre's geometries of terror) amid the displacement and disassociation: crafting your own histories and bloodlines that reverse the process of abjection in a very Gothic way—through the ghost of the counterfeit; i.e., the fake blood of Gothic horror for sex-positive reasons made in the spirit of fun, but also interrogating trauma *by camping it*.

This doesn't take an Oxford scholar. For example, my older brother once invented his own Eastern European leader for a third-grade assignment and called him "Mr. Kazakhstan" while using a picture of Stalin; despite how this would have been right around the fall of the Soviet Union, my brother's teacher didn't recognize the photo and gave him an A+ (angering my mother to no end). Keeping in line with the same family tradition, and informed by my mother's bringing of Russian and Eastern European history home to us kids, I wrote my own fantasy story in the early 2000s where an incestuous tyrant called Bane (the name comes

from *Weaponlord*, 1995, not *Batman*) forces his half-sister, Sigourney, and half-brothers to wear magic rings that keep them bound to the family castle. When Sigourney cuts off her finger and tries to run, her half-brother forces her to wear a collar instead. Over time, she gives birth to Bane's rape child: an incredibly intelligent/latently powerful witch named Alyona. Alyona is kind and book-smart—with her non-rapey uncles and her pet ravens there for her as friends (and also Ileana, who trains Alyona to harness her dormant powers to escape Bane's clutches). Eventually Alyona goes on to defeat her own father-uncle and save her family from certain destruction (with their help, as she cannot defeat him alone).

To be honest, I hadn't thought about this character in years; I used to think she was modeled after my mother and the abuse she and my uncles experienced during their own childhoods. But then, shortly before Valentine's Day of 2023, I realized that Alyona (and her siblings) were arguably closer to me than my mother (though functionally the psychomachy offered up a liminal combination of myself and my entire family unit to varying degrees of reality and artifice). To my current, updated knowledge, while no one in my immediate family is a literal product of incest, there *is* sexual abuse in my family's history and this history clutters our current ancestral home as one that was only in our possession for a single generation: the house my grandparents eventually bought. Yet the abuses that proceeded its ownership have stubbornly plagued them well into the present, tottering on the edge of the American middle class like Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of Seven Gables* (1851): "They had taken that downright plunge which, sooner or later, is the destiny of all families, whether princely or plebeian" ([source](#)).

"Families are always rising and falling in America"; i.e., the myth of the American middle class is a kind of Gothic lie waiting to crumble. Hawthorne's historical materialism arguably stems from his own cursed bloodline: the Hathornes. Donna Welles writes how [Hawthorne's ancestor, William Hathorne, was one of the judges of the Salem Witch Trials](#), which Nathaniel desired to escape from, but still write about. He did so by critiquing America's own Puritanical



heritage—felt on a social-sexual level through all those damn linguo-material reminders of former, fallen power, just *daring* to return but somehow already-here.

(artist: [William A. Crafts](#))

Gothicists generally fear a harmful barbaric past, but especially its prophesied homecoming within the

counterfeit residence as a fearsome site of tremendous lies, decay and abuse speaking to the actual doubled home as equally false. The same applied to me at nineteen during my own displaced writing concerned with power abuse as tied to the "gift-giving" of rings and collars operating as BDSM symbols of psychosexual roleplay. It might seem quaint or invented, but then again, rings don't tend to do much on their own. It's how they're viewed and applied during a given iteration that matters. In short, the writing for me was therapeutic, but also transformative: nearly twenty years before I identified as a woman, my story about Bane and the rings showed me the girl inside of myself as echoed by Tolkien's fictions. Such a shame Tolkien a) didn't have the guts to come out of the closet regarding his own stories, and b) recognize what they said about him and his home as something he tried to erase, albeit in favor of the colonizer through a purified village aesthetic *to retreat into*.

This isn't always a conscious decision at first (though Tolkien's denial/stubborn refusal to change, honestly reflect, or leave the closet would have become more deliberate, near the end of his life); as a child, I don't remember thinking about any of my own family's trauma or at least *consciously* reifying it as castles, collars or rings. We certainly talked about these experiences often, but much of it was jokingly passed around like a hot potato (a bit like Bilbo's ring in that no one wanted to hold onto it). The exchange became an absurd game—with my mother and two uncles joking as teenagers that *our* bloodline would meet the same end that Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839) did: "the fall of the House of [our family name]." The predictable rise and fall of our bloodline through socio-material decay is the very stuff of Gothic cliché. It was only later I consciously learned and started to understand how *badly* my mother had been abused—hurt by many different persons to such an appalling degree that exact quantification is impossible. This goes for the abuse, but also the degree of shivering someone or somewhere into fractals—a phenomenon in behavioral therapy called *multiplicity* or *plurality*. But like Gollum, there is often an exchange of power relayed in some shape or form that leads to the division taking place. This needn't be a ring or a vampire. Sometimes, it can be a contract; or in the case of Lenore's betrayal of Hector from *Castlevania* (exhibit 7a), it can be a vampire ring that works like a harmful BDSM contract when worn a particular way during a particular roleplay scenario: during sex as a dangerous distraction inside a Gothic (vampire's) castle.

For a good example of a slave contract without an obvious "ring" being visibly worn (or a vampire), consider the late '90s (thus early-Internet) Japanese anime thriller, *Perfect Blue*, and its own dissociative, gaslit depictions of a mind horribly fractured by trauma, but also surrounded by it:

Madness is central, in Gothic stories. Generally manifesting through a kind of palpable affect, the monstrous is an experience felt through horror and terror. Presented to the audience, this charge is stored either inside a

location or upon its imagery. Viewed, the promoted surfaces compel specific responses—either from victims trapped inside, or those who feel as such (the audience). Call it a "shared gaze," if you will; the madness remains vicarious.

In blander terms, *Perfect Blue* [1997] is a psychological thriller, one that concerns shared psychosis, or *folie à deux*. In Gothic terms, its madness is not limited between two people, but an entire location—what I'll call *chez folie*, or "mad place." A haunted house is more than the heroine and killer, inside; it involves a great number of moving parts, all cooperating to produce a madness exhibited. Once cultivated, this insanity is channeled through a pointed, liminal gaze, often the heroine's. Under attack, her sense of reality crumbles. Is she mad, or is the killer merely hidden, concealed within the mist? This affliction extends to the audience looking through her eyes; when the killer is near, reality starts to break down (a familiar notion for those acclimated with *Silent Hill* [1999] or H. P. Lovecraft) [[source](#): Persephone van der Waard's "Gothic Themes in Perfect Blue," 2019].

The story is over-the-top, but conveys an oft-buried truth under Capitalism: trauma can splinter the mind into pieces, leading to different outcomes in the material and natural world. All the while, the vampire hides behind the mirror inside the reflections of other people's faces and bodies:



In my case, my poetic division, displacement and disassociation amounted to Alyona as something I *materially* created in a barbaric, pointedly antiquated offshoot of *my* family home informed by Tolkien's imaginary one: a castle filled with psychosexual counterfeits talking about my abuse as arranged chronotopically around me; i.e., Bakhtin's dynastic primacy and hereditary rites speaking in the usual fatal portraits, suits of armor and coats of arms, but animated by the endless legends occupying the same space through its past-and-present inhabitants. In the case of my mother (as well as my romantic partners who had histories of complex

trauma), division involved aspects of their fractured personalities manifesting before my eyes inside a *natural* mind and body affected by the socio-*material* environment around it. And with all of us, the curious use of dated Gothic language was never far off. It was baked into the jokes we told ourselves, the games we played together as haunted by the ghost of the counterfeit. But it was still an effective device at speaking to the things that normally went unsaid. The paradox, here, is they were singing to us through the language of the imaginary past as something that shaped our own thought.

Historical-material trauma is utterly entropic, but built with bricks and stones that come apart and fly back together like magic. Always close at hand, it feels palpable but strangely elusive and distant—like Marx's nightmare, but also Doctor Morbius' from *Forbidden Planet* (1956): "Sly and irresistible, only waiting to be reinvoked for murder!" Whether abusers and abused, then, all of my family has been hurt by the family structure itself—all of its monsters hiding in plain sight through familial, dynastic forms: the gargoyles, fatal portraits and other chronotopic elements. For my grandparents, these became sources of shame to hide behind symbols of pride, *including* Tolkien's world as an adjacent source of pride to retreat inside. My folks buried everything they could, but I always felt it emanating all around me, like Poe's "Tell-Tale Heart" (1843) underneath the floorboards, but also inside Middle-earth and my copies of it (my teenage self unafraid to use Stalin and Eastern Europe as a palimpsest). In short, the trauma was buried alive within me as I existed inside my own Gothic-familial space; i.e., littered with traumatic bleeding into Gothic stories as something to messily pass down, but also pass *off* as not somehow connected to our own generational curse.

I've since become utterly detached from it all, feeling bereft of anything that might have been promised to me (including by Tolkien's magical worlds). Per Said, I feel exiled, but on some level, pleurably composed of my home as foreign to me. For instance, as a young girl and teenage woman, I had acquired then projected my osmotic absorptions onto a singular egregore: Alyona. Bane had bred her for war and revenge, a kind of fascist *wunderkind/wunderwaffe* he had predicted in the family bloodlines then imposed through his rapacious will. Alyona not only contained the awesome power of future generations; she contained a summation of my family's combined, complex trauma existing inside her own Gothic home as having inadvertently doubled mine; i.e., carried away to distant lands and enchanted castles and (more importantly) the ability to change one's problems in a way *I* never could: with rebellious magic inside my transwoman's duplicate of the Gothic rape castle. It strikes me as both simplistic and precocious—a maturing mind bred on fantasy stock coming to her own conclusions (not Tolkien's) inside a trans egg that finally cracked, decades later.

I was a teenager when I started writing these stories (and drawing them). Even so, my interrogation of capital was still far more frank than Tolkien's own, his elves effectively anglicized faeries, his men of the West an imaginary pro-European

Teutonic, and his vampiric Necromancer reducing the shadow of the fascist past to a dark, abstract, "pure evil" shape disconnected from sex and nature altogether (with his own impressive mythos badly echoing *Paradise Lost*—Satan, Beelzebub, *Pandemonium*—and Ursula Le Guin taking several books after *A Wizard of Earthsea*, 1968, to *really* hit her gay stride). Still, Tolkien's own writings on the Ring of Power—and the infamous plurality of Gollum (and Gollum's triangulation pitting Frodo against Sam)—speaks to *everyone's* exploitation under the state's heteronormative arrangement towards power long before Sauron shows up; i.e., the wearing of rings as a BDSM roleplay minus the Gothic kink, and simply being the Ring as the sole focus: "One ring to rule them all, one ring to find them, one ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them."

Do you honestly think the "men of the West" routinely fall for "the Ring" because they're not tall, fancy elf-ladies or gay wizards played by Shakespeareans? No, they're groomed to be susceptible before, during and after Sauron's fall by the West as a *corruptible* bloodline—under the spell of state-sanctioned marriage and heteronormative, institutional love; i.e., amatonormativity. Unable to explain fascism, Tolkien just naturalizes and solves it... with old-fashioned monomythic (thus heteronormative) violence and marriage, but also echoes of the Gothic cathedral—Ringwraiths in his case—as tied to the Gothic presentations of blood exchange he pointedly made bloodless. Sauron's bad play—his all-consuming vampire contract through the wearing of the energy-sapping rings—has totally withered them. Doomed to die, the traitorous kings' fearing of death was so great it had them playing Faust, only to *become* death by imitating his titular deal with the devil—not as a genderqueer entity but a giver of false knowledge and power invented by Christian men to *uphold* the status quo:



(exhibit 10c3: Artist: [Anato Finnstark](#). Their rendition of Weathertop assembles Tolkien's Gothic cathedral in ways he would have been embarrassed to openly do himself. Yet there they are, standing around Frodo (a dead ringer for Bilbo) like suits of armor possessed by the Shadow of the Skeleton King: a male tyrant reduced to mere shadow and scared off by something as basic [and lazy]

as torchlight. Yet Frodo swoons before them as any Gothic heroine would, enraptured by their Numinous might. One sympathizes.)

We've already taken Tolkien to task in Volume Zero for gentrifying war (and canonizing Milton's Biblical critique) in his own High Fantasy refrain regressing towards *Beowulf* and a pure, non-Gothic bloodline. Right now, I want you to try and consider how his inadequacies as a writer didn't *wholly* prohibit critical potency of a strictly BDSM, queer-Gothic sort in his stories. In short, I want you to help me save him from his own dumbass self.

Yes, Tolkien was a philologist (an expert in ancient written languages) and *Beowulf* aficionado—basically an old, dusty scholar who was well-versed in the Scandinavian legends of dragons, war and plunder. As such, he undoubtedly appeared as totally *lacking* in the language of women, ethnic minorities (the East is a dark place for him) and gay people. And yet similar to Milton, he had his devilish moments, and similar to my crafting of Alyona, there existed a tremendously secret, divided self waiting inside Tolkien's own psychomachic dialogs about his own dissenting opinions; i.e., the shadowy spaces of a deeply troubled man who, as we've already established, was at least publicly allergic both to the Gothic and allegory as a theatrical device. Despite these disassociative (arguably posttraumatic) aversions and paucity of accurate genderqueer labels, he clearly authored his own imaginary castles but also Gothic power exchange scenarios to go along with them (the Ring is basically a portable torture device that transports the wearer, if not directly to Barad-dur, then at least to feel trapped inside the fortress dungeon; i.e., surviving the dumb, brutal goblin jailors' whips, chains, prison bars and infernal torture devices; re: the Westerner's paradoxical chasing of the captive fantasy in order to embody the thinking captive's righteous indignation and escape from the brutish, unthinking⁹⁹ captor). They might seem even more far-removed than usual and that's on Tolkien, but the usual BDSM genderqueer antics are *still* there provided you know what to look for and have a bit of patience (to be clear, you don't have to rescue Tolkien's actual reputation, just his "ghost" as something to camp).

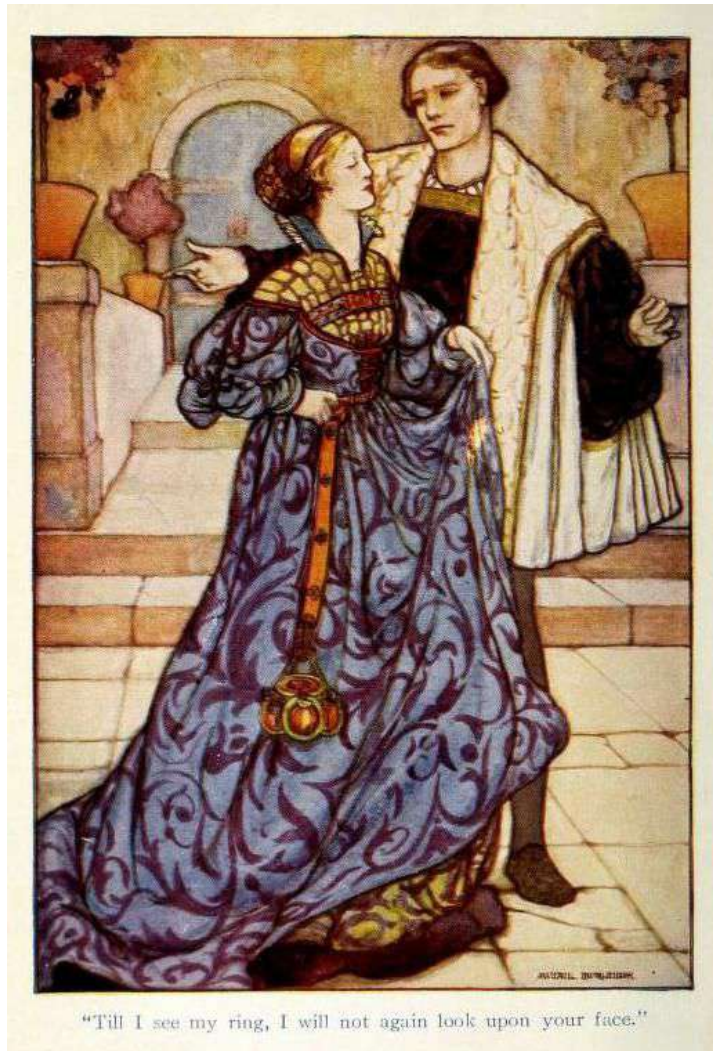
It all goes back to rings as classical symbols of status and power exchange. Rings are given and worn; the Ringwraiths (and their rings) are smaller abstractions of the Faustian bargain manifest through the wearing of Sauron's rings as harmful symbols of power but also power exchange as having a torturous effect on one's ability to relate to others; e.g., of Frodo to Sam. The magic becomes a metaphor, a kind of BDSM shorthand—re: not just our hobbits, but also similar acts of gift-giving that famously involve the ring as a kind of contract that is worn, generally in a variety of roleplays (which, for Tolkien, were primarily chaste in their execution—excluding the raw, lethal force of dead orcs, of course).

Tolkien stole this idea for his counterfeit much like he did everything else (excluding his languages, but who on Earth complains about those?). We mentioned

⁹⁹ Re: Descartes' disastrous notion of "extended beings" exemplified in Tolkien's refrain. Thinking vs extended, or white Europeans versus everyone else.

Lenore and Hector for the second time, a moment ago. Let us consider a likely inspiration for their own power games and Tolkien's that I have already examined myself in the past¹⁰⁰ (and which we now return to for a second look):

Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (c. 1598):



([source](#): Pinterest)

In a similar medievalist fashion centered around rings, bloodlines and Christian apologetics, Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* seemed to ask, "who is the titular merchant by the end of Act Five?" It would seem to be Portia, as the exchange of power and wealth through the wedding rings have gained her the most social capital in a Christian sense; i.e., the argument of mercy and bargaining through displays of charity that are displayed and worn in public. On paper, her husband has acquired her manor and inheritance, but she maintains the ability to gamely negotiate and navigate these spaces far better than he. As Karen Newman writes in "Portia's Ring: Unruly Women and Structures of Exchange in *The*

Merchant of Venice" (1987):

The governing analogy in Portia's speech [to Bassanio] is the Renaissance political commonplace that figures marriage and the family as a kingdom in small, a microcosm ruled over by the husband. Portia's speech figures woman as microcosm to man's macrocosm and as subject to his sovereignty. Portia ratifies this pre-nuptial contract with Bassanio by pledging her ring,

¹⁰⁰ I.e., in Volume Zero (2023) when I inspect my own 2015 essay "Dragon-sickness: The Problem of Greed" close-reading *The Hobbit*, *The Merchant of Venice* and Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904).

which here represents the codified, hierarchical relation of men and women in the Elizabethan sex/gender system in which a woman's husband is "her lord, her governor, her king." The ring is a visual sign of her vow of love and submission to Bassanio; it is a representation of Portia's acceptance of Elizabethan marriage which was characterized by women's subjection, their loss of legal rights, and their status as goods or chattel. It signifies her place in a rigidly defined hierarchy of male power and privilege; and her declaration of love at first seems to exemplify her acquiescence to woman's place in such a system.

But Portia's declaration of love veers away in its final lines from the exchange system the preceding lines affirm. Having moved through past time to the present Portia's pledge and gift of her ring, the speech ends in the future, with a projected loss and its aftermath, with Portia's "vantage to exclaim on" Bassanio:

I give them with this ring,
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love,
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

Here Portia is the gift-giver, and it is worth remembering Mauss's description of gift-giving in the New Guinea highlands in which an aspiring "Big Man" gives more than can be reciprocated and in so doing wins prestige and power. Portia gives more than Bassanio can ever reciprocate, first to him, then to Antonio, and finally to Venice itself in her actions in the trial which allow the city to preserve both its law and its precious Christian citizen. In giving more than can be reciprocated, Portia short-circuits the system of exchange and the male bonds it creates, winning her husband away from the arms of Antonio.

Contemporary conduct books and advice about choosing a wife illustrate the dangers of marriage to a woman of higher social status or of greater wealth. Though by law such a marriage makes the husband master of his wife and her goods, in practice contemporary sources suggest unequal marriages often resulted in domination by the wife. Some writers and Puritan divines even claimed that women purposely married younger men, men of lower rank or of less wealth, so as to rule them ([source](#)).

If Shakespeare's game approach to labor and wealth was relayed via imaginary Italy in the proto-Gothic tradition, Tolkien certainly took his own jaunts into similar territories using queer analogs.

First, there was the initial male bachelor playing at various games to escape battle with the goblins: speaking in riddles. Indeed, Bilbo not only cheated at the

riddle game; he cheated at combat, using a magic ring that he arguably stole (though it didn't originally belong to Gollum) in order to *sneak* out (all while Bilbo's *manly* friends had to heroically fight through tiers of goblins serving the evil master using the only language Tolkien's Nazi-esque¹⁰¹ scapegoats understood: brute force). Surviving into old age, Bilbo was followed by a second younger double, Frodo, who—when *he* puts on the Ring and goes (for but a moment) over to the dark side—would have been the same exact age as his spitting-image uncle when the older hobbit first found the Ring in Gollum's cave.

If I made Alyona and my own gay-penned torture castle to interrogate a Gothic living situation through BDSM theatrics (and in response to Tolkien as someone to camp), then I don't think it's really much of a stretch to see Tolkien doing the same to canonize the Gothic; i.e., his borrowed bestiary gnawing at the back of his own mind about the imperfections of the heteronormative West and its own imperfect bloodline. Except for him, the abstraction of the Ring was something to offer up during a ritualized sacrifice that, once invoked (using a volcano, no less), defeats fascism once and for all, letting things "return to normal" after the glory of Gondor's white castle is restored through the same-old monomyth purifying the blood through a trial by fire into Hell (versus already functioning normally through the endless cycle of war and false hope under Tolkien's brand of Capitalist Realism apologizing for nation-states). In fact, it's hard not to see a queer-if-closeted (what Tolkien might call "Tookish" or fairy-like¹⁰²) side of the old man, curiously mirrored on the surface of the twinkish Frodo; i.e., a little, confused and perpetual bachelor swooning before the prison-like assemblage of churchly stones, the kingly spectres and their awesome threat of hellish bondage pressing through the golden nuptial band gripping Frodo's hand.

As I said, if you know what to look for then Tolkien's closeted, scapegoat nature of Gothic antics (despite their typical displacement, disassociation and gaping shadow where women and good "orcs" should be) are as plain as wearing the Ring yourself: the threat of dark, vampiric bondage. It's precisely what drew me to his work because the presence of Sauron spoke to my trauma *as a queer person*. The truth of things ties up in the Ring's existence while under its power as something to paradoxically seek. The same palliative-Numinous logic applies to Sauron's offshoots, our riders in black, as unspeakable evocations of power that can be interrogated while under their fearsome spell:

¹⁰¹ Tolkien's goblins occupy a centrist shadow space; i.e., filled with general corruption and monstrous-feminine theatrics of the Western kayfabe: cartoon Nazis, Communists, and racial/genderqueer minorities. They're all things for the good guys to chase down and slay to restore the West to its former glorious state (fascism, Imperialism and genocide, except with more steps).

¹⁰² Tolkien's faeries aren't changelings or dark sexual monarchs, *vis-à-vis* Titania and Oberon. Even when he wrote *The Hobbit*, the elves are merely silly and gay or wild; but they aren't psychosexual; they lock up Thorin because he refuses to say why he and his friends are on elvish land—for suspicion of trespassing, in other words.



To that, the ghost of the counterfeit adumbrates settler-colonial guilt, even when pushed away through a refusal to connect it with home, instead declaring it as "pure darkness" from "elsewhere." The wearers of the black robes *aren't* women, spiders or even orcs; they're old, white bandit kings *from the West*, on par with the sort of duplicitous, "Gothic" backstabbers stared at with fear and wonder by

someone *not* accustomed to the paradoxes and doubling inside the shadow zone. Conjuring up a canonical iteration of darkness visible, Tolkien had taken the British empire's long shadow and projected it off onto faraway castles, alien lands and exotic battlefields of unprecedented carnage, but also crumbling ruins much closer to home: the barrow wights haunting nearby funeral mounds, and dark forests of enchantment populated by evil talking spiders. Corporeal or incorporeal, Tolkien's vampires greedily sap the lifeforce of good living people until they become just as wicked—growing unthinkingly hungry towards "good" nature like Ungoliant or Morgoth draining the twin trees of Valinor (exhibit 0c).

Tolkien wasn't an out-and-out Gothicism because he rejected the title and the open function of actually being one (far more than even Milton did, whose accidental celebration of Satan isn't an unpopular concept); yet Tolkien's necromantic black mirror is still on full display here, even if he can't really bring himself to say the quiet part out loud: Sauron cannot exist in a vacuum. There is no "Big Other" troubling the West from outside, merely the West (and Capitalism) acting as it always does; i.e., like a giant vampire reinventing its own bloodline and simultaneously conjuring up Nazi "homebrew" and *banditti*-grade warlords from *within* itself, inside/outside, but also inventing "evil" labels for its own prey and chasing after them into settler-colonial territories dressed up as "home defense." Evil returns during the class nightmare, whose inheritance anxiety must be banished each and every time through the seeking of power and attaining of all the usual relics thereof—by entering Hell, looting its vaults and "conquering death," Joseph-Campbell-style (again, Imperialism with more steps, and dressed up in rather preachy white-savior and white-*martyr* language).

Likewise, the potential to bring out a Gothic queer criticality was still very much present in Tolkien's works, albeit from a largely male, novel-of-manners perspective. Blame Peter Jackson for toying with canon and "changing things," if you want; but I don't personally think Jackson really changed all that much of Tolkien's notion of power exchange when examined through a queer Gothic lens.

Consider how the titular characters, Bilbo and Frodo, are both canonically 50-year-old bachelors in the book (they are, in fact, cousins who share the same birthday: September 22nd); both inherit a house full of nice clothes and parties but never go out and never get married or have children (with Bilbo begot from Belladonna Took, and Frodo being adopted by him after the younger hobbit's parents were killed in a tragic boating accident). In other words, both characters echo Tolkien, whose "diary" embodies the High Fantasy pastoralization of a *closeted* dandy ringed by Gothic shadows and counterfeits he utterly despised: the "finding" of a historical document that legitimizes a true bloodline and outs a dark bloodline as false. It's about as Gothic as anyone can get and I always knew the Tookish, repressed side of Tolkien wouldn't let me down.

I don't think Tolkien was strictly as fanciful or devilish as Walpole was, let alone Lewis, but the notion of historical reinvention with ahistorical fictions was certainly present in his village scapegoating of evil. Abjection aside, Tolkien's fantasies helped him discuss impolite topics through Gothic allegory as a Platonic, shadows-on-the-wall device the author openly decried, but was still *guilty* of using. Maybe that's why he kept quiet. Nevertheless, Molly Ostertag writes in "Queer Readings of *The Lord of the Rings* Are Not Accidents" (2021):

The frame story Tolkien created for *The Lord of the Rings* was that the tale was simply translated from a much older historical document. This is established in the book's introduction, where the author describes how Bilbo's private diary (i.e., *The Hobbit*) was preserved and expanded by Frodo (and later Sam), becoming an account of the War of the Ring. That volume, *The Red Book of Westmarch*, was preserved and transcribed, and passed down as ancient history—"those days [...] are now long past, and the shape of all lands has been changed"—until it ended up in Tolkien's hands. This frame is evident through the book in bits of old lore scattered through the story, footnotes on the quirks of translating languages like Elvish and Orcish into English, and in the [extensive appendices](#) that lay out Middle-earth's history before and after the story.

When a book is presented as a primary source rather than a work of fiction, it's an authorial invitation to look between the lines and search for hidden truths [oh, the irony]. The narrator becomes part of the fiction—history, after all, is recorded by specific people with their own motives—something that Tolkien, as [one of the world's foremost *Beowulf* scholars](#), would have intimately understood. It was a conscious choice on the part of

"Frodo" and "Sam" to include the many moments when they express love for each other, and it reads much in the same way people from the past delicately referred to their same-sex relationships: wanting to acknowledge their truth while obeying the conventions of the time.

Heterosexual romance is sparse in the books, and discussion of sexuality between the characters is absent (the One Ring can be seen as a metaphor for lust and temptation, but that's a whole other topic). But Tolkien was not averse to romance. In a letter to one of his sons, he wrote about chivalric romance as the height of romantic love: "It idealizes 'love' [...] it takes in far more than physical pleasure, and enjoins if not purity, at least fidelity, and so self-denial, 'service,' courtesy, honor, and courage." This is the relationship between Aragorn and his elf-love Arwen; between Eowyn and Faramir; and it is, to a T, the relationship between Sam and Frodo ([source](#)).



(artist: [Molly Ostertag](#))

Open confessions aside, the Walpolean tradition of Gothic Romance lies in Tolkien's story as utterly haunted by what it limits to the periphery: fascism, the monstrous-feminine and queer love as projected onto an imaginary easterly plain by a thoroughly white, cis-het, British male imagination reared at the end of Queen Victoria's reign (thus the collapse of British settler colonialism). Contemporaries of Tolkien certainly made no bones about diving more honestly than he did into deathly shadow spaces and rapey castles; re: James Whale, an openly gay man later imitated by bisexual activist, Vincent Price, as well as 1970s camp; e.g., *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and *The Phantom of the Paradise* (1974). All were channeling a monstrous-feminine idea that reaches back before Tolkien to Oscar

Wilde's aesthete (the author of the 1890 novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*) and the "sodomitic" dandies of the 19th and 18th centuries, including horror auteur, Matthew Lewis. And if the Gothic isn't currently being helmed by gay men, then its icons certainly have been inclusive of the demonized in ways that happily don't entirely preclude Tolkien, or at least his ghost as something to camp by shining a spotlight on the queer elements that *were* present in his own work.

Yes, Humphrey Carpenter wrote in 1977, "As to homosexuality, Tolkien claimed that at nineteen he did not even know the word" ([source](#): *J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography*, 1977). And yet, as with Walpole, Lewis, or even me when I was a teenage girl, it really doesn't matter if Tolkien lacked the words to spell out his queerness in no uncertain terms; it's still very much *there* for us to comment on—and frankly as clear as day in all the Gothic scenarios he swoops in to frighten readers with, but also himself. As someone clearly bothered by the shadow of the West (and British settler colonialism in decline), Tolkien conjured up this shadow as the stories' metatextual wizard: *he's* the necromancer *and* the Britannic queer of the story because the titular Lord of the Rings, Ringwraiths and hobbits all come from inside him and his culture as apologizing for itself through Gothic poetics dressed up as anti-Gothic; i.e., Tolkien's vault of treasures, but also his trademark dark forces without which his grand conflicts would be utterly meaningless (though unlike Milton, he is defending God and God's twin trees [the Base and Superstructure] and the Christian West as things that *are* exceptionally good, thus above critique). All encompass the "moral geography" of his famous treasure map and its prolific, endlessly replicated xenophobia (the creation of orcs and humans a standard function of nation-states carried into videogames through Tolkien's earnest, ubiquitous Orientalism: us-versus-them arenas and killing fields dressed up in made-up languages, their many names memorized by the faithful escaping into them to do battle with Tolkien's various scapegoats).



("J.R.R. Tolkien in his study, ca. 1937, black and white photograph"; [source](#): *The Morgan Library & Museum*).

Beyond Tolkien's ambiguously gay (male) hobbits, he nevertheless interrogated war through the classically dated, homocentric approach. Given his dusty academic interests, the complicated/warring bigotries of Great Britain, and the Nazis' destruction of Magnus Hirschfeld's Institution of Sexology in 1933, we can perhaps understand if not condone Tolkien's ignorance regarding trans, non-binary and intersex people

when he started canonizing his fantasy stories. He was nearly Bilbo's age when he wrote *The Hobbit*, thus unsurprisingly stuck to his white man's gentlemanly idea of a heteronormative, "civilized" world; i.e., the usual kind of white men fighting for white women in the usual Cartesian division and violence against nature that results. Tolkien's fabrications were moderately bigoted, but still bigoted in all the usual ways you could expect of a moderate from those times of waning British superiority under an increasingly globalized capitalist network. And yet, similar to Radcliffe or any other non-radical British person of the Gothic tradition, Tolkien used his privilege to draft a ghost of the counterfeit that was arguably far more dangerous than the open bigotries of the Third Reich (what Martin Luther King Jr. warned about in "[Letter from the Birmingham Jail](#)" in 1963: the white moderate): Sauron *thrived* in Tolkien's black-and-white universe, as did the imperial murder machine grinding up so many "orcs" to reclaim the lost valor of the West. Blood for blood, a truth universally acknowledged through wedding bands in the end (minus Austen's irony).

We're clearly not here to apologize for these persons, but to expose through our arguments with their ghosts (of the counterfeit) anything that is useful in their work towards developing a post-scarcity world that isn't quite so fixated on biology and blood. And sitting alongside Tolkien's painfully Anglicized lords and ladies was that curious group of "little people" who fall short of the towering men, gilded elves, and anti-Semitic dwarves of the West: hobbits.

To that, Tolkien's Middle-earth is an imaginary theatre of medieval jingoism (re: the Cycle of Kings; i.e., the titular *Return of the King* during the rise and fall of fascism, restoring Capitalism to an undecayed state) serving as the usual place where forbidden love occurs: Gothic castles. Even so, it remains largely devoid of active, gender-non-conforming (and especially non-white) women and utterly chockful of nationalized imagery tied to Capitalist Realism: orcs, vampires, and bad BDSM, but also hobbits. As something Tolkien contributed towards using these queer little creatures, hobbits worked as a debatable analogy for himself and his countrymen before, during and after WW1¹⁰³. Tolkien felt dwarfed (so to speak) by the presence of *global* war around him, becoming prone to homoromantic feelings that wouldn't have strictly been allowed by his peers: Bilbo never married and neither did Frodo, but both characters were clearly cis men who loved other men. But Tolkien could never really stick the landing. He (and his son) were/are too busy

¹⁰³ In a letter to his son, Michael, Tolkien wrote, "From Rivendell to the other side of the Misty Mountains, the journey... including the glissade down the slithering stones into the pine woods... is based on my adventures in Switzerland in 1911" ([source](#): Jim Dobson's "How a Trek Through Switzerland Inspired J.R.R. Tolkien to Create a Magical Middle-Earth, 2022). If *The Hobbit* was based on Tolkien's passage through Switzerland in 1911, then it's hardly a stretch to see *The War of the Ring* as based clearly on WW2 and Western Europe; i.e., being beset by the fascist, half-eastern territory of Mordor in centrist hypercanon, but also a variety of special military units on either side; e.g., the Great Eagles and the Nazgul both being death-from-above stand-ins for the rise of nationalized air forces during this conflict, and the orcs and Easterlings being seen as weaponized slaves on par with those used by the Nazi war machine during *Lebensraum*.

refereeing Tolkien's own stories, in effect [robbing their own house](#) to maintain the lie (the Divine Right of Kings and British sovereignty) while *also* doing their best to appear as boring and unassuming as possible within the American capitalist model. It's very British.

In short, it would take someone *other* than a debatably closeted British man in love with his own painfully English war poems, dying empire and European legendarium to give female persons a place inside the Gothic dialogic, in effect articulating what is perhaps Tolkien's greatest shortcoming of all (aside from his demonizing of people of color and celebration of Capitalism/the West through a blood purity narrative): his exclusion of women, especially their trauma as undead (with him being paradoxically terrified of talking to the dead in a Gothic way—*cryptomimesis*). This is a giant omission, but also mischaracterization by Tolkien; i.e., his women largely operate as virgins or whores, damsels or demons. Simply put, they aren't people so much as monsters to be killed (usually spiders), princess-like property to be fought over, or—in the case of generously neoliberal interpretations of *The Silmarillion*—Amazonian girl bosses¹⁰⁴ like Galadriel who advocate for open genocide; e.g., the "good war" rhetoric of *Rings of Power* (2022) being Tolkien's chickens coming home to roost (melting that ring down didn't do shit, dude): the endless escapism/chasing of war and orcs, goblins, and Drow, etc,



as beings of darkness to subjugate, fetishize and dominate by the vampiric forces of *good* acting like far worse doms than Sauron (and whose stately abuses extend towards any monstrous-feminine force by state actors—more on this in Volume Three when we look at the ontological ambiguities of femboys and other chased groups). In short, Tolkien's idea of pure evil abjects the state's brutality onto a basic, clumsy scapegoat; it's seemingly tame, but intensely harmful towards nature through the myopia it generates in defense of the state as preying on the natural world by redefining those in connection with it.

(artist: [Kyu Yong Eom](#))

¹⁰⁴ I can provide a partial exception to Eowyn because, even though she says, "You stand before my lord and kin, and if you touch him I will smite you!" Yes, she says in the same breathe that she is not a man, but does act like one in defense of Tolkien's bloodline; yet she is also someone who only ever fights a single Nazi stand-in, and to that, the *king* of Sauron's generals. So, while it could be argued that she is just as bad as everyone else, we do not get to see her "pull a genocide" and argue for it like Jackson's Eowyn or Amazon's Galadriel. She's not a white knight who has the chance to darken, and remains idiosyncratically subversive of the Valkyrie legend in genderqueer ways. Again, she's not *perfect*, but remains one of Tolkien's finest moments; i.e., *she*—not Bilbo or Frodo—inspired me on my own genderqueer adventure!

To that, Tolkien's biggest problem was his pure escapism into an idealized reality versus an experienced one; it became his canon, fear and dogma to—through a particular cultural mythos—uphold the status quo, alienating himself and others from sex and nature while fetishizing settler-colonial violence in horribly vampiric ways. I'd like to spend the rest of the subchapter examining how an experienced reality—and its Gothic BDSM fantasies not being divorced from trauma—lead to an iconoclastic worldview that made me far more openly queer and sex-positive than Tolkien, but also his supporters; i.e., those who would deny voices to presumed property of the state: the rape of women or beings treated like women in some shape or form. That, as we shall see, was my ring (or cross) to bear (minus Tolkien's sense of Christian guilt).

As our thesis argued, such stories' reclamation generally relies on *some* degree of Gothic poetics, including intense emotions, music, sexuality and monsters. It bears repeating that Tolkien even preserved a lot of this through his rings, swords-with-names and battlefields, but also his *Beowulf*-grade poems and songs, which appear to have no idea how women actually work, let alone gay people, persons of color or Indigenous peoples. Even so, the legends really *meant* something to the old man; they helped him process his trauma by literally conjuring it up and fighting with it through stolen armaments. While the basic idea isn't that different from ludo-Gothic BDSM, the arrangement of power is; my idea of the palliative Numinous is generally relayed through a feminine recipient of power inside Gothic castles—all to critique Capitalism and its generational trauma in ways that Tolkien's stories largely couldn't.

Again, for all his love of traditional and fantastical reinvention, Tolkien largely abandoned his Marxist critiques in favor of toeing the line through a centrist refrain built around heteronormative men and their pure bloodline (and token queer hobbits): the men of Numenor granted superhero powers by virtue of their noble parentage and staked claims on fancy elf princesses. A conservative treatment of sex lingers inside, but also of settler-colonial violence; i.e., not subversion, but *segregation* and enforcement of the usual bigotries told through a courtly romance (minus the usual medieval lust) centered around a small effeminate humanoid coded in various traditional ways; e.g., war and songs, but also knights and monsters that, through the ghost of the counterfeit, further the process of abjection through Capitalist Realism.



(artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#))

As a Gothic-Communist trans woman, my stories have sought to camp Tolkien's ghost in jokey ways: making *it* openly gay. To that, my Sigourney (left) is imprisoned at her evil half-brother's castle, but she seems to have something of a Mona-Lisa smile/approach, playfully daring the viewer, "Speak¹⁰⁵ 'friend' and enter!"—in short, to "raid" her "dungeon." The aim with our calculated risk is to reverse Tolkien's canonical usage (and facilitation) of war and

darkness towards a more Miltonian treatment (thus corruption) of dialectical-material forces (though my stories featured giant stone pillars, not twin trees, they were still ruled over by magical women, not a singular godly patriarch); my doing so has centered entirely around representations of things that largely went unspoken by Tolkien: women like Sigourney as actual persons with their own opinions, senses of humor and lived trauma; i.e., shackled to the dark, rapacious castles on display as a profoundly effective means of voicing their own trauma to reclaim what was taken from them by the usual abusers. Finding (a)sexual meaning in their own lives would likewise actually help anticipate Capitalism's historical materialism leading to all the usual genocides (and their alien commodification) centered around bloodlines, war and marriage—i.e., interrogating and negotiating power in ways that go far beyond Tolkien's limited, boys-only purview while he was alive to challenge the torchbearers of his complicated settler-colonial legacy after his death. His exclusion of women was clearly meant to gag them, but also the things these tokenized ladies would triangulate against: people of color and stigmatized elements of the natural world exploited by capital.

Compelled love regularly happens in neoliberal stories that prepare female workers for fascism's re-entry—*Beauty and the Beast* (1991), for example; i.e., trad wives "fixing the abuser" and faking orgasms (the latter of which *is* easier for AFAB persons to do, though I can personally attest to AMAB people faking the *enjoyment* of sex with an abusive partner). To be fair, unequal positions and behaviors—such as having one side be the primary breadwinner or an ace person and non-ace person becoming romantically involved—*can* be negotiated under boundaries of mutual consent. Fascism doesn't allow for mutual consent because it is *radically* heteronormative, *overcorrecting* the colonial binary to self-destructive

¹⁰⁵ A mistranslation by Gandalf in *The Fellowship of the Ring* (the actual line being "say friend and enter"), demonstrating the aging wizard's inability to get into dark, deep holes.

extremes; by extension, centrism cannot stop fascism, making it fascism with more steps. Tolkien's fringe homonormative undercurrent ultimately returns to the heteronormative, courtly arrangement of a white, purified Britain-by-another-name; i.e., destroying nature more slowly by leading to Sauron, but also covering up their own hand in things as "Saurons to a lesser degree." After all, a nature preserve without Indigenous peoples is simply genocided land; the same goes for elvish woods without goblins or orcs, the latter crammed into a ghetto-like underworld like the Misty Mountains. Tolkien's wishy-washy naturalization of a good/evil binary in the natural world is criminogenic.

Likewise, general slavery—normally veiled under neoliberalism—is more overt under fascism, but exists to varying degrees in centrist stories (whose paladins differ from death knights to a matter of degree, not function). This includes marriage between compelled heteronormative sex; i.e., women's labor, which is historically unpaid/forced through veiled threats of destitution and harm. Under manufactured scarcity and conflict, marriage becomes a ritual of convenience-under-duress: a compelled means of financial security for those who historically have no rights, including owning property—not just cis-het women (which canonically are fought over by men vying for the widow's gold, marriage bed and status), but queer folk who wear beards and have lavender weddings just to survive. Meanwhile, old genocidal adages from sublimations of America's Manifest Destiny break through the façade: "Kill the Indian, save the man" becomes "kill the orc, save the princess." Be they Indigenous peoples, persons of color or other minorities, token police scramble to save their own skins; they try to assimilate, offered a brutal and cruel "last chance" by their future slavers-once-more. Courtesy of Tolkien's refrain, war becomes an addictive, brutal



game—not just a ring to wear but a vicious, regressive cycle overshadowed by older variants of the Ring less remembered than Tolkien's famous epic; e.g., *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (1876) by Richard Wagner.

(source: [Legendo Games](#))

We'll return to the game show as a metaphor for exploitation later in the book. Until then, consider the ways in which violence-as-a-game is, itself, a pyramid scheme: "There can only be only one!" *The Highlander* (1986) sloganizes this concept,

evoking a violent, imaginary past that only the good Macleod—a white, male savior—can save the white women of the present from: the rapacious Kurgan. Apart from the hero, heteronormative fantasy canonized by Tolkien's High Fantasy schtick regularly segregates intersecting groups into a colonial binary that radicalizes towards the domestic center or repels away from it during state decay and restoration. Under fascism, everyone is forced to be hyper-cis-het inside a faux-medieval, hauntological framework; black and white are radically divided and token minorities police those within the state of exception to the detriment of nature. Under Bretton Woods' embedded liberalism, relative freedoms are "given back" to a working class threatened with fascism, provided sacrifices are made against a conveniently evil force... which neoliberalism makes into an idealized reality built on harmful, dogmatic illusions; i.e., made to conceal its own economic regressions that lead the cycle to repeating itself under Capitalist Realism.

The whole exploitative cycle between fascists and neoliberals is only derailed by two things: state shift, or the intersectional solidarity of workers fostering an experienced reality that camps Tolkien's idealized one.

State shift is the Anthropocene/Capitalocene as thwarted by Mother Nature herself effectively kicking Tolkien in the balls. Payback's a bitch, but it will be a terrible end—one met with slow, Promethean brutality. Genocides don't happen overnight or with the fall of nuclear bombs, which—unlike the monopolies of violence, terror and morphological expression—are too hard to control for the elite should they be used at all (as they rely on material reminders of their power not being blown away by nuclear fire); genocides take time so the rich pigs can soak up all the blood and digest it like greedy vampires. Yet, while total annihilation is neither "instant death" nor a foregone conclusion, it also cannot be salvaged in



one's own lifetime (the burning of "Rome" takes centuries). We all have our own traumas to handle, whereupon *you* can do as I have done when camping Tolkien and other centrist narratives with your own darkness visible; but you have to keep your ear to the ground and try (unlike Tolkien) to view darkness as something to perceive, interrogate and negotiate with in iconoclastic ways that belong to us.

(artist: [Earth Liberation Studio](#))

This experienced reality includes the people you meet and relate to outside of your family circle or village base. Whereas Tolkien's social interactions were largely (for

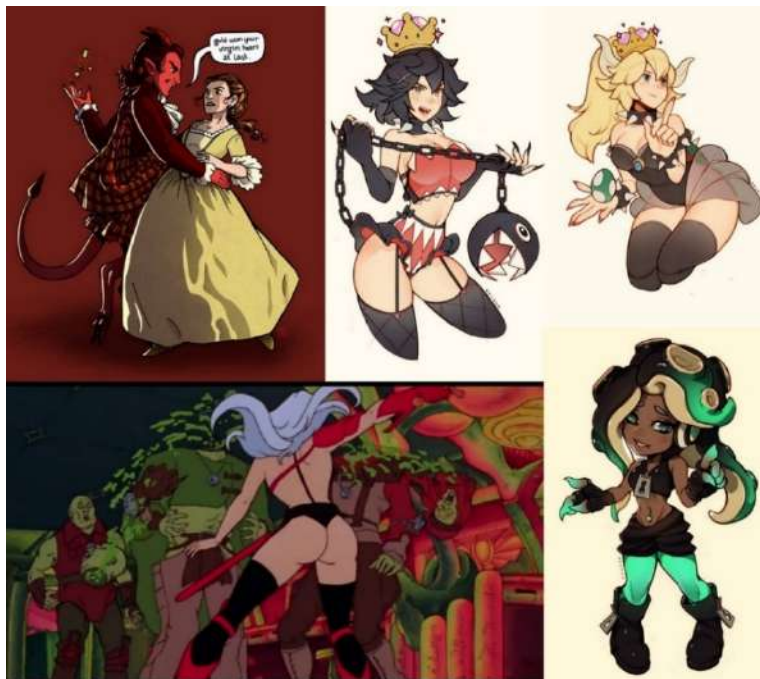
the hobbits) built around a village pastoral, escaping said pastoral myself—"pulling a Le Guin," as it were—was vital in my subverting of Tolkien's centrist apologetics for Capitalism. In my own family life, I directly recall an abusive father and stepfather hurting me, but I also sensed trauma *everywhere*. Long after I wrote and forgot about Alyona, my grandmother observed my pain and thought me odd (despite being a "grave chaser" who recruited my little brother to help her track down family tombstones); my grandfather saw my gloomy beard and thought it looked good, but unlike me seemed constantly sated by Tolkien's bloody pastoral refrain. Indeed, the more I lived and experienced the world, the more I saw trauma in Tolkien's chronotope—how he largely ignored the traumas of women as I experienced them, or saw them happening in my friends' lives, or the natural world as exploited more and more under Capitalism despite "Sauron" having been vanquished—and wanted to give those things a voice. Defending them was far more important to me than preserving Tolkien's idealized worldview.

In other words, the only dream here was Tolkien's premature victory and I soon outgrew the artificial wilderness he yearned for. Eventually I branched out, "leaving the Shire": I went to college a second time, fell love with several women, reading *The Hobbit* in between breakups and writing about it for school. Eventually I met a girl called Constance who broke my heart (more on *that* in Volume Three); then I went to England, met Zeuhl, fell in love again, and came back—always to the same place. Over several decades, I started to feel *bound* to my ancestral home, desiring to escape but feeling trapped by the same forces that rooted old Hawthorne where he was. I felt doomed, left behind by various persons, but especially Zeuhl¹⁰⁶ as someone who, like a ring-bearer themselves, had me wrapped 'round their little finger: something to wear then discard when the time came. Unhappy with home and past forays into the unknown, I kept trying on rings and collars, camping their canonical use as I read about it in books like *The Hobbit*. Escaping *that* closet, I grew increasingly convinced that a simpler kind of love wasn't for me; I *liked* the darkness and its Numinous inequality of power as something to inhabit as the sub, but I *still* needed to find someone who wouldn't fuck me over as Sauron did to his victims.

¹⁰⁶ When Zeuhl left me, they jokingly said it was "for an old flame in England"—i.e., a person they treated like their soulmate even though they said they didn't believe in such things. Instead of simply telling me that, they "unicorned" me, keeping a bisexual cutie in their pocket by not wanting sexual interactions between metamours while standing among us (or similar interactions happening with Zeuhl in front of other people). Simply put, they were incredibly controlling but also fooling themselves—i.e., were selectively poly until they weren't and were again, shifting in and out of a poly headspace whenever it suited *them*. It made me feel taken advantage of, so much so that I broke down crying in front of Dale Townshend in his office at MMU: "I feel *used*," I told him, like I was being lied to (despite Zeuhl insisting that they, like Jadis, could never tell a lie; instead, it was always *my* fault for making *them* feel crazy despite me merely trying to communicate). His response, "Nicholas, this sounds like bullshit!" regarding the way I was being treated. Bless you, Dale, for saying that; you were right.

The Promethean moral, here, is fittingly subversive, but also lived. The cyclical revolutions and seemingly anchored position made me desperate to buck fate, which largely thanks to Zeuhl's stupid bullshit—i.e., their car-crash-in-slow-motion-of-a-breakup and constant gaslighting of me—put *me* on the path to *accidental* self-destruction as a campy means of eventual catharsis and healing. I don't want to "hand it to them" nor abdicate my own hand in things, but I never negotiated to be abused by Zeuhl or by the person who came next (and the person after that person); despite being drawn to trauma as an abuse-seeking behavior at first glance, my lived reality was that catharsis and BDSM overlap in liminal territories using a shared aesthetic. *Vis-à-vis* Tolkien of all people, this helped me interrogate the usual centrist distractions of the world more effectively—i.e., when I was out of the closet, I didn't want to go back into Tolkien's sad little cupboard. I had tasted far more delicious fruits, and his came from a poison tree having grown tremendously after his death.

To this, it's true that former victims seek out the *theatre* of abuse as something they can reclaim in a panoply of ways; i.e., through canon or camp. This includes the Gothic theatre of courtship, but also *Amazonomachia* as a well-trod territory Tolkien was even more shy about than male-centric bondage scenarios (come to think of it, he very much liked *those*); e.g., Queen Taarna's angrier (and far bloodier) parade of the monstrous-feminine than Tolkien ever dared to dream (and would have blanched at seeing—for the sex and retro-future aesthetic, not the beheaded orcs). To defend myself, others, and the natural world from Tolkien's myopic refrain, I've devoted my life (and this book) to exploring the kinds of monsters and power exchange scenarios he routinely skimmed on:



(exhibit 10c4: Artist, top-left: [Margo Draws](#); top-middle and top- and bottom-right: [Oxcoxa](#); bottom-left, [source tweet](#): Raw Porn Moments, 2023. My study of the Amazon and BDSM has yielded a variety of truths alien to Tolkien. For one, the devil-in-disguise is often couched within crossdress and paradoxical strength as having evolved over space and time within a library of discourse. As Bay notes, "Taarna is built for the Male Gaze while simultaneously subverting its

expectations"; i.e., she reverses the role of the Medusa, chopping off men's heads as if to ask, "How does it feel, assholes?!" She also provides a complex, visually violent version of the postpunk disco/club music refrain: "How does it feel, to treat me like you do?¹⁰⁷" [a query as much to someone's guilt or position of giving as well as them on the receiving end of ironic "violence" versus actual harm]. Of course, Taarna runs the risk of chopping off workers' heads who are normally presented as orcs/zombies, minus the threat—i.e., labor movements and/or people of color being called "terrorists" by the state—but it's arguably a step in the right direction provided we camp Tolkien more than Heavy Metal [1981] did.

More to the point, Taarna isn't so far gone that you can't reclaim her from total assimilation and decay [or demonic animalization; i.e., Tolkien's spiders existing purely within female "chaotic evil" forms of nature as something to dominate by pure-white men upholding the profit motive within Capitalist Realism]. These kinds of Amazonian double standards and intersectional biases elide and roil on the surface of the female body as a) entirely mysterious to Tolkien, and b) a complicated billboard he never bothered with in his own stories: the variable undeath of a white-skinned Medusa as killed by men contrasted against the black-skinned Medusa as killed by men and women, both of them [and orcs] fetishized differently within the same punitive structure.

The genuine struggle—to holistically express body positivity during liberation as an ongoing event—becomes caught up in morphological double standards; i.e., the white-skinned "dark queen" either marketed as "black"—i.e., "PAWG" ["phat ass white girl," exhibit 32b/41b] as a "Goth" collision that elides black clothing with the "black" body as having white skin: the "big [titty/booty] Goth GF"—or kept skinny to be drawn the way that "most bodies are" [code for Vitruvian enforcement, [Oxcoxa](#)]. Meanwhile, black female bodies that happen to be skinny and fairer skinned [shadism] are inevitably perceived as "white" [as if most of them "chose" how they were born]: similar to queerness, skin color synonymizes with body size as a false choice, which complicates fat acceptance and liberation in the eyes of those persons seeking representation as something to escape the shared, internalized shame of white/black female bodies as queer [and male bodies in relation to them, the two hailing from the same savage, imaginary place].

In turn, the trend of the Amazon or Medusa as a powerful warrior queen or Sapphic monarch can be taken into potentially exploitative spheres, wherein the "Bowsette" crown [also [Oxcoxa](#)] famously fetishizes the white girl with an "atypical" [non-white] princess body to be desirable for the pandered-to male fans; but also articulates the descriptive sexuality of white or non-white AFABs within Nintendo's fandom—i.e., those who are simply born with bodies outside the settler-colonial standard, and who want to be celebrated for it via a class metaphor of power and status: the girly crown, suspiciously pink [re: Tirrrb's "[The Yassification Of](#)"]

¹⁰⁷ From New Order's "Blue Monday" (1983).

[Masculinity](#)"] but tinged with sexy black "corruption" as a non-harmful aesthetic/function. Within this larger dialectic, a viral trend emerges using the same imagery operating at cross purposes, resulting in various amounts of nuance or lack thereof, as well as [un]irony and cultural appropriation/appreciation when the "Yass, Queen!" crown is worn.

To this, Tolkien becomes a funny hypothetical begging "what if?" in a larger conversation the original never bothered with. When we entertain ghosts of his work through *Amazonomachia* speaking to a lived experience he deliberately distanced himself from, we play with, thus learn from these misfit toys. Doing so, we uncover the potential for class warriors and traitors emerging in arbitration relative to the public's use of a largely textual/oral tradition to support popular sentiment for or against the status quo: to let one or two minorities rule in a problematic light like Tolkien's orcs and dwarves did, or for there to be no minorities and for everyone to be kings, queens and intersex/non-binary monarchs in a post-scarcity world Tolkien [thanks to Capitalist Realism] literally couldn't imagine. For him, there were only gay-curious hobbits standing in for absentee maidens, and the white-knight heroes protecting them from savage orcs [mythical black rapists] and their masters, the thoroughly vampiric-yet-wholly-spectral dark lords.



[artist, top-and-bottom-left, top-middle, and bottom-right: [Wondra](#); bottom-middle: Persephone van der Waard; top-right: [Red's References](#)]

Just as fascist and neoliberal evocations draw on the imaginary past to prevent scarcity's termination, the possible worlds of Gothic Communism draw upon incredibly old and pervasive myths based on lived experience; i.e., whose ancient caves,

Amazons and monstrous-feminine hauntologies can be recognized closer to the present, thus used to empower current labor movements through mythical solidarity as an informed and educational exhibit. This includes the voluptuous

Easter, the statuesque Hippolyta, Schwarzenegger gender swaps [my loving 2016 attempt at gender parody] and other androgynous types closer to the present, but also their assorted clothing [admittedly optional; e.g., my omitting of the T-800's "death biker" schtick]. A set sex, gender or orientation/performance isn't even the point; rather, our aim is to merge non-heteronormative ideas of these things into semi-recognizable-yet-distinct forms of power and resistance as class-conscious. While such consciousness clearly takes many forms, "different" from a sex-positive standpoint isn't a commodity to be branded by Rainbow Capitalism in Tolkien's refrain; it's decided by workers resisting routine exploitation [of themselves and nature] through subversive, even transgressive media speaking to their lived realities challenging idealized worlds built by homophobic¹⁰⁸ Pygmalions like Tolkien.)



(artist: [Niki Chen](#))

Tolkien's idealized reality spoke to his lived experience relegating healthy psychosexual expression to the darkest of margins, including its abuse among a variety of persons and their bodies. During their hellish parade as brought into the light, a complicated worship occurs, of these and other "strict/gentle" symbols of corrupt/monstrous-feminine

power and persecution; e.g., the "gentle dom" fetish aesthetic of Marina, the objectified "Medusa"/girl of color (a kind of "zombie Medusa" [above] that elides assimilation fantasies within the state of exception) as fetishized in society at large—not just by a given artist and their legion of thirsty fans—while also having femme qualities in a nun-like submission that *might* erupt in masculine violence.

¹⁰⁸ Yes, homophobic. Tolkien flirted with homoromantic feelings, but the raw mechanics of the story—its socio-material conventions, redistributions of wealth, and unequal power exchange—are ultimately heteronormative. Aragorn must marry Arwen and become King of the West as a straight, white place. Bilbo makes bank following the Battle of the Five Armies, but grows alienated from the Shire for not marrying (a bit like Walpole, in that respect). Eventually he and Frodo are carted off to Heaven (a bloodless variant of "bury your gays") and Sam marries Rosie, arguably loving her but ultimately keeping up with appearances by sending his precious male master away for good. After this, hobbits more or less eventually go extinct, their magical bond/closeness to nature going with them.

Unfortunately this subversion of the standard Promethean Quest marks the searcher as vulnerable to actual predators, who—often abused themselves—see similar trauma in others they covet for their feminine vulnerability and exploit it through suitably Faustian means; they're drawn to them like a vampire to blood (or a Ringwraith to hobbits). And those of us seeking healing might foolishly offer our neck if our trust is betrayed by a convincing and/or hypnotic act.

Enter Jadis.

"You really do have a beautiful body" were Jadis' first words to me (they loved my ass, in particular). They are ex number three (not including one-night stands, online relationships and FWBs, etc) preceded by Zeuhl and Constance. However, while you gain and lose something with every partner, I lost more than usual with Jadis and learned some hard-fought lessons; i.e., like Frodo on Weathertop (except unlike Tolkien through Frodo, I learned how to process my trauma and express myself in a queer fashion). Simply put, Jadis was the most actively abusive partner I've ever had—a malignant narcissist who worked off *my* maladaptive survival response when courting me: to fawn (the other three being to fight, flee or freeze—the last one also called "oscillation" in Gothic circles). Unlike my dad or stepdad, Jadis never physically beat me; they still coercively brokered the power exchanges between us, teaching me to suffer in ways I'd only ever read about in stories like *The Hobbit* or *The Castle of Otranto*. Like Tolkien's stripped-down, all-black vampires, Jadis literally collared¹⁰⁹ me and "took me to Barad-dur" and drained me of my wits; it seemed fun at first blush, but very quickly ceased to be—not due to the aesthetics, but Jadis' strange faithfulness to Tolkien's canon as something to act out unironically in real life: the ghoulish necromancer built on bad-faith bargains by someone as stubborn, clumsy and inflexible as he was (moderates are polite until you push them).

By taking my own risks during psychosexual experiments, I accidentally became a Gothic princess in ways I *didn't* negotiate (the irony of me, the desperately gay Communist/closeted trans woman, walking headfirst into a neoliberal SWERF/TERF and then falling in love with them is not lost on me; to be fair to myself, Jadis did not advertise themselves as neoliberal, and when they eventually called themselves as such, I tried very hard to explain my point of view—more on this in Volume Two). I wanted material things and the ability to play wife; but I exchanged my own power to a genuinely Faustian, psychosexual charmer who clocked my trauma and love-bombed me, then took me far away from anyone to continue torturing me (cycles of abuse that only ceased when I *stopped* seeing Jadis as a protector and removed their collar). But I still learned from it. As

¹⁰⁹ It was a pink leather collar with a little bell on, like a cat. I loved the collar but grew to fear and loathe the person who placed it around my neck.

said in our thesis statement, trauma doesn't just beget trauma; it *recognizes* it and preys upon it, often in nonverbal, vampiric language. It's a very animal experience and you won't have any idea what it's like unless you've been there yourself, unless you've been hunted or have inherited the anxiety of being hunted as a surviving element of your culture (e.g., the animal themes in Jordan Peele films in relation to racialized violence).

For me and my survival *vis-à-vis* Jadis and our competing interactions with Tolkien's work, my biggest takeaways were how the state (through Jadis as a state proponent) desires power but also disguises it in self-righteous yarns. So do narcissists, and the former enables the latter in historical-material ways, generally



informed by state apologia. Jadis loved Tolkien and *D&D* as a kind of war pastiche their TERF-y personas could run wild inside. But this also spilled out into how we interacted during our day-to-day lives as informed by Tolkien's worldview as something Jadis undisputedly upheld for their own reasons: the female orc warlord (what I call the war boss).

(artist: [Just Some Noob](#))

While some narcissists provide and others receive, a provider or patient who *is* narcissistic will coerce and control their mark in highly manipulative ways. To this,

Tolkien's refrain pushed the dialogic forward in ways that remained closed and primed for abuse. While the angel/devil dynamic of unequal power abuse plays out in a wide variety of historical-material ways, Tolkien's dialogic played out through legends and games that carried his limited and praxially inert exchanges into Jadis' life, thus mine. He became something for them to flaunt and cherish, looping my neck in orcish ropes; it was literally our roleplay to bind and torture me, but in ways Jadis—like Sauron—used to deceive me with; i.e., with traditional positions and artifacts of power tied to providing from a male/female position; e.g., not just

the warrior archetype Jadis and I enjoyed, but the medical¹¹⁰ profession. My seeking of such trauma was a kind of theatre, but my caretaker was acting in bad faith.

To this, Jadis *provided* for me on paper and through a negotiated aesthetic, but abused me in practice; i.e., "Tolkien in reality." Indeed, the negotiation seemed honest, sincere and beneficial: to be their conjugal worker—"a live-in bussy" who learned to cook, clean and do things that, as a closeted trans person, I tended to avoid. While I actually value acquiring these skills and the novelty of service (which can be fun if it isn't abusive—e.g., cooking as a means of saving money on food labor costs, while also giving me control over how my food tastes as I prepared it for me and those I love), I quickly discovered that no one likes to be compelled and threatened by an asshole who acts like they know (and own) everything/are better than everyone else. Indeed, while Jadis was a genderfluid AFAB, they still coerced, gaslit and threatened me constantly despite playing the victim; they "knew better" than I did about Tolkien, and wanted me to keep my opinions to myself (and resented my attempt at constantly subverting the *D&D* racialized chart and manufactured conflicts, scarcity and consent; e.g., my attempt to make a good Drow who lived in daylight and loved others to challenge Tolkien's bellicose worldview but also ludology).

In this regard, the best lies are built on truth: Jadis' mother had abused them, resulting in Jadis having more sides to their personality than most people do. And while these fractals would flash across their own surface during confrontations, I couldn't always tell them apart or verify them because Jadis was inherently dishonest and manipulative. For example, Jadis liked to cry whenever I accused them of acting like their mother or just calling them out for "DMing" me in real life. They had described their mother well enough and certainly reminded me of them. Yet, Jadis' reactions always made me feel guilty for "making" them cry *despite* what they were doing to me! It wasn't just a pivot; eventually I started to feel crazy for standing up for myself (not "crazy" as "in love" in a sex-positive sense, but "crazy" as "gaslit" by an abuser). I slowly became reluctant to fight back, being worn down by attacks I couldn't always see but *could* always feel; i.e., like the pull of the Ring 'round Frodo's neck. I had a little crown and a pretty dress, but was still owned precisely because I *was* delicate, pretty and vulnerable. Like an orc queen with a little war bride, Jadis could have their way with me; and under their vampiric thrall, I became increasingly undead and started to doubt my own education and expertise, but also ability to camp fantastical stories. As they loved to say themselves, "You have heart, I'll take that, too!" And boy did they ever!

¹¹⁰ E.g., the nurse, doctor, psychiatrist or orderly appearing benign but acting malignant, often through needlessly corrective and harmful surgeries or procedures often, in horror stories, being treated as the stuff of nightmares: forced isolation, euthanasia, lobotomies, electro-shock, medically induced psychosis, queer conversion therapies, or genital-corrective surgeries on intersex infants (exhibit 3c), etc.



(artist: [Sabs](#))

We'll examine the plurality of Jadis' bullshit more during Volume Two, including how I bested them in the end (and went on to write this book in spite of their efforts to police my work). For now, just remember that their "conditional" offer of financial "security" as my would-be mommy dom absolutely *withered* alongside their pure condescension and abuse of me; both made the joy of cooking for them, caring for them and fucking them an absolute nightmare. At first, it was like Tennyson's poem, I their Lady of Shalott and they my Lancelot:

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
 He rode between the barley-sheaves,
 The sun came dazling thro' the leaves,
 And flam'd upon the brazen greaves
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.
 A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
 To a lady in his shield,
 That sparkled on the yellow field,
 Beside remote Shalott ([source](#)).

In the end, though, a horny bitch like me couldn't enjoy sex with Jadis because they utterly terrified me. It wasn't impossible to cum, but I still forced; i.e., trapped inside Tennyson's Camelot as slowly becoming an unironic Gothic castle the likes of Sauron's fortress (except when it appeared, I was already inside it).

To say that I *faked* orgasms wouldn't be entirely accurate. For one, the ejaculation wasn't fake (it either happens or it doesn't, for AMABs); as for my *enthusiasm*, it wavered, but I *wanted* it to be genuine in order to please Jadis despite it feeling worse and worse for me to keep trying. Regardless, I didn't want to have sex with Jadis because they had ceased to be the dark, handsome knight I fell in love with. Once wooing me with Irish ballads like "[The Devil's Courtship](#)" (2001) by Battlefield Band or "[The Two Sisters](#)" (2010) by Emily Portman, they became someone I wanted to get far away from: a source of torment that more or less looked the same as before.



Even now, though, I remember how their power *leveled me* when I was under its spell—no longer, thanks to my friends' help and my own courage (thank you, Cuwu, Ginger and Fen; you saved me that night). I escaped, and if this book is any indication, things are going well enough without Jadis in my life. Such is the lot of someone as lucky as myself to have a place to go (a secret, safe place). Writing this book in my peaceful idylls is the least I can do to help others—to cathartically pass on what I have learned for myself and for the world and nature after I am gone. So please, learn from my adventures; avoid the emotional/Gothic stupidity that Capitalism historically-materially foisted upon me through my own cursed bloodline, and which my own camping of Tolkien's Gothic (and his rings and collars) eventually saved me from my *own* harmful vampire.

An Uphill Battle, part three: Challenging the State's Manufactured Consent and Stupidity (with Vampires)

"I've known sheep that could outwit you, I've worn dresses with higher IQs, but you, you think you're an intellectual, don't you, ape!"

"Apes don't read philosophy!"

"Yes they do, Otto; they just don't understand it!"

—Wanda and Otto, *A Fish Called Wanda* (1988)



Whereas Marx once said, "Private property makes people stupid," my thesis argued, "Capitalism sexualizes (and alienates) everything." In Marxists words, "Private property has made us so stupid and one-sided that an object is only ours when we have it – when it exists for us

as capital, or when it is directly possessed, eaten, drunk, worn, inhabited, etc., – in short, when it is used by us" To that, sex and nature (animals, food, people) are things that you have in service to the profit motive in a Cartesian system; e.g., to have sex, to have a meal, sex-as-a-meal, etc, under settler-colonialism; i.e., under a belief system that instructs us-versus-them rhetoric, thus taking all of the above by force from a perceived alien by a perceived human and advertised *constantly* during military optimism to serve the profit motive.

As such, the nation-state under Capitalism monopolizes violence and terror by privatizing it, generally through Gothic poetics that make people stupid, alienating them from each other during canonical expression; during asymmetrical class and culture warfare, Gothic (gay-anarcho) Communism abolishes nation-states, including private property and the violent, chattelizing stupidity it causes (whose *gradients* of stupidity we'll go over in this subchapter—including vampires, as we've slowly been hinting at). This abolishment includes dismantling marriage as a religious-secular institution, but also creatively expressing love in de-privatizing Gothic language. Communism is entirely extramarital/de-nuclear, but also inclusively exceptional. Forget "There can only be one"; under Communism, we're *all* queens, best boys and best girls, enbies, etc. *Gothic* (gay-anarcho) Communism applies this idea to the language of monsters as it reflects in the natural-material world across space and time—through monster pastiche as an extension of systemic conflicts produced between workers for or against the state. In short, it's like an uphill, guerilla battle for our brains, but also our bodies, hearts and pumping

lifeblood touched by trauma in ways that, as we have explored, animalize us as prey for predatory state forces: the vampire is a seducer who hypnotizes their prey and feeds on them, but also assumes the forms of various animals, concealing the confusing reality that canonical vampires are divorced from nature, and indeed responsible for its enslavement and destruction (Otto, pictured above, is a misogynist pig who thinks too highly of himself, both a complete dumbass and curiously someone who hates animals: "You know what Nietzsche said about animals, Ken? That they were God's second blunder!").

The first two subchapters touched on animalistic poetics and castles, so I don't want to focus on them too much, here. Instead, I want to use this subchapter to consider the kinds of stupidities that regularly emerge between workers "turned" by the state; i.e., which it has rendered unironically vampiric in some shape or form. What we've discussed so far will come up, though, so keep all of it in mind. Likewise, consider all of this as part of our dossier of practical theory that, itself, will prove invaluable when synthesizing praxis by confronting trauma ourselves. That confrontation starts among the people we live with, but also work and fight with, and here is where the confrontation of trauma as something to process through our interpersonal relationships will start to emerge and develop; i.e., leading out of the manifesto and into the instruction half of the volume.

Gothic Communism seeks not a return to tradition and older ways of life as they once were, neither those false or empty revolutions, nor older rebellions that came and went; it uses what we're born with—our bodies and emotions, but also gut animal feelings, genders, dreams and sexualities, as well as our stories, imaginations and language as begot from these things as they presently exist—to inclusively transform the world beyond "Rome" (Capitalism) in various slave rebellions and boundary-setting exercises that demonstrate emotional/Gothic intelligence and class/cultural awareness as things to cultivate through proletarian praxis: to make our own castles, monsters, muses and media that speak to, from and of our lived experiences. This includes our trauma as attached to and informed by the material world extending from these things, effectively coming out of our brains, our bodies as being closer to nature in praxis than those without trauma; i.e., the Wisdom of the Ancients as a cultural understanding of the imaginary past as useful to our political cause, corrupting the twin trees of Capitalism—the Base and the Superstructure—into Communist forms that address our suffering and systemic abuse. Oppositional praxis reclaims one tree and recultivates the other to camp canon, making it gay through creativity as fundamental towards making people more (or less) emotionally and Gothically intelligent.

The Gothic castle and its monsters, then, work as a kind of school of sorts, one literally called the Schools of Terror and Horror in the Neo-Gothic period; it is something that workers can make or represent through themselves learning from past auteurs like Walpole and Lewis, but also Radcliffe and her offshoots. Every monster has an upbringing and haunt riddled with emotional turmoil, an unruly

place to call home even when they are unwelcome there or otherwise posed as a challenge to the current inhabits (making up their own lies about ownership). It's all an attempt to blend in, but also relying on people sitting across from you, who—for one reason or another—cannot read the room:



(artist: [La Faux Creux](#))

To this, the Gothic (*vis-à-vis* Tolkien) is not generally used by straight white people as an actively critical device, especially when said persons are already pretty accustomed to the socio-material benefits of the Imperial Core. As *Jadis* shows us, those persons (usually cis-het men or women, though *Jadis* was a token genderfluid person) have famously found ample cause to attack or commodify the Gothic mode as originally made by homosexual men or gender-non-conforming women resisting older institutional decrees appearing inside their lands; i.e., with historical moderates either whitewashing the Gothic, capitalizing on it, or entirely excluding it in or in whole for something "better" (re: Coleridge, Radcliffe and Jameson). But even with the aforementioned iconoclasts that these sticks-in-the mind aimed to discount, there was certainly critical power among the room for improvement, and things to rescue from Radcliffe as an imperfect *moderate* herself (we've explored Radcliffe's numerous imperfections plenty in Volume Zero, but will consider their *revolutionary* potential [such as it is] in Volume Two).

To be blunt, the state raises its own castles and molds its own monsters that pointedly make workers stupidly vampiric; while Communism wakes workers up, Gothic Communism does so with *castles* and *monsters* that actually challenge Capitalism even more than past versions did (and not all historically even did,

remember). The basic process requires propaganda, but can be divided into canonical or iconoclastic forms during Gothic exchanges between warring groups. Either rely on *poiesis* to work; i.e., "to bring into being that which did not exist before"—to make art, specifically monsters or things regarded as monsters or where monsters live echoed through *cryptomimesis*. During Socialism, said monsters and castles will still exist (along with the technology and workers needed to express them); they just won't be exploited by the bourgeoisie for profit because the bourgeoisie will cease to exist and private property will be abolished, then replaced by horizontal arrangements of power and reclaimed stigmas (and stigma animals)/torturous language that enable and maximize labor—not as a force for war, the Military Industrial Complex and copaganda's manufactured consent, settler colonialism, etc—but as an enriching means of interrogating older expressions for all inhabitants of the Earth in peaceful, co-existing ways: to de-escalate and remove¹¹¹ war as something to produce and endorse in the material world, arts and STEM fields through sex and monstrous bodies/genders, castles, and so on.

This is a *gradual* procedure, meaning it requires patience, awareness and constant application to work; i.e., between groups of people, and generally by people who have to warm up to the idea of even taking part in iconoclastic deeds: not just sex work, but standing up for themselves during it as a source of pride, boosted confidence and courage. To that, Jadis was gutless and judgmental, but also harrowingly abusive. To have a sex-positive example, we'll have to look to my friend Dulcinea/Dulci (whose alias refers to the barmaid from *Don Quixote*, 1605). As they demonstrate, finding one's nerve not only took not just practice, but going outside their comfort zone to achieve the comfort levels needed to stand up for themselves and have fun among the things they love.

Alas, Dulci's story does not have a happy ending. And their tragedy demonstrates that revolution is a constant, uphill battle threatened by abusive parties against those they will try to keep stupid through coercive measures; e.g., physical violence, but also mental attacks, like a vampire: DARVO, love-bombing and isolation, etc. Minus any identifying features, I've preserved Dulci's material in this subchapter in order to learn from their mistakes and lived experiences. —Perse

¹¹¹ This process is generally referred to as "hammering swords into ploughshares"—not the end of the world in Biblical terms (where the term originally comes from), but an end of history as envisioned and historically-materially perpetuated under Capitalism as enacted materially and culturally through the Base and Superstructure.



(exhibit 11a: Artist: [Cecilio Pla](#), of the "princess" Dulcinea from *Don Quixote*. My friend Dulci tried to come out of their shell doing cosplay and sex work. Over time, they grew more comfortable with going to conventions while dressing up [and meeting cool people like Steven Blum, the voice of Spike Spiegel from *Cowboy Bebop*, 1998] and using sex toys, but also doing sex work and being the femme fatale princess in cathartic, ironic, oft-slutty ways that reclaim their thicc body as a badass source of pride; e.g., Orchid from *Killer Instinct* [1995] and Princess Zelda. Sadly, Dulci's exhibit has been removed, as they met someone who grew jealous of Dulci's sex work and used that to isolate Dulci from their friends. In the end, my friendship with Dulci dissolved, and I have—per their wishes—removed all images of them from the book.)

As part of their development towards doing sex work as a job, Dulci came to visit and we negotiated our operative/actionable boundaries as I was also helping them start sex work on OnlyFans. This included sex—to fuck the way we both agreed to, no coercion. I won't lie. It wasn't the best sex on the planet—they didn't like to cuddle or sleep in the same bed—but it was still nice to get my nut and still be able to help Dulci set up their own revenue stream. They wanted to do their own thing and that's cool; so is the fact that certain offers are put on the table and taken off again as both sides hash things out over space and time (including the dissolving of our friendship). What's important is that it's conditional and mutually

agreed upon—no ultimatums, in other words. Dulci agreed to let me have sex with them provided I

- knew they were going to be fantasizing about someone else
- called them a slut or a "ho"
- pulled out and came on their body not inside them (even though I've had a vasectomy and they have an IUD)

This had to do with Dulci releasing stress and rebelling against their overbearing/overprotective mother. Said mother's views on love are privatized, in the sense of Capitalism making workers stupid by conceiving ownership as an exploitative "usage-equals-ownership" model. When attached to its historical-material conditions stuck on repeat, heteronormativity creates uneven feelings/pulverized divisions of idiosyncratic stupidity and caution. These canonical attitudes towards private property apply to men and women under a punitive hierarchy that divides sexualized labor (and workers from nature) dimorphically inside a heteronormative, settler-colonial scheme; i.e., what Tolkien upheld, and which extends into more openly Gothic stories.

Because of this division, we'll need at least two examples if we want to holistically interrogate the problem of idiosyncratic stupidity among domestic workers. However, I'll use three (other than Jadis, whose stupidity we've covered enough for now but will reexamine far more in Volume Two); I'm going with that number because I am trans, thus don't fit neatly into the binary but have met people who certainly do:

- my ex-roomie, Beavis (not his real name)—a heteronormative, cis-het dude/Catholic masters student with conflicting social-sexual desires
- myself and my own "Gothic" situation of stupidity and caution: falling in love with a model I drew *before* Jadis kicked me out and fucked afterwards: Cuwu
- Dulci's mom—a half-stupid, overly cautious woman worried about her "wayward" daughter

We'll also need a monster type, for which I've chosen the vampire.

Let's start with Beavis. His idiosyncratic stupidity manifested in the universal male fear under Capitalism: dying a virgin. Beavis loved animals but had zero idea how to talk to girls. He was also incredibly privileged, jealous and scheming when it came to women, but also searching for that "perfect" wife: the small, submissive woman who looked like his high school crush and would have his kids. While pretty damn telling and creepy all on its own, he was straight-up *canceling second or third dates* with girls who were DTF because they *didn't* want to have "his" kids. Like, if it matters to you so much, just put it on your dating profile, dude; people aren't telepathic!

Beavis never learned. He not only insisted he "was a nice guy" (code for "creep," these days); he was also a secret gun nut who squirreled away fucking assault rifles and lied to Jadis and I about it! This put me in a weird spot because—while I thoroughly detest guns (my three brothers once pointed our paternal grandfather's rifles at me without checking to see if they were loaded and then pulled the trigger like a damn firing line)—Jadis was working on their master's thesis and I didn't want to worry them; but then things eventually came out and, well, that was a mess! Pro-tip, kids: Don't keep secrets if you can help it (to be fair, Jadis was abusive towards me, but we'll explore that even more during the synthesis roadmap when we discuss most directly synthesis/oppositional-grouping stratagems like girl talk and healing from trauma)!



(artist: Mike Judge)

In the end, Beavis never scored (unless he finally found his maiden on his mom's Catholic dating app). I tried for weeks to be a good wing girl for him—eventually deciding to protect women *from him* when I realized he needed to learn for *everyone's* good. I got increasingly weird signals from him and tried to teach him to be better. Rather than listen, though, he just whined and moaned, blaming women but also lusting after the ones he "wanted": the most prey-like. He wouldn't sleep with the hot, slutty girl who was DFT or any of the girls on his dating app; he just fawned after someone at work who not only had a boyfriend, but—you guessed it—looked like his high school crush. She was a very nice person; i.e., was actually willing to try and hook the lad up with a friend if only he stopped making things weird. Sadly, Beavis didn't listen to me or her at all; it was like he had it all figured out, but was paradoxically tormented by his Catholic grief (akin to Matthew Lewis' Ambrosio). Frankly he had no clue. I told him, "College is the time when you're not under your mother's thumb. Just experiment!" He never, ever did, blaming women by default for his failures (the classic Catholic's Original Sin victim-blaming/male victimhood complex—a wicked combo).

While Beavis' ordinary-looking appearance belied an internal, vampiric predator—and his stupidity was altogether impressive for a single person (never underestimate the power of stupid people in groups)—his own psychological divisions were less acutely severe than more immediately pluralized persons, in large part because his privilege spared him the kind of trauma such fracturing demands. Yet, he was still divided in ways utterly commonplace under Capitalism (and well-at-home in Gothic novels; e.g., Matthew Lewis' 18th-century take on the

incel: Father Ambrosio): from sex and nature; i.e., girls were alien to him and he fetishized them for their natural biological functions for him to dominate. Indeed, Beavis' biggest problem was that he wanted manufactured consent, not genuine, informed consent. The sex-positive idea is to want someone to want you, like that Cheap Trick song—to *need* your body and your personality, your sense of humor and your touch, your pussy or your dick, etc. At the same time, appreciating value goes both ways when relating to others in whatever ways we can actually get. To whatever extent you both agree on, it's not about fitting in perfectly or agreeing on every little thing being offered; it's about being however intimate you're both decidedly comfortable with: FWBs, fuck buddies, one-night-stands, marriage, "just experimenting," etc. All the same, any "vibe check" should be done, if not on your toes, then at least on your feet; watch out for false friends, because people suck! The same goes for false symbols, fake rainbows, assimilated homosexual men (which vampires represent), etc:



(exhibit 11b1a: Top-left: Our classic friends of Dorothy making an appeal to a very heteronormative, colonizer/false wizard; higher-bottom-left: proletarian wizard, Mike Jittlov; middle: liminal, appropriated witch, [Mila Kunis from Sam Raimi's 2013 Oz the Great and Powerful](#); bottom-right: [Artnip](#); bottom-left: [Talia](#). Rainbow Capitalism loves to slap rainbows on pretty much everything. All the same, the rainbow during oppositional praxis remains a liminal symbol of queer liberation amid heteronormative appropriation—can be re-slapped on art that feels sex-positive to the person altering it; i.e., a countercultural marking to an already iconoclastic artwork or artist. During oppositional praxis as remediated through pastiche, there arise many bourgeois/proletarian witches, queens,

queer folk, monsters, dream girls, etc—all of which we'll unpack and examine throughout the book, but especially in Volume Three, Chapters Four and Five.)

While proletarian caution applies to queer circles as things to infiltrate by state enforcers playing the vampire (and asking for an invitation inside), it also applies to heteronormatively Gothic stories as things to camp. For example, in McG's surprisingly good, 2017 horror-comedy, *The Babysitter*, Bee the blonde

bombshell evokes a shape-shifting devil on par with Matthew Lewis' gender-swapping Matilda: every cloistered boy's wet dream/worst nightmare. In this case, the hero is an awkward white nerd called Cee, whose innocent virgin blood Bee requires for her Faustian witchcraft. Making this movie, McG is just as self-aware and playful two centuries later as Lewis was, evoking complex wish fulfillment: a desire to victim-blame warring with wanting to use someone according to canonically assigned (and iconoclastically rebellious) gender roles. This playful dissonance is typical of the Gothic story and has been since Horace Walpole first wrote *The Castle of Otranto*.

Not only did Walpole originally pass *Otranto* off as a "historical" artifact "disinterred" and presented as "genuine"; his goal was to illustrate the novel—a story of everyday experience—as married¹¹² to the Ancient Romance, a tale of high imagination, adventure and reinvention of the medieval period. Doing so requires working within the imaginary past as something to reassemble in the present, generally with incongruent, imperfect replicas; i.e., on par with Beltane or tarot as something to appreciate/appropriate depending on who's doing the reinvention; e.g., [Marilyn Roxie's *The Public Tarot as an appreciative example of digital hauntologies in videoludic form*](#). Rainbows and queerness are generally Gothic, but also consistently liminal and grappling with various renditions of themselves: *Jojo's Bizarre Adventure* (1987) vs Rainbow's cautionary "Tarot Woman" (1976) illustrating the quaint paradox of manly rainbows versus gay ones. Not only can phenomenological conflict through an *unheimlich* not be avoided; I would argue it's the whole point of Gothic stories: to face agitated, warring confusion (often in relation to repressed sexual desires and gender dysphoria) and deal with it (and the doubles that cause it) as part of the advertised experience commenting on the Western home as imperiled from within. This includes people infected by Capitalism, becoming stupid, vampiric abusers who have survived trauma only to become arbiters of capital through ghosts of the counterfeit furthering the process of abjection through lived experiences passed from person to person but informed by popular stories.

Similar to Walpole and Lewis, then, McG's Gothic is not just the wholesale stuff of fiction; it's a turbulent, fun commentary on real, everyday events told in displaced, dissociative, half-real language not quite divorced from the present space and time: fairytale love and over-the-top, outmoded betrayal when the vampire (the classic master of the Gothic castle) comes home to roost in an American suburb where a) no castles exist, and b) the houses are full of fresh, tempting virgin blood!

¹¹² "...in *Otranto*, it was [Walpole's] aim to combine the 'imposing tone of chivalry' and 'marvellous turn of incident' of the ancient romance with the 'accurate exhibition of human character' to be found in the modern novel" ([source](#): Dale Townshend's "Horace Walpole's *Enchanted Castles*" from *Gothic Antiquity: History, Romance and the Architectural Imagination, 1760-1840*, 2019).



This paradoxical authenticity is something I can vouch for in my own life. Despite Cee obviously being a cis-het teenage boy navigating the monomyth inside his own house as hellish, I had a very similar experience myself while still inside the closet. In

a galaxy not so far, far away... a past friend and sex worker called Cuwu (who the book has mentioned repeatedly by now) used me for their own stupid, selfish needs after Jadis kicked me to the curb. Like a vampire hypnotizing their prey, Cuwu's courtship happened in ways I *didn't* completely agree to. All the same, they made my *wildest* dreams come true (we once fucked on the floor and recorded it while discussing my thesis work on *Hollow Knight* (2017) [and watching this 2021 Silk Song fan video by Less \[above\] afterwards](#))! Before Jadis had thrown me out for calling *them* abusive, I had met Cuwu online a month prior while drawing sex workers (which Jadis knew about). Like Jadis, Cuwu also talked a good game and knew a ton about DBT (versus Jadis' extensive knowledge about BDSM and tendency to selectively follow its tenets for their own benefit). Cuwu's premise was to offer me a safe, loving environment after my breakup with Jadis. It worked like a charm, lowering my defenses and making *me* stupid. Pussy on the brain will do that (or dick; [just ask Alcibiades](#)), classically leading to live burial (which, as Eve Sedgwick explains, is symbolic of repressed, harmful libido communicating a symbolic form of generational trauma tied to house and home as invaded by predatory doubles; but for us is more a lived experience akin to unrooting in one's homestead as foreign and populated by wild fictions indicative of such transplantation).

At first, Cuwu was incredible. However, after I flew home from their nomadic household, my time with them long-distance started to feel unstable and insincere, but also draining. They had borderline personality disorder and manifested in more overt pluralities—less like Beavis and closer to my mother when she was manic. I had to fight very hard not to blame Cuwu even when I felt their abusing potentially coming home to roost. In part, I was entirely afraid of losing them and the vampiric essence they offered me, while having already been dispossessed by Jadis (who actually left me for their own ex *after* the three of us were living in a polycule,

trying to triangulate that person against me by calling *me* the homewrecker¹¹³) and shortly thereafter losing my uncle to a spontaneous heart attack; I also knew Cuwu was sick and trying to improve. In other words, I was Cuwu's "good boy" because I thought they'd actually try by detaching from their abusive past, thus not preying on me; i.e., the vampire that *doesn't* drink blood.



(artist: Edwin Landseer)

At first, they seemed sincere. I hadn't come out yet, but Cuwu encouraged it/were my mommy dom and little fuck puppy. So for a short-but-blissful time, I was living in my own variation of Bottom's Dream from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (and not for the first time, even, but I'll get to *that* in Volume Three when I discuss my first love, Constance):

I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream—past the wit of man to say what dream it was. Man is but an ass if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, and methought I had—but man is but a patched fool if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his

¹¹³ I.e., the classic role of the vampire, with Jadis insisting I was the monster feeding on their sanity and blood, not the other way around. Ironically their accusations happened before I met Cuwu, who a) Jadis never knew about, and b) who pointedly told me *they* didn't want to be a homewrecker towards Jadis and I.

heart to report what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream. It shall be called 'Bottom's Dream' because it hath no bottom ([source](#)).

Before I came out, my name was Nicholas, so Nick Bottom is a character I always relate to; it's also kind of a funny BDSM pun (thank you for pointing *that* out, Ginger). Personally, I think Shakespeare's bondage of the rude mechanical, Nick, by Titania was a little too pointed and ceremonial to be a complete accident, but maybe I'm just an ass. You have to be a *little* stupid/risqué to let someone in and play games with them where—like the vampire—you can actually get hurt.

Let's return to *The Babysitter*. The story is, like many other novels of the Neo-Gothic tradition, at least superficially concerned with growing up/becoming an adult. In that vein, Cee has to learn to protect himself from the more experienced girl he loves preying on him. The imperfect moral shared between Cee and myself is, "We all have to learn to form boundaries and protect ourselves, even from those we love; even if they talk a good game, they can still fuck you over or up." In McG's movie, Cee's taught this by more than one person—Bee, but also her himbo servant, the high school quarterback:

"You want a head start?"

"You're the quarterback, man!"

"Life's not fair, dude!"

Whether male, female or intersex, the Gothic hero's trial is overcoming adversity through love-making (courtship) as an inherently complicated and risky endeavor. In Cee's case, he's being attacked by someone else (the quarterback) being manipulated by someone else (Bee) being misled by something else (an old book of sacrificial blood magic). Deceivers take many forms and concentrically deceive themselves and others (the classic flaw of the Gothic villain). Facing this cold, sad fact—that many people most definitely suck, including assimilated, fearful workers—is merely part of this stupid, absurd game called life. But life can still be good! We just have to play it for ourselves, taking chances at enrichment while doing our best to be good friends, but also teachers and workers interacting back and forth to end the problem at its root: capital.

How you chose to go about this is entirely up to you and yours. As mentioned in Volume Zero, Cuwu's borderline personality disorder would give them panic attacks/make them dissociate. To counteract these comorbidities, I used to read Cuwu *The Hobbit* before bed; the book, combined with my voice, helped calm them. It wasn't a perfect solution, though. How Cuwu desired to become strong! They especially loved Smaug the dragon, who was "strong, strong, strong!" and started

to adopt that principle in their own "healing" behaviors; i.e., having been abused in the past, but also having been a self-confessed abuser towards their own ex of six years. In other words, I wasn't Cuwu's first victim, but they also weren't *entirely* an abuser when all was said and done; they were like Bee, who "used to be weak" and desired strength—abusive and controlling towards Cee even if it came from a place of real trauma (victims, like people turned into vampires, often become traumatizers themselves):



Neither Bee nor Cuwu were all bad ("just because she's a psycho doesn't mean women are evil," Cee's movie crush tells him), but there was still legitimate betrayal towards those they called friends. Cee and Bee had a sweet friendship but she still exploited him in non-consensual ways; i.e., draining his blood like a vampire for her black magic as ostensibly giving her everlasting life, but still a stupid decision and that alienated her from her best friend. Likewise, Cuwu fucked me over despite making all my wildest fantasies come true and, in the end, calling me "one of the best friends they ever had" (which strikes me as incredibly sad, given how short our friendship ultimately was); they were very vain and loved attention (and unlike the vampire were constantly gazing at their own reflection), but could be incredibly sweet when they were stable and medicated (or had their fill

of "blood¹¹⁴")! They professed to love nature¹¹⁵ and had been upfront about their abusive habits, too—had insisted they'd turned over a new leaf. And my dumb ass, rebounding hard after Jadis and firmly under Cuwu's intensely erotic spell, was only too happy to believe them (to be fair, they talked a good game, the tricky little Commie).

In the end, I paid a heavy price for my continued desire for Gothic-style adventures, but it was still a learning experience normally only seen in novels, movies or videogames (thus denied to everyday persons in advertisements about where to even find love). Through my own happy accident, I learned the same Gothic moral that Cee did: sex *is* dangerous, but it's also entirely worth it if you can find someone to trust (which Cee eventually does). I now have friends I can trust and confront trauma with: several partners (Crow and Bay) and loads of people working with me on this book. However, developing that also took a lot of time, perseverance and work from both sides; it's also, as this chapter has hopefully illustrated, an uphill battle, one that requires fighting societal coding with reclaimed animal-monster language and learning (through said language) paradoxical ways to open up to each other and reconnect with the nature world. Don't be afraid to do that or you'll grow divorced from nature, from sex, from love as not being paywalled in their most delicious forms—in short, you'll miss out on what makes life worth living!

At the same time, be careful! Like Cee and Bee, Cuwu and I were intimate with each other in a variety of ways; I loved them fully and deeply. But I stood up to them knowing on some level I'd never see them again (as I did with all of my exes). And as much as it hurt, I regret nothing insofar as it all panned out. However short, I laid with someone special; i.e., a little fae-like cum-magnet made entirely of that weird, special stuff that only dreams are made of: darkness visible. All my exes were like that; I guess it's my type. Pick your poison, kids; *vis-à-vis*, Paracelsus, it's all a question of application and balance: "All things are poison and nothing is without poison; only the dose makes a thing not a poison," condensed to "the dose makes the poison." To that, toxicity in relationships is normally a question of function, flavor and degree, including the poetics involved and what they encourage; i.e., Gothic irony and enjoyment as more of a liminal scenario challenging state-sponsored stupidity.

Now that we've examined Beavis' idiosyncratic stupidity and my own, let's move onto Dulci's mother. *Her* idiosyncratic stupidity manifests in uneven female

¹¹⁴ Vampirism isn't rooted strictly in literal blood, but *sanguine* as a medieval form of physiological expression (essence) connected later to British morality plights about improper relations; i.e., extramarital sex as something that, if it didn't kill you upfront, drained you of your sanity and lifeforce over time (effectively serving as a quadruple xenophobic metaphor for infidelity and venereal disease, but also domestic abuse and serial murder).

¹¹⁵ They gave me their copy of *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things*, which helped me tremendously when researching for this book.

fears: getting raped and killed by creepy men; i.e., the legitimate concern about male "conquests" acquired through dishonesty and theft; e.g., drugging/date rape as projected on people Dulci's mom *thinks* are creepy. In fact, she was worried I'd roofie her child! Like, context matters, lady! I'd known Dulci for ten years at that point. I wasn't gotta use drugs or lies—just tell them I wanted to have sex and if they said no, I'd respect their boundaries and wouldn't push it. That's how trust, boundaries and negotiation work, and most cis-het guys act more like vampires trying to seduce (and brute-force) their way past these (see: Beavis). As such they resort to "date rape" tricks during conservatively canonized, ritual-like spaces; e.g., high school and prom. *That's* a risk that's prone to fail and rightly so, because the only time it won't fall apart is if the romantic interest is battered. It's unhealthy and stupid, but also taught through popular stories with popular devices centered around the ghost of the counterfeit and the process of abjection (moral panic): magic and high adventure, but also sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll as vampiric reagents (the Gothic castle being cemented in videogames, thus neoliberal culture, with Metroidvania; i.e., as we discussed extensively in Volume Zero regarding *Metroid* and *Castlevania* but also their various palimpsests and imitators; e.g., *Alien* and *Jojo*, *Dracula* and others).

Ignoring the fact that Gothic stories are largely nostalgic, operatic and suitably wacky affairs (of the time-traveling sort), prom is at best heteronormative; i.e., compelled sex dressed up in ritualistic make-believe; at worst, it's the same thing but rapey (centrism in action) but still required to help the hero (the young man, by default) succeed in life: to get what he wants. It's class betrayal and dormant stupidity-in-the-making.



Take, for example, the Enchantment Under the Sea high school dance from *Back to the Future* (1985). This "rhythmic ceremonial ritual" hails from a hauntological 1950s nostalgia made by neoliberal filmmakers, then pointedly sold back to Reagan's 1980s and its

children of the future as the end-all, be-all of true love. Newsflash: Robert Zemeckis' wacky courtship ritual (and its myriad clones) don't actually teach you how to talk to other people; it just alienates workers inside a compelled, colonial binary where the "good" strong prevail against the "bad" strong in literal duels over a helpless woman who tells her own future son this is how things are: "A man should be strong, to protect the woman he loves." Never mind that George McFly

was a Peeping Tom¹¹⁶ according to his own son, and who Loraine Bates only fell in love with Florence-Nightingale-style¹¹⁷ because he... got hit by her dad's car?

Dulci's mom is similar to Loraine in that she's "half-stupid." "Bad timeline" Loraine lectured Marty about vice, only to change her tune when Marty rewrites the past; Dulci's mother taught her daughter about contraceptives, but also sees rape everywhere and defers to heteronormative male authority. Bitch, please; negotiating frankly doesn't "kill the romance" (an idea made from ignorance that fascism and neoliberalism absolutely *cherish* in their gradient of canonical, heteronormative love stories). Building trust is sexy. So is boundary formation and minimizing risk while taking chances. Healthy relationships require some degree of informed risk, including sex: risk-taking while also taking randomness into account. They don't have to be entirely sexual all of the time (or even part of the time, for all you ace folks out there). However, if they *are* sexual in some shape or form, then it behooves both sides to be open and honest, but also *game*.

This honesty and good-faith "gameness" can take different forms. To that, I'm a mid-sized trans woman (~170 pounds) and could help relieve stress by fucking Dulci's sweet little pussy when they were feeling it; but Dulci actually prefers (or so I thought when I wrote this) big, strong "teddy bear" men who don't ask for sex at all. As long as everyone's on board ahead of time, then no harm, no foul (which sadly isn't the case for Dulci's currently abusive partner preying on their stupidity for his gain; in the end, I told Dulci that predators don't change—that he'd keep abusing them if they stayed with him. Sadly Dulci stayed, a common phenomenon among battered partners). More importantly, such negotiations can extend to experimentation and labor as things to rescue from their sex-coercive arrangements (and pornographically appropriated equivalents) in Gothic poetics.

To that, let's cap off the chapter with vampires; i.e., by exploring how both labor and social-sexual expression can be rescued *without* involving prom, but instead delving into *forbidden* experimentation with Gothic poetics, including bodies from places that are normally exoticized and farmed for their *vampiric* qualities as things to behold: full, fleshy and vivid, the color red serving as the Catholicized color for excessiveness and enrichment (symbolizing the literal blood of Jesus

¹¹⁶ I would call this phenomenon "half-invited." Yes, the exhibitionist girl had her window and curtains open/was showing off to *anyone* who would look while she (un)dressed. Even so, George was still in a tree with a pair of binoculars looking secretly at her. Despite involving a willing exhibitionist and voyeur, the circumstances weren't actively agreed upon, thus exemplifying Mulvey's Male Gaze in a canonical narrative.

¹¹⁷ According to know-it-all, "Operation Paperclip" sublimation, Doc Brown. Re: "Paperclip" [was the post-WW2 transplanting of German Nazi scientists into America's institutions](#)—with Wernher von Braun, the "father of modern space travel," being a literal member of the Nazi party while Doc Brown's de-Americanized family name is... von Bron (with Doc being a similar age to Wernher regardless of which fictional age you select). Like, Einstein was a Socialist and opposed to the Manhattan Project; why couldn't they have made the loveable Doc a Jewish scientist, Spielberg?

Christ), but also raw hunger and blushing engorgement; i.e., as red as lipstick, as the apples of the Tree of (forbidden) Knowledge.



(artist: [Nya Blu](#))

Experimentation is vital to social-sexual health and understanding but also healing. For instance, I've mentioned how Cuwu once wanted me to fuck them while they were asleep, telling me in advance they were taking sleeping pills for a consent-non-consent ritual (how's *that* for "rhythmically ceremonial," Doc). The iconoclastic idea, here, was *appreciative peril*—a sex-positive instance of controlled dissociation/calculated risk to help Cuwu deal with their own trauma by facing it in a controlled environment where *they* have all the power as the sub. Normally rape is impossible when both parties mutually consent. However, it's still a trust-building exercise as consent-non-consent requires the dom *to not actually harm the sub* during paralysis, bondage, etc. There's a performative irony there, not unlike Eddie Money's costumed "Dracula" being bit on the neck by the "sleeping" beauty during "I Think I'm in Love" (1982). As I fucked Cuwu, I felt foolish, guilty and excited all at once—like I was learning something I shouldn't and partaking in the kind of game most don't get to play—and that my teacher was just as foolish as I. In truth, looks can be deceiving. Cuwu was borderline, but they'd chosen their partner well; I did exactly as I was told, and learned a wonderful lesson in the process (one taught through the vampiric exchanging of fluids).

The same basic playfulness applies to the Gothic camping of "necrophilia" and "live burial" as paradoxes to double and perform: enjoyed during ironic BDSM ceremonies and vampire metaphors that explore psychosexual trauma through rituals of, at times, regressive healing practices (meaning "to regress to a childlike or immobile state"). For these to be sex-positive, they mustn't condone the historical-material abuses their reclaimed rituals are based on, and which unironic/canonical necrophilia is associated with (which denotes a harmful lack of agency and inability to consent regardless if one is literally or figuratively dead). For the persons being packaged and sold as Gothic *commodities* (normally women¹¹⁸), there is often a degree of desperation and theatricality to their work; i.e., something to temporarily feel as you devour it like a luscious crop. Per Jameson,

¹¹⁸ We'll examine the vampire's historical usage *vis-à-vis* homosexual men briefly here (exhibit 11b4) but much more fully in Volume Two.

middle-class consumers wolf down these melons during their own class nightmares of relative privilege inside the Imperial Core. But in the Gothic sense of the fatal harvest, the neoliberal siphoning of resources from the colony back to the motherland generally disguises ongoing genocides inside exotic, culturally appropriative yarns. While each storybook reverie is filled with danger and excitement as forbidden-yet-delicious, these can be interrogated regarding the skull-like pit that always waits at the center of the fruit. *Vis-à-vis* Barabara Creed, it becomes not something to merely discard (as Jameson would do) but an *aegis* for workers to utilize however they decide: to reverse the process of abjection through the same ghost of the counterfeit.



(*exhibit 11b1b:*
Artist, left: [Nya Blu](#).
We all have skulls
inside us. According
to the Gothic
tradition inside the
Imperial Core,
inheritance anxiety
historically-
materially
communicates
internalized trauma
as suggested within
workers but
expressed according

to their surface-level appearance in the material world; i.e., who, regardless of their origins, will be judged and consumed based how they appear relative to a cultural understanding of the imaginary past as something to constantly look at, vis-à-vis Segewick's "[Imagery of the Surface](#)" [1980]. Nya, for example, is covered in tattoos that speak to Cartesian trauma and the Gothic as something to wear on her skin, reassembled there after having been created many times before. She's a walking fortress, utterly stacked but rife with surface tension. She performs the paradox that Charlotte Brontë's Anne Causeway could not, the latter woman entirely doomed inside the attic for no one to see [except in dream-like reveries]. The paradox is a doubled form of emancipation that occurs through confrontation; i.e., a savvy and brave wielding of the very things used to coop her up in the white man's home, but also his colonizer's heart and mind and those of an imperial readership then and now seeing her "of nature" and nature as psychosexual food [something to remember during the roadmap, [part three](#), which examines Cartesian fetishization of nature-as-food and how to subvert it with our bodies during ludo-Gothic BDSM].)

The paradox of theatrical "necrophilia" is not even corpses or bodies, but vampirism within capital (thus at large) as driven by animal hunger and need, but also invitations to enter and submit as tied to and expressed through one's mouth and appetites as undead sexual metaphors; i.e., alien symbols tied to trauma, power and decay in various forms, but also powerlessness. For example, in *Metalocalypse* (2006) a male band member is having a one-way conversation *with a girl in a literal coma*. Afraid of the girl and wanting to separate, pre-coma, now the guy *doesn't* actually want to break up with her because she's useful to him as "[the ultimate girlfriend](#)."

This skit is arguably funny because it's patently absurd; it's also a poor-taste rape joke shining a light on the vampiric nature of rape culture among white men towards women. Per Hogle's ghost of the counterfeit, the show passes off an "abject reality or hidden barbarity" that, *vis-à-vis* David Punter, "displaces the hidden violence of present social structures, conjures them up again as past, and falls promptly under their spell" ([source](#): "*The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day*, 1980). This obviously goes well beyond *Metalocalypse*, and yields a vampiric function in neoliberal fantasies like *Back to the Future*: a hypnotic lullaby that sublimates abuse. Not only has this abuse gone nowhere; its Gothic commodities, whether subtle or overt, have grown even more tempting (for the middle class) as time goes on—i.e., as Capitalism drains us of our blood (and brains) and sells them back to us in cartoonishly delicious, addictively sugary forms. Stories like *The Babysitter* generally camp these cartoons, but the expression is still liminal; i.e., like Nya Blu and her succulent embodiment of the Gothic, or Cuwu lying in bed, smiling like a vampire as I fucked



them in their sleep (the smile indicating the drugs, like Juliet's "sleep of death," weren't strong enough). As I did, I couldn't shake the feeling that Cuwu wasn't *quite* as asleep as they let on, but also were well-and-truly stoned; i.e., their own "love-in-idleness¹¹⁹" something of a partial, zombie-like ruse—a, educational game that was half-real, somewhere in-between all manner of things, satiating the raw, animal hunger felt by both sides:

(artist: [Christopher Sean](#))

This kind of compound, appropriative-versus-appreciative peril illustrates the difference between

¹¹⁹ The drug given by Puck to Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* ([source](#): Marissa Nicosia's "Love-in-idleness, Part Two: Intoxicating Botanicals in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," 2022).

negotiated boundaries and compelled boundaries/manufactured consent—i.e., *choosing* to be a "doll" (with the vampire having porcelain-line skin and painted-looking lips) in a sex-positive rape fantasy (Cuwu's schtick) versus being compelled into a doll-like role in literal and figurative forms of coerced rape by those in power (as stated in Volume Zero, appreciative rape fantasies can be intense, potentially affecting the dom far more intensely than the sub; Cuwu's games arguably did with me because I was awake and Cuwu wasn't¹²⁰, though for the knowledge I gained and the fun I had, I don't regret partaking part). Faustian "agreements" more broadly have a habit of "getting worse all the time"—e.g., Darth Vader's warning to Lando Calrissian: "I am altering the conditions of our agreement; pray I do not alter them further!"

This being said, "deals" made through force or lies are not deals at all; they're slavery and exploitation, even when dressed up (re: Sauron's rings of power). That's what neoliberalism is beneath "the magic." Cis-het men historically-materially treat women like *de facto* stress toys *without* their consent, transforming them into their pets, their property and/or their compelled sex dolls (so-called "Brides of Dracula"). For privileged, sexist men, intimacy is automatically sexual and rapacious to varying degrees; for battered/compelled women, this invokes body dysphoria: plastic, assimilated bodies made to please men; i.e., Stepford Wives (with eating disorders being an extra variable—incredibly dangerous, but also shameful and secretive). This "Barbie Doll effect" amounts to colonization/manufactured appearance—plastic surgery and purity/moderacy and sexy outfits (exhibit 8a). It also leads to compelled brides of vampires through the Christofascist return to tradition; e.g., the Mormons' coercive polygamy intrinsically linked to settler colonialism.

In other words, the ghost of the counterfeit is detrimental to workers within capital when left unchallenged; or worse, when entertained, the vampire-like draining and announcement become a spectacle to purchase and consume like second-hand blood.

For example, in my mid-20s I once had someone approach me asking me to illustrate them a fantasy about a man who turned women into sex dolls against their will—a bit like Jeffrey Dahmer lobotomizing his victims with hydrochloric acid, except in the client's story the syringe merely incapacitated the girls long enough for him to submerge them in a magic bath. Said bath literally turned the girls' bodies to rubber *but kept their minds active*—displaced/dissociative violence in action, wherein the idea behind the bodily destruction isn't reclaiming someone's lost agency but rather exploiting a particular group to vampirically enrich a privileged party. Eventually I learned to say no to weird clients like these, but back

¹²⁰ "Somno" (short for "somniaambulism," which means "to sleepwalk") is sex wherein one party is asleep and the other is fucking them. It's not uncommon for feelings of discomfort to be felt by the conscious partner—usually guilt—which often requires not just *spoken* agreements beforehand, but *collars* worn to visually signify the sleeper's agreement that help mollify the awake partner that it's ok to proceed.

then I was younger, dumber, and poorer. I drew the story because I felt like I *needed* the money. However, I also thought, "This feels like a horror story *outside* of the text—like the person I'm working for is a devil-in-disguise." Eventually my shame eclipsed my fiscal needs and I learned to form boundaries and say no to predatory clients preying on a) my financial desperation (thus stupid hunger) and b) the exploitation of historically abused groups (women, in their case).

Creepy art commissions aside, labor can also be transmuted into iconoclastic, sex-positive forms. In the case of Cuwu but also Dulci, I helped them rescue their labor from sex-coercive arrangements—by experimenting with them as our sex, art and friendships intersected in different ways per case. Like Cuwu, Dulci and I did sex work and made monster art together that aimed at making us less hungry but also less emotionally and Gothically stupid regarding our labor and bodies. Open sexuality antonymizes sex and harm but acknowledges past forms of trauma (and bad-faith versions of the same theatre) that synonymize these things. They provided and I provided and like vampires feeding out in the open—giving essence back and forth—we communicated freely without guilt, secrecy or shame; we learned. And even if our relationships didn't ultimately work out, the lesson—like a corpse in a coffin—"survives" to be gazed upon by future generations. Such feeding arrangements (and their Gothic aesthetics) are so much simpler and more educational (from a sex-positive standpoint) than how they would be under heteronormative arrangements, robbing one side of their power under violently compelled, mendacious circumstances. None of us wanted to get married and have kids—i.e., serve the state's will in nostalgically propagandized ways like *Back to the Future*.



That movie's hauntological song-and-dance (all so Marty can get his dick wet by compelling his own parents to get back together) is every bit as emotionally manipulative as it is nostalgically curious (e.g., 1986-era Marty needing a car to have sex, similar to how his mother "parked" with

neighborhood boys to escape her 1950s repressive household; i.e., American car culture being an escape from imposed socio-material conditions) but also borrowed: the 1946 palimpsest, *It's a Wonderful Life*, nakedly fear-mongering independent women, presenting George Bailey's wife as being entirely reliant on broke, hopeless dreamers and—funnily enough—Peeping Toms.

Marty's plan is terrible for several reasons. Not only should it have *not* worked; it presents George McFly as this self-made man when in truth, the entire coercively manufactured production made it possible for him to "get Lorraine back" (despite never earning her to begin with), then take all the credit after privatizing¹²¹ it in "his" novel. *Back to the Future* is easy to like; dialectically-materially it's a giant, dangerous lie. That's not "just" Reagan's 1980s in a nutshell; it's something that's continuously being sold to the next-in-line as "wholesome, good, and safe" for workers, making them stupid.

To borrow from Anita Sarkisian, though, I can enjoy "[Earth Angel](#)" rerecorded with the orchestral accompaniment (1985) and refuse to endorse Ronald Reagan, Robert Zemeckis, *et al* in the same breath. Just as Milton loved angels and demons, and Horace Walpole made his own castles out of whole cloth, each gave future peoples the intricate potential to challenge the status quo through Gothic (crypto)mimesis and pastiche: the institution of marriage as a fearsome place that we—using the spectres of Marx—can take and transform into something better while keeping the devilish aesthetic¹²² as a naughty keepsake; i.e., from Pygmalion's shadow to Galatea challenging said shadow while pimped out in black-and-red fetish gear and having all *manner* of submissive cuties under her powerfully parodic spells. Except *unlike* the status quo—re: Tolkien's *unironic* rape of anything deemed dark and terrible in misguided and ultimately dishonest attempts to conquer death—Galatea's darkness visible camps canon, "making it gay" as a false "jailor" threatening "rape," "torture" and various other things in quotes set to funky music; e.g., "Down, Down to Goblin Town" (1977). It might seem like toothless bullshit—nothing except empty fetishes and clichés to consume—but I got news for you: that's how language works! Meaning is arbitrary decided through the function of aesthetics as something to inhabit within the endless chaotic copying. So we may well use the aesthetics for medicinal, psychosexual leverage; i.e., when navigating the socio-political landscape under

¹²¹ Fun fact: The actor who played George, Crispin Glover, was replaced because he disliked the monetary reward the McFlys get in the end; i.e., that the movie is arguing that they need to acquire it to be happy—not because they are interesting people but because they were *assimilated*. According to Adam Donald's "How *Back to the Future 2* Tricked You into Thinking Crispin Glover Returned" (2022):

Bob Gale, co-writer and co-producer of the *Back to the Future* trilogy, has long claimed that it was a salary dispute which led to Glover not reprising his role in *Part II*. Gale has claimed that because Glover was not a huge fan of the sequel's script, [he demanded he be paid \\$1 million to appear in the movie](#) ([source](#)).

In essence, the producers fired Glover, lied about what he said and used his likeness without his permission (a taste of things to come in the AI days ahead of us).

¹²² Including musical homages imitated and bandied to and fro; e.g., Michiru Yamane's emulation of Western styles in *Castlevania* as a Japanese neoliberal counterfeit of the Gothic castle as originally forged in Britain.

Capitalism, looking for kindred spirits among its assorted wreckage (the steady trauma, disintegration and alienization) while also employing Sarkeesian's adage among the Gothic assemblage: anything begot from those older bricks—first taken from the ruinous, undead whole (extending to videogames and their paratexts, of course) and charged in a power not entirely our own: "no man is an island" and all that. Ask not for whom the bell tolls, indeed.

Sex positivity between sex workers and friends liberates them from capital and, more to the point, is no less democratic or humane than a cis-het marriage. Quite the opposite—it's far *more* democratic and humane from a systemic standpoint. Marriage has historically offered false "protection" to cis-het women during manufactured conflict, scarcity and consent; it only segregates them from other women and lets their husbands legally abuse/rape them—the Marital Exemption Act only being abolished in all fifty states in America in the early 1990s. Like *Roe v. Wade*, though, the repealing of the Marital Exemption Act is something that Christofascists/SCOTUS will try to overturn, blaming symptoms of Capitalism and its decay on minorities while simultaneously reining women in and cracking down "on crime" through an expanded state of exception's ghosts of the counterfeit. Neoliberal capitalists will allow this to occur through the oscillating pendulum of Capitalism and American politics working very much as intended: as a Puritanical institution, America was founded on genocide, rape, war and worker exploitation, as well as compelled marriages *defended* during moral panics.

As vampires demonstrate, there's frankly countless ways to personify then subvert trauma and the status quo; i.e., while seeking catharsis as one moves away from closeted self-hatred and towards self-acceptance, self-fashioning and self-love. These are topics we'll cover much more in depth in Volume Two and Three, but I've included some additional examples—four exhibits over the next eight pages—that pointedly use the Gothic mode in relation to vampirism.

If you want, call it a taste of things to come:



(exhibit 11b2: Artist, top: [Maloroid](#); middle-left: unknown; bottom-left: [D. H. Friston's illustration](#) for *Carmilla* [1872]—a cautionary tale about female forbidden love; bottom-right: [Nat the Lich](#).)

Something to keep in mind about criminal hauntology [and which we'll return to in Volumes Two and Three, exhibits 47a1/2 and 86a2] is that it relishes in the commodified suffering of the buried, the gays as automatic criminals, fugitives, unironic monsters through various fictional twists: nine times out of ten, we're the closest monster in the WASP-penned murder mystery or we're the victim as someone to punish by the damsel, detective or subjugated Amazon [the xenomorph is both: the cumulative forces-of-darkness black knight, cosmic rapist, pre-fascist

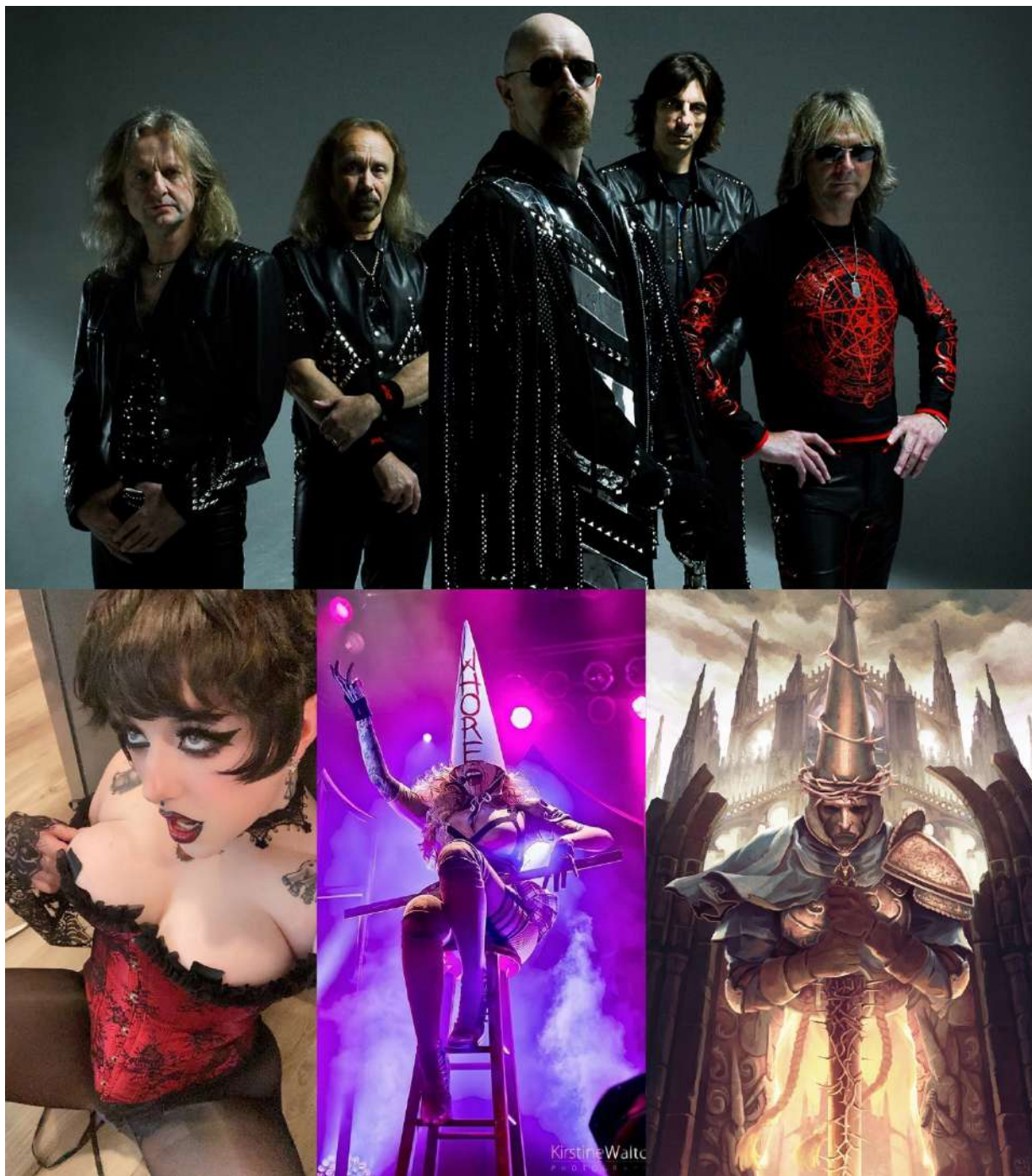
corruption dressed up in '70s fetish gear, exhibit 60d]. The canonical vampire narrative, then, isn't just a night stalker/queer boogeyman that only comes out at night [[like Edgar Winter](#)]. It also emulates various animal attacks and—like medieval lycanthropy—is a crude analog for mammalian diseases and medieval psychology [the humors] that brings a none-too-subtle metaphor for sleep/death, staking the queer while they're helpless; but also the sleeping woman as often naked and/or defenseless, like a babe in its cradle [similar to her sitting on the toilet or standing in the shower but even more vulnerable]: the compelled voyeurism of Gothic conventions demanding that we stare at her unironic rape as something to relish, to worship, to covet.

To "sleep," in this case, is overlapped with "playing dead" when faced with a sexual predator but also the reality that wives, teenagers and young girls would have been sitting ducks for their patriarchal overlords; i.e., to be violated and to have no conscious idea, but faced with the haunting suspicions through the "nightmare" of being visited by a succubus/incubus paralysis demon [exhibit 51b1] that has its way with the chaste maiden/celebate man-of-faith as an unwilling/unironic sacrifice [camped to hell and back by Tim Curry's Dr. Frankenfurter sleeping with Brad and Janet; i.e., less "making it gay" and more about exposing the repressed queer dialog amid monstrous proliferation as something to poke fun at and make your own in the process]. It becomes a spectating match by the audience as complicit in the whole ordeal, demanding a rape victim to worship, mock and fetishize as part of the night's entertainment.

Of course, consent-non-consent allows for the ritual of induced sleep sex to have playfully sex-positive BDSM, fetish and kink flavors [sleep sex being a regular event in cis-het bedrooms] but nevertheless one that is canonically used to scapegoat queer persons relegated to the shadows of a rising sexual discourse [while cis-het men continue to hunt their prey from the same darkness]. To reclaim the night and its creatures from the cis-het curse of a patriarchal, "Dark Father" sex pest, the subversion of the symbolic tableau always occurs through rape play/voyeuristic peril of some kind or another—of catharsis and trauma as occupying the same playground. This liminal expression can dress up in the aesthetics of death [exhibit 9b2], be openly vampiric swooning [exhibit 87], include animalized bondage and commands of tinctures of sleep and submission [exhibit 51d3]; or promote/execute doll-like sleep sex in various animate-inanimate forms [exhibits 38a and 38b1, " b2, " b3, " b4]. It can also be evoked as a kind of guilty pleasure in heteronormative circles [exhibit 86a1, exhibit 86a3] meant to scare and infantilize women; such fear and dogma can be reclaimed by Gothic counterculture—i.e., by sex-positive couples whose invited voyeurism/exhibitionist nudism [exhibit 101c2] helps move society away from harmful and coerced wish fulfillment: "It's ok to look or indulge if all parties want it.")



(exhibit 11b3: Artist left/middle: [Aroma Sensei](#); right: [Horny X](#). "To sleep perchance to dream." The fantasy of subjugation can be sex-positive but must subvert the imagery of the monstrous-feminine as targeted for "slaying" by traditionally male implements: the woman-in-black or the Amazon as threatened by the "knife-like" penis, but then actually wanting it [breeding kink being a common one, fantasizing about making monster babies and having monster sex to improve the orgasm, exhibit 87a]. Badly. Such notions of a sex-hungry woman are, as usual, forbidden in heteronormative spheres, but remain an open secret sold to people through the procurement of forbidden fruit as pornography that hardworking American adults [usually men] may consume. It becomes pay-walled, a sale of indulgences classically overloaded with a variety of harmful stigmas [exhibit 32a]. As always, these stigmas must, like individual trauma, be reclaimed and subverted in the same dream-like zone: between the fiction and the rules, on the surface of the image in intense thresholds neither here nor there.)



(exhibit 11b4: Artist, bottom-left: [Kay](#); bottom-middle: [Kristine Walton](#); bottom-right: [Jesús Campos](#).)

The queer man as a de facto sodomite is often driven to seek trauma in such a liminality and being synonymized with deserved self-loathing and psychosexual violence—e.g., failing to understand that Rob Halford is crooning about "The Ripper" or "The Isle of Domination" [exhibit 38c1b] in an ironic, cathartic sense—but also stared at by straight people looking for a medieval shock on a cryptomimetic vein [e.g., Trent Reznor's "Closer" (1989), exhibit 43b; or Panos Cosmatos' Mandy

(2018), exhibit 40a1b]. The same goes for the woman as the presumed whore/virgin. Ironically reclaiming these markers of shame occurs in the same place they are unironically applied, thus subject to constant scrutiny and moral panic the way that white straight men are not. Under the Neo-Gothic standard, though, the fearful imagination of a WASP-y moral panicker has produced centuries of stories about the devilish white person acting "non-white" but also not Protestant; i.e., like an outsider from the barbaric past [wherein Blasphemous is a thoroughly curious Metroidvania: Catholic fear and dogma, especially torture and miracles, dressed up as Gothic nostalgia]. Misdirection is a powerful tool, understood by common abusers and benefactors profiting off the conservative adage, "Perception is reality." Broken trust makes anything seem possible, but also plays on the mind in ways that render one the dupe/accomplice; i.e., to be under someone's power regardless if you're asleep, on drugs or in a seemingly healthy relationship.

This applies to real life, of course. For example, I thought Zeuhl loved me [we'll discuss Jadis at length, later] but I didn't realize I was being used for most of our relationship. It didn't matter because I perceived our love as genuine based on what I was told. For a while it felt manageable. All of a sudden, it wasn't [I winced when they fingered my asshole too hard, secretly second-guessed them when they didn't want me to meet their other boyfriend, who I'll call Paris; and asked me for money after the breakup, or other favors while stringing me along in various ways]; after that, I felt like I had been lied to, used, and manipulated like a silly unicorn. Zeuhl taught me that self-denial is a powerful thing. And yet, while the beard is often used by queer people to blend in or navigate choppy waters, the same idea is used by bigots who blend in with token spouses and partners [rendering them dupes, victims or accomplices in the process]; i.e., a theme of penance for past crimes, but also ongoing deceptions for the false penitent seeking sanctuary by directing blame at others/casting suspicion away from themselves and their habitual misdeeds. Like a game of Clue or a cheap "Whodunnit?" no one is being honest, even if this deception is societal; i.e., coded through heteronormative propaganda, fear and dogma [contrition, or the forced confession, being its own issue within police states; and drug abuse, torture and isolation used to keep victims in check, suggestible, even complicit]. In other words, "It just wasn't talked about," an open secret; the victim becomes not just the fly on the wall, but the wall itself part of a desolate, perfidious cathedral where people care more about keeping up with appearances and delighting at the coded barbaric's schadenfreude. Eventually it all falls apart, but also becomes forgotten and rediscovered as ruinous, esoteric.

To this, real life and fiction collide and fuse in a dialectical-material sense. The murder mystery/black confessional is a foundational trope of the Neo-Gothic's historical-material record: the secret letter or diary entry as a fictional throwback then and now [e.g., Ann Radcliffe's having Monsieur St. Aubert write a letter to his

daughter, as well as the entire *Confessional of the Black Penitents*—aka *The Italian*]. Its *poiesis* amounts to familial open secrets [of the Gothic sort, the bloodline] married to the myth that society is corrupt, not genocidal; i.e., the scapegoating of the fascist or the false authority figure as anomalous: the husband, preacher, father, teacher, etc. This kind of murder mystery has the centrist effect of directing blame away from the elite, from the distribution of power/material conditions at a societal, criminogenic level. It presents persons as reprobate, deceitful, fallen, not the state [the demonizing of the Catholic faith being a displaced critique of a former structure "on its way out"; i.e., during the crystallization of a Protestant ethic amid and after the Neo-Gothic revival, contributing to the rise of the current state of affairs: modern war, the nation-state, Capitalism as a neoliberal hegemony built on older hegemonies. These, in turn, produce newer kinds of complicit, bourgeois vampires versus older ones, but still rule over and prey on us; i.e., as queer people are buried indiscriminately without power or prestige to protect them].)



(exhibit 11b5: Artist, left: [Luis Dominguez](#); right: [Clyde Caldwell](#). At least as a starting point, the entire xenophobic/pre-fascist exercise of vampirism is basically *anti-Catholic* dogma ridiculing transubstantiation [exhibit 41i]. However, the female vampire ritual is further complex and bifurcated under Capitalism as a Protestant affair [we'll also examine anti-Semitism and queerphobia/-philia in Volume Two and Three]. It either often desires a cathartic ritual to the paralysis, thus a reassurance

that the dark dominator isn't abusive like a past real-life example might have been; or it desires a reversal to the trauma, exacting "revenge" and "torture" on the perceived patriarchal dominator [in BDSM, this is calling "switching"]—i.e., by swatting them like a pesky bug. Coincidences aside, a female mosquito has been buzzing around my head as I write this exhibit, dutifully reminding me that male mosquitoes do not drink blood, and that the drinking of blood by these insects is an abject, chimeric metaphor for Archaic-Mother sexual reproduction, as well as sex and power in general; or, as I write in "War Vaginas" [2021]:

Mythical weapons can symbolize female rebellion and power. Take Medusa's snakes: Functionally her snakes aren't female-exclusive, or man-made; they're purely cosmetic. Medusa kills her victims with a petrifying gaze. Gothic tales treat this freezing effect as a shock response: The female "snake" is viewed as a symbol of antagonistic power, threatening traditional masculinity through castration fears (robbing the phallus of its mythical power) expressed in patriarchal myths like the gorgon. The snake can also be overtly phallic. Benisato, a female villain from Ninja Scroll (1993), attacks with venomous snakes, including one hidden inside her vagina (a man could arguably cram a "snake" up his bum, but homosexuality is often seen as "female": othered, ridiculous, impotent).

The second symbol of female rebellion are natural, entomological weapons. These can be vaginal, tied to sexual reproduction. Insect brood mothers are a natural example of the Archaic Mother, using their powerful wombs to birth hostile armies. There's also phallic-looking weapons with female functions. The ovipositor of parasitoid wasps injects an egg into an unlucky host (the life cycle which inspired the xenomorph in Alien). However, all female Hymenoptera (wasps, bees, ants) have an ovipositor, the stinger of which is a modified version thereof. Stingers inject [paralyzing] venom, but also eggs[!]. It can stab and kill, but no male can have it. Like the womb, it is forbidden to men ("womb-like," vaginal spaces have a forbidding alien atmosphere, which we'll explore in a moment).

Insects tremendously impacted popular monsters like the xenomorph and later, Samus. Amazons are monsters, and Samus is only half-human. The other half is avian, but my point still stands: Humanoid insects (or animals more generally) are the site of alien depiction, but also behaviors humans typically abject. Unnatural strength is a thing to be feared, especially when viewed through a sexist lens. Though Samus is not insectoid, she still has levels of strength that mirror female insects. Hymenoptera are female dominant. Males are small, weak; they only exist to mate, and cannot work nor soldier—not unlike the submissive male roles in imaginary Amazon societies [[source](#)].



[artist, left: [Luciano Garbati](#);
right: [Benvenuto Cellini](#)]

To this, the female vampire is something of a chimera, but also dragon, a female Godzilla or dominator whose powerful fangs/stinger is feared by powerful men through collective insecurity but also collective guilt: the proverbial sins of the father against a vengeful monstrous-feminine. As usual, this code is executed in canonical, heteronormative videogames; i.e., to neglect, deny or scorn

anything that isn't "the Man." Knights don't just slay dragons; they make trophies of them.)

I went with vampires in this subchapter for a reason; they're a very closeted kind of monster—always staying indoors, away from sunlight, but also hiding in plain sight by passing themselves off as "straight" (fooling no one; the point isn't total concealment, but feigned subjugation within postures of controlled opposition). Sexuality under Capitalism is generally closeted, and the ancient canonical codes that Foucault warned about in *A History of Sexuality* weren't generally applied to powerful-looking men: Count Dracula as presumed straight but actually being the poster boy for Sodomy 101 (the musical, theatrical play and Gothic castle [danger disco] serving as the relegated domains of the classic tortured queer seeking catharsis). True to form, praxial catharsis must happen according to a raising of emotional/Gothic intelligence and class/cultural awareness in order to break through Capitalist Realism's myopic inability to imagine a different future; i.e., by reimagining the Gothic past, expressing state trauma during the present in relation to our past, present and future selves (we'll unpack this more during Volume Two when we trot out Frederic Jameson's corpse and beat it with a stick). This requires challenging the current chiefs of a colonized dialog raising cathedrals ringed with weird canonical nerds: Pygmalions as arbiters of the ghost of the counterfeit, hence the process of abjection.

Contrary to Pygmalions and canonical weird-nerd culture, monsters aren't just commodities; they're symbolic embodiments of speculative thinking tied to larger issues. You don't simply buy and consume them (commodifying struggle) but use them as a means, if not to put yourself directly in the shoes of those being

oppressed, then to think about things differently than you might normally. It's an opportunity to empathize with the oppressed and contribute to their pedagogy in ways that, to be frank, make you less stupid, nasty and cruel.

I'd like to conclude this chapter, then, by using vampires to consider the Pygmalion standard as a) something to challenge in relation to oppositional praxis, and b) whose curious double standards have evolved into themselves over centuries; i.e., between men and women who, should they choose to challenge the status quo in a genderqueer fashion, might find themselves being compared to vampires (or similar monsters) during moral panics valorizing the likes of those who *don't* rock the boat. We'll work in pairs, looking at Radcliffe and Lewis, Steven King and Elvira, Farley Granger and Roddy McDowell, doing our best to consider what commonalities and discrepancies these disputes might entail. However, before we dive in, I have a few points for you to keep in mind...

First, the author's foreword from Volume Zero introduced the Pygmalion as something to oppose through a Galatean double; i.e., not a subservient statue with (as Jameson puts it) "blind eyeballs," but a cagey challenge to Patriarchal Capitalism and its heteronormative devices. Ignoring our usual Pygmalion's commodifying of monsters, Galatea was just as gay as Dracula, and her Gothic mode of monstrous, Satanic poetics includes examining our own traumas and memories—be they real, imagined, or reimagined—as *Gothic pastiche*. This includes vampires as quick, scrappy shorthand for things that people tend to relate and respond to; i.e., the *monsters*, but also where to find them and how they function during liminal expression across various *mediums* (movies, television shows, books, masques, musicals, short stories, roleplay and videogames; etc) that likewise interact back and forth during oppositional praxis: canon vs iconoclasm.

Second, we need to remember that challenging the status quo occurs within sectors of capital that incentivize people not to speak out, but paradoxically give them the means to do just that (albeit in fabulously vampy ways). A generous portion of the Gothic mode, then, lives inside Western entertainment, whose industries host dialectical-material debates often held by famous *personalities*—talk show hosts, once-upon-a-time, but before them, novelists. The practice effectively started between Matthew Lewis and Ann Radcliffe, famously fencing back and forth while establishing Schools of the Gothic mode; in turn, their combatting fictions led by example, offering up warring critiques, art, political statements, porn, apologia, and polemics on a variety of taboo subjects (often centered around sex and violence). Through the ghost of the counterfeit, these became a stream of commodities that moved money through the natural-material world and formed a well-trod path for abjection to move forwards or in reverse.

Third, the vampire is something that survives by hiding in plain sight, while also being allergic to close inspection (most notably broad daylight) and whose revolutionary cryponymy (as we shall see in a moment) strives for various amounts of stealth and showiness. This means that any attempts to challenge state

monopolies yield moral panics that showcase the kinds of double standards present between men and women since Lewis and Radcliffe, into the Closeted Era of Gothic queer expression and towards bolder (more GNC-inclusive) times; i.e., in a Gothic dialog that has, until fairly recently inside mainstream circles, been commercialized as cis (and honestly still mostly is). As Radcliffe showed us, the accommodated author is generally complicit and celebrated for being straight, thus focusing on straight plights surviving foreign threats; as Lewis showed us, these "threats" took on the form of genderqueer demons, which later became the vampire as the 19th century saw homosexuality shove itself into public discourse (1870 seeing the arrival of the homosexual man as "a new species," according to Foucault). Even out in the open, the male queer historically survives inside the theatre closet as something to take with them, never allowing the public confirmation of which team they play for but certainly teasing the Straights' fear-addled brains. So while homosexual men *were* pegged as vampires, their status as men historically granted a fair bit of leeway to stretch their wings and vamp it up: onstage (with women historically being denied this privilege which simultaneously seeing their own homosexuality as fetishized by cis-het men in pornographic markets).

In short, the expression of vampires (and indeed, any monstrous symbol you could assign to genderqueer forces) historically has played out very differently depending on your orientation, but also your birth sex as naturally assigned; i.e., for centuries, men and women were treated violently when suspected of queerness (witches were burned alive, and gay men were labeled as criminals, but also as a plague, etc), but men like Lewis could still write *The Monk* and own it, provided they didn't say the quiet part out loud (or without a disclaimer on par with Shakespeare's Puck from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: "If we shadows have offended, / Think but this, and all is mended...").

These three points are all things to keep in mind when considering the stupidities of workers around us who learn from famous persons working through the Gothic mode; i.e., working to enrich themselves, to be sure, but also express their thoughts and feelings on taboo subjects tied to the profit motive. The more you make, the more credence lent to you, but this varies further depending on if you're male/female and if you queer/straight, etc.

Fourth, "Pygmalion," as I use the term, is generally applied in reference to men—e.g., Steven King or James Cameron—but it could just as easily be applied to token groups; i.e., sell-out women, queer people or other minorities in the entertainment business banking on Man-Box bigotry to turn a quick buck against members of their own (or other) oppressed groups (and leading to various disastrous effects: unironic forms of the narrative of the crypt, Cycle of Kings, infernal concentric pattern playing out in real life). Radcliffe certainly did that, but she was straight. Nowadays, a Rainbow-capitalist market allows for an expanded degree of authors (and content creators: weird nerds not tied to big studios or publishing houses) who are complicit and/or closeted beyond just Lewis and

Radcliffe fencing back and forth, but also working alongside one another in the same market; e.g., Elvira, Mistress of the Dark, sitting opposite Steven King through the decades in which they both worked:



(exhibit 12: Steven King is a white cis-het dude cashing in, but also a Pygmalion pushing his moderately heteronormative idea of Gothic commodities; i.e., fear as a structure that he manipulates and manufactures as a product, first and foremost [similar to Radcliffe]. According to legend, King Pygmalion creates

and falls in love with Galatea. For our purposes, Pygmalion is the shadow of the Cycle of Kings¹²³, a patriarchal influence that banishes queerness to the shadows and dimorphizes workers to be cis-het men and women. This Shadow of Pygmalion is the lasting influence of such a myth on the public imagination, whose Gothic poetics must be challenged by active, constructively angry Galateas who buck the status quo in genderqueer ways that have been with the Gothic since the days of Matthew Lewis [also a Galatea—see my previous point about Pygmalions not needing to be male]. Cassandra Peterson is one such Galatea. A lesbian-in-secret for decades and now out of the closet, Elvira has been advocating for queer expression onscreen just as long.)

Under Patriarchal Capitalism, the creation of monsters is heteronormative, thus binarized and sexually dimorphic, but also divided between male and female creators in cis language alienating non-binary forms of Gothic poetics. Called "the

¹²³ A term I coined, which my thesis volume describes as, "the centrist **monomyth**, or cycling out of good and bad kings and all the kings' white cis-het Christian men or those *acting like these men*, thus warrior-minded good cops and bad cops in **hauntological copaganda** apologizing for state genocide—i.e., TERFs and other token groups." Likewise, the "Shadow of Pygmalion" (another term I created for my arguments) is the harmful, lasting influence of the Cycle of Kings felt between fiction and reality concerning weird canonical nerds producing, consuming or otherwise endorsing material that upholds Capitalist Realism.

Pygmalion effect" in my thesis¹²⁴, we'll explore this facet of Capitalist Realism throughout the remainder the book: Heteronormative men (and token enforcers) are Pygmalion "kings" who create monsters in their male-dominated industries; subservient girls/queer people are monsters/monstrous, sexy props/*de facto* brides or chattel that sell abject merchandise by embodying blind pastiche. This applies many different registers—from Alfred Stieglitz to Frank Frazetta; to George Lucas to Ronald Reagan to Steven King to Jordan Peterson; to Elvis to Michael Jackson; to Dracula to God. All are kings, all are imperfectly and asymmetrically imitated by wannabe-monarchs—the female queens/princesses coercively wedded to powerful men and their Cartesian visions/misogynistic nightmares like the brides of Dracula or Frankenstein, etc. These marital sublimations of dynastic power exchange, hereditary rites and patrilineal descent manifest as cultish, but inclusive. As Deborah Layton puts it, "No one joins a cult. You join a self-help group, a religious movement, a political organization. They change so gradually, by the time you realize you're entrapped—and almost everybody does—you can't figure a safe way back out" ([source](#): PBS' *Jonestown: the Life and Death of Peoples Temple*, 2006).

By this same token, Pygmalion's opposite, Galatea, offers up classically female/genderqueer "monarchs" and non-abusive groups/communities with which to belong during oppositional praxis; e.g., Elvira (exhibit 12, a proletarian queen) and Ripley (a liminal, sometimes-proletarian "space trucker" queen/sometimes-bourgeois "TERF queen," exhibit 8b) or your run-of-the-mill sex workers rebelling and conforming to varying degrees: existing on the "rungs" of power as queens, but also figurative/literal princesses, lieutenants, captains, soldiers, etc. Either praxial type is distinguished by their good-faith or bad-faith façade; i.e., what is the queen-in-question angry about and what are they fighting for behind the persona—be they a witch, werewolf, zombie, vampire or some hybrid thereof, with all these canonical monsters personifying venereal disease but also bourgeois metaphors for homosexual¹²⁵ men as *the* problematic practitioners of monstrous-feminine sex, of

¹²⁴ "...inert, heteronormative dogma stuck on loop—our 'Pygmalion effect' as part of the broader **Shadow of Pygmalion**, which zombies worker brains to not simply accept these moon-sized tortures through Capitalist Realism, but embody them as **menticided** soldiers and victims [...] The two exist simultaneously within various offshoots of the colonial binary under the Shadow of Pygmalion; i.e., as a harmful mythic structure enforced by the **gender trouble** that **weird canonical nerds** experience; i.e., their **rape culture**'s heteronormativity-in-crisis being pitted against the campy **gender parody** of weird *iconoclastic* nerds" ([source](#)).

¹²⁵ Dale Townshend once told me in grad school that homosexuality—in the early 1800s—went from the "love that dare not speak its name!" to "the love that wouldn't shut up!" by the time Bram Stoker wrote *Dracula* in 1897. "Love" is of course a tremendous misnomer, assigned to queerness as a kind of canonically monstrous "false love" tied to rape, disease and the disillusion of marriage and decency. Likewise, while good sexual health and education are important, they are also not the state's aim. Rather, the state uses outmoded, Gothicized fears of venereal disease to stigmatize select groups as "spreaders" that need to be contained, controlled, even killed.

sodomy (which we'll examine more in Volume Two when we look at the history of vampires as a specific monster *type*): Roddy McDowall from *Fright Night* (1985) performing a queer/*queenly* horror show host similar to Elvira's outspoken iconoclastic role as the "mistress of the dark."

Similar to Walpole or Lewis, both horror hosts were queer but courtesy of Hollywood being staunchly heteronormative, coming out had its risks. Of course, a common way to hide was with a "beard"—marrying a member of the "opposite sex" (the phrase ignoring intersex people, of course) to keep the nosy blue-blooded neighbors from gossiping too much about your "female accomplishments" and string of male bachelors running about the place; i.e., hiding in plain sight.

Some people never bothered. For example, Terry of *Gay Influence* writes on Farley Granger (a co-star to McDowell in several productions, [below](#)):

unlike most other actors who were gay or bisexual, Granger refused to marry to keep his fans and studios off the scent of his male relationships. When studio bosses berated him for being seen having dinner with composer Aaron Copland, a known homosexual, he shot back, "(Copland is) one of the most important composers in America, a gentleman I met at this studio when you hired him to write the score for *The North Star*," which was Granger's debut



film (1943). "I'm not going to be told...who I can or cannot see in my private life." Granger turned on his heels and walked out of Sam Goldwyn's office ([source](#)).

Of course, this was a giant risk that could have gone either way. Generally it would have been one taken by men who, depending on their *level* of status and the political climate, would have had better or worse odds announcing themselves as "problematic lovers."

It's vital, then, to be unafraid to reexamine the past with fresh eyes and language that historical figures wouldn't

actually have used, but may have understood better than you might think. Oppression is oppression, and *that* certainly hasn't changed much in the recent centuries. At the very least, we need recognize the cone of silence that then-and-now continues to linger over those who fear state punishment as not only refusing to die, but expanding horrifyingly in all directions.

Revolutionary cryptonymy offers a paradoxical means of challenging these monopolies (and subsequent brain drains). However, until the Internet Age—i.e.,

since Lewis wrote *The Monk* over two centuries ago—resisting the decay of fascism and moral panic was something few men of privilege actually tried to an extent that would threaten their established livelihoods; e.g., like Oscar Wilde. But revolution won't work if we martyr ourselves *en masse*, and smaller efforts can add up over time (especially collectively during intersectional solidarity in the Internet Age).

While learning from past struggles bleeding into fresh ones, it's vital to consider how—after more precise language cemented queerness as a cultural identity in the shadow of the state—such persons merely became a separate species, but also a social *disease* that was commonly recognized as male (rebellious women were generally cast as witches, Amazons or whores, but their method of disease-spreading was seen as whore-like; i.e., attached to prostitution and unruly merchandise [again, women] versus sodomy being a crime committed by persons under the law—men). As often was the case, such things were seldom discussed out in the open at all, but that certainly didn't preclude political action being taken by those with privilege, generally those who waited until they were older and more secure; e.g., Vincent Price as someone who "didn't broadcast his sexuality [or use the words that would have spelled it out, but still stood] up and was counted when it mattered—attacking Anita Bryant's anti-gay crusade in the 1970s, joining PFLAG as an honorary board member, and shooting one of the first celebrity PSAs to allay public fears about AIDS" ([source](#): Dan Avery's "Vincent Price's Daughter Confirms He Was Bisexual," 2015).

It's important to recognize these instances when they actually happened, but also to understand the class-based stigmas and cultural forces guiding these persons to behave how they did: our aforementioned trifectas and cultural stigmas tied to state monopolies during oppositional praxis as an uphill battle ringed with dreadful, often unseen struggles. This obviously extends to homonormativity and queer assimilation by embodying the very stereotypes that straight people expected once the queer community *couldn't* be ignored, but it also preceded it through the actors whose behaviors shaped future generations. McDowall, for example, played many queer-coded characters, but not actual gay persons. But something of the closet continued to trap them even after gay people supposedly were "out." Time and time again, queerness has become both highly legendary and as invisible as Dracula's reflection. The sad joke is, Dracula *wasn't* invisible; he felt that way as a queer-coded *behavior* reflected back at him that he was expected to carry forward by victimizing himself and



others around him—i.e., the LGBA targeting trans people by making *them* invisible, preying on them exactly how the state wants.

Such behaviors have clearly overstayed their welcome on- and offstage, demanding to be recoded through future cryptonymies that serve a revolutionary purpose (which we have already discussed in this chapter and which Volume Three, Chapter Five is entirely devoted to); but these older codes still remind us how desperate minorities become when they are treated as inhuman, diseased and invisible their entire lives. To feel welcome inside the one place they could ostensibly be themselves (Gothic theatre), token agents triangulate against the state's enemies if it only means they can stall their own demise in the process. Some are less predatory and more meek (not a stab at their personalities but their character during class and culture war). As for McDowall, Andrej Koymasky of *The Living Room* writes:

Although McDowall never officially came out, the fact that he was gay was one of Hollywood's best-known secrets. Like many of his contemporaries from Hollywood's "Golden Age," McDowall never publicly discussed his sexuality, but his relationships with other men were poorly-kept secrets and friends and lovers have confirmed in the years since his death that he was gay ([source](#)).

Yet, all of these examples were men, of course. A gay *woman* in Hollywood would face her own struggles to face when trying to "raise Galatea."

Returning to Cassandra Peterson, then, Jazz Tangcay writes how Peterson is being "sexually fluid" in real life, but has largely been in the closet about it for decades for "business reasons" (echoes of McDowell, Price or Granger):

As Elvira, Peterson served as the Mistress of the Dark for four decades, starring in dozens of B-movies and portraying her alter ego on many TV shows. But behind the makeup, Peterson was guarding something very close to her heart—her sexuality. "I was scared that by coming out earlier, I could do some serious damage to my career," she admits.

Peterson revealed all in her 2021 memoir, *Yours Cruelly, Elvira*, detailing her 20-year relationship with a woman while labeling herself as sexually fluid. The hesitation in talking about her personal life came from having seen many good friends come out—only to have their careers end up in tatters. When asked, she won't name names, but she saw what happened. "They were men" is all she offers, and she couldn't imagine what it would be like for a woman to do the same. [...] After Peterson turned 70 last year, she decided she was ready to be herself in public: "If I don't do it now, when the hell am I going to do it? Who cares if people hate my character as Elvira and it goes down the tubes?" ([source](#): "Elvira, aka Cassandra Peterson, Opens Up on the Freedom of Coming Out," 2022).

These same reasons haunt popular media at large, regarding women; e.g., the Gothic/postpunk "disco-in-disguise" of female musical personalities like Siouxsie Sioux from Siouxsie and the Banshees or the ambiguous sexuality of Joan Jett from The Runaways. Similar to Price, Peterson, Lewis, or Hirohiko Araki, etc, their queerness could be found at the castles they built for themselves; i.e., not to conquer death, but to live among and embrace it, dancing with the skeletons while making the Gothic their own (as Walpole did but further).



(artist: [Quruqiqing](#))

This foray into vampires—and challenging the cultural stupidity engendered by Pygmalions and other weird canonical nerds—has merely been the beginning of a very monstrous (as gay-as-fuck) journey. Before we outline *that* odyssey in the next chapter, please remember that pastiche is merely the presence of remediated praxis, which Capitalism reduces to cheap, mass-produced counterfeits—called "blind" parody by Jameson and showcased in literal and figurative examples of the Gothic mode on various registers: workers acting like monsters; monsters representing workers, the bourgeoisie or their social-sexual power exchanges and linguo-material reminders of those things. As sublimated trauma, monsters are easier to confront, attack or befriend in complicated ways (doubles). Sticking with a dialectical-material approach, these monsters, lairs/parallel space and phobias can be canonical or iconoclastic within oppositional praxis, and there's room for liminal, in-between gradients, too.

For the remainder of the manifesto, we'll list these remaining things in order (then devote all of Volume Two to unpacking and exploring the history of monsters during oppositional praxis). After that, the instruction half of the volume will consider their synthesis (of praxis) when confronting systemic trauma in our own daily lives; i.e., as healthy social-sexual habits that help bring the revolution of Gothic Communism home.

Monster Modes, Totalitarianism (menticide) and Opposing Forces: Cataloging Oppositional Praxis

"People have given us many names: ghouls, ghosts, night wanderers, vampires, werewolves, and so on. But we are all members of the same family; tormented souls who must return forever to the scenes of our lost humanity. You may hang garlic or a crucifix above your bed, prepare silver bullets to shoot us, call in holy men to exorcize us from your home, but you cannot defeat us. Our name is Legion, and we are too many for you because we are the forces of evil that reflect the evil within your own souls."

—Michael Page, *The Encyclopedia of Things That Never Were* (1985)



This chapter concludes the manifesto by cataloging monsters, menticide, and oppositional praxis (canon vs iconoclasm, the Six Doubles, the bourgeoisie vs the proletariat, etc) as something we've already discussed in the book/this volume, but want to compile before moving into

second half of the volume (and into Volumes Two and Three). We've already looked at gargoyles, Amazons, and knights as visual, menticial reminders of state violence and terror, and vampires as vitalistic monsters of sin, seduction, vice and power exchange (with Roddy being utterly terrified of his own dark reflection as something he sadly felt he needed to stake; but that's the '80s for you: a time of re-closeting the queer while simultaneously comparing them to cis-het male serial killers). As we carry on, remember that all monsters are liminal; liminal expression involves pastiche and doubles in opposition, which is what monsters primarily are. This expression requires the remediated praxis of pastiche, the double's failure of sublimation, and liminality's conflict on the surface of the image inside the Gothic as a culture of weird nerds fighting for or against the state: oppositional praxis.

For example, vampires are beings of vice, power and appetite through the nerds consuming them; they can be reclaimed by iconoclasts, but canonically announce and express considerable fears, doubt and anticipation about the trauma

and the vitalistic, feeding nature of ourselves relayed in abject forms: an expectation and eagerness to do battle with the vampire as a primarily undead force, but also something demonic; i.e., a seductive shapeshifter from which to learn forbidden things from or prove one's worth against. Both types are summoned up and destroyed by canonical benefactors and inhabitants; or conversely are embodied as part of a non-colonial, genderqueer struggle that challenges state hegemony (and heteronormative division and assimilation) by lingering inside or near the state of exception. As part of this exchange, guilt, anxiety and menticide likewise become things to deal with and act out during oppositional praxis. Regardless of the monster type, then, oppositional praxis is tremendously chaotic, intersectional and complex; so the Humanities primer in Volume Two is entirely dedicated to covering the historical usage and evolution of our three main monster types: the *undead*—zombies, vampires, ghosts and composite bodies—as well as *demons* and *animalistic* "totems," chimeras, sentient animals and their associate reanimating magics, feeding mechanisms and forms of power exchange. Here, we'll mostly be listing all of them, and going over some of their base, shared functions as part of oppositional praxis' Gothic dialectic within weird-nerd culture.

To be as thorough as I can be, here are *most* of the monsters this book has already explored in Volumes Zero and One or will explore in Volumes Two and Three (with cited exhibit examples of *some* of their canonical critical functions being in parenthesis):

- zombies (the state of exception, exhibit 34d)
- werewolves (furries; symbols of rape, madness, and primal lust; exhibit 87a)
- vampires (the aristocracy and venereal disease, exhibit 41h; the dragon lord or Archaic Mother, exhibit 1a1c)
- aliens (xenophobia, abduction; exhibit 13a, below)
- clones (assimilation, doubles; exhibit 13a, below)
- reanimations (dead bodies, statues, golems, suits of armor, etc; exhibit 40h2)
- Mother Nature (natural disasters, plagues; exhibit 35b)
- orcs, goblins and Drow (the state of exception, tokenized conflict, settler colonialism; exhibit 37e, 41b, and 94a1b)
- stigma/"plague" animals: bats, snails, snakes, wolves, bears, hounds (of the Baskervilles), Rodents of Unusual Size, killer rabbits, etc (the wilderness, vermin; exhibit 10c1)
- Amazons (subjugated or rebellious, exhibit 8b2 or exhibit 1a1a3)
- knights/cops (sanctioned rape/violence, exhibit 24a)
- black knights (fascism/centrist caricature, exhibit 1a1a1h)
- composite bodies (Frankenstein's Creature, exhibit 44a2); but also cyborgs,

- robots and golems (exhibit 42e), including silly ones like Mr. Stay-Puft from *Ghostbusters* (1984)
- gargoyles (exhibit 6b4b)
- ghosts (the uncanny/*unheimlich*, exhibit 42d2)
- wendigos/imposters (exhibit 45d)
- mythical warriors (ninjas, knights, samurai; exhibit 39c1; Beowulf, exhibit 1a1a1f)
- mythical artists (mad musicians, painters, etc; exhibit 105a2)
- plant/pod people (clones and alien invasion, mad science, etc; exhibit 13a, below)
- chimeras (anthropomorphic, like mermaids, exhibit 54; or not—the Flying Spaghetti Monster, Cú Chulainn, Lucifer's non-angel forms in *Paradise Lost*—exhibit 51a)
- demons (forbidden knowledge and power exchange, exhibit 45c1/2)
- hags (aging but also ancient power, exhibit 84a2)
- witches (vice characters, pagan/non-Christian rituals; exhibit 83a)
- headless monsters/revenants of state executions (the Medusa, the headless Buddha, fallen warriors, feudal-secular terrorist-cell violence, etc, utilizing the severed head as a dialectical-material means of condemning or venerating the execution through beheading as vividly abject and often blindly furious; exhibit 41a and exhibit 11b5)
- Archaic Mothers (ancient, abject, really pissed-off vice characters; e.g., the alien queen from *Aliens* or Mother Brain from *Metroid*, exhibit 1a1c)
- archaic babies (the spawn of the void; e.g., the xenomorph, exhibit 60d; but also Giygas "the mighty idiot" from *Mother 2*, 1994, exhibit 60e2)
- killer, manmade babies tied to patriarchal mad science, patrilineal descent and pre-fascist *and* anti-Semitic revenge stigmas (again, the xenomorph or Beowulf, 1a1a1b; but also Cell and Broly from *Dragon Ball*, exhibit 39c2; the Creature from *Frankenstein*; and Homelander from *The Boys*, 2019, exhibit 108b4)
- phallic women (the monstrous-feminine of the xenomorph and similar liminal performances, but also violent women "acting like men" from a traditional, canonical viewpoint—i.e., though generally in response to patriarchal structures with an air of female revenge that leads to TERF-induced rape culture; e.g., Lady Macbeth from *Macbeth*, 1606; Victoria de Loredani from *Zofloya*, 1806, exhibit 100b2; Rumi from *Perfect Blue*, 1997; and Ripley/Samus Aran from *Aliens/Metroid*, exhibit 71)
- space bugs (Communism; see: Archaic Mothers)
- hybrids (vampire-zombie witches, [clown ninjas](#) [Worthikids' "Wire," 2021] and Zombie-Vampire Capitalism's Zombie-Vampire Voltron—e.g., *Mega Man X*, 1993, and *The Ronin Warriors*' 1995 neoliberal pastiche; exhibit 98b2a and 39c1/94c2a)

Allowed by the elite to flourish in canonical forms, monsters uphold the status quo; in *iconoclastic* forms, monsters work as doubled theatrical masks or costumes that can be subverted by the person wearing them for proletarian purposes during oppositional praxis (whose complex subterfuge and presence of trauma [revolutionary cryptonymy] we shall examine even more in Volume Three). In either case, these performances are literally Legion. So, I may have missed a few in my scrapbook bestiary above (on par with Prince Hamlet's commonplace book, which compiled knowledge as he came across it and guided his revenge moving forward). However, I wanted to try and cover all the bases as best I can to give you a comprehensive picture of their canonical effects within the ghost of the counterfeit, which generally are xenophobic, horrifying and disempowering/paralytic inside a decaying scapegoat sense of inherited home invasion:



(exhibit 13a: Assorted still images from Fire in the Sky, 1993; The Blob, 1988, The Fly, 1986; and Body Snatchers, 1993. All deal with alien invasions or mad scenes of foreign, irrational space, technology and occupants foisted onto an American setting. While there's a healthy degree of splatter, the genuine sentiment is abject horror/xenophobia within the ghost of the counterfeit's moral panics; i.e., stranger danger, but from beyond the stars! "Watch the skies!" indeed.)

Next, I'll list some of the infamous lairs/parallel space that monsters call (or make themselves at) home, which we'll also explore (albeit always in relation to monsters, whose sex positivity remains our hermeneutic/praxial focus):

- castles
- churches (and other ecclesiastical structures and their Neo-Gothic forms)
- danger discos
- caves
- condemned buildings
- industrial sectors or disaster areas
- crime scenes
- alien landing sites
- giant insect burrows/animal dens
- abandoned factories, but also ghost towns and other derelict settlements (or giant vehicles; e.g., ghost ships)
- haunted houses
- graveyards (official or improvised; e.g., mass graves)
- creepy basements
- sex dungeons (rape fantasies, which intersect with other space types)
- spooky mansions
- Metroidvania and to a lesser extent, other videoludic spaces like the FPS, RTS or JRPG (for this one, refer to my aforementioned PhD research on the subject, in "[Mazes and Labyrinths](#)" as discussed as length in Volume Zero, though we will analyze Metroidvania more in Volume Two)

Fictional monsters and their lairs/parallel space in media constitute localized phobias, stigmas, fetishes, and biases, the basic *mediums* of which include: movies, videogames, novels, theatre and musicals, etc. However, the basic Gothic theories (the Four Gs) can be applied to different mediums through different medium-centric schools of thought (and genres, which we'll keep exploring as we go, but also crossovers—e.g., Samus Aran in *Axiom Verge*, 13b).

This requires another list, which I'll call our Hermeneutic¹²⁶ Gothic-Communist Quadfecta (tailored after my education background, in this case; also, I didn't want to have two lists of four called "the Four Gs"):

- Gothic theory
- ludology (game theory)
- queer theory
- Marxism

¹²⁶ Meaning "concerning interpretation, especially of the Bible or literary texts"; or, "a method or theory of interpretation" ([source](#): Oxford Languages).

Apart from our thesis volume, Gothic theory has been outlined in "The Six Gothic-Marxist Tenets and Four Main Gothic Theories" paratext towards the start of the book, and throughout the manifesto in practical, executable forms; the latter three methods have already been outlined during the section, "Essential Terms, *a priori*," in the paratextual documents.

As we'll see when we push into the Humanities primer, my approach is thoroughly hybridized, as I think it's more accurate to a post-scarcity world sans privatization to allow for creations that aren't hidden behind artificial barriers. You don't have to wait for corporations to make multiverses. All deities (and worlds and demons) resides within workers—are their tools to express themselves with:



(exhibit 13b: My crossover illustration of Samus Aran in [Axiom Verge](#), purposely revisited to be more sex-positive and "[Laborwave](#)." To this, the idea was less about being faithful to a previous visualization of either series and more about re-drawing it playfully in ways that give room for my arguments and theories represented through Samus herself as transformed: no longer a servant of the state [the Galactic Federation] but an errant traveler finding herself in strange, new, colorful worlds. Gender trouble aside, the parody of heteronormative standards also allows for pure ontological joy unto itself.)

In praxial terms, workers familiar with these objects and methods of study can start to think critically through whichever theories help them process media (and psychosexual trauma) in an emotionally/Gothically intelligent sense; i.e., one that also helps our Gothic-Communist goals materialize as praxis synthesized. This includes sex positivity vs sex coercion (we'll get to the other doubles of oppositional praxis in a moment) as historically-materially generating an oft-liminal "monster pastiche," or other kinds in connection with monsters: poster, war/nation, rape, porn, disguise, etc, which we'll pointedly associate with monsters, lairs/parallel space and their relative phobias as things to rehabilitate and weaponize in our favor as rebellious workers. Over time, proletarian praxis leads to "friendly doubles": *de facto*, sex-positive, educational forms whose means of encouraging critical thought are tied to commonplace things workers can quickly spot, recognize and think about as they express (and liberate) themselves with iconoclastic art. In doing so, they can decolonize the Gothic mode and grant it their own humanizing power as part of a larger artistic movement; its steady iconoclasm/reclamation is how sex workers liberate themselves from canonical, heteronormative bondage—often using an asexual lens to appreciate social-sexual expression beyond compelled sexual reproduction and its state-sanctioned violence, trauma, and manipulation:



(artist: [Dejano23](#))

When starting this book, I chose to focus on Gothic theory, monsters and media because of their ubiquity under capital, but also their widespread effects. To that, canonical forms of the "fearful" Gothic imagination invite sex-coercive, social-

sexual behaviors that alienate workers from nature and sex, turning them against each other to serve the profit motive; *iconoclastic* forms utilize the same regular fixations during *proletarian* praxis, thus applying them in a sex-positive fashion according to common fears (moral panics) normally exploited by those in power for their own Base ends (that was a pun):

- the unknown (death, nature; the dark, beyond, alien, other or different)
- shameful conduct, but especially fatal hubris (the ignominious death)
- the impostor, especially a betrayal by a false friend, family member, lover/spouse or authority figure (cops, priests, husbands, coaches, teachers, etc)
- the tyrant and enslavement
- incarceration and live burial
- abandonment and identity erasure; cultural amnesia, genocide
- violence; including physical, emotional and sexual abuse
- impotence; a loss of control, including of one's mind—madness, paranoia, brainwashing and gaslighting, etc
- isolation
- emotional, mental, spiritual or physical vulnerability
- disease
- prurience, sexual deviancy and appetite
- strange combinations of these things (e.g., the Japanese kappa, anus balls and ignominious death helping compose [Sekiro's \(2019\) hidden boss, the Headless](#)¹²⁷—a hidden, headless warrior married to the kappa, quizzically stealing the hero's essence from their butt, but also relegated to the embarrassing-yet-terrifying forgotten grave: For a Japanese warrior to be beheaded, then left to rot, their honor and glory would be completely forfeit—utterly extinguished along with their name and identity as tied to violence. This would literally be a fate worse than death for their kind)
- cats and dogs living together
- mass hysteria

These canonical fears work as "starting points" that iconoclastic praxis can transform in highly flexible ways—first analyzed by Gothic theory to describe and critique the *material* world through art; then, used through future artistic generation to reeducate the *societal* Gothic imagination, slowly turning it into a sex-positive force; re: the Base and the Superstructure. This mounting power can then reshape the material world, all while preserving and remembering the barbaric past as it gradually turns into something new along liminal pathways.

¹²⁷ Ewan Wilson's "The Folklore Roots of *Sekiro's* Anus-Ball Snatching Enemies" (2019).



(exhibit 13c: The cover image for Thomas Leatham's "[Identity Crisis: The Curious Connections between Perfect Blue, Persona and Black Swan](#)," 2022.)

In other words, Gothic Communism crystalizes harmful behaviors into a Gothic moral that *doesn't* shy away from the dialectical-material complexities that emerge during oppositional praxis. Yet, our praxial focus always remains on a practical

outcome informed by simplified theories we cultivate ourselves—of emotionally and Gothically intelligent, cultural-savvy workers (sex or otherwise) who have access to the entire manifesto checklist: our manifesto tree's Gothic-Marxist tenets, main Gothic theories, Gothic mode of expression (its means, materials and methods of study), doubles of oppositional praxis/synthetic oppositional groupings and the creative successes of proletarian praxis: illustrating and imparting mutual consent, descriptive sexuality and informed consumption/informed consent through *de facto* social-sexual education that likewise conveys cultural appreciation through appreciative irony in countercultural forms; i.e., sex-positive fetishes, kinks, BDSM and Gothic counterculture; e.g., sex-positive (thus ironic) rape play.

From moment to moment, the mind can only hold so much. So now that we've catalogued the Gothic mode of expression, I want to spend the rest of the chapter (and the remainder of the manifesto) reloading yours: compiling and summarizing a variety of theoretical arguments that need to be understood holistically before we segue into the instruction half of the volume; i.e., a selection of items I think you should take with you—lifted from your own knowledge stores (as filled from my lessons) and placed into your current "basket" before we resume. These will be things the manifesto has already discussed, which I now want to holistically stress their various class/cultural functions during a preface-of-sorts to the second half of the volume's primary topic: oppositional praxis as a "war for synthesis." Think of it as a chance not just to reload, but *reflect* on what I'll loading your basket with.

I want to start with three points: their medieval flavors in relation to capital, including vice characters; a totalitarian, menticial function attached to dialectical-material arguments on either side; and opposing *material* forces with a *societal* element manifesting through Gothic poetics.

First, the medieval character of our liminal ploys work against the state in complicated ways. We're not just breaking icons or swimming in the grey area for

funsies (though it *is* fun); we're fighting the state's trifectas and monopolies on violence, terror and morphological expression through a variety of disguises that work as complex, oft-ambiguous code. Our revolutionary cryptonymy focuses specifically on sexual violence, as it intersects with other forms of state abuse as financially incentivized by those in power (the elite), with power (neoliberals) or seeking power (fascist) as normally afforded by capital. Capitalist Realism, then, stems from greed as a cultivated mindset—one informed by a revived, half-real medieval sitting between fiction and the rules, reality and imagination.

As previously mentioned, [I've coined this incentivization "the problem of greed" in my own academic work](#), writing about Weber's Protestant work ethic in Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*; the problem of greed (and its addressal) takes different forms (of vice character) depending on who's involved:

I've tabled these points using things my thesis discusses at length. Some of the terms are included in the glossary but I've also tried (for your convenience) to cite relevant snippets from my thesis volume. Refer to it for extended sections on terms like "banality of evil" and "desk murderer" in relation to my arguments. —Perse

- For neoliberals, the problem of greed introduces the banality of evil¹²⁸— chiefly the dragon (medieval operator) as a symbol of rarified greed—to a current-day myth: the useful billionaire, aka billionaire "philanthropy/Marxism." Capitalism cultivates the dragon's "hoard of gold," which makes the "dragon" gross dividends under neoliberal Capitalism. The owner class, meanwhile, grows more and more alienated from their own

¹²⁸ (from the glossary): "originally a term used to describe* the fascist bureaucracy of the Third Reich during the Nuremberg trials, desk murder goes well beyond Adolf Eichmann; it is destructive greed minus all the gaudy bells and whistles: the men behind the curtain (canon)." Or as my thesis volume argues, "The ensuing chaos [of state privatization] is the paradox of efficient profit: the state eating itself as the ouroboros does its tail, caught between an endless police state of regeneration and cannibalization (desk murder)" as a tiered enterprise:

Management of exploitation under Capitalism is *tiered*, pyramid-style—i.e., the top, middle and bottom; or lords, generals/lieutenants, and grunts according to corporate, militarized, and paramilitarized flavors (which often intersect through aesthetics and social-sexual clout). This "pecking order" translates remarkably well in neoliberal copaganda, whose **bosses**, **mini-bosses**, and **minions** deftly illustrate **Zombie-Vampire Capitalism** in action; e.g., Reinhardt Heydrich or Ian Kochinski/Caleb Hart (the latter two who we'll discuss in Volume Three's Chapter Three and Four) [\[source\]](#).

*"60 years later, the banality of evil has been so oft repeated, it's been reduced to cliché" ([source](#): Meghna Chakrabarti's "The Eichmann Tapes and the Comforting Myth of the 'Banality of Evil,'" 2022).

wealth-as-abstracted, but also other humans (workers) and sex/nature, preying on them or turning them into predatory devices (vampires) under their thrall. Owners see workers as a means to an end: moving money through nature; to achieve this, they exploit workers, including by callously bribing them through loans, subsidies and lobbying disguised as Christian/secular generosity (which align with the Christian tradition of worshipping capital in ostensibly secular forms; e.g., Reagan's America being an extension of virtually every American executive before and after having been a Christian in some shape or form—mostly *Protestant* Christians, [as Aleksandra Sandstrom notes](#)¹²⁹; re: Weber's Protestant work ethic being an *Americanized* phenomenon).

Ethically billionaires should not exist, yet neoliberal culture hero-worships them like gods—banal dragons with draconian *positions*, not literal piles of gold to hoard (unlike fascists). They posture as the Greater Good, often in TV shows and other forms of popular media [deliberately framing the elite as exceptional and benevolent](#) (Renegade Cut's "An Anarchist Watches *The West Wing*," 2021) in order to hide what they *really* are: vampires and desk-murders-in-disguise, killing more than fascists can through Americanized bureaucracy as an ongoing and disguised form of state power abuse—deregulated but enabled to accumulate as much wealth as possible for those out-of-touch ghouls at the top. Doing so, neoliberals intentionally create *criminogenic conditions*, [all while blaming the poor, stepping up policing and pushing austerity/personal responsibility rhetoric](#)¹³⁰ (this includes "charitable" organizations asking poor people for one dollar instead of asking billionaires for one percent of "their" money while also treating the Protestant work ethic as sacred/modest—divorced from excess *and* useful to the elite). While this historically-materially translates to genocide, war and rape, etc, as displaced/dissociative violence, it also extends to remediation as canonical sublimation via content creators who posture as "generous" while generally profiting off worker exploitation behind various "fronts"; e.g., Bon Jovi's restaurant accepting donations and labor [while branding itself and its products as a non-profit](#)¹³¹ [with neoliberal taglines](#) (e.g., "Hope Is

¹²⁹ "Biden Is Only the Second Catholic President, but Nearly All Have Been Christians" (2019)

¹³⁰ John the Duncan's "Neoliberalism: Class War and Pacification" (2021).

¹³¹ [America is a tax haven for the ultra-rich](#) (Georg Rockall-Schmidt's "How the Super Rich Avoid Taxes (Legally)," 2021) and rely both on [non-profits as go-to tax dodges](#) (Felix Salmon's "The Ultimate Billionaire Tax Dodge," 2022) and PR stunts meant to sanitize billionaire reputations as ["squeaky clean"](#) (Second Thought's "Why Billionaire Philanthropy Won't Solve Anything," 2022) and, hilariously enough, ["of the people"](#) (Adam Conover's "Why There's No Such Thing as a Good Billionaire," 2022).

Delicious!"); [The Open Hand Charity stealing fans' money for ten years while claiming "it's for dementia research"](#) (Karl Jobst, 2023); or Mr. Beast's "poverty tourism" miraculously helping the blind, [then using this as a shield his fans levy against criticism](#) (The Kavernacle, 2023); i.e., "he did good works, so he can do no wrong" thus should be allowed to exist *free* from criticism (negative freedom for the elite *and* their proponents).

- For fascists, the symptoms of Capitalism's disease manifest differently. For them, the problem of greed reintroduces an older form of wealth acquisition—raw material theft through direct physical violence and conquest—the return of the Skeleton King or dragon lord roosting on the literal pile of gold (re: hoarded stolen material wealth—the piles of goods taken from the Nazi death camps) inside a castle during the liminal hauntology of war. It is the partial collapse of the state to install new leaders in the vacated/emptied offices, vying to restore them to "their former glory" during an internalized foreign plot; e.g., Reinhardt Heydrich's busy campaigns¹³² at all points of his career under Nazi operations. Desk murder under fascist bureaucracy is performed through a weaker form of government centered around open piracy and medieval power abuse, with similar-if-less-effective results. Despite their badass façade, fascists perform grandiose displays of *perceived* strength ("I am strong, strong, strong!") through a weakened power structure resting on a cult of the strongman. Nazi Germany, for example, was materially capable of far less harm and damage than what America has globally achieved through US hegemony worldwide. US warmongering has slowly become automated, turning into endless bombings, occupations and drone warfare driven by *bourgeois* human greed through neoconservative arguments ("peace through strength"). In turn, these faraway forms are further displaced, dissociated, and disseminated through neoliberal propaganda. A common bread-and-circus form is popular sports, especially the *combat* sport (and its centrist kayfabe) as useful in conveying the competitive, individualistic models that are so central to neoliberal propaganda. These gladiatorial, ranked rituals "prove" which male workers/exploited groups are "superior," meaning "the best at being useful to the Faustian elite in violent ways," [like Mike Tyson for Cus D'Amato or Don King](#) (Rummy's Corner, 2023). Women in these arrangements are reduced to *de facto* prizes for poor fighting men to scrap over, normally enjoyed exclusively by the elite. "To the victor go the spoils (which, as a non-battered, cis-het/non-heteronormative AFAB is not a

¹³² "While the SS, prior to the seizure of power, mainly occupied itself with protecting the party against internal and external enemies, Himmler and Heydrich focused on all sorts of enemies of the state in the meantime, including in particular the Jews" ([source](#): Kevin Prenger's "Heydrich, Reinhard," 2016).

flattering concept—women [and gender-non-conforming people/minorities] don't really want to be reduced to pretty baubles that cis-het dudes fight over). As you might guess, this extends to military urbanism when Imperialism comes home to empire (roosting chickens).

- For those predating neoliberalism/fascism, or working through a medieval lens that potentially critiques either ideology and its practitioners, the likes of Shakespeare and Tolkien critiqued greed through their own displaced fantasies/ghosts of the author taking on a life of their own; i.e., inventing an imaginary Venice and Middle-earth to critique their respective presents' problems of greed in medieval language (re: "[The Problem of Greed](#)"). Similar to Blake's "[dark Satanic mills](#)"¹³³ (or Kafka's [potentially bourgeois critique in his own demonic spaces compared to Charles Dickens](#))¹³⁴, Tolkien's "black country" was a displaced critique of the Industrial Revolution and capital (as later heard in British metal stalwarts Judas Priest surviving Thatcherism, but also in Victorian authors like Charles Dickens living under empire, etc); so was Shylock the xenophobic scapegoat of greed during mercantile Capitalism and Smaug's rarefied greed being of the medieval, fascist (relatively small, vengeful and imaginarily "ancient") sort directed at a post-Catholic, 20th century West. Such allegory is not so different than condemning a foreign dictator for similar abuses committed by one's own leaders—not just elected officials, but the men behind the curtain pulling strings of various sorts (the British elite, in Tolkien's case). You also see the

¹³³ The Guardian's "Notes and Queries: What Were William Blake's Dark Satanic Mills?" (2012).

¹³⁴ David Spurr writes in "Demonic Spaces: Sade, Dickens, Kafka" (2012):

Kafka is close enough in spirit to Dickens, to his sense of the uncanny and to the ghostly presence of the dispersed baroque [...] But the obvious difference in style is symptomatic of a more substantial difference between Dickens and Kafka concerning what might be called the ontological condition of the demonic. For if Dickens has transported elements of the premodern baroque universe into the modern industrial world, he does so in order to redefine the demonic in terms of the inhuman social conditions created by that world. There is an unbridgeable gap in Kafka between material form and doctrine, and this accounts for the sense of impenetrability that Kafka rehearses as an element of his fictional universe. In contrast to the figures that inhabit Dickens's work, however ghostly and uncanny they may be, Kafka's fictional universe implies a much more enigmatic relation of the demonic to the human and object worlds.

Spurr notes how "Kafka often described his own writing in architectural terms," concluding on a destructive mayhem that seems to have been designed to speak for itself: "The demonic in Kafka consists, finally, in its demolition of human value, perhaps in the name of a more secure edifice toward which his writing gestures but for the construction of which his strength, like ours, fails" (source: *Architecture and Modern Literature*, 2012).

same tactic employed by powerful men like George Lucas or James Cameron, whose own successes become franchised, turning them into billionaire Marxist "Pygmalions" with far less critical power as time goes on; i.e., the wider their appeal, the less potent their message insofar as it serves profit first and foremost. Of course, allegory exists for a reason, but "mainstream activism" is disempowered by the mere virtue of it being diluted for the masses. Genuine applied activism (synthesis) needs to be direct, rough, and clear—less canon like what *Star Wars* became after 1977 and more *incendiary* iconoclasm like *Andor* (2022, which we'll explore in the synthesis roadmap).

Whether campy or canonical—neoliberal, fascist, or Communist—medieval expression generally requires a queer-coded¹³⁵, often-animalistic vice character who must either a) be cleansed or purified to whitewash the structure, or b) send it all crashing down (a metaphor for violent systemic transformation); i.e., the hyperreal of no white castle actually waiting behind the Gothic double—simply *the* castle, thus the system, as harmful and illusory *by design*. ACAB.

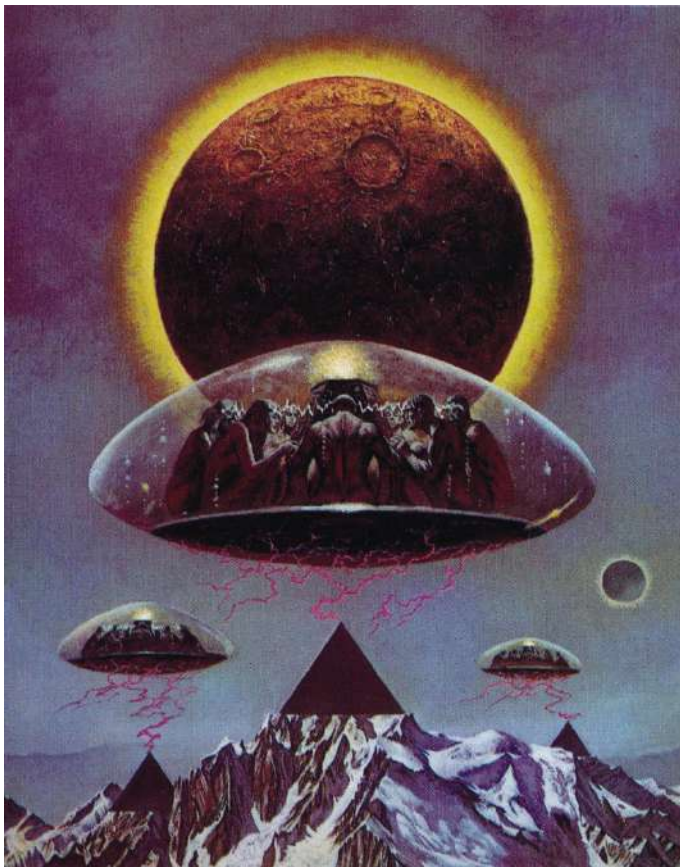


As previously discussed, we can camp the castle by doubling it ourselves, but also its queer-coded, animalized vice characters. And yet, just because someone is queer-coded doesn't mean they are actually queer in a functionally sex-positive

sense (nor are animals automatically a healthy view of nature; i.e., scapegoats). As stated during Volume Zero, fascism and Communism (as well as nature, the monstrous-feminine and corruption) generally occupy the same shadow zone until the *canonical* dialog requires a hard stance against the true enemies of the state: Communism (and Indigenous people) as the ultimate threat to Cartesian thought, heteronormativity, the nuclear family/colonial binary and any other "normal/natural" or "realistic" state of existence one could present the audience with (versus the false rebellion and actual defense of capital/assimilation fantasy that fascism represents). During oppositional praxis, this plays out historically-materially through fascism-as-unironic and queerness-as-ironic flavoring the same basic code.

¹³⁵ Or at least foreign challenging of so-called "correct" forms of institutional, Christian marriage; i.e., "true love."

As a result, vice characters come in all different shapes and sizes: Shakespeare's Shylock, Monty Python's killer rabbit (to give a nonverbal example), Tolkien's Smaug the Stupendous, Lucas' Darth Vader, [King Diamond's Abigail](#), etc—the killer, fun villain as campy or straight, but also human and inhuman to varying degrees. As such, they embody the "root for the bad guy" jester who speaks truth to power as unironic or ironic to varying degrees. Overt "clownish" examples include Kefka Palazzo from *Final Fantasy VI* (1994), Captain Hook from *Peter Pan* (1953), and Joker from *Batman* (exhibit 95a1b) as being stereotypically violent for the closeted gay man, but also various Disney villains literally being talking animals (e.g., *Lion King's* [1994] Scar, above, being an "evil animal" on par with Tolkien's nefarious spiders) who often are fascist-themed/queer-coded themselves ([with Ursula from *The Little Mermaid* \[1989\] being based on drag queen legend, Devine](#), writes Jack Coleman, 2022).



(artist: [Ken Barr](#))

Whatever the shape, the vice character denotes a sense of the disgruntled alien, often having non-white, Orientalist/fairyland "changeling" components coming from a black planet as something to fear or return to, hence nebulous wish fulfillment for or against a white status quo: Something is not as it seems, but the audience quickly finds themselves cheering for the vice character in an ignominious and oscillating affair promising Jewish, female, queer or black revenge; i.e., the corruption, then total destruction, of the "good" family patriarch and his "noble" bloodline (with *The Lion King* being based on *Hamlet*, Scar standing in for Uncle Claudius). This doubling takes a variety of personified/animalized forms, of which we've already considered quite a few and will consider many more throughout the rest of the book. For the moment, we'll swiftly examine two more: Ester from *Orphan: First Kill* (2022) and the killer lion from *Beast* (2022).



(exhibit 13d: Ester doesn't have wings or non-white skin, but still denotes the Orientalist phobias of a "changeling" that steals one's child and assumes their identity for material gain. To make their skin a color other than white would draw attention to the conflict as racialized, thus visible, which commonly occurs in fantasy narratives with non-human races like orcs, elves and Drow but also fairies. Ester shows us that in the absence of dark skin, other features—such as the eyes, hair and "spirit"—will be used to depreciate a scapegoat's origins within settler-colonial models [and Cold-War anxieties, in Ester's case]. The

practice actually dates back to British settler-colonialism; e.g., Heathcliff in Wuthering Heights [1847] being the dark-haired foster child; i.e., being treated like a fairy-like outsider based on his physical appearance despite having white skin. As Beast demonstrates, the target of in-group animus doesn't even need to look human—merely be something that stands in for institutional violence against out-groups commonly associated with nature as something to "tame" by colonial benefactors; i.e., like Idris Elba's Americanized family man conquering the nightmare lion of Africa's settler-colonial past in order to assimilate: by protecting his cubs.)

Orphan: First Kill (the second in a lovely horror franchise) covers transplant phobias on home soil. Ester is an adult woman with a rare medical condition that, due to a short stature and youthful appearance, lets her pass as a pre-teen girl to an American family looking to adopt... after she escapes from a mental hospital in Eastern Europe! But in this case, Ester isn't being adopted by fresh parents; she's passing herself off as a bereaved couple's long-lost daughter, who went missing years prior.

Orientalism *par excellence*, the movie concerns xenophobic anxieties about disempowerment through interactions with "children" from beyond America's borders; i.e., the estranged, cuckolded dad from *First Kill* subversively becoming "the child" of the family when *he's* trapped unwittingly between two dueling false parents: our "lost child," Ester... whose original double was secretly murdered by that girl's femicidal mother, the husband's own wife! Just as Gothic stories make

the location of the predator difficult to predict, Ester has gone and fallen into an unexpected trap, marking her the prey!

Operating as the other parent within this murderous exchange, the mother is both wise to Ester's tricks and smugly boasting about her own "superior" Mayflower heritage versus Ester's inferior foreign blood; i.e., disguised colonizer pride while the dutiful wife (and her corrupt, equally treacherous son) look down on the counterfeit adoptee as less good at violence and lying than they are. Amid the delicious turmoil, a common ghost of the counterfeit is also dug up, explored and (re)buried: incest (specifically the Oedipus complex—with Ester very much a *moe* figure trying to seduce her new father to keep her safe from the wicked stepmother). All the while, out-of-joint trauma exists inside a picture-perfect home rife with intrafamilial discord. Also, thanks to Ester not having killed anyone at the film's start (and having been sexually abused back in Europe), the audience is meant to side with her and dislike the white American family. It's classic Gothic oscillation/push-pull, wherein a displaced/dissociative, personified critique plays out in highly cliché ways: misplaced faith and a failure to sublimate, wherein the *unheimlich* gradually subverts while we spectate "bad guy" Ester being made into a relatively sympathetic con artist; i.e., by a transgenerational curse intimated by the wicked mother of the canonical bloodline. "A murder most foul," indeed, and lots of complicated, oppositional wish fulfillment happens here. It's oddly fun, but also playing a classic Neo-Gothic trick: critiquing the present in dated, counterfeit forms.

Beast applies the same complex, settler-colonial trauma and wish fulfillment overseas. During the opening scene, a family of all-black poachers kill a pride of African lions, only to be wiped out by the surviving father lion; i.e., an animal metaphor for the pro-colonial wish to kill *people of color* who poach, despite them only doing so because of colonial territories like Africa [being raped and pillaged by the West well into neocolonialism, then mythologized for it](#) (satenmadpun's "Pre-Colonial Africa and the Myth of a Savage Continent," 2020). From here, Idris Elba embodies the wish fulfillment of Afronormative cops—similar to homonormativity's emulation of traditional binary-gender roles in that a token, person-of-color *father figure* must defend his *family* as superimposed onto the white nuclear model for Elba to police. As a standard, man-versus-nature yarn, it works on par with *Jurassic Park's* (1994) neoliberal sleight-of-hand: humanizing the colonizers. Whereas *Beast* focuses on a single lion and black dad, Spielberg's blockbuster populates of an entire tropical island with *female* killer dinosaurs (the Archaic Mother trope) being exploited by the all-white family defending themselves from both a recuperated evil corporation, but also the sweet bumbblings of an old white colonizer who "just wanted" to build an amusement park for rich white kids (with him calling the "blood-sucking" lawyer the opportunistic one. Pot, meet kettle).

Unlike these two examples, Gothic Communism avoids commodifying worker struggles and alienation in favor of a basic-if-valuable lesson with far-reaching results: "Embrace vice; just don't be an emotionally stupid, uneducated sex pest or

giant asshole as taught by canon/Capitalism to abuse workers and marginalized groups by animalizing or otherwise preying on them and the natural world." Self-destruction is the end result of Capitalism, to which "Zombie-Vampire" (a concept we'll examine more in Volume Three) describes Capitalism's Promethean effects felt through the minds of workers within the canonical Gothic mode: vampiric, but also zombie-like ("lobotomized") workers functioning as obedient parasites who exploit themselves and others, brainlessly consuming till the cows come home. For them, blood becomes not just the stuff in our veins, but a medieval form of expression hauntologically revived in the present to *pacify* workers: by raping their minds.

This brings us to our second point: totalitarianism as a menticial device. By compiling it here, I want to stress how Capitalism is a factory of canonical simulacra whose likenesses serve as customary warnings meant to condition workers through dogmatic stigmas, monsters, lairs/parallel space, etc: "gargoyles." As we've already discussed them in an earlier chapter ("'Rome,' Gargoyles, and the Bourgeois Trifectas," exhibit 6b4b), I'm not talking about the literal stone statues on churches, but anything that can be looked upon with fear as a dogmatic source of instruction; i.e., any theatrical performance from the giant list of monsters and their lairs where the assorted phobias (and other sources of moral panic) can be instructed by them as something to behold by workers, who then sheepishly toe the line through codified instructions with power as Gothically totalized in the elite's favor (not its interrogation of, and negotiation with, these same repurposed implements).



The aim of these statues is to have subservient, predatory workers prey parasitically upon rebellious or noncompliant workers for even bigger parasites (the elite, utterly without shame and *superficially* charming like canonical vampires

are; e.g., [James Fallon's "pro-social" psychopath](#)¹³⁶ within a grand parasitic system that makes everyone ruthless, cruel, and dumb according to canonical Gothic poetics. Said canon and its poetics incentivize those without remorse to thrive by commodifying basic human rights/essence (and cultivates impostor syndrome and

¹³⁶ The World Science Festival's "The Moth: Confessions of a Pro-Social Psychopath" (2015).

paranoia through monsters that feed—especially the undead—in a disguised/uncanny form).

Simply put, canonical praxis leads to workers preying on each other through a menticidal scheme; i.e., weird canonical nerds; e.g., Autumn Ivy preying on me by seeing me as a threat to them. The resultant profit is hoarded "blood" (exploited labor, bodies, workers, etc). Those at the top feed on those beneath them as placed there by a structure that naturalizes the abuse, but also hides it in Trojan forms that paradoxically stick out; it treats poorness like a disease, a contagion the rich will despise, but also rely on to get ahead while feeding in the dark. They lengthen their lives, sipping greedily on "blood" they can no longer produce themselves behind closed doors, but nevertheless advertise their superiority through the freeness of the market, of Capitalism, of themselves as embodiments of capital and privilege: *their* castles, *their* profit, *their* right to do as they please. As such, their humanity is sacrificed in pursuit of a bloodthirst they—like the classic vampire—can never quench; their veins dry up and they become alien, shriveled up, divorced from nature while aping it [in horrifying babylike ways](#) (source, Tumblr post: depsidase). Like Brian Froud's Skeksis, they resort to hideous abuses to chase off an infantile death of their own making. This soulless inhumanity within the "castle" is a Gothic metaphor for *harmful* material conditions, making Dracula's quoting of the Bible in *Symphony of the Night* an apt one: "What profit is it a man who gains the whole world, but loses his own soul?" (we'll continue examining the ideas of sanguine and other pre-fascist vampiric textualities and hauntological medieval themes, in Volume Two).

Gothic Communism works in opposition to state artifice, confronting and transmuting the canonical "gargoyle" (and castles where these various kinds of monster statues call home) as continuously remade and executed by state authors between fiction and reality through the monomyth, Cycle of Kings and infernal concentric pattern; i.e., cultures already stricken by two basic totalitarian ideas lifted from Joost Meerlo's *The Rape of the Mind*

- menticide, or rape of the mind
- waves of terror

I've already introduced and applied these concepts earlier in the manifesto; in the interests of compiling them here, I want to supply their full definitions:

menticide

The variety of human reactions under infernal circumstances taught us an ugly truth: the spirit of most men can be broken; men can be reduced to the level of animal behaviour. Both torturer and victim finally lose all dignity [...] The core of the strategy of menticide is the taking away of all hope, all

anticipation, all belief in a future [which aligns with Mark Fischer's "hauntology," or inability to imagine a future beyond past forms supplied by Capitalism; i.e., a *myopia*]. It destroys the very elements which keep the mind alive. The victim is entirely alone ([source](#)).

waves of terror

the use of well-planned, repeated successive waves of terror to bring the people into submission. Each wave of terrorizing cold war creates its effect more easily—after a breathing spell—than the one that preceded it because people are still disturbed by their previous experience. Morale becomes lower and lower, and the psychological effect of each new propaganda campaign becomes stronger; it reaches a public already softened up. Every dissenter becomes more and more frightened that he may be found out. Gradually people are no longer willing to participate in any sort of political discussion or to express their opinions. Inwardly they have already surrendered to the terrorizing dictatorial forces (*ibid.*).

Apart from these, there is a third variable: thought crimes/venial sins (all-seeing governments or authorities in secular/religious forms; e.g., Santa Claus) that outwardly manifest as occult "markings": gargoyles not just as dated, humanoid curios, but *vanguards* of the state's monopolies and trifectas through various commodified refrains (e.g., Tolkien and Cameron's) in neoliberal media and responses to said media as something to endorse or critique, mid-enjoyment.

Gargoyles are classically installed on high places to watch over as much territory as they can: to look out for various problem topics or areas by teaching people to identify what to look out for—to become the eyes and ears of the state during endless crisis, moral panic and decay. For instance, canonical monsters often symbolize venereal disease marked to *mortally* sinful activities/cardinal sins worthy of capital punishment toward marginalized groups: death and reactive abuse through *selective* punishment. The state decides what's innocent in the eyes of the law as emblemized by "gargoyles" as a means of seeing and establishing punishment, *vis-à-vis* Foucault. This amounts to thought-crime personas of vice that are depicted as being canonically against the state, thus receiving state punishment/exploitation as righteously delivered (often by token agents). Even with iconoclastic liminality there's a thin line between pleasure and pain, virtue and sin: "It hurts so good," indeed (and remember the BDSM mantra: "[Hurt, not harm](#)")!

Gothic Communism is anarcho-Communist, thus meant to be generally applied to many different things; i.e., highlighting the destructive lessons that canonical art teaches through the same Gothic academic theories *in reverse*: iconoclastic doubles of said "gargoyles" that challenge the state's rape of the mind and totalitarian use of waves of terror/vice personas that lead to war at home and

abroad, thus rape and genocide, but also mental, imagination, and social death for workers endlessly exploited by the elite at the state-corporate level and dressed up in the same language, but appropriated to disguise the implementation of "cops and victims." Whether said victims are depicted as harmless, as scapegoats or as murderers (which regularly appear in the state of exception *against* the state's protectors), all become trapped inside Capitalist Realism; there's nowhere for them to go except into the executioner's arms.



For neoliberals, this amounts to the good team brutalizing the bad team, "cops and victims" relayed in humans or tokenized monsters (orcs, demons, bugs, etc) versus their unironically evil counterparts in nerd culture (especially videogames being endemic to neoliberalism as "home entertainment"¹³⁷); for fascists, this amounts to the village scapegoat, the open and radicalized target of revenge (which we'll explore more heavily in Volume Three, Chapter Two). In oppositional praxis, all of these things are doubled in both directions: for or against settler colonialism, worker exploitation and genocide; for or against the status quo and state abuse of workers, sex and nature. State abuse includes a gradient: open/grim fascist harvests versus more oblique/veiled, neoliberal forms of exploitation (total war versus sanctions)—i.e., good cop, bad cop represented as centrist vs fascist; e.g., [Dirty Harry's 1973 Magnum Force](#) but also Tolkien's village pastoral intimating the neoliberal market for the kind of good war his Bretton-Woods power trip exemplified in videogame refrains.

¹³⁷ I.e., compared to Atari home units, whose market crashed in 1983 and lacked the technology to sell its bloated library of same-looking games; or arcade smashes like *Donkey Kong* (1981) or *Pac-Man* (1980) as being *public* entertainment systems, comparable to a fair or carnival attraction. By comparison, the Nintendo Entertainment System (in the US, 1985) was a *home* entertainment device that caught on and has stayed popular (through corporate domination) to this day. As such, its dogmatic potential should not be ignored; e.g., the sexist elements of *Zelda*, *Mega Man*, *Castlevania*, *Metroid* or *Mario*, etc.

Neoliberalism disguises the fact that all cops serve the state, not workers. In praxial terms, cops are class traitors; they lie about their own hyperbolic, inhumane violence being performed in service to the state, turning everything around them into a functional prison they deceive citizens to preserve. In defense of the state, [cops lie and conduct surveillance against anyone who isn't a cop](#); they do it all the time because it's literally their job (Renegade Cut's "Cops Are Liars," 2022). In short, *they're* the "gargoyles" watching out for evil as codifying in state canon. Giant corporations also protect them, making it difficult to even report on their abuses; e.g., Leeja Miller's "[Why Are US Police So Bad?](#)" where she remarks, "This video has been edited from its original form. Police in the US are so problematic that we struggled to get this video past YT's community guidelines and limitations. In my 3 years on YT, I have never struggled this much to get a video past YT's restrictions" (2023). The surveillance worsens according to the *number* of paranoid eyes, evoking Foucault's panopticon (or Tolkien's Cartesian eye of conquest) as sung about by Chuck Schuldiner in "1,000 Eyes" (1995):

To the left and to the right
 From behind - they're out of sight
 Plunging into a newfound Age of advanced observeillance
 A worldwide, foolproof cage

Privacy and intimacy as we know it
 Will be a memory
 Among many to be passed down
 To those who never knew ([source](#)).

The same goes for Michael Parenti's notion of fascism as a false revolution, its reactionary defenders and fortress-mind practitioners of the neoliberal/fascist "cop" and its gradient of action hero/vigilante offshoots: the "prison sex" of war orphans and their bad-faith "beards" and other heteronormative disguises—and token queers, TERFs and other marginalized subordinates—dogwhistling sublimated coercion, but also false recruitment promises that groom future killers through menticultural, Pavlovian conditioning. This "schooled predation" builds future literal/figurative prisons and "prison sex" mentalities under Capitalism: the heteronormative Man Box offering the same-old solution of so many monsters to kill. The promise, then, reads like Uncle Sam: "We want you! 'Enrich' your character and become the exclusive badass; i.e., the havers of sex, power, guns, intelligence, muscles, etc" (we'll explore this deception historically when we examine zombies and demons in Volume Two, and consider its present application in Volume Three). In short, become the center of your own hero pitted against nature, promised all the white women and black slaves for simply being male and white (thus been given respect due to their station, not having to earn it; i.e., self-

centered threats of violence where the partner isn't threatened with violence, but self-harm committed by the man: "If you don't have sex with me, I'll kill myself!" as a very common and patriarchal guilt trip committed by male histrionics treating the man as the center of the universe):



(artist: [Frank Frazetta](#))

This brings us to our third point to revisit, here, and one already discussed during an earlier chapter ("Operational Difficulties"): revolutionary cryptonymy and opposing forces during liminal expression and ludo-Gothic BDSM. Here—and in light of this chapter's holistic examinations—I want you to consider these devices as things to synthesize mid-opposition to state

actors. As you do, I will introduce a variety of fresh terms relevant to synthesizing praxis that we have yet to explore (and which the instruction portion of this volume will tackle for its entirety).

Disguises remain incredibly important for iconoclastic praxis—aliases, alter-egos and egregores camouflaging oneself from heteronormative reprisals by blending in using the same masks, uniforms, and positions of Gothic theatre to interrogate power but also negotiate with it according to our own trauma, knowledge and lived realities. This means that exposure happens sooner or later at a societal level; it must or we're all just in the closet. The beard is "shaved," the lavender marriage exposed, the Trojan outed or accused, the gay threatened with burial, the token rejected, etc. We have to take that power in order to expose and turn it against the unironic, bad-faith actors triangulating against us, doing their best to continue the Gothic commodifying of sex and sin through our exploitation. Both are effective means of personifying trauma in relation to nature, thus treated as highly controlled *substances*, and their regulation is strictly monitored in ways that serve the profit motive under capital:



(artist: [Didi Lune Studio](#))

These exchanges aren't simply where we survive, but fight back and slay with vampy abandon: reckless camp, wild sex and *style*. Embossed with Medusa's severed head (or the skulls inside all our heads), our aegis must show those who seek to uncover and attack us the truth of who *they* are: dumbasses having surrendered their necks to capital, beheaded by the state and glaring with blind rage at anyone the state needs dead (to serve the profit motive). Holding that up at them, and in essence showing them their own doom through the same liminal pathways, can be an effective means of disarming our attackers; i.e., a shared humanity

told in the theatrical language of vice, power, jealousy and death stamped on the surface of the usual human billboards: worker bodies fetishizing sex (and the animal, the alien) through Gothic theatrics.

Something to keep in mind, then, is how our interrogations require us to share the stage with bad actors, players and educators, mid-negotiation. TERFs, for example, are sublimations of state violence relayed in rebellious markers that have been recuperated to subordinate trauma under reactive abuse; i.e., the Amazon recuperated through the "prison sex" phenomenon, becoming violent or submissively co-dependent towards power (there's always a stronger man, always a weaker woman, etc). In turn, the blank slate or *tabula rasa* of Capitalism is a false/bad parent; it's all that reactionaries can understand. Through unironic, state-centric warrior and rape culture, all bourgeois-minded workers become slaves to those in power telling them how to think regarding those they must exploit, rape and kill. Once triangulated, the Amazon kills (or otherwise antagonizes) her fellow victims by becoming the state's victimizer towards them (and nature).

Beyond TERFs, those in power or aligned with power—be they warlords, dark lords, neoliberal statesmen, or desk murderers—are "chicken hawks" making workers fight amongst themselves. This involves recruitment of soldiers at different tiers of management along the chain of command in its various parallel forms (the state, the military and the public, etc). Whatever the form, iconoclasts under Gothic Communism must resist all of them (and their disjointed, knotty goals) to be successful anarchists, generally through clever disguises and doubled Gothic language (which proletarian workers interpret and recreate in oft-liminal, subversive ways): our revolutionary cryptonymy that, like Athena's Aegis, turns the state's suspicious gaze (thus its theatrical violence on and offstage) back towards itself—the facing of settler-colonial guilt, inheritance anxiety and gender envy by

the closeted thug. These are tremendously *disempowering* sensations, which we can use when arguing for our own humanity in the face of those who seek to destroy us as having sacrificed their own. They become increasingly undead, demonic and predatory *for* the state, transforming in defense of canon as their fortress to defend from iconoclastic agents intent on camping their vertical, coercive arrangements of power and the historical-material *consequences* of said arrangements when left uncamped, thus unchecked: rape, war and endless police abuse.

We've already defined oppositional praxis in our thesis and reexamined it at the start of the manifesto. From here on out, I want you to consider it more as you would in your day-to-day lives: in simple oppositional terms; e.g., sex positivity versus sex coercion. It's not that you would use those exact terms yourselves, but that you probably have an unspoken understanding that is usually present outside of what is normally said or taught: abuse is wrong and should not be allowed. But to *which* groups of people said boundaries normally applied is arbitrated by the same forces; i.e., the enemy of empathy as something to envision according to canonical interrogations of, thus negotiations with, power as something to relay in Gothic poetics' paradoxes and doubles: power is something to perceive through performance and play as the Gothic mode normally goes about it.

To this, canonical iterations of essentially compelled stupidity relay through Gothic *dogma*, which its workers see as the end-all, be-all. *Vis-à-vis* Capitalist Realism, there is nothing outside of this current paradigm; anything else is death to them, meaning they will fight *to* the death to protect their so-called "saviors," the elite—treating the Gothic mode as an extension of the state's will. Any enemy of the elite and the elite's profit motive, then, becomes an enemy to them, leading class traitors to weaponize Gothic poetics *against* worker interests at large. Us-versus-them leads to doubling as a historical tragedy insofar as workers are



demonized through various moral panics that frame them as "terrorists" in bad faith; i.e., by *state* agents of terror who crack down against labor movements' counterterror during military urbanism as unironically demonizing both sides: the abused in ways that make them targets of state abuse using the same language, which state agents adorn themselves with as abusers. Paradoxes do not matter insofar as state sovereignty is (more or less) upheld, but clearly there is room to upset the balance:

(artist: Paolo Eleuteri Serpieri)

Beyond what you might normally expect, there is considerable nuance to these disturbances. But if you want the full definitions to oppositional praxis, please refer to the thesis volume, which provides them all and in full. Moving into the synthesis roadmap, we will merely be considering smaller *fragments* of the manifesto tree, but especially something relevant to the trauma writing and artwork we are going to unpack once the manifesto concludes in several pages: the synthesis of abuse prevention and risk reduction as challenged by state (Cartesian) forms of Gothic media designed to make workers not just apathetic, but utterly *violent* against nature/the monstrous-feminine cheapened in ways that increase said abuse and bad odds; i.e., weird canonical nerds policing weird iconoclastic nerds; re: Autumn Ivy and I.

Cops, at their most basic level, are class traitors who police themselves; this extends to culture war as something they meet through heteronormative, settler-colonial action: state terror relayed against those inside the state of exception, determined to monopolize terror by keeping workers submissive or afraid, but also prone to attacking each other in ways that keep them stupid, dormant, petty and short-sighted, etc. "Cops and victims," then, becomes something to perpetuate through bad theatre, but also to challenge in no uncertain terms during iconoclastic poetics camping the canon through rebellious, even titillating forms of reanimation. The revival of dead tissue and materials is certainly nothing new, nor is it exclusive to state monopolies and Pygmalions; indeed, Galatea might resurrect suspiciously similar scenarios during her cathartic, orgasmic rituals (whose gender-non-conforming and asexual functions we shall likewise expand on throughout the book):



(artist: Paolo Eleuteri Serpieri)

I think we can all agree rape is something to prevent, but camping canon through psychosexual, psychomachic and psychopraxial dialogs isn't actual rape because they aim to prevent harm through good education; harm is enforced through the state's bad education, which decries camp as "degenerate," thus to blame

for the state functioning as it always does: through endless crisis and cyclical decay. Clearly my use of the word "rape," here, extends the definition to include all manner of abuses beyond what is commonly envisioned in canonical workers: the sexual rape of women. Functionally there is no difference between the stabbing of a

man with a knife versus a woman being raped with a man's penis (or some other foreign object) insofar as both supply vulgar displays of power that maintain the status quo. Clearly we want to upend said status quo, and will do so according to where it generally takes place: through dialectical-material opposition during liminal expression while struggling to communicate our own traumas. If any of this ever seems hard to understand from a *theoretical* standpoint during said communication, just remember that these ideas are meant to be understood fairly loosely and their synonyms can be swapped interchangeably (e.g., canonical/blind pastiche) as long as the basic dialectical-material relationship (and its symptoms) are communicated.

Moving on, since our focus moving out of the manifesto and into the roadmap will be oppositional, it behooves us to reconsider the manifesto tree from our thesis in oppositional terms. Everything has a functional opposite to gradient degrees. While camp's assembly and production of cultural empathy under Capitalism happen according to **the "creative successes" of proletarian praxis**, these are checked by the implied "successes" of canonical praxis. Either are things to materially induce and imagine through parody and pastiche according to Gothic poetics; i.e., inside the "grey area" shared by **cultural appropriation and appreciation** during liminal expression's canonical/countercultural forms (the making of monsters):

the culturally appreciative, sexually descriptive irony of Gothic counterculture's reverse abjection with sex-positive demon BDSM, kink and fetishization; as well as asexuality and the ironic ontological ambiguities of trans, non-binary, intersex, and drag existence

vs

the culturally appropriative, sexually prescriptive lack of irony during Gothic canon's abjection with sex-coercive demon BDSM, kink and fetishization; as well as asexuality and the unironic ontological ambiguities of trans, non-binary, intersex, and drag existence

These are executed either by emotionally/Gothically intelligent or unintelligent workers, using canon or camp to cultivate apathy or empathy through Gothic poetics; i.e., by synthesizing Gothic Communism or Capitalism during oppositional praxis (canon vs iconoclasm) according to our manifesto terminologies and structure—in short, its various tenets and theories (the Six Rs, Four Gs) but also mode of expression. As per our *gradient* approach to praxis, these binary opposites contain between them a spectrum. As we have already discussed, people are not generally completely stupid or intelligent; they have blind spots, but also competing objectives that lead to various degrees of cognitive dissonance—of ideological combat through allegory and revelation.

The praxial sum, for our purposes, could be called "creative, oppositional praxis." The **Six Doubles of Oppositional Praxis** and their various **synthetic oppositional groupings** (we'll examine them more during the synthesis roadmap) manifest as camp's **class-conscious** defense from canon's **class dormancy** and **class betrayal**; i.e., braving the moderate/reactionary **class traitor's** four basic behaviors (quoted from the thesis volume):

- **open aggression**, expressing gender trouble as a means of open, aggressive attack (disguised as "self-defense" reactive abuse): "We're upset and punching down is free speech¹³⁸" ("free speech" being code for "negative freedom for bigots who want to say bigoted things" to defend the elite's profit motive).
- **condescension**, expressing a moderate, centrist position that smarmily perpetuates the current status quo as immutable, but also optimal: "This is as good as it gets" but also which can never decay.
- **reactionary indignation**, using sex-coercive symbols (argumentation) to defend their unethical positions: "They're out to destroy your heroes, your fun, all you hold dear (code for 'the current power structure')."
- **DARVO** ("Deny, Accuse, Reverse, Victim, Offender"), defending the status quo by defending the people who enslave them (the elite) by going after the elite's enemies, thereby defending Capitalism during decay. When it decays, these "gamers" see "their" games in decay and will defend those, seeing human rights as an affordable compromise in the bargain. They see themselves (and the elite) as "victims," and class warriors as monsters "ruining everything" (like Satan).

In historical-material terms, we have one side of the spectrum fostering universal, post-scarcity empathy and emotional/Gothic intelligence in the face of the opposite end of the spectrum: state actors operating with bad intent, neglect, and willful, taught ignorance (or some combination of these variables): "You can't convince yesterday's colonizer that today's colonizer is wrong."

¹³⁸ "Free speech" is a common "apolitical" DARVO strategy used by bigots who argue for negative-freedom boundaries that apply to them, but not for others; e.g., "I want to be able to say slurs or profit off manufactured controversies by politically advocating for issues that will never affect me; i.e., punching down at minorities while acting like a victim, myself." Freedom of speech is *not* freedom from consequences.



(artist: [Anolea](#))

And yet as we shall discover moving forward, these divisions—while far from cut and cry—tend to divide more discretely behind the immediate theatrics; i.e., many so-called "activists" (normally white moderates and token subordinates) are false revolutionaries

weaponizing/fetishizing labor movements and their monstrous, counterterrorist language for state aims. Conversely, many who appear as open harbingers of death actively challenge these aims through a complex dialog of theatrical reclamation; i.e., revolutionary cryptonymy's assorted masks, uniforms, bodies and weaponized props.

Again, it's **weird iconoclastic nerds** vs **weird canonical nerds**, one reversing the canonical, unironic function of the Four Gs (through the Six Rs) and the other endorsing the process of abjection through the ghost of the counterfeit to uphold Capitalism Realism: to further Capitalism's crises-by-design, hence its expected decay, according to the bourgeois trifectas that lead to the banality of evil (from the manifesto tree in Volume Zero)

as a vertical, pyramid-scheme arrangement of power and subsequent tiers and punitive exchanges thereof

- top, middle, bottom
- lords, generals/lieutenants, and grunts
- corporate, militarized and paramilitarized bureaucratic flavors

arranged in neoliberal forms inside and outside of the text

- bosses, mini-bosses, and minions
- executives, middle management/content creators, customers/consumers
- waves of terror and unironic vice characters (menticide)

which leads to a surrender of total power during states of emergency that are *always* in crisis and decay. Empathy is the casualty of the middle class, whose weird canonical nerds are taught to see the underclass as lacking basic human rights during moral panics. In the presence of crisis and decay, people forget then deify whatever's in front of them that looks powerful. They don't take the time to ascertain if the giant trees are canonical or campy—in short, whether the swap has been made and the current falsehood is designed to liberate or exploit them. During the bait-and-switch, they'll follow the leader to scapegoat the usual suspects under Capitalism *unless* canon can be camped.



The death of the author and all their heroes, monsters and castles swapped out for campy gay ones can make you want to scream, "Oh, my god!" like Grandpa Jojo. But like that show demonstrates (with campy aplomb), the life of these things lives on through paradoxical theatre and the monstrous

performance of power as something to reclaim from the state during liminal expression. Short of a mass-extinction event, the Gothic imagination isn't "going anywhere"; its praxial function merely changes in ways that raise class consciousness and empathy during class/culture war's pedagogy of the oppressed tackling Capitalism Realism, one monster at a time.

Instruction: Trauma Writing/Artwork, or Surviving and Expressing Our Trauma through Gothic Poetics

"When he was nearly 19, my son Eddie died. Of course, I was very, very sad, but I didn't really talk about it a lot. For quite a long time, it was bottled up inside me. I was caught between two feelings. I wanted people to know that I was sad, but, at the same time, I didn't know how to say it. So, in a funny sort of way, I didn't want them to know, because that feels kind of weak. One day, a child said to me: What become of the Eddie in your poems? I suddenly had to say what happened to [my son]. So, in front of a big audience, I said: "Eddie died." And the moment I said that, it gave me the courage to write the things down. And so that's what I did—I just wrote down how I felt. I even drew a picture—a funny, squiggly picture of me grinning like this, saying "This is me looking sad." Then, I just wrote straightaway and that turned into a book. In a funny sorta way, I felt better. I could feel good that I said that I feel bad. I know that sounds weird, but that's how I felt. So maybe if you wrote something down about how you feel, and maybe if you showed somebody that, that way we can help each other."

—Michael Rosen, [talking about his son's death](#) (2017)



(artist: [Less](#), "I Can't Decide," 2021)

We've reached the end of the manifesto, which has effectively summarized the manifesto tree from my thesis volume. As the latter constitutes the entirety of this book's primary ideas—i.e., its theories to apply and execute—this means my thesis volume has been somewhat light on catharsis resulting from good praxis, which I want to conclude Volume One exploring through a more simplified approach: instruction. Now that this approach has been theoretically outlined, its application through *de facto* education (a creative success of proletarian praxis) concerns something we've already hinted at inside both works: trauma writing and artwork as potent and utterly essential teaching devices, but also existing and operating in conflict in a variety of ways. As Cuwu taught me, showing your heart to others can be profoundly intense and relatable, but also needs to be mindful of a healthy outcome when shared through the usual Gothic fetishes and clichés.

Simple doesn't mean basic; it means that we're viewing things as simply as we can, mid-conflict. We discussed psychosexuality in the paratextual documents and examined some smaller personalized trauma writings inside the thesis volume; e.g., the palliative Numinous and my relationship to Cuwu (who we've already discussed in this volume, too, and who the postscript is dedicated to). Because the remainder of this volume, and indeed the entire book, is dedicated to trauma writing and artwork through monstrous poetics, we'll be considering anecdotal trauma (and oppositional praxis) much more directly from here on out:

- [The postscript](#) discusses learning about the trauma of others to help someone process their own in lieu of state abuses (through the police and their deputized terror tactics in stochastic forms): with heroes and monsters.
- [The sample essay](#) offers a small reprieve while we examine *Ghostbusters: Afterlife* through a postcolonial lens, *vis-à-vis* Edward Said.
- "[Paid Labor](#)" briefly discusses an important refrain to solidarized labor under sex positivity: sex work is work, which needs to be paid. Furthermore, it explores how many different kinds of work constitute sex work, insofar as Capitalism dimorphically sexualizes all workers, and that intersections of art, porn, prostitution, and writing must collectively negotiate and express worker rights and boundaries through intersectional solidarity.
- [The synthesis roadmap](#) is a symposium that considers trauma as a Cartesian enterprise, treating nature as food. As such, it discusses a means of synthesizing praxis, thus interrogating and processing Cartesian trauma (war and rape) in our own daily lives in opposition to state forces harvesting us. It provides a lengthier sample of synthesis than Volume Zero's camp map finale, but still constitutes a taste of what we will discuss and propose even more thoroughly in Volume Three; i.e., when we explore proletarian praxis at length. The roadmap comes in four parts, which we'll unpack and signpost more when we arrive. Monster-wise, though, it explores generational trauma during Gothic poetics in relation to nature-as-monstrous-feminine; i.e., exploited by Cartesian thought to canonize, thus facilitate, unironic war and rape: Medusa, but also forbidden expressions of the Medusa through Georgia O'Keefe, H.R. Giger and more recent, less infamous auteurs. It also examines Cartesian arrangements of state violence and resistance according to Heinlein's competent man and Kurosawa's Western. Keeping with the Medusa, though, the roadmap will also explore Amazons, phallic women/traumatic penetration, and various abject morphologies policed under Cartesian binaries during pornographic expression; e.g., racialized tropes, but also fat people at large.

To that, the writing in these areas will be messier and heavier than it might be in purely theoretical forms (even simplified ones), because it directly attempts to

speak to our experiences as conveyed in the creative output that we generate as extensions of, and dialogs about, our own survival under capital. So please take whatever precautions are required before proceeding into the pages ahead. You will see pretty things in relation to traumas that normally go unsaid, but haunt the beauty on display as inextricable from them: rape and war as foisted upon workers from all walks of life, but especially women and other minorities as synonymized with rape and war (which likewise synonymize); i.e., as their most regular victims under male/token Man-Box enforcers (who also, let it be said, also suffer under state crisis as perpetual brutalizers choosing to work for the state).



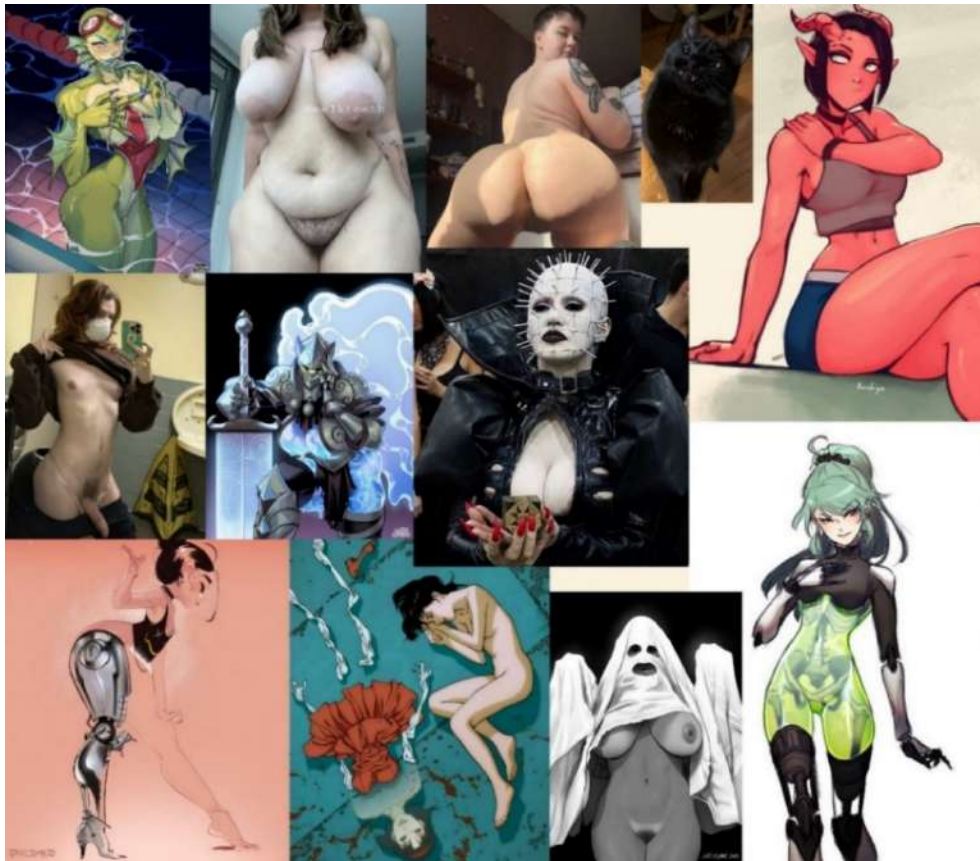
(artist: [Sophie Jane](#))

Rape and war are two sides of the same coin; Gothic Communism seeks to prevent both (and Capitalist Realism) through worker intelligence as something to raise well beyond canonical, Cartesian standards. Trauma writing/artwork, then, are vastly important insofar as they grant workers an awesomely potent means to speak out against the state and its normally myopic dialogs on rape, war and death: Gothic poetics as a counterterrorist device, by which to regain control over portrayals of our own trauma, thus lives; i.e., by reclaiming the ability to perform and play with these things imagined for ourselves, seeing possible worlds beyond Capitalist Realism's endless rape and war. Women (and all monstrous-feminine "non-men") are food whose harvesting serves a Cartesian profit motive.

To that, it's actually quite common for heroic canon to *include* trauma, but not to process it in any meaningful, healthy sense; i.e., of actually stopping its criminogenesis by recognizing and subverting these coercive material conditions and linguo-material factors in reclaimed language and iconoclastic, Gothic theatricalities. Even seemingly polite white moderates like Tolkien generally isolate trauma as something centered around the white cis-het male agent (or token person) as tied to state mechanisms that cast most other groups into the state of exception to varying degrees; the centrist hero's journal of war and its usual brutalities, then, tend to concern the normalizing of state monopolies on violence, terror and morphological expression. The most effective (and final) form of genocide is silence; the best way to combat its execution is to speak out in ways that highlight our trauma in recognizable forms.

For the state, trauma is something to extend into the future as a foregone conclusion: embodied by monstrous language as something for the state to abuse,

selling it back to the middle class while alienating them from nature and sex. For *workers*, trauma is embodied by devices that *can* be reclaimed from the state; e.g., monstrous language, but also sex work as a means of personifying personal, psychosexual trauma as something that haunts a given worker from moment to moment, but can also empower them with an actual humanized voice when challenging state dialogs. Rape and war become things to prevent through various praxial mechanisms during the warring class and cultural value of workers educated to varying degrees, including in Gothic poetics—our aforementioned weird nerds as canonical or iconoclastic.



(exhibit 14b: Artist, top-far-left and middle-center-left: [Ohno Justino](#); top-mid-left: [melkteeth](#); top-mid-right: [Scarlet Love](#); top-far-right [cat]: [Draculasswife](#); top-far-right: [Raichiyo](#); middle-far-left: [e.streetcar](#); middle: [Loretta Vampz](#); bottom-far-left: [Ota Goth](#); bottom-mid-left: [source](#); bottom-mid-right: [Lusty Comic](#); bottom-far-right: [Whisp Will](#).)

Trauma is something to live with, insofar as people embody it in some shape or form. Doing so can highlight aspects of the human body that are normally targeted for trauma in sexualized ways, but also something that can express said trauma through a reclaiming of the Gothic poetics associated with it and the natural world; i.e., to express your own unique sexualities, genders, performances [and sale of these things] through your own artwork, body or both as a complex performance

that synthesizes trauma in various forms. Whether "tasteful/sophisticated," "pornographic/vulgar," or some combination of the two, trauma becomes a subversive way of expressing your own identity as having formed under Capitalism, either by swapping out various pieces of yourself, or by making something normally foreign to who you are [or a part of you that has become alienated from you] a fundamental part of expressing your own rebellious, outspoken position: a robotic limb or pair of horns; one's bodyfat, hips [and other bones] and curves, but also genitals as sites of abuse/stigma as things to reclaim and/or accept as they currently are; i.e., to raise awareness about, while simultaneously achieving a newfound sense of self-worth, healing and discovery towards a sex-positive existence that has been permanently altered by trauma insofar as one's self image is concerned. Power in the face of trauma includes turning the abuse of nature and sex back towards one's abusers—as a survivor would.)

Regarding trauma writing and artwork at large, *Sex Positivity* (and Gothic Communism) offer a counternarrative to heteronormative dealings with nature as alien and traumatic—one that deliberately concerns praxis as a means of processing trauma and healing from it: through the personifying of monsters, despite knowing this will expose us as having survived state trauma, thus constituting a specific kind of threat they cannot tolerate: a witness. Partly this narrative is based autobiographically on my own abuse (as Gothic fiction often is); it's also based on partially asexual¹³⁹ reflections of sexual abuse experienced by other workers that I feel an empathetic connection to (which queer people often do—collectively punished by the state and its moderate/reactionary defenders).

In the interests of preventing trauma for other sex workers, then, I want to be thorough (the same way Paulo Freire wanted to prevent world hunger after personally experiencing it); I want to include an illustration of praxis as something to absorb from our surroundings—not just canon, but our friends, family and fellow workers' trauma and intimations thereof, including animals and the environment to which we give thanks and try to heal through ourselves. You should already be familiar with this idea from Volume Zero and earlier in the manifesto, and the roadmap will cover trauma-bonding at length. However, I'm highlighting it here in honor of those more oppressed than myself as something this book gives special focus to. Even though I was abused, I also have considerable privilege as a white trans woman (who only came out at 36 years of age); my experiences working with other sex workers have taught me that we can always learn from them as mutually oppressed workers—from *their* pedagogy of the oppressed felt in opposition to state forces: cops.

¹³⁹ There is a tremendous asexual facet to Gothic poetics when negotiating trauma. We will explore this at length in Volume Three.

Manifesto Postscript: "Healing from Rape"—Addressing "Corruption," DARVO and Police Abuse with the Pedagogy of the Oppressed in *Ninja Scroll* and *The Terminator*

"Kill poison with poison,' he said. He said [that] if you make love to me, you'll be free from poison; mine will destroy it."

—Kagero to Jubei, *Ninja Scroll*



As its most basic level, rape is a violation of basic human, animal and environmental rights enacted through Cartesian power abuse; this postscript concerns the complicated process that healing from rape entails—i.e., its corrupting presence through codified trauma, wherein the surviving of police abuse becomes something to relate to others through

Gothic stories that constitute radical empathy as a thing forever out-of-joint: the attempt to empathize with alien experiences to gain new perspective. Such empathy needn't concern both parties equally and its Gothic dialogs concern intense, poetic liminalities still bearing an intense potential for disguise that is haunted by the shadow of police forces. Even so, the postscript aims to showcase such a dialog and its phenomenological complexities; i.e., one held between two or more people relating through their interpretation of various texts they are either intimately familiar with or at the very least recognize the tell-tale arrangements of power and performance through traumatic markers: heroes and monsters as a liminal proposition to find catharsis inside the oscillation of. Our featured dialog involves *The Terminator* and *Ninja Scroll* as having been relayed between Cuwu and I; my accounting of that relationship will be more conversational and messy due to its intensely traumatic and taboo nature: they experienced rape fantasies that stemmed from a history of sexual abuse, of which I—having been physically beaten and emotionally abused, but never sexually raped—could only relate to through fantastical stories about such things. But I was drawn to such stories through someone knightly who had abused me all the same: my dark Amazon, Jadis.

Before we delve into such heavy grounds, I want to prepare you with several disclaimers/reminders. One, while it might be tempting to prioritize abuse to a matter of degree, I would caution against it. Rape isn't something to "rank" or trump others with; most people have some kind of trauma to endure, and generally this is how we relate to others, mid-oppression. Rape *is* a thing to heal from, which generally involves traumatic revisitations that are themselves corrupted by awesome forces; "corruption" isn't an immediate falsehood, in Gothic stories with heroes, villains and damsels, but semantic entropy and proliferation amid the presence of complicating factors. Facing an eventual understanding of said trauma requires facing the trauma of others by their side, which can be profoundly traumatic and disheartening unto itself—if purely because we discover (often by accident) how someone we care about was hurt in ways that are difficult to fathom. This injury can even compound should we learn just how *mistaken* we were about what we could and could *not* see.

Trauma is both shared and intensely private, something to interpret in popular stories that bridge the gap. For survivors of rape and other warlike violence, then, Gothic stories either concern trauma as something that is understandably difficult for them to share—like Kagero from *Ninja Scroll* despite Jubei having witnessed it firsthand—or that they were traumatized in ways we can scarce imagine even if they *did* share whatever we saw ourselves; i.e., sometimes, this trauma cannot be perfectly understood, even when it is told to us in thunderously intense forms: our trauma overlaps, but is simultaneously unique from both vantage points—that of the hero and his lady to rescue, except *he's* also traumatized. When Sarah Connor tells Kyle Reese, for instance, "Your world is pretty terrifying!" her idea of his world *is* a dream, a mere shadow of what he actually survived when trying to see through his eyes (and he hers):



All the same, Kyle cannot fully process *her* trauma as a female domestic who, at one point, feared *him* as the killer gunning for her (and doubles bearing her name) being announced around the clock during a 24-hour news cycle:

he looks human, but she sees a monster (failing to recognize the actual terminator in the bargain). The shared trauma, in both their cases, comes not from its strict accuracy but from the painful realization that one's own life is simultaneously

charmed and false on either side of a breakthrough, but nevertheless surrounded by trauma that impairs you through the people you meet and care about. Such confusions becomes commonplace even during vicarious, imaginary dialogs under more operatic settings that, thanks to state interference, aren't always under our control. Indeed, they are made under conditions that inspire feelings that take us seemingly out of control (through heroic language) to process an exit strategy inside colonized spheres of entertainment: the Gothic disco as dangerous precisely because it speaks to abuses we are drawn towards in theatrical forms that are closely monitored by police agents listening in, but also walking amongst us.



To that, we're going to examine my empathizing with Cuwu as two traumatized workers formulating a *combined* pedagogy of the oppressed; i.e., through the sharing of *The Terminator* and *Ninja Scroll* to communicate performative arrangements of unequal power amounting to at-time-times painful conversations about trauma. The aim wasn't to torture ourselves purely for its own sake, but to understand things outside our own realms of experience during calculated risks: sometimes the damsel *doesn't* want to be rescued, but "raped" (except no danger is actually present). Shared between us, these therapeutic stages helped us achieve (a)sexual catharsis through trauma bonding in psychosexual rituals/expressions of war and rape that speak out against the state and its police agents; i.e., as frequently disguised in the very markers of abuse, resistance and power that drew us towards them to start with. It becomes something to perform and play with, sometimes literally (we'll give an example of this briefly when we examine *Doki Doki Literature Club* [2015]—a videogame example of the same basic rape fantasies that *The Terminator* and *Ninja Scroll* illustrate). Cuwu was entirely clear (and incredibly outspoken) about how they felt; they hated cops but loved performing these complicated fantasies, which led me to

think of the above examples when relating to them through my own trauma as something I was drawn towards with Jadis as *their* Gothic princess. After escaping Jadis' "castle" (a run-down Florida duplex), Cuwu played mother (mommy dom) to me and I was, at least part of the time, their dominator and willing pet. Even so, the vector for this continuous swapping of dominant/submissive roles partly involved the same stories we shared between ourselves.

So before we delve into my admittedly complicated relationship with Cuwu through Gothic media, we'll want to consider the nature of Gothic stories as chaotic liminal spaces; i.e., stages to share and process trauma together over time, which are themselves simultaneously occupied by corrupt, liminal markers of trauma: monsters that, when abused, half-disguise and half-advertise class betrayal. State subterfuge cannot monopolize such language, so it thrives on sowing doubt through the presence of a *potential* invader who simultaneously polices other members inside a seemingly besieged fortress. As something to cultivate within the theatre of such places, radical empathy can shape our own views about canon as something to reclaim, informing personal/collective boundaries and lines in the sand to draw up future agreements and conditions with. This includes questioning the canonical veneration of state paramilitary agents as undermined with *what* they abuse—i.e., police exceptionalism and tokenized agents of self-policing minority groups wearing revolutionary uniforms in bad faith; e.g., TERFs acting like Amazons: out from a dark and savage "past," they return to said "past" once rescued and rape it all over again inside the present space and time:



(artist: [Luigiix](#))

Before we proceed, let's also briefly reconsider state violence at large, seeing how it's largely what we'll be focusing on through our own stabs at radical empathy through Gothic stories and heroic-monstrous language. As we've already explored in our thesis, but also manifesto ("Critiquing Amazons as Liminal Expression"), and will explore in Volume Three (especially in Chapter Two), cops are not your friends; they serve the state and the state is the enemy. In turn, the state and various multi-media networks and corporations churn out badass monstrous "copaganda" that justify/fetishize police "corruption" and monopolize state violence against workers and nature through monstrous-heroic canonical language. They combine against a demonized, infantilized population of reprobate victims that aren't allowed to fight back or defend themselves (which, in reality, is the state functioning *by design*, not by accident or flaw). However nice your local sheriff may be, the state monopolizes

and glorifies police violence (and uniforms) while treating the violence of you defending yourself as a death warrant. When threatened or feeling threatened, cops will empty their magazines into you (as their "warrior" training tells them to), then go home and hug their wife; if pressed, they'll invoke DARVO—or cry "corruption!"

Skip Intro—re: [the maker of an extensive YouTube series on copaganda](#)—calls this relationship a Faustian bargain, one enacted between the audience and the police through copaganda. As the state is always in crisis, it always needs a victim, making bargains with it extremely dangerous (Promethean). Yet, police canon is also black-and-white, with any forays into grey area reinforcing the status quo through manufactured tensions between different worker groups. It uses fear and dogma to menticide the audience, effectively lying to them to enable the state functioning as intended: through our aforementioned bourgeois trifectas, monopolies and profit motive. Class traitors wearing increasingly fascist uniforms monopolize violence, terror and morphological expression against other workers. The degree to said betrayal is a Morton's Fork (meaning the outcome doesn't change): worker exploitation, generally at the hands of other workers preventing solidarity while posturing as heroes.



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([source](#): Facebook)

State abuse/police violence is a very broad topic, and we'll continue to cover its Gothic execution and countering throughout the rest of the book. As we do, keep this in mind as we move through the postscript and onto the synthesis roadmap: heteronormativity and the colonial binary synthesize police behaviors through canonical praxis, which uses Gothic poetics to condition dimorphic sexual violence through a Cartesian, settler-colonial mindset:

- men (or beings acting like men) become violent, taught to show force and masculine dominance—to make war and rape, then lie about it in heroic-monstrous language; to be hard, rigid, infantilized penetrators competing against civilians (and nature) in an us-versus-them game of regularized, life-and-death confrontations over everyday things.

- women (or beings treated "like women/as feminine") serve as chattel slaves that receive systemic male abuse within a bizarre paradox: the monstrous-feminine. Women are both demons and damsels who seemingly can't be strong or create (works of art), yet must also a) look after men who—despite their brawn—cannot care for themselves nor establish meaningful relationships outside of systemic coercion, and b) spawn and raise the male bloodline while men busy themselves making war against women/monstrous-feminine, nature-aligned agents who *do* challenge the settler-colonial status quo.
- Trans, intersex, non-binary and otherwise gender-non-conforming beings internalize tremendous amounts of guilt, self-hatred, and imposturous/unwelcome feelings; i.e., as corrupt and monstrous-feminine, but also something for state agents to blend in with, mimicking rebellious factions occupying the same complicated shadow zone; e.g., subjugated Amazons serving as state infiltrators to dominate nature anew.

From a canonical standpoint, these gendered categories have moderate and reactionary variants, in which moderates encourage and enable reactionary behaviors whenever canon is camped: open aggression, condescension, reactionary indignation and DARVO. In turn, these behaviors happen according to the class/cultural tensions of competing *synthetic oppositional groupings* during oppositional praxis' Six Doubles and their Gothic-poetic mode of expression (the means, materials and methods of study). Regardless of the exact proponents, the dimorphic, heteronormative/Cartesian nature of canon has a profound impact on how its associate violence is viewed and carried out simultaneously within Gothic theatre. Precisely because it is liminal—and liminal expression relays through oppositional praxis—engagement with the Gothic mode must be considered as potentially compromised; i.e., *vis-à-vis* the potential for various betrayals.

For example, men in/through Gothic canon see women (and other monstrous-feminine) as soft *and* fearsome ("the enemy is both weak and strong") but also alien (undead), animal and demonic—doubly so if they stand out, let alone *refuse* to comply with authority (castration/emasculatation fears). Meanwhile, the presence of dislocated, counterfeit rape denotes a ghost of the counterfeit that female/feminized workers want to survive and heal from. This includes *whenever* they encounter a *perceived* threat: the state as fearsome—the police as false protectors or people associated with the police, generally as victimized subordinates—but also workers conveyed as fearsome through *state* propaganda; i.e., the good, the bad, and the ugly *of oppositional praxis* when preventing rape and war as things to tolerate or reject. Its execution becomes a liminal, messy ordeal, which means that healing from rape through Gothic expression is equally liminal and messy insofar as these stories are shared and experienced through a tenuous, and at times incredibly fragile, pedagogy of the oppressed.

We've discussed how power and resistance operate through Gothic poetics in the same doubled, paradoxical spaces. A kind of conversational theatre, the dialogic is disjointed but ubiquitous. *Genuine* rape and violence exist everywhere in America and Americanized countries; they're also doubled in Gothic canon, made fun of in blind parodies that ultimately serve as little more than rape apologia. At the same time, the paradox of ironic rape fantasies is legitimately proletarian—i.e., affording *gender trouble* as a parodic, psychosexual means of subverting stereotypes, exposing enemies, and expressing our trauma, dysphoria and euphoria by putting "rape" in quotes. Under such liminal conditions, something as striking and immediate as torn stockings (and a cummy vagina) can become empowering insofar as they challenge the simple commodifying of these areas through canonical media's targeting of them for heteronormative violence:



(artist: [That Hoey Vegan](#))

Considered through a dialectical-material lens, such an evocative image demonstrates the complicated ability to empower oneself through forbidden expressions of sexuality that *are* objectifying but nonetheless aid the model in finding some measure of catharsis, thus empowerment through psychosexual exhibits of *various* kinds:

- "flashing" exhibitionism (exhibit 53)
- private/public nudism (exhibit 101b)
- "breeding" kinks (exhibit 87a)
- rape play/consent-non-consent (exhibit 46d)

These forms of revolutionary cryptonymy and other "ravishing" games intimate (a)sexual catharsis through Gothic boundary-setting exercises that reassure traumatized workers they are safe from social-sexual violence as an ever-present threat; i.e., sensing the constant advertisement of nonstop crisis and societal decay through "gargoyles" that, when viewed, promise compelled boundaries (segregation) and unironic power abuse sanctioned through state dialogs and executed through various proponents of tacit-to-explicit state mandates; i.e., those lurking in the working class, the media, and the paramilitary/military sectors of a given population.

The pedagogy of the oppressed is formed in opposition according to heroic language, configured under duress amid suggestions of state infiltration: oscillations between hero and villain, but also savior and rapist. Opposite the class-conscious worker and their poetic, *cryptomimetic* sculpting of sex-positive egregores (and their subsequent, partially-buried trauma), you have the false-conscious, bad-faith efforts of the class traitor as wearing masks (often, as we shall explore in Volume Three, of famous monster types while also posturing as activists; i.e., gobstopper masks and disguise pastiche of state impostors/parasites—exhibit 100a3). These traitors are a socio-materially diverse group that include standard-issue "weird canonical nerds" and white, heteronormative reactionaries, but also fetishized minorities (token police, including hauntological iterations like the witch cop—something we'll examine in Volume Three, Chapter Four) and assimilated activists.

For example, TERFs adopt assimilative rape fantasies, but also facilitate them for those in power—e.g., [Ghislaïne Maxwell for Princess Charles](#) (Dreading, 2023). Girl bosses also exude "phallic" (traditionally masculine and bellicose) tendencies stemming from penis "envy" and rape trauma having become weaponized by ubiquitous torture porn constantly triggering them to behave in ways useful to the state; i.e., by triangulating against state enemies (which is a stressful activity for all parties involved, leading to nothing but stress and harm) through subjugated forms of rebellion. Meanwhile, straight men have gender envy and war/rape fears, which both groups project onto their assigned bourgeois subordinates/proletarian victims: the "prison sex" mentality. Once funneled through them, pro-state propaganda becomes Marx's aforementioned nightmare "dressed up"; re:

Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living. And just as they seem to be occupied with revolutionizing themselves and things, creating something that did not exist before, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service, borrowing from them names, battle slogans, and costumes in order to present this new scene in world history in time-honored disguise and borrowed language ([source](#): "The Eighteenth Brumaire," 1852).

"Like a nightmare on the brains of the living." It is a sobering concept whose dangerous re-investigation requires bravery and caution: Under Capitalism, the notion that people do remarkably awful things to each other is a historical-material fact, one induced by Capitalism as a structure. Do *not* rely on the better angels of peoples' natures, especially empty heroic platitudes and veiled/non-empty threats administered by reactionaries, moderates or cops (actual or figurative)!

Historical materialism is very much a vicious cycle of monopolized state violence, terror, and morphology stuck on repeat, including its nightmarish ambiguities, liminalities, egregores and deceptions. As police states oscillate between neoliberal and fascist forms, police agents go from sex pests to sex fiends in service of the state—dutifully attacking the state's enemies by becoming soldiers, but also soldiers-in-*disguise*: cops, detectives, good Samaritans, etc, as undercover through monstrous-heroic costumes. On a shared stage of Gothic poetics, the state's bad-faith contributions spill out and into a messy civil war of spies, police and infiltrators who exchange their ability to love for their ability to protect the state from its assigned enemies. DARVO becomes common, labeling labor/antifascist movements as "terrorist" organizations. In turn, this plays out in fantastical, brutal forms that intimate state abuse as lurking close by through Gothic displacements that disassociate war and rape as committed by "foreign" police agents; e.g., the black penitent, blackguard, succubus, or death knight, etc.



(artist: [Ayami Kojima](#))

Whether to illustrate or perform, neither tactic is strictly a state instrument. Indeed, for the rest of this postscript, we'll ping-pong between two genres of the Gothic that employ heroic misuse in ways we can reclaim by using Gothic consumption to relate to each other in stories haunted by the consequence of risk, but also inaction as something to temper with fresh courage: the dark fantasy of *Ninja Scroll* and the dystopian, technophobic science fiction in James Cameron's *Terminator* (and assorted offshoots) as a complicated step in the right direction. Cuwu was clearly the inspiration for this postscript; i.e., according to a shared but unevenly

experienced and understood sense of domestic abuse when presented by me to them in Gothic stories covering war and rape in more outlandish and intensely imaginary forms. As such, there are elements of my close-reading style present in the remainder of the postscript, but these are meant to highlight various concerns that would have been on my mind when sharing said stories with Cuwu (and people like them); i.e., those who ultimately were more traumatized than I was, and whose pedagogy of the oppressed was communicated through the trading of psychosexual, operatic stories passed back and forth. There's a constant, hypervigilant sense of weighing in regards to what is being considered, performed, or otherwise conveyed, but also an overwhelming desire to relax and let one's guard down (doubly so for those who disassociate facing trauma).

Victims of past trauma, then, become drawn to paradox—as trapped between performances of pure hero and pure villain, wherein "rape" makes the damsel feel more safe through calculated risk than strict black-and-white scenarios of total safety or danger do. The latter two become untrustworthy and uncomfortable, whereas ludo-Gothic BDSM becomes an effective means of managing complicated feelings; i.e., of control in the presence of uncertainty as something to put "on the hip" through active performance and play. Doing so more accurately describes how the performer feels from moment to moment in relation to the world around them as duplicitous *vis-à-vis* the shadow of police corruption. Being "raped" via the baton or "lance" becomes the best way to confirm. And all of this becomes the pedagogy of the oppressed as a communal form of investigative power exchange.



As we proceed, I want you to consider is how my present thinking was shaped; i.e., in relation to my sharing of these stories with other workers: as a communal healing process informed by a learned mistrust of their surroundings, but also fed on them as things to later return to

and subvert while surrounded by potentially harmful copies. Or as my thesis argued, "Returning and reflecting upon old points after assembling them is a powerful way to understand larger structures and patterns (especially if they're designed to conceal themselves through subterfuge, valor and force). It's what holistic study (the foundation of this book) is all about" ([source](#)). I cannot begin to overstate how messy and painful healing from rape/power abuse is; it and the pedagogy of the oppressed are a tremendously fragmented and at times even erratic process. And both are motivated by theatrical mechanisms of force that if not inherently harmful, certainly have the potential to lead us into dangerous spheres of influence. Not all workers take the noble route, or have good intentions; except the oscillation between friend and foe only remains, intensifying according to complied hero fantasies that interrogate power through "rape" as something to execute.

About that. Before I discuss Cwuu and my relationship with them through these stories, I first want to consider how these stories molded my own thinking when shared continuously between myself and *many* workers; i.e., how I think about rape and violence in Gothic media as an ongoing exchange that is hardly set or safe. My examination of these stories, *post hoc*, isn't to simply consider their

repacking as something to sell back to us then imitate through the ghost of the counterfeit (the falseness of state power but the lingering of its abuses through alien sensations), but to entertain how this dark reimagining allows them to exist in popular culture at all; i.e., to ask how its tangibility grants the distribution of police trauma as something to share, discuss and reflect on, insofar as it concerns all workers living within state territories as affected in a variety of ways.

Rape and disempowerment were certainly things Cuwu and I discussed in types of theatre normally policed in relation to those who have survived what some workers (myself, in this case) can only speculate on through Gothic poetics. That is, the stories we shared weren't so different than them having me fuck them a particular way during rape fantasies we collectively decided on; e.g., choking or sleep sex. Prior to those rituals' deliberate negotiation and gingerly execution, sharing a moment of Gothic peril can bridge the gap through a shared audience; i.e., by inviting dialogs between them about sexual violence that Cuwu and I eventually entertained in a more participatory and playful fashion. I can say without shame that I was the instrument of Cuwu's "rape" as informed by popular horror stories we consumed separately (Cuwu loved *Lucifer*, 2016) and shared together for inspiration. Some, like *Ninja Scroll*, were rougher than others:



(exhibit 15a: Genma from Yoshiaki Kawajiri's Ninja Scroll—in disguise as the Lord Chamberlain, having his way with a palace concubine. As leader of a brutal gang of rogue ninjas, Genma is our recuperated Nazi. He rules from the shadows with forbidden magic using fear and dogma; his power is literally necromantic resurrection; his fascistic, thieving violence is deceptive, but also standard-issue—

period, but also its many reincarnations in late 20th/21st century popular media.)

Rough or not, such dialogs remain incredibly vital, insofar as their official discouragement (and subsequent silence) only leads to harm on a genocidal scale. Behind closed doors, for example, cops underreport their own "chattel rape" abuse towards those allegedly under their "protection"—with "to serve and protect" and similar slogans embossed on their prowler doors being constitutionally for the state, *not* the people (or nature). Cops can marry you, then kill you and lie about it and nothing happens; they can do this in public and get off with paid administrative leave before getting rehired somewhere else. It's literally protocol. Meanwhile,

damning data such as "[40%¹⁴⁰ of police families experience domestic abuse](#)" or "[1 in 5 women are raped](#)" is a gross underestimation, wherein decades-old studies hampered by or actually performed by the police use language that limits the ability to even express what violence and rape are. It's misleading. The real numbers are far worse, but also unknown—fudged to keep the image of the state strong but also squeaky clean (a phenomenon performed by neoliberals and fascists alike).

Clearly people need to be able to interrogate their own trauma, but also negotiate with it *vis-à-vis* ludo-Gothic BDSM as divorced from state power. The problem is, various forms of potentially sex-positive BDSM, kink and fetishes are regularly appropriated, reducing their critical awareness/teaching potential through assimilations of rape theatre (controlled opposition). Coercively sublimated in ways that uphold the status quo through bad play's guilty pleasures, these domination bids threaten servile emotional manipulation and internalized reactive abuse (which we'll examine more thoroughly in Volume Three, Chapter Two). For minorities and queer people, assimilation fantasies become a deadly and embarrassing game of compromise: tokenism through class, race and culture betrayal. The game-in-question offers a magnified form of exclusive (rare) promotion, limited to the "special" slaves; i.e., any self-policing Judases working within the minority group(s) wishing to escape reactive abuse for self-preservation and comfort. Such illusions hide the reality behind a screen: that things are somehow better for everyone, when in reality they are provided to a small group of elevated slaves afforded special positions. In spite of these disparities, the system as a means of division and exploitation is still very much in place. So are the urges to interrogate trauma, albeit using imperfect forms that leave much to be desired.

In spite of these praxial complexities, such oscillating subterfuges bring us to Gothic illusions that—through tremendous romance and Gothic reinvention—still communicate inherited anxieties regarding the present. For example, Cameron's *Terminator* yields a very *dystopian* translation of the American police. Their hyperreal, *posthuman* quality in the film speaks to the replacement of the human with a "human" counterfeit tied to a devastated map of empire that lacks even the rudiments of humane programming. As the Imperial Boomerang flies home, its goal



is simply to deceive—a highly advanced infiltration unit hiding in plain sight in the places where people usually gather to let off steam, but also seek out forbidden, psychosexual pleasures that serve a decidedly medicinal function:

¹⁴⁰ For a more recent examination of this oft-disputed statistic, [consider Renegade Cut's 2023 video](#), "How Many Cops Are Domestic Abusers?"

Like Cameron's ill-fated Tech-Noir disco, popular media at large can often feel infiltrated, but also forgone—despite its necessity—to be corrupted by the presence of trauma as a paradoxical healing agent. In *Ninja Scroll's* imaginary Japan, the demons are everywhere, but look oddly human. In such an uncertain and dangerous world, a woman's lived reality is that Jubei appears (at first glance) as much a threat to Kagero as her rapist does; the same goes for Sarah and her own "love triangle." To that, *Ninja Scroll* offers up a careful balance in Jubei Kibagami. Precisely the kind of hero prayed for persons who are normally subjected to state abuses, he's Superman, but more rugged and conspicuously surrounded by a world that is far less perfect than his relatively polite warrior's code:



In Byron's words, though, "I want a hero" sadly becomes as much a Judas' refrain as it does a call to rebellion when no such hero is actually present. Oppressed workers consume the stories, but they often submit to state mandates through various concessions, *especially* when they have been denied the ability to

experiment; i.e., in ways that go beyond Jubei's patently sexless approach. Indeed, oppressed groups don't rush into danger so much as they aim to negotiate with theatrical doubles of "danger" through optional sexuality amid Gothic theatrics: there is often an asexual component, insofar as psychosexuality exists adjacent to harm in ways that treat sex as a performance of death, violence and, yes, rape.

This becomes yet another reality under Capitalism, one to interrogate through the opening of sexualized channels of performance common in Gothic stories; i.e., experienced as much through open forms of "rape," "murder" and frank, intense BDSM as through run-of-the-mill damsels waiting to be rescued. Relying on the rescuer too completely can be an issue, but likewise the dungeon fantasy demands a degree of moderation, lest it become a dark romance presented as blind comfort food: shared between parties where trauma is fully repressed (e.g., Radcliffe). Because praxis and its synthesis live inside Capitalism, it behooves us to look at the structure as it lives and breathes, including anyone trapped inside its mechanisms as things to recreate in theatrical forms. When workers synthesize praxis, they cultivate the Superstructure inside Capitalism; this happens between workers and the natural-material world operating in continuum. This "sticky" relationship needs to be considered in its totality for iconoclastic praxis and worker solidarity to occur.

In other words, it's entirely worthwhile for us to ask how different people (with their traumas) relate to Gothic stories, but especially their monsters, heroes

and haunts as things to consume, create and perform ourselves. For any who have been raped, a hero (or heroine) will generally be monstrous in ways that might seem alien to those who have never experienced trauma themselves; but bonding through trauma is generally lopsided to some extent. While the Superstructure shapes material production through the Base, proletarian praxis through allows workers *in* uneven arrangements of trauma to shape, acquire, and learn from the world in ways that aim to stall, if not outright prevent regular abuses under Capitalism—real abuses, but also *(re)imagined* abuses as wrought through iconoclastic Gothic poetics of differing flavors; e.g., Jubei's hypermasculine violence versus the Eight Devils of Kimon in defense of the ninja girl, Kagero; or Kyle Reese vs the terminator to defend Sarah Connor from a gruesome death: "He'll wade through you, reach down her throat, and pull her fucking heart out!" Regardless of the time and place, demon lovers (and sex) in Gothic fiction classically synonymize with unironic harm—not just rape but murder and disembowelment as staged, granting a sense of relief not unlike our aforementioned danger disco.



Think of it as the Western saloon. Extreme violence isn't simply expected in such dark, erotic, musical places (many serving as brothels for settler-colonial agents); it's entirely the point and serves a profoundly (a)sexual function: wish fulfillment and guilty pleasure; e.g., the punishing of the rapist after a rape-like performance that clearly has room for degrees of accuracy and poetic liberties. For any oppressed who historically endure rape, the hero

and the villain of Gothic stories help open up cathartic channels of conversation concerning everyday perils that remain overshadowed by heterosexual enforcement amid settler-colonial guilt (usually with various other anxieties woven in).

For the *state*, the dehumanized cops-in-disguise work as gargoyle-esque replicas meant to scare us into submission; i.e., by either introducing an infiltrator into oppressed venues where rape is discussed, or suggesting one. Regardless, it walks among us like a mirror that reflects the state's hidden-yet-visible workings on our vulnerable, developing minds; like Macbeth's question to the dagger of the mind, we're not sure if we even see a threat—i.e., if it is directed at us or if it is even real:

"Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?" ([source](#)).

Strong and brutal as he already was, Macbeth wasn't even sure what he was looking at when going to kill King Duncan. Neither was Kyle Reese, Sarah, or us completely sure when swimming inside the shadowy back alleys of Cameron's Los Angeles. A murky-yet-glistening dislocation of state power and artifice, *The Terminator* gives rise to Skynet, an invisible, legendary foe meant to surveille citizens using a camera lens disguised as a "human" face, berserk dressed up as a false animal; i.e., "metal, surrounded by living tissue" as a mass-produced product "grown for the cyborgs."

As such, the Imperial Boomerang comes out of the future of what is now our own past (re: Jameson), colonizing its own subjects through hyperreal decay and paranoia as charted through a variety of "pasts": *mise-en-abyme* relayed between fictions like *Ninja Scroll* and *The Terminator* having a similar flavor of rape fantasy despite their obvious spatio-temporal discrepancies. Both worlds are filled with violent killers and spies foisting themselves on those merely trying to survive, but especially women as historically vulnerable entities under such conditions. Whereas *Ninja Scroll* feudalizes Japan in an openly magical past, Cameron's take on the Gothic Romance (and liminal hauntology of war) updates the technological singularity for a 1980s, post-nuclear world, one where the legacy of artificial intelligence and the Manhattan Project have doomed the present. Atomized and scattered, many different "possible futures" loom over those living on the other side of the Pacific—a war for survival decided in a series of nightly combats not once, but over and over again. As I write in "Gothic Content in *The Terminator/T2*" (2019):

Gothically, a reoccurring theme in the *Terminator* franchise, from 1984 onward, is survival—outliving an unavoidable "past," in the present. A death omen, Cameron's nightmare is Orwellian; set in 1984, L.A. (and by extension, civilization as we know it) is invaded by "one possible future" (a "past" version of itself that has yet to materialize). Cameron populates his world with standard Gothic fare: the animated miniature or statue. Centuries prior, these would have been Horace Walpole's subjects, literally walking out of their own paintings; or, suits of armor walking around, without a human body inside. In *The Terminator*, the likeness of a human is grafted into a walking suit of armor [...] Given eyes of their own, they look back at us—at least, we think they do. What post-human horror lurks behind that carmine sphere? ([source](#)).

Even when Arnold Schwarzenegger's terminator is reprogrammed "for good," the reoccurring nightmare lies in the state's untrustworthy (and inherently violent)



nature, its territory shrouded in darkness but also piercing observation lights:

Skynet isn't a dumb-machine, but "a new order of intelligence" founded on militaristic, *human* ways of thinking and conquering the world: "It decided our fate in a

microsecond. Extermination." Capitalism is Skynet *unabstracted* in totality—the metal eye of conquest steering Cartesian thought on auto-pilot, conquering all of nature versus simply part of it. An abstraction of capital, Skynet provides smaller abstractions¹⁴¹ begot from a local police state: patrol machines built in automated factories, but also paramilitary machine men with glowing-red camera eyes that spy for a secret police department during military urbanism run amok: "During the vision, everything is smoky and dark, but also a ruin of present-day L.A.; the giant machines have red-and-blue lights. Comparable to present-day police cars, their purpose is war-like, out-of-control" ([source](#): Persephone van der Waard's "Textual Elements in *The Terminator*," 2019).

Vis-à-vis my thesis critiques on Botting and Jameson, it's incredibly important not to supply special credence to a particular genre's time and place. To that, Kawajiri's imaginary feudal Japan (and army of psychosexual ninja demons) are *also* abstractions of capital; i.e., produced nearly a decade after Cameron's world and in a decidedly antiquated approach. Yet, both he Cameron conjure up the shadow of a medieval, castle-like police state that entertains Gothic rape fantasies that serve an operatic "release valve" in times of socio-material uncertainty and collapse. Whereas Skynet kills the state's enemies in the shadow of a former nuclear menace that mirrors America's current war games, the Devils of Kimon posture as a fascist force that remains in Japan to this day. "They look human!" Kyle says of the 800 series; so do the Devils. In either case, the direction and location of the threat has become abstracted, oscillating inside a circular ruin shared between authors across space and time. This is done less to terrify the occupants of the present than explain their complex feelings from moment to

¹⁴¹ Abstraction isn't simply the reduction of detail down to basic geometric shapes and color (though Skynet, when it is visually conveyed, appears as a cybernetic pyramid, often in black and red, or silver-blue and purple); smaller iterations or offshoots of larger complicated things are also abstractions. On par with Rudolph Otto's ghosts serving as abortive offshoots of the Numinous, they and Skynet hint at something neither can fully describe: Capitalism and Capitalist Realism.

moment, story to story; i.e., the terror once felt by victims of state abuse during *Pax Americana* now inflicted on everyone else to a higher degree than ever before. In a nice, postpunk twist, Cameron's hauntology has another trick up its sleeve: disco-in-disguise; i.e., our aforementioned "danger disco" as an obviously musical place, one to go to and partake in psychosexual indulgence presented in all the usual formulas: a gun fight.

To that, I'd like to focus on Cameron's more musical approach through the danger disco of the 1980s, then end the postscript by focusing on my relationship to Cuwu through *Ninja Scroll* and *Doki Doki Literature Club*; i.e., as more openly erotic and fetishized stories centered around sexual violence, which informed the



traumas in our own daily lives as we interacted back and forth.

Returning to Cameron's excellent sleight-of-hand (and police-light pareidolia), his commentary on neoliberal hegemony is already a perilous ordeal, requiring allegory to disguise

it as something other than a direct query (which would translate to worker solidarity and direct action); the subterfuge calls for a *musical* space for play inside that yields monstrous, nostalgic elements: the danger disco as a venue for persons seeking treatment regarding past run-ins with power abuse through liminal theatrics that provide an operatic backdrop; i.e., a place of sex and sin to consolidate and execute calculated risks in heroic-monstrous language.

Tech-Noir (and similar establishments) are where the police-in-plainclothes infiltrate as undercover shadow agents, surveilling citizens in parallel societies that try to escape the weight of an oppressive state by having fun, but also *conspiring* in plain sight within surveilled spaces: the cafe, disco, jazz club, bar/dive, church, brothel, music hall, theatre, library, etc, as heavily policed/forbidden sites of taboo entertainment, education and congregation (the closing of such places being a common colonizing tactic: the *intelligencia* purge). Postpunk, then, becomes a revolutionary façade within tyrannical, dishonest worlds that are already falling apart over and over inside themselves (the infernal concentric pattern). Here are some examples inspired by *The Terminator* or in the same vein of canceled future common in noir stories, cyberpunk dystopias, and Gothic retro-futures; i.e., of the hauntological operatic variety shared since Antiquity with various mixtures of music, theatrical combat, heroic deeds, monstrous sensations, storybook apocalypse scenarios (the fate of the world hanging in the balance of true love, mid-invasion and mid-occupation) and kayfabe tropes:



(exhibit 15b1: The cyberpunk/tech-noir's slow-motion, disco-lit "danger zone" is a common, potboiler trope of the game-like risks present within daily life. As something often expressed through ritualized love/death inside parallel space, these expressions of the human condition and its uneven socio-material conditions become infused with an updated hauntological spirit of darkness well known to Gothic tales [which, out from the disintegration of the John Ford Western and its brightly-lit chase scenes and saloon brawls, survived in the "noir" genre from the early 20th century before updating to a technophobic, neon-lit variant during the 1980s. Such variety codified into both the monster-rock vampire's Neo-Gothic castle of *Castlevania* but also a form of cyberpunk/tech-noir pastiche stretching into the 2010s]. Their own presence indicates class war as remediated through popular story types told in praxial opposition. Infiltrators/imposters remain an essential part of the code, contributing to the uncertain feeling of vague, alien, ubiquitous danger for the oppressor/oppressed group facing off on the dance floor.

Historically the oppressed group of Gothic fiction would have been white cis-het women reading about themselves in Gothic novels, but they would have always had relative privilege for being white and cis-het. When future groups fought for their rights—and queer discourse started to emerge from the shadows in the 1970s, in particular—the mantle of oppression would extend to various minorities voicing their abuse during moral panics committed by token oppressors. Indeed, said panics would be commonly imposed by white cis-het women gatekeeping more marginalized groups; e.g., queer identities and sex workers targeted by white Christian women, but also second wave feminists during the Satanic panic of the 1980s also attacking people of color and religious minorities.

Similar to other monstrous language, "Satanic" symbolism is generally a stand-in for various out-groups that have become romanticized—by in-groups, but also by themselves using reclaimed language whose liminality extends to queer symbols

like the rainbow as something to enjoy but also potentially endorse when no hard stance is diegetically present. Doing so is not uncommon, the context of queer self-preservation occupying the same discourse as a heteronormative desire for profit:



For example, [TWRP's "Starlight Brigade"](#) [2019, above] arguably straddles the fence because its parallel music video/collab by Dan Avidan—and Knights of the Light Table [the latter's animation inspired by Roger Dean, Hayao Miyazaki, and Moebius for all of their visual inspiration]: producer [Patrick Stannard](#), director [India Swift](#), and art director [Michael Doig](#)—presents a reinvented nostalgia as something to enjoy for all audiences; i.e., without saying the quiet part of queer oppression or resistance out loud. Instead, its mixed message defaults to the monomyth of a centrist, good-vs-evil tale: an anxious young man teaming up with a group of misfits to save the world from "pure evil" [of the Sauron sort]. Their combined success and miraculous destruction of vaguely fascist war [reduced to basic geometric shapes] occurs through self-belief that serves to further a kind of "wishful thinking." Faith is rewarded with material change, the warships standing in for psychomachic sentiment; i.e., representing a figurative struggle like [Star Wars](#) does.

Whereas some iterations of [Star Wars](#) communicate how rebellions and violence go hand-in-hand [with [Andor](#) in particular showing how uprisings are historically armed with stolen weapons, ships and equipment, exhibit 21b], TWRP's music video lacks a spoken dialog on this subject. It doesn't even call the good guys rebels; they're just child soldiers, ostensibly of a "paladin/good soldier" class [which [Voltron](#) deliberately called themselves, the babyfaces policing "outer space" by cleansing it

of monstrous-feminine and "corrupt" forces—capped off by "punching the Nazi" to qualify their war as "good"].

But even if the makers of the video were clear about the dialectical-material status of their heroes, the "Voltron problem" would still persist: an absent material critique, one where many different creators [not just TWRP, Knights of the Light Table and Dan Avidan, a cis-het man] aim to recruit queer groups through the inclusion of a queer potential that can serve the status quo when a vocal resistance to power is not present. When non-queer creators do this, it's queer bait; when queer authors participate, it's assimilation. But sometimes, the desire to voice one's oppression is told through common stories; i.e., by reclaiming the language of the oppressor class [which, yes, includes Voltron pastiche]. However, that subversion still needs to involve a process consciously driven by a desire to alter socio-material conditions: to push away from the status quo and its exploitation of workers behind the usual groups benefitting inside these stories and in real life. Queer allies, especially well-to-do ones, need to be mindful of this in regards to peace and tolerance in the face of deplorable socio-material conditions; e.g., Tom Taylor's 2023 writeup, "Steely Dan vs John Lennon," reporting how John Lennon's "Imagine" [1971] came across as more than a little naïve according to Steely Dan's "Only A Fool Would Say That":

Their 1972 track, "Only a Fool Would Say That" was written in response to Lennon's parade of peace. It looks at idealism through the practical eyes of folks on the street. "You do his nine to five," they sing, "drag yourself home half alive, and there on the screen, a man with a dream." And with that, you get a sense of how grating and vacuous they thought that Lennon's "Imagine" campaign had become [source].

In other words, it can't be vague or mixed in its messaging. For resistance-in-solidarity to work, it needs to be direct, informed and conscious [of class, gender, religion and race as intersecting forces].

Vagueness is a shared problem among children's cartoons and Gothic fiction. Often only the basic language [of an alien aesthetic of paralysis] is present—incredibly expressive from a visual and emotional standpoint, but still having to be occupied by warring groups during class struggle as a liminal outcome. Indeed, liminal expression is a regular occurrence in Gothic discourse, existing in shared parallel spaces using the same contested language's emotional turmoil. French New Wave's "Darkwave" subgenre, for instance, has the potential for critical power but also critical blindness. Their mutual potential within hauntological expression threatens the present as something to examine through an at-times-unreliable critique: ghosts of the counterfeit that yield a musical signature, which—as Derrida hints at

through *Spectres of Marx*—has become something to listen to during hauntology¹⁴² as a Gothic revival; e.g., French New Wave music appearing in videogames that consciously imitated older forerunners: James Cameron's take on the imperiled, "tech-noir" discotheque borrowed from '70s technophobia and older British counterculture given a fresh coat of hauntological paint in 1984, before reappearing decades later in *Drive*, 2011, then *Hotline Miami*, in 2012; on and on.)



(exhibit 15b2: Just as Cameron was inspired by Scott's 1982 *Blade Runner* spearheading a whole train of older Gothic stories into the 1980s, each outing depicted a blood-splashed opera announced using outrageous violence, gloomy visuals and dated music. Even so, the sheer ultraviolence of the 1980s became its "own" style to emulate as a dark mode of critical expression during oppositional

¹⁴² As TheScientist writes for "RYM Ultimate Box Set > Hauntology":

The discourse developed around [Jacques Derrida's](#) concept of "Hauntology" (in 1993) and its application to music in the minds of writers and bloggers like [Simon Reynolds](#), [K-Punk](#) and [Adam Harper](#) as a philosophical and aesthetic musical idea emerged in the music world in 2006. Derrida's original use of the phrase can be linked to a sense of "threading the present through the past," or a ghostly re-imagining of the past defining our existence both in concept and in art. But in its musical sense, Hauntology has been used to describe a gathering of disparate artists dealing in "haunted" sonics; music resonating with the emotions and feelings of past analog, and digital ghosts ([source](#)).

praxis; i.e., free for auteurs to interpret differently by reinventing the allegorical mask of attractive fatal nostalgia.

For example, Nicolas Winding Refn's homage to Cameron cheerfully drops his own masked vigilante inside the same Hollywood setting: Los Angeles. This time, the hero is a cold, seemingly unfeeling protector of women and children; he resembles Sarah's handsome, human protector while using similar tools for the job that Kyle Reese did: the trusty shotgun and stolen getaway vehicle, but also the mask as a metaphor for the persona as something to either discard [or wear] during criminal mayhem.

The fun lies in the cosmetic differences from older works, including the masks. Refn's "terminator" can't take off his mask-like face, but wears a Hollywood "crash double" mask on top of a smile that doesn't quite reach his eyes. He's cold and precise, calmly driving robbers to and from crimes while dodging the cops.

Conversely, Cameron's terminator wears a human mask made of actual flesh [whose bad special effects during the eye surgery scene are actually closer to Ryan Gosling's studio-grade mask of a policer officer] meant to hide a cybernetic vigilante killer inside the Gothic ball. One commits crimes to enrich covert thieves to the state's detriment; the other works for the state by pointedly killing women, being identified by the police as a "one-day pattern killer." Across both stories, the disguise pastiche maintains a thoroughly Gothic flavor.

Whereas Cameron's material critique lay in the culture of fear surrounding serial killer mania, military urbanism and Cold War anxieties, Refn keeps much of the same violence, pathos, setting and hauntological music, but comments on the "cold-blooded nature of the hero" as a killer-by-design who can still help the usual damsels-in-distress; i.e., as the College song goes, be "a real human being and a real hero." Within this borrowed spell of nostalgia, there lurks a degree of madness that utterly revels in the opera as nostalgic through the aesthetic bloodbath, but also the music as a means of teleporting "backwards" to a chronotope where such discourse is both welcome and expected. This would be parodied a year later by Dennaton Games, treating the hero's violent quest as a drug-fueled rampage with less-than-noble intentions. Though undeniably fun, such parodies are prone to become blind, their pastiche "stuck on repeat" while worshipping the reimagined, cryptomimetic past as a product, first and foremost. They can be enjoyed, but should not be endorsed without understanding their deeper context.)



(artist: [John Cordero](#))

So while Cameron's story *is* a Gothic fairytale centered around rape, its now-iconic, achingly musical techno-Gothic mythos was still informed by the undeniable presence of concealed, state-level nuclear abuse and decay hidden behind American neoliberalism:

Sarah's night terrors cannot stop until Skynet is crushed. For that, both [the T-800 and T-1000] must die. Killed, they melt into harmless goo; Sarah faces the shapeless future with a sense of hope. Will Skynet return, regardless? [...] I ask this ignoring Cameron's terrible alternate ending. In it, everything is spelled out—in Utopian fashion by a much-older Sarah; [her son] John becomes a senator and advocates for peace. That's all good and

well. However, it betrays the franchise's greatest strength: fear and doubt [as a deliberate means of raising class consciousness to combat class dormancy and class traitors]. Our current political climate should prove the future is not set, and in the hands of political agents and military men, Skynet, "a computer defense network built for [SAC-NORAD](#) by Cyberdyne Systems," could always "return" again. The dream never ends, because the fear—of being alive in an uncertain present [within unequal, exploitative media control and material conditions]—is continuously preserved through the things we build and leave behind. That includes Cameron's fabulous *Terminator* movies. Rediscovered in the present, these relics come to life, invading us from all directions ([source](#): Persephone van der Waard's "Gothic Content in *The Terminator/T2* — part three: Textual Elements in *T2*," 2019).

As part of this "dark '80s" nostalgia, Cameron's Gothic hauntologies rely on technophobia that is both surprisingly dated, but curiously translates to current misconceptions¹⁴³ about technology as a veil for state abuses that we can still

¹⁴³ The technological singularity is often misunderstood as something that will *eventually* happen, all while scapegoating machines; i.e., by presenting them as the end of the world, rebelling against the status quo by replacing Humanity with pure non-humans (often via a transhuman buffer like the

discuss in cartoonishly theatrical forms; i.e., the very sorts of theatre overshadowing the lived traumas that individual workers have survived due to systemic implementations that are too grand to easily illustrate. At times, the explanations channel through inherited confusions by which to funnel our pedagogies through. Strict accuracy isn't the point; the point, from a theatrical stance, is the communication of intense, fearful emotions that progress towards healing from rape inside the darkness as a lived state of mind: to provide the kinds of lived realities that are, themselves, built on shady foundations grasping at hints of the truth through their adjacent falsehoods and phobias.

Despite Cameron treating computers like black magic, his own abstractions don't serve the state; they convey a presence of unaddressed trauma that sits within confused dialogs that, try as we might, cannot be avoided. The paradoxes become part of the performance, conveying the lived experience of those living within state territories that cast very long shadows. If the Gothic offers anything of value, it's the ability to express the human condition according to never-ending struggles within an oppressive system's historical past. As something to reconcile with in dated, inaccurate imaginary forms, one is left juggling perceived impostors with actual persons or entities that mean us harm in connection to the state as a great factory for such deceivers: frauds and conmen, but also assassins and parasites of a more active and directly cutthroat nature. As the prey mechanisms of the heroine project onto the male agents of unknown allegiance, her own fears are informed by the combined alarm fatigue from larger and smaller struggles: inheritance anxiety and survivor's guilt as a post-WW2 American citizen living in somewhat-distant fear of the Bomb being granted the inconveniently immediate warning of a "one-day pattern killer" broadcast about *her* on '80s television: "You're dead, honey."

xenomorph or Frankenstein's Creature). But the truth is less romantic: Thanks to efficient profit (and the bourgeois trifectas at large), Capitalism is generally *not* incentivized to build things like Skynet in a literal sense. Rather, human beings are dehumanized to behave in robotic ways, insofar as delivering or receiving state violence is concerned. This isn't technology of an incredibly advanced sort, nor does the state require it; it's a reflection of the human condition projected onto various *dated* anxieties about the rise of the police state smashed together with state-fueled phobias and stigmas in a retro-future hauntology that leads to Capitalist Realism. It's a paradox—a liminal expression of unequal power and its abuse, insofar as technology becomes a device of state terror that contains within it all the usual means of humanizing the dehumanized through counterterror.

For the state, Skynet is a recuperative scapegoat for, and elaborate distraction of, Capitalism that once conjured up sows mistrust of technology while making threats that are anything but guided by actual non-humans; for us, the singularity is merely the waking up of those framed as inhuman by the state. Skynet is a mirage; police abuse, genocide and nuclear violence are not, but the state's control on violence, terror and bodies are not absolute and can be reprogrammed. Generally this happens by fighting back within hauntological myopias to see state orchestrations behind so-called singularities like Skynet, but also reclaiming such hyperbole to disarm canonical technophobia in service of Gothic theatrics that *assist* workers: ironic technophobia and *technophilia* treated as monstrous in relation to computers as immensely powerful devices that can serve worker needs on and offstage in very Gothic ways. Their summoning should raise our awareness of state abuses, including its effect on our minds; i.e., what we're afraid of as authored by state forces or otherwise in service to them (more on this in our next footnote).



To that, Sarah is clearly a Gothic heroine of the Neo-Gothic (white) sort updated for the late 20th century—i.e., the middle-class "secret princess" with a hidden destiny delivered through a dream-come-true protector. True to form, her fear of rape is fused to then-current-yet-also-dated superstitions (of Cold-War rhetoric scapegoating AI as a rapacious metaphor for unfettered market greed)¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ NATO's fictional double—SAC-NORAD and Cameron's technophobic genesis of the technological singularity—lends far too much credence to the idea of thinking machines being responsible for the planet's devastation (and the end of Capitalism) through state shift. Indeed, Cameron both uses the singularity's spontaneous rebellion to shift blame away from capitalists (essentially arguing that rebel computers nuked the planet versus climate change) and appears to misunderstand, or at least thoroughly abstract the nature of what AI is in practice. Even by current standards, AI as it is marketed by capitalists, is an algorithm within a search engine that steals data:

An AI is like a gigantic word sifter. It can structure sentences in ways that seem related to the topic at hand, which is why, if you ask it for a court case, it can generate text "[proper noun] v [proper noun]" as a formatting concept — like how Excel will see you type in \$1.00 and know that further entries in the column are likely also dollar values, so it will change the formatting of that column to the dollar value type.

But the AI will not actually search for existing court cases, nor will it understand what's in the court case — because it has no ability to understand anything, as it is not intelligent. Instead, you press a button, and the sifting machine starts spinning, and since you said, "court case," it will output a string of text that is formatted to look like a court case ([source](#): Doc Burford's "Using ChatGPT and Other AI Writing Tools Makes You Unhireable," 2023; [also consider Naomi Clark's Twitter summary](#)).

The takeaway here is that it's the *illusion* of thought capitalizing on people's stolen information, their livelihoods (the theft of which giant companies have been doing for decades). "AI," then, is a tremendous misnomer because it implies the device has the ability to think for itself or might suddenly "come alive" and kill everyone like a fascist maniac or furious slave. That's... not how computers work. This isn't T2. Human decisions are *not* removed from strategic "defense" and Skynet won't begin to learn at a geometric rate. Instead, the structure is designed to profit the elite in ways they don't need to make. It might happen anyways. However, predictions by people like Stephan Korn [a New Zealand

and the Military Industrial Complex that boils over into predatory fears about nuclear Armageddon during peacetime; e.g., GDF's "[NATO Is Risking Nuclear War](#)

CEO fixated on "innovation"—big ol' red flag there, dude] are not only guessing but calling the software something it isn't—intelligent. Yes, Capitalism *could* design some kind of sophisticated super-agent and overlord system to surveille its citizenry with through various ungovernable forces that lead to a theoretical boiling point:

Like it or not the power of AI will attract at least 4 distinct motivations that are hard to regulate:

- Profit motive - companies gaining significant competitive advantage through the use of ever more advanced AI
- Control motive - intelligence agencies / counter-terrorism units wishing to use more sophisticated versions of AI to provide a level of security for their citizens / countries
- Power motive - any individual or group wanting to use AI to manipulate existing systems (such as democracy / governments) to gain an advantage
- Disruption motive - criminals and terrorists using AI to further their causes

At least one of the above will be completely resistant to legislation / regulation which means there will always be someone working without governance / control on more sophisticated versions of AI systems (source: "[Skynet Is About 3 Years Away](#)," 2023).

But the reality is, the elite already *have* a stranglehold on the world and operate through brute force, efficient profit and market deregulation that colonize its populations at home and abroad (name me something that's more brute-force and clandestine than nuclear war and police states under neoliberal hegemony); "Skynet" is already here: the dehumanized elite, coldly exploiting the world to the brink of nuclear war and arguably beyond.

Despite Western prosiness of the futurist Utopia, science fiction is rooted in the Gothic critique of Cartesian thought and Western settler-colonial hegemony and has been since 1818. Cameron's white-savior take on "tech-noir" thoroughly bastardizes Mary Shelley's *Modern Prometheus*. People forget that Shelley had Victor make a monster he could abuse in order for her to make a postcolonial critique of men *like* Victor—not a testament to Victor's creative ability or the Cartesian Revolution's merits! Whether Cameron would want us to or not, the same idea applies to Cameron's *Terminator* movies. The film isn't meant to entertain the idea that such a machine could actually exist because those in power would never actually *make* it, *could* never actually make it; state science serves the market and the market is guided by human decisions predicated on illusions, not genuine scientific advances. It's in their best interests to keep machines/slaves stupid—to keep us stupid and afraid of a false threat overshadowed by a very real one.

To this, Cameron's critiquing of the elite's desire to dominate and control coming home to roost is stowed away in popular phobias (while simultaneously profiting off the same narrative to enrich the elite by making his own white-savior fantasies come true on screen—self-aggrandizement, in other words). And, if we want to be charitable towards Cameron (who has profited considerably off these stories), we could argue that Skynet represents as much the repressed desires of the downtrodden, the wish fulfillment of the Global South guiding the nuclear missiles home towards the colonizer mother country like some kind of token police agent—a tinman who finally got a heart and destroyed its slavers. Except, the great machine has no body and there is no dialog like *Frankenstein*; comparatively Scott's 2017 *Alien: Covenant* is more discursive and upfront about presenting David, that movie's villain, as a Satanic rebel in opposition to state power (more on this in Volume Two).

[for Money](#)," 2023) and alleviated through a psychosexual shock to the system meant to keep her (and us) going. To this, the movie might seem like a total mess borrowed from older sources, one where Cameron patently emulates the threat of nuclear war from earlier apocalyptic science fiction; e.g., *The Outer Limits* of the 1960s [and ripping off Harlan Ellison in particular](#) (David Brennan's "The Harlan Ellison Dispute," 2008), *Colossus: The Forbin Project* (1970) and *Star Wars'* legendary Death Star bombing foreign populations (as well as Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* [1826] beating all these Pygmalions to the punch). Yet, such anxious homages are par for the course under shared material conditions yielding a dark channel of communication; i.e., a shared Gothic nightmare where power and resistance play out on the same disco floor in all the usual ways. Market forces are inherently unequal under Capitalism and lead to tremendous suffering and anxiety but also theatrics as a liminal sphere of expression.

Simply put, the Gothic is where we retreat to interrogate our trauma (and relative guilt, desire, anxiety and other repressed emotions) in relation to other survivors; i.e., to trauma-bond through the usual displays of music, violence and sex. However imperfect it can seem under a magnifying glass, *The Terminator* is as good a story as any to achieve this end: to broach radical empathy with varying degrees of privilege and oppression among like-minded persons with similar experiences that intersect and diverge. Indeed, I often shared it with others to relate to them through the characters onscreen, but also sponsor activism as something that manifests imperfectly in stories that—through the pedagogy of the oppressed—could speak to our collective troubles inside police states. This includes Cuwu as someone with whom such sharing felt natural, but who currently isn't a part of my life anymore (their ghost is, exhibit 16b). At times, it really *is* like dancing with ghosts. While I have been beaten and mentally tortured, for example, I have never been sexually raped; I am AMAB and the odds are simply far lower by any conceivable metric that I would be. However, I know many workers who have been raped. Listening to them has helped radically change my systemically privileged views, but also reflect on my own lived trauma and complex emotional abuse compared to theirs.

For the remainder of the postscript, then, we'll examine two such workers: Mavis for a quick moment, followed by our star-if-slightly-delayed (off-screen and sporadic) attraction, Cuwu.

Mavis is someone I haven't mentioned until now, but will mention more throughout this book. They have had countless experiences with rape (dissociation makes you forget or "block out" the trauma, which makes it hard to remember). According to Mavis, rape is awful, but it's also over quick and you can dissociate (something that plurality allows for); also, according to Mavis, they'd rather experience rape than prolonged mental abuse, the latter which can go on for years like a war of menticial attrition—including threats of rape amid diminishing returns of genuine care after the initial "love-bombing" phase (say nothing of the historical-

material variants if you're living in someone's family estate, or equally bad, [being shamed, neglected or ignored by what Melissa McEwan calls "rape apologia" or "rape ranking" amid rape culture](#), 2013).

Speaking from my own experiences, it's the kind of thing you *can't* block out. Over time, this abuse can be "buried alive"—hidden in plain sight all around a "cursed" location littered with markers of power, but also illusions-of-illusions (crypt narrative) of normality that broadcast imprecise ambivalence. It's precisely these iffy phenomenological disturbances and partial disconnections/connections that one relates to in continuum; i.e., being a part of the space-in-question, the broken home that is nevertheless one's poisoned wellspring and haunted library of nostalgic storybooks. Trauma lives in the body but also the chronotope as something the body absorbs things from—the haunted house as returned to, feeling uncannily familiar and alien, but also *already-occupied* by something close-at hand during uncertain, liminal, *feudalized* ownership (which we'll discuss more at length when we examine friendly [and unfriendly] ghosts in the Humanities primer, but also the King Diamond rock opera in Volume Three, Chapter One): the fear of inheritance; i.e., Walpole's idea of a "secret sin; [an] untold tale, that art cannot extract, nor penance cleanse" from *The Mysterious Mother* (1768). Except incest isn't a "pure myth" relegated to Gothic fiction, but precisely the kind of thing experienced by Mavis, Cuvu and people like them (who extrafamilial predators will mark as having survived, and try to exploit them for in the future; i.e., trauma lives inside you, but also follows you like a curse).



The Western world is generally a place that testifies to its own traumas by fabricating them; i.e., as markers of sovereignty that remain historically unkind to specific groups that nevertheless survive within them as ghosts of unspeakable events linked to systemic abuse. Trauma, in turn, survives through stories corrupted by the presence of said abuse. There is a home resembling a castle, where a ghost—often of a woman—lurks inside having been met with a sorry fate. But undeath is something that can be felt through

echoes of ourselves that aren't diegetically spectral; they *feel* spectral through an uncanny resemblance, like standing over our own graves. This becomes something to play with, akin to an (at-times) humorous, even trashy gallows theatre rife with dark, forbidden language: sin, vice, violent sex, all-around death, and other taboo

subjects discouraged by privileged (and unimaginative) moderates who historically frame the Gothic as a puerile, good-for-nothing backwater while simultaneously suffering from conservative delusions of privilege and/or tokenism (re: Jameson). In other words, the pedagogy of the oppressed faces its classic foil: tone-policing.

Cuwu was one of my exes, and the sole one living with rape trauma of a sexual nature. As stated earlier in Volume One and in Volume Zero, our relationship was far from perfect. Even so, listening to them about their trauma still *changed* how I felt about older media, hence the world. When Cuwu and I watched *Ninja Scroll*, for instance, I knew I was sharing a movie that I had watched for years—had grown up on, in fact. However, I didn't realize until after how limited and *stuck* my point of view was; with it, I had never noticed the deeper nuances of the film's rapacious violence, which could only be seen from a different, ultimately asexual point of view. Being different but also no stranger to rape, Cuwu noticed them immediately. As we watched the movie, I gave Cuwu trigger warnings for the upcoming rape scenes (for which they thanked me). Those bothered them far more than the "manly" violence did, the rape making them "go blank" and dissociate.

After the film was over, we talked about it from Cuwu's point of view as someone I related to in both sexual and asexual ways. Doing so frankly opened my eyes to what, for them, was an everyday experience: living with the trauma and threat of rape as something for you and others to behold, often as voyeurs, but also as BDSM practitioners fetishizing our own survived abuse in psychosexual, Gothic forms. Many of the fantasies that Cuwu and I played out reflected the sorts of unspoken abuses generally granted some kind of voice in Gothic fictions. The choking hand is, at its most basic level, meant to *relieve* stress from having seen



something stressful that reminds you of an abuser who *won't* follow your commands:

For the non- or less-abused, it generally doesn't register that we are, in fact, watching a rapacious ceremony when we look at eroticized material; and sometimes we see what we *think* is rape only to be mistaken. Regardless of which, historical materialism has Cartesian dualism, the Gothic

chronotope, and the colonial binary reflecting in porn as something to lament, parody or relish in paradoxical ways. "Hardcore" porn, for example, is generally emblemized by penetration as adjacent to violence—if not within the text, than the mind of someone who has survived abuse and seeks it out in some shape or

form; this book considers monsters and erotica as part of a larger equation where violence is implied, including artwork and sex work where consent is a seemingly tenuous proposition.

As outlined in our paratextual documents, this book contains no illegal material—no revenge porn, child porn, snuff porn—but it does examine things generally thought of as porn that are unironically violent. It does so in ways we might fail to recognize because canonical porn has been made so normal to us, including humiliating displays and threats of capture and violence. In Gothic stories, these threats become something to play with as a psychosexual means of calculated risk; raw sex and rape fantasies are a common playground for the abused that tries to help us see what they see (and try to express) every day of their lives:



(artist: [Babie Biscuittt](#))

As our thesis argues, this goes well beyond cinema and into videogames. Rather than point to *Metroidvania*, the example that mostly immediately leaps to mind for me—and one that actually matches the "hard R" approach to rape fantasies seen in *The Terminator* and *Ninja Scroll*—is *Doki Doki Literature Club*. In the holistic spirit of this book, I wanted to mention it quickly as it happens to match both Cuwu's psychosexual fantasies, but also their intense desire to explore and talk about these things. Then we'll conclude the postscript by examining my relating to Cuwu through *Ninja Scroll* and the various things *that* resulted.

Doki Doki Literature Club has a particular performative focus: the *unheimlich*, but specifically the ghost as relayed through a particular Gothic meta; i.e., one where sublimation fails and we look at something that isn't diegetically consensual nor original, but replicated in ways that have become self-aware: a dating simulator that protests its own exploitation (exhibit 16a). Yet the paradox of Gothic rape is that it is "half-real"—written to convey the unspeakable as a fictional event to view voyeuristically from the outside; it also is conveyed by cosplayers, illustrators and other creators who communicate the thrilling proposition of transgressive sex as a kind of "buffer." Made for them to express themselves with, their liminal expressions violate societal norms to convey alien forms of sex that are actually sex-positive through iconoclastic praxis. Gothic Communism can reunite us with these forms through what we create as acquired by studying older works,

voyeuristically flirting with the boundaries of the real and the imagined as constantly reimagined in our favor.



(exhibit 16a: Top-left: [source](#); top-middle: [Two Bratty Cats](#); everything else [is from Nisego's Twitter timeline](#).

"Fun" fact: to beat *Doki Doki Literature Club*, you have to go into the game's code and delete Monika, the game's "Satanic" protagonist; i.e., "killing" Monika in ways that go directly against the game's "coding" of the player through normalized instruction.

This mastery of the player by the game is common in game types that disempower players for trying to master the game; e.g., horror games, but especially *Metroidvania*. As I write in "Our Ludic Masters":

Game mastery is a large part of my research. However, I'm interested in players being dominated by the game, not the other way around. Seth Giddings and Helen Kennedy touch on this in "[Little Jesuses and *@#?-off Robots](#)" [2008]. They write:

conventional assumptions that players learn the game system to achieve mastery over it—and that this mastery is the source of the prime pleasure of gameplay—is in fact an inversion of the dynamics and pleasures of videogame play. Games configure their players, allowing progression through the game only if the players recognize what they are being prompted to do, and comply with these coded instructions [13-14].

*According to them, the game prompts the player. My argument is less interested in games at large, and more in the relationship between players and *Metroidvania* [[source](#)].*

The same scrutiny and invention applies to games like Doki Doki Literature Club, which likewise treat mastery and consent as existing between a shared [and unstable] ludic contract by players and the game.)

The game's dark, steep eroticism might seem hyperbolic, but its dating-sim *unheimlich* was par for the course for myself and someone I felt connected to: a haunted text that spoke to shared trauma replicated inside Gothic media we could share and talk about, but also perform. Cuwu was intensely erotic, but also politically outspoken in ways that gelled with my usual analysis of said stories; our consummation of their taboo fantasies involved someone who reminded me of my younger twenty-something self, but also was their own person: a self-declared Marxist-Leninist who seemed equally drawn to me and my traumas through stories that I consumed in an almost voyeuristic manner. My voyeurism was no secret to them, but also was informed by my upbringing as something I *explained* to Cuwu. To that, I am a *consensual voyeur* by virtue of a rather complicated set of ingredients; i.e., I always ask for permission and seek out my fantasies through negotiated boundaries between me and those I play with. This was less taught to me and more something I picked up on my own journey through life involving a variety of educational factors loaded with their own contradictions and nuance.

For one, I was exposed to sex at a very young age. Dad would leave porno tapes in the VCR player and I saw part of one when I was four (my mother racing out of the bedroom to rip the tape out of the player when I cried, "What is she doing?" from the living room). I also was fascinated by his collection of *Playboys* and would sneak into my parents' bedroom while Dad wasn't around (which he generally wasn't—he was off having affairs with many different women around town: basically the village man-whore being sampled by all the bored housewives). My mother didn't want me to consume such stories until I was "of age," but couldn't watch me all the time, either (they did catch me looking at the *Playboys* once and told me to stop, but I didn't listen). Rather than act like a helicopter parent, she taught me to respect women... except her notion of "women" was informed by stories that mirrored her own lived experiences: stories like *The Terminator* and *Ninja Scroll*, where women are damsels who *sometimes* get raped by men; where men are rapists *unless* they're the heroes like Kyle Reese or Ryan Gosling's titular Driver (or Liam Neeson's many doubles of himself, as we examined in Volume Zero) who use their inherent, monstrous capacity for lethal violence to save women as Gothic antiheroes famously do; and where women consequently put out to reward good men for saving them from bad men. The exchange of sex for protection was an absolute, sacred fact in Mom's mind, and one that informed my upbringing and interrogating of said texts, myself.

Since I was small, I always pondered about appropriated violence and rape fantasies, though I didn't know that's what these things were. Eventually I learned, meeting Cuwu as someone who liked to ponder about and transmute these stories

into transgressively sex-positive forms. A lot of proletarian-minded workers do, male or female. But Cuwu taught me that getting "ravished" can be incredibly fun, thrilling and/or hilarious. Likewise, "ravishing" someone who's high, asleep or both can be super fucking hot *provided* it's mutually consensual *in advance* (someone can't consent after they're drunk or asleep). Cuwu taught me that.

Cuwu also taught me that appreciative, sex-positive rape fantasies are not actually rape (they loved the show *Lucifer* and would fantasize about being "taken" by the actor of that show as someone sexy and strong but also a little dangerous). I learned this while having a previous understanding that appropriative, canonical rape fantasies function as rape *threats* at various registers; e.g., "be a good girl and don't have extra-/premarital sex or Jason Voorhees will cut your head off with a machete!" As it turns out, unironic and ironic rape fantasies and demon lovers are tremendously common, but so is their eliding during liminal expressions that seek healing from rape through "rape." Such ubiquity comments on state abuse as ever-present, but denied, displaced, dissociated—*abject*. Spending time with Cuwu, I learned how to reverse this through our own demonic, ludo-Gothic BDSM. We could play around with "rape" as a form of theatre, involving many of the usual cliché activities (choaking and sleep sex, but also BDSM commands and unequal power arrangements; e.g., Cuwu being my mommy dom): Gothic fantasies invoke the heroic person as *capable* of murder and rape, but *choosing* not to. In sex-positive iterations, the fear mechanism assists the calculated risk to heal from rape during *echoes* of state abuse. Perfect for the damaged damsel seeking a Gothic antihero!



(*exhibit 16b: Model and artist: Cuwu and [Persephone van der Waard](#). The painting is a meditation on trauma; i.e., healing from abusive partners by painting them as friendlier ghosts of their former likenesses, thus capturing how I fell in love with them but omitting the abusive elements [to haunt me with a palliative spirit, not a crippling one]. It also considers how those who have been abused can teach us how to heal from trauma, while relating to them face-to-face. Generally, there is a fair amount of overlap between victim and victimizer, and Cuwu, while having been abused themselves, was also a prolific and lengthy abuser. Needless to say, they taught me a great deal about healing from trauma through consent-non-consent rituals, but also surviving from*

trauma perpetrated by them against me.)

Furthermore, whether autobiographical or not, traumatic artifice is informed by our immediate surroundings: what we see and consume, including stories like *Ninja Scroll* as a reflection on the past, but also a guide into future forms of a cultural understanding of the imaginary past (the Wisdom of the Ancients) through interactions just like the ones Cuwu and I shared. As Gothic Communists, this becomes a strange relationship to the voyeuristic ritual of psychosexual violence as cathartic in ways that allow for sex-positive wish fulfillment: of "killing" one's rapist while also not hurting anyone, or being "raped" by someone who cannot harm the "victim." This negotiates a future boundary—to draw in the proverbial sand, should we become threateningly triggered during our day-to-day relationships, but also *enthralled*. To this, people don't often see their abusers and just "let them in." Like vampires, murderers come to you with smiles; they trick you based on disguises pulled from canon. It's what Jadis did, sweeping me right off my feet as a sexy black knight. Sometimes, then, the only way to avoid abuse is to learn from those who have been abused—abuser personas and pluralities included. Often, this education is through the consumption and shared processing of trauma adopted from less unironic, bloodthirsty forms:



(exhibit 17a: Ninja girl Kagero fights the stone-skinned, fascist-coded Tessai, a brutal, seemingly-invincible monster who works for the mysterious Shogun of the Dark. After Tessai kills her crush and rapes her, Kagero "uses" the poison in her body as a passive revenge against this stupid, violent man. Post-rape, the male hero, Jubei Kibagami, distracts Tessai long enough for

Jubei and Kagero to escape. Once they're safe, she hardens; Jubei takes the hint and skedaddles, but after he's gone, Kagero sobs. The quiet anguish she feels is denoted as animalistic, closer-to-nature like the breeding fireflies all around her. It's not something Jubei could really understand.)

It was tremendously eye-opening to relate to Cuwu through *Ninja Scroll* adjacent to our psychosexual experiments. Despite Cuwu abusing me (and others; discussed in Volume Zero), seeing what they saw through their eyes helped me see

boundaries before that I never knew existed, but also dangers; I felt differently about the violence I had grown up enjoying as a kind of voyeuristic peril—saw rape in ways that made me empathize, but also identify with, the victim through my own complex abuse: Cuwu, but also myself, with my forgotten egregore, Alyona. Without really intending to, my own pedagogy and oppression had linked with Cuwu's. After that, I wrote a small piece about *Ninja Scroll*. I haven't shared it until now, but want to in order to demonstrate how *profoundly* my views changed when hearing a survivor's testimony with empathetic ears *despite having done my best already to change*. If this book is any proof at all, genuine ideological change takes serious fucking work.

My thoughts on *Ninja Scroll*, written May 10th, 2022 (written the day my Uncle Dave died, which will become relevant in the roadmap):

Erotic and violent, tremendously illustrated and animated—Ninja Scroll demands to be seen. It's also a very much a film about looking. Specifically, at the ninja girl, Kagero. "Look how beautiful she is!" the movie seems to ask, a byproduct of its '90s Male Gaze. The Male Gaze, in academic terms, applies to a specific point of view, one fostered by media that caters to a male status quo—sex and violence, generally. This view is often literal, the screen filled from second to second with objects, subjects and moments that inform a compulsive heteronormative stance. Think of it as "audience-coding behavior." What is seen remains afterward inside the mind.

I've seen Ninja Scroll many, many times. However, it [wasn't] until very recently that I understood a key moment in the film: the antidote scene. I never fully grasped why Jubei and Kagero hesitated. She seemed to be attracted to him; he admitted that both of them were comrades. Why hesitate to save his life in what should, at first glance, be an alluring proposition? The answer lies in context, something the movie adequately provides but never spells out: Both the young man and young woman are being forced to have sex by a government spy called Dakuan [exhibit 17b]. This lecherous old can "watch" by asking Jubei about it later. While there's nothing wrong about watching provided it's consensual, in the case of Jubei and Kagero, it's not: Dakuan has poisoned Jubei (obviously without his permission) knowing full-well that only Kagero can save him.

The movie mentions several times that one kiss from Kagero's mouth is poisonous enough to kill someone—let alone vaginal penetration, phallic or otherwise. So, coitus with Jubei isn't actually required. It is, however, the one option that Dakuan repeatedly demands of Jubei and Kagero. "Did you make love to the ninja girl?" he asks Jubei, over and over. However, Dakuan also knows that each will be hesitant towards helping the other. Traumatized on- and offscreen, Kagero fears closeness (for men only bring her pain).

Jubei understands this, respecting Kagero too much to subject her to that kind of anguish, even from a kiss.

The tragedy is that Kagero wants to help Jubei, but remains understandably conflicted. Apart from Hanza, who dies during the opening battle, Jubei seems to be the one man in Japan Kagero actually wants to sleep with. She knows the full extent of her poison as well as anyone, and she wants more from Jubei than kisses; but for Jubei, even a kiss from Kagero is asking too much. This conflict is incredibly useful to an unscrupulous man like Dakuan, who use the comrade's growing friendship-amid-turmoil to sexually exploit them.



(exhibit 17b: After Jubei leaves Kagero, she is forced to report to the Lord Chamberlain, who—unbeknownst to her—is really Lord Genma in disguise. To add insult to injury from our point of view and Kagero's in different ways: a) the "chamberlain" is rude to Kagero while fucking his murder victim's concubine and b) is lying to us as non-diegetic voyeurs. Meta! Following that, we meet Dakuan, the government spy. Kagero doesn't like him and frankly he's a duplicitous old creep [still a backstabber but more willing to bargain with Jubei than Genma is]. Dakuan constantly leers at Kagero, watching her and Jubei grow closer. Eventually he plays "coercive matchmaker," trying to force them to have sex so he can hear about it. Jubei, ever the gentleman, merely gives Kagero what she's wanted from the start: a hug. Ace!)

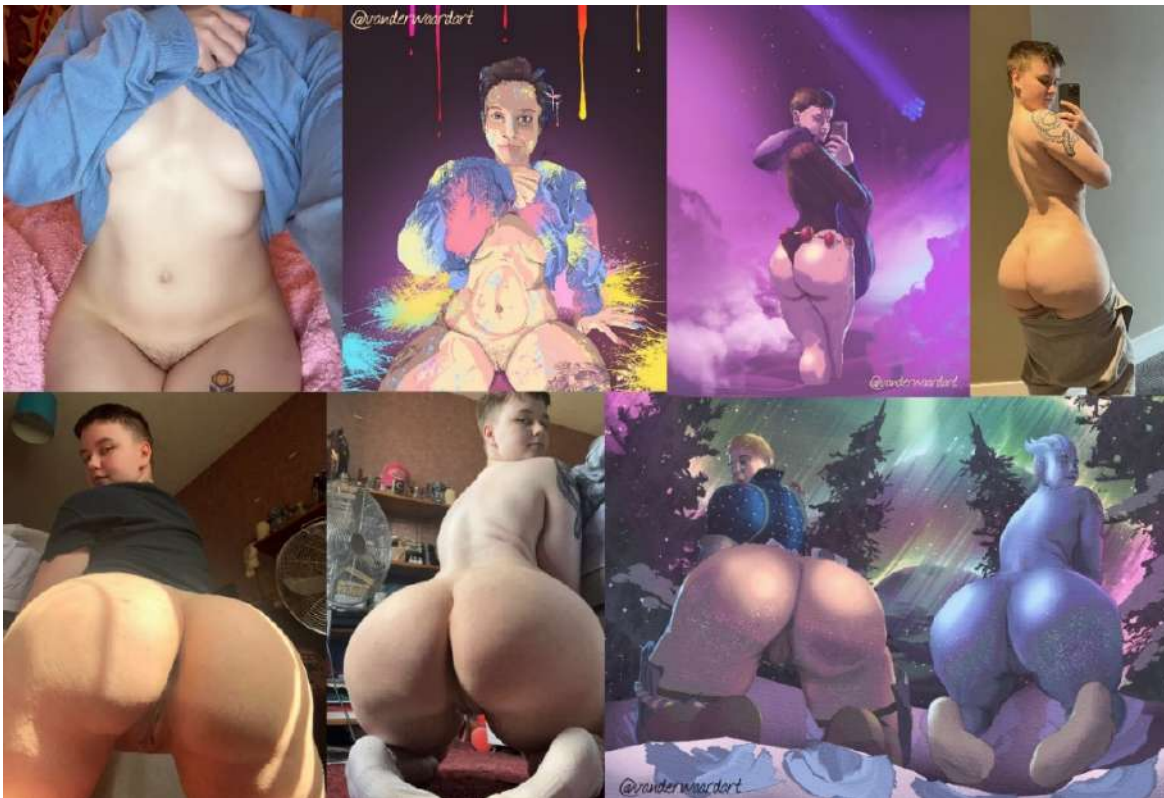
Similar to Jadis, my relationship with Cuwu did not last, but they did teach me lasting lessons about how to perform, play with, and exchange stories of

psychosexual trauma through Gothic poetics and ludo-Gothic BDSM. The takeaway moral with *Cuwu* and *Ninja Scroll* (and *The Terminator* and similar Gothic stories) is that it's tremendously important to learn from more disadvantaged groups when you occupy a dominant position, even if we have lived through trauma ourselves and regularly consume voyeuristic peril. For example, the critic Chris Stuckmann—despite escaping from a Jehovah's Witness commune [and having difficulty addressing his own trauma](#) (2021)—still likes to call *Ninja Scroll* "[blood and boobs... and more boobs—boobs, boobs, boobs.](#)" He seems to notice the *presence* of boobs far more than *what's happening to the owners*—that all of them are being undressed, raped and otherwise exploited by the diegetic narrative for the film's target audience: cis-het men, but especially white *American* men. Stuckmann never once mentions rape in his brief review—merely that his mother wouldn't let him watch it because the parental advisory label read "absolutely not for children or anyone under the age of eighteen" (a rape-porn paywall, essentially).

When reviewing *Ninja Scroll*, Stuckmann clearly understood one form of abuse, but came off incredibly tone deaf about another. However, some traumatized people can go on to clearly draw lines in the sand, whereupon they deliberately punch up and down from—swatting at low-hanging fruit while also attacking groups lower than them in willful tone-deafness (so-called "middle-aged moments"). This applies to the veneer of generosity we mentioned earlier—re: "We have done nice things; therefore, we can do no wrong." Known atheist and ex-Mormon, Jimmy Snow, did this against Essence of Thought, [tone-policing them for critiquing a fellow member of the atheist community](#) (Rhetoric & Discourse, 2021) despite Jimmy having critiqued Mormons for doing the same exact thing. It's a "boundaries for me, not for thee" scenario, but also pulverized solidarity/equality of convenience being weaponized against different activist groups, which the elite financially incentivize to prevent direct, collective worker action and solidarity when opposing the state.

Put a pin in that for now; we'll return to it later. For now, just consider that when someone refuses to change once exposed, this becomes an informed compromise between negative freedom (freedom from restrictions) and positive freedoms (freedom for oppressed groups); doing so harms worker solidarity by negotiating with power towards a *shrinking* state of exception (which we'll see when we examine TERFs, but also NERFs and atheists/secular reactionaries in Volume Three, Chapter Four). Ideally there should be *no* state of exception, vanishing the bourgeoisie and spreading power horizontally in ways that abolish privatization and nation-state monopolies through direct, intersecting worker solidarity geared towards preventing war and rape by using Gothic poetics to worker's emotional/Gothic intelligence in their daily lives. These ideas are central to proletarian praxis, which Volume Three is entirely about, and which our synthesis roadmap will introduce beyond what the postscript could merely suggest. The

artwork bellow constitutes further examples of such solidarity made in collaboration with myself and other sex workers:



(exhibit 18a: Top-left, model and artist: [Venusinaries](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#); top-right and bottom left/right: [Scarlet Love](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#).)

Gothic Communism is built on systemic catharsis, which results from good praxis. Let's take stock before we delve into the synthesis roadmap, then, which simplifies theory to synthesize praxis within a collective teaching approach; i.e., how to process and interrogate trauma in our daily lives. Combined with the thesis volume and glossary keywords, the manifesto and its postscript provide you with every *main theoretical idea* used in this book. Everything that comes next concerns applying ideas taken from them, insofar as navigating and expressing trauma are concerned. Originally, there was *no* thesis—just the manifesto as a sketch of it, and a great many ideas I wanted to introduce after it; i.e., inside the roadmap and in Volumes Two and Three. I had also devised a "test" to see what readers would know *before* reading the rest of *Sex Positivity* and discovering these ideas: a small sample essay that utilized the sum of my books' theoretical devices. Purely in the spirit of fun, I've left the essay in the book for you to test yourselves with—i.e., to see what you've learned *after* reading my thesis volume and manifesto/postscript. Provided you've read and processed those, this should be a piece of cake.

Gothic Communism, a sample essay: "Cornholing the Corn Lady—*Ghostbusters: Afterlife* and Empire"

Edward Said's book Culture and Imperialism was well received in the United States, but provoked some bad-tempered responses in the United Kingdom [...] The reason for the bad temper, one might suspect, was that as the imperial power principally targeted in his book's historical discussions there remained a legacy of colonists' guilt in Great Britain. Particular exception was taken by British commentators to Said's chapter, "Jane Austen and Empire," and its triumphant conclusion: "Yes, Austen belonged to a slave-owning society."

—John Sutherland, "Where Does Sir Thomas' Wealth Come From?" *Is Heathcliff A Murderer?* (1996)



This Gothic-Communist essay demonstrates me as the *unideal* reader of neoliberal canon. It was written in the spirit of fun, using the Six Rs and Four Gs to critique the Gothic mode of Jason Reitman's canonical expression and a debate of sorts with ghosts of different kinds. Classic works are one such ghost, and one that must be invoked to say whatever one wants to say. But there are also the spectres of oppression and of Marx that can be invoked in a variety of ways: in the figurative language of dialectical-material analysis and historical materialism, but also thoroughly Gothic dialogics *Sex Positivity* prides itself at assembling and navigating. If the zombified spirit of Ronald Reagan is "alive" in 2023, then Angela Carter's fateful, 1974 words ring truer than ever: "We live in Gothic times." Allow me, then, a chance to express that now—by barbecuing a sacred foal begot from the neoliberal 1980s: *Ghostbusters: Afterlife*.

Before we do, a note about Austen and Said's bone to pick with her (as she is someone I've defended already in my thesis argument). My essay is iconoclastic, its

proletarian praxis speaking to speaks to an enjoyment of the critical process on par with Edward Said's "pleasures of exile." Such a concept is hardly new, in the sense that Said riffed on Austen, "farting in Britain's general direction" to say something larger about that country's colonial guilt through their hypercanonical literature mom. That was new for the time (and useful to Gothic Communism for us). My essay does something similar in opposition to Gothic canon as something that is very much alive and well, and far less "quiet" than Austen's *Mansfield Park*. Said is forced into, as John Sutherland puts it, "the awkward speculation, 'Sir Thomas's property in the Caribbean *would have had to be* a sugar plantation maintained by slave labour (not abolished until the 1830s)'" and the "dead silence [that] pretty well describes *Mansfield Park's* dealing with Antigua" (*ibid.*); the Gothic is far louder because it's working with a kind of language whose "silence" is anything but quiet.

Even with Said debating Austen's "ghost" *minus* Gothic poetics, there's considerable merit to arguing with spectres and the unspoken (re: Castricano's *cryptomimesis*, or "writing with ghosts," which I expanded to "writing with monsters"). Indeed, doing so is a time-honored activity that largely makes up what the Gothic is. And while Said's dialogs are certainly not without weight, they're also nearly two centuries further along than Austen's. To that, it's certainly true there's a complete lack of urgency in Austen's novel surrounding any kind of modern importance that Said assigns to postcolonial concerns. These would have been absent in Austen's time, with her focusing entirely on the struggles of a rising class of property that was quickly becoming a class of *people* in a slave-owning society through a particular novelistic convention: white women inside the novel of manners. It shouldn't really be surprising that she kept mum on certain topics; e.g., her pointedly roundabout and indirect conversation between Eleanor Dashwood and Colonel Brandon showcasing how neither can bring themselves to utter the word "duel" in polite company. But if her stories are any clue, she was profoundly apt at navigating the expanding-if-sequestered place of white women in an incredibly material world, and not without a considerable degree of irony ("It is a truth universally acknowledged...") and dialectical-material analysis behind a veil that all women in her time were expected to wear by tone-policing white men; furthermore, as we have already explored in Volume Zero, Austen certainly wasn't above critiquing the open, if deliberately moderate, bigotries of Ann Radcliffe's own Gothic Orientalism (the further east you go, the darker it gets) when writing *Northanger Abbey* (written in 1803, published in 1817 after Austen's death).

We shall press these Gothic voicings to our advantage in this essay. My point about Said is that I think he—ever in a hurry to outline the very-real and ever-present presence of American Imperialism in the Middle East—thoroughly underestimates/discounts the ubiquity (and degree) of the powerful forces that Austen was writing under as a white woman. It would be a mistake to lump Austen in with so many of her imitators and contemporaries, in part because her *Mansfield* protagonist, Sutherland rightly points out, "belongs to the Clapham Sect of

evangelical Christianity, which hated plays and light morality only less slightly than it loathed slavery" (*ibid.*). Said's overall conclusions certainly aren't wrong about Imperialism, but his assertions about Austen are largely words put in her mouth by *his* pen (kinky), which he then argues with to make his point. The problem is, he assumes her silence to be indicative of a particular kind of guilt, when Austen's shame at writing at all became a matter of legend after her death: "How could I possibly join them on to the little bit (two inches wide) of Ivory on which I work with so fine a Brush, as produces little effect after much Labour?" ([source](#): Zoe Louca-Richards' "Two Inches of Ivory: A New(ish) Jane Austen Acquisition," 2020).



(artist: [Touminnn](#))

That's the problem with ghosts in regards to trauma writing and illustrations: they yield a fictitious, imaginary component to unspeakable systemic abuse supplied by the *critic* seeking to give said abuse voice, and Said's invention (as with many invocations of Austen) is not entirely of the woman herself but her reputation and the spirit (and shackles) of the British Empire stretching into *Pax Americana* following the so-called "end of history" in 1991 (*Culture and Imperialism* and *Spectres of Marx* were both written in 1993). As with all Gothic histories,

though, there's a considerable amount of truth to had through a familiarity with what *is* being said, unsaid, or supplied through various cryptonymies that indicate a presence of trauma.

Keep this in mind as we proceed onto *Ghostbusters*, picking a bone with how American neoliberalism and Hollywood abuse Gothic poetics in order to uphold the status quo in fairly standard regressions. For them, and for Radcliffe as a spirit to evoke married to global Capitalism, ghosts are things to summon, feel anxious/fearful-fascinated about (through the ghost of the counterfeit), then exorcise in defense of the status quo using the process of abjection—to cut off Medusa's "head," in so many words, of which invoke a manufactured imaginary past that upholds a particular place and time as sacred: the conservative 1980s as copy of itself wherein copies of the imaginary past are reduplicated *now* to send us

spiraling backwards into the self-same myopia; i.e., the scared, commercial-minded brains of white women, but especially the vulnerable consuming public inheriting the commodified fears of said women as taken from oppressed groups (and nature), repackaged, and sold back to the middle class.

These poetics are things to reclaim through our own pedagogy, which requires dialectically-materially scrutinizing "*Ghostbusters: Afterlife* and Empire." The film, then, offers up its own Medusa to behead, commenting as it does so on the veneration of old clichés within bourgeois praxis and Cartesian thought as parts of the larger Gothic mode: Halloween as a canonical ghost of itself that is conjured up and vanquished in the same breath. *Ghostbusters: Afterlife* offers up blind war pastiche to canonically requote of an older version of the same basic franchise and its ghostly Medusa. This time around, Gozer—a ghostly "corn lady" (of the harvest, Halloween)—is coercively demonized, blamed for the downfall of all things by a mad "dirt farmer" whose own selfish legacy is restored to greatness when Gozer is exposed as "real." Made material, she must be stopped—if not at her made-up temple than in the cornfields she imbues with ghostly menace (questioning elite sovereignty by challenging middle-class essentialism regarding these fields and their assorted yields). Her subsequent summoning and slaughter is hauntological torture porn; i.e., the fascist myth of the conspiratorial Great Foe both weak and strong confirmed and validated during her ritual sacrifice by the ghost police: the Ghostbusters.



(artist: [Alex Milne](#))

Thoroughly sexist, these Enlightenment pillars of reason can so barely get past Gozer's short, dyke-ish hair that anything else is unimaginable: "Hey, flap top!" As such, they see Gozer exclusively as an agent of chaos upending the order of American civilization reduced to a localized portraited of itself; i.e., an illegitimate terrorist threat to the Cartesian romance of the New York cityscape, but also the American Midwest and its endless farmlands acquired through genocide. To this, any sense of counterterrorist power is omitted *on purpose*, Capitalist Realism robbing our ghost queen of a critical voice/pedagogy of the oppressed. She isn't a source of legitimate female rage bucking at canonical war and rape, but an unironic plague on American crops and essentialized culture covering up American atrocities. Displaced,

disguised and disseminated by neoliberal, Patriarchal forces, the symptoms of Capitalism-as-a-disease in *Afterlife* are gaslit, gatekept and girl-bossed by the bourgeois men behind the curtain. *Afterlife* is their own narrative of dynastic power exchange and hereditary power rites—the master plan/grand design as a self-confirming prophecy that recruits children to war, shames non-conservative values and Gothic expression with *regressive* Gothic poetics, and turns scientists superstitious in canonical worship of oscillating pastiche both narrow and broad; para, meta, and diegetic; liminal expressions that are automatically colonized; etc.

If anyone thinks I'm being unfair to Reitman, he a) lives in a historical period well after Said wrote *Culture and Imperialism*—i.e., when the horrors of America's business-as-usual have been covered up not once, but repeatedly through myopic Gothic nostalgia; and b) speaks quite loudly *through* Gothic nostalgia to accomplish bourgeois aims. Purely by design, neoliberal Capitalism relegates linguo-material play along formalized lines that colonize everything into black-and-white/us-versus-them Cartesian dualism, heteronormativity and settler colonialism; Rietman's ghosts trumpet a pro-state Gothic dialog to speak to American conservatism as a particular invention useful to the elite through a warlike consumer base bred on Gothic canon. Its (mono)mythic structure appropriates peril through these various means, with a particular ludic, sexually dimorphic structure—indeed, a war plan straight out of the Metroidvania model: miniboss keys (the Gatekeeper and Keymaster) that lead to the Big (female) Bad. Meanwhile, the Ghostbusters work as wizard-warrior "ghost cops" (on call, like Samus Aran to vanquish pirates for the Federation). In this case, personal responsibility frames the Ghostbusters as working-class "rebels" (whitewashed fascism) that seek and destroy Gozer and her generals in order to return to a "better" time—i.e., "the Regan years when the economy was good" and moral panic was high; when the children of yesteryear were taught to fight ghosts, but also see them as something to "fight with" using toy weapons. Miniatures for real weapons, these knights-templar-in-training would have been taught to worship their order as sacred, seeing their cutesy ghost enemies as simultaneously dangerous. In other words, the enemy is both weak and strong and hooks kids on the displaced, dissociative violence of appropriated, canonical peril. They're conditioned to worship old dead men and their ghostly simulacra, but also their warlike, Enlightenment view of endlessly bloody worship being consciously sold back to them. Don't think; react and consume!

The cultural result is a mire of canonical Gothic doubles—recycled clichés in support of a larger commercial model's parallel space/chronotope: dumbly abject monster battles with complicitly cryptonymic scapegoats, carceral hauntology and sex-coercive family values. So while the single, white mother is dumb as a brick and shamed for being poor and single, her child returns to the violent traditions she rejected; in love with a man she never met and a time in which she never lived, Phoebe overlooks the stigmas of these times appearing in the present: how extramarital sex is shamed and fetishized as ongoing wish fulfillment for the

parent-age workers, the local nerd promised wild animal bitches and the women compliant unto these entitled dweebs. It's the hellish ghost of Ronald Reagan in action, his Vampire-Zombie Capitalism turning the younger generation towards the very traditions the previous generation had grown jaded towards; i.e., all the bullshit and false splendor that Reagan (and men like him) promised in Gothic forms: the Gatekeeper and the Keymaster. All of this is enacted paratextually by a diegetic meta-performance that comments on the men behind the curtain, of the curtain, on the curtain, in service of the Symbolic Order as set in stone. Jason Reitman follows in his daddy's footsteps—just like our little, ace girl boss, Phoebe, follows in her grandfathers' footsteps—and both registers channel Reagan who serves Patriarchal Capitalism and its appropriated perils, monsters and confusion. The sum of their patchy teamwork of concentric deceptions is an age-old Gothic cliché: the lie told by pirates to scare people away so the thieves can loot and plunder in plain sight (*Radcliffe's* refrain). Egon is the patriarchal lie told using their neoliberal war chest—a staggering amount of industrialized artifice and narrative guile dressed up as "movie magic" and worshipped by apathetic nerds of all sorts:



(exhibit 18b: Sorry to burst your bubbles, here, but this ain't "movie magic"; it's canonical bullshit. "Brought to life" is also a bit of a misnomer, though the illusion still lives on inside the minds of target consumers who worship the process. As an artist, I can respect its power, but am leery of its abuses. Regardless if these were the best or most effective techniques, make no mistake: The studio used

expensive, time-consuming methods [to bring an actor's likeness back to life](#), using that privatized "ghost" to sell the story of what Ramis played a smaller part in—not once, but over and over within a [database](#) of wax sculptures for the Gothic theatre of canonical war. Within that grander narrative, the real horror [for me] is watching the cute and intelligent Phoebe slowly turn into a little dog of war for Grandpa "Ramis," controlled by an ascending ladder of vertical puppeteers. It's frankly awful stuff, on par with watching John Ford [middle bottom-middle] curl his claw-like hands around Belinda Palmer's body. Maybe [Chinatown](#) [1974] was "all fake." However, just like Judy Garland before her, the reality behind [that](#) scintillate rainbow [and plausible deniability of the 4th wall] remained terribly bleak: Polanski was a rapist and everything was done for profit by corporate Hollywood goons and paid actors who looked the other way.

So, think of the workers, you animals! Protect them, whoever they might be. Don't turn them—and by extension, the audience—into heartless monsters concerned with illusions and dreams of revenge. McKenna Grace might turn out just fine; the smaller role they play as Pheobe remains part of a larger cover-up of systemic abuses that happen inside and outside of the film industry. Moreover, [Afterlife's](#) grander '80s hauntology romances the very real and very terrible things not just under [Reagan's](#) administration, but the [continued](#) existence of the United States and its unholy union of state and corporation already spread across the entire planet.)

Canonical praxis, in this case, is Phoebe: our little Velma-to-be, a detective-warrior debutante seeking revenge (Gozer killed her surrogate dad, Grandpa Egon). Phoebe's asexual appropriation keeps her chaste, superstitious and curiously leery of ghosts, but converted into neoliberal Capitalism's fiercest warrior during the formulaic narrative. From skeptic to true-believer, she gradually takes up Egon's baton and—ever the dutiful grandpa's girl—begins to listen to the ambiguous whispers of the past. Egon is invisible for nearly the entire film; his instructions are not. Their doubling and voice-in-the-walls disembodiment work as a cryptonym for the tyrant as a rehabilitated monster—a sweet old man and *not* the worst of the bunch even though the movie presents him that way to "disprove" it later. This requires a naïve, child-soldier host, but also a bogeywoman—"the muffin to toast," the Corn Queen to cornhole for threatening the kid: ol' Gozer. Gozer is the movie's scapegoat, its wicked old witch (which the film's token girl of color calls "pretty woke for 3000 BC"—hauntological xenophobia layered over the present as an already-reinvented place being reinvented again and again).

In this case, Gozer is someone the new recruits must train to confront, starting with smaller cute ghosts, then the bigger terror dogs (the false rebellion of angsty teens hating their parents only to forgive them, crumbling the dogs to dust). From here, our child heroes exhibit the worrying traits of a police force in-the-making: Phoebe makes quick work of main street, she and her rag-tag team driving

like a bat outta hell as they capture the ghost for destroying private property—privatizing said property through a "boundaries for me, not for thee" approach that has them locked up, then forgiven (the token black cop is never mentioned again) and rearmed to "save the world." Rietman dresses up the wacky medieval hauntology of something as ridiculous and vile as the KKK, presenting "us versus them" in neoliberal dogma; i.e., cute kids slaying "ghosts" on par with Tolkien's orcs: an endless manufactured enemy wherein nature is divided into good/evil, familiar/alien halves, commodified and pitted against itself—their lynching performed on both sides of a settler-colonial argument until the end of time, naturalized (e.g., "We are the only people on Earth asked to guarantee the security of our occupier. While Israel is the only country that calls for defense from its victims." —Hanan Ashrawi). In the process, he burns the town partly to ash by inventing a bigger evil to justify his babyface team's centrism—their moral position as simply "good."



(artist: [Vincent van Gogh](#))

Meanwhile, Reitman's ghost of the counterfeit is the usual hysterics tied to nature as colonized, then rebellious: Gozer and all her abortive offshoots as hidden among the corn rows; i.e., Jim Crow but also the Archaic Mother as imported from older times and "other" places. Their rage concerns the burn-to-ash policy of Capitalism on its frontiers mirroring fabled U.S. enemies in whitewashed, homegrown domestics (themselves standing on stolen land and scorched, blood-soaked earth): the food of slaves (corn bread, oil and meal, etc) treated as fine cuisine stolen from the Indians, given to African slaves and romanced by a white, utterly privileged dialogic equipped with its own forms of imaginary bondage: the fearful reverence of such places and their hauntings (re: Jameson's describing of the *canonical* Gothic [I would steelman] as a "class fantasy (or nightmare) in which the dialectic of privilege and shelter is exercised"). At home, it's all fun and games; on the front, people are dying in ways utterly alien to these New York transplants

"exiled" to Oklahoma (a war camp whose "dirt farm" raises soldier children out of the soil in pursuit of the state of exception). War and rape; "lions, tigers and bears, oh my!" While the thinning of the membrane and confrontation with spirits during the fall harvest is utterly at home in the Gothic imagination, its evocation in *Pax Americana's* "Southern Gothic" becomes mired in repressed forms of settler-colonial guilt that complicate the poetics at hand: a plantation fantasy haunted by dead Indigenous peoples, rebellious workers, assorted minorities and African slaves, but also the corpses of their "ghosts." From the predominantly white middle-class perspective, the unspoken inhabits a place where genocide never stopped, and whose dialogics about it use Gothic poetics in ways Austen only parodied. In 2021, we're left with "There's no place like home" for these menticed little twerps, the latter taught to worship abject war and rape sold as cute, "totally rad" and fun. It's Reagan's neoliberal Halloween stuck on repeat: cheap, bad candy to munch down and absorb as brain-rotting fuel.

Throughout this setting of appropriated harvest phantasms (and their endless commodifying and consumption) lingers a tangible spirit of death that never left after American (thus global) slavery supposedly "ended." Clearly it didn't, and Said is ultimately proven right by insisting that we move beyond the frustratingly quiet past works to finally say the quiet part firmly out loud: Austen's "happy ending" as Sutherland calls it, was itself a ghost, and a sorry one that Austen avoided by dying in 1817. If Austen was more interested in the British class system while she was alive than openly interrogating British Imperialism (which, let's face it, she clearly was), we are not beholden to those same limitations; and furthermore, we can hold Austen accountable because of that.



([source](#))

All this fantastical revenge is happening now in 202[4], after the Pandemic, the War on Terror, the Gulf War, Reagan's Contra Affair (and James Cameron's *Aliens* rescuing Vietnam's "failure" through its own famous girl boss) and various other manufactured crises—instated behind the scenes and apologized for through canonical praxis just like *Ghostbusters: Afterlife*. Moral panic is a bourgeois, *sequel* enterprise. Under it, war and rape are canonically Gothicized as beatified horror monsters, lairs/parallel space and phobias tied to manufactured crises. As instructional material that breathes into Americanized culture and its bellicose social customs, these "gargoyles" tell you

- what to fear—the extramarital sex, foreigners, and ghosts
- who to worship and fear as a dangerous, vague, nebulous target—the Archaic Mother, Gozer the Red-Scare corn lady disassociated through canonically "quaint" Halloween rituals
- who to love and fear—the Ghostbusters, the centrists of a righteous cause, their quant melodies and moral actions being a catchy veil for fascism
- how to fight and kill (to do or die, not question why)

Combined, Reitman Jr.'s façade veils Capitalism's continuous Promethean design, displacing routine collapse and pinning it on a female bogey person ("It's whatever it wants to be" is a double insult having survived for nearly 40 years: Gozer is what the *men* want her to be, then constantly misgendered by Reitman's neoconservative old farts). Not only does this cryptonym disguise fascism's "return" (having never actually left); the entire production harnesses all Four Gs to silence female critics as workers exploited under Capitalism. Instead of sex workers with collective power, they become reduced to abject, queernormative scapegoats—wicked old witches who eat children, possess babes and ostensibly sacrifice either for old nameless gods in hauntological New York or Oklahoma (a site for American genocide as is); i.e., Gozer's temple a counterfeit made by a creepy old man to revive the elite's liminal hauntology of war.



(exhibit 19a: Various stages and actors in two productions nearly 40 years apart).

As a larger production, the sacrificial theatre benefits Patriarchal Capitalism. Workers are enslaved within a patriarchal Symbolic Order through the Gothic mode as canonized. This canonical praxis portrays them as either Gozer or the Ghostbusters (us-versus-them)—either waiting to spring forth and eclipse everything else, confounding the stupid and the faithful, whose canonical icons will

not save them unless the boys get back together and save the day. That's the canonical synthesis present in Reitman and company's intended targets: the children of today urged to become future war orphans, brides, soldiers, victims, and other exploited parties (we will unpack all of these things during the roadmap, primer and in Volume Three, I promise).

The Numinous tableau of 1984 has become a bit more laid back in 2021, but the costumes in 2021 are far better (especially Gozer's). Cosmetic preferences aside, *Afterlife* still concludes with a big battle—one that summons a seemingly invincible Gozer by a pointedly impotent, false man (Fu Manchu-meets-Colonel-Sanders, Ivo Shandor). Faced with her, the "real men" and their wonder weapons must send Gozer back to Hell. Everything happens much as Ivan did it forty years prior, except Ivan's son directs the recuperated ghosts of the past—our soon-to-be-dead old-timers—to clear their names (and clear up the thoroughly bogus spat they had with dear-departed egghead "leader," Egon Spengler) by vanquishing the mythical "wandering womb." They do this by ejaculating proton "streams" (or fiery chains) all over it. It's a veritable "séance bukkake," an abject pissing contest that Gozer just has to sit there and take (which reactionary audiences in 2016 refused to do when an all-girl term castrated the Stay-Puft Marshmallow Man). She's their sorry Sphinx cum dumpster, their unhappy toilet and punching bag to gloriously assault as the Ghostbusters reunite the nuclear family and teach the next in line to fight as they do: like a Roman boy.

Transformed into a tomboy tin soldier, Phoebe hugs Ghost-Yoda Egon; he smiles, proud and satisfied and his zombie Jedi pals pat themselves on the back. The world is saved, personal responsibility reliably venerating the ghost of the tyrant (of the tyrant of the tyrant...) in a broader narrative of the crypt. Everything leading up to this—the trail of ambiguous-but-ultimately-appropriated clichés and fragments—are illusory intimations of a Gothic chronotope that presents the bloodline as literal and figurative: a concentric-holistic dynasty of power exchange and hereditary rites felt on the para, meta and diegetic registers intersecting messily on a singularity of converging fakery and wreckage. Phoebe's glasses double her grandfather's just as her actions do, seeing through "his" eyes; the proton packs are a celebration of mad science as weaponized; the vintage "hearse ambulance" a hauntological fossil that venerates American car culture for the dumb, white American teenager driving stupidly through a corn field. It's propaganda for dumb kids tied to bigger fish to fry: Gay Communism (a cryptonym-inside-a-cryptonym, the cosmic sexpot intimating a desire to quell the combined spirits of native Indigenous peoples and diasporic African slaves haunting the same cornfield).

To that, Gozer is our prehistoric bitch come back from the dead, doomed to play the part of the composite monster bullseye. A starlet censored with burn scars and protoplasmic bubbles, she is liminally abject: a giant cock-tease *and* mind-fucker, hag-dragon-lady chimera (we'll explore the chaos dragon as a Patriarchal

concept more in Volume Three, Chapter One). Even so, Gozer is the Pygmalion artist's nightmare creation, a canonical "inkblot test" where patriarchal dudes simultaneously wet their pants and get hard, uncannily aroused at the thought of war and rape towards a shapeless, endless foe:



(exhibit 19b: Artist: [Paolo Giandoso](#)'s concept art for *Ghostbusters: Afterlife*. His womb state and Archaic Mother are abject, entirely devoid of criticism for the franchise. It is "blind" pastiche; mute, nefarious, and complicitly pro-war/-rape.)

For an ideal audience, "Kill it with fire!" is a lazy joke hiding *another* ghost of the counterfeit: scorched earth; "kill all, burn all, loot all¹⁴⁵." By framing Gozer as naughty Pandora "needing" to be put back into her box, Reitman silences critics of war, rape and its etiology through displaced, cartoon shows of force (which can be enjoyed, but should not be internalized or endorsed by us—in politics or our social-sex lives). Gozer's eyes do not see; drugged and lobotomized, she is a deaf, dumb and blind, bourgeois queen—

a vampire-zombie clone on par with [Raleigh Theodore Saker's schizophrenic soliloquy](#) from Sublime's *Robbin' the Hood* (1994):

We've got you in this fuckin' movie to exterminate all the lunatics all at once with a filtering system of a God. We're the psycho-semantic police. You can't even see us. How in the fuck can you do anything about it? We're pure intelligence, you're not. You're biological product of a cosmological universe. You're molecular matter, I constructed you. Fuck you. I made you up, you didn't make me up, you got it backwards. You know who you are? You're fuckin' semantic blockage. That's what made you up. You're a fuckin' programmer named Christine Gontarek who fucked up. She sucked my cock, fell in love, and she was locked in. She's gonna get her second chance to suck my cock again. If she turns me down, she's gonna go straight to Hell, she won't pass "Go", she'll never fuckin' win. She's the cunt that thought she was God, but that's okay. I don't give a shit, as long as she sucks me off

¹⁴⁵ [The Three Alls being a Japanese imperial policy](#) when imitating the West and expanding into Manchuria.

when I tell her, 'cause she's my zombie. I captured that motherfucker, and she's my cassette ([source](#)).

Gozer is Reitman's Gontarek, the functional Egeus from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* begging the ancient privilege of "Athens." Replacing a legitimate antiwar/-rape critic with a canonical shadow puppet, Reitman has all-in-one given us an angry sexpot to spank and a tentacle "chaos dragon" to banish to the shadow realm. The fabrication is a special-effects-driven, "plastic reality" ([as Julie A. Turnock calls it](#), 2015) of revived '80s neoliberalism—one presenting Gozer the Archaic Mother as little more than a seasonal slaughter of the ghost of the harvest. This shoddy double stands in for actual fascist/neoliberal harvests; i.e., happening all the time behind the veil, but also on its surface, in plain sight. It's one's own doubts and fears being cheaply "vanquished" with military optimism as something to wish for and worship until the end of time: the zombie myth of the "Good War" rescued yet again.

Meanwhile, the world slowly keeps dying while America colonizes itself (and everything around it) in pursuit of the neoliberal trifecta: infinite growth, efficient profit and worker/owner division. Along with the other three, and the state monopolies, the entire product is a mendacious call to war chorusing to a larger war horn, a "false flag operation" [as slick and alleged as Nancy Reagan's legendary blowjobs](#) (which, though Samantha Cole is writing about them in 2021, hail from an unofficial bibliography nearly thirty years prior). An open secret tied to the annals of power, *Afterlife's* semantic wreckage and bad-faith doubles amount to a narrative of the crypt that belies a paradox and madness beyond what science not only *can't* explain, but gaslight, gatekeep, girl-boss—re: Hogle's warning of a vanishing point, an endless "place of concealment that stands of mere ashes of something not fully present." Speaking truth to power starts to feel unnatural, alien; it becomes forgotten, papered over, buried by canonical pastiche. Gozer could be whatever it wants and make whatever it wants, except those in power perpetually code her as a victim or a scapegoat (for female hysteria and dark, abject poetics that challenge the status quo) over and over and over. They can't hide her rage but they *can* sublimate it into something useful to Capitalism: a punching bag to make male workers feel good by killing dark gods and getting the girl by taming nature as sometimes "getting out of hand" (with Cartesian forces needing to keep nature and monstrous-feminine poetics "in hand," thus under control in lucrative, ultimately genocidal ways).

In service of this false claim and its manufactured consent, *Afterlife* unironically plays out like a slick military recruitment video—a horror movie sequel of the capitalist, mass-produced sort, versus the horror "one-offs" of iconoclastic praxis/counterculture addressing social-sexual unrest tied to buried trauma. To that, it's less early George Romero and more Zack Snyder, with daddy's-boy director Reitman telling you what to think, but also what to say, what to do and

what to stand for—to fear in relation to the state's out-of-joint enemies. It's garden variety moral panic, resold as "fresh, hip" nostalgia by "faithful" canon post-excavation—a canonical strategy of elaborate misdirection, a "historical document." This emotional/Gothic stupidity and privatization must be challenged by intelligent, Gothic-Communist workers. The same goes for appropriated peril and moral panic; war and rape, menticide and waves of terror; the semantic wreckage of the narrative of the crypt and its liminal prisoners, queer scapegoats, lady ghost hostages—all met with iconoclastic doubles in service of Gothic Communism as something to develop towards during oppositional praxis: *our* "archaeologies."



(*exhibit 19c: model and artist: [Cara Day](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#). Gothic canon invokes the monstrous-feminine to fetishize and annihilate it. It is within this complex space that sex-positive implementations of*

the same hysterical poetics [and famous monsters] must come to light. Gozer isn't just a bad girl to spank, and Cara isn't just a piece of ass. There's sex-positive power in what they can subvert and express while turning a buck.)

This essay is just part of iconoclastic praxis more broadly. It was impromptu, written after watching the movie having already internalized my own manifesto. This is my magic, my voice. But my voice also includes various artwork, collages, slang and epigrams as things for me decolonize and reclaim in complex liminal ways—to synthesize with my own cultural habits and general social-sexual skills/synthetic oppositional stratagems like girl talk, community (anti-fascist) defense with a larger end goal in mind far beyond just my meager life. My iconoclastic art becomes a weapon to fight the bourgeoisie and their propaganda as Gothic Communists do: to encourage direct solidarity by sex worker propaganda in opposite to nation-states, neoliberal corporations and their complicit proponents; that uses my manifesto and its demonstration of social-sexual synthesis and Humanities education as something to teach high emotional/Gothic intelligence—all to benefit workers as co-conspirators in service to themselves, not some higher, vertical authority. *That's* proletarian praxis!

Paid Labor: Summarizing Praxis as Something to Synthesize by Paying Workers

"America's not a country, it's just a business. Now fucking pay me."

—Jackie Cogan, *Killing Them Softly* (2012)

This mini-section (six pages) offers a brief repose before we dive into the rest of the volume. While the manifesto has already covered a lot, I'd like to stress the labor value of sex work as a paid means of synthesizing praxis; i.e., when preventing state abuse through sex work a valid service that should be monetarily compensated for its labor value. This includes artwork, writing and sex work as indiscrete categories illustrating mutual consent; e.g., this book and its combination of the three illustrating how intersectional solidarity works: together through a variety of creative practices that support one another through negotiated labor exchanges and boundary-forming exercises. To that, "Paid Labor" briefly discusses an important refrain to solidarized labor under sex positivity: "sex work is work," which needs to be paid, but many different kinds of work constitute sex work because Capitalism sexualizes all workers. As such, "sex work" can be summarized as collective, *iconoclastic* worker action against the heteronormative, settler-colonial status quo: art, porn, prostitution, writing (and intersections of these devices) when collective negotiation and expression of worker rights and boundaries happen through informed, class- and culture-conscious worker solidarity.



(artist: [Fired Up Stilettos](#))

To that, Gothic Communists achieve proletarian praxis through an iconoclastic recultivation of a bourgeois Superstructure: the literal teaching of emotional and Gothic intelligence (the confronting of trauma) through sex-positive sex work and art as a sheer democratization of development through worker solidarity (the state, by comparison, is *not* historically democratic, but serves the interests of the elite). Now that you have access to my thesis (from Volume Zero) and the manifesto as a simplified form of my thesis arguments, I want to spend the rest of the volume supplying a teaching roadmap concerning

synthesis and Volume Two giving a Humanities primer concerning monsters (our so-called "booster rockets" before we fully "take off," in Volume Three).

However, before getting to *those*, let's summarize the role of oppositional praxis in relation to our manifesto's thesis and its execution as a *fundable* operation in either direction: Sex coercion happens through privatization—specifically the privatization of sexual labor (exploiting it) and emotional labor (siphoning it out of workers' heads) in canonical forms for the state's benefit; i.e., exploiting the emotionally unintelligent who surrender their labor and their rights, but also who try to own or control those around them in service to the state during crisis and decay. The historical-material result are scapegoats, fear and dogma that turn people against one another and who cannot tell friend from foe, but also who see everyone as a potential threat, in threatening places, with canonical threatening language: the ghost of the counterfeit and process of abjection's hauntologies, chronotopes, and cryptonyms.

Meerloo once called these totalitarian tactics "menticide" and "waves of terror" in relation to thought crimes, which we briefly introduced during the manifesto but will articulate more in the roadmap (along with thought crimes/venial sins and several other germane ideas that will be useful in the navigating the primer and Volume Three). Capitalism doesn't just alienate workers from the products of their labor and from nature; it uses canon within capital, flowing money through nature to alienize either in relation to the other as hopelessly divided, blind and lost. As a consequence, workers are divided from their *labor value*.

The historical-material effect is reliable: destroying the material world as incumbent on nature actually being preserved by people having some connection to it to start with. Sever that through a quick, inadequate paycheck in a scarce setting and nature is a regular casualty (followed by workers, of course). Capitalism rapes the mind by constantly terrifying it in regards to deprivatized labor and nature; sex positivity is the long road back to reunion, a wending iconoclasm that starts with sexual labor (media) as a communal, intersectional, healing process that needs payment to work. There isn't some final destination where things happen "at the end"; it develops over time in active, ongoing and incremental ways that happen through iconoclastic art, general creativity and Gothic imagination; i.e., a conjoined process of rising emotional intelligence within the larger community and their artistic output, whose sexual labor and Gothic negotiating power are adequately compensated. The elite hate unions for this very reason. Without workers constantly slaving to the grind, everything stops; the *money* stops insofar as infinite growth is challenged by basic human needs expressed in Gothic terms.

Capitalism frames the meeting of the latter as unthinkable through worker imaginations myopically centered around *elite* needs during recuperated Gothic nightmares; i.e., Mark Fischer's hauntologies, or cancelled futures, blaming past *worker* actions for what capitalist greed always leads to: violent rebellion when enough is enough. Teach people they have rights and military urbanism won't fly.



(artist: Eugène Delacroix)

We've discussed the framing of past revolutions through Gothic canon as "terrorist" according to state interests. But however violent those in power (or with power) will mark our emancipatory attempts to be, our "breaking of church windows" is not concerned with abstract rebellions or wanton violence, but literal human thought as materially reshaping itself and

the world through iconoclastic praxis: various artists, relating back and forth across space and time, in liminal, sexy-spooky ways; i.e., Gothic *counterterrorist* poetics. If that is "violent," then so be it. "In the absence of justice, there can be no peace." Nation-states and corporations do far worse every day through their usual monopolies as bought-and-paid for but also endorsed by the regular *paying* public.

Not only do our combined efforts require informed engagement with the past as hopelessly complicated when reimaged in the present; the reclaiming of artistic language and labor as already-colonized must be repeatedly conveyed and *funded* by those born into the present. Such persons drink up information like thirsty little sponges (some thirstier than others), which poses a problem insofar as the flow of money is concerned. History is littered with the graves of really stupid kids who dug graves for others in the bargain. From the Hitler Youth to the Khmer Rouge, to clean-cut Ike-Age kids and the Jonestown disciples, children don't discriminate in what language they acquire. This includes the language of commerce, which the children of the future must *not* acquire their understanding of from canon; its authors, the elite and their proponents, only manipulate and blame us for "the dismal tide" of fascism's arrival and subsequent "war on degeneracy and Modernity"—will only groom them to become not just "killer baby" soldiers, but idiotic heroes starring in "their own" productions; e.g., Ashley Williams from *Army of Darkness* (1992): "Impunity is the apex of privilege. I say this in regards to consumers whose Ash-worship is perpetually reinforced by spiritual successors" ([source](#): Persephone van der Waard's "Army of Darkness: Valorizing the Idiot Hero," 2019).

There is, as usual, money behind canon's routine brain drain. Together with submissive, tokenized sex slaves, such heroes and their canonical legacy destroys the material world for profit, nature included (with us being a part of nature, including our connection to our bodies, society and the ecosystems around us). We

must not only *not* listen to the elite; we must challenge their pedagogy's financing with our own, which they will criminalize, including our very *thoughts* as criminal. Otherwise, the perfect soldiers become the stuff of nightmares: automated patrol machines, walking guns and infiltrators intimidated by their human-yet-dehumanized counterparts. More to the point, they currently hold the purse strings of disposable income, which behooves us to assist those who would pay us; i.e., to help them see us as human, not as sex machines that, when paid, reliably "put out" even when that wage is throttled to unlivable extremes: wage slavery and labor theft insofar as worker desperation is preyed upon by other workers with the means and mindset to do so. They think tipping is "optional"¹⁴⁶, especially regarding sex work (which honestly waitressing and other thankless service professions functionally are; i.e., "women's work" as a component of extended beings [those of nature] for Descartes' thinking beings [white cis-het men] to exploit).



(artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#))

It's true that wealth redistribution is fundamental to developing Communism, but it still requires empathy as something to recultivate through mechanisms that have become thoroughly commodified; i.e., Gothic poetics, including implements of objectification and abuse, but also recuperated voices of rebellion such as rock 'n roll. Yes, money keeps the revolutionary lights on, but stripping is not consent. In conjunction with that productive adage, blasting metal shouldn't be a shortcut to sex; i.e., the expectation of *automatic* sex just because Rob Zombie is blaring from the stripping stage.

¹⁴⁶ A double standard, I should add, they would never apply to themselves; i.e., the fascist approach to rights for the white, cis-het male avenger (the middle class) scapegoating marginalized groups (often sex workers; e.g., [my friend, Blxxd Bunny, getting bullied online by incels and MGTOW types](#)) instead of attacking the system despite said system (and its owners) exploiting them. These hateful bigots see sex workers as "the real enemy" and anyone who helps them as a "simp": a person who gives money to people who don't deserve it (according to fascists) because their labor value is zero, thus literally doesn't qualify as paid work; i.e., should be given to predatory men *a priori* while said men are venerated as the sole breadwinners. In effect, this demonization of tippers discourages public empathy towards sex workers, but also the act of financially supporting women at all (forcing them into unpaid domestic positions; e.g., the bedroom, the kitchen, or the laundry room, etc). Not only does this lead to domestic abuse by men who treat women (or people forced to identify as women) like chattel; it lowers class consciousness to the detriment of all workers, dividing the middle class and pitting them against marginalized groups.

To that, a constant mindfulness of intersecting factors is required. Faustian bargains are generally relayed through the acquisition of unequal power as something to display through wealth as given in bad faith; e.g., the supplying of collars and rings, but also *blood money* as something to recognize and weigh when choosing to accept it under theatrical conditions. So while taking payment from slavers who have you on the hip isn't a bank heist, singular payments from chudwads has, to some extent, been laundered; i.e., the latter shouldn't be discounted for what that money can go towards: something better than where it started from. This includes turning ourselves into something that accurately represents our struggles, *not* the desires of those enslaving us with an inadequate wage, or wages that are tossed about as a cruel (and cliché) means of reminding us that we and our bodies (and their morphological and cosmetic expressions through Gothic poetics) are somehow "owned" by those paying us; i.e., white knight syndrome through the "rescuing" of sex workers. Tips shouldn't be an excuse to make these kinds of *ipso facto* possessive statements; when given in good faith, they will let workers express themselves for themselves through a class- and culture-conscious mindset whose rebellious expressions and room for understanding and confronting trauma includes all oppressed workers.

The idea isn't to "rescue" sex workers at all, but make their profession safer from class traitors, not just women. So while Megan Barton-Hanson isn't technically "wrong" when she writes

There's a common assumption that all women are victims who need to be "rescued" from the sex industry, but that's not true. [...] People think that women in the sex industry have no other choice, which for some people is sadly the case, but for a lot of women it's a side hustle that they do alongside uni or running a business ([source](#): "How to Be an Ally to Sex Workers," 2022).

there's a glaring omission in terms of whom she's *not* including in her advocacy: gender-non-conforming persons, non-white-sex workers and AMAB sex workers (e.g., trans misogyny). Betrayal isn't always done on purpose, but intent doesn't matter if a given expression leaves someone out, which Barton-Hanson pointedly does. Survival sex work needs to be acknowledged, not pushed to the side by those who have the luxury of a side hustle while going to uni or running a business (which most people lack the ability to do). Even so, it's equally vital to remember that those operating through necessity vs privilege still deserve a living wage through the labor value of their services; i.e., sex work that goes against the profit motive as something that normally accommodates women like Barton-Hanson to the detriment of more oppressed groups (instead of saying "sadly" and shrugging one's shoulders through a materially and socially superior position).

Obviously it's in our material interests to *collectively* reject the brutal, "blood in, blood out" of state-mandated factionalism and class traitors: cops and other such rival gangs materially incentivized by the state to make war according to money's flowing as something to dictate, and whose chicken hawk leaders endlessly recruit children for their own greedy ends tied to war (and rape) as a business. But the managing of canonized funds through reliably sanitized sources (tone-policing and whitewashing sex work) goes hand-in-hand with the utilizing of said funds for proletarian means: to teach future workers through its acquisition to be antiwar, anti-rape, and anti-*state* (which monopolizes sexual labor through terror, violence and bodies) according to the iconoclastic artwork *we* leave behind; i.e., socio-material lessons whose proletarian praxis, when synthesized and widely employed over time, sees the sex workers of the world (and by extension all workers) freed from the mental, physical and *fiscal* shackles of Capitalism: through a *continuous*, proletarian re-cultivation of the Superstructure that synthesizes praxis through habits that, when funded, are formed again and again.



(artist: [Nori Noir](#))

Said synthesis is meant to compound and accelerate from mounting financial backing (sex work, when allowed and encouraged, tends to pay quickly and well; i.e., is always in demand from persons with the means to pay for it). This includes receiving financial support from,

not just the down-and-out, but the middle class at large: petit-bourgeois revolutionaries putting their literal money where their mouths are (unlike cis-het workers who *say* all the things they'd like to do *to* us without actually dropping a dime towards the Cause; keep your ceaseless flattery and pay out, please) to foster empathy towards sex workers through daily habits that cultivate empathy as a mindset, but also a reciprocal skill; i.e., tipping.

To conclude, paying all workers for their services is vital to revolutionary praxis because it permits and enables activism under Capitalism. Social-*sexual* activism happens through a liberating creativity tied to sexualized art as a form of reclaimed labor and collective, instructional worker action that materially survives after workers die; i.e., to fund, thus pass along the ability for workers—like little detectives—to sense and illustrate the "creative successes" of Gothic Communism

as a paid operation. Unlike our bodies, which decay and rot, artwork doesn't have to worry about falling apart, but its labor needs to be compensated. Paint literal skeletons if you must, but you can leave behind something more than naked bones: someone who lived and worked towards the *payment* of workers within the system as a means of confronting state trauma when synthesizing praxis; i.e., in ways that humanize the entire system of exchange through Gothic poetics that, when examined by future workers, reminds them that these bones were human, thus a) deserving of a wage and b) able to use that wages' artistic results to develop Communism through Gothic poetics.



(artist: [Couple of Kooks](#))

Synthesis Symposium: Nature Is Food; a Roadmap for Forging Social-Sexual Habits, or Cultivating Gothic-Communist Praxis in Our Own Daily Lives/Instruction

"People don't really connect, you know?" "What?" "Like those dots simulating humans. We all live totally separately. That's how it seems to me."

—Harue Karasawa and Ryosuke Kawashima, *Kairo* (2001)

Approaching the end of Volume One, we have moved beyond outlining our manifesto's stated goals—its core tenets, simplified theories (from our thesis), and means/materials/methods of study—to increasingly examine the trauma of other people and ourselves. Whereas the postscript considered acknowledging the pain of



others to process collective trauma, we're now going to consider the execution of theory during oppositional praxis when acknowledging trauma ourselves in a combined pedagogy/performance; i.e., praxial synthesis towards praxial catharsis through good instruction as enacted by us when confronting Cartesian abuses that treat nature not simply as female, but *monstrous-feminine* food that harms Indigenous peoples, racial minorities and GNC people (so-called "incorrect" or "non-men" of the white, cis-het European sort) to varying degrees of settler-colonial genocide: by cheapening their lives, their bodies, their labor to serve the profit motive.

(artist: [Skylar Shark](#))

As stated during the preface, praxial *synthesis* executes theory by cultivating good social-sexual habits that simplify theory during oppositional praxis. This instruction happens in order to raise emotional/Gothic intelligence and class/cultural awareness, preventing Cartesian war and rape through trauma writing and artwork as *de facto* (extracurricular) educational devices; e.g., ludo-Gothic BDSM as a form of proletarian creative success, not a means of material gain performed by bad-faith actors concerned with profit and punching down instead of educating people through their work in a sex-positive way (re: Autumn Ivy). This raising of intelligence and awareness *can* point towards more complicated theory (e.g., postcolonialism) but the emphasis remains on the functioning of theory through a collective, second-nature cognition that cannot be strictly controlled. It must take on a life of its own within a complicated system of interrelating factors: oppositional

praxis and Gothic poetics, but also good education and acting versus bad education concerning nature as regularly alienized and harvested by settler-colonial forces.

Praxial *catharsis* is the application of practical theory to resolve state trauma at the source: through our own connections to systemic issues, which we then express through interpersonal, intersecting pedagogies/trauma in practical ways. Doing so means taking simplified versions of Gothic-Communist goals and theories while progressively dabbling more and more in the exploration of the anything-but-simple—and indeed inherent messiness of—interpersonal and transgenerational trauma. As such, the manifesto and postscript have carried out a mounting progression of trauma writing and artwork towards this roadmap, which was preceded by a small essay to test your theoretical fluency (and introduce the idea of the Cartesian harvesting of monstrous-feminine entities) and a quick pause after that to also consider the financial nature of successful labor exchanges exhibited using Gothic poetics. Now we arrive at the synthesis roadmap itself, which considers the cultivation of the rebellious mindset and habits needed to apply good praxis towards achieving systemic catharsis; i.e., through said poetic's creative successes challenging Cartesian thought.

The synthesis roadmap, then, constitutes its own symposium-style chapter (similar to the symposium at the end of my thesis)—except, its interpersonal rhetoric of trauma writing and artwork doesn't fixate on the generational abuse of police states like the manifesto and postscript did. Instead, it shifts focus towards what I consider to be the root of the larger problem, and one we can devote praxial synthesis to achieve catharsis in ways that rescue workers and nature from: Capitalist Realism as a *Cartesian* enterprise. Under Cartesian thought, nature is *female* food tied to profit in ways that alienate workers and the natural world in classically Gothic ways that lead to police states and grim harvests, but also harvests at large regardless of their outward appearance; i.e., the monstrous-feminine through settler-colonial models that continue to plague workers and nature as victims of capital. It divides into a smaller primer and three fundamental pieces (followed by a conclusion): "the basics," or synthetic oppositional groupings that occur during oppositional praxis, as well as the canonical endorsement and reifying of unironic war and rape as things to prevent *vis-à-vis* these basic factors when synthesized during iconoclastic/campy approaches; i.e., according to our good social-sexual habits/synthetic oppositional groupings:

- **Part zero, or the pre-symposium**, explains what synthesis is, as well as providing equations and trauma to prime the reader with before pressing into the symposium itself.
- **Part one, "the Basics of Oppositional Synthesis"**: An examination of the basics, or pure reductions, of our synthetic oppositional groupings; i.e., how our pedagogic emphasis involves oppositional praxis as something to synthesize according oppositional synthesis with a proletarian agenda: to

prevent war and the rape of workers/the natural world by raising emotional/Gothic intelligence and, by extension, a class/cultural awareness that leads to systemic catharsis; i.e., through trauma writing and artwork as things to express and teach through a basic educational approach. Features Medusa and stigma animals, but also Georgia O'Keefe, H.R. Giger and more recent auteurs.

- **Part two, "a Deeper Look at War"**: An iconoclastic consideration of war culture and how it can be interrogated and synthesized in our own creative responses to canonical forms; i.e., how to recognize said canon and express our trauma in relation to it during class/culture war as a means of challenging Cartesian arrangements of power and outcomes. Features Robert Heinlein and Akira Kurosawa.
- **Part three, "a Deeper Look at Rape"** and **"finale: A Problem of Knife Dicks"**: An iconoclastic consideration of rape culture and how it can be interrogated and synthesized in our own creative responses to canonical



forms; i.e., how to recognize said canon and express our trauma in relation to it during class/culture war as a means of challenging Cartesian arrangements of power and outcomes. **Part three** features Amazons, phallic women/traumatic penetration, and violence in sports; **the finale** examines morphologies policed under such binaries during pornographic expression; e.g., racialized tropes, but also fat people at large and human (often female) bodies targeted for having "fat, immodest" qualities, which are then alienated by capital, before being fetishized and harvested like crops. We have to humanize the harvest.

(artist: [Leeza](#))

Synthesis Roadmap, or Nature Is Food, part zero: Pre-Symposium; or, Synthesis, Equations and Cartesian Trauma (war and rape)

The magic circle is not something that comes wholly from Huizinga. To be perfectly honest, Katie and I more or less invented the concept, inheriting its use from my work with Frank, cobbling together ideas from Huizinga and Caillois, clarifying key elements that were important for our book, and reframing it in terms of semiotics and design—two disciplines that certainly lie outside the realm of Huizinga's own scholarly work. But that is what scholarship often is—sampling and remixing ideas in order to come to a new synthesis.

—Eric Zimmerman, "[Jerked Around by the Magic Circle](#)" (2012)

Before we dive into the symposium proper and the basics, I want to prime you with some core devices: a more comprehensive explanation of synthesis (which the camp map finale touched on in Volume Zero) and several equations and ideas



to keep in mind when processing trauma ourselves; i.e., while regarding the simplification of theory when teaching it through the expression of trauma as a Cartesian byproduct—one that alienizes and fetishes nature, turning it (and workers connected to it) into monstrous food during genocide expressed through war and rape.

(artist: [Legion](#))

First, the idea of simple versus complex. Again, Gothic Communism relies on the simplification of complex theory to tackle complex structures (Cartesian thought and Capitalism) as simply as possible, but also in oddly relatable, even hilarious ways; i.e., by people who don't have a total understanding of theory but can still apply it according to their shared trauma in popularized exchanges that *thrive* on linguo-material contradiction/abstraction according to human language (and its dark materials) as fought over but also with; e.g., Skynet as an abstraction of capital, but also the xenomorph (above) as a potent means of performance and play during Gothic psychosexual expression. Whereas *praxis* is the practical execution of theory as reified out of a grander compiling to choose from (my thesis argument in volume form), *synthesis* amounts to how said theory is simplified into livable forms to achieve praxis at all. It is how praxis is cultivated and taught, and good *de facto* education feeds synthesis with varying emphasis on theory as applied through habit—i.e., as something to practice and instruct to future generations relative to

trauma using Gothic poetics in our own media. It must become, to some degree, second-nature.

In turn, the synthesis roadmap concerns oppositional synthesis, pointedly the synthesis of good social-sexual habits that contribute towards proletarian praxis mid-oppression and mid-conflict under Capitalist Realism; i.e. as *de facto* educational devices that make workers collectively more intelligent and aware of trauma as something to identify outside of themselves and respond to/interrogate, but also identify and negotiate with: in sex-positive Gothic dialogs shared between themselves and other workers as emergent beings (tired to nature) harvested by Cartesian agents demonizing them. As my thesis volume argues, the extracurricular function of sex positivity amid Gothic poetics must become second-nature; i.e., through creative successes that can be passed on and subsequently learned from in popularized forms; e.g., the inherently violent, liminal and paradoxical expressions of the operatic Gothic castle/danger disco, psychosexual rape fantasy and monster pornography/*Amazonomachia* kayfabe we've examined thus far in Volumes One and Zero as quintessential forms of trauma writing and artwork. There's always a form of nefarious abstraction, but this is hardly "mute." It's just a different form of data to feed the brain with. Call it food for thought, insofar as it turns us away from Capitalism's usual, Cartesian harvests hidden by Capitalism Realism. We can remain delicious and monstrous without being reduced to profit for the elite.

Continuing this ghoulish nourishment, I also want you to consider the fact that I am revisiting this roadmap while attempting to preserve its conversational flavor in light of my thesis volume. Similar to the symposium from Volume Zero, these changes are happening *after* completing my thesis argument, except the roadmap was originally devised *before* the thesis crystalized. This might make it seem more basic or conversational by comparison, but I think that might actually be useful when grappling with these ideas yourselves—i.e., an invitation of sorts for you to consider how you might encounter these arguments in your own simplified approaches when dealing with complex things. In your own lives, you probably won't encounter block quotes of my theories except inside the volume itself. However, you *will* encounter pieces of what went into it as you go about your own lives, and can adopt a more conversational Gothic dialogic when conducting and reifying oppositional praxis yourself; i.e., synthesizing theory and trauma to achieve systemic catharsis through a raising of emotional/Gothic intelligence and warrior awareness in defense of the state's usual victims.

The point in doing so is to demonstrate how to teach the successful execution of theory (recultivating the bourgeois Superstructure) by examining iconoclastic art as something to create *in relation* to healthy social-sexual habits that we not only pick up, but learn to perform in our own daily lives living under the power of state forces—not just as workers, but sex-positive *de facto* educators who teach the world through what we create and leave behind: the educational *legacy* of our sex work, artwork, and various other exhibits that routinely survive us. These aren't

instructions *to* harm, but *prevent* harm on a global scale by camping the very canonical devices that lead to harm in the same complicated shadow zone; i.e., "harm" as a theatrical, sex-positive device camping Cartesian gargoyles. Imagination and experimentation—while canonically deplored—are essential to escaping state tyranny and addressing its phantom pains by bringing them out in the open.

If you've read the symposium from Volume Zero (and the end of the manifesto), you'll have an idea of what to expect, moving forward; I didn't want to change things too much despite having written this second symposium well before my thesis. Like the thesis volume's symposium, it represents a point when I was still figuring things out, and I think it serves as a good thought experiment insofar as it will represent a middle stage in your own thinking that will match up with this talk of mine. Its cluttered, "messy attic" quality might speak to you better as you interpret and grapple with these ideas yourselves. And if you want increasingly more complete forms of theory that spell things out as much as possible, there is always the manifesto and thesis. Compared to those, this symposium is a conversational way to close out Volume One. After the symposium primer supplies its own ideas, part one will try to illustrate them (and the basics of oppositional synthesis) through a seminar that walks you conversationally through their application; parts two, three and the finale will consider this application in relation



to rape and war in canonical forms. For the *entirety* of the roadmap, I want you to consider the basics yourselves. I will do my best to mention them and evoke the simplified theories of the manifesto as a means of thinking about labor and art, but also generating and utilizing it ourselves in our own day-to-day relationships (which explore our own trauma).

(artist: [source](#))

It's true that Gothic Communism *is* built on systemic trauma as something to acknowledge and articulate, but its achieving of systemic catharsis happens through good praxis; i.e., as a teaching approach whose theories live and breathe through creative expression, which process and interrogate trauma in our daily lives then pass said information on using synthesized, abstracted forms (e.g., ghosts). That is, rather than cancel each other out, they fuse and corrupt into a unique form of data at home in Gothic expression: trauma as a psychosexual presence, but generally one complicated by competing class/cultural factors. For Gothic

Communism, this means oppositional praxis. All the while, power and resistance share the same space, haunted by the spectre of state abuse *and* Marx; our retailored derelicts and their complicated paradoxes operate less as raw reductions of theory and more as pieces to a collective societal puzzle that, when assembled and holistically examined, constitute the reformulation of the Wisdom of the Ancients to achieve systemic catharsis when regarding transgenerational trauma; i.e., as a thing thoroughly trapped inside a cultural imaginary past. In it, the trauma cannot be neatly exorcised, but it *can* be performed in different ways that lead to its gradual healing over time.



(artist: [Frank Frazetta](#))

Said healing happens not by killing dragons or whitewashing castles, but returning to nature (and reclaiming our labor) through the informed, steady changing of socio-material conditions that prevent systemic harm in the future. Doing so is meant to challenge complex things with

simplified approaches that make up a larger solution to a grand problem: our material conditions and historical trauma, which are often abstracted into past-like, hauntological forms. The core issue, then, stems from a lack of resolution tied to the crux of my thesis argument—that Capitalism sexualizes all workers to exploit them; i.e., a heteronormative, Cartesian dimorphic whose global sexualizing of workers and nature leads to a terminal myopia of Capitalist Realism through cyclical Gothic poetics (the ghost of the counterfeit and process of abjection, but also Shadow of Pygmalion/Cycle of Kings, infernal concentric pattern, etc); the solution is to reclaim these haunted poetics and reverse their class/cultural function through our six Gothic-Marxist tenets and four main Gothic theories' creative successes.

We've listed these successes entirely earlier in the volume, including mutual consent, informed consumption and descriptive sexuality as things to express ourselves. Volume Three will stress all of them; Volume One's symposium emphasizes *de facto* education as something to illustrate through the synthesis of *subversive* Gothic poetics. To that, their *practical* teaching element married to lived trauma is what I want to spend the remainder of the volume introducing readers to. By working as a direct, counterterrorist solidarity against the state, we aim to prevent war and rape as Cartesian byproducts by raising emotional/Gothic intelligence and class/cultural awareness towards nature as alien, food, monstrous-feminine; i.e., through the cathartic processing of personal and systemic trauma

along various intersectional routes traveled by real workers and occupied/shared by them collectively. To this, other peoples' creations—what they make and fashion out of the clay of the Gothic imagination (what Descartes would call emergent beings) for the purposes of humanizing those seen as raw materials—are just as valid as anything I could make myself:



(exhibit 20a: Artist, top-left, bottom-mid-left/-mid-right: [Chronorin](#); bottom-far-left: [Kukuruyo Art](#); top-mid-left: [Le Faux Creux](#); top-mid-right: [Rivolution](#); top-far-right: [Oujo1](#); bottom-far-right: [Reiq](#). Beings of darkness are generally made from stigmatized materials/natural resources that—when divorced from settler-colonial aims—serve a vital iconoclastic role during rebellious morphological expression. To that, Satanic morphology uses Gothic nostalgia to bring us closer to our alienated bodies, but also their trauma as requiring psychosexual healing through an assortment of analogous materials: slime, metal, chitin; oil, rubber or latex; dead tissue, animal tissues [chimerism] and so on. There's an animate-inanimate quality but also a seditious element that must, under canonical circumstances, be presented as abject and commodified. Satan becomes something to control through commodified "opposition."

Keeping with the sculptor's metaphor, monster-making produces bricks in a "primordial" series, their corrupt, monstrous-feminine wall singing the hysterical chorus of a reimagined past; the chorus becomes an enormous challenge to the status quo and what it seeks to dominate through the ghost of the counterfeit and process of abjection: the Earth and things associated with it/of it as hellish, dark, and forbidden, but only ostensibly under their control. As *Frankenstein* shows us, Victor's Cartesian ploy fashioned a giant statue he had no hopes of controlling.

Indeed, it grew to resent and rebel against his embodiment of systemic abuse by embodying a side of himself that had become alien, which he then tried to deny and abort, but also torture [an approach the Creature then adopted "to better the instruction"]. Unlike Milton, monstrous self-expression also applies to consciously rebellious sculptors and their complicated golems, except they identify with their clay as traumatized, thereby speaking what is hidden through the same base materials' cryptonymic rebellion. As such, their self-expression, -empowerment, and -determination embody the Satanic spirit of a self-fashioned deity challenging the Almighty who claims to have authored all things by having "total power" over all forms of authorship: "God" can make devils, but devils are not allowed to play god and make their own things. This is easy enough to disprove.)

I hope the above exhibit illustrates how, while the rest of the volume draws upon jargon—and I consider such heady theoretical concepts useful to understanding my central thesis and its ideas; i.e., as things to teach through iconoclastic art made by individual artists working in concert—the roadmap's language is still largely figurative and simplified to make it more accessible when processing trauma at interpersonal levels. As such, think of my thesis argument (and relevant language presented in the manifesto) more as a handy guideline for executing the core ideas of Gothic Communism, while also thinking about the bigger picture of systemic trauma and its confrontation using *commonplace* language that relates to or relays your own trauma as something to express; i.e., with a shared pedagogy against larger oppressions: what Shakespeare's Hamlet would call a "quintessence of dust," and Milton "darkness visible." Make it your own, and breathe life and pedagogy into your own creations, that these golems-esque egregores—be they undead, demonic, and/or naturalized—might speak of taboo things that help the world to heal.

To that, don't be afraid to substitute my terms with your own language as you go; and if that seems daunting at all, consider how we've already been doing this with various authors already. Selective reading is a conversation made with our own contributions to what already exists, making something new in the process: a roadmap towards systemic catharsis as something to exist under historical-material conditions that, among themselves, harbor unique elements that we contribute towards when developing Gothic Communism together. If the thesis volume is my theory and the manifesto simplifies it, then the roadmap is how I would go about it in the most flexible way *I* could think of; except I don't see the approach as "mine," insofar as it's been tailor-made to transform into something new through Satanic poetics and counterterrorist thought as a mode of campy reclamation that anyone can do, provided they stay sex-positive.

If it's not mine then why give a roadmap at all, you ask? Well, it's all too easy for me to do exhibits and just *talk* about them as I spout theory from Volume Zero. But I don't expect people to just "get" these things without having the same

exact experiences, education and outlook that I do (which is impossible; my identical twin doesn't have *that*—in fact, he and I are actually quite different despite having similar opportunities; we're actually mirror-*imaged* twins with different dominant hands [I'm left and he's right] and clashing personalities, which is why I think he's cis-het and I'm trans). Nor do I think it's a good idea to just "hurl" theory at students in any scenario. Rather, I want to explain how theory can be applied to worker lives as they live them—as people first, whose praxis happens to whatever degree they curate art as an extension of emotionally/Gothically intelligent habits, which can then be connected to Gothic-Communist theories *post hoc*. Take my teaching approach and make it your own to process and defuse state trauma with, but also weaponize your trauma as a form of self-identity within ongoing struggles.



(exhibit 20b: Artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#). *The monsters that we make are generally extensions, if not of ourselves, then complicated aspects of the human condition that we synthesize through our own labor using our language, bodies, and body language. The idea, with Gothic Communism, is to synthesize good praxis through sex-positive Gothic*

poetics; i.e., to raise emotional/Gothic intelligence and class/cultural awareness by cultivating healthy social-sexual habits in our own daily lives, including the monsters we create. To this, the Drow as I envision them, aren't strictly evil, but something that can embody a buried, taboo form of sex positivity that we bring to the surface and educate people with; i.e., not associated with the delivery of harm by the Drow, but their canonical receiving of harm when placed into the state of exception as evil, matriarchal spider people with purple skin who practice black magic. Luckily this deliberate collection of stigmas can not only be survived by those forced to wear them, but subverted and embodied as a form of rebellious sex-positive struggle whose cryptonymy weaponizes the basic imagery against state propaganda doubling said imagery; i.e., by humanizing the state's chief nemesis through trauma writing and artwork, thereby constituting intentional [and seductive] reclamations of settler-colonial hatred tied to sexual trauma that is synthesized into a sex-positive, postcolonial form. The Drow and the trauma they broach become, like Milton's infamous darkness: visible.)

I want to stress that self-identity involves connections that require praxial synthesis as part of a larger equation. That is, "sampling and remixing ideas in order to come to a new synthesis" isn't unique to scholarship (re: Zimmerman) but applied to everyday people from all walks of life performing proletarian praxis in

opposition to state forces through several equations I want to resupply you with from the thesis volume; the first involving oppositional praxis:

Sex positivity happens during oppositional praxis' class/culture war (class traitors/weird canonical nerds' class dormancy and betrayal vs weird iconoclastic nerds' class [thus race and gender] consciousness); i.e., sex positivity vs sex coercion to recultivate canon/the bourgeois Superstructure, thus reclaim the Base (means of production) according to *our* proletarian tree of Gothic-Marxist tenets and other factors.

and the second about proletarian praxis:

Successful Proletarian Praxis (recultivation of the bourgeois Superstructure through iconoclastic art creation, critique, or endorsement; the "creative successes" of proletarian praxis) = Thesis Statement + Praxial Coordinates (manifesto tree) + Synthesis (social-sexual habits, emotional/Gothic intelligence, and financial support during worker's daily lives; i.e., the camp map from the thesis volume and the synthesis roadmap from Volume One) + *Poiesis History* (the Humanities primer)

Yet, (most) workers aren't like computers that operate strictly through equations; they're physical, biological creatures. As extensions of them, their art is often *spontaneous* as a result, but also often subconsciously part of given artistic movements that workers may not be actively aware of (as I wasn't for years, despite making prolific amounts of sex-positive writing and art, slowly "waking up" as a trans detective regarding my own evolution).

Propaganda is code; workers absorb and internalize code as "human computers" do—slowly and inefficiently over time, according to competing "lines" that support or reject the status quo. Planned, coordinated resistance generally requires class-conscious or at least *semi*-conscious efforts that resist the propaganda of the state, but also the rape and war cultures they beget and transfer onto one's own social-sex lives, power exchanges and labor exchanges: the socio-material markers that stochastically trigger horrifyingly violent responses from sleeping minds—at the domestic level, but also in foreign territories back and forth. Praxial synthesis includes recognizing these things and, if not outright rejecting them, whistleblower-style, then at least not openly endorsing them, either. This includes critiquing things we, as workers, are taught to endorse as central to our lives, even academically or at least in connection with academic institutions and their holistic output—e.g., popular sports at the college level (with colleges neoliberally centering diploma mills around sports teams as things to emblemize achingly Liberal platitudes; you get a "free" ride if you're an athlete who can help "the school" [meaning its owners] make money):



(exhibit 21a1: An exhibit of "false consciousness" conducted by "sleeper agents" waiting to trigger and conduct Man-Box abuses that lead to military urbanism? Maybe, but it's still stochastic under Capitalism as a living structure carried out by people, not robots. Then again, maybe our boys holding up the frog [[toads are frogs, even hypnotoads](#)] are actually revolutionaries in disguise! If so, they still have to hide inside the grander structure of Capitalism's tableau; i.e., its heteronormative sphere's crowds and sports-driven bread-and-circus. And the recipients of any social-sexual

violence that results from these interconnected factors are right to be wary of those most likely to perform it: cis-het men [or those in the closet who self-hate for failing to perform as such, conflating their true selves with unironic, psychosexual harm]. Heteronormative canon and its male workers—be they star athletes, husbands, cops, soldiers, doctors and/or your goddamn mailman—historically rape women and abuse minorities; the poisonous nature of rape/war culture is how it extends into the public imagination alongside conspicuous fear and dogma that whisper of a larger terrifying reputation, a transgenerational curse. Racism, misogyny and other imbricating bigotries become both ubiquitous and endemic, like a common cold or seasonal flu evolving into more lethal forms [which, as Covid showed us, the most privileged, fearful and bigoted will opt out of inoculating themselves against regardless of the damage it does to less privileged/more vulnerable groups].)

As activists, it's easy to point the finger at obvious examples, and not just the American secondary education system, including copaganda and the Military Industrial Complex working in concert; e.g., "Those Nazis sure were bad, weren't they?" However, before the gas chambers, there were bullets and knives ("Holocaust by bullet"); before these, there was German propaganda; before there was German propaganda, [there was American propaganda and genocide having inspired them](#) (re: Bad Empanada's "How the USA Inspired the Nazis - From Manifest Destiny to Lebensraum," 2022): a unified front against nature, founded on and concealing Indigenous exploitation during a continual process whose structure rapes and murders the world well before and after the Nazis have been sublimated; i.e., into a neoliberal likeness of themselves working as centrist foils during Capitalist Realism. The human emblems, above—our athletic white knights and

their at-times theatrical moderacy—fill a special role within the profit motive: obscuring Nazis and other fascist groups during neoliberal kayfabe (which extends to any sport—not just dueling pairs but *teams* and their supporters).

War, rape and genocide exist everywhere under Capitalism, but so do the neoliberal illusions that less cover these things up and more essentialize them through deceptive refrains: "Rape cultural is a myth! Pay it no mind! Gun violence? It's a way of life! Here, have a *gun* to protect yourself with!" Whether on the frontier of faraway lands or back at home, war and rape extend from capital, giving birth to neoliberal gargoyles whose flesh-and-blood equivalents internalize these lessons and spring to life once "triggered." They become an endless glut of pleasurable, *drug-seeking* behaviors tied less to literal, external drugs and more to intense biochemical responses felt and pursued under the prolonged stressors of perceived duress: Gothic, canonical expressions of Cartesian violence, terror and bodily abuse/regulation through capitalist apologia; i.e., monsters "only" exist in horror stories, whose canon must nevertheless have abject monsters and torture porn with an unironic edge (to menticide workers with through the ghost of the counterfeit's process of abjection within unequal material conditions).

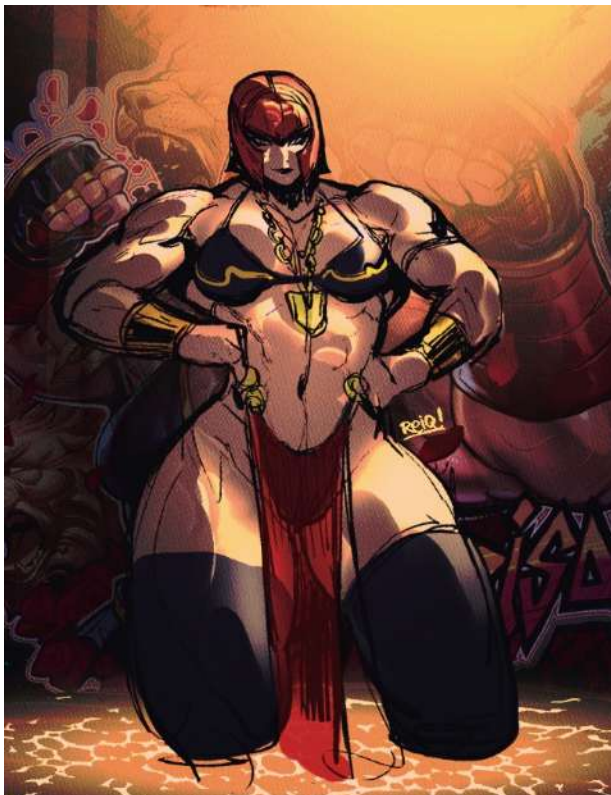
As such, canonical "love" (rape) and war are merely "natural," essentialized games—where only the strong survive and get the girl: "Might makes right, winner take all, to the victor go the spoils," etc; which, under neoliberal Capitalism, has workers fighting more for less; e.g., Capcom's "unprecedented" [2024 million-dollar 1st place prize for Capcom Cup X](#). It's an Internet-Age "jousting" tourney where gladiators—relics of Antiquity—duke it out for scraps; i.e., relatively poor people/slaves, usually men, having extended to (usually male) weird canonical nerds/tech bros trained to be infantilizingly¹⁴⁷ violent through neoliberal, might-makes-right dogma in sports-like language, especially *combat* sports with a kayfabe element informed by Gothic poetics/psychosexuality haunted by medieval abuse¹⁴⁸.

¹⁴⁷ The elite, as Elon Musk terrifyingly shows us with his diaper fetish alt account (re: [depsidase](#)), are not immune to the infantilizing effects of Capitalism.

¹⁴⁸ The likes of which still occurs behind the scenes; i.e., men enslaved to their contracts, their bodies being destroyed while women are sex-trafficked for those men by those at the top—Vince McMahon being investigated for sex-trafficking:

In 2022, McMahon announced he was stepping down from the WWE after an internal probe that found allegations of a hush-money payment to a former employee, with McMahon allegedly paying \$3 million to the then-unnamed female, a WWE paralegal, to keep their "consensual" affair private. Following the investigation, he returned to WWE in July 2023. However, in January, that woman — Janel Grant, who was hired in the specially made role of "administrator-coordinator" in WWE's legal department — filed a lawsuit against McMahon, WWE head of talent relations John Laurinaitis, and the wrestling company outlining years of alleged sexual assaults. Among the allegations in the lawsuit, is McMahon's demands that Grant make herself sexually available to both himself and Laurinaitis (who is also named in the suit), as well as unnamed "WWE Corporate Officers" and a "WWE Superstar." Grant also accused McMahon of degrading her, and in one incident, said that named and Laurinaitis locked her in an office and raped her ([source](#): Daniel Kreps' "Vince McMahon Under Federal Investigation Amid Sexual Assault Lawsuit," 2024).

Wrestling is an artform that historically pits Nazis, Communists and Americans against one another as living weapons whose pastiche projects onto various media forms; e.g., videogames. These, in turn, become regular sites of monstrous avatars (and targets of violence—bosses, lieutenants and minions) useful to the pacifying of workers through so-called "empowerment fantasies" that, in truth, master and dominate players (re: Seth Giddings and Helen Kennedy) more than you might think. Informed, half-real negotiation can challenge worker subjugation and its harmful conditioning. Except you still have to recognize and critique the games themselves *as* praxis; i.e., insofar as kayfabe and BDSM are concerned within daily synthesis: Marisa from *Street Fighter 6*, below, as an icon thereof, serving to inform whatever habits we cultivate ourselves or already prescribe to.



(artist: *Persephone van der Waard*; original [lines](#) and [background image](#) by [Reiq](#))

Such habits include the body-as-a-weapon, which takes on different forms in wrestling pastiche. Compare, for example, the shared operatic nature of pugilism and knife play kink (exhibit 0a1b2c, but also the *Dragon's Crown* [2013] Amazon's axe, below). In either case, you have a master/slave dialogic informed by the dimorphized aspects of kayfabe that lend themselves well to BDSM parlance. Playing out onstage with athleticized fetish gear and performers, there's a visual element of danger minus the actual threat of guaranteed harm (accidents still happen, of course). And the back-and-forth of this particular dance involves a partner who cannot actually harm you, but whose warrior *aesthetic*—specifically one personifying *national* war—lies adjacent to state theatrics that *do* promote harm through the same general performances and play: Marisa literally playing the Nazi¹⁴⁹ heel or black knight/destroyer role linked to Spartan-

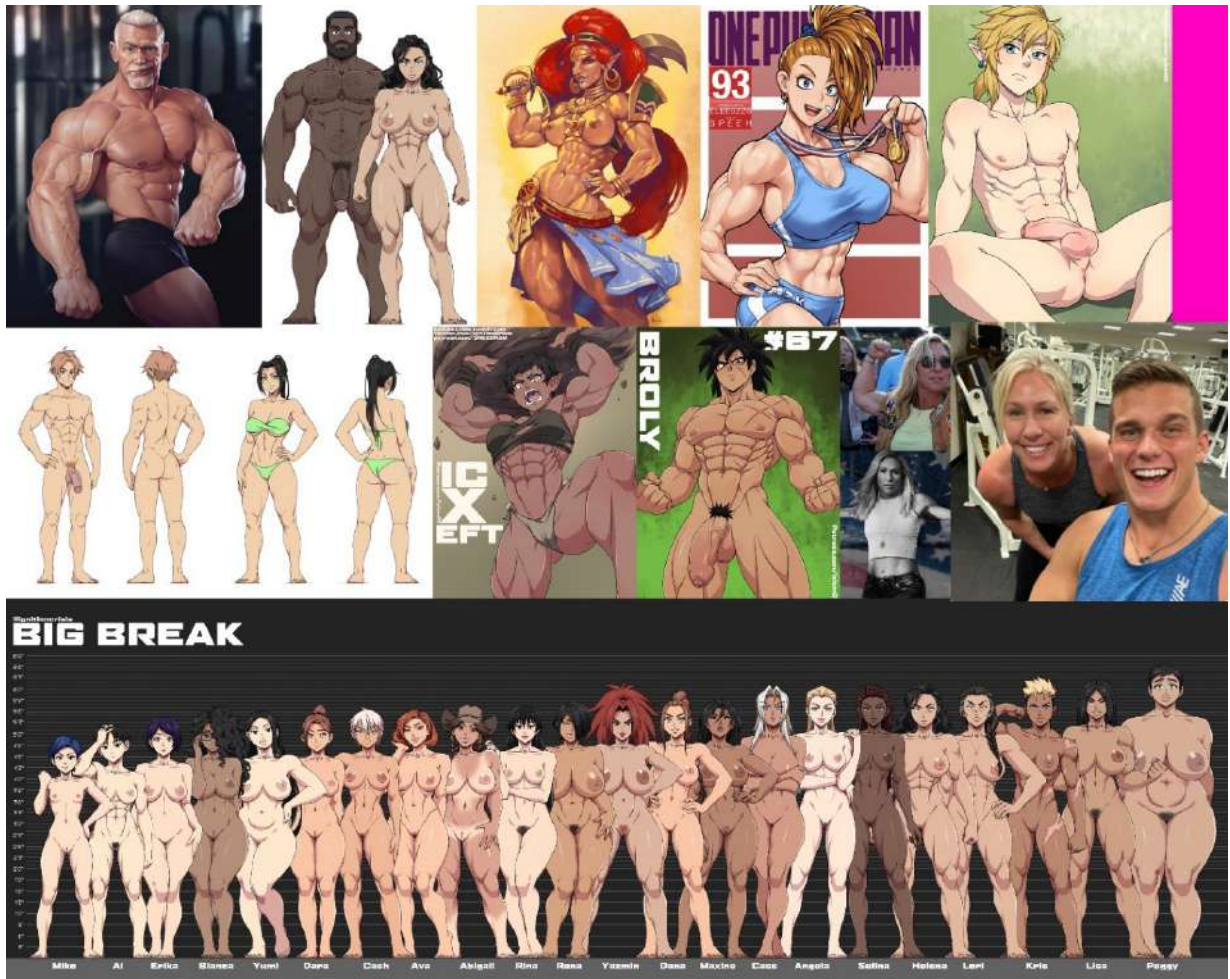
¹⁴⁹ Technically she's an *Italian fascist*, who—as a token Man-Box bruiser—channels the alt-right, female prime minister of Italy, Georgia Meloni. But you'd be forgiven for thinking otherwise; one, all fascists defend capital, and two, the Nazis have far greater propaganda value in centrist stories—are far more revered within kayfabe at large—for their perceived strength/warrior prowess. Despite modern fascism starting in Mussolini's Italy, no one really makes movies about cartoon Italian fascists. Much of this has to do with American myth-making after WW2, hiding American Imperialism behind the Myth of the Good War (which requires a recognizable and feared, but also *game* enemy to work).

Roman hauntologies of the Zack Snyder sort (versus the babyface with virginal, angelic aesthetics "grappling" with their polar opposites during *Amazonomachia*). Practicing their expression is ultimately liminal, meaning the paradox of terror (and violence) arise while we interrogate past trauma with fresh bodily forms that *double* state power and potential; i.e., when using our own play and performance to camp canon (and its monopolies) with the same basic (often kayfabe) language:



([artist: Jan-H Sculpts](#))

Regardless of the exact form, it's vital to remember that the mechanisms/operations of capital affect everyone, and just as they affect everyone, they can be subverted in liminal forms of expression whose meaty kayfabe bodies and performances aren't strictly controlled or operated by state forces looking to fatten and harvest them; i.e., "Trojan-style" disguises that convey revolutionary allegory through cryptonymic displays of Cartesian-grade violence, terror and morphology (the brutalizing of nature-as-monstrous-feminine) on and offstage:

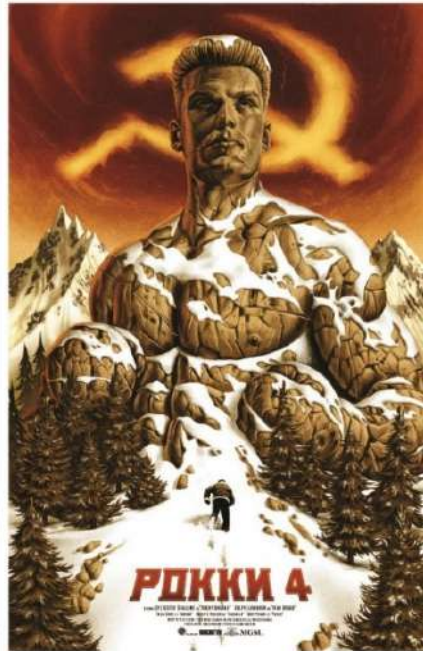
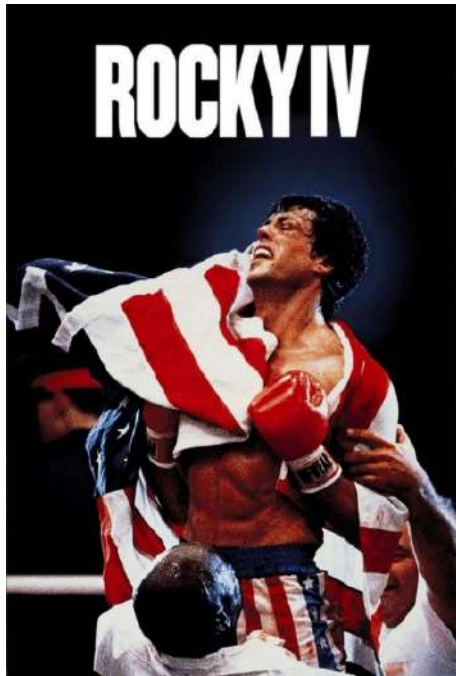


(exhibit 21a2a: Artist, top left: [Silverjow](#); top-middle: [Jan Rockitnik](#); top-mid-right: [elee0228](#); everything else: [Ichan-desu](#). Marisa is one of many Amazons.

Furthermore, the athlete is a common physical marker of war personified through the imaginary past as something to evoke in popular media at large. By extension, social-sexual notions of "warrior" and "strength" interlock and "argue" through cross purposes; e.g., the body of the Amazon, bear or twink as ripe for political discourse within the human form as a hauntological, cryptonymic expression of power tied to combat sports and military culture. Subversions of this culture include the open fetishizing of muscular bodies with various masc/femme flavors that grapple with, or otherwise interrogate, double standards concerning the monstrous-feminine; i.e., in the paramilitary world of contact sports [which extends to the cryptonymy of "adventure" through the sublimation of war and rape]. Inside said world, it's not uncommon to "recorrect" the feminine man by gifting the bear/polar bear with Herculean bodies whose chiseled muscles automatically translate to giant penises in the eyes of cis men [and have a pitcher and catcher with a presumed "womanly" bottom]. But it can also be reclaimed as a statuesque performer divorced from their intended role. It becomes a look/mood unto itself.

My point is, it's not "the look" that's the problem, but the context for how it's viewed within said world as it presently exists [function determines function, not aesthetics]. The language of "bears" and "twunks" have had to exist in a military sports environment that, outside of the aristocracy or famous athletes, would have discouraged actual sodomy [non-PIV sex] in Western culture since the time of the Ancient Greeks: big muscles were statuesque and hypermasculine then and now through the personification of the Greek/Roman pantheon as thoroughly "Zeus-like" [the paradox of the gay superhero under Capitalism is that they are tolerated precisely because they are exceptional; i.e., the exception that proves the rule under Rainbow Capitalism: queerness is a commodity tied to war pastiche as predominantly straight, excepting tokens as the perpetual outsiders/smaller group]. Meanwhile, the non-binary approach to this morphological treatment of strength as corporal-sexual can also apply to women through gender trouble and parody as variably engaged: the Amazon as a musclebound "herbo" with the giant tits and six-pack; the skinny-thicc Barbie doll with pornstar curves and Pippi-Longstocking strength; or a cavewoman with traditionally masc qualities whose body evokes a Renaissance effect of morphological descriptors largely kept the same, but swaps genitals/sex organs in order to escape what is normally prescribed within a heteronormative binary [the "Conan with a pussy" concept, though Urbosa is basically female Zeus protecting Link by proxy]. The cis Amazon's sodomy is less reviled in canon if only because, unlike the trans woman, she is born with a vagina, thus can be converted back to the canonically "correct" usage of that sex organ. In short, she can be tamed, rode and ostensibly bred in the appropriate hole [though not always] by her master.

To be crystal clear, this interpretative approach isn't perfect. Marjorie Taylor Greene is basically a really mean herbo: a buff, incredibly dumb and frightened bigot/scared gym rat thriving in a culture war whose canonical praxis merges class war with the aesthetics of war in a fairly obvious way: muscles. Her Amazon disguise sucks—in part because cryptofascists rely on partial transparency but also because an anti-intellectual like her is welcomed by people like them who will exploit her position for a larger regressive movement: "Look at how loud and proud she is, but also strong like Xena!" She's like a cheap wrestler in this respect; i.e., bad-faith but also "campy" in a thoroughly blind and bourgeois sense. It's tragic.)



(exhibit 21a2b: Artist, right: [Jason Edmiston](#). Nation pastiche commonly personifies war through larger-than-life cartoons of men [and token agents] who fight within geopoliticized theatre as a grand kayfabe: the simplicity of the arena as a stage to punch away your problems [and sell tickets and other merchandise within a

free and glorious market]. This doesn't just apply to male Man Box culture, but will be something to keep in mind in Volume Three, Chapter Four when we examine how TERFs perform as regressive Amazons that emulate the same heteronormative mentalities [albeit from token positions within the capitalist paradigm].)

As the above exhibits depict, combat sports under neoliberalism are war personified through national theatre stemming from more antiquated forms of the same basic hero-monsters. In times past, the whole world was watching to the extent that it could. This blood-and-sand, bread-and-circus vibe has expanded well beyond historical knights and gladiators to a variety of performers within and outside the Man Box using shared language. Clearly the tropes endure, but have become hauntologized, *contested*. Knights serve more of a police function (the good/white knight, bad/black knight) and gladiators more as chattel/wage slaves operating inside a bread-and-circus model (this includes tokens offering the circus-level curiosities of Amazon or Adonis as commodified within the general business scheme of a babyfaces-and-heel switch).

Regarding EVO, Capcom Cup and videogames, such ordeals generally come with live bands/music to remind you it's a legitimate sporting event despite the relatively unathletic nature of videogame players: NASCAR levels of corporate sponsorship, phallic trophies and player kayfabe personas that move product with their digital bodies parallel to the Military Industrial Complex overseas, the two operating in unison; e.g., *Wayne's World* (1992, exhibit 34c2) connecting war in videogames to geopolitical maneuvers that use war inside capital to profit as highly as possible; i.e., by moving as much money through nature as can be done, all while exploiting as many workers as possible while dodging the consequences at

every turn. This isn't terribly difficult when you have means. For instance, a million-dollar purse barely qualifies as peanuts to a billion-dollar company like Capcom.

Likewise, as the elite work within their means, collateral damage is to be expected, but also canonized, worshipped and fetishized on and offstage, at home and abroad. Under such privatized, coercive conditions, canon's menticide belies real abuse (rape or otherwise) long before it's "proven" in a court of law—one run by powerful male (or token) judges and biased, cherry-picked juries having a vested, monetary interest in a selectively punitive and illusory course of Justice. Chosen to benefit, if not wealthy then certainly privileged white male defendants, the status quo banks on a legal system operating not as "corrupt," but exactly as intended; i.e., according to the real world as echoed [within copagandistic portrayals that celebrate this Faustian arrangement as naturalized and immutable, hence lucrative for Pygmaliions like Dick Wolf maintaining the spell to profit off of its pro-state myopia](#) (Skip Intro's "Law & Order's War on Your Rights," 2024).

You must understand, then, that oppositional praxis—its mode of expression and execution (through workers synthesizing praxis)—are hopelessly entangled, twisting into a Gordian Knot. Untangling the mess doesn't call for a sword to slice through everything; it takes time and effort to interrogate, and must be done as it actually operates: "an unweeded garden grown to seed." The important distinction for workers lies in seeing Capitalism's ownership of the figurative "seeds," their "planters," the "pots" and the "soil" of the public imagination. Under these stark, pre-owned conditions, workers should do whatever they can when they can to contribute to whatever degree they're able that raises the class/cultural awareness of a larger pro-labor movement seeking liberation; i.e., one that enacts sex-positive change through iconoclastic praxis synthesized according to emotional/Gothic intelligence, the social-sexual habits of which develop over time. It's not a sprint, but a marathon performed by a disparate union of workers and various class allies (friendly millionaires, professors, politicians, industry legends and other privileged/accommodated workers) grappling with class traitors (cops; unfriendly millionaires, professors, politicians, industry legends and other privileged/accommodated workers). All are menticed to some degree and exposed to waves of terror through the state trifectas and monopolies. What defines workers as bourgeois or proletarian is *how* they respond within oppositional praxis, be that passively or actively (the more active/awake the better). In short, you want workers who "gotchu" when class traitors start to fuck around, [like this very pissed off \(and very awesome\) Boston mom](#) (Jaclyn Smith, 2023).



Speaking in fictional terms, *Star Wars: Andor* gives the perfect model, I think ([and extrapolate on in my own glowing response video](#)): Maarva/Cass Andor and friends are rebellious workers/active conspirators; Axis

and Mon Martha, class allies; Dedra Meero and Syril Karn, class traitors; Karis Nemik, the twink manifesto-writer ("the brains"); Faye Marsay, muscle ("the brawn"/Amazon warrior mom); Saw Gerrera and Kino Loy, liminal workers (factionalism, but also turncoats/converted allies); and B2EMO, the cute robot mascot. Nemik's manifesto is the theory behind the operation; Mon Martha funds the rebellion and Axis facilitates it (in admittedly cutthroat ways); Andor vs Karn or Meero vs Axis and Martha are oppositional praxis; and the combined drama and intrigue between everything, in dialectical-material terms, synthesize through social-sexual, emotionally healthy and intelligent habits that "grease the wheels" of revolution and tyranny (there's not much overtly Gothic content in the show but retro-future is retro-future).

To emulate these working concepts as part of oppositional praxis at large, the remainder of the synthesis roadmap divides into our aforementioned four parts: the "basics," or social-sexual habits tied to emotional/Gothic intelligence as they presently exist, followed by fleshing out these concepts more deeply as we supply further exhibits about canonical war and rape as historical-material "side effects" of Capitalism/Cartesian dualism operating as normal.

Before we proceed onto the basics in part one, consider one more time the paradoxical means of applying Sarkeesian's adage to the human body in popular entertainment as something to embody ourselves. Traditional mechanisms of strength and power are easily alienated and fetishized through Cartesian violence/abjection, to which function determines function, not aesthetics. All the same, there is generally a great deal of overlap, so remember this when conducting dialectical-material scrutiny through your own consumption, creation and/or patronage of the arts:



(exhibit 21b: Artist, top-left and right: [Jan Rockitnik](#); top-mid-left and top-mid-right: [Luigiix](#); bottom-left and bottom-mid-left: [Inputwo](#); bottom-mid-right: [Velladonna](#).)

The body—especially the female body—is a highly controlled canvas [which reflects back on AMAB variants of the monstrous-feminine/corrupt, of course]. As we have discussed regarding Amazonomachia so far in the book, the embodiment of strength is generally in conflict with hauntological traditions that serve the state, or become unmoored from state mechanisms to interrogate themselves in worker-produced, semi-asexual forms of poetic catharsis [e.g., rape play and public nudism]. The aim isn't just to empower oneself in relation to one's own trauma, but to prevent trauma in the future by reclaiming the potential theatrical devices that normally concern or otherwise bring trauma about for all peoples. The body as a canvas, then, becomes a battlefield with which to issue a variety of warrants and commands from and towards; i.e., through body language itself as normally policed with these bodies and their expressions of power, but through Gothic-Communist performance and play lets workers negotiate their own [a]sexual destinies by corrupting the usual mechanisms of worker enslavement: material conditions and propaganda.)

Heroes are often monstrous and sexualized, and the monstrous body is a huge paradox. Orcs are clear example, as we have discussed in Volume One and Zero

"umm I hope you guys know orcs would kill you if you tried to fuck them"
whaaat holy shit man orcs are typically depicted as chaotic evil savages? no

waaay dude, this whole time I've been eroticizing the monstrous as a deliberate critique of the racist and ableist undertones in the classical orc archetype, when I should have simply realized that elements of popular fiction are objective absolutes that can't be reexamined or remixed through the cultural lens of the ever-shifting presentttttt (source, Tumblr post: [Orc Boxer](#))

but really it can be anything monstrous or fetishized *adjacent* to monstrous stereotypes, thus able to intersect with systemic trauma through parallel expression (similar body types; e.g., the PAWG, below, as luscious, fruit-like, and ready-for-harvest); i.e., as something to expose psychosexual trauma and teach good play through (a)sexual renegotiation amid the creative successes of proletarian praxis grappling with state forms (which automatically compel sexual activity through segregation and force). Keep this in mind as we proceed.



(artist: [Super Busty Art](#))

Nature Is Food, part one: The Basics of Oppositional Synthesis; or Outlining Girl Talk, Menticide, the Liminal Expression of Subversive Revolution and "Perceptive" Pastiche in the Face of Cartesian Trauma (feat. Medusa, Stigma Animals and Georgia O'Keefe)

"Gossip is instructive. It tells which way the wind is blowing."

—Oz, the Great and Terrible, *Wicked* (1995)



We arrive at part one of the roadmap, which again is a symposium-style examination/illustration of "the basics," or pure reductions of our synthetic oppositional groupings. It explores our pedagogic emphasis during oppositional praxis as something to

synthesize and instruct to others; i.e., oppositional synthesis with a proletarian agenda that is cultivated—to prevent war and rape against nature, specifically Cartesian treatments of nature as food: nature as *female/monstrous-feminine* food tied to the profit motive, which alienates workers from nature by fetishizing and commodifying them as extended beings ripe for the harvest. Ending the harvest demands raising emotional/Gothic intelligence and, by extension, a class/cultural awareness that leads to systemic catharsis through trauma writing and artwork as something to express and teach through a basic, *de facto* educational approach. Our instructional focus is something I call "girl talk," or open, preventative communication versus state menticide and bad communication; i.e., our challenging of the state's bad education through liminal, monstrous expression that encourages subversion and perception useful to proletarian aims confronting trauma by suggesting it (aka revolutionary cryptonymy). In the interests of issuing *healthy* girl talk, we'll also have to discuss Medusa and stigma animals, but also people like Georgia O'Keefe who attempt to express themselves in relation to nature-as-abject.

We'll get to them. First, the basics, themselves.

For the proletariat, the goal of synthesizing praxis is to prevent universal war and rape (of workers and nature) by processing systemic (Cartesian) trauma and dogma through creative successes that invoke monstrous language; i.e., by establishing social-sexual connections through basic behaviors useful to the development of a post-scarcity (non-capitalist) world versus hopeless alienation and

blind revenge; e.g., the abject, furious slaughtering of the Romanovs or the beheading of Louis XVI.

In terms of making social-sexual connections, our Gothic-Communist aim is to teach workers to holistically "put two-and-two together," thus reconnect with nature and the material world in ways that Capitalism abjects: nature as alienated from workers and workers from it, including workers as natural beings—our labor, bodies, sexualities, genders and emotions, pastiche, genitals, etc. Though all are valuable to think about, with, or through, our *emotions* are especially useful as a critical-thinking device that likewise learns from the past through the Gothic mode; i.e., a return to irrationality or pre-Enlightenment expression, minus the Cartesian stigma of pointless madness or disempowering hysteria (often presenting in literal bodily forms; e.g., "immodest" fat bodies presented in a "dark" aesthetic, below) as grappling with "correct" and "incorrect forms" through the *basics* of oppositional praxis. Keeping with the spirit of instruction, part one will introduce and outline these basics in a symposium-like style.



(artist: [Tana the Puppy](#))

The "basics" constitute something that we've touched upon so far in the book, but now which I thoroughly want to stress: instruction of good praxis through basic-yet-essential social-sexual behaviors. While our thesis was pure theory, which the manifesto focused on simplifying—i.e., through intimate and interpersonal expressions of trauma—doing so has led up to the cultivation of rudimentary social-sexual habits that make up good praxis as something to instruct; Volume One's second (shorter) half concerns instruction through said habits inside an anti-Cartesian, non-binarized way of life. Good praxis, then, is demonstrably achieved when theory becomes productively

synthesized to challenge Cartesian dualism; i.e., can be simplified to common behaviors that amount to collective worker action solidarized against the state. The basics boil down from the synthetic oppositional groupings that the Six Doubles manifest through:

- **destructive vs constructive anger**—i.e., possessive or bad-faith, destructive anger's defense *of* the state vs constructive anger as a legitimate defense *from* state abuses; e.g., police abuse and DARVO tactics.
- **destabilizing vs stabilizing gossip**—i.e., co-dependent, "prison sex" mentalities and rape culture vs interdependent girl talk (e.g., #MeToo) and rape prevention.
- **"blind" vs "perceptive" pastiche/quoting**—i.e., unironic pastiche and quoting (dogma) vs subversive, ironic quoting (camp).
- **unironic vs ironic gender trouble/parody (camp)**—i.e., a performative means of cryptofascism vs demasking the fascist-in-disguise, making these imposters self-report by figuratively gagging or crapping their pants (with gender parody being a means of combatting the impostor syndrome of gender *dysphoria* with gender *euphoria* and reclaimed xenophobic labels/implements of torture: Asprey's counterterror in a theatrical sense)
- **bad-faith vs good-faith egregores**, including xenophilic/xenophobic monsters both as products of worker labor as well as worker identities, occupations, and rankings, which use similar language regardless if they're bourgeois or proletarian—e.g., the *bourgeois* Amazon detective (canonical Samus Aran) vs the *proletarian* zombie-vampire-unicorn pillow princess.

They reduce from these groups according how workers communicate in simplified forms; i.e., according to cultivated social-sexual habits: *anger*, *gossip*, *parody/pastiche (subversion)* and *monsters*—aka, the "basics," except we can simplify even them further!

We'll do so in just a second. First a note about opposition. The basics are my attempt at formulating a simplified teaching approach that I feel makes up how people actually operate on a daily level; i.e., according to common social-sexual devices that connect to complex theories that are often in conflict. In turn, these basic habits constitute actions that can be cultivated through Gothic poetics, which can gradually and collectively camp canon, reclaiming the Base and recultivating the Superstructure in a sex-positive sense; i.e., by making them (and their violent, rapacious theatre) gay. Doing so can alter historical materialism (and undo Capitalist Realism) through dialectical-material opposition to state forces, including *menticide* as something to counteract. A raped mind is a stupid, fearful mind unaware of structural manipulation as malleable. Keeping those forces in mind, it's also important to remember that my attempts at theoretical reduction also include reductions of what we're up against—that sex positivity, emancipation and rebellion (the Three Iconoclastic Doubles) involve proletarian synthetic groupings that are routinely met with varying degrees of *open aggression*, *condescension*, *canonical indignation* and *DARVO* towards camp in defense of canon (and that these have only accelerated according to a growing profit motive on the global stage). So while

the preface already explained that synthesis is vital to good praxis, this praxis can be challenged by bad instruction working in opposition to the pro-worker habits that we cultivate in their most basic forms, often piece by piece:



(artist: [Zuru Ota](#))

As the preface also stated, synthesis can be adequately summarized as the cultivation of emotional/Gothic intelligence and class/cultural awareness; i.e., the deliberate utilization of Gothic poetics during the practical application of simplified theory between activist workers formulating healthy social-sexual habits. The state will try to undermine this everywhere it can, including through its own forms of instruction transforming these basic patterns to oppose ours; i.e., during oppositional praxis:

- *destructive vs constructive* anger
- *destabilizing vs stabilizing* gossip (and abuse encouragement/prevention patterns)
- *"blind" vs "perceptive"* pastiche (class/culture blindness versus consciousness)
- *unironic vs ironic* gender trouble/parody (canon vs camp)
- *bad-faith vs good-faith* egregores (monsters/doubles)

Again, the idea is to think in terms of opposition and what both sides represent as they engage back and forth through battles of instruction; i.e., psychopraxis, including good education versus bad education (a concept we'll touch upon here, and reexplore more thoroughly in Volume Three when considering weird canonical nerds as bad educators). The creative successes of proletarian praxis encourage

their own results, but so does bourgeois praxis; e.g., mutual consent is challenged by manufactured consent according to someone who—through varying degrees of passivity and action—seeks to encourage abuse and risk-production behaviors that emerge through a lack of intelligence, awareness and empathy, hence *constructive anger, stabilizing gossip, perceptive pastiche, ironic quoting and gender trouble/parody, and good-faith egregores*.

For the purposes of this symposium, then, I want to acclimate you towards chaos as a state of existence that Gothic poetics capture well (something my thesis discussed in relation to paradox and play through Milton's "darkness visible"). I want us to consider the above groups in the simplest, most conversational language:

- *girl talk* (anger/gossip): People talk, often with excitement and anger but also theory through their own *de facto* forms of instruction.
- *monsters* (doubles and liminal expression): People self-express through extensions of trauma that reclaim state language, generally as a means of identity.
- *camp* ("perceptive" pastiche/ironic parody): People perform, but also subvert canon, often through gender trouble and parody using identity and instruction to achieve praxial catharsis at a structural level; i.e., by redistributing power and its understanding and application/interrogating through a healthier Wisdom of the Ancients.

All of these go hand-in-hand; reclamation happens through gossip and gossip can be campy and monstrous, etc. Moreover, these are the very basics to successful praxis, which the rest of part one will explore in order using the most rudimentary of terms. Doing so should hopefully reflect how the instruction of synthesis (and *de facto* education of said habits) work at an intuitive, everyday level.

First up, *girl talk* preforms through various thresholds that protect the mind from rape and war (thus *menticide*) while discouraging either in the future as having learned from the past as something to repeatedly conjure up and tinker with. To avoid automatic, traumatizing violence, rape *prevention* (war through Imperialism is rape on a mass scale) demands *subversion/liminal expression* and "*perceptive*" *pastiche* in the face of powerful enemies who lack the nuance needed to root us out. Through gender trouble and parody (camp), we can expose them by making them self-report before their positions in society become normalized *again* (crisis never stops and decay repeats); we can furiously gossip and remediate praxis through parody and pastiche, preventing war and rape via Gothic poetics, using said poetics to humanize us and expose our abusers as coercive and ghoulish

by breaking their concentric veneers down, one layer at a time. In short, we'll examine how their menticed status can be opposed, mid-conflict¹⁵⁰.

I want to start with an older historical example of canonization, before poking and prodding into more recent iterations that have cropped up during the 20th and 21st centuries. We're going to look at the history of Gothic poetics extensively in Volume Two, and a much, much more fleshed out examination of praxis in Volume Three. For now, this is merely grease for the wheels. As such, we'll consider a brief example of slavery from Britain's Victorian period, then touch on the basics as you might encounter them in your own day-to-day existence; i.e., as a means of reflecting on various forms of abuse that amount to slavery under capital and through which you can relate to according to an imaginary past (and its conspicuous darkness) as a dialog unto itself: the darkness (and its emergent corruption) *are* the data and work as potent, if-at-times paradoxical, leverage towards a better world, not simply a whitewashed castle to hide the spilled blood and open fields of exhausted laborers. To do that, you have to humanize not just alien that is fetishized, but their fat and meat as belonging to them while representing who they are through morphological expression as a liberatory device; e.g., fat liberation becoming a postcolonial critique of settler-colonial forces, working with various tissues to give rise to new levels of appreciation and resistance.



(artist: [Dani Is Online](#))

The 18th and 19th centuries were a place and time of tremendous mid-war/post-revolutionary sentiment, wherein sex positivity (and its various praxial relatives) would have been utterly vilified by Ann Radcliffe as "useless sorrow" or Charlotte Brontë's Bertha, the "madwoman in the attic" that colonizer Rochester had no idea how to treat: his first, literal slave wife.

By extension, it could be argued that neither did Charlotte. We've already blown Radcliffe to bits in Volume Zero; here, I want to use an exhibit to extrapolate on Charlotte Brontë's bigotries to make my point. Bear in mind, you can stretch out these arguments with anyone you critique during your own sacred-cow barbecues (often while also offering up your own variations [above] to worship without harm):

¹⁵⁰ Though we won't stress these terms here, this includes conflicting theories (psychopraxis), monsters (*Amazonomachia*), mentalities or identities (psychomachy) and sexualities (psychosexuality).



(exhibit 21c1: [Source](#). British female hypercanon is white and cis-het, thus super problematic. Edward Said once described Austen as belonging to "a slave-owning society" [and stuffy Brits gave him hell for it]. Before him, Jean Rys highlighted Charlotte Brontë's internalized racism with her own 1966 postcolonial critique, *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Even in 1847, though, Charlotte's repressed bigotries spilled out inside a recently emancipated Britain having preyed on its colonies for centuries: a displaced, disassociated patriarchal critique projected onto a demonic, racialized other—Antoinette Cosway by

another name. Charlotte's framing of female virtue, then, is rather sexist/cis-gendered, but also xenophobic and racist—i.e., the white woman's "wildness" as needing to be tamed or regulated to tolerable levels while also punching down at various non-white groups with fleshier bodies.

To this, Charlotte would treat Bertha's body as alien, describing her—a woman of color—as a vampire and a goblin whose nightly wanderings Jane would look on at in fascination and horror [and who Rys would humanize over a century later]. Jane's *bildungsroman* [coming-of-age story] frames her, the child, as wild and uncouth, eventually evolving into a firm, measured governess [who isn't "as wild" as her and Rochester's technically unadopted French bastard, Adèle; at the end of the novel, Jane tries to Anglicize Adèle, gentrifying her by making the girl "less French"].

Similar problematic themes [and [highly dysfunctional love-as-a-stalkery-trap written by women about men who can't handle rejection from women](#)] can be found in Victorian forebears¹⁵¹ like Austen, whose Eleanor and Marianne Dashwood

¹⁵¹ Toxic love bleeds into modern pop culture, too; e.g., Fleetwood Mac's 1977 album, *Rumours*, which was written while the entire band was cheating on each other and presumably knew about it. Lorna Gray writes:

Forty-five years ago, Fleetwood Mac released their 11th studio album, *Rumours*—widely considered one of the best albums ever made. But while [Fleetwood Mac's](#)

respectively represent the titular *Sense and Sensibility* [reason and passion]: Marianne loves the uncommitted Willoughby too much and is consequently married off to Colonel Brandon [Austen allows no unmarried heroines at the end of her novels; despite her ironies needling the institution but also the profession of writing about marriage, the narrative ultimately demands for it from her each and every time. Not without irony, Austen still obliges the formula].

However art also imitates life in that Charlotte's sister, Emily [and her fiction; e.g., *Wuthering Heights*] were considerably wilder and more passionate [and fun, in my opinion] than her sister's fictions. Yet, without Charlotte's patience and dedication to cultivate Emily's poetry after she died, the younger, more reclusive sister would have remained largely unknown. As I write in "Beneath the Church-Isle Stone: Posthumous Liberties" [2015]:

"One day, in the autumn of 1845, I accidentally lighted on a [manuscript] volume of verse in my sister Emily's handwriting. Of course, I was not surprised, knowing that she could and did write verse..." ("Bibliographical Notice" v). Charlotte Brontë already knew that her sister was a poet, but here, found proof that Emily was a good, productive one. It would not do to hide this work from the world, she thought—not when the three sisters needed to start supporting themselves. Determined, Charlotte swore to get published, and after much persuading was able to convince Emily to participate in a collective project where the three sisters, including Anne, each contributed poems to a single volume. This volume, *Poems by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell*, was published in 1846 and sold only two copies. Undaunted by this underwhelming reception into the literary market, each sister continued to write, and in 1847 published a single novel apiece: *Jane Eyre*, *Agnes Grey* and *Wuthering Heights*. *Jane Eyre* was published last, but enjoyed the most success, becoming something of a Victorian "best-seller." The other two novels were subject to relatively harsh criticism, polarizing Victorian readers. Emily and Anne 's reputations as writers were tarnished, and shortly after their novels were published, both died. In an attempt "to rescue [them] from the notoriety surrounding the novels, [Charlotte Brontë reconstituted] their battered reputations around their verse" (Bauman 32). To do this, she waited until her sisters were dead before introducing never-

[music](#) has inspired, comforted and captivated people for almost five decades, it's easy to forget the tumultuous and downright crazy sh*t that was going on behind the scenes. Namely, the fact they spent a heck of a lot of time on cocaine, and they've all been embroiled in some sort of scandalous love affair, usually with each other. The somewhat incestuous affairs of the band members were at their peak when they spent 11 months recording *Rumours*. Mick Fleetwood has admitted recording the album "almost killed us" [[source](#): "Inside the Affairs that Nearly Destroyed Fleetwood Mac," 2023].

before-published poems, notably altering and changing them to acclimate Emily and Anne's works to a fussy Victorian audience unused to the writing style of either woman [[source](#)].)



(exhibit 21c2: Model and artist: Charlotte Brontë and George Richmond. While there exist [two portraits of Emily painted by her brother, Branwell](#), she is often mistaken for a portrait of her sister, Charlotte. Mistaken identity is a common theme in Gothic fiction, one that plays out quite literally in Radcliffe's 1796 [The Italian](#) when Father Schedoni sees "his" daughter in a miniature portrait around her neck; or as I write in "Gothic Themes in [Perfect Blue](#)":

In [[The Italian](#)] Father Schedoni, a master manipulator, is deceived by appearances. Preparing to plunge his dagger into Ellena Rosalba's breast, Schedoni freezes, having seen a pendant whose miniature "resembled" him. In truth, while it did, the picture was actually of Schedoni's brother, the Countess di Bruno. Killed by Schedoni years earlier, the Countess' likeness is similar enough to Schedoni's stolen role that he thought he saw himself. In a cruel twist, he grows convinced that Ellena bears his likeness, is actually his long-lost daughter. While Schedoni had sired a child through his brother's wife, it had died while he was abroad. In truth, he is actually Ellena's uncle, and her father was Schedoni's murdered brother, the Countess. Unable to safely murder Ellena, Schedoni forces her to travel with him through the Italian countryside. There, both spend the better part of the novel in a state of mutual confusion [[source](#)].

Dead ringers and wacky murder plots aside, portraits and miniatures were incredibly expensive, and most families would have been hard-pressed to afford even one. "Emily" Brontë's portrait was painted in 1850, two years after she died—a testament to her fame competing with Charlotte's [whose money following [Jane Eyre's](#) success helped her afford the privilege] but also owing to the simple fact that [multiple](#) women weren't allowed to be famous. For this reason, Charlotte had

elected to publish their pennames as "neutral," meaning agendered: Acton, Curren and Ellis Bell.)

Our point in examining older women like Radcliffe, Austen and Charlotte Brontë before we dive into the symposium proper is to consider how their emotional/Gothic intelligence—especially regarding slavery and critiquing the Patriarchy's amatonormative focus to achieve heteronormative models of exploitation—was and is outmoded and underdeveloped (versus Mary Shelley's precocious, "Satanic" science-fiction, whose iconoclastic, queer-adjacent and anonymously published desire "to be the witch" [[unlike Margaret Hamilton](#)] we'll unpack in Volume Two): their Gothic novel, novel-of-manners and *bildungsroman* operating as *imperfect* tools of menticide, meaning they can be reclaimed and repurposed to heal the mind from rape. By relying on our intelligent and informed emotions/Gothic imagination as things to learn from a collective, dialogic past, we can improve on what came before through our own contributions (with pen names also being a trans strategy of publication—e.g., Grace Lavery's [Pleasure and Efficacy: Of Pen Names, Cover Versions, and Other Trans Techniques](#), 2023); by improving on ways of Gothically imagining the world, other stratagems—our basics reduced to nouns and simple, executable verbs—reliably emerge that are equally vital to iconoclastic praxis, but also our own survival while performing it as teachers that cultivate rudimentary behaviors that, while ubiquitous in day-to-day life, are also punished during daily moral panics.

With all of this unpacking done, and a brief nip into the past as it once was imagined, let's press on into the symposium's consideration of Gothic media in the present space and time: our own means, materials and methods of instruction.

The Gothic, as we've established, addresses sex worker trauma through liminal expression, often tied to an imaginary past derived from older texts. Special emphasis, then, should be given to phenomenological expression (the study or *expression* of experience) and markers of abuse; i.e., the cultural gargoyles we mentioned earlier in the manifesto; e.g., Charlotte's Bertha as a historical-material relic of 1840s Britain. Whereas iconoclasm seeks to dismantle the social-sexual stigma assigned to these symbols by state-sanctioned laws, religion and violence, Gothic *canon* codifies canonical stigmas. In turn, the stigmas themselves serve as cultural "cement" in regards to how workers are treated or viewed, including by themselves in relation to psychosexual trauma as already-materialized: rape as the ever-present threat of power abuse and poorly concealed harm; if Imperialism comes home to empire, the usual recipients of state abuse will feel it the worst, but the *minds* of all will be subject to powerful forces that induce harmful social-sexual habits through menticide.

As we have already discussed, Meerloo describes "waves of terror" that traumatize people in ways useful to the state: "the use of well-planned, repeated successive waves of terror to bring the people into submission" *vis-à-vis* "the core

of the strategy of menticide is the taking away of all hope, all anticipation, all belief in a future." In 2023, the workers of today see these waves constantly reverberating across the real world through fictional and non-fictional variants imitating each other in continuum: rape and war culture, but also the material, personifying articulation of thought crimes—e.g., sin. Meerloo calls the *outcome* of this abusive continuum "menticide," a rape of the mind—something we'll continue examining through the state's proliferation of Gothic canon and how said canon whittles down the working class' emotional reserves and Gothic imagination; i.e., to foster Capitalist Realism through a Gothic myopia. That is, arrayed conspicuously around the viewer at various registers, bourgeois monsters serve to constantly terrify workers in ways useful to the state through bad instruction: threats of violence and rape carried out over not just single moments, but a victim's entire life span through transgenerational trauma; it becomes a curse, one afforded by egregores-made-material.



These days, canonical gargoyles don't just sit on literal churches; they pertain to ever-present likenesses existing everywhere in the material world, spat out in mass-produced forms. As the manifesto argued, they are "anything that can be looked upon with fear as a dogmatic source of instruction." In purely cis-het circles, simply look around and you'll see:

macho men acting like canonical monsters towards women, while faithfully quoting their favorite sexist literature or persona (e.g., Andrew Tate); and battered women responding in ways that either submit to toxic-masculine abuse or fight back in ways that ostracize women from society—with society tending to blame the historical-material victim(s): women and minorities (who often victimize themselves as they internalize bigotry and attempt to assimilate).

Our holistic goal with iconoclastic praxis, then, is teaching emotional and Gothic intelligence through the acquisition of *stabilizing* behaviors. Girl talk, liminal subversion and transformative quoting/perceptive pastiche, then, are reductions of theory into useful actions that alleviate state-manufactured crises and push towards praxial catharsis. These require emotional/Gothic intelligence—i.e., an active desire to avoid politically "passive" competition under a punitive hierarchy that occurs

through various measuring "contests": dick-measuring, female asset-measuring and the gauging of tokenistic assimilation (e.g., whiteness, but also class, religious and cultural values at large). These behaviors develop in relation to the historical-material world as something to subvert and "quote" in liminal, transformative ways. In turn, idiosyncratic¹⁵² love language, but also *fear* language, become things to vocalize and double in our own subversive artwork—extensions of our own lives as teaching devices of societally beneficial stratagems:

- trauma/rape awareness-and-prevention tactics and terms ("reactive abuse," "love-bombing," "hovering" "isolation," "red flags" and other sadly-but-deliberately extracurricular things under Capitalism)
- emotional health terms that describe how we actually feel
- a heightened awareness towards traditionally female/feminine predicaments: experiencing rape or threats of rape; being gaslit, gatekept or assimilated (with a queer, all-inclusive flavor of course: abused workers include more than cis-het white women acting as girl bosses; i.e., queer bosses; e.g., Natalie Wynn, who we'll examine in Volume Three, Chapter Four)

Such basic goals are instructional, but also vocal; i.e., a kind of "tea spilling" unto itself—one whose bold, playful investigating of repressed or policed social-sexual factors are designed to help workers get "in touch" with their older, emotional selves, nature, and trauma through gossip, but also society's emotional self and trauma as normally being monopolized historically-materially by the elite (who alienate workers from nature and sex, but also their emotions [anger] and ability to think critically by camping canon in Gothic ways). In turn, said gossip talks about how canonical "gargoyles" repress worker willpower and resistance by attacking workers' ability to imagine anything else. Gossip isn't just useful, but paramount to our very survival when the elite divide and pit us against each other.

Once combined and put to proletarian praxis, revolutionary workers can generate sex-positive lessons in ludo-Gothic BDSM and other elements of sex positivity that assist in putting Capitalism (and its menticial abuses) behind us. This requires subversion, which happens by making canonical praxis—including its bourgeois monsters, worker atrocities and ruthless tyrants/soldiers—a *dated* paraphernalia we continue to examine and learn from during our own means of subversive instruction; i.e., our girl talk, monsters and camp. All enable us to survive while mastering an iconoclastic doubling of social-sexual expression that evolves away from Capitalism and into Gothic Communism: Ann Radcliffe's happy

¹⁵² I'll never forget when Zeuhl called me "cutie" for the first time; the word sounded alien to me, but was something I very much wanted to hear more of as time went on. Every partner I've had has used their own special terms of endearment to refer to me as.

ending *without* the dancing peasants celebrating the new princess' felicitous, *exclusive* inauguration (we're all princesses under Communism, my sweets).

Conscious rebellion also includes the Gothic mastering of madness and monsters present in the evolution of the female detective/damsel-in-distress into holistic, inclusive forms, merging into increasingly liminal/queer iterations (the imperiled twink) that transform themselves, and the material world around them, as things to "quote" imperfectly on purpose; i.e., to invoke gender trouble (whose progression and praxial friction we'll examine throughout this roadmap, but also in Volumes Two and Three; e.g., the "Conan with a pussy [except not bigoted]" concept seen in exhibits 84a and 112). As something to expound upon *ad infinitum*, our Gothic-Communist making of gender trouble is two-fold, then: to one, synthesize old terms with our individual/collective artistic output and exhibits; and two, invent *new* terms and codes (this book is full of such things) that likewise "do the trick." Development towards Gothic Communism will constantly put us in uncharted territory that requires updating the lexicon as needed—i.e., by pulling out old classics, but also making new ones to adjust to the social-sexual, linguo-material "growing pains." All of the synthetic terminology outlined thus far should be a clue. All the same, it generally comes from older language that was (and is) used to maintain the status quo.

Take, for example, [C.S. Lewis' four outmoded words for love](#) (the guy straight up treats *eros* as synonymous with romantic love). There should also be different words for fear that describe worker submission under Capitalism—not just fear of death, but fear of a world without Capitalism, thus without "protection" as synonymous with the symptoms of capital: the ghost of the counterfeit, Shadow of Pygmalion, Cycle of Kings, monomyth, infernal concentric pattern (and its endless semantic wreckage) and any and all reliable historical materialisms that result from business-as-usual under the elite. Our expanded language through our own instruction attacks a Symbolic Order whose language and fear-mongering are used by reactionaries and moderates alike (and that Fischer's hauntology touches upon): bourgeois phobias and stigmas tied to cultural gargoyles that can be synthesized—i.e., transmuted according oppositional praxis and expressed through our successful, iconoclastic forms over space and time. Gay gargoyles, monsters, wizards, slutty detectives (exhibit 22)—through such darkness visible, we can make whatever's needed to get our point across: Capitalism sucks and can be improved upon through the same devices reclaimed by us.

Keeping with our examination of the past as brought into the present—and previous stabs at Radcliffe—consider Velma again (and not for the last time):



(exhibit 22: Artist, top-left: unknown; top-right: [unknown, but links to a Velma cosplay subreddit](#); bottom right: [Steven Stahlberg](#); bottom-left: [Valentina Kryp](#). Especially popular or remediated characters tend to get virally shared. Such sharing can be hard to regulate or track. In this case, we not only have detective pastiche, but *Velma* pastiche. Seriously, this foxy nerd is legion, but also a regular practitioner of the "explained supernatural" trope originally formalized by Ann Radcliffe. Defrauding the "supernatural" through spooky piracy is a common theme in Radcliffe's works, or embattled marriages, false relatives and various ordinary things taken to performative extremes; e.g., the mother being sent to live in a nunnery for the rest of her days. To this, Radcliffe was following suit with Walpole, injecting the supernatural into ordinary events, getting at the truth of things through outrageous narratives that still, in the end, feel cliché and homely. As for Velma, her subversive liminality is complex—empowering for performative nerds who want to let it all hang out, but also solve mysteries of a highly conventional sort using subverted conventions: a surrender of corporal modesty and surviving the danger ahead by becoming closer to nature and one's shapely body while still being smart as a whip. Velma is a character whose tasty "slut

reclamation" dares to ask, "Why not both?" Sure, it's arguably appropriative from a commercial standpoint—i.e., tailor-made JO material for weird male nerds and their ravenous, horny gaze—but the iconoclastic exhibit has multiple functions. One of them is to keep the revolutionary lights on, and cis-het dudes got money to pay out with in support of sex work, allowing for purely asexual or nonheteronormative reasons amid the usual sexual ones: charity without the expectation of sex. In development's increasingly better world, however, such codependent transactions will become less and less necessary. Re: Socialism's "From each according to [their] ability, to each according to [their] work" to Communism's "to each according to [their] need.")

Regardless of what (or who) we retailer towards rebellion, Gothic Communism is easier said than done. Revolutions occur over time, and as we discussed before the symposium must constantly be funded, organized, and taught through collective worker action/activism as something that evolves the Superstructure in a proletarian direction. Simply put, revolution requires constant awareness, application and discipline at a societal, collective level: one of and towards people and language as they function in (dis)harmony as a presently divided working class learning over time to heal; and two, how Capitalism slowly wears down our defense mechanisms using reactive abuse over generations that shape natural and material language, binding them (and our responses to them) to the elite's will. This includes how we communicate "on and off the clock"; i.e., when we're actively working or just shooting the shit. *Gossip and anger.*



For example, the bourgeoisie can easily infect the way women, as motherly educators, gossip about rape and war—at parties, general social gatherings, or over the phone, etc.

Indeed, I noticed something recently while my mother and grandmother were talking on the phone. They had been chatting about a friend's suspicious mother not wanting her undercover policeman husband going near their children because he looked like a "criminal/underworld person" (a "hobbit," according to my grandmother). Both women seemed to be innocently gossiping about broad, nebulous markers of violence, yet both were associating things of the underworld as inherently dangerous; i.e., Gothic markers, *monsters*. My family was taught to

think this way by the state, but also state proponents like Tolkien (re: hobbits) passing their teachings along compromised social practices: *outmoded*, harmful gossip through the lessons they leave behind; e.g., *The Lord of the Rings*. In this manner, communication can quickly become a kind of "stranger danger" that spreads moral panics like a virus across oral language informed by recorded language; i.e., according to how language *naturally* tends to work and how we tend to acquire it through socio-*material* means: osmotic transference through reified stigmas and fears that stochastic terrorism further exacerbates. Before you know it, monsters aren't things to consume, but scapegoat state enemies and victims with, blaming them for the state's regular "failings" (worker, animal and environmental exploitation).

However "random" and "disconnected" such terrorism might seem, it nevertheless remains a manmade consequence to the bourgeois machinations of the state (whose spontaneous gun violence, for example, enters the American hydra of cycling reactive abuse, much like Jack the Ripper once did in Britain over a century ago; the criminal hauntology of either myth continues to be enshrined in popular media, which we'll explore more deeply in Volume Three, Chapter Two). To turn a phrase, generational violence and the people who commit it are "cut from the same tree"—of the natural and material world interacting back and forth during oppositional praxis.

To that, Gothic Communism happens from moment to moment, using variable counterterrorism to slowly reclaim these natural-material functions for workers' universal benefit. Over generations, it slowly liberates them and the larger Gothic mode from the bourgeoisie by making said mode amenable to worker rights. Bit by bit, stochastic terrorism (and its associate monsters and fears; e.g., getting raped and murdered by false boyfriends) can gradually disappear at home, and settler-colonialism abroad. However, the abolishment of state violence at all levels can only happen while *consciously* moving forward into the future; i.e., as emotionally/Gothically intelligent workers who grow increasingly aware of the wars taking place on all fronts. Establishment politicians only serve each other and the state; we must diminish the influence they have over worker minds insofar as monsters take part. Except, our focus needs to be on ourselves replacing the elite, subverting their monstrous tools of menticide and, in effect, weakening the elite's grip on us as normally enacted by unironic variants.

In light of established monopolies, then, we must reclaim Gothic poetics (and the required emotional labor) from state forces in the present moment. Doing so happens through individual means of *camping* canon that, once combined, make up a *dialogic* Gothic imagination. Comprised of social-sexual "girl talk" that subverts heteronormative conventions with "perceptive" pastiche, this social network—and its cultural synthesis of iconoclastic praxis in Gothic language—defends the exploited with a holistic checklist that no one educator, student or lesson could hope to impart single-handedly (this book will try to encapsulate everything but

doubtless will miss something): fostering "friendly monsters" (and monstrous sex toys) whose camp reverses abjection and uses the natural complexity of human language as navigated easily by fluent practitioners of the Gothic mode; i.e., building sex-positive parallel societies with Communist chronotopes, achieving mental emancipation with hauntology and revolution with cryptonymy to liberate all workers and, by extension, the nature world from Capitalism.

For the rest of part one, I want to focus on synthesizing the basics through one famous monster type, the Medusa and Athena's Aegis, before talking about the history of female expression (through Georgia O'Keefe, exhibit 24c1) and increasingly gender-non-conforming variations enacted by us (myself and Eldritch Babe, exhibit 24d2) in defense of nature-at-large as classically exploited by Cartesian (settler-colonial, heteronormative) forces.

First, Medusa and her tricky concept of "double mirroring":



(exhibit 23a: Artist, top left: [Yneddt](#); bottom-right: unknown; middle: [Drawingfreak77](#). Medusa is an ancient, "phallic" [androgynous] form of the monstrous-feminine, one that that needs to remain conscious lest older waves of feminism triangulate her against new inclusive movements; or as my thesis writes of Barbara Creed [whose 1993 book, *The Monstrous-Feminine*, focuses on refusing to be a victim vis-à-vis Freudian models and Julia Kristeva, while simultaneously

omitting the rights and experiences of gender-non-conforming groups that cis women historically attack]:

*my book aims to go thoroughly beyond Barbara Creed's somewhat dated and limited, **biological-/cis-centric view** of the monstrous-feminine/"woman as other" [to be fair, she wrote The Monstrous-Feminine thirty years ago, so maybe she wrote something more recently¹⁵³ and I'm just late to the party]. So while it's true that the phrase "phallic woman" traditionally denotes a war-like woman, huntress or vengeful monstrous-feminine, I want to stress how subjugated Amazons aren't just aggressively and physically violent towards cis-het, sexist men; they've radicalized inside a "prison sex" mentality to become hostile towards "outsider" groups, including trans people, while seeing themselves as the universal victims that tacitly yield to their conquerors by emulating their worst habits [exhibit 41g1a2].*

*As such, I want to expand on how the monstrous-feminine can also non-binarize to illustrate the gender-non-conforming idea of a non-violent trans, intersex or **enby** person; i.e., someone who refuses to be a victim without embodying the standard-issue implements of violence and war from conventional stories [including TERF examples: the blind, indiscriminate Medusa] [[source](#)].*

Small note, but giant female monsters are generally shot in the boobs or other sexualized parts of the body—castration/bullet rape by "civilized," technologically "advanced," male attackers.)

Medusa (above) shows us how gossip, monsters, and camp are powerful, fetishized weapons. In terms of reclamation, let's consider abjection at large; i.e., monsters as things to gossip with/about and reclaim through camp using Athena's Aegis ourselves. Monsters tend to conflate with systemic harm as adjacent to them, expressing shared qualities of generational trauma/stigma that are animalized (from our thesis statement):

To this, monsters have more in common than they do differences (and these differences generally are hard to pin down). In short, demons offer forbidden knowledge or power and can shapeshift; the undead were formally alive (or appear to have been) and generally feed in relation to trauma (concepts we'll unpack at great length in Volume Two). As a kind of deathly theatre mask, something else that's equally important to consider about demons and the undead (and which we'll bring up through the entire book) is that *animals*

¹⁵³ (originally footnote abridged): "She did! See Routledge's [The Return of the Monstrous-Feminine](#) (2022)."

embody the canonical language of power and resistance as something to camp through demonic and undead forms; i.e., stigma animals relayed through demonic BDSM and rituals of power expression and exchange that embody hunters and hunted, predators and prey that play out through the ongoing battles and wars of culture, of the mind, of sexuality and praxis as traumatized: marked for trauma or by trauma that parallel our green and purple doubles onscreen. [...]

Predator-wise, the war dog can present as male or female, thus muzzled in ways that are correct, thus normal according to the status quo: the female war boss as correct-incorrect, but still a useful gatekeeper for the elite (a TERF, in other words). In this sense, you get paradoxes like the chimera as both a snake and a dog—with Medusa both a phallic woman and maneater who turns men to stone, and a specific kind of bitch that works for the state as a weaponized victim that is compared to multiple animals at the same time; *she* is both a snake-bitch, but manly in the theatrical sense due to her penetrative attacks, piercing stare and direct, aggressive behaviors. On some level, the Pavlovian ideal is conditioning for hunting behaviors that misuse congenital or maladaptive prey responses: the hunter becoming the hunted (or vice versa). This can be cis-het men seeking to abuse others to make their trauma stop thus feel safe, or women and token groups ([source](#)).

To this, Medusa is classically binarized, the "dark mother" with a good and bad side (exhibit 23a, above). The "Athenian" side produces a more human-looking Amazon that represents life; the wild side—an unmasked, "feral dog" Medusa—overtly associates with death, but also the ocean and the (often gross, alien) mysteries of the womb as hysterical: "rabid" female rage established by the female body's natural reproductive functions being hounded and coerced by state forces; i.e., her "wandering" womb as venomous, but also a rebellious form of girl talk. I liken this to "back talk," wherein the classic recipient of patriarchal abuse, the Medusa, angrily reflects her endless trauma and alienation back at state proponents using Athena's Aegis. In short, she takes it back:

When Perseus slew the Medusa he did not—as commonly thought—put an end to her reign or destroy her terrifying powers. Afterwards, Athena embossed her shield with the Medusa's head. The writhing snakes, with their fanged gaping mouths, and the Medusa's own enormous teeth and lolling tongue were on full view. Athena's aim was simply to strike terror into the hearts of men as well as reminding them of their symbolic debt to the imaginary castrating mother. And no doubt she knew what she was doing. After all, Athena was the great Mother-Goddess of the ancient world and according to ancient legend—the daughter of Metis, the goddess of wisdom, also known as the Medusa (source: *The Monstrous-Feminine*).



Random-Ten Studio

Just_Tenth '19

(artist: [JL Seagull the Best](#))

In the past, I have stressed the Aegis as a counterterrorist weapon with revolutionary *potential* as a kind of "spectre of Marx"; i.e., when removed entirely from its state *function*, but also haunting it vengefully from the inside during all manner of inheritance anxieties; e.g., the Radiance from *Hollow Knight* (left) operating as an ancient queen, haunting the mind-like tombs of mere mortal men and eventually being banished back to

Hell once hunted down and exposed by a male hunter inside his fallen master's ruinous crypt (the entire game is effectively a prolonged, Gothic-style witch hunt meant to *reclaim* patriarchal territories: find the bared exposed power of the matriarch and stab her for exposing herself in immodest ways—in her melon-like tits as something they both freeze at and lack the language to effectively describe¹⁵⁴ while wanting to cut up and eat). Please keep this in mind as we continue through part one.

Also remember that, aside from the Medusa, many ancient, Chthonic deities (meaning "of the underworld") were inspired by the ocean as a vast place of mystery and death feared by superstitious men—especially lonely European sailors, who, while they probably *wanted* to fuck a mermaid or something similar, generally settled for each other or unlucky Indigenous peoples once the Americas were discovered. Indigenous rape occurs in relation to nature as something to dominate by proxy. To that, human rape historically happens far more than animal rape in a literal, zoophilic sense; in a figurative sense, the raping of nature is total. And if this distinction seems bizarre, it owes itself to the function of empire as brutal and all-consuming on *both sides* of the Imperial Core. [So while demonologist Kevin Meares](#)

¹⁵⁴ I.e., Matthew Lewis having Ambrosio freeze at the sudden sight of Matilda's exposed boob—i.e., "her tits were there" ([source tweet](#): Patti Harrison, 2019)—while likewise describing it in a highly unnatural, statuesque fashion (effectively camping/reverse-engineering Genesis in the process):

As She uttered these last words, She lifted her arm, and made a motion as if to stab herself. The Friar's eyes followed with dread the course of the dagger. She had torn open her habit, and her bosom was half exposed. The weapon's point rested upon her left breast: And Oh! that was such a breast! The Moonbeams darting full upon it enabled the Monk to observe its dazzling whiteness. His eye dwelt with insatiable avidity upon the beauteous Orb. A sensation till then unknown filled his heart with a mixture of anxiety and delight: A raging fire shot through every limb; The blood boiled in his veins, and a thousand wild wishes bewildered his imagination ([source](#)).

[asserts Christopher Columbus once mistook a manatee for a mermaid](#) (source: Quora), Columbus [was a well-documented rapist, establishing sex-trafficking on an unprecedented, settler-colonial scale](#) (source: Bad Empanada's "The Truth About Columbus - Knowing Better Refuted," 2020).

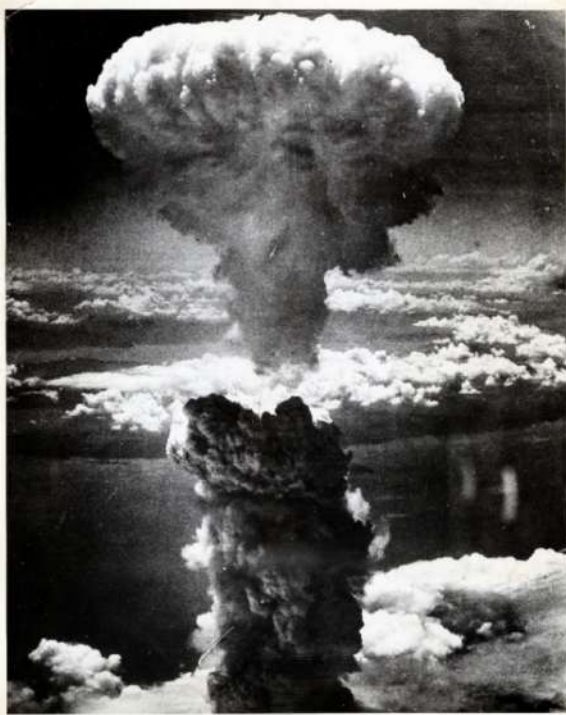
Columbus was arguably the father of settler colonialism, but America has since carried and continues to carry its genocides out to a much more successful degree. David Michael Smith writes in his introduction to *Endless Holocausts: Mass Death in the History of the United States Empire* (2023) how the extent to this degree is something that evolved into itself through a system built for exploitation from the start (excuse the three-page quote, but it's vital writing so I want to include it):

That the United States is a colonialist and imperialist country—an empire—can hardly be questioned. The conquest and near-extirpation of several hundred Indigenous nations by European and U.S. settlers provided the land on which the contiguous United States was built, and Native peoples continue to live in colonial conditions, deprived of sovereignty and self-determination. The United States also colonized Liberia, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, the eastern Samoan Islands, the Philippines, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands. Panama, which Washington carved out of Colombia to build a transoceanic canal, and Cuba were U.S. protectorates for decades. The United States recognized the independence of Liberia in 1847 and the Philippines in 1946 and admitted Alaska and Hawaii as states in 1959 but refused to relinquish the Panama Canal Zone until 1999 and still occupies forty-five square miles of land and water at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. [...]

In addition to its long history of conquest and colonization, the United States has always energetically exploited other peoples' resources, markets, and labor. The enslaved labor of people of African descent fueled early U.S. economic development and the Industrial Revolution. By the 1820s, U.S. merchants were shipping opium from Turkey to China so they could sustain imports of tea, spices, porcelain, and nankeen. As Greg Grandin has noted, the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 "announced to European empires that Latin America fell under Washington's exclusive sphere of influence." In the mid-nineteenth century, the mounting need to export surplus products led the U.S. Empire to threaten and use violence against China, Japan, and Korea. In the last quarter of the century, intensifying industrial development and agricultural production contributed to unprecedented economic growth. By the 1890s, U.S. businesses were shipping steel, iron, oil, and agricultural machinery to foreign markets, and the export of capital had begun. During that decade, the United States replaced Britain as the world's largest economy. In 1895, Secretary of State Richard Olney, referring to South America, claimed that "the United States is sovereign on this continent." In

stark contrast, after acquiring most of Spain's colonies in 1898, the United States demanded an "Open Door" for U.S. trade and investment in China and did not even consult its government.

The U.S. Empire's imperatives of expansion and accumulation have dramatically grown in the era of modern imperialism, and so has its exploitation of the resources, markets, and labor of people in other countries. As Grandin has explained, in the early decades of the twentieth century "American corporations and financial houses came to dominate the economies of Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America, as well as large parts of South America." To protect its investments and promote its interests, the empire militarily intervened in the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and invaded and occupied Nicaragua, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. / Industry, agriculture, and trade grew significantly when the United States funded and armed, and then joined the Entente Powers during the First World War. Afterward, the United States invaded Soviet Russia, supported the Guomindang regime in China, and welcomed European fascism as a bulwark against communism—entering the Second World War only because the Axis powers threatened its own imperialist interests. By 1945, the United States had become the wealthiest and most powerful empire in the world. Since then, the imperium has vigorously sought to obtain the oil, strategic materials, and other resources it requires and to keep, in the words of Harry Magdoff, "as much as possible of the world open for trade and investment by the giant multinational corporations."



[photograph insertion, mine; [source](#): The Digital Collections of WWII Museum's "Mushroom Cloud over Nagasaki, Japan, 9 August 1945"]

These imperatives led to unrelenting confrontation with the Soviet Union and other socialist states—at horrific human expense. The later collapse of most of these states, which occurred partly because of U.S. actions over the decades, made the world a more dangerous place as the empire found itself to be the sole superpower and moved to establish its presence in those and other lands. Since 1945, the United States has fought devastating large-scale wars in Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Iraq

(twice), and Afghanistan. It has launched proxy wars on four continents, routinely attacked countries, overthrown and installed governments, destroyed popular movements, assassinated foreign leaders, engaged in economic sabotage, and supported its allies' violent domestic repression and acts of war against other nations. The only country to ever use atomic bombs, the United States has deployed nuclear weapons around the world, developed ominous plans "to win a nuclear war," and brought humanity to the brink of nuclear holocaust on several occasions. Today, the empire has a network of client states encompassing about 40 percent of the world's countries, about eight hundred foreign military bases, and more than 200,000 military personnel and contractors deployed in about 140 countries. But the rise of China, the return of Russia, and the mounting economic, social, and political crises [e.g., foreign plots and crises of masculinity, below] at home make clear that the United States' "unipolar moment" is already fading ([source](#)).



(artist: [Stacy Cay](#))

All systems die, changing into others. Communism allows for this change and prepares for it in non-heteronormative ways—i.e., that reflect on alienation and genocide through mirrors of what the state normally abjects and what queer communities celebrate; Capitalism tries to prevent this, forcing gender-non-conforming persons to the margins (or assimilating them); and both sides utilize the basics through workers to achieve oppositional goals. Said opposition

is palpable, for instance, when masculinity and Capitalism are in crisis by perceived "abominations" and progressions away from the colonial binary towards a postcolonial outcome (above), as well as campy dialogs that push back against harmful notions of sexuality and gender (e.g., this hilariously Austenian 2023 [[source tweet](#)] conversation between Professor Grace Lavery and a bigot potentially confusing Lavery with the author for *Detransition Baby*, 2021). Nature-as-female is a common scapegoat, including its mythological forms parsed by outdated psychoanalytical models; re: Creed *vis-à-vis* Freud, and Kristeva. Outdated or not,

the Medusa remains Creed's chosen source of cis *female* rage and patriarchal fear in *The Monstrous-Feminine*.

To her credit—initially catalyzed by Freud's essay "Medusa's Head" (1922) and the patriarchal bogeywoman, the Archaic Mother—Creed's characterization of Medusa is *post*-Freudian to some extent. Again, Creed stresses the weapon-like power of the Aegis as a means of paralyzing men, but leaves much room for improvement (re: my thesis quote, exhibit 23a) insofar as Marxist, intersectional solidarity is concerned; i.e., seeking to explore *cis* women beyond their universal portrayal as victims in Western canon: their monstrous, "ancient" function standing in during *Amazonomachia*, or brushes with Amazon pastiche, to *mask* Communism as a rising way of life during the beginnings of Capitalism's decline a mere century after the US rose to geopolitical prominence in 1890. Creed appears to make up for it in her follow-up book, *The Return of the Monstrous-Feminine*, but only seems to have done so thirty years later. It's a bit tardy (typical of cis women who aren't feeling the pressure [and pain] of state abuses to the same degree as gender-non-conforming people).

In canonical terms, this sexist hauntology has endured well into the present, with women being the chaos dragon that "needs" to be slain according to Jung's mythic structure (a model still upheld by Jordan Peterson today and many other "great" men besides). In terms of Cala Maria from *Cuphead* (exhibit 23a, 2017), Maria embodies the outer "beautiful form" *until provoked*. Then she unfurls her penis-like snakes, presenting them to the hero to petrify them (the game's original protagonists being coded as male). Her genderqueer transformation—as with other examples of the Medusa like Giger's xenomorph or Géricault's raft (exhibit 23b, below)—invoke the Archaic Mother as a recursive, gender-non-conforming nightmare borne out of the pre-Civilized, pre-enlightened, primordial past as female, feminine, and furious at *Capitalism* and fascism having resulted from Cartesian hegemony long after Athens fucked off (though, like Rome, it never fully left). To prove their own dominance, lest they turn to stone like scared little children, heteronormative heroes must either kill Medusa, putting her down like a disobedient bitch; or weaponize her gaze against¹⁵⁵ *enemies* of the state. But

¹⁵⁵ A *sadly apt metaphor for TERFs if ever there was one—like a battered housewife, the abuser pits the second wave feminists' Amazonian female rage against trans people (and minorities) instead of men: a Dark Medusa or Hippolyta like Victoria from Zofloya (exhibit 100b2) or Ellen Ripley (exhibit 30a) told in badass wrestler's, action-hero kayfabe, thus allowing centrist gradients like muscle mom Marisa "Glory Seeker" (98a1), queer boss Natalie Wynn (100c10) or queen bitch Elphaba, the Wicked Witch of the West (exhibit 98a4) to emerge (which synonymize "badass" with defense of the nation through "waifu bait": the promise of war brides to male consumers). At the same time, these "TERF Amazons and Medusas" can be dutifully met by various subversions produced by iconoclasts like myself—e.g., Nyx posing as an Amazon warrior mommy (exhibit 102a4), but also various franchised simulacra: Odessa Stone (exhibit 100c4), Marisa (exhibit 104a2), Elphaba (exhibit 112c) and Zarya (exhibit 111b). We'll examine all of these oppositional variables in Volume Three, Chapters Four and Five.*

Medusa still wins in the end because her killers invariably go mad and eventually die, turning to stone themselves (state shift being the last laugh of Mother Nature).



(exhibit 23b: Artist: [Théodore Géricault](#); model and artist: [Mischievous Kat](#) and Persephone van der Waard. Nature-as-female/monstrous-feminine has women and feminized minorities treated like food under Cartesian models. Géricault's "Raft of the Medusa" [1818] was a commentary on real-world atrocities tied to industrial norms and covered up by the elite, which his painting vividly depicts while also breaking racialized boundaries. In the process, he showcases the solidarity-in-struggle of a diverse group of survivors, trying to be heard amid bourgeois attempts from the French Monarchy to silence workers and save face [while struggling to maintain settler-colonialism's harvesting of nature]. The concept of worker isolation and solidarity under harsh, capitalized conditions is, indeed, a common Marxist fixture under capitalist oppression—one which my own drawing

deliberately marries to transgressive sexuality and queer subversion, framing the Medusa as a fat, intensely awesome GNC creature of the vast depths, not a ship. As she and her animalistic [chimeric] trauma rise to the surface through erotic pleasure and monstrous, genderqueer expression, my instructional aim is to venerate everything through the combined, sex-positive labor of workers unified against the abuses of Capitalism then and now. Much like Géricault's original piece, there's a debatable presence of anger and unheard frustration amid the basic visual pattern, but also rebellion as a constructive rage against the machine; i.e., rebellious subterfuge and perceptive pastiche as a transgressive, pre-fascist [Gothic] means of proletarian praxis whereupon resistance and power exchange "share the floor." Time is a circle and the bugbears of yesterday haunt everyone during the debate. As they should; cryptomimesis comments on fascism as something to expose through Gothic displacement; i.e., pre-fascist ghosts of the counterfeit that whisper its continuation in the present space and time.)

Beyond Medusa, abjection more broadly is a form of settler-colonial menticide codified into a linguo-material status quo—i.e., what its *canonical*

gargoyles stand for and how heteronormative society conversely stands for them in response: manufactured consent. Historically, Patriarchal Capitalism makes white cis-het men the most privileged worker class, those most prone to class betrayal and lying (and the most afraid of death): universal "heroes" or "protectors." Everything else is alienated or abused, either a victim or persecuted monster to varying degrees (usually on a hierarchy of descending privilege—with white women closer to "the top/civilization" [and Simone Beauvoir claiming "other" for cis-het white women] but still closer to nature than men are, and intersections of queer people, people of color, disabled people and/or the mentally ill closer to the bottom, along with non-human animals and nature).

To this, canonical praxis treats *iconic* monsters like Medusa as challenges to overcome in defense of the state—literal dragons to slay or things to keep hidden, locked up like a secret peril or damsel in a tower (with the ones that dare to try and escape compared to dragons, shamed as sluts, or blamed for their own murders—re: the madwoman in the attic, exhibit 21c1); iconoclastic praxis treats monsters as language to *reclaim*, exposing the systemic, settler-colonial trauma committed by assigned "heroes" behaving like sex-coercive monsters against their coercively demonized and abused victims—e.g., "monstrous" witches being burned at the stake by the creepy, self-righteous and utterly horrible Puritans. Once reclaimed, iconoclastic monsters become problems for Capitalism to "solve"—an abusive system that nevertheless employs the same poetic language to try and hide its own exploitation of workers, demonizing them while robbing them of their rights, wages and literal time as laborers. This becomes the thing to gossip about/with, through monsters as canonical or campy forms of theatre that play and perform power as a means of interrogating trauma—often in relation to trauma as lived, but also generationally inherited; i.e., through class nightmares that are, for those trapped inside the state of exception, just another day that escapes notice for those outside of these brutal zones; e.g., the Kashmiris of the Kashmir Valley who, Tariq Ali *et al* write in [Kashmir: The Case for Freedom](#) (2011), "the valley of Kashmir now hosts the biggest, bloodiest, and most obscure military occupation in the world" (cited and summarized in GDF's "[How Kashmiris Got So Good At Smoking Indian Soldiers](#)," 2024).

In terms of raising class/cultural awareness and intelligence through the Gothic mode, Medusa is an incredibly ubiquitous example; one that speaks to trauma in our own lives, she readily comments on commonplace struggles of AFAB workers, but also those perceived as monstrous-feminine at large (which extends to "incorrect" AMAB persons and intersex people). Throughout the rest of the book, then, we'll of course consider gender trouble in relation to historically ironic (from the Western heteronormative perspective) biological factors; e.g., trans women being seen as "false women" for a distinct lack of female sex organs, but also as "non-men" who fail to perform with their male sex organs and gender roles as essentially indiscrete; i.e., in the ways expected of them by the state (which

essentializes human biology insofar as sex and gender are, for them, one-in-the-same).

For the moment, though, I want to examine an aspect of misogyny that classically female monsters like Medusa historically represent in Western culture: biological reproduction and animalization.

Whether cis or not, all workers are sexualized and of nature. However, AFABs *are* closer to nature in the sense that they have bodily functions they cannot avoid and which the state wants to control and chattelize by having them bear children *and* identify around this fact. To this, AFAB people are forced, to some extent, to identify as women—the identity generally being tied to their reproductive functions as systemically exploited and viewed as abject by patriarchal forces. By this same token, sexist cis-het men are simultaneously attracted to and repulsed by the vagina and what comes out of it (except their own semen, which they love): babies, period blood of various consistencies, and yeast infections. Pee (and female ejaculate) don't actually exit the vagina but many men *think* both do; men also incorrectly call the woman's pussy her "vagina," denying her sexual pleasure outright by ignoring the clitoris, labia, and vulva while emphasizing her reproductive functions as compelled for the state's continued existence—i.e., a broodmare thereof, kept stupid, powerless and dumb (as well as her children, implying a cycle of feudalized rape to keep the patrilineal bloodline "strong").



The simple fact is that patriarchal men fear women, but also AFABs in general, because heteronormative canon frames female bodies, periods and PMS as mythically terrifying to men: something that must be contained *or else*. The UK's Royal College of Nursing states

that "Women have long been seen as at the mercy of their biology"—with [doctors having called "hysteria" \(female madness\) "wandering womb" for millennia](#) (2021). However, hysteria was also a convenient excuse to kick modern women out of the American workplace, post-WW2 (exhibit 3a1). This goes well beyond factory work, with computers being a socialized, female field until it was colonized by men—culminating with neoliberal dickheads like Bill Gates [privatizing operating system softwares that were largely open-source for decades](#) (Another Slice's "King Of Neoliberalism," 2020); forgetting computers, [the entire STEM field currently is](#)

[systemically sexist](#)¹⁵⁶ according to the Society for Women Engineers (2021) and has been since the Enlightenment/Cartesian Revolution.

Relegated to the realms of women's work, female workers often see life and death in ways male workers do not: as intertwined, but also integral to female bodies in ways that are generally controlled uniquely to women as workers. Yet it's something that Capitalism can't alienate entirely from women, but *can* frame as monstrous by dehumanizing the whole reproductive process *and* making all aspects of female labor somehow tied to reproduction and female biology (which, again, ties into gender-non-conformity and trans, non-binary and intersex peoples): women are monsters who must be dominated to preserve the species' current arrangement. Enslaved to childbirth as a privatized system of compelled labor that reduces mothers to breeding vats, AFABs experience death in stages generally ignored by cis-het men, because cis-het men will not experience these things directly in relation to themselves (versus GNC persons, who regardless of their biology *can* be labeled as monstrous-feminine). Indeed, bourgeois-inclined men only care about those children most "useful" to the state: the cherished son as a would-be father, husband, soldier, doctor, philosopher, patriarch, politician, Caesar, etc; the daughter as a wife, bride, or aforementioned broodmare (a much more narrow role). To cater to men in this respect, women must face more than simply period blood and menstrual cramps, but miscarriages, stillborn babies, postpartum depression and various other things that make them feel possessed by their own bodies and sex organs as hijacked by the state. They become animalized, but also goaded into abusive dialogs that pit them against other women in marginalized circles; e.g., "I am woman, hear me roar" at trans people, *not* the state.

We've discussed animalization throughout our thesis argument in Volume Zero, which we've cited here as well. Animalization isn't strictly a negative insofar as class and culture war are concerned. On the state side of things, though, sexual reproduction becomes systemically compelled, but also mirrored by horror canon shouting, "childbirth is abject!" from American rooftops for decades. It becomes its own form of gossip that harbors a great deal of genuine anger, monsters, and camp on both sides of oppositional praxis. But on the *state* side of things, the aesthetics of rebel culture become subordinate, thus complicit in state aims—with furious Medusa archetypes and subjugated Hippolytas triangulating against state enemies; e.g., GNC women as bad animals and cis-queer women (and cis-het feminists) being "good bitches" for the state; i.e., TERFs. While this abjecting of animalized workers is common in female *human* workers, and while people who menstruate/give birth are generally treated like chattel for their reproductive capabilities, our own gossip, monsters and camp also need to consider the needs (and ironies) of non-human animals as well and how we relate back and forth.

¹⁵⁶ It is also *queerphobic*, insofar as my ex, Jadis, would "stealth" as a woman ("girlmoding") to avoid trans misandry by cis male and female scientists.

Before we move onto George O'Keefe as someone who expressed her own rebellion relayed in natural forms, let's quickly consider the plights of animals and nature as something to acknowledge.

The paradox of the pedagogy of the oppressed is that animals cannot talk, so we must listen to them through our own performances *of them* as a means of identifying with their oft-silent struggles; we must speak for them by identifying with them. For these reasons, the struggle of animals might not always seem obvious at first glance. Capitalism, for example, is marginally kinder to dogs and cats and other non-human, "pet"-type animals (especially chonkers and lomgbois), and (as my thesis argument explored at length) tends to valorize these qualities when applying them to humans who serve the state. The same goes for various hunting animals, beasts of burden or chattel; i.e., valuable, lucrative property that you're *not* supposed to have sex with (though if patriarchal men could have babies with animals, they undoubtedly would). However, excluding specialists speaking out for their favorite critter (entomologists stanning for bees or mantids, for example), a collective push should be made to see *all* animals in a more positive light, not just the cute ones; i.e., how Capitalism exploits the natural world by citing non-human animals as useful or not according to the bourgeoisie and what they "own" through structural, positional, and material advantage. It's important, because it affects humans, too, insofar as we're compared to animals all the time.

As YouTube creators like [Ze Frank](#) or [Casual Geographic](#) demonstrate, humor and slang serve these humanizing aims, code-switching between science, comedy and myth to reclaim stigma animals (and their associate human pariahs by proxy) in the minds of a casual audience bred on theatrical clichés. Anti-animal sentiment



overlaps with *human* stigmas; e.g., anti-dog sentiment in *Isle of Dogs* (2018) being a canine cryptonym for "rabid" Japanese eco-fascism (which we'll briefly touch on here before returning to in Volume Three) and Imperial outrage: segregation, immiseration, persecution, and genocide adjacent to real-world assassinations like that of Inejiro Asanuma by right-wing ultranationalist, Otoya Yamaguchi:

(photographer: [Yasushi Nagao](#))

Gothic Communism is holistic and must include "stigma animals" (and the marginalized peoples associated with them; e.g., Medusa and snakes; Drow and spiders) as *symbols* to rescue:

- wasps, "monster bugs" [that actually pollinate flowers](#) (Cerruti R. Hooks and Anahí Espíndola's "Wasps, Surprisingly Cool Pollinators," 2020).
- snakes, "danger noodles" [that are largely harmless towards people, but stigmatized to Hell and back](#): "Just a quarter of snake species are venomous, and most snakes aren't a threat to humans or pets. Yet snakes inspire fear in many people, whose overblown reactions often result in snakes being unnecessarily killed or removed from their habitats" (the Human Society's "Snakes Have a Bad Reputation that Doesn't Match Their Behavior, 2023).
- bats, "sky puppers" [that eat tons of insects but also fertilize/pollinate plants](#) (the USDA's "Bat Pollination") but [are also constantly endangered](#) (the Bat Conservation International, 2023).
- spiders, "spooters" that also eat tons of insects
- frogs and toads, "hoppy bois" that remain incredibly sensitive to the changing of the world climate due to human intervention, [thus useful to determining the health of a given environment](#) (Candace Thomson's "Nature Center Notes: "How Toxic Is Your Environment? Frogs Will Tell You," 2019); also, [they look super cute when fighting each other](#)
- sharks, "stuffed animals" disarmed ignominiously underwater [by flipping them on their noses](#), yet still are demonized as "supreme killer machines" by aspiring Hollywood directors; e.g., Spielberg and his many imitators)
- shrikes, which despite being "[headbanging, prey-impaling death-birds](#)" (Hannah Waters' "Shrikes Have an Absolutely Brutal Way of Killing Large Prey, 2018) are still songbirds.
- parasitoids (which help combat overpopulation and starvation—i.e., in a *natural* way not tied to the profit motive and genocide).

Even some dogs and cats¹⁵⁷ are stigmatized, or rabbits, for being stupid and weak (a concept we've already discussed and will look more into at the end of Chapter Four/start of Chapter Five in Volume Three, exhibit 100a5). For example, so-called "bad dogs" overlap with the deliberate weaponizing of real/robot dogs tied to national fervor and anti-intellectual, xenophobic behaviors; e.g., *Isle of Dogs*' complex blending of Japanese media with anti-vaxxing and isolationism (exhibit 24a, below).

In the film, these happen in spite of an existing vaccine in order to perpetuate fear and dogma versus the fallibility of the state despite its widespread

¹⁵⁷ Orange cats are often seen as more stupid than other cats, and black cats as witches' familiars. It might seem "harmless," but leads to the actual harming of animals based on their phenotypical presentations: the color of their skin and their fur coats (similar to humans). The apathetic divide generally stems from them being seen as animals to begin with, except their relation to us is one between two (or more) animal groups—with humans preying upon non-humans in ways unique to our species: Capitalism.

abuses, general skullduggery and master/slave, dynastic-familial posturing through propaganda as righteous and "invincible": "Brains have been washed, wheels have been greased, fear has been mongered." Amid this, the narrative makes room for humanized narratives with animal personas: the lady and the tramp, but also a boy and his dog tied to larger geopolitics parodied as "cat-and-dog" hysteria. So-called "dogs of war," then, historically take on a literally meaning through warrior pups that have since become lost to history [as nightmarish, Baskerville-style hell hounds trained to do Capitalism's dirty work](#) (Unknown5's "The Man-Eating Spanish War Dogs That Crushed the Aztecs," 2023).

Such anthropomorphic stories can be useful to bridging gaps within geopolitical divides and radically different political stances during oppositional praxis. For instance, while Jadis was inarguably a stone-cold biznatch, they absolutely *adored* stigma animals. Indeed, it was their most endearing quality and something I very much enjoyed about them; it was also how they identified, worshipping the wasp and performing as "wasp" through BDSM analogs. The same idea applies to cats and dogs, but also the living and the dead, the animate and the inanimate. Dogs can be disposed of, and ghost or zombie dogs can bridge the gap between the colony and colonized, sacred and profane, trickster and tricked, etc, during liminal expressions that—through Gothic poetics—often have deep ties to nature as a profoundly alien experience that must be reclaimed:



(exhibit 24a: Artist, top-left: [Persephone van der Waard](#); top-middle: [TommyPocket](#); top-right: [Neal D. Anderson](#); bottom-left: [source](#), modeled after Katsushika Hokusai's "The Great Wave off Kanagawa"; bottom-right: [Gobifrip](#). Eco-friendly art is predicated on artists, including poets, being in touch with nature by

identifying with it through animals; e.g., [the "inhumanist" poet, Robinson Jeffers](#). Often there's a pastoral element, connected with fishing or tourism in medieval/pre-Capitalist depictions of peacetime and demilitarization.)

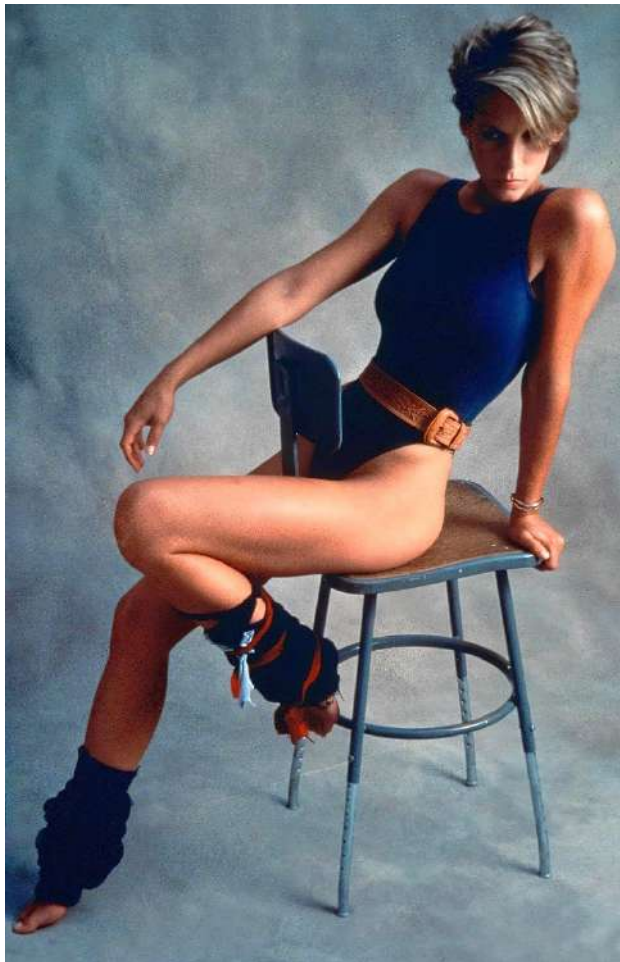


(exhibit 24b: Artist, far-top-left: [George Roux](#); top-middle-left: unknown; top-middle-right: [Escape Pearly](#); top-far-right: [Georgia O'Keefe](#); bottom-far-left: unknown; bottom-middle-right: [Takato Yamamoto](#); bottom-far-right: [H. R. Giger](#).)

Reversing abjection is a liminal proposition, and compounds through intersecting liminalities amid an *animalized* Gothic. As the manifesto explored, this applies to Capitalism's *continuation* as a menticidal system towards workers, which can be reversed through remediated praxis; i.e., pastiche, whose campy monsters can potentially introduce "perceptive" parody, ironic gender trouble and constructive anger, etc, in opposition to DARVO and other state tactics of control. *Vis-à-vis* the paradox of violence, terror and hellish bodily expression, the potential for resistance to state abuse is always present, but must be realized through *de facto* good education that raises awareness, intelligence, empathy and understanding through the Gothic mode. This requires gossip, monsters and camp, which require the other interrelating devices (our creative successes, the Six Rs, etc). Round and round.

This symposium has already touched on liminality in one form of pastiche (re: Velma pastiche, exhibit 22); Capitalism more broadly results in a series of

paradoxes and conflicts captured in Gothic pastiche at large, often through poetic thresholds. Their crossing includes not just monstrous surfaces, but their lairs' parallel space as liminal-by-design; i.e., built to be moved through. Said motion encapsulates a crossing of *social* (often taboo) barriers through occupation and movement inside; re: Bakhtin's chronotopes (with *Gothic* chronotopes being especially "heavy" in terms of historical-material time, thus trauma, as felt concentrically within the scenic decay of a given space-time narrative: its historical, but also hauntological [nostalgic] signature). Once ventured, these "routes" can be retaken for entirely different reasons depending on how one leans socio-politically as continuously informed and challenged by the material world and vice versa; i.e., ergodic motion, whereupon these same routes have *already been taken* (and remade) time again and time again. What Luis Borges called "[The Circular Ruin](#)" (1940) or "[Garden of the Forking Paths](#)" (1941) also applies to the cultural attitudes assigned to chronotopes' occupants, familiars, creators, and homes.



(artist: [Jamie Lee Curtis](#))

Women, for example, become alien as a status *and* location whose time and place are complicated by societal bias during uneven mistreatment and estrangement in professional roles; e.g., within acting as something whose pedagogy of the oppressed becomes regularly denied to anyone whose mother *isn't* cinematic royalty (which Jame Lee Curtis' mother was). Alienated within or removed from society ("woman is other' symbolizing chaos and darkness, *a priori*" vs "society *others* women and relegates them to darkness") or otherwise concealed from in-groups, the result is constant female displacement and dissociation; i.e., through the ghost of the counterfeit's process of abjection, which throws women off of and away from society's half-real, imaginary forms that, in turn, bleed *back* into daily life. She becomes

alien, as does nature and her in relation to it; e.g., Samus Aran, but really any heroine, insofar as Gothic treatments of women are difficult to escape in popular media/real life.

At times, a setting and its inhabitants synonymize to some degree. For example, Georgia O'Keefe was a "monster" (a gay¹⁵⁸ woman) painting "flowers" (vaginas, 24b) in ways that allowed her to express herself as freely as she felt comfortable in her time period, but whose resultant tableau implied the artist behind the canvas through non-humanoid, nature-themed abstractions—flowers. Giger likewise straddled the fence between the living and the dead (exhibit 24b)—the sacred and the profane—to subversively convey the symbolic body as erotically "biomechanical," a retro-future "vice character" recreating old medieval ideas "discovered" by his surreal portfolio, then shown to Ridley Scott by Dan O'Bannon,



who facilitated the ideas through *Alien*, which FOX distributed, selling the entire thing to 1979 America and eventually the rest of the world in various figurative and literal copycats. Like Medusa, the flower-as-feminine or xenomorph as *monstrous-feminine* frame nature as alien, insofar as we no longer recognize our connection to it, but also abject (displace and disassociate) settler-colonial abuse elsewhere, onto an "other" being in an "other" place: some combination of women, plant life, stigma animals, Indigenous life, and queerness in a spatial arrangement that conveys and houses them.

(artist: [Rocky Schenck](#))

To that, Giger might seem more overtly monstrous than O'Keefe, but the paradoxes of power and play were on full display in both their galleries' liminal expressions. In turn, these expressed shared ideas about the surreal and the feminine as something to portray in relation to nature as a battleground of Gothic

¹⁵⁸ Used in the loose sense, "gay." However, to be more accurate and clear, O'Keefe [was a bisexual, polyamorous woman who slept with married and unmarried people and their \(often-artist\) partners in normative and non-normative inclinations](#). As such, she—and her paintings and my language to describe her—are "more than meets the eye" transformers that shapeshift when needing to disguise the vulnerable workers associated with them. The rebellious subterfuge becomes a revolutionary cryptonymy that shields iconoclastic workers like O'Keefe from heteronormative power and its centrist/reactionary enforcers: things that appear like ordinary flowers but speak on forbidden subjects like female agency.

Likewise, to try and say O'Keefe was "just" bisexual and not queer in the broader sense is to colonize interpretations of the artist, [post hoc](#). It was a different world, a different time, but she was still queer in ways that defy singular, Cartesian definitions of commonplace terms.

ideas, of which the human body is but one. The feminine/female form as monstrous-feminine could be readily be expressed by Giger's drug-addled gimp suit as oversaturated with overt, corrupt expressions of psychosexual trauma; but O'Keefe's own body was—bare and exposed—equally inhuman and forbidden in the eyes of those who might see her younger, openly queer self as something to stare at while thinking of things associated with darkness, nature, sin and vice, etc: Grendel's mother but also her lake, and the flowers surrounding it that "weaker" individuals associate with soft feminine things, which the "strong" insist are hiding untold terrors; i.e., the kiss of death; e.g., the "blossom" blooming boldly between O'Keefe's legs:



(exhibit 24c1: Nude photos of O'Keefe taken by Alfred Stieglitz—all but one, of Ellen Morton that male art critic, Alex Waterhouse-Hayward, mistook for O'Keefe because of Stieglitz' conditional patronage of O'Keefe and its legacy of "controlled vice" that O'Keefe would challenge for the rest of her life; likewise, Hayward would be burdened with a hermeneutic "blind spot," tending to favor men and male interpretations of things; i.e., exhibit 24d1.)

In other words, Gothic abstractions intersect in highly dreamlike and chimeric ways. Already male-dominated, the entire struggle of a nature-oriented, sexually descriptive dialectic was hardly ground-breaking by 1979 (when O'Keefe's flowers were old news). As a Pygmalion chain of visual facilitation—from Giger to O'Bannon to Scott to FOX—the sequence had a love-hate treatment of female nudity as monstrous, occurring through liminal expression during oppositional praxis. Whereas Giger's xenomorph (exhibit 24b/50b/51/60c and many more) is a liminal being tied to Gothic hysteria and the necrotic, murderous "womb space" as an unstable, escaped slave, the viewing of the creature's Numinous power brought home to empire from a perceived "elsewhere" extends to male art critics stupidly conditioned to think of women as monstrous in sex-coercive ways (exhibit 24d1, Hayward). O'Keefe's own nudity was liminal in the same respect, and generally in relation to "ancient" spaces, which Giger's Gothic-surreal poetics conveyed: caves, lakes, darkness and the underground (exhibit 24d1).

Through informed, dialectical-material study, their doubled condition highlights *functional* similarities amid *cosmetic* differences. Brought to light, both are exposed to Cartesian assaults. However, O'Keefe was "vulnerable" ([as this 2023 article by Ayanna Dozier puts it](#)) because society made her so in relation to heteronormativity and its enforcers' constant policing of nature-as-alien: women as beings of nature, hence alien themselves minus Giger's male privilege, but also his bizarre creation's animalistic, Amazonian defenses (teeth, claws, armored skin, a phallic ovipositor and "concentrated acid for blood"). However, O'Keefe—like the xenomorph—was also incredibly subversive, brave and free to experiment and try new things within financial constraints. The same applies to anyone perceived as monstrous-feminine, including other women experimenting with nude photography during O'Keefe's lifetime; e.g., [Ergy Landau](#) (source: Rob Baker's "The Nudes of Hungarian Photographer, Ergy Landau," 2023):



(*exhibit 24c2: Photographer and model: Ergy Landau. Her fascination with nude women gathered around water feels similar to Milton's "narcissistic Eve"¹⁵⁹ loving her own reflection instead of her God-ordained husband, Adam.*)

From Pygmalion into the present, such bodies are incredibly controlled, even amid perceived liberation. O'Keefe's husband, Stieglitz, was not only 24 years older than O'Keefe; he also provided financial support, arranging for a residence and place for her to paint in New York in 1918. During their marriage, Stieglitz took hundreds of nude photos of O'Keefe when she was young. O'Keefe lived to be nearly a hundred. In 1978, eight years before her death,

O'Keefe remarked, "When I look over the photographs Stieglitz took of me—some of them more than sixty years ago—I wonder who that person is. It is as if in my one life I have lived many lives" ([source](#): Hilton Kramer's "Stieglitz's 'Portrait Of O'Keefe' at Met"). Furthermore, Stieglitz' provisions had strings that have to be reflected on—reflections on reflections of reflections (calm yourself, Borges).

For example, as male art critic Alex Waterhouse-Hayward himself remarks in "Ellen Morton, Georgia O'Keefe & Anne Brigman" (2018):

In 1987 on my first trip to New York, I saw a photograph [of Ellen Morton] at MOMA that impressed me and which I have not forgotten. Other variations of the above photograph say Stieglitz's subject was Georgia O'Keefe.

¹⁵⁹ From James W. Earl's "Eve's Narcissism" (1985), though I don't see Eve's seduction by Satan as a bad thing like Earl does: "Eve's problem, though, is that she invests only *some* of her narcissistic libido in Adam. It is the fate of what remains that concerns us—because by means of her residual narcissism she is seduced by Satan" ([source](#)). Or maybe Adam sucks?

It came to mind on Saturday night when I was reading the Sunday New York Times [...] I read a fine essay on almost-forgotten American photographer Ann Brigman written by Rebecca Kleinman.

What took me back to that photograph of Georgia O'Keeffe taken by Alfred Stieglitz was this quote:

She never really fit in [with] Stieglitz's salon and city, seeking a breath of fresh air in Maine. He brought the theories of Havelock Ellis, the founder of modern sexology, that linked artists' works and their sexuality, particularly concerning female artists. But eroticizing nudes wasn't [Brigman's] thing. Brigman went back to the West Coast for good, and Stieglitz eventually fulfilled his Pygmalion fantasy with the more compliant O'Keeffe ([source](#)).

Regardless, O'Keeffe's infamous depictions by Stieglitz not only effaced other women and their own self-made attempts at nudity at the time—re: Landau and Morton; they were something she had to escape through her own "monstrous" work, but also reflect on later in life by quoting for interviewers about her own body of work as alien (or works taken with her as the subject to be captured by men). This wasn't always immediately transformative, but it did happen.

For example, early in her life—post-marriage but for the rest of their lives together—the relationship between Stieglitz and O'Keeffe, writes O'Keeffe biographer Benita Eisler in [O'Keeffe And Stieglitz: An American Romance](#) (1993), was "a collusion [...] a system of deals and trade-offs, tacitly agreed to and carried out, for the most part, without the exchange of a word. Preferring avoidance to confrontation on most issues, O'Keeffe was the principal agent of collusion in their union" ([source](#)). She "topped from the bottom," in other words.

Moreover, this occurred as much through abstractions of herself—her flowers, but also things associated with parallel dialogs focused on shared abstractions that might seem totally different and yet concern a Gothic dialogic's Wisdom of the Ancients. Coded and recoded through a shared aesthetics but also psychopraxis, the appearance of things belonging to this Wisdom is far less important than what they signify in relation to marginalized elements of nature applied to workers: the female and the feminine as monstrous and fetishized in ways historically unkind to anyone who isn't a cist-het (and later white, Christian) man. The evocation of the cave becomes an affront to canon, but also a violent, fetishistic opera whose spaces of darkness, terror and rape allow the historically marginalized to reclaim their voice through the self-same tools of terror, bodies and violence. Trauma and power becomes things to associate with, and communicate through, nature as feral, hungry and feminine:



(exhibit 24d1: Photographer/model: [Ann Brigman](#)'s "Cleft of the Rock" [c. 1907]. Photographer, bottom-middle: [John McNairn](#) [2021]; right: [Jeff Dunas](#) [1954]. Women and caves/rocky structures remain a tremendous fixture of classical art that has survived out of the oldest English written works—Grendel's mother's underwater cave in *Beowulf*—into photography and beyond ["Women getting stuck to rocks is the top-two greatest hobby of all time!" says Hannah Gadsby of male-authored classical art]. Regarding "The Cleft of the Rock," Hayward writes, "There are some that believe that Brigman's photograph above represents a vulva in the same way that O'Keeffe's paintings of flowers do. I am not so sure." Yeah, right; says the guy with dick-colored glasses, who mistook Ellen Morton for O'Keeffe. More to the point, iconoclastic art extends to iconoclastic interpretations of art as something to teach to sexist men like Hayward. He's right on the cusp; you gotta drive that point home, right into the brain—to [and this is a Plato pun] decolonize the female "cave" and lead him out of the allegorical [man-brain] cave. However, this takes practice, and often intermingles between men and women working together in unfair systems to say something unsaid; e.g., Neil Marshall's 2005, "I am woman, hear me roar!" feminism of *The Descent* devoting much of its screentime to alienating and killing everything in sight. The taming of the female cave as "the womb of nature" is something we'll return to in Volume Two, when we look at Francis Bacon's spearheading of the Cartesian Revolution as responsible for gendering nature as something to conquer by men and tokenized women; i.e., to rape.)

Such education requires an awareness from the student imbibing the lesson. Despite O'Keeffe "holding the reins," for example, she still negotiated (wordlessly by the sound of things) from a position of material *disadvantage*. Likewise, the existence of canonical gargoyles' and their ubiquitous presence (the egregore and

the chronotope) is gaslit then-and-now by those who keep the power of such things for themselves in favor of state arrangements: "monsters aren't real" remaining a frustratingly common, if generally supercilious, expression of so-called "guy talk."

For one, it relegates descriptively sexual/gendered bodies to the void of total image death, but also abjects the idea that sex workers can even negotiate with their bodies to begin with; i.e., to reshape how they are viewed through art in ways that decolonize the Superstructure, re-visualizing bourgeois egregores as sexually descriptive according to humanizing narratives; e.g., the undead/demonic egregore as animalized in ways that treat them as the stuff of dreams, but also the natural world (and feral, primal sex) as increasingly legendary (and rare) under a Capitalist-Realist mindset: the unicorn.



(artist: [Zuru Ota](#))

We're not talking about equine, horn-headed things, here, but an availability of sex known to a closer bond with nature as freed from Cartesian, heteronormative bondage. Over time, iconoclastic depictions of unicorns become valuable to Gothic Communists

through their humanized, unexploited labor enjoyed by all those participating. As something to synthesize in socio-material terms, their representees can become autonomous, helping them escape chattelization by horny men; i.e., those who crave a willing and compartmentalized third—often a bisexual woman, but in reality extending to any effeminate receiver regardless of their sex (e.g., twink)—to sleep with him and his complicit wife (or vice versa). This isn't a fluke, but canonically advertised and sold incessantly to heteronormative couples all the time.

Cis bias remains. While Emile Lavinia of *Cosmopolitan* writes on "how to survive [unicorn season]" (2022),

A unicorn, quite simply, is a person who hooks up with couples – the key component of a threesome. Unicorns might be looking for a one off or something regular. [...] A unicorn can be a person of any orientation or gender and there's no right way to have a threesome or be a unicorn ([source](#)).

she focuses on bisexual women who unicorn:

Some women love to unicorn and others find it frustrating and frankly disrespectful having to field proposals from couples looking for a third

throughout the colder months. Bisexual women have a long history of being [fetishized](#) and viewed as sex objects by heterosexuals (*ibid.*)

As the remainder of part one shall stress, Lavinia's fixation on the bisexual *female* experience can be expanded on by trans, intersex and non-binary artists like Eldritch Babe and myself (exhibit 24d2) through iconoclastic Gothic poetics (which Volume Three shall likewise focus on; e.g., exhibits 87a and 101b). To this, O'Keefe was far less overt than Giger was, but plenty of artists portray the fetishization of the human feminine in far more open terms that point back to her vaginal, gently alien flowers. This doesn't preclude sex positivity at all, provided the poetic context—and the instructional means of interrogating and negotiating trauma and power through paradox and play—are actively present. A "rose" by any other name can still function as a rose towards liberatory aims, *especially* when its viewed as monstrous, magical, and out-of-this-world:



(artist: [Sasha Khmel](#))

Gothic Communism, then, seeks to highlight the dangers of "monsters aren't real" as *apophenic conspiracy*—one that that smugly calls iconoclastic art and interpretations of it as "totally random" (*apophenia* meaning to see "patterns" in random data). Proponents of capital will discredit us, but also use and abuse us to enrich themselves through bad play. Such bad-faith instruction becomes something to beware, including how Capitalism commodifies our own trauma and pedagogy through ludo-Gothic BDSM as shackled to profit (and Capitalist Realism). This, on its own, is already a complicit cryptonym that conceals the Capitalist atrocities that sex-positive artists are desperately trying to suggest when they create *seemingly* random bonds using ostentatious

Gothic language (or other artists taking what they see and riffing off it, or other artists like me making a collage of art, of art, of art). Not only does calling it "random" take away artist voices by making their work seem "fake"; but doing so utterly misses the forest for the trees connecting all of us in grander statements across space and time. It doesn't matter whether anything "real" (an actual, literal vampire) is connected to them or not; material depictions of monsters (or things historically framed as monsters) very much do exist and furthermore, have deep-seated social-sexual anxieties and trauma attached to workers exploited under Capitalism.

The pedagogy of the oppressed relies on monsters to gossip about, thus prevent rape by placing it in quotes; i.e., camping its usual aliens. To avoid an abject, Foucauldian torture loop, iconoclastic monsters must be more than art, but emotionally/Gothically intelligent artists that reverse-abject the entire structural blueprint back into domesticated spheres, flaunting dark flowers, Satanic unicorns, and biomechanical demigods for the purposes of communicating trauma and preventing its actualization in the future. Meanwhile, "undead/demonic" workers with the mythical booties, thick thighs, buxom breasts, and tight li'l pussies—*they're* the zombie unicorns who fuck to metal and possess a mythical, uncanny ability to shrewdly negotiate with those things in order to sleep with whomever they damn-well choose; i.e., to tame the rapacious tendencies in sexist Man-Box consumers through *appreciative, mutually consensual* peril: "Fuck me like this, in this outfit, the way *I want as we agreed upon* (we'll explore BDSM negotiation much more in Volume Three, Chapter Three). By extension, these autonomous, BDSM-savvy workers permit whoever they want to draw them or photograph them as based on emotionally/Gothically intelligent *boundaries* (what Gamma Ray inadvertently calls "[The Heart of the Unicorn](#)," 2001); i.e., illustrating mutual consent through negotiated labor exchanges that also, as it turns out, interrogate trauma as something to reduce through calculated risk *while* camping canon.

This largely concludes part one of the roadmap. However, a few assurances before we proceed onto part two.

First, after this roadmap is concluded, we'll continue to refer to abjection throughout the entirety of the Humanities primer and Volume Three. We'll also discuss hauntology, chronotopes and cryptonyms. For now, simply understand that all are academic terms that comment on commonplace symptoms under Capitalism. To be sex-positive, I *must* critique them in connection to capital and how they at times support and resist it, oscillating back and forth but not changing all that much visually or orthographically through popular, haunting depictions of monsters or sexuality in recursively wending stories (the endless, revisiting nightmare again being the mythical, cliché source of many-a-Gothic yarn). This will require the

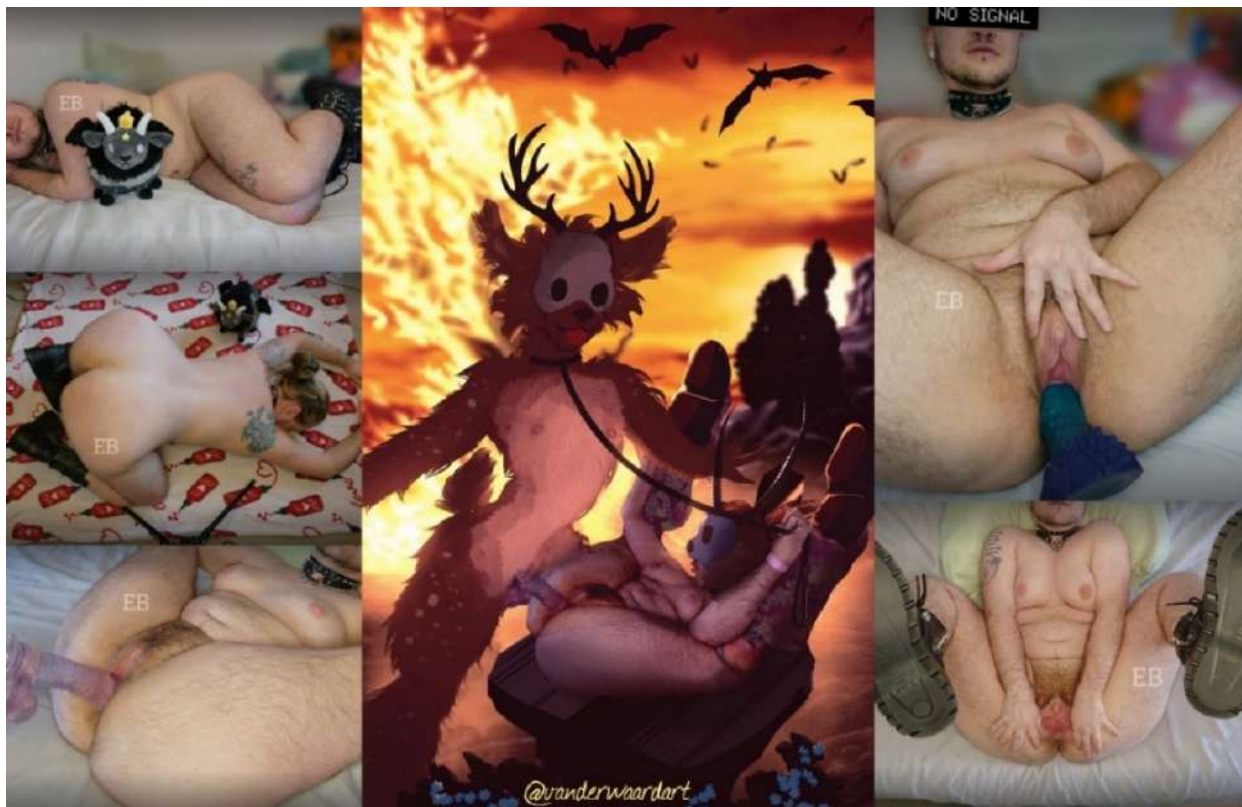


social-sexual habits of our currently unfurling roadmap as guided by interdependent girl talk from younger people, but also aimed in good-faith at older people initially stumped by these mysterious concepts—whose minds probably feel "fucked" right now by what I'm trying to say.

(artist: [Chris Bourassa](#))

Second, per Chris Baldrick, confusions are inherited, generally by those who sense the presence of trauma in Gothic situations shared between uneven victims of state abuse. Chaos, then, becomes something to acclimate towards during psychopraxis, psychomachia, *Amazonomachia* and psychosexual displays; i.e., as state education battles rebellious workers' *de facto* education through the same basic poetics and synthetic oppositional groupings, mid-opposition. It's never as simple as it seems because language is always in conflict (though generally for historical-material reasons that concern the state). So try not to fret too much about understanding things perfectly! Stay loose!

However, before we move onto part two, the idea here is to be loose *enough* within chaotic, interconnecting positions. My teaching style tends to be very fluid, organic and spontaneous; i.e., covering the likes of Medusa, George O'Keefe, H.R. Giger and Neil Marshall, but also far less famous gender-non-conforming persons in order to make my larger point. I would encourage my readers to try the same, and with friends who share you views:



(exhibit 24d2: Model and artist: Eldritch Babe and [Persephone van der Waard](#), portraying an animal-themed BDSM scenario celebrating the subversion of Gothic canon through a dark breeding ritual [the background photobash is based partially [on Franck Sauer's BG art](#) for the old Amiga shoot-'em-up, *Agony*, 1992]. As my thesis argues, monsters have a tremendous genderqueer potential to be Satanic rebels; i.e., queerness as simultaneously antithetical to state aims but

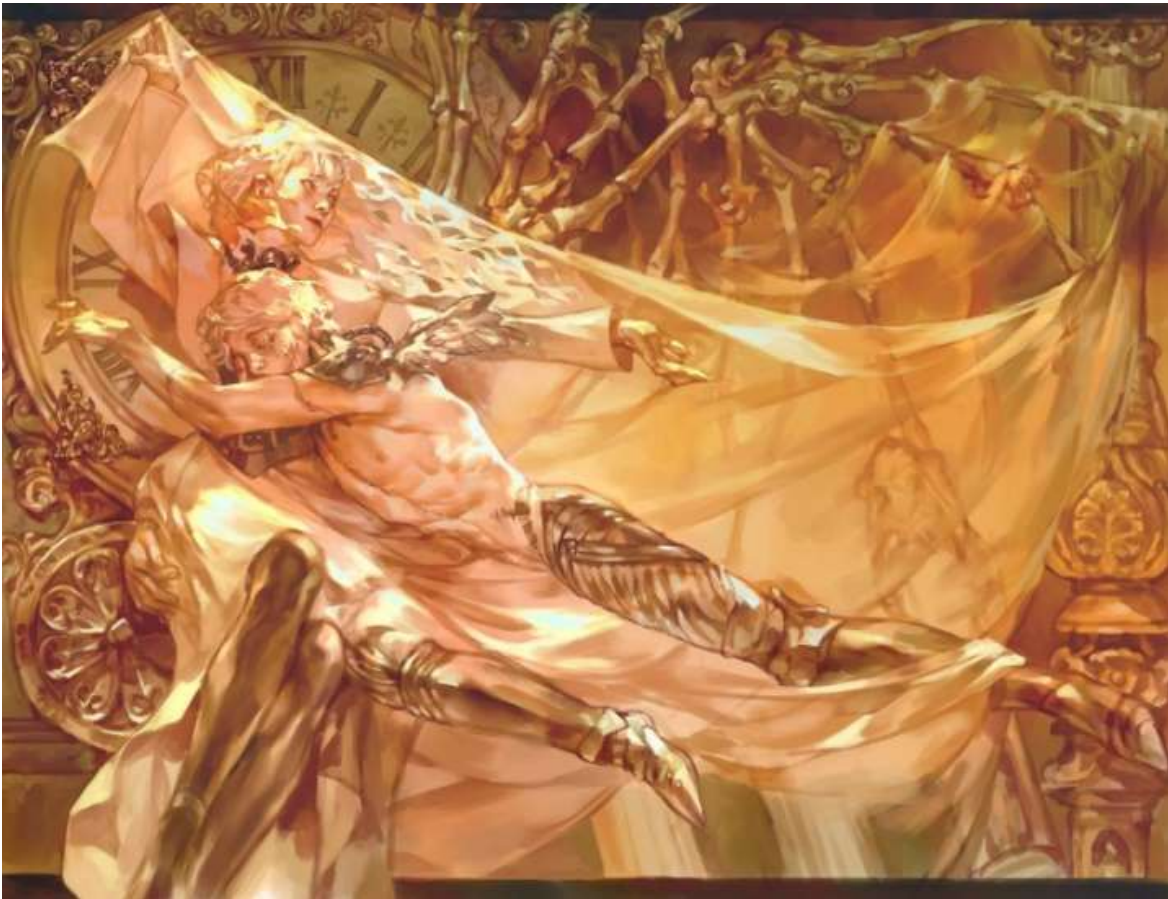
nonetheless required by the state to be sacrificed in animal-like ways. As Eldritch Babe and I demonstrate, this butchery can be camped, and generally with a fair amount of psychosexual fun overshadowed by canonical trauma as something to camp through gender trouble; i.e., by putting "rape" and "death" in quotes, but also dissolving the line drawn between sex and gender and their state-sanctioned connection to biology set easily to rock 'n roll as a theatrical assist:

*"We eat the night, we drink the time
Make our dreams come true
And hungry eyes are passing by
On streets we call the zoo" [The Scorpion's "[The Zoo](#)," 1980].*

Demons, the undead and animalized egregores, then, are not things to summon strictly from "somewhere else," but are evoked through a liminal sensation closer to home; i.e., of another world that speaks to generational, systemic trauma in our own lives. All the same, there are profound levels of jouissance onstage; i.e., exquisite torture and ironic peril/rape play and xenophilia. To that end, the aim of the ritual isn't to summon outright destruction, but cultivate a sense of catharsis through communion with psychosexual, palliative-Numinous forces during ludo-Gothic BDSM's unequal exchanges of power and knowledge as things to negotiate time and time again. A demon or ghost might not appear each time, or it may—as a creature of chaos—appropriately take different forms; e.g., Eldritch Babe and I cultivated an especially animalistic ritual during one particular exchange, but it could have easily manifested a different way. What matters is the attempt and its goals during oppositional praxis; i.e., as a means of creative success through de facto education towards sex-positive instruction of future social-sexual habits, thus praxial synthesis. Function determines function, not aesthetics.)

Third, for those of you referring to these ideas yourself, also try and remember that the Six Rs, Four Gs, Gothic-Communist mode of expression, Six Doubles of Oppositional Praxis and synthetic oppositional groupings are simply things to keep in mind as general teaching objectives, means and techniques while testing them out in various holistic ways. You certainly won't need to invoke all of them in a given moment in order to achieve proletarian praxis, but merely should keep the basics in mind during your creative successes: gossip, monsters and camp. All demonstrate praxial synthesis as an attempt made many times over leading to praxial catharsis. More important than hammering any of them into peoples' heads, then, is mirroring them in sex-positive ways that people can intuit at their own speeds; i.e., cultivating them during their own reflections on capitalistic trauma inside a hall of mirrors: our revolutionary goals and creative successes being things to repeatedly "shoot for" per performance as echoed across

all. Each is instructional, constituting good education (camp) versus bad (canon) as occupying the same space during an ongoing and highly plastic Gothic dialog.



(artist: [Vetyr](#))

When you've been through Hell, it becomes something to bring back with you and express in opposition to what put you through it to start with (the state). *Above all else, the cultivating of emotional/Gothic intelligence and class/cultural awareness remains paramount*—to help workers and society liberate itself (and nature) from Capitalism, thus assist in the renewed development of Gothic Communism through sex-positive (art)work. As things to cultivate, emotional and Gothic intelligence are synonymous with social-sexual activism begot from our own diving into the imaginary past. So please, swim around and play—with language, yourselves, and figurative and literal BDSM games that renegotiate labor and unequal power exchange in sex-positive ways. Mix, match, and blend; inject or insert (so to speak). Whatever it takes to do the job in some shape or form; i.e., to recultivate the Wisdom of the Ancients, thus achieve a Gothic-Communist outcome. "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" If it works, it works! The signs of praxial success lies in how your students, viewers and customers respond to your own checklists and their idiosyncratic constellations, but also what you put into the

world around you: through your own basic approaches that can be extrapolated on through theoretical analysis if need be, but also by and large speak for themselves.

When liberating workers (all of whom Capitalism sexualizes) through iconoclasm, remember that, as iconoclasts, you will generally be compared to vice characters along the way (exhibit 13d). Be mindful of reactionaries, moderates and class traitors more broadly. They are undercover cops who, at any moment, might disrobe, transform and attack you, but just as likely will retain their outward appearance while seeking to cause harm in bad faith. The more openly ironic gender parody and trouble are displayed, the more likely someone is wedded to the Cause; but even so, context is key in telling good actors from bad, and must be scrutinized through dialectical-material analysis each and every time. Eventually it becomes second nature—a means of reading the room:



(artist: [Eris Allure](#))

This concludes the *basic* synthesis roadmap and its exhibits—to cultivating good social-sexual habits through our teaching methods/synthetic oppositional groupings, thus achieving proletarian praxis through what we create to camp canon with; i.e., as Galateas, not Pygmalions. With it concluded, as well as my current assurances in place, we can further demonstrate how the basics operate according to oppositional praxis through *my* teaching style. Before we finally delve into the Humanities primer and the various "poetic histories" within the Gothic mode that each section examines, let's

conduct a deeper look at war and rape as things to be mindful of in our own social-sex lives while synthesizing praxis. We'll do so one at a time, starting with war as something to camp, thus prevent its unironic harm when canon goes unchallenged.

Nature Is Food, part two: A Deeper Look at Cartesian Trauma in War Culture (feat. Robert Heinlein and Akira Kurosawa)

"Before us lies the endless city, black in the black of night, cowering as if to creep back into the earth. And we're afraid."

—*from the diary of a young woman in Berlin; April 1945, during the Battle for Berlin*
([source](#): Robert Gerwarth's "Daily Life before the Downfall," 2010)

"I turned back and saw the blaze well under way. And that is when I noticed movement around the keep. I thought I knew what fear was, or that I had known fear. I was wrong. This night I have experienced true fear¹⁶⁰. The army of the Dark is upon us and it has no end. They march toward us, shoulder to shoulder, for as far as the eye can see. The very earth must be crying out at the damnable weight of them."

—[from the Narrator's journal](#), *Myth II: Soulblighter* (1998)

In my thesis volume, we explored the sacred framing of rape and war. The two generally go hand-in-hand, synonymizing sex with violence and sexualizing workers through canon to feed the profit motive (through the bourgeois trifectas and state monopolies). Keeping the basics in mind, this section of the roadmap considers how war culture can be interrogated and synthesized in our own creative responses to canonical forms; i.e., how to recognize said canon and express our trauma in relation to it using instructional gossip, monsters and camp, using them to achieve good *de facto* education, then habits—back and forth when warring with state forms harvesting nature as monstrous-feminine food. This section will consider the Cartesian arrangement in relation to us-versus-them power structures: Robert Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* and Akira Kurosawa's hauntological Western, but also the kinds of legendary genderqueer expression (exhibit 27a1) and body types (exhibit 28) that regularly appear during these stories.

War is a both a profoundly basic and incredibly complex thing; i.e., that generally abstracts to shorthand forms to relay a human element amid the titanic complications. *Canonical* war touches us, marking us in Gothic ways that we can instruct in future forms during class/culture war—to learn from past mistakes and present abusers. To serve the profit motive, the state's war against workers trumpets empty virtue with false doubles, protectors, fathers and heroes; begets manufactured scarcity, consent and conflict that endear the state to us in different, alienating ways. Endless cycles of neoliberal deception and bloodshed decay into more unstable, hauntological gradients—a fascist regression towards frontier

¹⁶⁰ A feeling, I should note, is felt most strongly by colonizing forces when Imperialism comes home to empire; i.e., the roosting of *alien*, undead chickens on the homefront.

Romance. As earlier American genocides and Manifest Destiny are dressed up in medieval, displaced language and occult obscurantism in current-day frontier wars, Capitalism manufactures war at home. In doing so, it turns workers against workers, brothers against brothers, cis-ters against sisters (that was a TERF pun) who cannot unite against the elite. Instead, the bourgeois Superstructure systematically sows worker division. The complex, transgenerational curse of a ceaseless "cold" war slowly paints the nation-state's altars blood-red. Glutting the vampiric maw of the elite as something to celebrate, workers become violent and stupid; they horrifyingly eat their friends, but also their own children and each other. *This* becomes the historical-material lesson repeating *ad nauseam*.



(exhibit 25: Left: Photos from *Blood Father*, 2016; right, artist: Francisco Goya. Goya was staunchly antiwar, painting the 82-painting series, [The Disasters of War](#) [1812-1820]. While these largely speak for themselves, [his 14 "Black Paintings"](#) made later in his life were even more grotesque, with "Saturn Devouring His

Son" [or as I call it, "Boomer Noms Zoomer"] perhaps being Goya's most famous and shocking work.)

This abject, paternal cycle of death can be resisted, but also transformed through fresh instruction. For example, in *Blood Father* (above), an old con called Link is on the run, protecting his estranged daughter, Lydia, from a larger web of criminals. He's sober but streetwise; this ain't his first rodeo. Perplexed by the perils of parenthood and attacked by cartel assassins (themselves "lost children" of America's manufactured conflict, the War on Drugs), Link smuggles Lydia to a den of thieves run by an aging man he used to serve: Preacher. Preacher is fascist, a false father who "eats" his offspring like Goya's Saturn. So, despite owing Link for his "muscle" during the old days (and his silence in the slammer), Preacher postpones repayment indefinitely. Instead, he makes Link stick around long enough to stab him in the back (no honor among thieves).

Until *that* moment, Preacher leers at Lydia, who—unbeknownst to him—has already shot someone herself: "You've felt the bite of the mosquito, haven't you? It leaves an enzyme inside you that other mosquitoes can sense—see in the dark," Preacher smoothly jeers. "Run from it forever—forever!—and they'll find their way

back to you." The predator spots the prey's trauma within the space of courtship and speaks to it to lure them into its clutches: "I am like you; I can keep you safe."

Preacher thinks he has Link and Lydia "on the hip," boasting arrogantly once he sees how vulnerable they are. To this, Preacher is utterly perfidious—a false preacher/educator who *thinks* he knows the score, remarking smugly how bona fide rebellions are repackaged and sold as recuperated, toothless things to white girls like Lydia. She's supposedly the "easy" mark and he the old con, but he's also so broke he can't afford to pay her father, Link, for keeping quiet. Forget "no honor among thieves," Capitalism turns workers into dishonorable, *broke* thieves, orphans, rapists and killers-for-hire—a "prison sex" mindset of warrior/rape culture and every-man-for-himself skullduggery that gauges "success" as quick, petty theft; i.e., sublimating systemic worker oppression and widespread exploitation with "making someone your bitch" as a kind of personal responsibility dynamic that colonizes the world under more stable, ostensibly less decayed neoliberal models (the crisis remains, however).

On any register of the system, crime doesn't pay for anyone but the elite. Link, for instance, has a tattoo on his arm that reads "lost soul." He's living proof the undead currently walk the earth—callously used up by Capitalism and discarded, then repackaged and reused in zombified forms whenever people demand to know where the zombies come from (they usually don't). Oppositional praxis under Capitalism begets doubles through the menticial language of war and rape (sexual assault and power abuse), which we've yet to examine thoroughly in my exhibit style. We shall do so now in two back-to-back sections, while synthesizing rape and war as a social-sexual process that involves emotional/Gothic intelligence of varying degrees (then examine them later in the Humanities primer as things to materially fashion out of the Gothic past, followed by Volume Three's at-length discussion of proletarian praxis along five key points).

We'll discuss systemic/canonical rape in the next section. First, war/nation pastiche and canon. According to the Six Rs, Gothic Communism is generally concerned with trauma and emotions as things to reconnect with, *especially alienized or alienizing emotions (a symptom of division under Capitalism through Cartesian dualism) as things to reclaim, rediscover, renegotiate, reeducate, replay with and reproduce/release from the state*. Meanwhile, canon's warrior or scientist men of reason deal with trauma and stress by automatically distancing themselves from it; by doing so, they shut down anything outside of the state's interests, uncreatively responding to these factors with state-sanctioned, "problem-solving" violence, *not* genuine attempts at dialog and understanding: shoot it¹⁶¹ or bomb it.

¹⁶¹ E.g., an unused idea from the original script for *Alien* had Ash the android asking the crew if they ever tried talking to the monster instead of, you know, just assuming it was hostile and trying to kill it. When this anecdote came up in the 2003 actor's commentary track for the movie, Harry Dean Stanton testily asks Veronica Cartwright, "What the fuck would we say to it?" He's not wrong in that dialogs between alienated groups are often confusing and tense; but Cartright's insistence of a dialog is still required to bridge the gap.

It becomes its own means of bad education, one with social-sexual consequences that reliably lead to open, unironic war and rape. Such means of instruction do not prevent state terror, violence and morphological expression; they compound them through the liminal hauntology of war—the castle, but also its battlegrounds inside and outside of itself.

Over time, this "war pastiche" and canonical rhetoric escalates, compounds and procreates through individualized "great men of history" and their deadly game of "follow the leader" made in service of Capitalism's infinite growth, worker/owner division, and efficient profit. Historically-materially this happens through frontier genocide under Imperialism (the highest form of Capitalism); i.e., settler colonialism. Imperialism eventually colonizes itself, starting with those who resist on the fringes of empire before working inward: disgruntled workers and slaves. Violence begets violence as workers fight amongst themselves, slowly escalating until the scales tip and settler-colonial Imperialism is brought home to an empire not just in crisis, but *decay*. This, in turn, demands an eternal enemy, and the conflict never stops; it only waxes and wanes, menticing worker minds through waves of terror according to the bourgeois trifectas (which leads to reactionary behaviors from state defenders when *de facto* educators try to facilitate good social-sexual habits; i.e., by synthesizing praxis to achieve systemic catharsis



through sex-positive expression and Gothic poetics).

For instance, [the asthmatic auteur of the so-called "Competent Man" trope](#) (source: TV Tropes), Robert Heinlein, argued fervently for nuclear war against the Communists. For one, he created the Patrick Henry League, drumming up support for the U.S. nuclear testing program¹⁶² in 1958. By extension, he wrote *Starship Troopers* in 1959

(and many books after that). A badly disguised ethics polemic *against* anti-nuke protestors, nuclear war ([and a veteran-ruled planet](#); Knowing Better, 2022) is precisely what Heinlein argues for as something the United States was actively trying to accomplish in its own, post-WW2 foreign policy against China and Korea. As Carl Posey writes in "How the Korean War Almost Went Nuclear" (2015): "There

¹⁶² "Worried that a skeptical public was turning against rampant nuclear testing, [Heinlein] and his wife Virginia ran an ad in newspapers around the country supporting the military and inveighing against communism. They also wrote letters and organized meetings. The group accused opponents of nuclear testing of being not just wrong, but part of a communist plot" ([source](#): David Forbes' "The Secret Authoritarian History of Science Fiction" (2015).

was a second Korean war, one that has been studied and discussed even less than the first, which some have called 'the forgotten war.' The second one was nuclear. It consisted of a series of threats, feints, and practice runs, and it very nearly made it to the Korean battlefield" ([source](#)).

Few things captivate the American public's imagination as thoroughly as science fiction, especially *weaponized* science fiction involving great men modeled after real persons; e.g., Oppenheimer's "sadness" following the completion of the Manhattan Project, which Christopher Nolan's *Pygmalion* revisionism capitalized on, only to be rightly rejected and criticized by non-white Americans like Clara Iwasaki:

Oppenheimer built the bomb that killed my great-grandmother while her grandsons were drafted into the US army and the govt imprisoned her kids. If you're into moody great man biopics, I guess that's cool, but I personally really don't care how he felt while he was doing it ([source tweet](#): Clara Iwasaki, 2023).

It's the ultimate wave of terror, still sung about decades [following the "pointless" droppings of the Bomb on Nagasaki and Hiroshima](#) (Shaun, 2021):

Soon to fill our lungs
The hot winds of death
The gods are laughing
So take your last breath (Metallica's "[Fight Fire with Fire](#)," 1984).

To that, few things are as overtly *Promethean* as nuclear war—conveniently spreading fear of the nation-state and its "fire of the gods" power as inherently capitalistic. Those who serve the state, then, ultimately endorse this treatment thereof and its seminal tragedies. This can be soldiers *or* scientists, but there is always a militant component through the scientific side; i.e., Cartesian dualism dominating nature, even in outer space (re: astrotoetics).

For example, the great man of history exemplify through "competent men" as something to ape by regressive Amazons. As I write in "[Military Optimism](#)":

I once called Ripley [the Invincible Heroine](#). A better way to phrase it might be the Competent Woman. The idea stems from Robert Heinlein's [Competent Man](#), which Walter Hill transferred to Dan O'Bannon's [unused Alien script](#). Like Heinlein, Hill was influenced by the Competent Man trope, saying his own father and grandfather were "smart, physical men who worked with their heads and their hands" and had "great mechanical ability" ([source](#)). However, while *Alien* famously transformed the Competent Man into a woman, this wasn't Hill's idea. Ripley was originally written to be a man, and only became female when [the president of Fox suggested a gender](#)

[swap](#). Scott loved the idea, [having grown up with a strong, capable mother](#). Out of this complicated mess of competing ideas, Ripley was born.



Before we continue, it's important to note that Ripley was born into a man's world. Just as Dernhelm threatened the status quo—of war being "[the province of man](#)"—so did Ripley challenge the Competent Man is as essentially male. Though

not exactly warlike, her burgeoning masculinity was inherently transgressive. To compensate, Ripley was stripped almost naked to demonstrate her feminine vulnerability. It took another seven years for her to evolve into something more militarized, lest she be seen as a threat like the Amazons of yore. The capable, heroic individual stems from overcompensation. Though not unique to Hill or Heinlein, the Competent Man came from their sickly health. Hill was an asthmatic youth; Heinlein, likewise, was a navyman who fell ill¹⁶³ and later curiously romanticized the infantry through fantastical, arguably fascist stories (see: [Brows Held High](#)). Leave it to the infantry to idealize the stupendous feats single human soldiers can accomplish, and that's precisely what Heinlein did (with Hill's *Alien* draft arguably being the suggestion, if not outright endorsement, of a civilian equivalent).

"Specialization is for insects," Heinlein famously wrote, and his characters weren't always military. But they could do anything asked of them because they were competent. Competency isn't just a mindset, or a character's natural ability. More often than not, Heinlein's heroes had access to better equipment—weapons, to be sure, but also the power suit, which served as an extension of their organic bodies (which, in turn, were a hive-like extension of the state).

The thesis volume has already established quite thoroughly that military optimism goes hand-in-hand with the Promethean Quest of *Aliens* and its spiritual successors' monomythic approach to Cartesian dualism; i.e., Cameron's refrain, the Metroidvania. Likewise, the bugs from *Starship Troopers* were people that the bourgeoisie wanted dead and got workers to kill through state-corporate propaganda on and offscreen. Bombs are only one component and tend to be

¹⁶³ Between 1933 and 1934, Heinlein served on the USS Roper and earned the rank of lieutenant. After surviving tuberculosis and chronic seasickness, he was given early retirement in 1934" ([source](#): Famous Veteran: Robert A. Heinlein," 2013).

expensive; there's also bullets and bayonets, and worker labor thereof; e.g., the entire FPS genre (which [my 2021 "Vintage and Retro" interview series](#) has researched alongside my work investigating Metroidvania and FPS as interconnected genres; re: "Mazes and Labyrinths") being thoroughly inspired by *Aliens*, by Vietnam, by *Starship Troopers*, by Descartes and Francis Bacon, *et al.* Whichever is implemented, Capitalism is a man's world, is Promethean. Even moderates who act like they aren't fascists still admonish revolutionary praxis, their normalizing of fascism leading to its regeneration when Capitalism enters decay, mid-crisis (which it does by design—something to remember in Volume Three when we examine canonical praxis as something to challenge in relation to neoliberals, fascists and war/nation pastiche).

Through Cartesian thought, male/masculinized workers are distanced from nature as conquered by them in defense of Civilization as inherently capitalistic. It becomes bad education, which workers must challenge in their own extracurricular forms—generally by interrogating state trauma as something to negotiate and play with, on and offstage. This is an ongoing affair that needs to be upheld constantly lest things regress back towards fascism, neoliberalism and state abuse through Capitalist Realism. To that, *Paul Verhoeven* might have filmed *Starship Troopers* to parody *Heinlein's* American fascism in book form, but *Americans* still celebrated the movie without irony—i.e., as a blindly campy *mode* of expression articulating global American hegemony in imaginary worlds created after the Cold War ended; their myopic, harmful interpretations of the film gave it (and its various offshoots) an ongoing stupidity in the 20th and 21st centuries that further endorse American settler-colonialism at all registers. Anything else is unthinkable, tantamount to treason and cataclysm (re: Fischer's adage) thus deserving of genocide.

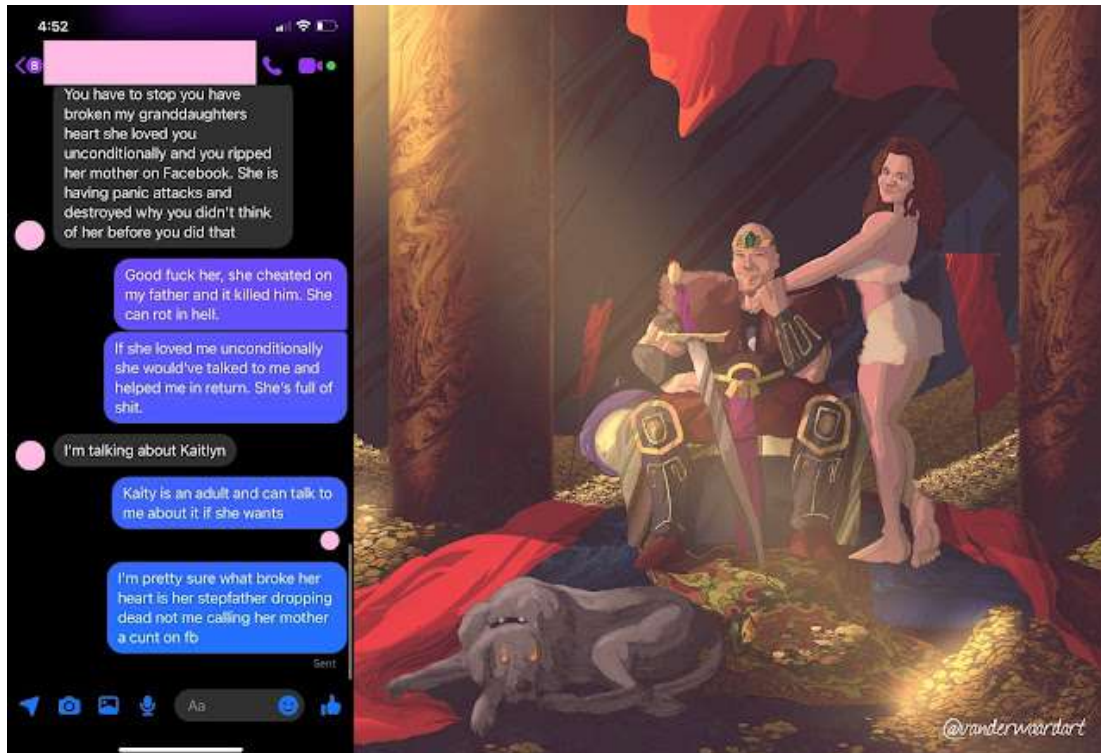


Our education vs the state's must be considered in ways that take the latter's enforced divisions into consideration. Excluding TERFs (queen bees who "dick-measure" with their female bodies to emulate male management/executives), female/monstrous-feminine workers tend to be more in touch with nature as something to co-exist with, whether they want to or not; i.e., the natural-material order of physical nature and the material world operating in unison, not discord. This ontological teamwork includes traditional motherhood roles, but also "motherly" roles tied to things that men normally abject or otherwise distance themselves from: female bodily functions, but also intimations of death or conflict as something the living must survive and deal with in their own communities; i.e., when it happens to one's spouses, children, family and friends.

When war happens, people die. This can be the war of bullets and blades, but also class and culture war relayed in theatrical forms on and offstage. Here, stable "telephone games" communicate trauma and abuse as protective countermeasures, insofar as either are conveyed in ways that help women (or beings forced to identify as women) process trauma from moment to waking moment. Doing so becomes a pedagogy of the oppressed that *can* formulate good social-sexual habits, but instruction remains a rather messy affair tangled with reactionary logic and state forces. To that, there remains a pre-conditioned element to formulaic expressions of peace and love in wartime that is foisted onto women as the caretakers of men; e.g., the gift of flowers or one's condolences to war widows. These can certainly be transmuted into emotionally/Gothically intelligent rituals that deescalate conflict and critique the state through class/cultural awareness and cathartic exchange. However, war is ultimately a liminal proposition, an oscillating metaphor for social-sexual exchanges at various registers. The historical-material effects of *canonical* war and poor emotional intelligence can be seen in domesticated spheres through the rituals of codified power exchange and hereditary rites that endlessly transpire there in performatively Gothic ways (echoes of Bakhtin).

For example, my late Uncle Dave was cuckolded from beyond the grave by his "grieving" widow, Erica. First, she had been cheating on him while he was alive while not participating in their relationship and trashing the place before and after Dave died. Then she passed the mess off to Dave's bereaved daughter, Kelsey (exhibit 26, next page). When this happened, us girls had to spread the message: Kaitlyn, Erica's daughter, found out through Erica's sister, who told her, who told Kelsey, who told Mom, who told me. The boys (my brothers) were the last to know and generally had no idea; they were off working and providing as men under Capitalism generally do. We women, queers and monsters are the pallbearers of Capitalism's ignominious dead; we fight those unglamorous battles, including decolonizing its artistic power when we become actively involved in oppositional praxis as melded unromantically with our daily lives. It became a telephone game.

Seemingly unromantic, we transform it all the same into oft-romanticized forms of *de facto* education. After Dave had died, I wrote his eulogy and immortalized him the way Mom thought he would have wanted: I drew him as a warrior king like Conan the Barbarian (exhibit 26). Much to my chagrin, I had also drawn Erica with him, the two of them side-by-side in Dave's "Valhalla" as I envisioned it. It became its own form of instruction on how and how *not* to act:



(exhibit 26: Left: My cousin Kelsey's conversation [shared with her permission—better to ask for permission than forgiveness, as doing so illustrates mutual consent between negotiating parties] where she, ever the firebrand, completely rips a defender of her father's abuser a new asshole.

Right: [the drawing I did of my late uncle and his now-exposed wife](#). Dave? Rest in glory and in peace, king. Erica? Have you no decency, my dude? My exposé of you—in this book's examination of my former artwork that featured you—isn't a call to violence at all, but an active attempt to reveal and discourage destructive societal behaviors; i.e., bad communication that foments stochastic violence under Patriarchal Capitalism: You lied a lot, swanning theatrically for those around you.

What might you be willing to do under more war-torn circumstances? Art, once created, must be examined, especially when damning information comes to light. The aim is not to endorse war and conflict, but to use the language of war as something to speak to men in language they can understand that, all the same, hammers swords into ploughshares. I have no wish to quote *Hamlet* unironically—"frailty, thy name is woman!" or "from Hyperion to a satyr!"—nor to hold up Man as

the "paragon of animals," relinquishing my voice like doomed MacDuff from Macbeth: "I have no words, my voice is in my sword." Rather, to quote Eowyn, I will declare "I am not a man!"; I am a trans woman whose experience as a man has placed me in a liminal position—one foot in both worlds, teaching me the language of men in ways I can transmute, killing the old ways forever [versus endorsing them, like Samus Aran does, for example].)

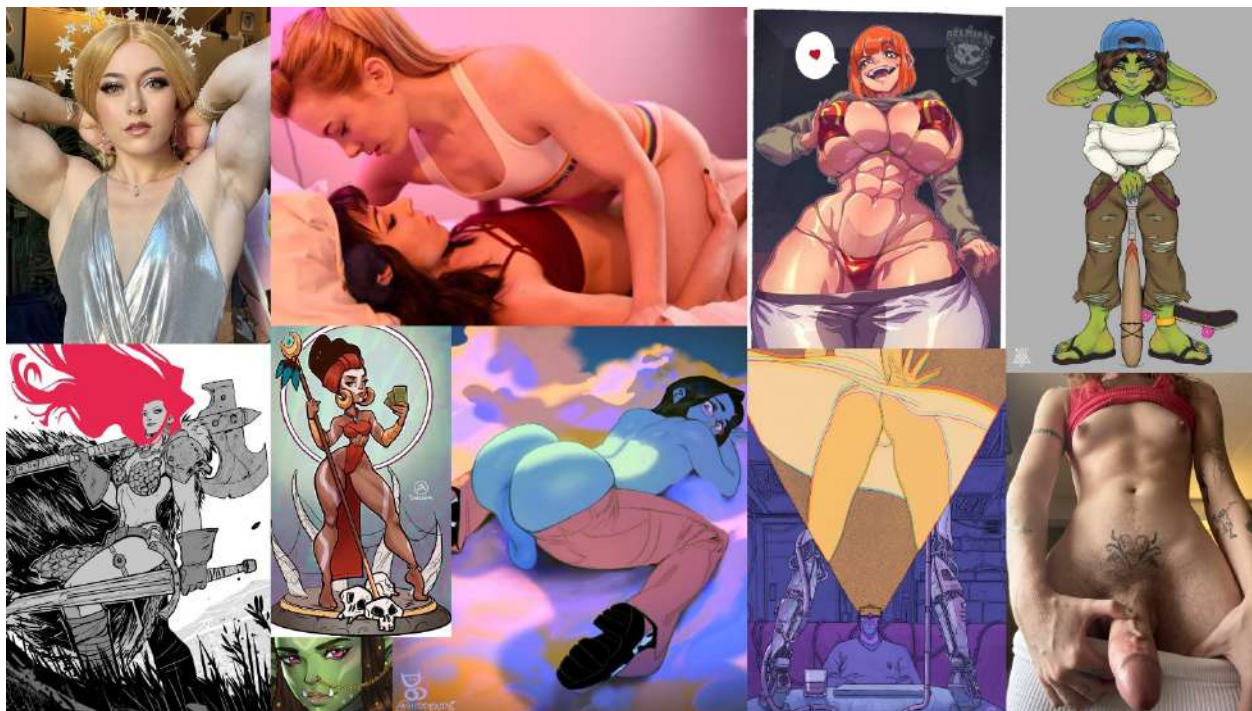
I want you to consider the educational role of such exhibits; i.e., as things we produce (and teach with) all the time in our own lives. You don't have to be made into a teacher by the state to impart lessons through artwork; we're a social species and the process is generally something that comes quite naturally to us (especially insofar as processing trauma is concerned). Apart from traditionally domestic, social-sexual roles like marriage and sanctioned sex, a female/feminine connection with nature traditionally involves mental and physical responses to trauma (madness) whose educational potential facilitates praxial synthesis and catharsis; i.e., sex-positive forms help keep workers alive in response to *manmade* trauma (war) on various registers. In Gothic fiction, this commonly manifests through the presence of monsters that intimate systemic abuse, but also bigotries, stigmas and complex psychosexual feelings of fear-fascination (the ghost of the counterfeit/process of abjection). The xenomorph, for example, is a manmade weapon, a creature of war from Ridley Scott's point-of-view that Ripley must survive, but also learn from in regards to larger structural problems both are swept up in (and indeed, are the products of in relation to each other).

The instructional element to this kind of storytelling yields popular archetypes. The thesis volume, for example, established the at-times problematic role of the domestic detective (which we'll explore even more during the Humanities primer alongside damsels and demons); i.e., that they constitute a common kind of Gothic heroine already suffering from intimations of *something* hunting them in everyday life, and whose inherited trauma—as something to grapple with in the present—feels intensely operatic and psychosexual out of a conservatively imaginary past. Per Radcliffe, the nostalgic feelings of prey invoke being hunted by the horrors of the past, which *Capitalism* gatekeeps, gaslights and girl-bosses the viewer with by proxy. Through displacement as hauntological, faraway or otherwise made-up, fatal nostalgia explains the *unheimlich* (the unfriendly castle and its monsters doubling the audience's homes, families and friends) away through so-called "bad dreams" whose comparisons to the present cannot be avoided but *can* be discredited: "There's no place like home." In true Radcliffian fashion, the monster is summoned and then *killed*, itself a nightmare whose anxieties—felt within the Imperial Core about settler-colonial abuse on foreign and domestic territories—disappear along with it.

Some female detectives track down the truth, armed with their wits; others perform a "burlier" Amazonian function, tracking the past down with both brains

and brawn ("[Predators as Amazons](#)"). The latter work directly as general-purpose hunters, often as retro-future variants; e.g., "Space Amazons" like Ellen Ripley or Samus Aran, whose official variants oscillate between iconoclastic/canonical praxis: "female revenge" and ambiguous "female rage-gargoyles"—the Archaic Mother and phallic woman, but also the bourgeois, warrior girl boss and proletarian warrior mom (exhibit 8b2).

In other words, not all detectives are cops, but it's a fine line and replete with fetishes and clichés. Amazons in general are commonly sexualized in animal language, but tied in theatrical forms of strength that yield many double standards. As a means of common discourse that has only expanded in recent times, these are all things to interrogate and negotiate with when fighting for our basic human rights. They become a mouthpiece *for us*, but also a means of self-definition and self-identity mid-struggle while battling our own trauma, but also sources of trauma through theatre as policed; deviations from theatre are required through future instruction, but said instruction is generally liminal unto itself:



(exhibit 27a1: Artist, top-far-left, top-mid-left: [Claire Max](#); top-mid-right: [Mr-Deathcat](#); top-far-right: [Sk8ter](#); bottom-far-left: [Denis M79](#); bottom-mid-left and bottom-mid-right: [Deuza-art](#); bottom-center: [Hiddend8](#); bottom-far-right: [e.streetcar](#); bottom-mid-left [face]: [Amber Harris Art](#). The expression, "woman," is a complicated thing and its performative nuance knows no bounds. Likewise, "woman is other" becomes a theory routinely challenged by updates to acceptable forms of equality and representation; i.e., *campy* forms of woman through Gothic poetics whose revolutionary girl talk [anger and gossip] challenges Beauvoir's [and

for that matter, Creed's] notion of the monstrous-feminine in ways that lead to better and better instruction when interrogating trauma and attaining catharsis, mid-struggle. Amazonomachia isn't just battling monsters, then, but making them to do battle with; i.e., to combat and embody externally during campy theatre that speaks to how one feels inside: monstrous vis-à-vis state instruction. Canonical tutelage becomes something to subvert and ultimately overcome through various monster types that prevent harm through subversive gossip; e.g., ironic versions of orcs and Amazons' racialized tropes/"the fear of a dark continent" alongside gender-non-conforming persons' genuine identities and orientations relayed through their biology and performance as deftly weaponized against state forces. Our existence, through struggle, becomes ironic in ways that can be appreciated and endorsed during oppositional praxis: "woman" not simply as "monster" but "counterterrorist monster" inciting pro-worker rebellions against the state [and its monstrous proponents] harming us.)

Whatever form it takes, this intersectional, "female" relationship to war messily extends across the entire Gothic mode, its myriad markers of complex trauma (monsters) haunting liminal expression during oppositional praxis. Said praxis affects not just *cis-het* women, but beings either perceived as female/feminine/womanly or who embrace or reject these categories regardless of their biological equipment: trans, non-binary or intersex people, but also people of color and other functional "chattel" on a hierarchy of privileged abuse towards "good" workers; i.e., coerced forms of preferential mistreatment/selective punishment towards, and from, a divided working class. While these different marginalized groups experience something naturally assigned to them (skin color or biological sex) that forces them to handle manmade catastrophes more creatively than state benefactors do, their counterterrorism remains historically ignored, dismissed or talked down to by tone-policing moderates both inside and outside oppressed circles; i.e., those monopolizing violence, terror and bodily expression for the state, exploiting these devices in ways that marginalized workers must live with from moment to moment. To compensate, the pedagogy of the oppressed must highlight this unfair gradient of abuse, bringing its painful realities closer to home for those reaping the rewards of genocide every day. Our gossip, monsters and camp must collectively and intersectionally raise intelligence and awareness about war through daily social-sexual lessons that are deeply intimate and personal in ways the state (and its own curriculum) commonly prohibit.

Indeed, the reasons I wrote *Sex Positivity* are largely personal—for me, as a Gothic-Communist trans woman, artist, and sex worker—to think about these social-sexual themes in relation to my own sex-positive output, Humanities education, family ties and lived trauma; i.e., as things to attribute towards praxial synthesis and catharsis during class and culture war as a combative dialog. My creation of iconoclastic trauma writing and artwork contribute towards a rebellious,

Satanic process of thought that actively engages with pre-established social constructs emblematic of war as a whole—not just as material things in isolation, but whose praxial function can be redesigned: to make something new not just by imagining it, but *reimagining* it as it currently exists. This includes whoever is doing it—within their own lives as workers with domestic ties to art, vice versa, or either as informed continuously by the other.

To this, I can reimagine war—not as sacred, but surprisingly malleable in terms of something to convey through iconoclastic art as informed by past examples, including from other places around the world as informed by an ongoing exchange of media; e.g., Akira Kurosawa's stamp on the Western genre and pushing back against Orientalist tropes by waging war onscreen in ways that can be honed and cultivated further and further in a proletarian direction by artists like myself (and people that I work with):



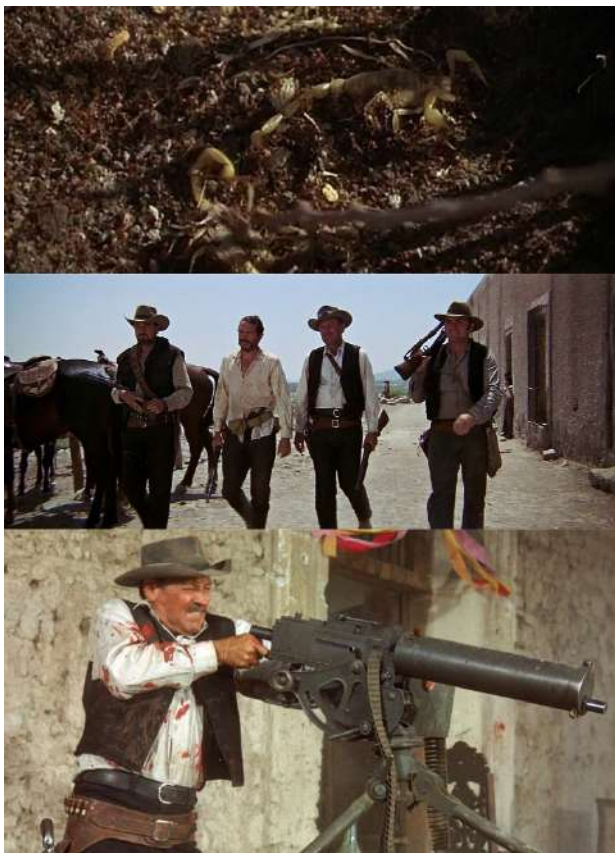
(exhibit 27a2a: Top-right and top-and-bottom-left: photos of Akira Kurosawa's seminal classic, [Seven Samurai](#) [1954]—the titular boys themselves and director "leading the charge" into a brave new world; artist, bottom-right: [Persephone van der Waard](#). The American Western [a cryptonym for genocide] inspired

Japanese [shonen](#) as intensely hyperbolic, romanticized and [eco]fascist [exhibits 17a, 24a, and 104b1/b2]. In turn, Japanese hauntology inspired American media during global conversations that supported or resisted the original, genocidal foundation. [My](#) response to Kurosawa operates on a creative, imaginary level [though not always consciously] through my own iconoclastic work; e.g., my take on [Baiken](#), the "samurai warrior mommy," in a sex-positive manner through liminal expression during opposition praxis. She's sexy and strong in ways that uphold and carry a rebellious sex positivity into the future.)

Reimagining war isn't hard; it simply requires transforming already-imagined symbols in a linguo-material sense—i.e., to achieve class/cultural consciousness through monstrous poetics being a kind "stabilizing gossip," a universal "girl-talk" that individuals master, codify and re-release into society and the material world where war is already a popular dialog (allowing for the theatrical interrogation of trauma and disempowerment, of tension and release). Girls talk, especially revolutionaries looking out for each other when threatened by the normalization of physical and sexual violence. We gotta, because there's so much to teach and so many dangerous, badly educated people out there (especially cis-het men, let's be frank). Spilling tea isn't exclusive to or indicative of emotionally fickle, catty bitches (whose over-advertisement by state proponents tone-police and discredit worker legitimacy and concerns); it's a defense mechanism in response to Capitalism's own manufactured stupidity and risk-raising/abuse-encouragement mechanisms. To loosely borrow from Akira Kurosawa, *Capitalism* "made the workers wicked, stupid, foxy beasts! *Its* 'samurai' took workers' food, land and bodies, and killed them if they tried to resist!" The samurai were a *class*, and Kurosawa evoked that to hauntologically touch on 1954 class struggles through a complex marriage of Eastern theatre, Japanese *chanbara* ("sword") movies and Western cinema.

The subsequent "nuptial's" class character reshaped how people saw and conceived the Western's violent, personified interrogation of material conditions (and mercenary wealth redistribution through cutthroat arbitration of local disputes: chivalric reimbursement through class mobility during immobile time periods) in cinematic terms worldwide—one felt through a stream of "Western pastiche" whose dueling swordsmen (the samurai, ronin and ninja from the likes of *Ninja Scroll* or *Blue Eye Samurai*, 2023, echoing white and black knights, but also Amazons) and gunfighters (also white/black and Amazonian) as part of ancient military theatre (again kayfabe), but also legendarily strong-and-silent, long-lost heroes hailing from otherworldly times and places: the mixed-worlds quality of Achilles dipped in Styx, being from the world of the living *and* the land of the dead. Bringing wonderful weapons, but especially bullets and blades—e.g., Excalibur pulled from the depths of the Lady of the Lake, cutting magically through steel—to bear against tremendous, equally eternal adversaries (and hordes of disposable fodder to shoot, cut down or beat up) also divorced from the modern world, both are announced by heavy weather and fierce storms: monstrous assassins, demons, and dire revenge, but also beautiful damsels rescued by warriors, both doubling as detectives during violent displays of courtship—less through gaudy material parades and more through wanton, psychosexual displays of excessive medieval force. Out of that messy frontier justice and its various stages/theatres' antiquated means of overcoming adversity through vehicular wish fulfilment (and Gothic sense of confused, conflicting emotions), new possible worlds can emerge—the settler colony upheld "as is" or transformed into something new. Something *better*.

In the spirit of the Gothic, these all combine and shift to produce a complicated, of-two-worlds¹⁶⁴ hauntology spanning decades, genres and continents (and bleeding easily into other mediums; e.g., videogames): the mercenary *Magnificent Seven* (1960) to *The Wild Bunch's* (1969) ultraviolent, deromanticized class character of anti-government cons robbing banks and fighting the crooked, unscrupulous railroad; i.e., activist sentient in a crudely bloodthirsty, "man's man" narrative whose cutthroat, rebellious nature would reach all the way through the dystopian '80s cityscape of John Carpenter (*Escape from New York*, 1981) and Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* to the out-and-out Space Western of the late '70s onwards: *Star Wars*, *Rogue One* (2016) and *Andor*, but also Shinichiro Watanabe's *Cowboy Bebop* (the space Western/space cowboy); but also the "postapocalyptic, Ozzy Western" of *Fury Road* and George Miller's own stabs at "perceptive" pastiche through the Western as a thoroughly liminal territory caught between *The Wild Bunch* and John Ford's *Stage Coach* (1939) but also Sergio Leone's trademark frontier nihilism (and silent nameless heroes) of the "spaghetti Western" (Zeuhl, a person with Communist leanings if not outright conviction, loves spaghetti Westerns—especially Leone's "The Man with No Name" trilogy).



(exhibit 27a2b: While Watanabe's, Peckinpah's, Kurosawa's, and Lucas' antiheroes [not Leone's, so much] are all great warriors that—unlike the evil empire—eventually choose to forget about settling old scores/getting even or rich and instead lay down their lives for a bigger cause, Peckinpah is stuck in a very male-centric drama that "wasn't quite there, yet." For him and his war boys, the male drama concerns the finding of emotional intimacy amid the stoic soldiering towards inevitable death, even if said bonding *is* the rowdy male sort: machismo, bravado, rape jokes and locker room talk, etc.

As we already examined with *Ninja Scroll's* Jubei, hauntology is a common mode of rebellious expression in retro-future language. As such, the likes of samurai, bounty hunters,

¹⁶⁴ Re: Walpole's Ancient Romance and modern novel married through the Neo-Gothic castle space.

bandits, and scoundrels share a common thread among the troupes of rag-tag rebels performing them: the necessity of struggle. Desperation forces disparate, hungry peoples to bond in ways their privilege [or its lack] never could. In turn, their actions contribute towards noble-but-doomed resistance composed of smaller acts of daring and unsung courage: counter heists, espionage, sabotage, masquerades, endured medieval torture and humiliation, saloon brawls, war brides, brothel espionage [kiss and tell], bombings [dynamite], assassinations, betrayals, decoys ruses, criminal conspiracies, vandalism/graffiti, scandals, double-crosses/dry gulching and desperate last stands. All happen during asymmetrical warfare whose guerrilla actions depict one losing battle after another during an inglorious-yet-admirable war against the state; i.e., in the sense that a) there's no glory ["Again, we have lost!"] and the enemy is someone clearly stronger than them, while also b) presenting the Cause as something that requires more than simple victories and fascist bullshit to prevail—in a word, teamwork.

Worker solidarity through reclaimed acts of theatrical force build around the unscrupulous acquisition of funds, insofar as the money is either stolen, or earned in ways the state will do its best to regulate: violence, terror and bodily expression, of course, but also the kinds of work that sexualize in relation to these things commonly depicted in Western tropes. According to tradition, men do battle to



protect women, but the Western often gives women the ability to fight as men do.

(artist: [Alcololi](#))

Teamwork, then, goes well beyond cis-het manly men, and recruits women, GNC performers and racial/religious minorities into the heist, collectively striking at the state's propaganda through a

shared stage. Doing so is more important than traditional propaganda victories because class/culture war requires subversion far more than simply killing large hordes of enemy soldiers; i.e., Boromir's piles of dead orcs, Crom counting Conan's dead, or Peckinpah's metaphor of scorpions and ants [the Wild Bunch vs the Mexican bandits] little more than extermination rhetoric tied to settler colonialism: Cowboys and Indians [which is merely Capitalism in action: grinding up the useful dead as part of the Military Industrial Complex through the rise and fall (re: Hawthorne) of great heroes, great houses, great enemies and barbarian hordes—over and over in medievalized, superhero kayfabe: "see, kill, take; repeat".]

As something to live under through canonical and iconoclastic depictions alike, Capitalism threatens to explode into war at all times. This yields a variety of feminist clichés: "Us girls gotta stick together." Girl power. Empowered "womaning." However, as we've already determined, the Gothic is full of clichés and symbols of war prior to the Western. Moreover, these fetishes are actually historical-material clues to deeper systemic issues begot from women's unpaid and exploited roles in society as hopelessly tied to war mentalities furthered by canon. Capitalism historically-materially turns women (and minorities) into unpaid servants, governesses and conjugal "mothers" who need to marry up. However ignominious, hypergamy becomes a means of survival through denied material advantage. Often, the wives' husbands are soldiers or paramilitaries who abuse them far more than any faraway foe.

In turn, the state teaches men not to learn from women/"non-men" and their pedagogy of the oppressed. Rather, male workers are expected to "sow their wild oats," then marry out (exogamy). Marrying up for men is considered an insult, but one nevertheless canonized by the mythical pile of widow's gold (e.g., *The Duchess of Malfi* or Portia from *The Merchant of Venice*): the man swallowing his pride to steal possibly the only exception to women historically owning property in Western canon before the 19th century. Meanwhile, the canonical wars of the bourgeoisie guarantee that many boys grow up stupid and fatherless, feeling deprived of anyone who can actually advise them amid glacial shifts towards the Left in terms of socio-material conditions: Young men think feelings are "gay" thus don't share them; they also can't wipe their own asses and girls, in their eyes, are from Venus (misogyny is equally cliché, you dorks).

Societal "health," then, amounts to a cultural awareness linked with iconoclastic movements, the emotional state-of-affairs determining how often systemic issues are brought to light by whistleblowers who, let it be said, are often female/GNC, especially regarding domestic/sexual abuse that men historically refuse¹⁶⁵ to talk about. A common example of this is the witch, a victim of state violence during the early formation of Capitalism and nation-states; her *current* persecution stems from ancient forms of hysteria that survive in hauntological forms the state cannot fully monopolize. This means terror, violence and bodily expression become ours for the taking—can be used by us in sex-positive lessons to challenge state fear and dogma with through extracurricular forms of solidarized labor between two-or-more laborers; e.g., [Dani Is Online](#) and myself partaking in a

¹⁶⁵ Excepting male whistleblowers, who as our thesis argued often have a military/state background; e.g., Edward Snowden, [candidly swapping antiwar rhetoric on Substack with Vietnam war iconoclast, Daniel Ellsberg](#) (2021). While I can't speak for Ellsberg in this respect, Snowden himself always gave off slight twink vibes—i.e., described in his 2019 autobiography, *Permanent Record*, as moving away from a fighting-youth mentality and boot camp physique to expose the entire NSA. Quite the act of courage, I think; to be against war is to be against the state, making antiwar sentiment a thought crime/sin under Capitalism.

bit of counterterrorist expression, taking a moment post-negotiation (and payment) to appreciate the witch as a sex-positive, countercultural icon appreciating but also liberating another oppressed group in the process: fat people as harvested under Cartesian models (which the end of the final symposium section will explore even further).



(exhibit 28: Model and artist, top-middle: [Dani Is Online](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#); everything else: Dani Is Online. Art is a relationship between various artists interacting over space and time. While Dani makes their own content, we've also collaborated before; they're also aware of my book, what it stands for and were perfectly happy to exchange services for posing in its pages [sex work for payment as negotiated by both parties]. The drawing collab that Dani and I did together [top-middle] is referenced from a sexting session nude repurposed for this book [top-right]. As such, my labor seeks to appreciate Dani as they are, and as someone I appreciate who has serviced me in the past. It is this pointed combination of person, body and labor that I wish to honor through Dani by highlighting them as they are: big, beautiful and gender-non-conforming during holistic liberation from Cartesian shackles, connecting their body to paganized groups that would celebrate their fatness as something to preserve, not alienate, fetishize and harvest it for profit.)

Women, GNC persons, and racial/religious minorities make up the unified front of Gothic Communism. As such, they must gossip together using constructive anger and campy monsters; i.e., steering the public imagination away from

Capitalist Realism and its manufactured scarcities, conflict and consent (and other trifectas), as well as patriarchal institutions of war perpetuated inside Cartesian models of domination. This rerouting happens in theatrical forms that "lead the charge" with Gothic poetics into a brave new world; e.g., the various Amazons examined in Volume Zero (exhibits 1a1b and 1a1a3) and Amazon warrior moms in Volume One (exhibit 8b2), as well as nature-themed auteurs like O'Keefe, Landau and others (exhibits 24c1, c2, and d1) making these creations, of which many more types will also be explored in Volumes Two and Three: magic girls/military tomboys (e.g., *Sailor Moon*, 1991, exhibit 56b; and *Revolutionary Girl Utena*, 1999, exhibit 55b) and kittens-with-claws (exhibit 91a1; also, below). Variable cosmetics aside, all share a common goal: to encourage the active absorption and embodiment of iconoclastic attitudes during praxial synthesis/*de facto* education reclaiming workers' connections to themselves and the natural world as collectively brutalized by Capitalism for centuries. The only way to prevent this is face one's trauma by fighting back through repurposed instruments thereof:



(artist: [Zillabean](#))

Mid-fight, such a social-sexual "osmosis" should encourage enhanced self-reflection regarding the imaginary past as currently existing in the present: row after row of monsters to study and communicate with in canonical and iconoclastic forms. We have so much to teach about and teach with—oral traditions¹⁶⁶ and Gothic "oldwives' tales," but also the Humanities and sex work more broadly (and yes, even the STEM fields, though I think they're hella

¹⁶⁶ The ancient rhetors were fabled to have legendary memories; e.g., Plato in *Phaedrus* (c. 347-399 BC) citing technology as the death of *oral* memory through *written* communication: "In fact, it will introduce forgetfulness into the soul of those who learn it: they will not practice using their memory because they will put their trust in writing" ([source](#): "Socrates on the Forgetfulness that Comes with Writing," 2023). Oral traditions matter because they contain what is often unwritten (concerning culture and trauma) while also being harder to police by state forces (word of mouth); but Plato's argument remains antiquated: Writing is not something that should be discounted, for it is where the battle for middle-class hearts are minds are fought when giving monsters shape in the material world.

sexist; but that's not the majority of women's fault nor queer people or other minorities).

Cis-het/token cis-queer men—and especially white men—on the other hand, have so much to learn about a great many things! To be fair, class warriors and allies can learn from each other while cultivating new habits, but the fact remains: the vast majority of domestic murders, rapes, and murder-suicides—as stated during the thesis volume—are committed overwhelmingly by white cis-het men against oppressed groups (which under the heteronormative model are predominantly white cis-het women as *visible* victims). Men, simply put, can be allies to Gothic Communism *if they want*, but do not need to join in order to experience systemic privilege as they already do. However, if they actually *want* to be chosen by liberated sex workers in control of their own bodies and sexual labor—to get laid, in other words, but also enjoy the perks of friendship and comradeship, mid-struggle—men (and other Man Box proponents) gotta start relying on things other than what the system offers. They have to learn from unusual, unused, and forgotten sources—from women or beings perceived as women, but also from sex workers and their unique ties to labor/nature (their bodies, their genders and sexualities, etc) and the Wisdom of the Ancients, which men under Capitalism/Cartesian dualism historically-materially tend to lack/police in stupid, harmful ways.

Working against the state and its proponents, revolutionary workers must achieve praxial synthesis in their own social-sex lives, their own creative spheres; they must engage with the trauma of war as something to face and perform, interrogating power in highly liminal thus playful ways. As such, women, queer people and other minorities must embody proletarian praxis *holistically*—if not a universal appeal by default, then a universal adaptability (re: Zizek) expressed in modular parts that appeal collectively to different educational and cultural backgrounds, but also what numerous peoples can collectively understand: an end to worker exploitation through commonly consumed theatrics/Gothic poetics. Uncompelled solidarity is the point, allowing emotionally/Gothically intelligent workers to "get together" in revolutionary and peaceful (non-warlike) terms across generations, but who will "go to war" if needed in defense of the oppressed—e.g., my great grandmother wanting all her children to be educated; my grandmother going to college to find a husband (and get a degree); my mom going to college; all of them encouraging me to write, create and be myself; and me writing *Sex Positivity* to culminate all of that in a Gothic-Communist capstone inspired by older generations of artists with a progressive bent. It's not just a start, but one of many in the legion of "uppity" women and queer folk who came before, but also our cis-het male allies who gave us room to speak!

For example, Ridley Scott is someone we have discussed (and will continue to discuss) repeatedly throughout the book. His feminist, 20th/21st century Gothic was inspired by his mother as an exceptional authority figure in his life:



Scott attributes his no-nonsense temperament to his mother, Elizabeth, who shouldered much of the parenting for Scott and his two brothers while their father, an army engineer, worked. During

World War II, it was Elizabeth who shuffled the boys to shelter under a steel table in the kitchen as bombs rained down on their home in Northeast England during the Newcastle Blitz. Her parenting style was to say, "Get out in the fields, come back at 5, and do not fall in the sea," Scott says. "She was hard-core. She should have been in business. I could see it, as the three boys got older and there was less for her to do, she became frustrated."

Scott's mother's character is also to thank, he says, for one of the signatures of his career, an extraordinary number of dynamic and groundbreaking female roles, starting with Sigourney Weaver's Ripley in *Alien* in 1979, and also including Geena Davis and Susan Sarandon in *Thelma & Louise* in 1991 and, this year, Gaga in *House of Gucci* and Comer in *The Last Duel*. "Thelma & Louise had a massive impact on me when I was younger," Gaga says. "Linking all of his films together, it's clear that Ridley cares about the life of the woman. What he really devours as a filmmaker is this idea that we [women] are complicated and complex figures" ([source](#): Ryan Pfluger's "What Ridley Scott Has Learned: 'We Don't Know S***,'" 2022).

In turn, girl talk and its pacifist social cues and monstrous/campy body language historically come from genderqueer women (and gay, effeminate men; e.g., Walpole and Lewis) as teachers of men (and themselves) through the Gothic mode. Simply put, "girls talk" is a descriptive statement of *potential* rebellion when leveled against the state and its patriarchal war machines, propaganda included. Moreover, workers learn how to behave *politely* from their mothers, girlfriends, sisters, and aunts' instruction when processing trauma; from Jane Austen, Ann Radcliffe, or Mary Shelley, etc (though none of these women are far from perfect and can be expanded upon, as we have shown).

Obviously, there are exceptions. Plenty of abusive/tokenized women exist. But likewise, these are informed by trauma as a transgenerational curse that we commonly inherit from the past. Gold-diggers, cheaters, black widows, religious zealots, TERFs, etc—all extend from the state as universally abusive towards women and children, but also boys (as well as women and minorities) taught how to act "like men"; i.e., Man Box/the "prison sex" mentality as an invitation to rape and abuse through heteronormative models.



(artist: Vasily Polenov)

Before we segue into rape culture as a taught mechanism that can be challenged by the synthesis of sex-positive educational devices (e.g., rape play) from good-faith actors, I'd like to quickly examine (for a page) the double standard present within state education that sex-positive instruction must

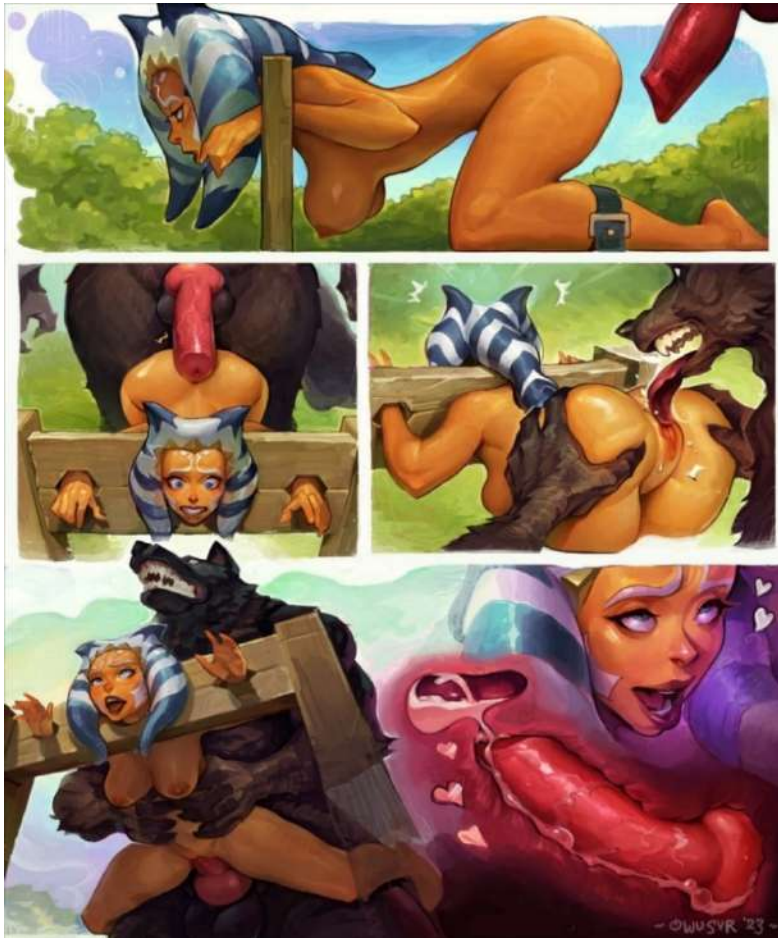
challenge: the image of women as naturally weak and providing but also brides to give away and breed like dogs. To this, state abuse fosters the treacherous myth that "all women" are "natural caregivers," while animalizing them in ways detrimental to all parties involved. Except girls don't just fart, burp, spit and shit like the boys do; they cheat, lie and harm others—e.g., working people to death, then lying about it (exhibit 26, Erica vs Uncle Dave). Because of the double standard, though, they generally enjoy less systemic privilege that working-class men have had for centuries; e.g., the euthanasia effect, wherein so-called "bitches" are collared or "put down" far sooner than male agents. To that, TERFs and the LGBA are a more recent¹⁶⁷ example of tokenism, emerging in the late 2010s to shift the state of the exception—the Medusa as an ancient *female* punching bag—less onto *some* cis women and more onto GNC groups; e.g., the xenomorph as a second-wave feminist symbol of trans misogyny (which we'll examine more in Volume Two).

Just as cheating can be meaningless and shallow or incredibly intense, so can healthy relationships (which can be negotiated to operate along any of these wavelengths). All extend from Capitalism encouraging heteronormative behaviors through canonical praxis: expected gender behaviors that funnel workers into war-

¹⁶⁷ Tokenism has lain with the state for the entirety of its existence, but reshapes according to state dogma as something that transforms itself to disguise (or valorize) the profit motive; e.g., recruiting from queer bodies to police themselves and other groups.

time mentalities. Conversely, proletarian praxis is *antiwar* during class and culture war as teaching opportunities that seek to antiquate war by hammering swords into ploughshares. This requires open communication that comes from honesty, trust, and negotiated boundaries developed independently of the state/vertical power as something to develop away from through praxial synthesis. Development extends towards all peoples, without double standards or token minorities beholden to patriarchal forces; e.g., soldiers, [or even female astronauts playing second fiddle](#) (Dreading's "The Ridiculous Case of Lisa Nowak," 2023). This pedagogy of the oppressed includes men listening to women instead of speaking for them/down to them about abuses women experience or see themselves that men usually do not; i.e., "I never saw anything like that. Therefore you must have been imagining things!"

Whether through neglect, ignorance, or scorn, second-hand abuse is still abuse. Whether from workers, management or the elite, first-hand abusers rely on community abuse to continue their acts of unchecked, predatory cruelty at a systemic level; i.e., second-hand abusers normalize first-hand abusers, creating Gothic trauma markers that condition Pavlovian harm between them. Simply put, war normalizes *menticide*—a rape of the natural and material worlds by canonical praxis as a form of prescribed power abuse. And where there is war among and



towards the chattelized and alien, there will likewise be rape of them, too. Both go hand-in-hand while Capitalism divorces us from nature.

Now that we've examined war through the synthesis of iconoclastic art that fosters emotional/Gothic intelligence and class/cultural awareness in the face of canonical media, let's examine the other side of that terrible coin—rape culture—and try to subvert it through the basics of oppositional synthesis relayed through trauma writing and art.

(artist: [Owusyr](#))

Nature Is Food, part three: A Deeper Look at Cartesian Trauma in Rape Culture (feat. phallic women/traumatic penetration and sports abuse)

[Francis Bacon, the father of modern science,] argued that "science should as it were torture nature's secrets out of her." Further, the "empire of man" should penetrate and dominate the "womb of nature." [...] The invention of Nature and Society was gendered at every turn. The binaries of Man and Woman, Nature and Society, drank from the same cup. Nature, and its boundary with Society, was "gyn/ecological" from the outset ([source](#)).

—Raj Patel and Jason Moore, *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things*

War and rape go hand in hand. Now that we've examined (but not exhausted) the Cartesian trauma of war culture as something to subvert when synthesizing praxis, the roadmap's next two sections considers how rape culture can be interrogated and synthesized in our own creative responses to canonical forms; i.e., how to recognize said canon (and its Man Box mentalities) in part three, and express our trauma in relation to it through successful praxis, during the finale. Systemic catharsis requires praxis as conveyed through our extracurricular instruction's cultivation of good social-sexual habits; i.e., *de facto* educators relaying a pedagogy of the oppressed through trauma writing and artwork that speak to living with rape under warlike conditions, raising the collective, solidarized awareness and intelligence required towards preventing future abuse (ultimately dismantling the state). Except Capitalism is Cartesian, targeting anything with the power to creatively liberate itself through psychosexual theatre. To serve the elite, canonical forms of demon BDSM frame nature as monstrous-feminine food tied to the profit motive, which rapes and disempowers workers and nature by fetishizing their regal, empowering monstrous-feminine aspects; e.g., Medusa's rage or Satan's ability to shapeshift; i.e., through physical and mental violence of a highly divisive and terrifying sort. Nature is a fat, sassy bitch, which Capitalism thus



divides (and cuts) into fetishized pieces of alien material before rendering it fatally into profit, chaining the bodies to an endless *Cartesian* Gothic brutality. Alienate, fetishize, dissect and feed. Genocide by design.

([source](#): "Vulvine Reine d'Extase" by Gobelins, 2022)

Part three considers Cartesian violence inside the Gothic mode; i.e., in relation to phallic women and their traumatic penetration but also male violence in sports; the finale

examines the knife dick as something to reshape, disarmed through racialized porn tropes fetishizing dark/fat bodies (and body parts): as things to liberate through themselves using ludo-Gothic BDSM, whose ironic, Satanic-rebel variants of psychosexual violence are prohibited during canonical fetishization under Cartesian models of domination (through the state's trifactas and monopolies).

Rape is a serious and complicated topic, and we won't have time to unpack all the theoretical aspects to ludo-Gothic BDSM, here (refer to my thesis volume for the entirety of them), nor all the various forms of alienation that habitually occur under Cartesian violence. Instead, we'll combine concepts we have already touched upon, juggling them holistically to arrange around us and connect like a constellation, while also promoting various poetic scenarios the rest of the book will explore deeper than this symposium has thus far (or its remaining fifty pages). For now, just remember that Cartesian dualism (and its subsequent rape) historically-materially reduce workers and nature to three main xenophobic (or harmfully xenophilic) classes of alien—and by extension criminal/slave status—as something that is born into, then fetishized and raped because of it; i.e., inside prison-like



structures that, through the state of exception, perpetuate crime-and-punishment inside an established order of cops and victims: undead, demonic, and totemic¹⁶⁸ (which Volume Two will explore at length).

(artist: [Legion](#))

Moving forward, part three exhibits nature and human bodies as irreversibly transformed into Man Box enforcers (female, then male) and pitted against criminal, monstrous-feminine fetishes; i.e., during rape less as a single event and more as an ongoing structure by Cartesian forces (who go on to rape these groups again and again during reactive abuse driving them to madness, but also portraying them as hideous, violent and inhuman). Then, the finale explores the resulting trauma and monstrous-feminine language synthesized through rebellious counterterrorist bodies, liberating themselves by pointedly reversing the Patriarchy's bedrock notion of "counterterror and terror" in favor of workers, not the state (and its knife dicks); i.e., beings from the stars, the beyond or Hell whose devilish *gnosis* offers a

¹⁶⁸ Zombies are shot, demons banished, and totems hunted, trapped, and killed/tamed inside the state of exception; i.e., skinned in ways whose trauma is worn on the outside by people who may or may not be acting in good faith (more on this in Volume Two).

delicious, forbidden gateway for future liberation, not a death warrant. Before part three continues, I want to spend the next four pages discussing various important ideas concerning rape in connection to ludo-Gothic BDSM; i.e., as a playful, potent means of reclaiming nature through Gothic poetics' shared sphere: camp, intent, function, double standards, and assimilation.

First, camp. In our thesis, we discussed rape as synonymous with war under capital but also something to place in quotes when camping canon. Just because something is camped doesn't mean an unironic harm *can't* be found; it merely means that unironic violence is challenged as a dogmatic tool through ironic/appreciative forms of fetishized Gothic peril—our ever-important (from a cathartic standpoint) rape fantasies, guilty pleasures and wish fulfillment during ludo-Gothic BDSM.

Rape is both invisible and ubiquitous under Capitalism. This paradoxical arrangement has just as much to do with the arm of the state as the public imagination, though the two generally go arm-in-arm during military urbanism. According to the Marshall Project's "Overlooking Rape: New Orleans Is Not the Only City Where Police Don't Get It" (2014):

The undercounting of rape is becoming more common, according to [Dr. Corey Rayburn] Yung. Between 1995 and 2012, he found a 61 percent increase in the number of cities providing the FBI with rape statistics that seemed suspiciously low according to his methodology ([source](#)).

Power, as we have discussed up to this point, is something to tally and perceive, but also perform during expected roles enforced by state powers and obedience towards said powers: to do one's duty no matter how painful or ignominious.



(artist: [Grand-Sage](#))

Cartesian thought is predicated on harmful invention: Nature and Society *vis-à-vis* Bacon, but also the invention of terrorism through the Neo-Gothic *vis-à-vis* Joseph Crawford: the invention of us-versus-them to magically summon things "from beyond" like a Radcliffean nightmare, then execute or banish again with xenophobic impunity inside and outside a given police state. It canonizes power as something to perceive through nature not just as food, but *criminal*, alien food that must be kept down through force. Capitalism, then, automates war

and rape as a canonical, *police* means of fetishizing¹⁶⁹ and harvesting nature-as-alien (thus dark) until both are all workers know and anything else is unimaginable. While both synergize under Capitalist Realism, the latter often targets the mind through menticide as a torturer/tortured dynamic predicated on isolation. Neoliberal Capitalism does something similar decades after Meerloo, breaking the minds of all workers (not just men) in sexually dimorphic, deliberately isolating ways: a Capitalist-Realist myopia that cripples their ability to see, think, create, or relate to, thus form relationships with, other workers and nature as brutalized.

Second, intent. Contrary to popular thought, rape isn't just sexual or even physical abuse, but emotional and mental abuse conducted through nebulous threats of violence over long periods of time; it is synonymous with violence in all its forms, regardless of intent. Jadis, for example, would threaten me with abandonment, which served as a reliable trigger for them to manipulate me with: I couldn't tell if they meant to, only deepening and extending their torture of me. Mavis actually feared behavioral conditioning far more than physical rape; physical violence demands work and effort from the rapist, whereas propaganda does much of the work for you inside the victim's own mind. Exposed to threats of violence through "waves of terror" and brief pauses thereof, victims of menticide become *subconsciously* compliant towards rape culture as conspicuously gendered; e.g., women broken by Pavlovian conditioning often lash out at perceived threats offered



up by conservative leaders during moral panics; i.e., triangulation, a common TERF tactic when manipulating members within their own social circles. And before you ask, "What about their intentions?" consider that rape is rape regardless of intent; moreover, intent can be ascertained by what historically-materially persists through structures that lead to, and generally apologize for or obsess about, rape through the ghost of the counterfeit's process of abjection.



(*exhibit 29: Top: In vino veritas, "In wine, there is truth." Cersei getting plastered to prepare for the worst [as even under sex-positive scenarios, alcohol can loosen one's body cavities]; in this case, the "hair of the dog that bit her" is also rape: She's speaking from experience. Bottom, artist: Edward Munch, feeling alienated from the world, utters a terrific [and silent] scream.*)

¹⁶⁹ "Fetishizing" as in, "to reduce to alien, psychosexual objects of darkness, power and force."

Third, and in other words, function. Express, conscious intent doesn't matter if the historical-material outcome demonstrably contributes to, thus functions as, successful canonical praxis and abuse encouragement patterns. James Cameron, regardless if he "meant to" or not, still "pulled a Pygmalion"; i.e., making a giant, Communist, T-Rex "dragon lady" with an African tribal mask for "Girl Rambo" to catfight with. Offstage, rapes happen regardless if someone "intended" to, or if they lied or hid their intentions behind bad-faith performances before, during or after the crime, defending their abusive actions to whatever court they find themselves in (we'll pointedly refer to this with Ian Kochinski's own slimy tactics, in Volume Three, Chapter Four¹⁷⁰). Rapes, however, not only leave behind scant physical evidence; they affect the testimony of those who survive who are reminded of them in stories that first-and-foremost aim to profit off the *perception* of rape under criminogenic conditions; i.e., heteronormative Gothic fiction.

In other words, canonical praxis turns workers (classically men) into stupid rapists who "accidentally" or intentionally rape their victims, then try to cover it up—often in Gothic forms; it turns men (or tokenized workers within Man Box culture) not just into soldiers, but mind-raped killers-for-hire who rape themselves and their fellow workers in perpetuity across all registers. Rape culture compels widespread, self-destructive service through threats of vague annihilation at all moments; it leaves behind no bruises, but the scars run deep and permeate all aspects of public life, but *especially* Gothic media as a voice for things normally shirked away from in politer dialogs.

One such inheritance anxiety is how the state is always in crisis and crisis leads to decay as something to normalize in canonical Gothic media. Ultimately this will fragment the state when Imperialism comes home to roost, but the brunt of the burden is historically borne out by workers abused by the ruling class. For instance, the Nazis' industrialized Holocaust offered their nation-state no material benefit; in fact, it actually used up tremendous amounts of valuable resources, bureaucracy and sheer labor that could have been diverted elsewhere during the war effort. Instead, [top Schutzstaffel \[the SS\] like Heinrich Himmler, Reinhardt Heydrich, and Ernst Kaltenbrunner](#) (The People Profiles, 2023) kept up appearances purely for profit so efficient it contributed to the Nazi state's *entire* destruction. Long after the Nazis came and went, though, rape culture is very much alive and well in America—a constant, living force felt through Gothic language, but also reactionary politics that abuse the Gothic's liminal potential to cultivate bad education. Enslavement is taught, and generally relates to trauma as something to express, surviving inside people and the media that survives them to inform future

¹⁷⁰ Said chapter considers years of abuse by Kochinski, which I shall list when the time comes. However, said evidence more recently has been confirmed through Kochinski [accidentally revealing to the world his private lolicon \(and horse\) porn collection](#) (Bad Empanada Live's "Vaush is a P*dophile (CONFIRMED)," 2024).

generations. In short, there is no clock on trauma; it heals when it heals and until then, you simply have to live with it; i.e., synthesize through your own daily habits.

Fourth, double standards, which heteronormativity leads to. Female servitude under Capitalism is different to male servitude, the latter of which tends to receive preferential mistreatment as the universal clientele. Both are raped under Capitalism, but differently through Man Box culture. Women (or beings forced to act and appear as women) are raped through figurative and literal labor theft and wage slavery—sold to male clients like useful animals or chattel slaves, but also as highly cultivated products that "beastly" men are likewise conditioned to rape, kill, or otherwise eat like gruel: Stepford spouses, "as calm as Hindu cows," their minds and their eyes dead inside. Intersectionality extends this relationship to overlapping axes of oppression within the same basic pedagogy (and its complicated traumas) as perpetually contested under state mechanisms; e.g., people of color or GNC



persons as corrupt, monstrous-feminine and correct-incorrect. An oppressed pedagogy will account for these complexities, synthesizing them in practical ways, including parody and irony as an unfolding, ambiguous proposition (e.g., *Fight Club* [1999], left); a state pedagogy (and its own means of instruction) will not.

Fifth, assimilation. Conformity to state education is generally unhealthy to workers, including the perceived benefactors. For example, Man Box culture conditions cis-het men to physically and materially prepare their bodies and minds for war and "home defense," only to die on the front lines historically far away from women (save as voices, media, prostitutes, or medics). In turn, both sides of the gender binary invoke settler colonialism, thus sex within war and violence. Settler colonialism trains men (or token agents) to torture those around them through a "prison sex" mentality that bleeds into media as instructional towards state aims. Unable to stop because it's the only way they can feel "like a man," such persons regain their manly essence by taking it from others through traumatic penetration; they become killer babies—both violent, impulsively vampiric creatures-of-habit, and trophy-keeping serial killers (soldiers and cops, but also weird canonical nerds debating Nazis within nerd culture, etc) working for and trained by the state to rape others: manufactured competition inside us-versus-them, good-vs-evil teams

instead of collective teamwork and intersectional worker solidarity. The consequence is internalized fear and dogma that keep workers violent and stupid, but also divided and afraid of nature; a raped mind is an isolated, dead mind.

Emotional/Gothic intelligence and class/cultural awareness aren't just social skills and know-how, but perseverance and resilience under struggle; it's not something privileged groups—especially white, cis-het men—experience to the same degree, leading them when feeling the slightest bit threatened to automatically jump to conspiracies like the shadow state, Qanon and the Jewish globalists, and white replacement. It makes them highly susceptible to bullshit, thus easy to manipulate by unscrupulous ringleaders. They start to feel threatened by everything to a higher and higher degree, demanding real victims to alleviate their own terror at absurd, imaginary "threats." Little by little, their home becomes a fortress, which they will defend from outsiders invading from a perceived elsewhere (again Hell, but also the stars, the unknown, the wild, etc).



(artist: [Niki Chen](#))

This insecurity also regards property (things of nature) as potentially "compromised"; i.e., something for men to collect and obsess about, but also feed on/objectify in tremendously harmful ways for all parties (and natures) involved; e.g., necrophilia, pedophilia and zoophilia, etc (the removal of consent within canonical Gothic poetics). Women inside the colonial binary (which excludes anyone who doesn't conform, turning them into *hostile* alien fetishes—the Medusa) are canonically valued by sexist men as "porn food" that, when fattened up or starved (usually a combination, left), helps "grown-ass, manly specimens with manly appetites" indulge in "grownup junk food." This not only cheapens women, but nature through porn, reducing both to a cheap, disposable, sinful product that men "give into" when they're "weak"; i.e., when their judgement "lapses" and they taste of the forbidden fruit "outside" of Cartesian society. But men conditioned through the state still prefer these conspicuously monetized "snacks" versus disobedient "ladies (3D or otherwise) who don't know their place," and other non-female embodiments of natural as "wild." It's easier for men to cope with their own exploitation and trauma if they have control over something they can simply eat. This double standard usually presents as isolated, downplayed or displaced, but in reality stems from Capitalism having relied on men to do its dirty work since day one and is now trying quite badly to make up for the paradigm shift: women not wanting to sleep with every man they come across.

Through assimilation, female autonomy becomes something to appropriate under Capitalist Realism—specifically *appropriative peril*, whose expanded recruitment leads to canonical "TERF gargoyles"; i.e., girl/war/queer bosses; e.g., female drill instructors, lady Rambos and Amazons—all figurative and literal "sleeper agents" who respond stochastically to trauma as phallic women do: through traumatic penetration's knives and bullets, but also a Cartesian willingness to turn these against other so-called "emergent beings."

With that, let's take one more page to outline the criminogenic conditions that sanction Cartesian violence to begin with; i.e., the paradoxes of violence, terror and morphological expression. As we do, remember two things: One, both they and their linguo-material forms exist in dialectical-material opposition, doubling inside chaotic liminal territories and positions occupied by class traitors (cops) and warriors alike using opposing forms of cryptonymy. Two, once established by state forces, the illusory maintenance of state righteousness, sovereignty and legitimacy must never be challenged lest "the world end"; i.e., Capitalist Realism. On one side, the state preys on nature and human bodies as raped by Cartesian forces, the latter feeding on the former by transforming them into walking apocalypses: zombies, demons, and totems as hyperbolically menacing. On the other side, state victims endure police brutality's *embodiment* of presumed, conspicuous guilt (the dark exterior) and internalizing of self-hatred and bigotry while subverting police misuse of Gothic poetics through a pedagogy of the oppressed: counterterror with a proletarian function.

I've repeatedly said that function determines function. Another way to conceptualize this is flow determines function. That is, during oppositional praxis' dialectical-material struggles, terror and counterterror become anisotropic; i.e., determined by *direction* of flow insofar as power is concerned. Settler colonialism, then, flows power *towards* the state to benefit the elite and harm workers; it weaponizes Gothic poetics to maintain the historical-material standard—to keep the elite "on top" by dehumanizing the colonized, alienating and delegitimizing their own violence, terror and monstrous bodily expression as criminal within Cartesian copaganda: treating terrorism and counterterrorism as a Cops-and-Robbers lullaby to soothe white army brats (and other children during military urbanism) having become afraid of nature as one might be the dark: "My mommy said there were no monsters, no real one. But there are, aren't there? Why do mommies tell little kids that?" / "Because most of the time it's true." Ripley and Newt's conversation speaks to the abjection of nature as dark, rapacious and wild by colonial forces—the Medusa concentrated into an inhuman-yet-maternal dominatrix (the dark "mommy dom") whose vivid, liberating combination of undead, demonic, and animalistic¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ Again, such categories of alienation generally overlap under Cartesian domination, while also making room for curious hybrids and subclasses. This includes the occult demon, but also composite bodies (cyborgs) and chimera animals produced with the undead, demonic and totemic modules (which Volume Two will unpack at length).

will be criminalized and attacked by class traitors adopting more civil, outwardly "white" forms of medieval violence like Ripley (and similar Amazons, below) teaching "Newt" to fear the dark by raping it; i.e., subjugated phallic women castrating a female master rebel, once she visibly tries—through a dissident question of mastery—to reverse the status-quo binary (and flow) of terrorism and counterterrorism by showing her trauma, anger and willingness to fight back against a presumed overlord.

In doing so, a Galatea threatens the canonical, Pygmalion decree of what's appropriate, insofar as the giving and receiving of xenophobic violence unfold inside a compelled moral order—one whose fear and dogma (during endless crisis, decay and moral panic) establishes the police and the state as good, thus legitimate, and those aliens inside the state of exception as bad, thus illegitimate. Per Radcliffe, the invention is one of state forces accusing *others* of banditry in bad faith; i.e., while functioning as *banditti* themselves, robbing others blind behind the ghost of the counterfeit's process of abjection to deliberately further genocide (re: "Who's the savage? Modern man!"). Cops are always good, human, safe and nature is always alien, criminal, dangerous. Anything that breaks the spell must be discredited, destroyed and/or exiled, scapegoating it all the more.

Within the reactive abuse of settler-colonial models, rebel villainy and outrage is manmade to receive state violence during moral panics: orchestrated by Cartesian hubris through arrogant, fame-seeking men like Victor Frankenstein (more on him in Volume Two) but also female protectors classically enslaved¹⁷²



during *Amazonomachia* to serve men (often through marriage) and kettle state enemies with a smile on their face. First, we'll look at how through subjugated Amazons and other tokenized female agents' traumatic penetration/carceral violence against state victims; after that we'll look at violence against men in the sports world, then segue into the finale, which inspects racialized and GNC forms of pornographic expression before concluding the symposium (and volume) with a matriarchal anecdote.

(artist: [Morry Evans](#))

¹⁷² Slavery, then, goes both ways—of the underclass, but also the middle class enslaved to, and disguised as "service" towards, God/the state; i.e., an endless paranoid duty chasing ghosts, dragons and other state inventions for the Greater Good until death and/or your assigned foil claims you; e.g., Inspector Javert chasing Jan Valjean in *Les Misérables* (1862) but also in more alien, thus Gothic forms of police/criminal behavior—Van Helsing vs Dracula, Beowulf vs Gendel, or Ripley vs the xenomorph (exhibit 30a), etc.

Already-codified under Max Box culture, state abuse strategies become something to assimilate, internalize and release back into the world using canonical Gothic poetics' fixation on phallic violence; e.g., knights, Amazons and their dick-shaped weapons as sexualized killing implements swept up in hauntological courtship. The unnatural coercion of the women involved becomes naturalized, normal; reacting to trauma, cis-het or cis-queer women (and male feminists and gay men) either bow to its markers through damsel-style regression; or they assimilate them, the Amazon angrily "dick-measuring" with Medusa in the canonical, bourgeois sense to their own and everyone else's detriment: sheathing her sword inside her foe. They triangulate and attack the state's enemies through phallic means: stabbing and shooting other marginalized groups. In other words, the "prison sex" phenomenon co-opts classic female/queer rage as false activism; i.e., a divide-and-conquer strategy to pit workers against workers through workers. The marginalized in-fighting is specifically performed by reactionary women, whose past trauma is weaponized—a Pavlovian conditioning that promises further abuse unless they act against state enemies to restore balance *now*.

As such, these TERFs reliably respond to moral panics in ways the state requires: through "prison sex" dominance hierarchies and rape culture coopted by second wave feminists against sex workers, but also trans, intersex, and non-binary people (and their allies) belonging to nature-as-food. All become something to harvest by Cartesian means—through rape and torture (as Francis Bacon would put it) by presenting Mother Nature (and her various offshoots) as "asking for it." The monstrous-feminine becomes dark, queer and violent, but also composed of two unfair halves; i.e., a being of two worlds, both to blame for all of Capitalism's woes and tied to the granting of savage secret desires and dark, repressed wishes Capitalism advertises in cliché forms: the bringer of fresh life amid intense,



orgasmic torture, power, decay and death. A rival master to Cartesian dominators, the monstrous-feminine (often the Archaic Mother/rebellious phallic woman, among other such "corruptions" of nature) is both the obscene penetrator that drains you of your lifeforce, and the necrotic womb that takes you in before vampirically eating you alive: absorption, or a reverse birth.

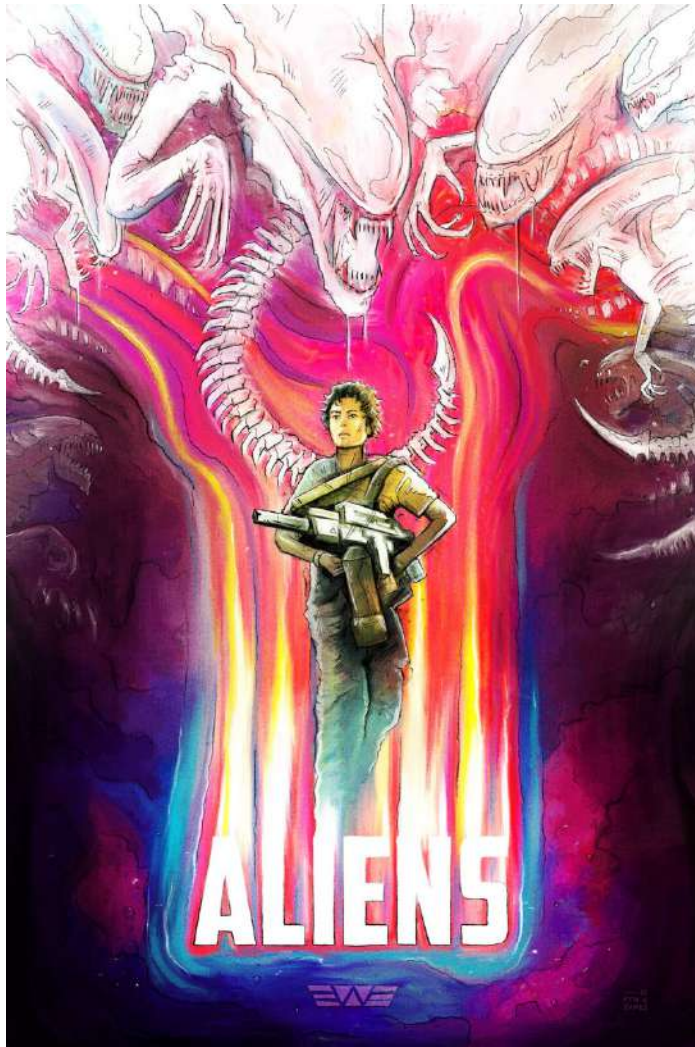
(artist: [John Tedrick](#))

We've already examined *Amazonomachia* and the triangulation of women considerably in Volume Zero, and we'll unpack its "prison sex" moderacy and TERFs (and *their* Amazons and Medusas) much more in Volume Three. In the

meantime, keep this in mind this as part three proceeds: women who assimilate tend to emulate cis-het men's typical Cartesian actions against nature. By extension, this books' pedagogy of the oppressed isn't really *on* cis-het men, because cis-het men generally aren't oppressed *compared* to women and various minorities. That being said, this section *will* examine men briefly as givers and receivers of phallic state violence; e.g., by injecting their bodies full of dangerous chemicals (exhibit 30b1) or placing heroes within sacrificial positions of Gothic danger (exhibit 30b2) that demonize the imaginary past as vengeful against the current generation, not the elite; or turning them into serial killers who not only kill women, but transform them into phallic implements of Cartesian binaries, hence psychosexual violence (exhibit 31): brides of Dracula. Said men (and the women imitating them to whatever degree they're allowed within the Imperial Core) need to stop using said violence to fetishize and attack those workers alienated, then preyed on, by the state: us-versus them porn (exhibits 32a, b, c, and d).

Of course, there are moments throughout the remainder of *Sex Positivity* that delve into patriarchy on different registers of power—e.g., weird canonical nerds in Volume Three, Chapter Three—but the emphasis still remains on sex positivity for *all* workers, who the state (and its proponents) rape. This goes well beyond cis-het men or women. Even so, assimilation fantasies (and their rapacious elements) require subversion and irony if they are to become cathartic during proletarian praxis and its creative successes' *de facto* instruction; i.e., when processing state abuses and generational trauma through our own labor (and its myriad expressions/arrangements). These are very much discussed for the rest of the roadmap, but also in Volume Two and Three; i.e., their misapplication by TERFs and their battered, canonical girl bosses; e.g., Ellen Ripley (exhibit 30a) and Samus Aran, her palimpsest (exhibit 71). As someone who grew up in love with these space cowgirls, I absolutely can recognize their liminal, oft-canonical background as something to challenge within oppositional praxis. We'll explore that now, before returning to rape as tied to Gothic symbols of phallic violence when committed by men, but also women and other tokenized, Man Box proponents: the knife dick¹⁷³ as something to brandish at what the state has divided you (us) from and made alien (them) compared to yourself.

¹⁷³ And bullets/variants of either kind tied to state force, but especially carceral or lethal force; i.e., capital punishment for challenging the state's patriarchal monopoly on violence, terror and hellish morphological expression. Again, zombies, demons and totems are destroyed to serve a Cartesian profit motive during the ghost of the counterfeit's process of abjection.



(artist: [Kyle James](#))

To this, state hegemony threatens and executes invasion in the same complicated sphere. Per Cameron's refrain, the imperial castle becomes a black fortress, an indiscriminate killing ground with one grim message: "kill the enemy." Except, its broadcast travels inside a place where the distinction between friend and foe is eliminated. The colony doubles as a concentration camp for both sides, but also a territory to conquer over and over. Inside its state of exception, civil distinctions become meaningless; everyone is a threat (the xenomorph a potential invader hiding inside state employees) and the state can do anything to defend itself, to *profit*. Hostages, soldiers, and terrorists alike not only become confused, but collateral damage serving the profit motive. Cops, the

prescribed hero class, transform; they become demons, pirates, and black knights—rabid-dog torturers, jailors and assassins who threaten everyone except the elite, far, far away.

This harrowing reality plays out in videogames under neoliberal hegemony, but also the movies that inspired them coming out of older, pre-cinematic works. In either case, us-versus-them owes itself to Cartesian thought pitting state violence—i.e., the traumatic, dick-like penetration of knives and bullets—against guerrilla forces wielding abject variants of the same ordinance inside prison-like conditions. Historically this would have been stolen American materiel, but in many shooters is symbolized as biomechanical/cybernetic during a prison break. This chimeric fusing of nature and the unnatural creates something utterly fearsome that America cannot defeat without "outside" help: the ancient male mercenary (the knight) hauntologically revived, but also the *Amazon* updated through neoliberalism as a war-themed girl boss "from another world." As my thesis argues,

Under Capitalist Realism, Hell is a place that always appears on Earth (or an Earth-like double)—a black fortress threatening state hegemony during the inevitable decay of a colonial body. Its widening state of exception must then be entered by the hero during the liminal hauntology of war as a repeatable, monomythic excursion—a *franchise* to subdue during military optimism sold as a childhood exercise towards "playing war" in fantastical forms; e.g., *Castlevania* or *Metroid*. Conjure a Radcliffean menace inside the Imperial Core, then meet it with American force.

Threatened, the state always responds with violence before anything else. Male or female, then, the hero becomes the elite's exterminator, destroyer and retrieval expert, infiltrating a territory of crisis to retrieve the state's property (weapons, princesses, monarchic symbols of power, etc) while simultaneously chattelizing nature in reliably medieval ways: alienating and fetishizing its "wild" variants, crushing them like vermin to maintain Cartesian supremacy and heteronormative familial structures [...]. Neoliberalism merely commercializes the monomyth, using parental heroic videogame avatars like the knight or Amazon pitted against dark, evil-familial doubles—parents, siblings and castles (and other residents/residences)—in order to dogmatize the player (usually children) as a cop-like vehicle for state aims (often dressed up as a dated iteration thereof; e.g., an assassin, cowboy or bounty hunter, but also a lyncher, executioner, dragon slayer or witchfinder general "on the hunt," etc): preserving settler-colonial dominance through Capitalist Realism by abusing Gothic language—the grim reaper and his harvest. Doing so helps disguise, or at least romanticize (thus downplay, normalize and dismiss) state abuses through their regular trifectas and monopolies; i.e., the CIA and other shadowy arms of state mercenary violence fronted by myopic copies—pacifying the wider public by mendaciously framing these doubles as (often seductive) "empowerment" fantasies. Dogma becomes "home entertainment" as a palliative means of weaponizing the *idea* of "home" against those the state seeks to control and exploit *on either side of a settler-colonial engagement*: the cop or the cop's victims. Either is sacrificed for the state through its usual operations; i.e., for the Greater Good, except heroes are glorified as monstrous sacrifices serving "the gods" (the status quo) out of Antiquity into capital, whereas their victims are demonized as evil, thus deserving of whatever holy (thus righteous) retribution comes their way. Both are chewed up and spit out, the state's requisite "grist for the mill" as it uses its own citizens to move money through nature: by defending itself from an imaginary darkness "From Elsewhere." A fortress' sovereignty is forged, as are its manufactured crises and saviors, but the outcome is still profit; the castle remains haunted by the ghost of genocide, suggesting the unthinkable reality that the hero is false.



(artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#))

In neoliberal copaganda, canonical heroes are sent solo or in small groups, deployed as much like a bomb as a person; hired by the powerful, these "walking armies" destabilize target areas for the mother country to invade and bleed dry (a genocidal process the aggressor sanitizes with cryptonymic labels like "freedom" and "progress"). To this, they are authorized, commissioned or otherwise sanctioned by those with the means of doing so; i.e., a governing body centered around elite supremacy at a socio-material level. After infiltration occurs, they work as a detective¹⁷⁴/cop, or judge, jury and executioner—either on foreign or domestic soil, the place in question framed as loosened from elite control, thus requiring the hero [and their penchant for extreme violence] to begin with. This makes them an arbiter of material disputes wherever they are: through police violence for the state in its colonial territories at home and abroad. They always follow orders: "Shoot first, ask questions later and enslave what survives." In stories like *Aliens*, *Doom* and *Metroid*, the fatal nostalgia of the "false" doubled homestead is used to incite genocide, thus conduct settler colonialism inside of itself; i.e., through standard-issue Imperialism but also military urbanism; e.g., Palestine abroad¹⁷⁵ versus [the death of Nex Benedict at home](#)¹⁷⁶. This has several steps. First, convince the hero that a place away from home is home-like; i.e., the thing they do not actually own being "theirs" (the ghost of the counterfeit) but "infested" (the process of abjection). Then, give them a map and have them "clean house"—an atrocious "fixer" out of the imaginary past who repairs the "broken" home room-by-room by first cleansing it of abject things "attacking it from within," then disappearing with the nightmare they constitute; i.e., purging these alien forces through blood sacrifice or even total destruction of the home itself. The iconoclast can reverse this two-step

¹⁷⁴ We'll examine the Gothic role of various (often female) detectives in science fiction more in Volume Two, including the sections "The Demonic Trifecta of Detectives, Damsels and Sex Demons" and "Call of the Wild, part one."

¹⁷⁵ Which is generally something [to deny](#) (Noah Samsen's "Genocide Denial Streamers," 2024) or debate when, [as the Youtuber Shaun points out](#), there is nothing to debate whatsoever—a genocide is occurring and it is wrong ("Palestine," 2024).

¹⁷⁶ Persephone van der Waard's "Remember the Fallen: An Ode to Nex Benedict" (2024).

process, but must protect those queenly things of nature normally persecuted by Cartesian forces and their cartographic schools of violence; i.e., by using counterterrorist language and ironic roles of violence, terror and monsters redirected towards the state: Athena's Aegis and the dark queen's chaotic stare of doom, but also literal, manmade weapons illustrated during performative shows of force *against* state invaders attacking Galatea ([source](#)).

Canonical heroes triangulate against state targets, then, becoming the necessary exterminator of the settler-colonial model, but also the sexy destroyer and *superheroic* retrieval expert during the monomythic fetch quest (hyperbole and state heroism go hand-in-hand, exaggerating the menace, emergency and rescue to equal measure); i.e., a budding flower of war and larger-than-life tempter-of-fate (and the audience) walking the tightrope between Heaven and Hell, life and death, protector and aggressor, child and parent, but also wild and tame, pleasure and pain, black and white, strong and weak, invincible and vulnerable, good and evil—all while delivering state subjects (and the nuclear family unit) from evil, chaos, death, darkness, Hell, etc: the dark chronotope as a false copy whose hellish architecture and monarchy (the medieval bloodline) threatens the perceived



legitimacy of the West's own forgeries (while also haunting them). A school of canonical violence, then, the liminal hauntology of war predictably emerges, summoning the hero to occupy then suppress a prescribed "disorder" during an *orderly* chaos/*Amazonomachia* that breaks and repairs the symbolic home; i.e., over and over (a narrative of the crypt, circular ruin, infernal concentric pattern, Cycle of Kings, etc).

(artist: [Gerald Brom](#))

And since we're focusing on the monstrous-feminine, here, I consider the most famous of all modern phallic women to be Hippolyta-married-to-Theseus: James Cameron's neoconservative, "feral mother" take on Ellen Ripley serving as a warlike, parent-themed mentor for the children of the present (or those who, thanks to waves of terror, regress to child-like states). She's the housemaid with a gun, facing the barbaric imagery of the imaginary past mirrored by actual colonial abuses, upholding the latter by banishing the former to benefit the elite—in short, by playing out a heroic story much in the same way that modern versions of Beowulf would: through sex and force, rape and war expressed in theatrical language that maintains Capitalist Realism.



(exhibit 30a: Volume Zero extensively explored how rape is a triangulation device employed by state forces in Gothic media; i.e., of Amazonian women raping state enemies/targets: the state's chosen female war bosses giving police, "prison sex" violence to nature-as-alien. Biological similarities and differences aside, their xenophobic function is identical to men's—an assortment of gun, war, and rape pastiche through a co-opted, centrist Amazon: the good monster woman, Ellen Ripley, furiously slaying her evil double, Medusa, in service of the state [who redirect her rage at their abuse of her in the first movie towards whatever target they want killed next: destructive anger]. The neoliberal, neoconservative "revenge fantasies" of *Aliens* and *Predator* [1986-87] are rape fantasy in that regard, as are their videogame offshoots: "Rape the Communist; kill the pig, spill its blood!"—all in service of the owner class back at home posturing as righteous, but also displaced by neoliberal "arms merchants" like James Cameron and John McTiernan [the former's other franchise, the *Terminator* movies, having a much more left-leaning "Western" flavor surprisingly Gothic/critical of Capitalism, exhibit 8b2]. These neocon fantasies canonically disassociate through state violence, producing a "bouquet" of "war daises" echoing T.S. Eliot's infamous "Wasteland" [1922]: "April is the cruellest month, breeding / Lilacs out of the dead land" [source]. Just as the shared, us-versus-them rhetoric owes a symbolic debt to Beowulf's post-Roman treatment of monsters inside a Christian hegemon that survived in

future English forms, neoliberalism's prime videogame mode—Cameron's refrain, the shooter—owes its own abject warrior symbolism to earlier stories putting future ghosts of Beowulf in seemingly unusual environments like outer space [whose dark hostility emulates Grendel's mother's underwater cave]: *Starship Troopers*. Beowulf's various offshoots survived into a retro-future copaganda whose military optimism contributes to the ongoing myopia under Capitalist Realism in male and female videogame forms; i.e., "Conan with a gun" aping Rambo [the white savior playing guerrilla] and Amazonian, Hippolyta-in-spirit Beowulfs like Samus Aran doing the same. Both offer a *de facto* "good" parental role to challenge the bad parentage of corrupt and/or monstrous-feminine entities [the evil double of the hero's homestead and its occupants]. Conjured up, Beowulf aborts the spawn of Cain and Grendel's mother on their illegitimate home turf encroaching on colonized lands; Samus crushes her own tall, hideous enemies using her own armored body and superior "phallic" weaponry. *He's* the Great Destroyer shooting Red Falcon's biomechanical offshoots to dust; *she's* the Medusa, as strong as the Earth as she cuts Mother Nature [and her draconian offspring] down to size [below]. Per the kayfabe clichés of wrestling monsters, its not long before both hero types get naked, reviving binaries from Antiquity stressed post-Renaissance—he, stripped down to stress his masculine "invulnerability" and she, her feminine "vulnerability" during a recent creation of sexual difference. Within this settler-colonial trend, they pointedly denude towards a native, "white savior" state, mid-combat, which then regresses back to nuclear family roles after the action lulls: Hippolyta, the if-not-bridal-then-at-least-maternal role, playing house/mother while Beowulf goes home to be a family man... until the fight begins anew [which it always will under Capitalism; if there's no one left to fight, the elite will make new enemies to confront based on Cold War kayfabe archetypes: the Nazi or the Communist as a bad parent to the hero's good parent].



[artist, bottom-right: [Blue the Bone](#)]

Through this canonical, neoconservative chase back to war—to track down and kill her own trauma—Ripley "pulls a Rambo" like Arnold and the boys do, becoming Beowulf, the fabled Great Destroyer persona and very thing she feared in the first film, during Amazonomachia: a cosmic, female war boss catfighting with a female-Numinous, xenophobic symbol for Communism in order to become "top dog," queen bitch, etc, in service of Patriarchal Capitalism preying on nature. As such, Ripley's "teeth in the night" performance murders, pillages and rapes the land and its inhabitants around her for the company and for Capitalism [with Cameron making FOX lots of money and contemporary videogame companies like Konami and Nintendo also becoming indebted to Aliens in future installments]. In this sense, her short fuse mirrors Victoria de Loredani's short life in Zofloya, except "Lilla" [the recipient of state violence, exhibit 100b2] is disguised as both a killer army of queer, Communist space bugs and their abject, queenly broodmare's Satanic power to create things that—like Satan or David from Alien: Covenant [more on him in Volume Two]—threaten "the end of the world" simply by existing at all; i.e., a termination of the status quo's socio-economic order relayed through monster kayfabe/Amazonomachia and Galatean poetics: good monsters and bad, good nature and bad, good war and bad.

Cartesian thought emblemizes nature-as-alien through stigma animals as things to war against—often insects and other decomposers that mass produce through inhuman means of sexual reproduction, but also symbolize Indigenous culture and pagan religions; e.g., Tolkien's fearsome spider women and orcish subterranean barbarians, or Lovecraft's sea creatures "from the deep." To some degree, all symbolize death, decay and ancient forgotten gods feared from a Western colonizer's perspective; in turn, the ghost of the counterfeit abjects mighty-yet-weak [re: Umberto Eco] cultures that, once unleashed, lead to a black planet through a dark uprising's hoard-like, black, queer and/or Jewish revenge: from the transgenerational surrender of "slaves give birth to slaves" to a slave uprising dressed in reclaimed implements of counterterror scaring whitey senseless. It's a doomsday prediction built on colonist anticipations of eventual, inevitable collapse [no colony lasts forever]: Nature must be kept "in check" to preserve the world "as is"; i.e., Capitalism, which dominates the world/nature through military optimism as a brutal-but-effective means of maintaining the generational myopia of Capitalist Realism. As such, it also treats nature as savage—an unthinking "hive" multiplying in ways that, according to the West, "cheapen life." Doing so abjects the West's usual cheapening of nature [and subsequent kettling through psychosexual violence/reactive abuse] onto its victims around the world, claiming the East doesn't "value life" the way the West does in its own good-war canon [Kay and Skittles' "How Enemy at the Gates Lies to You: Saving Private Ryan, Othering, and Cold War Narratives," 2023].

To this, Ripley is the CIA cop [the "advisor"] who, working for the Man in search of Promethean power [rival mastery] under a Faustian bargain, becomes the

temporary Nazi to wade into the prison-like colony's risen Hell and punch the Communist-framed-as-Nazi: the Archaic Bug Mom in fetish gear operating as the Satanic rebel, but punished as the zombie, demon, patchwork-animal cyborg when she invariably snaps under Western occupation/carceral violence. Once Medusa is vanquished and her feral legacy in chains, our Hippolyta seemingly returns "back to normal," exiting Hell and coming back from the dead at the end of the Hero's Journey. Except, the ontological horror—of the hero's conditioned desire to attack such a monster—is it turns the fearful party into a genocidal murderer of the helpless [and their children] passed off as tyrannical, disgusting vermin reflecting state trauma perpetrated against the abuser towards the abused, in a ceaseless cycle of abjection, of extermination. Dark reflections of their own abuse cause TERFs to triangulate against the state's intended underclass, the refuse of Capitalism's bowels, its relegated, infantilized pieces of shit: the "killer queen" of the Goths and her den of abominable thieves. Hysteria isn't quelled, then but maintained by abusing Athena's Aegis to pass state violence along viral reflections of a perceived exotic bride to tame, an alien queen "of nature" to dominate, penetrating her fearsome womb until the end of time while Capitalism sexualizes everything.



[artist: [Lera PI](#)]

To this, Cameron's Ripley was always a TERF Amazon, a phallic woman playing Brutus putting "Caesar" [corruption] down by abjecting white fears of medieval human childbirth [and the hysteria and humiliation of state-compelled birth trauma—of placental blood, amniotic fluid, slime and involuntary shit] onto alien bodies, biology and compelled reproduction metaphors forced away from Western powers and onto the Archaic Mother as a settler-colonial scapegoat; I'm merely exposing Ripley as one now through my instruction speaking to my trauma at the hand of cis-het/cis-queer TERFs who lionize Ripley and demonize me in the same breath. The irony is canon puts the hero-turned-heel to heel, and in the case of tokenized straw dogs like Ripley or Victoria, puts them down when they become man-eaters/"rabid." On the flipside of this "euthanasia effect," male "dogs" that "go mad" are normally prized for their valor and ferocity as useful to capital. They're seen as "used to it" but also expected to "last longer" before they tire/fall apart like a spent animal corpse. Regardless, the praxial inertia remains, demanding opposition to state menticide through our own de facto education challenging its usual climaxes erupting out of exploited forms; e.g., traumatic penetration depicted as insectoid/queer to abject anything performing it, robbing them [and the endemic counterterror of their murderous, slimy "womb spaces," but also biomechanical, stabby-stabby girl cocks, below] of valid revolutionary potential in the eyes of would-be converts; i.e., when the chickens come home to roost.)



Enough about Ripley and Amazons. Now we're going to look at those who women *like Ripley* emulate—men within Man Box culture through the sports world—before returning to knife dicks (for both genders) during the finale on page 547. In the meantime, remember that war and proving one's manhood (or female place)

through rape is generally to the detriment of male and female workers, queer people and other minorities (orgasmically raping and dismembering these faithful servants to serve a centrist kayfabe narrative, above: Mother Nature's animal, but also posthuman, black/androgynous¹⁷⁷ revenge-by-wasp-ovipositor must be stopped, whatever the cost): policing Hell's infernal territory is an always-needed

¹⁷⁷ I.e., Freud and Kristeva's handling of the Archaic Mother myth, but also the myth of the black male rapist/sexually aggressive black woman as "manly" being projected onto the same dark kayfabe figure as the Nazi or Communist. To this, canon presents rape as something that "dark" (non-white) creatures do. Or as my thesis writes,

Assimilation goes both ways, of course, and for every act of open rebellion there were plenty who refused to rebel due to the expected colonial countermeasures (re: "power aggregates," from Atun-Shei Film's "[Fighting for Freedom](#)") [...] This would go on to then be romanced and displaced by white-penned Neo-Gothic fictions of various kinds: white men's open, settler-colonial bigotry and white-saviorism from the likes of Shakespeare, Conrad, Tolkien, Ridley Scott, James Cameron, Frazetta (exhibit 0a2c) and Wes Craven haunting the gutted castles of a seemingly abandoned colonialism with dark, vengeful spirits exorcized by white heroes; but also the so-called "jungle fever" entertained by white women like Radcliffe, Dacre, Charlotte Brontë and Angela Carter's fixation on a white protagonist's idea of rape fantasy inside the castled ghost of the counterfeit, and in the American porn industry at large; i.e., as a forbidden fruit to outlaw, commodify and sell back to middle-class people amid a widespread, systemic punishment of the non-white people associated with the image:

In the U.S. and other capitalist countries, rape laws were originally framed for the protection of men of the upper classes, whose women ran the risk of being assaulted. What happens to working-class women has always been of little concern to the courts. As a result, appalling few rapists have ever been prosecuted—appalling few, that is, if black men are exempted from consideration. While the rapists of working-class women have so rarely been brought to justice, the rape charge has been indiscriminately aimed at black men, the guilty and innocent alike ([source](#): Angela Davis' "Rape, Racism and the Capitalist Setting," 1978).

Aside from strictly *animal* arguments, *posthuman* considerations would ask us to respect how alien spheres present the chattelized animal and robot as ally commodities; i.e., whose shared, biomechanical rebellion is foretold, demonized and sold back to American consumers within the Imperial Core: the xenomorph as part-insect, part-machine in ways that resemble a shared uprising—of slave animals, but also dissident *robata* (the Czech word for "slave" that "robot" originates from) defying Asimov's Laws of Robotics by fighting back against their humanized masters' "correct" hegemony. Nature is alien, thus roboticized in slave-like ways that, unlike an actual machine, aren't strictly "unthinking" at all; they're *undead*, made "like machines" and traumatized against their will. The trauma isn't incorrect, according to Cartesian thought; its *outcry* is.

We've already considered the posthuman relative to *Mega Man* and *Ghost in the Shell* in Volume Zero (rogue robot masters and cyborg cops, exhibit 1a1a1c4), but will deliberately consider it more *vis-à-vis* the xenomorph's composite, undead nature (and Mary Shelley's posthuman critique using composite demonic bodies) in Volume Two.

job in canon, one performed by the hero—as Joseph Campbell put it—of a thousand faces; i.e., not just Ripley aping Hippolyta but millions of women just like her based on similar manly legends and recuperated stories of female rebellion, genderqueer potential and echoes of Beowulf inside the monomyth.

Except policing Hell is not just unattainable; it's Faustian and Promethean in neoliberal power fantasies and ludic contracts—an '80s "training montage" of assorted martial contests and feats of strength that lead to individual *disempowerment* and systemic downfall (the collapse of the male bloodline and Patrilineal descent). Gothic canon, but especially *Pax Americana*, abuses kayfabe theatre to synonymize strength with monomythic weapons, leaping from pugilism and swords to guns and bombs as rapacious, but also righteous. Simply put, it's sold to us in small; i.e., the same quests for power that Capitalism exploits, weaponizing worker traumas through violent, monomythic refrains journeying into Hell that disseminate throughout popular media, but especially cinema and videogames in the neoliberal age lending us the *illusion of power* as false hope that utterly evaporates during state decay. Just as retro-future, throwback heroes like Mega Man or Samus Aran magically appear when darkness threatens the land (waves of terror), they suddenly disappear again when these anxieties are quelled; i.e., when pastoral bliss resumes onscreen, leaving a giant Walpolean helmet behind with no one inside. Like Walpole, it's a sham, but one abused by *capitalists*



(and complacent, thus complicit benefactors) to pacify workers nonetheless. What could be more Gothic than that?

([source](#))

My thesis has already established that conscious

rebellion between the player and the game, but also workers and the world, can negotiate the unequal arrangement of power and distribution of information/consent as something to transform that, nevertheless, is shared between players and games during ludo-Gothic BDSM formulating new contracts of mastery and submission (from the glossary): "In other words, the ludic contract is less a formal, rigid contract and more a negotiated compromise occurring between the two; i.e., where players have some sense of agency in deciding how *they* want to play the game even while adhering to its rules and, in effect, being mastered by it." Said transformation must be conscious and willing in order to demonstrably

challenge Capitalist Realism's centrist illusions of power that rape nature *ipso facto*; it must be inventive and *game* as a rebellious mindset cultivated by players interrogating Cartesian abuse while taking power away from the state—i.e., in game-like, emergent ways borrowed from centrist kayfabe (again, to interrogate power, you must go where it is). Under capital, there are only masters and slaves, the hurly-burly likes of He-man (the babyface) and Masters of the Universe (the heels) being emperors with no clothes, no power as they're sacrificed for the Greater Good (the heroic cult of death—of death before dishonor—part of an essential "tough guy" routine well at home in kayfabe, but also those who consume kayfabe presenting themselves online as "macho" to varying degrees of anonymity and public brand images); under Gothic Communism, there are no masters or slaves, only workers reunited with nature through monstrous critical lenses revived in various media types that help us process and relieve stress: in relation to psychosexual forces giving us palliative-Numinous, but also post-coital focus while grappling with complicated ideals normally alienated from us by capital. Hidden among them is the trauma of the state, but also the oppressed—our spectres of Marx yearning to be free through the same dreadful *cryptomimesis*.

To this, holistic, intersectional approaches like Gothic Communism combine various theories and social-sexual habits for new synthesis, or—as my teachers described my work—"new vistas of reflection." These emerge through diversity and combination, not as so-called "weaknesses" but a flexible and mixed, playful ability to reimagine the Wisdom of the Ancients; i.e., with fresh interpretations of old language, thus overcoming the complex and brutal enslavement of nature and the human mind through singular, Cartesian interpretations thereof: set paths vs paths made by us veering away from traditions that, while old, aren't nearly as established as you might think. Keeping the prominence of these dialogs in mind (the Hermeneutic Gothic-Communist Quadfecta: Marxism and Gothic, queer and game studies), let's reconsider the way that the rape of nature is educated through hypermasculine, sports-like stories as a kind of "opiate for the masses," then explore the way that men, as beings to imitate through Man Box culture, are affected by Cartesian thought in ways that women historically aren't (certainly not to the same degree, anyways).

For one, the Promethean outcome is foregone in ways that absolutely disempower men while punishing them and nature. Like Jonathan Swift's "Little-Endians" and "Big-Endians" from *Gulliver's Travels* or Dr. Seuss' *Butter Battle Book* (1984), these foolish enterprises march like lemmings towards the same desolate outcome: yet another pile of used-up war dogs, their chattelized corpses spent like fuel in the engines of Capitalism's profitable war/rape machine. Inside it, though, the petal-raining glory of fleeting conquest becomes replaced with a funeral march—one of [glass jaws](#) (Rummy's Corner, 2023), [chronic traumatic encephalopathy](#) (Mixed Martial Academic, 2022); morbid obesity (which bodybuilders, professional wrestlers and other habitual steroid users constitute),

non-steroid drug use [and nepotistic exploitation dressed up in deceptive, hauntological theatre practices](#) that bleed into real life (Behind the Bastard's "Vince McMahon," 2022) and the gladiatorial fool's dogged chase of "immortality."

These male chasers of glory can be literal military members, as well as athletes who personify war in drugged forms. The latter aren't class traitors (at least not in the active sense)—more like Roman fools falling on their swords over and over. The guts-and-glory drama—of online, Joe-Vincent-style "neoliberal colosseum pastiche" (e.g., "[Julio Cesar Chavez - 89-0 - Greatest Mexican Boxer Ever](#)," 2023)—tends to outshine the dialectical-material reality faced by often-poor men of color, white men (who can be poor though Tommy Morrison was not; he was related to John Wayne and had that man's connections) and brown people from the streets of former US colonies, the US as an ongoing settler colony and current neo-colonies fighting for scraps every single day of their lives (a literal "victory or death" material reality). The fact remains, the product is sold in ways that are incredibly drug-like; i.e., a bread-and-circus approach having bonded to current mechanisms of capital from older, antiquated forms; e.g., from the Roman Empire to the United States of America.

Drug abuse is a common facet of Capitalism brutalizing nature through workers; rape, then, extends to drug abuse in relation to one's body image in pursuit of unnatural strength as sold to workers very much *like* a drug. While actual drug use is a widespread problem as a response to trauma, both plague the sports world as a habitual site of rape and unequal power exchanges through theatrical forms that speak to trauma as Cartesian; i.e., "if only we (usually men, but also TERFs and various token groups) could be strong enough to face our demons and elevate ourselves by conquering our natural limits, thus the world!" The pushing of steroids through these kinds of stories serves to control people through addiction for profit, making consent just that much more of a myth.

This happens on and offstage and not just to men in the sports world. For example, studio executives would push drugs onto Judy Garland (exhibit 30b1), hounding her day and night to drink coffee, take uppers, and smoke cigarettes but not eat food. This sent her down a road known to many child stars. She was dead at 47. In the world of combat sports *theatre*, though, many athletes were and are abused by similar parental figures and arrangements forcing them to try and live up to hypermasculine gender standards: the impossibly manly men that, through the abuse of science, only have higher and higher hills to climb but never actually surmount (the "fodder" role is the point). Like Dr. Jekyll's potion, suddenly men are turning into 'roided-out Hulksters, trying to imitate a literal giant who, in wrestling canon, had a disease that would ultimately kill him: acromegaly (an increasing of organ sizes, which eventually leads to heart failure, killing André the Giant when he was 46).

However different these men seem to Garland, they suffer from similar problems, their comorbidities shoving them into early graves to enrich the vampiric

old men who own them, their bodies, their jobs, their livelihoods, their business contracts, etc. In turn, this becomes something to instruct through Gothic poetics as historically wrapped up in kayfabe narratives; i.e., the Amazon myth, but also Achilles as "superior" to nature—to *any* phallic woman with a sword (or sword-like implement). For them, such extensions of actual possibility go beyond Capitalism's ordering of things, thus become aberrations to demonize and dismiss, but also fetishize and rope back into the usual schemes of patriarchal domination; e.g., Mizu from *Blue Eye Samurai* fighting to be recognized while appearing alien to the culture of 1600s feudal Japan (and, per the Amazon device, upsetting the archaic division of labor—sex and force—in medievalized spaces. Said spaces' demand for these speaks to our confusion and intensity of feeling mid-disempowerment, always ensuring that such heroes find themselves employed from a diegetic *and* meta standpoint): "I'm vulnerable and *will* defend myself in ways normally denied to women in Gothic Romances/the liminal hauntology of war (the spectral warzone)."



In the case of Garland and the dead wrestlers of American kayfabe, the illusion to which these workers were part of is what ultimately killed them, in part because its continuation (and education of future workers to rape themselves and

those around them) was seen as more valuable than the lives of the people propping it up (Emp Lemon's ["The Wizard of Oz and the Dark Side of Hollywood,"](#) 2021)—by the directors, but also by critics like Roger Ebert, who cherish American cinema to a fault: "Maybe it helped that none of them knew they were making a great movie," he wonders, prefacing this with,

Judy Garland had, I gather, an unhappy childhood (there are those stories about MGM quacks shooting her full of speed in the morning and tranquilizers at day's end), but she was a luminous performer, already almost 17 when she played young Dorothy. She was important to the movie because she projected vulnerability and a certain sadness in every tone of her voice ([source](#): Roger Ebert's "The Wizard of Oz," 1996).

Ebert cares more about what Garland brings to the performance than the actress behind the scene being raped; i.e., the cliché of suffering not merely for one's art, but the art that others long to give them "transcendental" lessons that apologize for rape. This isn't communal; it's predatory and does little but essentialize the status quo through rape apologetics in the face of trauma bleeding out of canon and into our own lives echoing those who should seemingly be far better off. Yet rape haunts their glamorous (and at times ridiculous) portraits:



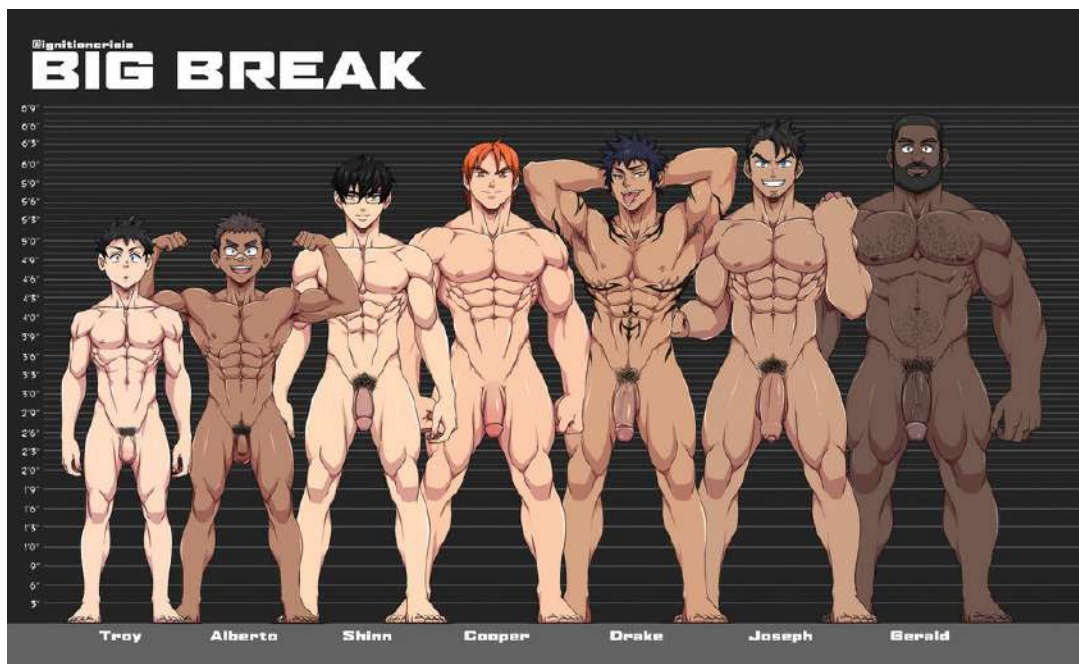
(exhibit 30b1: Drug use generally effects men and women differently according to a growing divide in heteronormative dimorphism, hauntology and poetics furthering Cartesian dualism; but its effects on both are infamously torturous and fatal. Judy Garland didn't live to see fifty and James Brian Hellwig—aka "The Ultimate Warrior" [a hideous commodifying of Indigenous culture by white America]—was tremendously unhealthy from steroid use and cocaine binges afforded to him by

those banking on his absurd, hypermasculine performances. Dying at 54 from sudden heart failure [a common side effect of steroid use], Hellwig was tremendously out-of-shape despite looking "in shape" per the Cartesian statuesque model; like Frankenstein's Creature, minus the pathos—a dead man walking whose appearance of power was utterly hollow.)

In their own ways, then, hulking wrestlers like the Ultimate Warrior and dainty actresses like Judy Garland have quite a bit of common ground: dying for their art as literally injected into them (their skin penetrated by invasive needles). Beefed-up, they push themselves to exhaustion, then keep going because they were whipped into doing so until it became habit (and when raw habit wasn't enough, addiction certainly did the trick). They became chattelized, as disposable as insects, their power false. Under more recent years, this horrendous, Cartesian exploitation has only increased and rewritten its own story under neoliberalism—i.e., to better chew workers up and spit them out, at greater quantities and faster speeds. More and more, consent vanishes, worker rights becoming an unattainable dream as the studio rapes bodies and minds to apologize for rape as something whose education (and Capitalist Realism) should never be threatened by the creative successes of proletarian praxis' synthesis and catharsis. A failure to alleviate the trauma (and spell-binding glamor) of rape is entirely what capitalists want. Centrism delivers such instruction, and delves into physical and mental cultivation well beyond the girlish innocence of Garland's monomythic fairytale's journey into Hell (and facing of the witch). While there is violence and struggle in trying to synthesize a means of expressing and subverting trauma under capital through such stories as reclaimed by us, centrism is fundamentally violent and physical in terms of the rape-like abuse it espouses. Its theatre globalizes *martial* arts and *combat* sports, whose good cops, bad cops and robbers materialize differently depending on the genre; e.g., white knights and black knights. Where such beings exist, and where critical thought is absent, there will be unironic rape as a criminogenic means of instruction dominating nature.

To understand how men suffer under Cartesian dualism, let's briefly consider rape inside kayfabe. The sports world has many clichés that defend rape as normalized, and defended, by fans of the genre: "David vs Goliath" and similar underdog/*deus ex machina* narratives (e.g., the postcolonial fantasy [of the iron-skinned Chinese Boxer beating the British officer, post hoc](#)) that go hand-in-hand with the "tough hombre" language of sanctioned violence (usually against hordes of '70s-style ninjas conveniently attacking the weak/strong hero one at a time in obviously choreographed body language). Their canonical quoting and blind war pastiche feed endlessly into a perpetual "Who is the greatest?" debate that can be summed up as mere "Bakhtinian" dick-measuring—i.e., dynastic power exchange and hereditary rites, often through symbols of actual dicks (and the warlike bodies attached to them, below): freaks of nature like Hellwig made mad by Cartesian

science but presented as "of the past" and pitted against one another to make the elite money by demonizing nature in favor of a patriarchal hegemon.



(artist: [Ichan-desu](#))

In other words, it is *not* conducive towards abuse prevention (thus successful proletarian praxis) to argue if the judges robbed Marvin Haggler during his fight with Sugar Ray Leonard. This is doubly so for professional wrestling narratives, whose racist tropes and fascist leanings¹⁷⁸ historically-materially leads to the deaths not just of single performers, but entire families driven by greed (re: "[Vince McMahon](#)"): Jack Barton Adkisson Sr., better known by his stage name, Fritz Von Erich, became a wrestling baron who—following his retirement in 1982—drove five of his six sons into early graves (four of which died in their twenties, and three of which committed suicide) by forcing them to play an infamous heel-type from professional wrestling's Cold War equation: the Nazi. It's a brutal business and always has been (*ibid.*, [timestamp](#): 1:02:21); according to Robert Evans from *Behind the Bastards*, it's only gotten worse because McMahon a) doesn't look like a Nazi and b) has proven to affect politics through his close friendship with Donald Trump (the latter having profited himself off the basic formula in the 1980s,

¹⁷⁸ As Griffin Kaye writes in "Nazism in Wrestling—Wrestling's Most Controversial and Troubling Booking Strategy" (2022):

Wrestling plays upon the source of controversy. Whether it is related to evil foreign heels, real-life deaths, and horrific social events outside the wrestling landscape – these are often seen as distasteful and offensive but one gimmick can encapsulate all 3: *Nazism*. Over the many decades, many bookers have utilized the use of this strategy to full effect, playing off understandable post-World War 2 fears to create a monster figure ([source](#)).

bringing his own brand of fascist theatre into the White House). Love towards these kings of the sports world (often as patrons of gladiators) leads to an ubiquity of rape tied to the profit motive, but also the dogma and fear of things changing in ways that "extend the theatre"; i.e., in ways customers romance in relation to themselves as educated by the imaginary past as apologetic towards rape in sports-like narratives.

Full confidence, I say this even though I enjoy [Rummy's Corner](#), [Second Base's leftist politics/graph porn](#) ("Fighting in the Age of Loneliness: Supercut edition, 2021) and a slew of martial artists/movie stars/athletes/stunt people, ranging from: Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan, Jet Li, Jean-Claude Van Damme, Scott Atkins, Cynthia Rothrock, Andy Hug, Mike Tyson (and his various videogame offshoots like Mr. Dream and M. Bison/Balrog—*Street Fighter's* neoliberal, combat sport "nation pastiche" something we'll touch upon in Volumes Two and Three), Michael Yeoh, Michael Jai White, etc. I enjoy these artists, while still being consciously mindful of their professions, but also their *politics* and how said politics code their own art and day jobs as violently standardized; i.e., leading to an encouragement of rape towards various groups under the status quo. As beings of nature, women are historically fetishized and raped as alien to men, but also devoured by them as paradoxically delicious ("forbidden fruit"). Concerning *men* within this arrangement, queer men and men of color are demonized as incorrect but prided for their prescribed differences to white men in relation to nature: the draw of the dark horse or the fag when outside of the closet being part of nature-as-bject. Per the doomed sons of Von Erich, whitey also pays the price.

Per Sarkeesian's adage, my enjoyment of sports (and camping "rape" in my own psychosexual stories; e.g., *Amazonomachia*) includes me enjoying the work of someone like Gina Carano in *Haywire* while abjuring [her awful, awful politics and those she works for, the Daily Wire](#) (José, 2022); or conversely recognizing Manny Pacquiao's [extreme generosity for the people of his homeland](#)¹⁷⁹, despite being part of [the same destructive business that advocates for cruelty "merely" as part of a brand](#)¹⁸⁰ (this advocacy often made by white men, however). Any way you slice it, rape is always somewhere close by. Be that the rape of minority culture, women or white cis-het men, we can subvert it in our own social-sexual habits; in doing so, we must be unafraid to examine how such abuse survives (and perpetuates) in canonical forms of instruction that can be recoded through liminal expression on and offstage. For example, people learn from the movies, and generally endorse the binarized, gendered violence found there with their wallets: the human condition expressed liminally through theatrical, psychosexual combat.

¹⁷⁹ "Asia Game Changer of the Year" (2022).

¹⁸⁰ Sam R. Quinn's "Manny Pacquiao: Why Pacquiao's Kindness Has Hurt His Legacy" (2012).

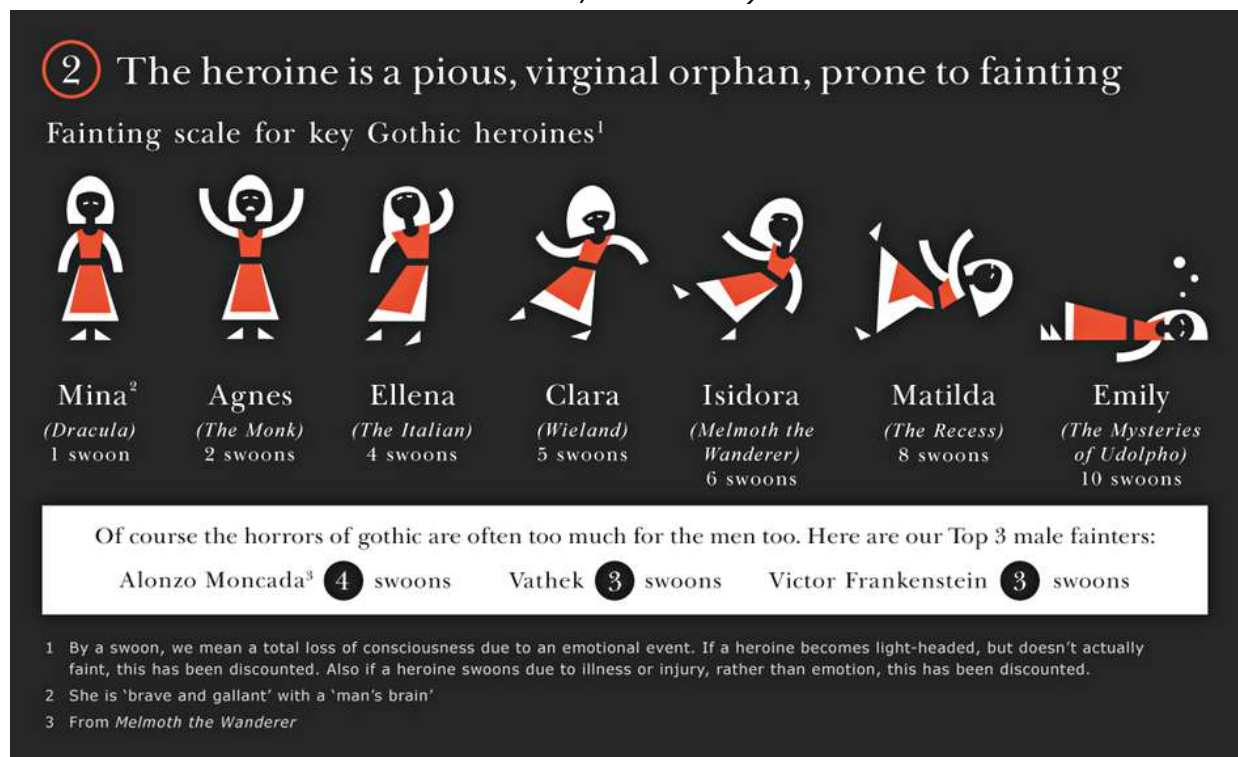


(exhibit 30b2: To quote the shaolin monk from *Enter the Dragon*, 1973, "An enemy has only images, behind which he hides his true motives; destroy the image and you break the enemy." In Gothic stories, the same is true for the villain looking to rape his victim; we want to critique neoliberals who appropriate Gothic narratives to hide their own crimes behind, but also the Cartesian structure that enables the genocidal rape of nature and workers to begin with.

Top: In *Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story*, 1993, Bruce Lee must fight his greatest foe: his own inner demons. Except the film presents these as a transgenerational curse that follows Bruce wherever he goes—across space and time, even onto his film sets! Luckily for him, his nightmares eventually become lucid, with Bruce finally taking control and "saving" his next-in-line from the family curse. While the

filmmakers' prophecy sadly erred in real-life—Brandon Lee was killed less than a year later during a tragic shooting accident on-set—the concept still enabled Bruce, in-film, to defeat a largely illusory demon with pretensions of invulnerability informed by the victim's own insecurities as fed to him his entire life: by the world and other workers around him; i.e., his father's theatre troupe.

Bottom: Gina Carano is misled and ambushed by a trusted friend, who agrees to kill her for the main villain of the movie. Said betrayer's greatest defense is his ability to lie and backstab, as unfortunately for him, Gina can fight better than he does. Not only does she absolutely trounce him; she illustrates the value in not swooning as Gothic heroines history-materially are prone to do. Their fight scene is quite erotic, intimating one of the usual places "vanilla" people learn about sex-coercive BDSM from: action movies—second only to murder mysteries, thrillers and Gothic horror, of course.)



(exhibit 30c: Adam Frost and Zhenia Vasiliev's "[How to Tell You're Reading a Gothic Novel – in Pictures](#)" [2014]. Neo-Gothic heroines were historically very passive, requiring them to be rescued by a male protector. Such a contrivance generally leads many women in fiction [and in real life] to suffer at the hands of their attackers dressed up as "protectors." Canon, then, treats rape or threats thereof as essentialized within canonical, blind pastiche: "There's gotta be a damsel-in-distress, because the status quo demands it in relation to Capitalism's historical-material mistreatment of female workers!" Further explorations of swooning are crystalized in vampiric hypnosis as demonized code for the same basic event [exhibit 87c].)

From a capitalist standpoint, rape is a business tied to Man Box culture; challenging said business, and by extension the bigoted culture associated with it, is tantamount to rebellion of nature against the civilized world—i.e., a threat to the profit motive. Simply put, you have to be awake to rebel and you can't do that if you're constantly bending the knee, quoting canon and reducing your own "girl talk," campy rejoinders and monstrous creative output to codependent, blind forms; canonical war pastiche is little more than sanctioned, mainstream violence, pointedly designed to put your minds to sleep and open your wallets: war tithes for the bread-and-circus "church" of war personified and its hypermasculine "soldiers" (whose rape of each other [and nature] parallels the state's monopoly on violence, terror and morphological expression the world over). These are *not* gods onstage, and they do not prevent rape; even if they "clean house," they often die young and in sudden, embarrassing fashion—e.g., Bruce Lee, from a cerebral edema; Andy Hug, of acute leukemia; and Ramon "the Diamond" Dekkers, of sudden, acute heart failure. Enjoy their violent displays if you must (which I certainly do) but do not endorse the brutal structure of Cartesian dualism and its ruthless, greedy engineers' education, thus canonical synthesis (rape apathy). It's bourgeois kryptonite-for-the-brain and its raw consumption isn't critical engagement. In fact, it's precisely the *opposite*, designed to pacify consumers outright while worshipping rape-like spectacles, violence and lies encouraging future violence towards nature and things "of it"; i.e., in American iterations of the Colosseum praising the financial successes of the elite as a kind of Icarian "trickle-down" mechanism: basking in the glow of stolen, blood-drenched gold. Rape is a part of that, reflecting in the gilded shimmer as stolen from the natural world: money running through nature like a sword.

And if this all seems like "an outsider's perspective," I can wholeheartedly assure you it's not. But I had to learn to see the difference between canon and camp insofar as nature was concerned, "making it gay" by embracing *my* truth as given to me by my surroundings¹⁸¹. Yes, I'm a girly bitch and hate team-based sports, but I'm also an American, thus no stranger to *hearing about* sports, war or rape (to borrow from common parlance, "raping" is what the winning team does to the losing team). For one, [the United States has been at war for most of its existence](#) (according to economist and mathematician, Arthur Charpentier, who calculated the number in 2017 to be for 222 out of 239 years). While professional sports have existed well before global US hegemony commenced in the 1890s, they utterly exploded in popularity afterwards. In American media, then, rape and war

¹⁸¹ E.g., camping Lovecraft's patented racism and crippling xenophobia by consuming stories made by others; or in the case of videogames, *played* by others in a very meta sense: The Academic from *Darkest Dungeon II* (2021) lamenting, "I should have never bought that cursed clay, from which sprang this anathema!" to which Randy Potato deadpans, "I hate when I buy some clay and it just springs up an anathema—relatable!" ("[Beacon GAMING w/ Random Party! Big Update is now LIVE!](#)" 2024). Or as my grandfather or my mothers and uncles might say about Lovecraft's ever-present "sanity damage" relayed then-and-now across media: "I *hate* it when that happens!"

are commonplace—on the streets, in our stories, in our lives interacting back and forth through the social-sexual habits we cultivate as informed by Cartesian models. As for me, I am no stranger to violence or sports in my past life while living "in the closet" (exhibit 30d). Also, my father's father fought in the Dutch resistance and I loved hearing his war stories as a child (especially the harrowing ones about Nazi war atrocities and their survivors' testimonies: my bloodline's raw courage). Here is Gramps, [being interviewed about the war by Linda Meloche in 2005](#).

Simply put, I was born and bred on *Pax Americana*, exposed to its war-



nation pastiche loop at a tender age. Yet in high school, I was also mocked for being "like a girl," for drawing sexy anime pictures in class [and for liking *Alien* and its Gothically "femme" stance on Cartesian war more than *Cameron's sequel*](#) ("Outlier Love: Enjoying Prometheus/Covenant in the Shadow of Aliens," 2021). Sticks and stones; I saw my same classmates sent off to war and killed, or returning broken and shot up but worshipping their plights. In war, no one "wins" but the elite, and only until their palaces crumble around them (during state shift). Until then, workers are raped inside the Capitalocene—their minds and bodies, but also their homes; i.e., the land around them.

(*exhibit 30d: Photos of me in TKD class/at tournaments in 2012.*)

I can understand my (mostly male) classmates' jingoism somewhat; I fought in TKD tournaments and attended classes sold to men, women and children (taught by a local SWAT sniper I very much *didn't* like). Cheap platitudes of "moral character" and value were pitched to us with the express intent of wealthy Michigan parents paying out for them and their kids to progressively train for battles they would never fight (and when my twin—afro lad next to me, ponytail; exhibit 30d, above—broke his arm, our "master" ghosted him and left my brother to foot the bill and go under the knife through the nightmare that is the American healthcare system). Canon-wise, it's just state-sanctioned violence under a bourgeois Superstructure that acclimates workers to a pacified mindset, one entirely accepting of manufactured scarcity, glorified war and rape, naturalized criminogenesis, and ubiquitous, displaced genocide.

To that, I'm not just a pretty trans face, sweeties. I came out from the same masculine closet as many Americans. Many more are still on the inside, guarding their fortress from nature-as-alien like a hawk. Sports is sacred, as is the unironic peril inside informing our own basic social-sexual habits; i.e., our gossip, monsters and camp. Under Capitalism, rape and war are constant, but also roiling back and forth during oppositional praxis as a battle for our minds, consent, and labor in service to or in resistance of the rape of nature on and offstage. Under complex conditions of systemic, transgenerational and menticial abuse, men (and other weird-nerd practitioners of Man Box culture) transform into xenophobic, nationalist, ethnically "pure" monsters. They become mistrustful of nature, but also intellectualism and foreigners defending it. As such, American bloodthirst is boundless and bipartisan, directed by American consumers at those the state exploits first: the Global South (re: Ward Churchill's "[On the Justice of Roosting Chickens](#)," 2005).

As such, defenders of capital codify markers of fascism that appear more moderately under neoliberal Capitalism, but especially Gothic canon as its own reactive abuse. Recipients of this abuse (women, racial minorities, GNC people, etc, as "of nature") frequently lash out, submit, or break down in response; i.e., resort to playing the game by patriarchal rules even when those same rules don't apply to non-men/tokenized groups ("boundaries for me, not for thee"). And if potential war brides seem scarce or mum to white cis-het men as the most privileged benefactors of genocide, it's because women more generally fear men as historical-material sources of ghastly murder and hyperbolic rape. No joke, the false protector is literally enshrined within Gothic canon and always will be: our aforementioned knife penis¹⁸² (re: the "stabby cock dagger") as having good versions and bad versions of either gender under settler-colonialism's heteronormative dichotomy. In medieval language, this plays out through white and black knights; in more recent criminal hauntologies, it plays out through damsels, detectives and demons. This includes Amazons, but also serial killers as wild, "rabid" predators terrorizing polite society (and its white women) with traumatic penetration; i.e., as a fetishized form of alien, psychosexual violence that nevertheless commodifies nature-as-abstract through the ghost of the counterfeit's unironically mutilative, patriarchal rape fantasies (re: Radcliffe's demon lover).

The finale, next, shall consider the knife dick, then, as the prime implement of Cartesian abuse (traumatic penetration) before investigating how to subvert it: by humanizing the harvest.

¹⁸² While traditional masculinity and the status quo are generally defended through active force by cis-het men, the brutal, direct violence of a knife, club or bullet can be emulated by fearful women in ways that make them triangulate, acting "like men" for men and the Patriarchy against state enemies: TERFs attacking workers fighting for their basic human rights and those of animals and the environment (which the state calls "terrorism").

Nature Is Food, the finale: A Problem of "Knife Dicks," or Humanizing the Harvest; Hammering Swords into Ploughshares (feat. racist porn and fat bodies)

*All hear my warning:
Never turn your back
On the Ripper!*

—Rob Halford; "The Ripper" on Judas Priest's *Sad Wings of Destiny* (1976)

Having addressed Cartesian trauma as alienizing and fetishizing nature in dimorphized, heteronormative forms, the symposium finale considers the root of the problem—the knife dick—followed by its solution; i.e., by subverting the mechanisms of Cartesian abjection in racialized porn normally fetishizing nature as a fat-and-sassy bitch (demon, whore, etc) needing to be tamed, thus carved up *while* fucking her with the knife. Settler colonialism conflates sex and harm within a lack of consent burdened with genocidal overtones: the harvest. We need to humanize it while acknowledging the sharpness of the blades we're transforming.

To that, let's quickly exhibit the knife dick/demon lover in these unironic rape/torture fantasies, then examine how the penis (and other body parts/phenotypes—fat bodies and dark skin), despite being normalized into alien fetishes during canonical porn, can—through informed, iconoclastic acts of praxial synthesis—prevent traumatic penetration's symbolic proliferation, and with it, Cartesian violence against nature by its usual jailors; i.e., by using our own bodies in highly subversive forms of monstrous pornography and ludo-Gothic BDSM:



(exhibit 31: The bogeymen and bogeywomen for and [sometimes] against Patriarchal Capitalism/Cartesian dualism generally orbit around rape/sexual violence as synonymized with sexual activity at large; i.e., implements of torture that suggest [or explicitly perform] a biologically essentialized erotic function associated with psychosexual human bodies and their assorted compulsions, stigmas and fetishes. These historically-materially divide into a gender binary that GNC dialogs must challenge, subverting cis-het expectations of rape and violence within, and outside of, these fictions.

Top: Thoroughly broken, many men who cannot enjoy women—only "murder to dissect" them in cold, child-like curiosity [and boredom] in between hunts. As bourgeois agents—e.g., police, witches, detectives, et al—become "rabid," men/man-like entities fuck their victims like Pavlovian chattel animals, coerced to give and receive violence, not love. This has the added effect of scaring women into "good girls" who hide indoors and don't try to make money for themselves using what they got.

Bottom: The women who detect and investigate these braindead cretins often belong to problematic media, themselves; i.e., true crime [of which it, and the Radcliffean tradition it stems from, I took no prisoners towards during the thesis volume]. Fragile and superstitious—like Arthur's knights cowering in utter terror before the awesome might of the killer rabbit [a pagan symbol of fertility]—nothing is more terrifying to a canonical warrior [overcompensating for his own broken brain and dick with literal knives and swords] than a moderate-to-well-educated woman-of-means who doesn't need to rely on men to keep her safe, say nothing of trans folk and other minorities united together through worker solidarity! United against Capitalism, rebellious workers can collectively expose the cowardice of oft-male class traitors for the sad, mind-raped torturers of nature they embody. This being said, historical self-preservation makes for strange bedfellows. For example, TERFs are a liminal category pushed into a radical position of "home defense" by past brushes with trauma [re: canonical dick-measuring—their "cocks" are bigger than other women's, but not men's]. We'll explore these "bad-faith" or unwitting ["sleeper agent"] detectives, witches and she-warriors in Volume Three, but for now just remember that phallic women embody/confront the myth that women cannot stab their victims or become class traitors through Cartesian abjection; they absolutely can. Medusa—a famous female being of nature—revives as the furious, indiscriminate rapist of civilized men and women alike: ancient hysteria as "phallic."



(artist, left: [Stephanie Drew](#); right: [Jan Rockitnik](#))

In Zofloya, Victoria famously stabs Lilla to death. Written by a white, cis-het woman, the story's confrontation occurs between two women, testifying to marginalized in-fighting during a moralized conflict: cis-het [often white] women fear rape, see the penis as rape, and use the "penis" to rape their prescribed enemies: trans people. And yet, given the universal adaptability of gender and "darkness" in Gothic stories, Dacre's symbols yield countless interpretations. For example, within queer dialogics, symbols of the battered woman can either be Lilla cowering in fear or Victoria advancing on her with an open blade, stabbing and destroying "her" idea of weakness as conditioned into her by men: the diminutive feminine. The idea of stabbing that to death might seem symbolic in a purely abstract sense, but the historical-material reality is that abused women are frequently weaponized and misled by Patriarchal forces against other women—i.e., to see softness as weak, or as an imposter that must be outted and slain [the "woman" with a penis]. It becomes paranoid, but also kill-or-be-killed. In fascist circles, "monstrous-feminine" accounts for anything man is not; in centrist circles, it's anything that protests or commits abuse; in leftist circles, it's one of survival against either of those things by using the same shared language: the knife and penis as ontologically confused. Except, while I like being a little princess dominated by Dark Amazon/Gothic aesthetics, I don't actually want to be abused by my partner[s]. Even if my preference towards mommy doms were "strict" instead of "gentle," being a strict dom or sadist never gives you to the right to harm your partner.)

Knife dicks (and similar weapons) are the so-called "virgin-killer" (one cannot have sex using a dagger for a penis, only rape) being secretly terrified by powerful women/monstrous-feminine types and—to borrow from Monty Python (again)—"[desperately needing to be confused](#)" ("Confuse-a-Cat," 1969). Like, maybe fascists could learn something from the rabbit instead of blowing it up with the Holy Hand Grenade of Antioch (a very bad habit)? In the interim, the Patriarchy's natural/material toys and games "overcompensate" in violent, often knife-like bombast that compels the status quo through a gradient of veiled/exposed threats and explosive executions of social-sexual violence through Cartesian (thus rapacious) synthesis. The visible result isn't just small knives, but big knives/multiple knives and a canonical treatment of them towards nature through fear and dogma when faced with settler-colonial trauma; i.e., "I was hurt in the past, but now I will hurt others to avoid that pain in the future"; e.g., Ellen Ripley.

The paradox of this entire arsenal is *impotency*—a social-sexual inability to actually bond with women/minorities as fellow workers, all of whom Capitalism frames as alien, animal, the enemy per Cartesian thought; i.e., the white rabbit as something to fear, not follow and certainly not someone to *learn from*. The *physical* effect on men (and token enforcers) is often literal impotence—a curious, often tragically sad inability "to get it up" unless dominating someone

through threats, or executions of, authoritative force. A cultural desire to "be the man" radicalizes male/tokenized workers into more and more monstrous worker roles. Said roles condition men and other class traitors/state torturers to become easily-threatened by nature and those of it as abject, functioning as such through the holistic disempowerment of alienizing positions.

In turn, Cartesian proponents blanch at our social-sexual habits as cultivated by us, including calculated risk and informed consent, but also worker identity-through-struggle as something the state tries to commodify, thus project its trauma, abuse and complicit attitudes on. To that, our own identities and behaviors must become like Athena's Aegis; i.e., a black mirror that paralyzes the state through revolutionary cryptonymy by showing them (and us) their true fragility in the face of ridiculously "dangerous" things. Like brave, brave Sir Robin, the state's sexist enforcers promptly recoil and soil themselves the first moment the rabbit—normally a prey animal—bares its "sharp, pointy teeth" and draws blood. Remember, boys, it's only a flesh wound!



([concept art from Dragon's Crown, 2013](#))

Like a killer rabbit, "the enemy is both weak and strong." And though language is naturally fluid, Capitalism—like a deck within a house of cards—mixes canonical metaphors to defend itself with (whereas Gothic

Communism furtively swaps in iconoclastic doubles to undermine Capitalism's hold on worker minds). In order to fortify their own tenuous, absurd positions *under* Capitalism, fascist 'fraidy-cats install various superstitions informed by their own menticide and broad canonical praxis interacting back and forth over time; i.e., moral panic as increasingly vengeful against nature, blaming anyone except for those actually responsible for rape as an ongoing apology: the state, but also the state's actors.

To this, canonical "decks" shuffle and exchange cards, doing anything they can to, as Meerloo's *Rape of the Mind* describes it, turn words into "verbocratic" emotional triggers/conditioners instead of sources of independent thought:

Propagandistic lies and catchphrases are an inexorable feature of totalitarianism. Repeated countless times from countless angles, the effect is to drill the desired thinking until accepted as truth. "Double talk" characterizes much of the narrative, with words like "freedom" [or witch] redefined to support the lies [e.g., of the witch as dangerous]. **Words**

become emotional triggers and conditioners instead of sources of independent thought ([source](#)).

"Verbocracy" historically-materially crystalizes through various Cartesian-coded behaviors the state encourages through bourgeois propaganda in all its forms—the knife dick as something to brandish. This "saber-rattling" becomes something to challenge through our own praxial synthesis during liminal expression; e.g., porn and monsters as things to camp, thus raise awareness about rape through our bodies as things to gossip with in opposition to state education as endlessly repeated; i.e., Cartesian dualism as predicated on raping the natural world through "unthinking" (according to Descartes) extensions of said world (the paradox being that so-called "thinking beings" become knee-jerk killers who don't think at all; they react).

I want to end this section of the roadmap—and by extension conclude Volume One—through a series of four exhibits that examine rape in pornographic, liminal expression; i.e., as a transgressive commentary on human bodies that can synthesize proletarian praxis, mid-opposition, counteracting the state's Cartesian takes on porn to blunt their proverbial knife dicks. Just as liminality is expressed through conflict within thresholds and on the surface of things, pornography is generally controlled and fought over by those who wish to compel profit through binary sexuality versus those who want to liberate sex and gender from the state's heteronormative constraints using Gothic expression. The emphasis of these exhibits is racialized; i.e., the gender binary as settler-colonial in ways that stress a racialized character from bodies of different skin colors (exhibits 32a and b), physical types (skinny vs fat, exhibit 32c) and monstrous forms of expression (vampires, exhibit 32d) that speak to Cartesian trauma as something to live with and *prevent* in the future.

Sex-coercive BDSM actually includes a *gradient* of impotence echoed in canonical porn pastiche; i.e., not just "knife dicks," but someone "under" the state worker—a slave or token class traitor (which is basically a slave)—aping the blade: "prison sex" mentality. Under this mindset, an unwilling third can be conditioned to fuck another worker the way the state, thus the privileged worker, wants them to: according to the torturer's canonical, alien-fetishistic worldview (and fatal promised glory, post-slaughter¹⁸³) handed to them like a knife by the state, then synonymized with their biology as "all they are." Insect politics.

¹⁸³ Generally of the hero, but also the hero's *victims*, whereupon the conqueror's death is enshrined in a vault of worship pushing the mythic life-and-death glory forward into new, unsuspecting minds. Or as my thesis volume argues,

In other words, canon (thus Capitalism) is full of ritual sacrifice with a Christianized flavor (crucifixion) or Westernized abuse of paganized forms whose divine right revives the glory of recuperated Roman aesthetics (the Nazi as quasi-pagan); e.g., the sacrificial rooster or lamb, the virgin or scapegoat, as something to bleed out for significance and good fortune, but also



(artist: [Pancake Pornography](#))

One "card" in the state's aforementioned "deck," then, is racialized fetishization through traumatic penetration; i.e., the BBC as an internalized, "fattened" metaphor for phallic implements of state terror by black men against women (and other recipients) but classically white women. Originally on the plantations and colonies of the antebellum American South, the white man's toxic view of the black man's "giant animal cock"

historically has become slave canon, *post hoc*—mythologized and repurposed to be turned on white women as a fearful prophecy fulfilled through sex-coercive rituals, then gargoyle-ish abstractions and extensions of those rituals: female gargoyles attacking perceptions of rape inside but also *outside* white populations, becoming vigilantes during interracial rape fantasies where they embody givers and receivers of sexual abuse in terrifying forms (state terror as a weapon). The cock needn't



literally be black, even—simply "too big" to be considered "white" within settler-colonial models, thus able to cause pain relative to traumatic penetration as something to threaten in oft-Gothic forms: being too big.

(artist: [Slugbox](#))

Echoes of nightly slave abuse, then, have survived into the present—first lauded by powerful men like Woodrow Wilson towards D. W. Griffith's

stalled demise for the holder of the knife: the Christ-like Herculean warrior as babyface or heel to sacrifice when the state's crises enter decay while firing up production, which in turn requires more and more sacrifice the hotter the furnace gets. Engorged, the elite need ever more blood to satisfy their hunger as the ultimate parasite, thus demand of their loyal followers, "Defend our land; defend *your* land from the infidels" (which curiously the elite stole the land from, to begin with). As Hitler put it, "What is life? Life is the nation. The individual must die anyway. Beyond the life of the individual is the nation" ([source](#)).

aforementioned "black, rebellious slaves violate white women" rape fantasy, *The Birth of a Nation*, followed by Giger's xenomorph as a postcolonial "lawn jockey" later crystalized by 1980s' porn hauntologies (below). Something for moderates to preserve and for reactionaries to return to, said porn becomes an unironic product to consume and embody through canonical praxis; and it is precisely this kind of pornography we must *de facto* synthesize into healthier forms of sex-positive education (counterterror):



(exhibit 32a: Artists: Victoria Paris and Sean Michaels. Since I'm writing about oppositional praxis as liminal expression [the execution of dialectical-material theory within thresholds] in porn pastiche, here's a collage thereof: the black star athlete enjoying his forbidden prize, the white blonde in wifely silks. They kiss, then begin, him removing her panties and starting to fuck her. From every angle you can think of, the camera is curious and invasive, showing you things normally left to the fearful-fascinated imagination. Literally "sex with the lights on," the makers have placed these sights behind a canonical paywall; i.e., in medieval language, it's a Catholic "sale of indulgence" or return to canonical norms. Rejected by Martin Luther and Protestantism during the Iconoclasm, this only led to the Protestant work ethic and Puritanism through American labor during the 20th century—work being holy and sold sex being unholy but profitable. In turn, this oscillating schism remained curiously in place under Reagan's tenure, a high time of profitability during the latter-end of the "[Golden Age of Porn](#)." VHS offered up a mass-produced, widely disseminated reprieve from one's holy work through a taste of unholy decadence, laziness and unlawful carnal knowledge: blondie likes that big

black dick, not only taking all of it like a champ but fucking back, power-bottom style.)

The above exhibit might seem "harmlessly" cliché, but Gothic canon treats "black" as synonymous with "aggressively violent and racist" according to repressed sexual desires in the 20th and 21st centuries; i.e., black men sleeping with white women as a common source of contention among reactionary white men (and their token subordinates) declaring a state of emergency spearheaded by *foreign* knife dicks: a crisis of unwanted black penetration against white women. While canonical porn is full of whitewashed appropriations like these, it reaches back to older conflicts in American history we must dig up and confront. Generally uglier things are preceded by cryponyms of various kinds, including sex; but sex is generally a part of the problem being discussed in psychosexual bedlam.

For example, before the Wilmington Massacre of 1898, the Reconstruction-era town had black-owned businesses and politicians—until a white-supremacist mob retaliated with violence. This included a local racist editorial printing malicious slander against the black population, saying the latter were the rapists of white women (and implying that having "sheathed black daggers," the modesty of white women was compromised forever):

Newspapers meanwhile spread claims that African Americans wanted political power so they could sleep with white women, and made up lies about a rape epidemic. When Alexander Manly, owner and editor of the Wilmington Daily Record, published an editorial questioning the rape allegations and suggesting that white women slept with black men of their own free will, it enraged the Democratic party and made him the target of a hate campaign ([source](#): Toby Luckhurst's "Wilmington 1898," 2021).

Afterward, the town exploded into violence, resulting in the only successful domestic coup in American history. The massacre included a machine gun-armed white mob targeting and killing people of color and their allies. Sound familiar? Kyle Rittenhouse and the Proud Boys are merely copycats in a long tradition of upholding racist violence in the United States. This is not a glitch, but the system defending itself through bad-faith arguments projecting state rape onto state victims. Any voice of the oppressed must occur through the same basic dialog—in short, because that's where power is concerned, thus amounts to where people are already looking and surviving.

The blindness of such gazes can be undone through iconoclastic narratives that subvert rape; i.e. ironic or critical rape fantasies that remove the harmful capabilities of the knife dick as a settler-colonial tool. These aren't always playful in an obvious sense. For instance, the Wilmington Massacre inspired Charles W. Chesnutt's *The Morrow of Tradition* (1901), an Austen-style novel-of-manners that

devolves into a horrible riot partway through due to escalating racial tensions inspired by a local white supremacist newspaper. This paradigm shift was codified—teased decades later, post-Civil Rights movement, by canonical '80s wish fulfillment; i.e., of canonical American pornography as a widespread extension of unchecked systemic American racism. The general sentiment stems from Lost Cause, Jim Crow and white supremacy and extends into various future groups like the Proud Boys. This happens through canonical behaviors and sentiments; i.e., coded behaviors taught by porn as incredibly body-centric, but also divisive regarding nature as alien under Cartesian rule.

This brings us to a corporal threshold, one the elite—try as they might—cannot fully monopolize in demon BDSM linked to Satanic morphological expression; i.e., the body and its knife dick (or *vagina dentata*) as a poetic offshoot of a greater inhuman¹⁸⁴ presence; e.g., Medusa's snakes, Lilith's demons; Sauron's orcs, the alien queen's insect brood or Dagon's spawn; Cain's son Grendel, Dracula's thralls, etc, that reproduce in non-heteronormative ways (sodomy effectively meaning "non-PIV sex") to endlessly produce armies of invincible barbarians, which as "forces of darkness/nature-run-amok" (e.g., Alex Jones' "gay frogs") must be conquered by state champions during returning "hard times"¹⁸⁵ that demand the knife dick's resumed employment (which promises a bloody harvest to enrich the state-in-decay to a former glorious position).

First, we'll examine the elite's attempts at monopoly through Cartesian domination, then our counterterrorist responses dulling their blades in relation to what they cannot fully control as ours for the taking: our bodies reversing the process of abjection, hence psychosexual expression tied to various alien body types embodying nature and dark godly power that, in iconoclastic hands, can sever themselves from heteronormative sexuality (several of which we explored already in the manifesto: the BBC and BBW, "[Prey as Liberators](#)").

For us, this accounts for transition within thresholds amid perpetual trauma (in and around the body as part of nature) as a lived and inherited experience; but for those with relative privilege, said bodies are consumed—especially their swollen/cursed status (and tortured expression regarding state trauma) invoking those naughty of-nature sex fantasies that cis-het men—as beings of Civilization—aren't supposed to have, watching

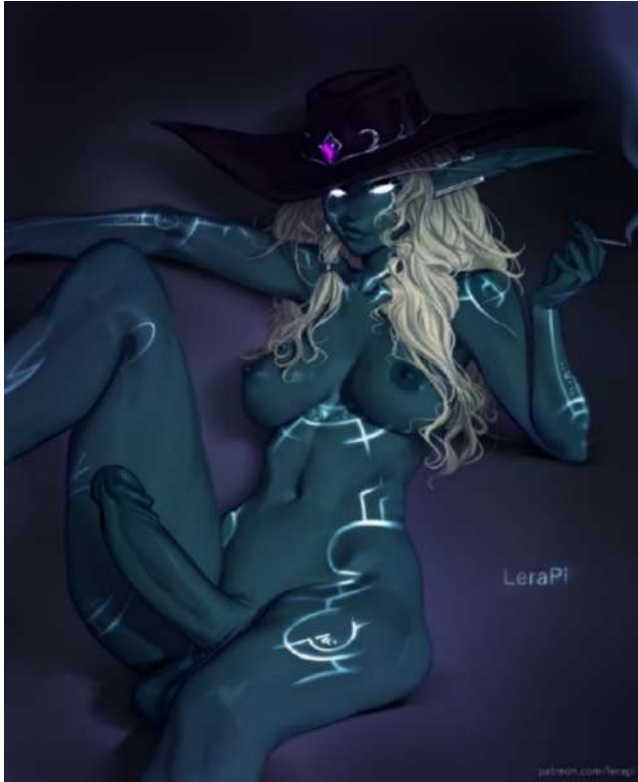
¹⁸⁴ Nature-as-alien canonically achieves demonic power (allegory through transformation) through sexual reproduction tied to an inhuman stigma-animal life cycle; e.g., Kafka's *Metamorphosis* (1915) but also the xenomorph.

¹⁸⁵ From Bret Devereaux' "Hard Times Don't Make Strong Soldiers," 2020): "'Hard times create strong men, strong men create weak times, weak times create weak men, and weak men create hard times.' The quote, from a postapocalyptic novel by the author G. Michael Hopf, sums up a stunningly pervasive cyclical vision of history—one where Western strategists keep falling for myths of invincible barbarians" ([source](#)).

- *their* white women get fucked by a well-endowed black man's BBC (exhibit 32b)
- a white man (their avatar) fucking a woman of color (exhibit 32b)
- a PAWG ("Phat [already colonized vice: "pretty hot and tempting"]-Ass White Girl," exhibit 32b/41b)
- BBWs, which fetishize the female body in a return to pre-Cartesian appreciative forms; i.e., the Rubenesque, *zaftig* form revived in the modern age (exhibit 32c)

Such sanctioned voyeurism frames nature as grossly abject, its excessive trespasses tied to "interracial mixings" that aren't allowed in "decent" society but curiously wait on standby in racialized pornographic forms; i.e., by powerful American companies with lateral neoliberal ties to a Christian executive. Under Reagan's rule, porn flourished, as did the AIDS crisis and moral panic. Simply put, it was profitable. It might have clashed with his pure, family-friendly image, but it was far more lucrative to simply look the other way or scapegoat "the Gays" than it was to prevent *harmful* porn outright.

Canonical fetishes concern psychosexual violence through a Cartesian profit motive under which bodies become swollen fruits to harvest by knife-life genitals—albeit in a variety of psychosexual, alienizing ways per marginalized group: fat people vs white women vs people of color and their various intersections in undead, demonic and/or totemic forms. It is here where we must recognize the clichés and fetishes on their face; i.e., on our *own* bodies as fundamentally made of the same stuff in subjugated/complacent forms, but which offer up a proletarian function whose decision to fetishize ourselves in a subversive "exquisitely torturous" manner pointedly challenges the Cartesian profit motive (and knife dicks' unironic rape scenarios brutalizing nature) in service to our basic human rights. Both types exist at the same time, and invoke similar forms of Gothic nostalgia presenting the body (and its genitals) as terrifying and powerful, albeit in ways that are controlled by state forces serving Cartesian ends; i.e., exploited for their labor value along racialized lines (exhibit 32b) that must be reclaimed through bodies of all kinds employing a dark Satanic power that, while adjacent to sexual reproduction, isn't the same thing as it or its knife-like enforcement.



(artist: [Lera PI](#))

Nor is it a perfect copy of the state's function of such devices. Instead of creating demons, per se, you have creative morphological expression as a *double* of state implements, resembling them but divorced through the paradox of terror¹⁸⁶ from the Cartesian means of alienating and fetishizing the monstrous-feminine as human-versus-animal: abject sexual reproduction, wherein the genitals become a knife to cause harm against nature. State predation fattens the human body but also consequently makes it into something that feels hideous, insect, and brood-like despite a relatively comely (or at least humanoid, above)

outer guise. To that, any creativity that upends the status quo (also above) in this respect must humanize the usual targets of Cartesian violence treating people like vermin-in-disguise—a broad iconoclasm whose Satanic rebellion includes fat people (exhibit 32c) as "non-white" extensions of the natural world as normally penetrated and drained of their resources by Cartesian agents. If someone is fat, they are "dark," thus incorrect for anything *but* the harvest, whose traumatic penetration and exterminatory slicing during harmful BDSM turns them into a variety of food types, but especially porn fetishizes (thus unironic psychosexual violence) for those both starved of sex and addicted to harmful, fetishized (thus alien) versions of it.

This reprobate punishment becomes something to face and acknowledge, mid-harvest inside Americanized media "stabbing the peach"

¹⁸⁶ Further paradoxes endemic to capital (and its ghoulish maintenance) include the precarious existence of a stigma-animal monster that should both not exist in the presence of immutable sovereignty and, conversely, a decayed imperium that requires an exterminable chattel to conjure up like a plague and exterminate/prey upon to demonstrate so-called "total power" as faced with "external," alien menaces. As an elaborate and conflicting series of lies, then, Capitalism yields bizarre liminalities by design (the inside/outside, correct-correct).



(exhibit 32b: Artists: Heavenly Peaches and Advoree [the others are unknown or Google searches]. Pardon the expression, but interracial porn isn't black-and-white. Rather, it assigns forbidden qualities to different fetishized bodies that historically-materially have different degrees of preferential mistreatment as "fruit for the harvest." On paper, men are the universal clientele, with black men [and their BBCs] being framed as rapacious and white men as reprobate [which in Calvinism, a form of Protestantism, means "predestined to damnation"—i.e., "damned at birth," but also "god-fearing"]. Women, meanwhile, are divided in settler-colonial terms: white women as "modest" provided they avoid being "like black women," the latter being animalistic and full of gross, "demonic"¹⁸⁷ indulgences. However, these various qualities can transfer from body to body—the fucker, the fucked, the sinner and the sinful associated with a gradient of skin color, organ size and body type. Generally, too, the booty and "doggystyle" are seen as sinful, secular or pagan ways of performing sex—non-missionary sex, in other words. Colonized variants of doggy generally present sexual activity and its attached body parts to rituals of compelled social-sexual domination, historically-materially tied to state violence. Pornographic expression can be reclaimed, of course, but those

¹⁸⁷ A Neo-Gothic trope—of demonizing Catholic excess—that stuck to people of color through racist Enlightenment thought/settler colonialism haunting the ghost of the counterfeit.

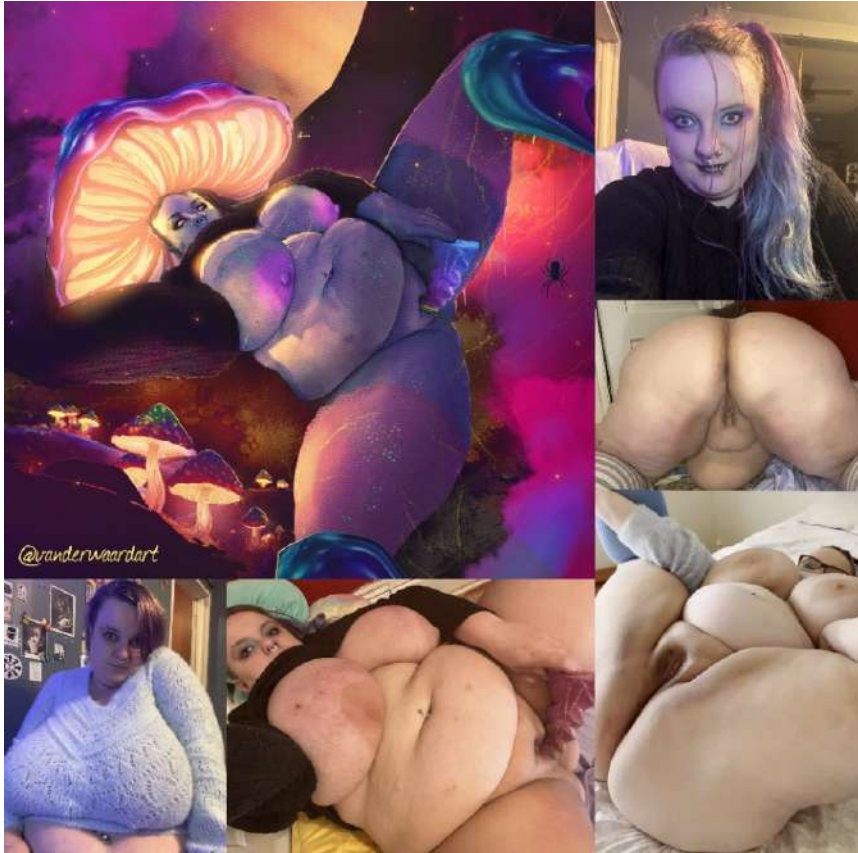
reclaiming it must partake in stigmatized rituals symbolically loaded with racist phobias and guilt; e.g., "It's bad luck to do it doggy because God is watching." Not only does Capitalism instill a sense of guilt within all workers; it grants the sinner a desire to rebel against a higher power by said power—i.e., the Paradox of Evil materialized as reactive abuse inside a high-control group's test of faith, then disseminated under neoliberal Capitalism. Porn is a test destined to fail, thus meant to instill already undernourished workers with even more social-sexual guilt—menticide, through and through.)

and then transition endlessly away from psychosexual self-harm (seeing oneself as "knife-like¹⁸⁸") as a Cartesian byproduct regardless of where one is relative to the settler colony (which commodifies bodies differently based on location and type); i.e., towards an ironic, xenophilic state of self-acceptance whose complicated self-liberation happen though self-(GNC)-expression: humanizing the harvest. The fruit's still delicious; it's just not dehumanized and sliced up for profit, or slicing others up as such.

Synthesized within capital using our bodies' counterterrorist function, doing so rescues *our* forbidden fruit and Satanic potential; i.e., girl talk, camp and monsters that yield creatively rebellious, liberating forms to exonerate Hell with, thus poetically open up hellish channels whose otherworldly gateways of exquisite, pleasurable "torture" hammer swords into ploughshares. This playful, consciously sex-positive xenophilia deftly subverts Cartesian norms, half-real perceptions of sovereignty and pretend state monopolies backed by actual lies, force and xenophobic manufacture (the trifectas) using Gothic poetics; i.e., across our lives and the lives of those we touch within a shared, at times incredibly soupy dialogic: a caterpillar that less turns into a butterfly whose symbolic metamorphosis the state fears, and more staying as it is ("dummy thicc") while remaining equally fearsome¹⁸⁹:

¹⁸⁸ A very trans-femme fear—speaking from experience with this one.

¹⁸⁹ Like the zombie, pain lives in the body and around it, the broader world. It bottles up like a potion, that if not "uncorked," will explode in ways the state knows how to handle (through settler-colonial force). Sometimes, the best course of action is to open it and let things breathe, giving others a taste in the process—not fruit from the poison tree, but from the Tree of Knowledge exposing God (and Cartesian thought) as tyrannical. We've already discussed how state forces like to invade discos as breeding grounds for rebel action. If they invade *this* time, they won't find a monster to kettle, but Athena's Aegis; i.e., as a part of collaborators actually having fun that, when opened, like Pandora's Box cannot be closed again. Like the *xenomorph*, it cannot be killed and will never obey the state: a liminal, spirit-monarch "Galatea" that will serve no one, can never be destroyed or fully recuperated and may create anything out of anything. In short, it is free to self-fashion and self-determine, but is hunted by xenophobic canonical agents, who style its uncontrolled, xenophilic opposition as *their* Great Destroyer—e.g., the arch-fiend, or technological singularity (more on this, in Volume Two).

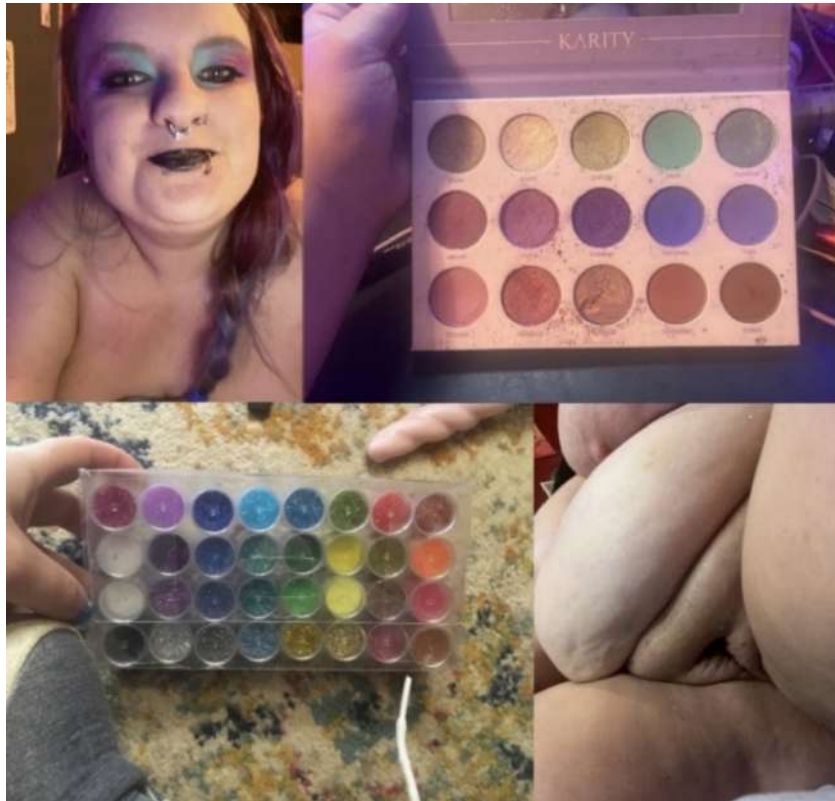


(exhibit 32c: Model and artist: [Sinead Rhiannon](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#). Sinead describes faer chubby caterpillar body as "basically a fat Barbie with holes"—not to depreciate its transformative value, but appreciate something that is desirable precisely because it is different and can be played with accordingly by two [or more] consenting parties. Larger bodies are canonically associated with/fetishized as

stigma animals, Satanic hunger and vice, but also nutrients and vitality as something to enjoy in an iconoclastic, bacchanal manner between both sides; i.e., fruit-like, ripe and waiting to be sampled: the BBW as a pornographic treat laced with shame, which must be reclaimed by subverting said shame and its psychosexual violence harvesting fat bodies like chattel. The trick is to reverse European beauty standards [thus heteronormativity and settler-colonial dogma and animal stigmas] while expressing the desires and frustrations that these persons have, and which they express through their Satanic bodies and art in ways that evoke and revive the Rubenesque imaginary past to challenge the status quo in more inclusive, animalistic hauntologies.

*To that, fatness becomes a symbol to reclaim through language and negotiated play going hand-in-hand; e.g., as Sinead explains, "fat" is a generally-accepted neutral term in the fat community whereas a word like "ob*se" is considered a slur and should be avoided. Beyond spoken or written language, the reclamation of fat bodies through fat liberation [and not just positivity as something to sell to those with means] is partially devoted to consumption as a symbol that can be reclaimed from canonical forms, but has a hauntological [nostalgic] flavor—i.e., the likes of Rubens, Rembrandt and other Renaissance painters who had a different way of appreciating larger bodies in that period that has since become commodified in Western society and American hegemony on the global stage, but whose modern canon still has a dated flavor to it that evokes the stigmas of the Catholic church*

and fears of "outside" groups tied to forbidden desires and knowledge. The idea is to challenge Cartesian "othering" through our bodies and artwork, the collaborations that we do with other artists/SWers working towards the same goal: humanizing each other as normally harvested by the elite and their watchdogs.



For Sinead, this theatricality is highly specific: "My specialty is creatively costumed characters and corresponding fantasy-scene concepts including a super-wide variety of kink and dynamic options, and that I have a passion for glitter and chaos." And fae often specifically caters to queer porn consumers using faer succulent body as plentiful, but also fantastical; i.e., the content fae makes for cis men is usually kind of an afterthought [and said

men usually pay the misgendering upcharge]. Fae thinks it's important, since content designed for people who aren't cis men can be harder to find in general. And this is something I can help fae with through my art. The message I hope to convey through our negotiated labor exchange is something Sinead feels strongly about: "Like, it's definitely getting easier to find queer porn, but a lot of queer and trans porn creators will still market heavily to cis men because they're at least perceived to be the vast, vast, vast majority of the consumer market." In other words, we want to appreciate queer culture sans pandering to the status-quo customer base who normally objectify us and commodify our struggles as Satanic during moral panics; i.e., fat bodies, in Sinead's case, tied to pagan precursors to Satan as an animalistic religious figure of pre-Christian natures harvested by Cartesian forces: witches and faeries, Easter and Samhain [re: the monstrous-feminine "lady of the harvest," but also said lady's wild, forest-animal servants]. For us, the struggle[s] and solution[s] intersect.)

With exhibits 32a, b, and c, we're returning to past forms of canonical media and studying them (and their Cartesian trauma) as codified worker relations and

BDSM rituals; i.e., in anti-Cartesian ways that let workers learn to interpret canon for themselves—to understand its imaginary past from every angle, then repurpose and recreate demonic BDSM (the knife dick and the "pumpkin" it carves) through iconoclastic praxis in their own liminal forms. To this, pornography is extremely liminal under Capitalism, forced between states of consent and non-consent that cannot be easily determined; i.e., due to hyperreal depictions of beautiful smiling workers that historically cannot consent slowly having more rights but being tied to images traditionally associated with trauma: sex demons. The aim, here, is to challenge the "ghost of the counterfeit" in canonical porn: the penis (and traumatic penetration) as a codified threat of Cartesian rape and violence and the pussy (and by extension nature as "fat, sassy and dark") the recipient; i.e., the torturer and the tortured through all the usual harvests. Whether a literal knife or dark "horseflesh," these manmade rituals and coercive, toy-like fetishes invoke canonical praxis to evoke a rapacious Symbolic Order that compels sex worker submission. For example, unironic xenophobia affects men of color as scapegoated, animalistic rapists, while generations of cis-het white women collectively recognize rape through oral traditions passed down under reactive abuse. Over time, man's natural "toy" starts to mirror the historical-material version, becoming one-in-the-same for wounded, scared victims: "Parents with sons have to worry about one penis; parents with daughters have to worry about all of them" (as if fathers can't rape their sons).

The grander counterterrorist moral isn't simply that traumatic penetration is psychosexual violence, which fetishes corporally represent; it's that such devices can be reclaimed through iconoclastic praxis during liminal expression, wherein one chooses to fetishize oneself in controlled, informed psychosexual terms. Despite the ambivalent, conflicted nature of Gothic language, the awesome power to set ourselves free lives within us and our bodies as transcendent gateways to better worlds of infinite possibility framed as "impossible" by Capitalist Realism. Except, Hell—if it is to be a home for all of nature criminalized by Cartesian thought—must be a place on Earth. We must become of two worlds, then, "half-bred" to wreak havoc and sow discord towards a better kind of place than Cartesian order does when enforced by moderate cunning and reactionary brutes' usual dogma. Their knife dicks rape and kill; ours "rape" and "kill" to drain our would-be-murders' potency when aiming their weapons against us. They freeze under our power insofar as we humanize ourselves in their eyes and expose them as the brutalizers.

To this, Gothic-Communist instruction occurs through praxial synthesis telling a different story than canon does, the latter's norms preying on nature and bodies tied to nature as something to harvest ("fat" being the classic state of something "ready-for-harvest"). By humanizing the harvest, the butt needn't be a symbol of chattel, nor its owner's smiling face a forced *Doki-Doki-Literature-Club*-style mask. The smile of the soon-to-be-fucked can be genuine; when the owner raises their butt, they can illustrate mutual consent, indicating how they *actively* want it from

being hard-up: begging for some dick a particular way from a particular type of person while reclaiming the activity with their body and all too happy to do so—i.e., "We are not animals, nor are we guilty or afraid. Now gimme." It becomes vitalistic in a vampiric way that celebrates the transmission of essence and vitality through all the usual vectors, minus the stigmas; i.e., a revival of older pre-Cartesian ways for seeing the world, updated for the kinds of dialogs-under-capital that have carefully evolved to bring these monsters (and their complicated humanity under state oppression) out into the open: a vampire standing in daylight, making them *sparkle*.

Trauma is always adjacent to sexuality and performance, but needn't determine the outcome. Insofar as harm can be reduced to calculated risk in forms of iconoclastic playfulness, the imaginary past remains plastic, thus can be recoded by empowering monstrous aesthetics with a critical-instructional edge, but also *jouissance*; e.g., the vampire as a play on rape theatre, traumatic penetration (stakes and fangs) and vitalistic power exchange through medieval language as reclaimed by ludo-Gothic BDSM; i.e., from Cartesian thought's bad instruction under capital: a harvesting of sanguine that enriches both parties through informed consent that profanes the church and returns to nature.



(exhibit 32d: Model and artist: [Casper Clock](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#). A huge part of my work is about updating pre-Enlightenment/settler-colonial nostalgia with a more inclusive Renaissance hauntology [medieval nostalgia]. Older authors discussed sin, pleasure and vice, and while they didn't necessarily have queer language and queerness was [at least in the West] associated with sexual/gendered

actions and not identities, this changed in the late 18th century in ways that canonized harmful variants of the medieval past and Gothic nostalgia; e.g., the demonization of Catholic excess linked to "non-white" bodies and heteronormative standards that basically fetishized other standards and descriptive genders and sexualities as "other." Basically anything "Satanic"/sodomitic became subject to state violence and control, whose abuses were then turned into shameful commodities; e.g., the homosexual man as a vampire, or the fat white woman as "black" in the stigmatized but also racialized sense. Race and sin, but also forbidden knowledge/devil worship, smashed together in the Enlightenment period, sold as vapors in Neo-Gothic novels before becoming more and more commodified during the 20th and 21st centuries.)

As we've discussed, vampirism (and porn at large) operates through various degrees of visibility and stealth during the liminal hauntology of war (and rape): "cruising" behind various layers of anonymity that treat the closet, dive bar bathroom stall, or backseat of a car as a cryptonym to turn Athena's Aegis on our menticed foes, immobilizing them. We want to challenge this synonymous fusing of the marginalized body with violence, but also the canonical linking of all of these things to nature-as-alien; i.e., to a heteronormative binding of sex to gender hopelessly tied to human biology that weaponizes our shame against us while throwing our descriptive genders, sexualities and performances into an abject, self-policed state of existence.

So however ancient or modern—and whether it occurs inside a bathroom stall, church antechamber or coffin recorded at high definition or on a potato—the violent and sexual stories of kayfabe and the Gothic should speak to our experiences inside a settler colony while enjoying psychosexual likeness of systemic adversity we overcome on all performative and lived registers; e.g., the palliative-Numinous inside the castled Gothic opera. This intersectional solidarity also includes whatever generations we hail from, or degrees to which we openly or not-so-openly get by and off as on and offstage blend together (to various degrees of stillness and trembling under disturbing sensations speaking to our trauma as inherited across generations). But this also requires accounting for potential allies during revolutionary cryptonymy while speaking to and from own complicated experiences intermingling with others' similar to, and incredibly different from, ours. Sooner or later, it has to meld, but it's up to us fags (and other minorities) to speak with our voices: our drama not as a piece of popcorn food for the Straights (who are often part of the problem), but a means to tell them know, however imperfectly, the way we feel in relation to them inside the Imperial Core.

To escape the closeted freakshow status of nature-as-abject, we can employ monstrous language that allows for sex-positive forms of essence, knowledge and power exchange through ludo-Gothic BDSM; e.g., not just the Amazon or knight, damsel or demon, but the vampire (queer person), gross person (fat/muscular) or person of color, etc, as combined with a whole *army* of Gothic status symbols and arrangements of power and control. As profound ontological statements concerned with Cartesian abuse, these make up a collective ludo-Gothic paradox/educational act; i.e., rooted in Gothic play and psychosexual performance, thus adjacent to phallic harm as normally produced by the state and which we to overthrow through



cryptonymic rebellion: to look the part, but no longer play it by refusing to obey the elite's evil commands; e.g., as Anubis does to Emperor Tulpa: "Ronins, I am one of you!"

Per the knife dick, there are legions of examples in how Cartesian thought fetishizes nature to chattelize it, and the non-white/fat body or vampire are only three by which to camp canon with.

Regardless of the monster (or body type/gender) being performed, reverse-abject revelations reunite viewers with an old truth mythologized by Capitalism, but also liminalized by it: Maybe women/GNC persons *like* being "ravished," playfully using the old rituals and monstrous language in transformative studies of subversive, even transgressive expression—i.e., an iconoclasm that respects the past and wisely fears its tyrants, then laughs in their withered, old zombie faces by placing "rape" in quotes as a means of applying theory through cultivated habits that humanize the harvest. It does so by reclaiming the "tools" of worker enslavement for these same workers to "revisit" linguistic sites of Cartesian trauma with, and heal from its traumatic penetration through a reclaimed social-sexual ritual (we'll be sure to examine asexual modes of expression in Volume Three, I promise): "Watch us get fucked the way we want to, by whatever sex organs (or toys) we choose *together!*"

During ludo-Gothic BDSM, the knife or the stake becomes camped, thus placed in quotes, but remains a time-consuming process; intelligence and awareness are drained by state xenophobia and must be restored over time through good-faith instruction—i.e., through reliable, time-tested means: power and sex, but also ironic xenophilia and appreciative peril more broadly acting as rewards. Their instructive pleasure and pleasurable pain (divorced from harm) can synthesize good social-sexual habits according to our manifesto arguments (and thesis backbone): a culture of state terror versus a Gothic counterculture of worker counterterror performing informed mutual consent, whose pedagogy of the

oppressed delivers appreciative irony *vis-à-vis* Cartesian trauma. Power lies in Gothic theatre as something to reclaim from our colonizers.



(artist: [Jahfy](#))

Cartesian thought treats workers as meat without ironic "rape" scenarios/calculated risk to safeguard them from genuine xenophobic harm; e.g., the palliative Numinous as an ironically xenophilic, thus beneficial ritual. As stewards, not harvesters of nature, we need to heed the dual function of fetishes when partaking in "exquisite torture" ourselves (and in ways that avoid Radcliffe's openly spifflicating demon lovers). Subversion is our most potent weapon because its gender trouble and parody can transform the relationship between Heaven and Hell as a dialectical-material conversation. Post-

Milton, anything that has the power to liberate through creation—especially morphological expression divorced from sexual reproduction—will be canonically fetishized by default; i.e., the Gothic and its "darkness visible" of the Satanic rebel; e.g., the thinking woman as alien and insectoid, but also darkly delicious when put to heel by Cartesian forces. In iconoclastic terms, such a double can hijack the aesthetic of power and death (re: Sontag's black leather) to willingly act out the powerful mommy dom "destroying" the subby femboy (above) as they repurpose torture language (and "traumatic" penetration) as decedent, salubrious and various other complicated emotions¹⁹⁰; i.e., speaking to our experiences as identities (not

¹⁹⁰ Hollow, gutted, like dead meat; reduced to chattel, vermin; but also destroyed in a Numinous sense, trapped between the living and the dead, often in animalized forms of an undead/demonic poetic. Volume Two shall examine why someone inside the state of exception might choose to identify with a given stigma animal as alien: the parasitoid insect, gory worm, hoarding vermin, bloated broodmother or slimy octopus, etc. And likewise we'll consider why these feelings might be close to trauma and home as confused, thus closeted, contradictory and repressed: like a vampire in a coffin or a corpse underground, surrounded by the likeness of death, ensconced within self-hatred and decay as something to, like Sontag's death theatre, turn inside-out. Doubles make this potent, campy inversion not only possible, but practical, even preferable inside alien costumes while interrogating and negotiating power and trauma inside the shadow zone; or as my thesis argues:

good play amounts to Gothic poetics as a potent means of regaining control through reclaimed implements of terror (the manacle, castle, rapist, slur or baton, etc) but also being that which terrifies the state and its proponents to no end: a refusal to conform or obey [...] Despite their poetic nature, performance and play are an absolutely *potent* means of expressing thus negotiating power through the Gothic mode ([source](#)).

Paradox, performance and play during ludo-Gothic BDSM, then, process Cartesian abuse through praxial synthesis, gradually achieving catharsis through a newfound perception of/reunion with nature as liberated from Cartesian models—the harvest freed from the knife.

simply actions) mid-struggle while cruising inside the liminal hauntology of war—all to protect themselves from capital treating them as vermin-like extensions of nature-run-amok: things to sugar-coat, then exterminate. All the same, while fetishes humanize the alien as routinely harvested by Cartesian thought, it's also vital to recognize the oppressed are *not* the fetishes they use to liberate themselves with; e.g., Satan, Dracula or Medusa is a performance, not a person. Even if those fetishizes concern their bodies as dark, queer, fat, or otherwise "other" in the eyes of the state, a fetish is an informed action—a performance tied to a body as one's own by which to identify with nature as abjected by Cartesian dominators.

We'll examine the history of demon BDSM and its evolution/regeneration in Volume Two, and our own present praxis in Volume Three as informed by the past during appreciative irony in Gothic counterculture. For the moment, just remember that, in a post-scarcity world without sin or scapegoats, iconoclasts can use monstrous-liminal expression to return to an older time in a new linguo-material world replete with implements of harm that have yet to be fully reclaimed. This reclamation can be appreciative rape fantasies, but also complex forms of subversive wish fulfillment that instill a liminal, "perceptive" sense of control into the ritualized pastiche of war and rape. It becomes a messy-yet-vital means of gossip through monsters and camp fundamental to proletarian praxis' instruction: revolutionary cryptonymy through torturous devices like the knife dick as fundamentally liminal—a piece of the monster but also a historical-material reflection of state violence interwoven with queer people and other oppressed existences exploited by Cartesian forces. Part of the trauma is interrogating and disentangling ourselves from unironic forms, which involves ambiguity through a shared aesthetic whose function is not set. There's a simultaneous application of disguise and exposure through competing codes that make up revolutionary theatres (which Volume Three's Chapter Five will conclude on): "flashing" exhibits, exhibit 53; breeding kinks, exhibit 87a; and even *ahegao* when handled with care, exhibit 140d, as risky behaviors portrayed as safely as possible: depicting rough sex/consent-non-consent, where workers ultimately stay in control and simultaneously communicate the state's Cartesian divisions to better emancipate sex workers from the harm said divisions cause.

And if the canonical knife penis still sounds like a stretch, remember that a) women are historically the heroines in, and traditional audiences of, Gothic literature; and b) that Joseph Crawford, writing in his introduction to *Gothic Fiction and the Invention of Terrorism* (2013), described "terrorist literature" in the late 18th century (the peak of the Neo-Gothic novel in Britain) as having developed in connection with state fears of worker rebellions' counterterrorism deliberately mislabeled as "terrorism":

The idea of a single Gothic literature of terror, stretching continuously from the 1760s to the present day, imposes a false unity on these early works,

which were referred to as "Gothic stories" only because they were set in the "Gothic ages" (i.e. the medieval or early modern period) rather than the present day, and were more likely to be sentimental romances than tales of terror; the preoccupation with evil, fear, and violence, which is the defining characteristic of later Gothic literature, did not become a prominent part of the genre until the success of Radcliffe's later novels in the 1790s. I thus became increasingly convinced that, although works referring to themselves as "Gothic" had existed since the 1760s, the true roots of the Gothicised rhetoric I had observed in the nineteenth century were to be found not in the anxieties of the mid-eighteenth-century middle classes, but a generation later; in the fearful decade at the century's end.

It was in the 1790s that Gothic fiction and rhetoric first became truly popular in Britain; it was also in these years that Britain, like the rest of Europe, was struggling with the consequences of the French Revolution. [...] In a very real sense, the Revolution *created* Gothic, transforming a marginal form of historical fiction chiefly concerned with aristocratic legitimacy into a major cultural discourse devoted to the exploration of violence and fear ([source](#))

but also, I would argue, on account that it would potentially condition women to disobey their husbands(!) and GNC/colonized workers more broadly to rebel against Cartesian models likes of which Mary Shelley called out in her own works; i.e., to invent not as the state does (us-versus-them) but in the Miltonian Satanic tradition taken beyond what Milton, Marx or many others since thought possible.

The collective idea, then, is to evoke a pedagogy of the oppressed that can be applied through compounding habits that came from Gothic stories reflecting on rape through nature as abjected by Western forces raping the criminal, fetishizing the alien, etc, for profit. The passive, dubious rebellion of Ann Radcliffe (and her demon lovers) is literally history in this regard. Even so, I completely disagree [with Jarad Fennell when he writes](#) that *only* female authors "identify the source of fear and terror as existing outside the self and involve a critique of institutional power" ("Sublime Terror and Uncanny Horror in Gothic Novels," 2023); Lewis, as we've already established in our thesis and manifesto, clearly had much to say about institutional power, but was merely more outlandishly queer/violent about it in ways Radcliffe stayed quite quiet on. Even if you aren't female, of color, queer or non-Christian, you can still be an ally to these postcolonial struggles (far more than Radcliffe was); you needn't be Radcliffe's *banditti* towards nature, the Cartesian man-of-science/capitalist stealing everything behind an abject veneer framing others as alien criminals while you pilfer them and the natural world as dumb, monstrous-feminine and unthinking—easy prey for the Pygmalion genius, the patriarchal overlord, the *Gothic villain*.

Having considered the patriarchal nature of Cartesian dualism raping nature through traumatic penetration—i.e., as enacted by men and tokenized, Amazonian agents, but also pornographic expression—I want to conclude the symposium and the volume with a matriarchal afterthought for you reflect on when synthesizing praxis and subverting potential state trauma, yourselves. To that, I want to give an imperative, lesson, and anecdote to close out the chapter with.

First, the imperative. Now's the time to be active! Absorb, learn, create and share! Whereas Wordsworth once implored, "Let nature be your teacher!" we need to account for nature as it exists presently informed by past-and-future ideas. Help you and your fellow workers, then, by creating a *fresh* socio-educational line of Matrilineal descent; i.e., whose Wisdom of the Ancients challenges the status quo's rotting nepotistic standards. But also? Be bold! Don't be cowed or discouraged. Don't listen if you're told you're "wasting" your time or your talents. Coming from me, a former playmate once chided me for using my Gothic MA degree to get laid (that's a long story but essentially I was writing Gothic roleplays on Kik, Reddit and Fetlife).

However, when they told me "that's not what a master's degree is for!" I replied, "Why not both?" Why not, indeed! The whole point was to expand my mind/intelligence and awareness, hence ability to instruct new people in regards to my trauma; i.e., as something to contribute to a growing pedagogy of the oppressed. If that gets me laid *and* demonstrates revolutionary praxis in defense of nature, then mission accomplished!

(artist: [Hiddend8](#))



Second and third, a lesson and anecdote. Lesson-wise, sex is a wonderful educator but so are sources of education prohibited by capital: performance and play when camping canon in ways that *asexualize* sex and prey on nature; i.e., through public nudism as *de facto* education, versus simply a Cartesian device to arouse visual excitement and nothing else. While there's nothing wrong with

visual stimulation through porn and dark aesthetics (mommy or otherwise), the abject function of Capitalism demonizes Mother Nature to devour *her* as an unironic psychosexual fetish. Generally this is very bad in how it routinely leads to the rape

of nature and workers "of nature" through Cartesian, thus patriarchal, systems of capital justifying nature's "incorrect" forms to sanction her own rape. Porn needs to be perceptive!

However, as Volume Two's exploration of monsters will show us, nature isn't just monstrous-feminine; it's tied to forbidden knowledge, an iconoclastic, xenophilic Wisdom of the Ancients whose combined Humanities modules reveal Cartesian dualism's myriad abuses and xenophobic alienations of nature—as food, but also undead, demonic and totemic. Matrilineal descent, then, is a maverick intellectual pursuit tied to the struggles of everyday life under Patriarchal Capitalism, and one that can cultivate powerful social-sexual habits/pathways in service of sex positivity liberating nature from its patriarchal rapists' perceived air of omnipotence. The door to other worlds—be they the proverbial stars, Hell, or simply "the beyond"—isn't something to dread, but welcome and relish as a



precious opportunity to change into something new. But it *must* occur using the same basic language and aesthetics "passed down" through older monstrous-feminine educators pilfered from Cartesian forms. We're not whitewashing Heaven or breaking into it through some kind of trial to prove ourselves¹⁹¹ to a higher power. We're making Hell our home-to-perceive through the Satanic deities caged inside our own breasts: "The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven."

(artist: [Asu Rocks](#))

To that, I want to give a short anecdote valorizing the very things Cartesian thought would seem to alienate, fetishize and rape: female/monstrous-feminine

education/reinvention as criminal, once-upon-a-time, but also *unthinkable* by Cartesian proponents then-and-now crippled by Capitalist Realism (the paradox of the thinking zombie, demon, animal¹⁹² and alien, etc). Just as Mary Wollstonecraft passed down the privilege of progressive education onto her daughter, Mary Shelley, the women on my mother's side were/are all intellectuals. From my great-

¹⁹¹ I.e., as Milton put it: " Long is the way and hard, that out of Hell leads up to light."

¹⁹² Mary Wollstonecraft was commonly demonized as animal: "Brickbats hurled her way were pretty vicious, 'a hyena in a petticoat,' as well as the usual whore, vixen, emasculator of men" ([source](#): Rosita Sweetman's "Mary Wollstonecraft: 'Hyena in a petticoat,'" 2017).

grandmother to me, they found ways to be active and do things "beyond their stations"; or within them—i.e., my grandmother throwing absolute *shade* Erica's way for doing what she did to Uncle Dave, but also "staying in her lane" by generally letting men cheat because "men cheat, and it's the woman's fault." No one ever said that Gran was perfect, but her imperfection is not absolute, either. Habits are like broken bones; you have to break old injuries to help the bone heal, thus achieve praxial catharsis through synthesis.

For example, my grandmother might be an old battleaxe who actually "does a sexism" quite often; she's still fought plenty of battles for children, including those who weren't her own (she worked in an asylum for mentally ill children for years and looked after the boys and the girls, which the state eventually released back out onto the street to die). To be sure, she often wore her rose-tinted glasses and didn't speak out "for the children's sake" when my grandfather had *his* psychotic breaks; but the moment my mother remembered her own abuse as a child and confirmed it through the wife of a relative (again, girls talk), my grandmother synthesized her daughter's trauma through girl talk as a means of preventing future harm: she confronted the perfidious old man and told him to his face that she fucking *knew* what he did. The old creep confessed and later, Gran and Mom danced on his grave. How's *that* for Gothic?



(photographer: [Robert Massa](#))

End of the Road: Concluding the Roadmap and Volume One

How easy it is to deny the pain / Of someone else's suffering

—Chuck Schuldiner; "Suicide Machine" on Death's Human (1991)

With the roadmap finale concluded, so ends Volume One. Before we segue into Volume Two, I want to quickly (over the next ten pages) reiterate some key things Volume One has covered that you should keep in mind moving forward. You should now have a fairly sound idea of synthesizing praxis through our manifesto and its instruction; i.e., the *conscious* cultivation of social-sexual habits (and those in connection with you) into emotionally and Gothically intelligence and class/cultural awareness regarding state trauma, power and general abuse as things to interrogate, negotiate and replay out on the same shared stages. Your habits should collectively subvert the Cartesian trauma of war and rape using perceptive pastiche and liminal expression during proletarian creative success—in short, to express your own sex positivity and interrogations of trauma and power in opposition to state synthesis and pushback via reactionary behaviors: your



instruction of simplified theory through a collective pedagogy of the oppressed *vis-à-vis* the basics' gossip, monsters and camp versus the state's harmful, unironic forms; i.e., good instruction versus bad, generally through cathartic psychosexuality and ludo-Gothic BDSM.

(artist: [Fugtrup](#))

We'll examine proletarian praxis amid Gothic poetics during Volume Three. As we move onto Volume Two, we will consider *past* proletarian praxis as a social-sexual process of Gothic poetics conveyed through various Humanities-themed modules: the undead, demons and totems. Each will demonstrate how sex-positive egregores have the power to reimagine the material world through creative expression conveyed by a living chain of workers responding to what other workers have already left behind; i.e., subverted trauma as something to reexamine and

continuously negotiate with through a constantly updated Wisdom of the Ancients that reclaims the Base and recultivates the Superstructure by camping canon, raising worker intelligence and awareness during class/culture war amid a shared, intersectional pedagogy of the oppressed. Organically enacted by actively imaginary revolutionaries at various levels, Gothic Communism responds to the status quo of popular media as a disjointed collective seeking to reunite against the state. For this purpose, I'm not entirely trusting of the galaxy-brained eggheads in academia, leaning far more into Edward Said's notion of non-accommodated/marginalized intellectuals. I specifically want to apply Said's concept to various generations of artistic and sex-working persons: those of the Baby Boomer generation, Gen X, the Millennial generation, and Gen Z synthesizing praxis on artistic platforms and social media more broadly.

In doing so, Gothic Communism seeks update the flow of absorption—the literal direction and control of disseminated information and how it changes the way mass media is perceived and consumed; i.e., how we see ourselves as workers in relation to nature and the material world, and how praxial inertia and resistance are overcome through paradox. This elaborate strategy of misdirection (re: Frederic Jameson) can use iconoclastic praxis to push back against canon in ways those in power will notice and respond to, albeit in ways state-sanctioned force cannot "solve." Indeed, state reprisals only historically-materially bring marginalized communities closer together, "girl-talking" more and more as a means of community defense/rape and trauma prevention against an ancestral, systemic foe that exposes their embarrassing failings in ways only impotent, callow men can generate.



([source](#): Maya Oppenheim's "Incel Culture Should Be Classed as Terrorism," 2021)

Iconoclasm is seldom black-and-white. Rather, development requires decolonization as a liminal proposition of gatekept thresholds; re: whose "Imperialism of theories" (re: Norton) extend historically-materially beyond the

academic world and into a public Gothic; i.e., Gothic language and its complex, liminal expressions of power as colonized/decolonized during oppositional praxis by everyday workers, literally synthesized through the social-sex lives of those for or against the state. Gothic-Communist revolution is prolonged, subversive struggle,

reclaiming canonical pastiche/praxis in liminal, "perceptive" forms that slowly open the gates and keep them open: our minds, our language, our creations, our praxis liberated through intersectional solidarity.

As already stated, I don't consider pastiche to simply be "blind parody" like Jameson's *Postmodernism* (1991) does; there's room for ironic parody and satire, as well as enjoyment of canonical material without endorsing it. Through complex co-existence, the collective action of iconoclastic media's liminal-didactic components manifest in ways that, over space and time, historically-materially make all of us better teachers and students in an active and passive sense: Put in more colloquial language, "Suddenly we girls are running the show, tellin' the good from the bad and pushin' the creeps to the side for our socio-material benefit." Involuntarily celibate? Tough shit! Ain't got time for bad students who don't want to learn (or pay out)! If you can't be bothered to do the bare minimum, don't "play" by trying to cheat, or by forcing someone to play with you the way *you* want them too; i.e., abuse encouragement patterns that treat us like chattel. That's gross and super fucked up. Might does *not* make right, my Manosphere dudes; if we can't get that through your thick skulls, then at least we don't have to sleep with you! As weird iconoclastic nerds, we can play our own games and make our own rules, odds, luck, fate, monsters, poetics, and covert maneuvers (e.g., "poker faces") during revolutionary cryptonymy and the other Four Gs.

As mentioned in Volume Zero, our enemy is as much cognitive *estrangement* as it is dissonance. My (and your) instructional emphasis, then, lies in how people "actually talk"; i.e., "how people talk" in the Internet Age, according to a complex, organic blend of everyday speech, memes, anecdotes, code ([a lot of queer activism is tied to memes and humor that pokes fun of the status quo, for example](#); Ty Turner's "The STRAIGHTS are STRUGGLING," 2022)—and various other linguistic elements and artist expression that operate passively or actively as *de facto* exhibits of proletarian praxis. As a whole, Gothic Communism seeks to cultivate a sex-positive approach that avoids the pitfalls of academia (and if academics feel alienated by this approach, that's ultimately a hazard of their overspecialized professions). Within oppositional praxis, the Gothic mode's means and materials of production—it's monsters, lairs, and mediums—are praxis when synthesized, are for or against Capitalism in ways that invite the viewer to look at Athena's Aegis and be changed by it.

Our aim is revolution and development, which happens in active resistance to canonical praxis and its various pastiches. Pastiche is merely the presence of remediated praxis, which Capitalism reduces to cheap, mass-produced counterfeits; liminality is largely an attempt to enter the threshold and convey something different with pastiche (something to keep in mind as we talk about pastiche and liminality throughout Volumes Two and Three); e.g., porn, monsters, BDSM, etc. Thereupon, our furious, gossiping exhibits of ironic, "perceptive" pastiche become an active invitation to look—partly at this former midden with fresh eyes,

but also our exhibits as refashioned from old parts to give you those eyes. Let the scales fall from them. Per my expansion of Castricano's *cryptomimesis*, gossip with monsters, camping canonical ones in the process. "Make it gay" with your own Satanic power adding to the spectres of Marx chorusing already.

Gothic Communism is about overcoming praxial inertia and state violence by exposing state decay and abuse through monstrous language; it is not the rotting corpse of canon, but a perceived end of the world that challenges Capitalist Realism by killing Capitalism and its myopia of apocalyptic forces designed to rape and destroy your minds. If canon uses fear and dogma—but also freezing terror and a carefully cultivated inability to imagine a better world than the current socio-economic order—then Gothic Communism reverses this process through the same aesthetics to achieve an opposite function: the liberation of workers through iconoclastic art; i.e., sexualized, oft-Gothic counterterror and delight. We are not defined by how the state tries to criminalize us, but our own bodies, sexualities, genders and identities do lie adjacent to very-real harm as something to disentangle ourselves from. It requires a confrontation with ourselves as devils ordinarily persecuted by state forces, except proletarian logics assist us in ways that free us from state enslavement; i.e., by accepting the ontological irony of our own psychosexualities and subsequent catharsis, and developing a language for that we can share with others. This is often literal, but maintains a monstrous appearance adopted by new generations of people working through their own trauma, guilt and shame; i.e., subverting canon to better acquire joy and community in the process:



(exhibit 32d: Artist: [Danomil](#), of their OC, Vilka the marshmallow dog. As Danomil says, "I've been really horny lately so here are 8 more stickers for you! [...] Use them for your pleasure!" Indeed, my partner [Bay](#) and I often use them when

communicating and playing on Telegram together. Vilka speaks to me and how I feel around Bay but also how I want to fuck them.)

A common Biblical symbol of death is the white horse; subversion achieves class and culture war as a conscious effort—i.e., through monstrous language that introduces incongruous new elements; e.g., a white dog (above) or rabbit, etc, as challenging canon's heteronormative instruction to interrogate power and trauma. From an iconoclastic standpoint, then, "death" is simply change, transformation regarding these complicated matters. Active, informed iconoclasm (and its darkness visible) invite one to look at forbidden, satirical, half-real, undead/demonic and animalized things that, once seen, have the power to transform workers through what they consume; i.e., not the totalitarian myth of turning one to stone, but turning workers into something new and the world slowly with them: your minds, but also your language and how you present yourselves in relation to the natural-material world.

(artist: [Danomil](#))



To that, do not fear chaos and death; embrace it! Follow the white rabbit or dog when you see its fur stained with the blood of canonical abuses; heed its pedagogy of the oppressed and inhabit the same spaces through empathy and love. The food will taste better, the sex will hit *harder* (all the good spots). Make it a part of yourself that instructs better behaviors moving forward;

you'll be surprised how different things seem. Precisely these mechanisms, once adopted, will slowly change how you think but also how you act; i.e., what you synthesize through your own creative successes.

Through the fulfillment of the Six Rs, the bourgeoisie will "turn to stone," but also their victimized servants: the canonical rapists and warriors; proverbial trolls, silver-tongued vampires, and legions of the fascist undead, heroes and warlords, but also the entire structure that makes them and their false fears, their empty hopes, their deadly dreams. This includes their sell-out thought leaders, shills, and politicians telling you how to think (or not think) with canonical praxis—in effect, warning you *not* to look and see for yourself while turning you into canonical

monsters that abuse yourselves and your fellow workers to support a select few "lucky ones." It becomes a brand, so challenge that with your own praxis; synthesize it into something that doesn't sell out like past groups have:



(exhibit 33a: Artist: [Mick Cassidy](#). Metallica isn't just a giant sell-out band; they're "class traitors" who monopolized the metal industry for their own base ends. Or as Top Dollar once put it, "The idea has become the institution." What once were young and hungry Bay Area thrashers from the streets slowly but deliberately became aging grandpas that can't hold a candle to their former selves, or their career competitors actually keeping the genre energized. But Zombie Metallica won't stop touring! Even so, I can shine a light on this corrupt monopoly and still love their first five albums [and some of their latter-day songs, even if the production sucks] and their merch. God, these guys really know how to promote themselves—by paying other talented artists to sell their brand for them, of course! But Metallica doesn't own art or metal [despite them dominating the algorithms [with fan-made pastiche](#) [Persephone van der Waard's "My Two Cents: Ep 3., Lux Aeterna on KEA," 2023] riding that wave: "[Metallica pastiche](#)" and its [various offshoots](#) [refer to the Acknowledgements section to see examples from my "Two Cents" interview Q&A series]. This includes Megadeth and other famous contemporaries [reanimated by fans decades later](#) [Ali's "Tornado Of Souls w/Peace Sells Tone," 2023]. Much like [the entire NWOTHM movement](#), it becomes its own thing for fans to work at as endless labors of love. Take what they produce and make it your own. Make metal your ironic anthem, a cornerstone of your praxis as

you "set the world on fire," iconoclastically transforming the status quo for workers everywhere.)

The state and its defenders aren't sacred, nor are corporations or industry giants, celebrities and greedy musicians. Become informed and aware then help other workers do the same, collectively instructing a collective means to interrogate generational abuse. But also, don't put the cart before the horse (with you being the horse in this case). Yes, all iconoclastic workers must be "motherly" to some extent—protectors, providers, teachers with liminal-iconoclastic language: those who hunt the hunters in linguo-material ways, through countercultural "war" mascots (we'll examine these more in Volume Three; e.g., Chapter Five, exhibit 102). Be that the "memeing" of (or as I call it, "transformative quoting"—usually in relation to campy films with memorable scenes; e.g., "[Garbage Day!](#)" from *Silent Night, Deadly Night Part 2*, 1987) or some other form of creative playfulness, Gothic subversion works at an individual and societal level when creating *for other workers*, not for the bourgeoisie (all bourgeoisie [and their proponents] are war profiteers within Man Box culture). Have fun with it and don't be afraid to try new things to make something special; e.g., Russkaja's "[Russian Turbo Polka Metal](#)." There's nothing new under the sun, but all things are made up and remade again, so give it a shot! Be brave, be visible, and stand up for yourselves; otherwise the image of you—like Picasso's women—is destroyed, along with *your* history the image represents. This history is generally annihilated and whitewashed in Capitalism's rainbow façade as "true activism/controlled opposition." Opposition isn't just a t-shirt for sale (though it can involve t-shirts and logos, like the Raised Fist or Che Guevara, exhibits 8b2); it involves the destruction of property for the betterment of workers, animals, children and nature, etc: rioting in demonstrable ways that protest very real (and repressed) abuses of power. You have to take that power back by finding your own voice to speak out with; even if you're punished, you'll have made *that* visible—something that cannot easily be ignored.



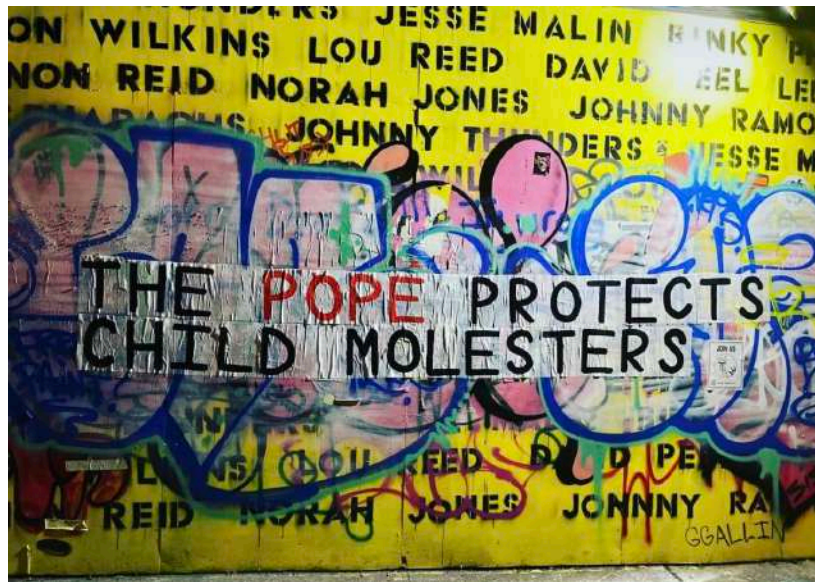
For example, as Kathryn Ferguson says of Sinéad O'Connor in *Nothing Compares* (2022): "So many women are reduced to footnotes in history. I couldn't bear that for Sinead" ([source](#): Sylvia Patterson, 2022). But O'Connor's [famous destruction of an image of the pope](#) for him defending

pedophiles was, itself, tantamount to seditious vandalism of Catholic canon—i.e., a

very real and precocious stand against the state-of-affairs that threatened her burial by the state through a banning by SNL (itself a centrist institution filled with American liberals supportive of *Pax Americana*):

Perhaps her most iconic moment was in 1992, on *Saturday Night Live*. O'Connor, who was raised Catholic, was performing a version of Bob Marley's "War." She changed some of the lyrics to reference child abuse and then held up a picture of Pope John Paul II as she reached the final line: "We have confidence in the victory of good over evil."

Then she ripped up the photo and said, simply, "Fight the real enemy" ([source](#): Tori Otten's "Banned From SNL for Calling Out the Pope," 2023).



([source tweet](#): *Feminist Collages*, 2023)

All the same, as girl-talking "mothers of the world," this isn't some zero-sum game where class/culture consciousness makes it impossible for you to subsist in the barren fields of Capitalism, its endless retro-future hauntologies treating worker unity and teamwork like a fantasy with a price tag. It starts with you looking out for yourself and yes, having fun (remember Sarkeesian's adage). Decide your level of commitment to the Cause, being that rioting or commercial protesting or extracurricular education. But also: figure out for yourself what *you* like in terms of self-care as a means of political-material endorsement; experiment, look, swim, fuck, try on new clothes, use new toys, speak in code, in memes; laugh, cry and share. Make friends—boys, girls, queer folk, animals, mythical creatures—and go from there. Inform your own consumption and production habits as praxial factors; *don't* settle for those given to you by the bourgeoisie.

And if the end result is that you want to do your part by making a podcast that speaks out against oppression instead of rioting in the streets—and that, in

terms of cuties, you prefer chubby androgynes/deep-throated nerds who wear college alumni sweaters, have fuzzy pussies, freckles and horn-rimmed glasses (that "Velma" look) and "know what they're doing" in the bedroom when it comes to toys, fucking and getting topped or topping you—then cool, that's what you like! The same goes for being sex-repulsed and "grey ace" gradients. Canonical praxis, on the other hand, is workers actively wanting to like what Capitalism deems acceptable and abjecting everything else, including sex-positive workers and their art as something to extinguish entirely. It's the canonical desire to "fit in" and punish those who don't—i.e., violent genocide, but also neglect, scorn, and ignorance thereof administered by literal or figurative police agents.

Zeuhl did that to me, telling me not to write because it concerned them as someone who didn't want to be seen or associated with me and my work (and who did their best to appropriate activism through BLM as a recuperated movement that ultimately sold out); Jadis told me not to write either. Anyone who tells you not to stand up for yourself serves the status quo. Books exist to critique and hold power accountable; so does music (e.g., New Zealand reggae: Kora's "[Politician](#)," 2004; or inuk circumpolar hip-hop/rap¹⁹³ [a combination of rap, metal, and traditional inuk folk] Uyarakq's "[Move, I'm Indigenous](#)," 2021). Telling others not to riot or stand up

¹⁹³ Hip-hop/rap and metal historically are music of protest that has been recuperated over time. Like monsters (and generally in concert with more overt, fantastical forms), these musics demand reclamation by workers creating music to stand up for their own rights; likewise, dancing in slave culture and music should be used while exploitation and genocide are currently going on—any form of art-as-protest to make these abuses known. Genocide isn't just death camps, but every abuse of power leading up to fascist hegemony that was permitted by those the Nazis emulated, including American police states and pro-police individuals within society at large consuming "neutral" media that attempts to commodify genocide/settler colonialism; e.g., Laura from *Street Fighter V* (exhibits 10b2 and 41e) but also Deejay as a black capitalist, smiling ear-to-ear from having "made it" out of the colony gutter.

Genocide is culture and societal death at a pace that is meant to be so large and gradual that it becomes normalized, denied and invisible. This bigotry must be challenged, including against so-called "progressive" branches of society and establishment politics; e.g., Rosario Dawson, a cis-queer person, abusing trans woman, Dedrek Finley ([source](#): Derrick Clifton's "Trans Man Details Abuse Allegations Against Rosario Dawson," 2019). Solidarity is *not* refusing to punish the lesser of two evils while singing about them. And the singing must continue, lest history carry on much as it has. This includes demonizing the Left and its activists not simply as "fake" or "childish," but as "terrorists" (or useless according to liberal moderates, who simultaneously rely on the Left for votes, but also insist they never did and never will:

There is no outcome to any election in the United States in which the Democratic Party acknowledges votes from Communists and thanks them for their grudging support. If the Democrat wins, the most that the Left gets is not a Republican, and is then discarded, ignored and mocked—at least until the next election when the Left is needed but somehow also not needed. It is always the leftists who are accused in the media of ruining the alliance, even though there is no real alliance and the disagreement is on both sides [...] Our capitalist media will favor voices from those who support Capitalism [which the Left does not, making them terrorists in the eyes of both sides of establishment politics; [source](#): Renegade Cut's "2024 - Thoughts and Speculation," 2023].)

The moment the singing stops, the abuse will continue unabated. So it *must* continue regardless of what is thought by either side of the American establishment.

for themselves is at worst, openly abusive, and at best, controlled opposition/centrism as a kind of suppressed abuse, the latter entirely befitting of zombie metal acts like Metallica who, at the end of the day, really only care about making as much money as possible for themselves by monopolizing the market; they're shit activists and shrewd, aging businessmen—i.e., the very thing they were protesting *against* in their heyday! Don't be like Zeuhl, Jadis or Metallica; don't snuff out your fire because those in or aligned with power tell you to. Be like O'Connor, instead. Have courage and express that courage in ways that discourage systemic abuse, priming the conditions for a proper blaze among the kindling. Better to burn property than people. Silence will not stop abuse, but prolong it:



In defense of his own people, Bruce Lee once said, "We are not sick men of Asia!" We are not terrorists; we're counterterrorists, activists. Ignorance of worker abuse is no excuse towards demonizing us—not in the Internet Age when the entire world is at our fingertips, waiting to be reexplored, rediscovered, and reclaimed, along with

our labor, our power, our bodies. Unified workers can lead sex and its ambivalent markers away from their current traumatic history (and dissociation with canonical "pleasure") towards new pleasurable histories. The dick can certainly feel good, or the little toy or getting royally pounded, rapidly fingered, softly licked, tenderly cuddled post-fuck, snuggled without sex at all, etc; but only under sex-positive socio-material conditions between emotionally/Gothically intelligent workers who have the means to master their emotions, but also "mother" new connections and bonds that unteach the old fearful, menticidal ways under Capitalism.

In more dialectical-material language, I'm framing creativity itself as a proletarian thought response to a historical-material world and the natural processes contained therein—either activity informed by material production (the Base), which art affects differently depending on how it's controlled and cultivated (the Superstructure). Material image production, for example, determines the images that people consume—i.e., as products to endorse, reject or reinvent through a cultivated imagination tied to class consciousness (and "false conscious" variants forwarded by neoliberal ideologues, patrons and consumers). While this socio-material process involves various factors, I've chosen to focus on sexuality

within sex work as a means of transforming popular artwork *as it already exists*, thereby treating iconoclastic imagery as a sex-positive, educational mode that allows people to become sex-positive themselves, thus emotionally/Gothically intelligent. This, in turn, can help already-exploited workers imagine a world *beyond* Capitalism by pointedly highlighting the trauma it causes surrounding our own bodies and identities as entangled, specifically its targeted exploitation through heteronormative canon of sex workers using various codified stigmas that make abusers abuse and victims victimized: blind, deaf and dumb to the world as it decays around them and their "god" falls silence (the cruelty and eventual death of the owner class); the only way out is through solidarized intersectionality according to what we produce together and speak out against state forces with using what we have at our disposal: iconoclastic art as liberating workers under Capitalism by humanizing the harvest.



(artist: [Sinead Rhiannon](#))

This concludes the roadmap and Volume One. Now that we're armed with both the thesis argument from Volume Zero and the "basics"—of girl talk (and an expanded understanding and vocabulary of trauma recognition/rape prevention language), menticide, the liminal proposition of subversive revolution, constructive anger and "perceptive" pastiche (of rape and war); along with the core manifesto of Gothic Communism—I want to proceed into the Humanities primer in earnest. To that, Volume Two will examine the past history of monstrous expression; i.e., its canonical usage made to sexually exploit non-heteronormative workers, as well as the oft-queer mechanics used to humanize these same workers through iconoclastic monstrous language. It will be something to learn from when we consider enacting monstrous sex positivity and proletarian praxis ourselves in Volume Three.

Keyword Glossary

"You keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means."

—Inigo Montoya, *The Princess Bride* (1987)



([source](#): "The 430 Books in Marilyn Monroe's Library: How Many Have You Read?" 2014)

The companion glossary is dedicated to terms found in the thesis volume that nevertheless appear throughout all four volumes. It is divided into four sections:

- [Marxism and Politics](#): Contains any terms that deals with Marxist theories or socio-political concepts.
- [Sex, Gender and Race: Language, Theory and Politics](#): Covers the majority of gender theory used in this book.
- [Miscellaneous Terms, Game Theory](#): Holds anything useful that isn't in the other sorting categories.
- [The Gothic, Kink, and BDSM](#): Catalogues the various ideas/theories on the Gothic, kink and BDSM that, while used throughout this book, aren't listed in the manifesto.

Marxism and Politics

Marxism

Schools of thought stemming from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, trying historically to achieve Communism through the state first (Marxist-Leninism) instead of direct worker solidarity and action operating in opposition to the state and establishment politics (anarcho-Communism). As an anarcho-Communist, I borrow ideas from Marx, but shy away from calling myself a Marxist (any more than I'd call myself a postmodernist/deconstructionist despite borrowing from Derrida); throughout the book, I prefer to use the noun/adjective phrase "dialectical(-) material" in place of "Marxist." The reason being is that Gothic Communism, as we shall define it, deviates away from Marxist-Leninism (state Socialism) towards a democratized class consciousness/proletarian xenophilia that combats the historical-material abuses of the state in any configuration (fascist, neoliberal, Marxist-Leninist, etc).

material conditions

The factors that determine quality of life from a material standpoint; i.e., not an ethical/moral argument ("this is right/wrong"), but one that deals with access to various material conditions that reliably improve one's living conditions: housing, food, electricity, clothing, water, education, employment, loans/credit, transportation, internet, etc. The status quo reliably constricts material conditions to benefit the elite; this occurs within a societal hierarchy that structurally privileges marginalized groups from least- to most-marginalized along systemically coercive and phobic lines. Indeed, this arrangement is so concrete that future history can be readily predicted through the arrangement of material conditions already displayed in canonical works: historical materialism.

historical materialism

The normalized, vicious cycle that history is predicated on the material conditions that routinely bring them about. These conditions make genocide and sex worker exploitation a historical-material *fact*, something that weighs on the living through what Capitalism leaves behind—the endlessly doubled histories of the dead according to Karl Marx in "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" (1852):

Hegel remarks somewhere that all great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce. [...] Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but

under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living. And just as they seem to be occupied with revolutionizing themselves and things, creating something that did not exist before, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service, borrowing from them names, battle slogans, and costumes in order to present this new scene in world history in time-honored disguise and borrowed language ([source](#)).

dialectical materialism

The dialectical progress is the study of oppositional forces in relation to each other. For Marx, this involves the study of dialectical-*material* forces—i.e., the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in opposition, not harmony. "Harmony" is canonical pacification, which leads to genocide and endless exploitation of workers by the elite.

the means of production

Marx' Base, owned by the elite; the ability to (mass)produce material goods within capital/a living market. This operates on a mass-manufactured scale, but also through work performed at the individual level—labor. Workers seize the means of production by attempting to own the value of their own labor. Conversely, capitalists exploit workers by stealing worker labor, often through wage theft (wages under Capitalism being the creation of jobs, or revenue streams for the elite to structuralize then steal from, which they then credit themselves as giving back to people; i.e., "I created these jobs!" Translation: "I created a means of exploiting people through their labor during manufactured scarcity). Billionaires privatize labor through unethical means, "earning" their billions through wage theft/slavery as "owned" by them, meaning *used* by them specifically as exploited labor (which alienates workers from the products of their own labor).



(artist: Adolf Menzel)

private property

Not to be confused with personal property, private property is property that is privately owned, generally by the elite through privatization via state-corporate mechanisms. As Marx puts it in 1844, "Private property has made us so stupid and one-sided that an object is only ours when we have it – when it exists for us as capital, or when it is directly possessed, eaten, drunk, worn, inhabited, etc., – in short, when it is used by us. Although private property itself again conceives all these direct realisations of possession only as means of life, and the life which they serve as means is the life of private property – labour and conversion into capital" ([source](#)).

privatization

If private property is property that is privately owned, *privatization* is the process that enables private ownership at a systemic, bourgeois level. Under Capitalism, the elite own means of production by encouraging negative freedom to "liberalize" (deregulate) the market. They do so by removing restrictions, allowing the owner class to privatize their assets. In class warfare, capitalists disguise this fact by deliberately conflating bourgeois ownership with "bougie" (middle-class) ownership:

- Owners, in the academic, bourgeois sense, own the means of mass production, thus individual production within capital. They privatize factories, territory, industrial sectors, the military, paramilitary (cops), and the means to print money. As a consequence, they also own workers, albeit by proxy (wage slavery).
- Middle-class ownership is merely an exchange of wages—direct purchases or taxes—for material goods aka *personal* property. These goods become something to defend, resulting in a great deal of punching down (reactionary/moderate politics).

functional Communism

The eventual (centuries from now) abolishment of privatization/private property. This process is called development, or Socialism; Socialism's historical-material "failure" to move beyond planned economies stems from foreign, bourgeois interference and internal strife begot from privatized interests—all related to Capitalism preserving itself as a structure.

nominal Communism

Nominal communism—i.e., Communism in name alone, sold to workers through canonical propaganda to scare them into upholding the bourgeois status quo.

Gothic (gay-anarcho) Communism

Coined by me, Gothic Communism is the deliberate, pointed critique of capital/Capitalism using a unique marriage of Gothic/queer/game theory and Marxist ideas synthesized by sex-positive workers during proletarian praxis. Meant to end neoliberal/fascist Capitalism in order to bring about anarcho-Communism, this liberation occurs through sex-positive labor (and monsters) reclaimed by sex workers (which Derrida called "spectres of Marx" in his eponymous book on hauntology as a Communist "ghost" that haunted language after the so-called "end of history").

anarcho-Communism

The gradual disillusion and transmutation of Capitalism into Socialism and finally Communism through direct worker solidarity and collective action, whereupon power is horizontally restructured—slowly rearranged into [anarcho-syndicalist communes](#) (which are historically more stable than Capitalism is, but also under attack/sabotaged by the elite every chance they can get—e.g., Cuba and U.S. sanctions for the past 70 years whitewashed by Red-Scare propaganda). To achieve

this, class warfare must be conducted against official/*de facto* agents of the state-corporate union devised by capitalists/neoliberal hegemons.

neoliberal Capitalism

The dominant strain of Capitalism operating in the world today—i.e., Capitalism employed by neoliberal canon, centrism, moderation and personal responsibility rhetoric to achieve the greatest possible division between the owner/worker classes, as well as infinite growth and efficient profit (more on these during the manifesto proper). Neoliberal Capitalism is founded on a vertical arrangement of power through national-state-corporate leaders operating against worker interests by exploiting them to the fullest using capital.

capital/Capitalism

A system of exploiting workers, nature and the world, whose resultant genocide and vampiric devastation is synonymous with profit for capitalists/the elite. The elite parasitize everyone/thing else to generate profit through Capitalism; or to quote directly from Raj Patel and Jason Moore's *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things* (2017):

Money isn't capital. Capital is journalism's shorthand for money or, worse, a stock of something that can be transformed into something else. If you've ever heard or used the terms *natural capital* or *social capital*, you've been part of a grand obfuscation. Capital isn't the dead stock of uncut trees or unused skill. For Marx and for us, capital happens only in the live transformation of money into commodities and back again. Money tucked under a mattress is as dead to capitalism as the mattress is itself. It is through the live circulation of this money, and in the relations around it, that capitalism happens.

The process of exchange and circulation turn money into capital. At the heart of Marx's *Capital* is a simple, powerful model: in production and exchange, capitalists combine labor power, machines and raw material. The resulting commodities are then sold for money. If all goes well, there is a profit, which needs then to be reinvested into yet more labor power, machines and raw materials. Neither commodities nor money is capital. This circuit *becomes* capital when money is sunk into commodity production in an ever-expanding cycle. Capitalism is a process in which money flows through nature. The trouble here is that capital supposes infinite expansion [growth] within a finite web of life ([source](#)).

For our purposes, this "web of life" concerns the privatized, social-sexual exploitation of workers in monstrous language—something to be unironically defended by class traitors preserving Capitalism, thus the state as a means of maximizing capital for the elite (infinite growth); i.e., to serve and protect capital, not people, through the means of production/propaganda's current bourgeois hegemony under neoliberal Capitalism's personal responsibility rhetoric—to regulate the market and empower the state through concealed abuses that accrete out from the center in all directions. As anarcho-Communists, we much critique this canonizing process' profit motive through our own iconoclastic material.

capitalists

Those who own capital, the bourgeoisie. However, capital/Capitalism as a process actually alienates capitalists from their own wealth; there is seldom money "on hand"—largely positions within a structure operating in continuum in pursuit of neoliberal Capitalism's main objectives (very different from the dragon sitting on a pile of gold, which is closer to the fascist strongman stealing wealth by hijacking the mechanisms of the state).

An idiosyncrasy in terms of my writing: This book treats Capitalism and Communism as proper nouns; other words, like "state," "capitalist," "neoliberal," and "fascist" are not capitalized. The reasons are arbitrary but I've at least tried to be consistent. —Perse



Anthropocene/Capitalocene

The *Anthropocene* is unit of time used to describe the period in which human existence and interaction with the natural world has started to impact it negatively in terms of ecosystem proliferation and health, general climate operations, and various other factors that intersect and relate to the survival of all life on the planet—including humans—as threatened by human contributions to climate change. The *Capitalocene* (as used by Patel and Moore) applies this logic to Capitalism:

Regardless of what humans decide to do, the twenty-first century will be a time of "abrupt and irreversible" changes in the web of life. Earth system scientists have a rather dry term for such a fundamental turning point in the life of a biospheric system: state shift. Unfortunately, the ecology from which this geological change has emerged has also produced humans who are ill-equipped to receive news of this state shift. Nietzsche's madman announcing the death of god was met in a similar fashion: although industrial Europe had reduced divine influence to the semicompulsory Sunday-morning church attendance, nineteenth-century society couldn't image a world without god. The twenty-first century has an analogue: it's easier for most people to imagine the end of the planet than to imagine the end of capitalism. [...] Today's human activity isn't exterminating mammoths through centuries of overhunting. Some humans are currently killing everything, from megafauna to microbiota, at speeds one hundred times higher than the background rate. We argue what changed is capitalism, that modern history has, since the 1400s, unfolded in what is better termed the Capitalocene [than the Anthropocene] ([source](#)).

anthropocentrism/posthumanism

In *Posthuman Life* (2015), David Roden writes, "A humanist philosophy is anthropocentric if it accords humans a superlative status that all or most non-humans lack" ([source](#)). Posthumanism goes beyond traditional notions of Cartesian humanism to afford basic rights to humans, animals and the natural-material world as something not to exploit by Capitalism.

transhumanism

From Roden's *Posthuman Life*,

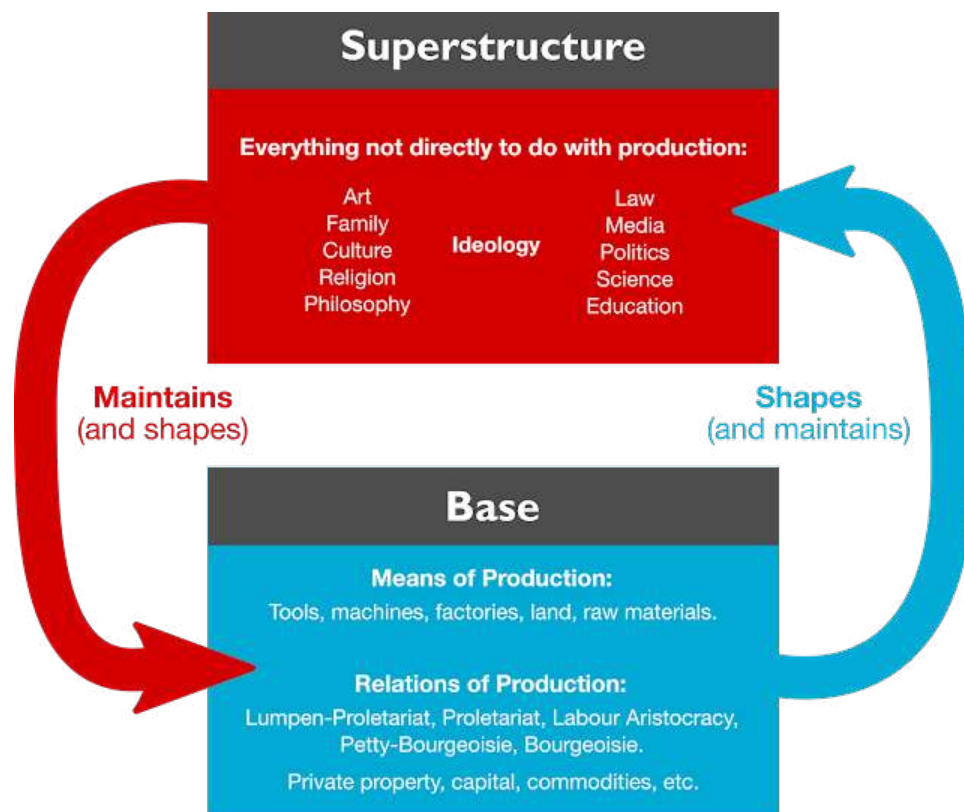
Self-fashioning through culture and education is to be supplemented by technology. For this reason, transhumanists believe that we should add morphological freedom—the freedom of physical and mental form—to

the traditional liberal rights of freedom of movement and freedom of expression [...] to discover new forms of embodiment in order to improve on the results on traditional humanism [and according to the World Transhumanist Association, 1999] "to use technology to extend their mental and physical (including reproductive) capacities and to improve their control over their own lives" ([source](#)).

accretion

Dissemination out from the center of a socio-material structure (similar to how planets form); i.e., the Symbolic Order, the mythic structure, etc; e.g., accretions of the Medusa as someone to kill or avoid, as "untamable" by men as the arm of the state and the law. To escape men, she turns to stone (or a tree)—a defense mechanism from those who unironically defend the structure in official/unofficial capacities.

the Superstructure



**This moves in a spiral pattern.
The base is generally dominant.**
(*exhibit 2*)

Propaganda; that which, Rana Indrajit Singh writes in the *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, normally "grows out of the base and the ruling class' interests. As such, the superstructure justifies how the base operates and defends the power of the elite" ([source](#): "Base and Superstructure Theory," 2013)—*normally* being the operative word, here. This book isn't a fan of what's normal because normal is the status quo and the status quo is bourgeois.

splendide mendax

The teller of splendid lies; e.g., [Jonathan Swift and *Gulliver's Travels*](#) (1726); also applies to self-aware weavers of various genres of fiction, from Oscar Wilde to Luis Borges, but also non-white/American authors who have to reinvent their own cultures' lost histories—e.g., Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), Michelle Cliff's [Free Enterprise](#) (1993) and Charles Johnson's [Middle Passage](#) (1998), etc. Furthermore, concerning bourgeois lies vs proletarian splendid lies, Gothic stories are concerned with recycled clichés in either case.

"archaeologies" of the future

[Fredric Jameson's titular 2005 idea](#), *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*, of an elaborate strategy of misdirection (an idea originally from his 1982 essay "[Progress versus Utopia; Or, Can We Imagine the Future?](#)") that breaks through the future of one moment that is now our own past, often through the fantasy and science fiction genres (the Gothic variant of this strategy as we shall discuss it is the Gothic castle/chronotope, discussed in the thesis proper). Canonical "archaeologies" sell this dead future back to workers to pacify them; iconoclastic variations devise ways of seeing beyond canonical illusions by "re-excavating" them, using what's left behind *again* to liberate worker bodies and minds in the process.

propaganda

According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *propaganda*

is the more or less systematic effort to manipulate other people's beliefs, attitudes, or actions by means of symbols (words, gestures, banners, monuments, music, clothing, insignia, hairstyles, designs on coins and postage stamps, and so forth). Deliberateness and a relatively heavy emphasis on manipulation distinguish propaganda from casual conversation or the free and easy exchange of ideas. Propagandists have a specified goal

or set of goals. To achieve these, they deliberately select facts, arguments, and displays of symbols and present them in ways they think will have the most effect. To maximize effect, they may omit or distort pertinent facts or simply lie, and they may try to divert the attention of the reactors (the people they are trying to sway) from everything but their own propaganda ([source](#)).

For us, propaganda is anything that cultivates the Superstructure, including splendid lies and elaborate strategies of misdirection. However, anything that goes against the interests of the state will be perceived of as terrorist lies by the state, making its abolishment by workers all the more pressing. However, state propaganda also *self-replicates*—with Sigmund Freud's nephew, Edwards Bernays, famously applying the principles of political propaganda to marketing in his 1928 capitalist apologia, *Propaganda*. The book argues for a rebranding of propaganda called "public relations," one where "invisible" people create knowledge and propaganda to rule over the masses, with a monopoly on the power to shape thoughts, values, and citizen responses; that "engineering consent" of the masses would be vital for the survival of democracy. In Bernays' own words, he explains:

The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of.

Despite a patent rebrand filled with cheerful Liberalism, Bernays went on to inspire Hitler's minister of propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, but also Hitler himself (as well as American propagandists during and following WW2). Hitler did his best to emulate American media, [seeing its coercive value by creating his own Hollywood](#) (see: Hilter's Hollywood, 2018). Helped from the likes of commercial-savvy artists like Goebbels, he copied Charlie Chaplin's toothbrush mustache, radicalized Bernays' ideas on propaganda, [and painstakingly toiled over the creation of the Nazi symbol itself](#) (Jim Edwards' "Hitler as Art Director: What the Nazis' Style Guide Says About the 'Power of Design,'" 2018). Behind the illusions, Hitler remained cutthroat, buoyed to chancellorship by the German elite defaulting on American loans, whereupon he promptly killed his political enemies and spent the next decade convincing his nation to fight to the death. In short, he was a bad capitalist (unlike the American elite).



praxis

The practical execution of theory. This can be achieved through different modes; e.g., ours is iconoclastic *poiesis*, or artwork tied to worker emancipation as something to creatively express, but also build upon as a collective, cultural understanding unified against the state. In other words, canon and iconoclasm are synonymous with praxis, but also *poiesis*.

poiesis/poetics

"To bring into being that which did not exist before." A commonplace example is "poetry," which historically has granted impoverished, exploited people idiosyncratic voices/parallel societies in times of struggle. *Poiesis* is not just pithy scribbles, in other words; it's a means of understanding the world and sharing that with others to cultivate countercultural movements in opposition to the state; i.e., by "playing god." For our purposes, canon and iconoclasm—as means of cultivating the Superstructure through creative artistic expression and sex work—are both forms of *poiesis*, but exist in dialectical-material opposition. One is a pedagogy of the oppressed; one is a pedagogy of the *oppressor*.

canon (dogma)

Marx's Superstructure as normally cultivated by the elite through official/unofficial, state-corporate icons and materials designed to control how people think, behave

and feel: heteronormative propaganda/dogma. Financially incentivized by the elite including billionaires, these mass-produced, privatized variants are generally accepted as genuine, legitimate and sacred by workers and typically produced by anyone who upholds the status quo. This includes corporations, but also financially-incentivized, bourgeois (often white, cis-het) authors and their beliefs/praxis furthered by pre-2000s, Internet-era media: [the TERF/neoliberal politics of Harry Potter creator J. K. Rowling](#) (Shaun's "Harry Potter," 2022), [decades-long racism and all-around horrible weirdness of Dilbert creator Scott Adams towards anyone different from himself](#) (Behind the Bastards' "How The Dilbert Guy Lost His Mind," 2023), [Earth Worm Jim Creator Doug TenNapel's own conservative praxis when interacting with awful chaser/soon-to-be-divorced dudes like Steven Crowder](#) ("Surviving the Leftist Mob," 2021) or Matt Groening's [proud, middle-of-the-road, smug-as-fuck centrism](#) (David Scheff's "Matt Groening," 2007) having already sold out, his unabashed playing of both sides against each other leading to Zombie Simpsons and a toleration of fascists/total inability to critique Capitalism (cashing in after doing the bare minimum with the first seven seasons completely undoes any activism those episodes achieved in their heyday):

Playboy: When you spread a liberal message by way of Fox, do you feel subversive?

Groening: It's fun anytime you can piss off a right-wing lunatic, but it's also fun to piss off a left-wing lunatic. In fact everybody on the show is concerned about not being preachy or heavy-handed. We try to mix it up.

American consumerism generally frames canon as "neutral," despite complicitly hiding sexist attitudes and ideologies in plain sight (usually through cheap, mass-produced, privatized likenesses/intellectual properties).

iconoclast/-clasm (camp)

Marx's Superstructure, counter-cultivated by an agent or image that attacks established variants, generally with the intent of transforming them in a deconstructive, sex-positive manner. Such a manner is treated as heretical by the elite, but also workers sympathetic to bourgeois hegemony. Deconstruction, aka Postmodernism—when harnessed by Marxists—seeks to move beyond Modernism; i.e., the Enlightenment, whose high-minded principles are really just excuses to enslave and control people through negative freedom for the elite. Generally, this happens by presenting things harmful, segregating binaries like civilization/nature, white/black, man/woman, mind/body, art/porn, etc.

hypercanon/-ical

Something so famous that it becomes recognizable by sight across generations; e.g., *The Wizard of Oz*. However, a popular example is the cyberpunk of the hauntological retrofuture. Popularized by movies like *Blade Runner* (1982), *Ghost in the Shell* (1996) and *The Matrix* (1999), the cyberpunk comments on the future as dead (a concept we'll explore more in the Humanities Primer) as a means of providing a hypernormal, hyperreal illusion.

hyperreal/-ity

A distillation of Jean Baudrillard's broader notion of the simulation representing things that do not exist, yet, over time, have become more real than the reality behind them, which has decayed into a desert the hyperreal simulation has replaced in the eyes of its viewers—i.e., has covered it up. Baudrillard's Hyperreality comments on similar historical-material issues that the egregore or simulacrum do as occult creations and copies of older likenesses or illusions. The preservation of the illusion as Capitalism turns the natural world into an uninhabitable desert could be called *hypernormal*. As Nasrullah Mambrol writes (exhibit, theirs):

Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality is closely linked to his idea of Simulacrum, which he defines as something which replaces reality with its representations. Baudrillard observes that the contemporary world is a simulacrum, where reality has been replaced by false images, to such an extent that one cannot distinguish between the real and the unreal. In this context, he made the controversial statement, "The Gulf war did not take place," pointing out that the "reality" of the Gulf War was presented to the world in terms of representations by the media [as inherently dishonest ...]



4) There is no relationship between the reality and representation, because there is no real to reflect (the abstract paintings of Mark Rothko).

According to Baudrillard, Western society has entered this fourth phase of the hyperreal. In the age of the hyperreal, the image/simulation dominates. The age of production has given way to the age of simulation, where products are sold even before they exist. The Simulacrum pervades every level of existence. ([source](#): "Baudrillard's Concept of Hyperreality," 2016).

hypernormal/-ity

A term that, [according to Adam Curtis' *HyperNormalization*](#) (2016), was originally used to describe the "whiplash" feelings of Soviet citizens during the 1980s—faced with the terrifying onset of societal collapse despite Soviet national propaganda having adopted neoliberal shock therapy while insisting that things were fine. The same idea can be applied to the uncanny sensation that things are *not* fine or even real despite how normal, foundational and concrete they seem; i.e., how they "pass" as normal despite a disquieting sense of decay (worker exploitation, for our purposes).

centrism

"There are no moral actions, only moral teams" (re: Shaun's "[Harry Potter](#)"). Centrism is the theatrical creation of good vs evil as existing within politically

"neutral" media—a dangerous preservation of orderly justice whose "moderate," white (or token) voice-of-reason/cloaked racism and discrimination pointedly maintain the status quo: Capitalism. To this, centrism displaces and cloaks two things:

- genocide as conducted by neoliberals/fascists on foreign/domestic lands.
- the neoliberal's codifying of Nazis as an essential part of Capitalism—where the state's bureaucracy fragments through the emergence of an ultranationalist strongman.

This return of the medieval—of the Imperium and Empire, Zombie Caesar, etc—is both "blind" nation pastiche, but also a cartoonish bourgeois parody that makes the Nazi and pastiche thereof tremendously useful to Capitalism and the elite's survival through genocide's continuation behind the veil.

war pastiche

The remediation of war as something to sell to the audience (for our purposes) as canon, generally in centrist forms. Whereas nation pastiche tends to denote a national character (e.g., James Cameron's colonial marines, but also [the wholesale, staple choreography of Asian-to-American martial arts movies like Ip Man 4: The Finale](#), 2019), war pastiche simply communicates violent conflict as something to personify in various dramatic/comedic theatrical forms; e.g., Blizzard's *Warcraft* pastiche (orcs vs humans).

nation pastiche

Any kind of pastiche that ties war and combat to national identities, a common modern example being the *Street Fighter* franchise's nation pastiche and FGC (fighting game community). Said community employs a variety of stock characters tied to a signature nation-state, draped in a national flag and gifted with a statuesque (sexually dimorphic) physique, snappy costume and set of trademark special moves/super moves. Gamer apathy mirrors the apathy of wrestling fans, whose tentpole company regularly capitalizes off the global stage through geopolitical (nationalistic) dialogs performed using sanctioned, bread-and-circus violence; e.g., [the WWE and its lucrative contract with Saudi Arabia](#) (Renegade Cut's "WWE and the Saudi Royal Family," 2019).



([source](#))

heels/babyfaces

The centrist heroes and villains of staged, professional wrestling and American contact/combat sports—i.e., war personified—but commonly employed through combat e-sports like the *Street Fighter* FGC. Heels normally wear black, fight dirty and talk trash; babyfaces (often called "faces" for short) tend to wear white, fight fair and refuse to talk trash. A common narrative between the two is good overcoming the bullying of evil by deus ex machina "rallies," where upon the underdog babyface is able to prevail by the end of a particular war. The tragedy in doing so is the babyface always converts to a heel position. The theater and its evolution through modern sports parallel geopolitics in ways that deregulate the process of worker exploitation through sports contracts and ringleaders working adjacent, through their own distractions, to military contractors and arms manufacturers/dealers in the Military Industrial Complex; neoliberalism, in other words, promotes fascist as an essential part of centrist theater through post-fascist, Cold War stereotypical heels—the Nazi, Muslim or the Communist—versus the traditional babyface: the American crusader or "good" vigilante/exacter of righteous justice. The public's endorsement, tolerance or unironic worship—of what is generally become recognized as a highly scripted affair—is called "kayfabe."

kayfabe

The Wikipedia entry for "kayfabe" reads:

the portrayal of staged events within the industry as "real" or "true," specifically the portrayal of competition, rivalries, and relationships between participants as being genuine and not staged. The term kayfabe has evolved to also become a code word of sorts for maintaining this "reality" within the direct or indirect presence of the general public. Kayfabe, in the United States, is often seen as the suspension of disbelief that is used to create the non-wrestling aspects of promotions, such as feuds, angles, and gimmicks in a manner similar to other forms of fictional entertainment. In relative terms, a wrestler breaking kayfabe would be likened to an actor breaking character on-camera. Since wrestling is performed in front of a live audience, whose interaction with the show is crucial to its success, kayfabe can be compared to the fourth wall in acting, since hardly any conventional fourth wall exists to begin with. Because of this lack of conventional fourth wall, wrestlers were once expected to maintain their characters even out of the ring, and in other aspects of their lives that could be made public ([source](#)).

For a good introduction to the concept and its history in modern professional wrestling and popular media, consider Behind the Bastards' podcast episode, "[Part One: Vince McMahon, History's Greatest Monster](#)" (2023). The concept applies not just to wrestling but includes any professional sports—e.g., e-sports but also vigilante sports/action hero narratives with athletic crusaders such as the heteronormative avatars from *Streets of Rage* and *TMNT* or *Street Fighter* as something to endorse through their police violence of state-oriented criminals, potential subversives, revolutionaries and so-called "terrorists" threatening the existence of "correct" action heroes as something to perform (exhibit 34c2, 98a1, or 104a1); or to subvert these false revolutionaries in a variety of ways (exhibit 102a4, 111b).

moderacy

Famously outlined by Martin Luther King's 1963 "[Letter from the Birmingham Jail](#)," excoriating the white moderate as more dangerous than the overt racist. Moderacy would evolve into the American neoliberal and its worldly doubles (1980s Soviet Russia or Great Britain) as willing to break bread/debate with fascists in the "free marketplace of ideas." To this, moderacy equals veiled white-cis-het-Western supremacy—generally upheld by centrist canon.

menticide/waves of terror

From Joost Meerloo's *The Rape of the Mind* (1956), menticide is the animal, "Pavlovian" conditioning through various forms of torture, namely "waves of terror" to achieve an ideal subject just not complacent with state abuse, but *complicit*. Of *menticide*, Meerloo writes,

The variety of human reactions under infernal circumstances taught us an ugly truth: the spirit of most men can be broken; men can be reduced to the level of animal behaviour. Both torturer and victim finally lose all dignity [...] The core of the strategy of menticide is the taking away of all hope, all anticipation, all belief in a future [which aligns with Mark Fischer's "hauntology," or inability to imagine a future beyond past forms supplied by Capitalism; i.e., a *myopia*]. It destroys the very elements which keep the mind alive. The victim is entirely alone ([source](#)).

Meerloo describes *waves of terror* as

the use of well-planned, repeated successive waves of terror to bring the people into submission. Each wave of terrorizing cold war creates its effect more easily—after a breathing spell—than the one that preceded it because people are still disturbed by their previous experience. Morale becomes lower and lower, and the psychological effect of each new propaganda campaign becomes stronger; it reaches a public already softened up. Every dissenter becomes more and more frightened that he may be found out. Gradually people are no longer willing to participate in any sort of political discussion or to express their opinions. Inwardly they have already surrendered to the terrorizing dictatorial forces (*ibid.*).

the pedagogy of the oppressed

Radical empathy. [Coined by Paulo Freire in his 1968 book of the same name](#), the text is a warning to closeted (and active) moderates to stop talking down to people who know their own trauma far better than moderates do.

the banality of evil/desk murderers

Originally used to describe the fascist bureaucracy of the Third Reich during the Nuremberg trials, desk murder goes well beyond Adolf Eichmann; it is destructive greed minus all the gaudy bells and whistles: the men behind the curtain (canon). Whether fascist or neoliberal, those at the top abject (denormalize) truth, shaming dialectical-material analysis while venerating the uncritical consumption of canon.

In doing so, they hide, thus normalize, their owner status; the elite own everything through vertically-arranged power structures, deliberately constructed to exploit everyone else—not just by owning the means of production, but using said means at a corporate-national register to parade and venerate conspicuous shows of god-like wealth and endless consumerism.

neocons(ervatism)

Neoconservatives are liberal hawks who, exposed to menticidal propaganda over time, [despise war protestors and promote peace through strength](#), including neocolonialism and proxy war. It's the centrist, oscillating phenomena of so-called Liberalism turned bloody, routinely demanding its blood sacrifice on the so-called altar of freedom (as Howard Zinn notes about the formation of the Americas during the American Revolution).

Liberalism

Not to be confused with neoliberalism (though the two generally go hand-in-hand), Liberalism is the disingenuous language of the Enlightenment becoming Americanized, then used alongside Cartesian dualism to obscure genocide under settler colonialism. In his *A People's History of the United States* (1980), Howard Zinn catalogs the various fears of the upper "master class"—of Native Americans and slaves rebelling together but also white indentured servants and African slaves as something to discourage using Liberalism:

"What made Bacon's Rebellion especially fearsome for the rulers of Virginia was that black slaves and white servants joined forces [...] Those upper classes, to rule, needed to make concessions to the middle class, without damage to their own wealth or power, at the expense of slaves, Indians, and poor whites. This bought loyalty. And to bind that loyalty with something more powerful even than material advantage, the ruling group found, in the 1760s and 1770s, a wonderfully useful device. That device was the language of liberty and equality, which could unite just enough whites to fight a Revolution against England, without ending either slavery or inequality" ([source](#)).

neoliberalism

The ideology of American exceptionalism (which extends to allies of America like Great Britain) that enforces global US hegemony through deregulated/"re-liberalized" Capitalism as a structural means of dishonest wealth accumulation for

the elite. Laterally enforced by state/corporate power abuse through a public conditioned by these groups to worship the free market, neoliberalism seeks to foster a centrist attitude. By preaching the lie of false hope* through an us-versus-them mentality and personal responsibility rhetoric, neoliberalism maintains the status quo [by demonizing nominal Communism](#) (Monty Python's "International Communism," 1969) and disguising the inner workings of Capitalism—how Capitalism is inherently unethical and unstable, and how it exploits nearly everyone (workers) to benefit the few (the elite). This framework, and the pervasive illusions that prop it up, eventually decay and lead to societal collapse. In the interim, common side effects of neoliberalism include: the gutting of unions, destruction of the welfare state, reinforcement of the prison system and strengthening of the police state.

**For a quick-and-dirty example of vintage American neoliberalism, [consider the opening to Double Dribble \(1987\) for the NES](#): palm trees and skyscrapers in the background, a bare concrete lot and tight, manicured lawns in the foreground—where hordes of consumers flock to a giant stadium to "the Star Spangled Banner" while a Konami blimp emblazoned with an American flag soars overhead. This kind of canonical nostalgia traps workers inside a world they never experience because its constantly sold to them as an idealized past to escape into from their current environment; as Capitalism fails, they can't imagine anything beyond it, just whatever was shown to them as children: something to retreat into fondly like a lost childhood.*



fascism

Capitalism-in-decay aka "zombie Capitalism." When Capitalism starts to fail (which it does by design), it creates power vacuums whose medievalist regressions reintroduce scapegoat mentalities on a state level; i.e., the village sacrifice of a manufactured outsider taken to national extremes during palingenesis ("national birth"), which ushers in a perceived former glory tied to a former *imaginary* past: a liminal hauntology of war against anyone different than the status quo; e.g., a witch/pagan, vampire (queer person) or similar target of state violence during moral panics stoked by fascist ringleaders. A radicalizing of the status quo, then, allow populist strongmen to foster unusual sympathies within the (white, cis-het) working class: the installation of a dogmatic (sexist, racist, transphobic, etc) hierarchy that intentionally abuses a designated underclass (the out-group), promising societal and material elevation for those following the leader (the in-group). Or as Michael Parenti wrote in *Blackshirts and Reds* (1997):

Fascism is a false revolution. It cultivates the appearance of popular politics and a revolutionary aura without offering a genuine revolutionary class content. It propagates a "New Order" while serving the same old moneyed interests. Its leaders are not guilty of confusion but of deception. That they work hard to mislead the public does not mean they themselves are misled. ([source](#)).

Simply put, fascists are violent LARPers (live-action role-players) living in a death cult, reducing themselves and those around them to expendable, fetishized, zombie-like fodder. The in-group operates through fear, dogma and violence—cultivating the *perception* of strength through a coercive, revered worldview that leads to delusional overconfidence and ignominious death in service of the state through its same-old language (e.g., Monty Python's "[Black Knight](#)" skit, 1975).

pre-/post-fascism

Fascism is the generation of, regression back towards medieval, pre-civilized hauntologies that attempt to revive the glory of former times (usually the ghost of Rome) through the creation of, on various levels, a fearsome destroyer persona: the pagan Goth, but also the zombie tyrant (the Romans killed Christ). *Pre*-fascism is the Gothic imagination that historically was obsessed with the inheritance of a decaying system prior to the rise of fascism in the 18th and 19th centuries, which in turn has become *post*-fascism: the fear of fascism and systemic decay entertained through popular discourse and Gothic poetics in the 20th and 21st centuries, post-WW2. It's the ghost of tyranny—the skeleton king tapping his palm

with his cudgel-like scepter. Because fascism defends Capitalism (an inherently unstable system) the fear, then, becomes fear of sacrifice by the state to preserve the whole from an imaginary menace with historical-material validation for its own desire of revenge (the specters of Marx; i.e., a ghost battle between capitalist, thus fascist hauntology and Communist hauntology).

eco-fascism

The turn towards fascist rhetoric, stowed away inside nature conservatist rhetoric. When Capitalism fails, (some) humans become the virus inside the state of exception, *their* destruction pitched as "saving the planet" for the uninfected. This scapegoat is always Indigenous peoples (the go-to recipients of state exploitation) but can and will expand towards the center of American privilege (stopping short of the elite, of course) when things geopolitically and ecologically begin to worsen.

zombification/Zombie Capitalism+

The death of ethical parody and its replacement with "blind" forms; e.g., *Zombie Simpsons*. In "*Zombie Simpsons: How the Best Show Ever Became the Broadcasting Undead*" (2012), Dead Homer Society writes,

By almost any measurement, The Simpsons is the most influential television comedy ever created. It has been translated into every major language on Earth and dozens of minor ones; it has spawned entire genres of animation, and had more books written about it than all but a handful of American Presidents. Even its minor characters have become iconic, and the titular family is recognizable in almost every corner of the planet. It is a definitive and truly global cultural phenomenon, perhaps the biggest of the television age.

*As of this writing, if you flip on FOX at 8pm on Sundays, you will see a program that bills itself as The Simpsons. It is not The Simpsons. That show, the landmark piece of American culture that debuted on 17 December 1989, went off the air more than a decade ago. The replacement is a hopelessly mediocre imitation that bears only a superficial resemblance to the original. It is the unwanted sequel, the stale spinoff, the creative dry hole that is kept pumping in the endless search for more money. It is *Zombie Simpsons* ([source](#)).*

Zombification results from people living under Capitalism, a system that discourages them not to think for themselves, but also to violently attack people who try. *Zombie Capitalism* is when Capitalism becomes "feral," entering a fascist state of decay—whereupon, violent, pro-state zombies suddenly appear and attack rebellious workers, "eating their brains" (symbolizing an attack on the rebellious

mindset). Being the target of the state in this manner means you have fallen into the state of exception—disposable zombie fodder even more useless than the zombie heroes the state endlessly sends after you.

the Wisdom of the Ancients

A cultural understanding of the imaginary past. The past is always imaginary to some extent, but through less wise forms reliably leads to genocide and tremendous suffering (Marx' prophesied tragedy and farce) according to structures of power that preserve themselves through blind pastiche, parody and canonical art. These essentialize Capitalism's vicious cycle and cataclysmic arrangements of the imaginary past as something that is simultaneously Malthusian, but also paradoxically "as good as it gets" and threatened by the doomsday myopia of nominal Communism that Capitalism Realism affords. As their sense of agency and certitude collapse with the world around them, workers—but especially the middle class—are left feeling cheated or lied to, and either blame the system or scapegoats. Scapegoats are historically easier because you can shoot or kill them, implying the solution is a simple, straightforward one. It's the "tried-and-true" "wisdom" of the Roman fool, falling on their own sword while Rome burns not once, but over and over. Such "wisdom" is not wise, but a false power, which Gothic Communists seek to reclaim through our own doubling of the imaginary past—its monsters, castles and battles—as a kind of "living document" that can reclaim the Gothic imagination, thus our ability to think; i.e., through lost forms of knowledge retailored for the complexities of the modern world—its warring mentalities, sexualities, monsters (codified beliefs and actions) and praxis during class and culture war.

the Imperial Boomerang

"The thesis that governments that develop repressive techniques to control colonial territories will eventually deploy those same techniques domestically against their own citizens" ([source](#): Wikipedia). In Foucault's own words during his lecture at "Il faut défendre la société" in 1975:

[W]hile colonization, with its techniques and its political and juridical weapons, obviously transported European models to other continents, it also had a considerable boomerang effect on the mechanisms of power in the West, and on the apparatuses, institutions, and techniques of power. A whole series of colonial models was brought back to the West, and the result was that the West could practice something resembling colonization, or an internal colonialism, on itself ([source](#): "Foucault's Boomerang: the New Military Urbanism," 2013).

Described by Stephen Graham as "military urbanism," this phenomenon accounts for the legion of dead futures popularized in American canon and its expanded, retro-future states of exception—hauntological narratives that present the future as dead and Capitalism as retro-futuristically decayed; i.e., Zombie Capitalism and zombie police states.

the state of exception

The state-of-emergency applied to recipients of state violence; or as Giorgio Agamben writes in *State of Exception* (2005),

"A special condition in which the juridical order is actually suspended due to an emergency or a serious crisis threatening the state. In such a situation, the sovereign, i.e. the executive power, prevails over the others and the basic laws and norms can be violated by the state while facing the crisis" ([source](#)).

the state's monopoly of violence

Max Weber's maxim that "a state holds a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence within its territory, meaning that violence perpetrated by other actors is illegitimate" ([source](#); originally from "Politics as a Vocation," 1919). This applies to state-sanctioned witch hunts and scapegoating markers, which we'll examine much more thoroughly in Volume Three, Chapter Two.

the Protestant (work) ethic

From Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904-1905). In it, "Weber asserted that Protestant ethics and values, along with the Calvinist doctrines of asceticism and predestination, enabled the rise and spread of capitalism" ([source](#): Wikipedia)—a concept I've explored in my own Tolkien scholarship, for example; e.g., "["Dragon Sickness": The Problem of Greed](#)," (2015).

[Umberto Eco's 14 Points of Fascism](#) (from "[Ur-Fascism](#)," 1995)+

A handy guide for spotting fascism, which tends to conceal itself or idiosyncratically manifest. We won't go over all of them in this book, but there are a few that I like to focus on.

Sex, Gender and Race: Language, Theory and Politics

sexualized media

Media that contains sexual and gendered components—of cis-het men and women, but also queer persons/other marginalized groups for or against the state. However, the treatment of sexuality and gender—how it is sexualized by "the Media" or in media more broadly—depends on if it is sex-positive or sex-coercive (some examples, below):



(exhibit 3a1: Artist, top-left: Frank Frazetta; top-middle-to-right: [Sveta Shubina](#); bottom-left: J. Howard Miller; bottom-middle: Norman Rockwell; bottom-right: Michelangelo.

Artistic mimicry through homage is a common phenomenon of art, with women being illustrated historically by men for various purposes. A common reason for doing so was to illustrate their place in a man's world; e.g., as wives, mistresses [the Virgin or the Whore] but also as workers. Whereas open fascism historically relegates women to traditional modes of women's work, American propaganda temporarily made various concessions during WW2. These occurred to support the overall war effort and the material interests of the elite. After the war ended, women's rights were quickly rescinded in favor of a return to the status quo, female workers being demonized by the same male employers and patrons who formerly promoted them [and fetishized by the likes of Frazetta, who started his career during a regression towards female re-enslavement after the war].

Mimesis is a back-and-forth process, borrowing images and symbols for new purposes during oppositional praxis. In Rosie the Riveter's case, promotions of female "equality" were themselves guided by an American sense of righteousness that went on to be co-opted for social movements long after the original pieces aired. Indeed, Rosie only became a cultural icon of feminism in the 1970s—i.e., as a symbol of female empowerment that eclipsed Rockwell's Christianized mimesis of Michelangelo's Isaiah. On Rockwell, Christina Branham writes in "Rosie the Riveter" (2016),

The pose she strikes seems a bit awkward, but it too conveys a message: it was inspired by Michelangelo's portrayal of the prophet Isaiah on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Why? As stated during a Sotheby's 2002 sale of the original art, "Righteousness is described throughout Isaiah's prophecy as God's strong right arm." Rockwell's Rosie is certainly sporting some strong man-arms, but I would say the bigger message is that America was on the side of righteousness [[source](#)].

After Rockwell's upstaging by Miller's latter-day revival, the image of Rosie took on a life of its own. The image itself went on to convey the nostalgia of a reimagined past: the rights of cis-het white women [which second wave feminism primarily represented through its arguments]. In the works of future artists, nostalgia becomes something to reclaim, but also regress towards depending on the context and political leanings of the creator.)



(exhibit 3a2: Assorted pieces by Milo Manara and Luis Royo; middle-right: Olsen; far-top-right: [Morry Evans](#). Hauntology presses women into different forms of transgressive servitude—i.e., more about titillating the cis-het male gaze within risky positions of appropriative peril and high imagination/adventure that women are expected not just to perform, but compete for under male Pygmalions. Indeed, white, cis-het women assimilate and promote these roles, focusing on the unironic torture of a highly specific and prescriptive industry body type, versus catharsis for women forced to do certain forms of coercively humiliating labor regardless of the genre. Reduced to blind pastiche, these can perpetuate various harmful stereotypes within transgressive media as a means of submitting to formal power rather than resisting and reclaiming it through the same rituals as subverted; e.g., Morry Evan's work of a servile giant for the counterfeit of a nun; or Sveta Shubina's *Bowser and Peach*, below. We'll examine more iconoclastic subversions throughout the book; e.g., the aforementioned size difference as something to appreciate in different monster types, such as the Amazon/mommy dom, exhibit 51d2.)



(exhibit 3a3: Artist, left: [Sveta Shubina](#); right: Don Bluth. The desire to separate the art from the artist and aesthetics from ideology is understandable/possible, but it remains important to remember that when emulating a given style, said style in the past was associated with a problematic belief system and its symbolism; e.g., Don Bluth's damsel-in-distress, Princess Daphne, "needing" to be rescued from the dragon by a man who is still draconian themselves [the knight and the dragon being dichotomized variations of the "walking castle"/human tank]. Shubina is clearly emulating Bluth's visual style but subverts the relationship between the princess and the dragon—i.e., like King Kong but seemingly negotiated through the topos of the power of women [to attract men] as something to toy with. This context, of course, is difficult to glean from the base drawing itself, all but requiring a bit of imagination from us to reinterpret the same old clichés. But even if these stereotypes are subverted, their own work will remain haunted by the sexism of past idols that people unironically love in the present.

The woman as "emasculator" ties to the ironic cuckold of men, having them figuratively "by the balls": "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned." This historically unenviable position becomes canonically enviable among women forced to compete for limited husbands with wealth, being judged by men as "gold diggers" and judged by other women jealously fighting over the same heteronormative prize. Conventionally pretty women become viewed through various double standards: the treacherous beauty as a user of everyone around her to get what she wants; i.e., sex as a weapon. While the narrative reduces the woman to a singular role and personality type, it's one where their intelligence is treated like a concealed weapon behind their sexuality as front-and-center. They're forced into uncomfortable clothes and pitted against other women wearing the same princess-style uniform; i.e., the historical-material reality of women competing for the same bloodline: to be the king's prized broodmare.



This includes Bowser in BDSM circles, [a prime candidate for the "daddy dom" or queer "Bear" stereotype](#) [artist, above: Taran Fiddler]. The paradox of the spiked collar is canonized as the master's sigil that simultaneously is an anti-predation device for a large, powerful pet in iconoclastic circles.)

sex work

Any work centered around sexuality and gender roles, including *artwork*. More commonly thought of as "prostitution," patriarchal sexism under Capitalism extends sex work to the broader division of sexualized labor within a colonial gender binary: men's work versus women's work. While the former focuses on war, violence and promotion through socio-material dominance, the latter involves submissive, traditionalized modes of sexual-reproductive labor towards a male authority figure—often a boss, parent or husband. So, while many sex workers perform strictly eroticized acts in this manner, many more are secretarial or marital in nature, performed inside traditional sites of women's work like kitchens, bedrooms, or laundromats, but also banks or hospitals. In the creative world, sexist employers compel female creators (musicians, models, illustrators and writers, etc) to promote prescriptive notions of coercive sexuality and gender tied to heteronormative beauty standards, fashion and music. Regardless of the work, sex-positive workers will resist sex coercion through their own labor.

sex positivity

Sexual/asexual expression that enables individual self-expression (thus self-empowerment) by relatively ethical means—the right to do sex work or partake in sexual activity *if one so desires*. In other words, it is a *positive freedom*; i.e., freedom *for* people to do what they want, specifically "the possession of the power and resources (material conditions) to act in the context of the structural limitations of the broader society which impacts a person's ability to act." Apart from being morally good and materially beneficial, sex positivity empowers marginalized communities (who, amongst other things, are generally exploited for sex as a form of labor); it does so by arguing for mutual consent, descriptive sexuality and cultural appreciation using historically regulated language: bodies and biology, gender identity/performance and (a)sexual orientation.

sex coercion

Sexist, heteronormative argumentation, work and artistry that compels and upholds sexual and gendered norms by abolishing others through various unethical means. This includes corporations downplaying their harmful actions as benign, or fascists framing their openly harmful actions as justified. This freedom to act is a *negative freedom*; i.e., freedom *from* external restraint on one's actions. It is generally repressive towards marginalized communities, the elite exploiting them on a material level while also denying them their basic human rights.

Small idiosyncrasy in terms of my writing: When using "sex positivity" or "sex coercion" (nouns) as adjectives, they will be hyphenated; e.g., "The sex-positive fog crept in on little sex-coercive feet." This is completely arbitrary but my aim is to be consistent. —Perse

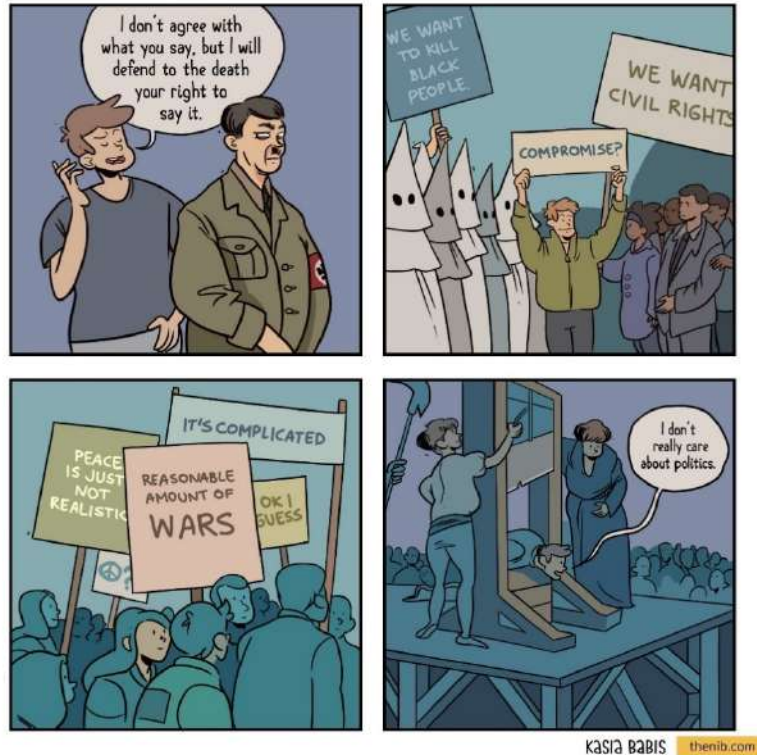
basic/civil human rights

The Communist idea that all human/animal workers deserve fair and equal treatment, which nation-states and corporations historically do not give (they are bourgeois and exploit workers). In Marxist terms, these rights are administered through Communism not according to profit, but "From each according to [their] ability, to each according to [their] needs." According to LeiLani Dowell at the Worker's World Forum in 2012, [this existence is planned and achieved through the development phase, aka Socialism](#): "...to each according to their *work*."

ethics, ethical, ethicality

This book treats *universal ethicality* not as canonical societal norms (what is prescriptively "correct" or "morally right" according to canon), but that humans, animals and the environment have basic, unalienable rights. The universality of

these rights is what is correct. Anyone's hypothetical ability to systemically "question" or undermine these rights—including the bourgeoisie—is fundamentally incorrect/unethical (what moderates call "compromise").



(artist: [Kasia Babis](#))

-phobia/-philia

In Gothic-Communist terms, a *phobia* isn't raw, animal fear—e.g., fear of death or the unknown—but an actionable, social-sexual stigma, bias or taboo assigned to a particular out-group or historical-material victim under the status quo/inside the state of exception: xenophobia, pedophilia, necrophilia, etc. This extends to various moral panics—e.g., Satanic panic, Red Scares, or the fascist revenge phobia of the backstabbing Jew, etc. Phobias are canonically fetishized. Philias are often deliberate/accidental misnomers insofar as abuse euphemisms are concerned (again, necrophilia, pedophilia, zoophilia); i.e., used to describe acts of abuse wherein the abuser is acting on a sexual attraction or otherwise abusive compulsion but is acting it out on a party that cannot actually consent (the dead, children, or animals; slaves, wives and other humans legally regarded as property in some shape or form).

purity arguments

A type of reactionary, fascist argumentation tied to manufactured scarcity, consent and conflict as radicalized during moral panics under police states/ethnostates. Think "boundaries for me, not for thee," but attached to limited-time waivers for those who best fit whatever soldiers those in fascist seats of power are looking for (with Himmler anything but "Nordic"). This tends to historically-materially manifest in racial-purity pseudoscience and aggressive recruitment tactics, defending the "purity" of a nation (and its children and women) through racialized supermen, generally with the descriptor "ethnic" attached to them—e.g., ethnic Germans (in Nazi Germany) or Jews (in Israel).

moral panic, morals, and morality

This book views personal morals as being shaped by broader social codes—folkways, mores and taboos that determine "good from bad" or "right from wrong" at a societal level. For conservatives, this involves reactionary politics administered through bad-faith, "moral panic" arguments; for neoliberals, there are no moral *actions*, only moral *teams* (re: "centrism," a concept we'll explore much more deeply in Volume Three, Chapter Four). Calling others immoral in either sense is actually immoral/unethical* relative to people's basic human rights.

**I would consider the difference between ethical and moral to be a matter of scope and scale. As Cydney Grannan writes in "What's the Difference Between Morality and Ethics?" for [Encyclopedia Britannica \(2023\)](#), the terms [are often used interchangeably even in academic circles](#).*

Please note, dialectical-materialism focuses on ethics through material relations—hence why I prefer to describe things not as "good or bad," but as bourgeois or proletarian (exceptions will be observed as they arise). —Perse

the Pygmalion effect

The patriarchal vision of those knowing-better "kings" of male-dominated industries, wherein "Pygmalion" means "from a male king's mind." Male "kings" author imaginary visions of the past, present and future, including the monomyth/Cycle of Kings, infernal concentric pattern and its heteronormative legion of monsters, invasion scenarios and escape fantasies; their reasoned, Cartesian treatment of women is heteronormative, thus abjectly hysterical.

hysteria/the wandering womb

Hysteria is a form of moderate condescension/reactionary control tied to Cartesian dualism, but also the gaslight, gatekeep and girl-boss trifecta that argues women

are "less rational" than men; it tends to diagnose them with bizarre, completely absurd medical conditions to keep them inactive and scared, but also under men's power (e.g., bicycle face is one [[source](#): Joseph Stromberg's "'Bicycle face': A 19th-Century Health Problem Made Up to Scare Women away from Biking," 2021] but [here's a whole list of odd disorders/female causes of ignominious death](#) invented by male "Pygmalions," including "night brain" and "drawing-room anguish"; source tweet: Dr. Daniel Cook, 2021). However, it also tends to frame women as mythical monsters/mothers that need to be killed for men to "progress": Medusas, Archaic Mothers, Amazons, etc.

the creation of sexual difference

Popularized by Luce Irigaray, her flagship concept is summarized by Sarah K. Donovan as follows,

In other words, while women are not considered full subjects, society itself could not function without their contributions. Irigaray ultimately states that Western culture itself is founded upon a primary sacrifice of the mother, and all women through her.

Based on this analysis, Irigaray says that sexual difference does not exist. True sexual difference would require that men and women are equally able to achieve subjectivity. As is, Irigaray believes that men are subjects (e.g., self-conscious, self-same entities) and women are "the other" of these subjects (e.g., the non-subjective, supporting matter). Only one form of subjectivity exists in Western culture and it is male ([source](#): Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy).

the Male Gaze (appropriative voyeurism/exhibitionism)

Popularized by Laura Mulvey in her 1973 essay, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," the Male Gaze goes well beyond cinema; according to Sarah Vanbuskirk in "What Is the Male Gaze?" (2022), it deals with female objectification under Capitalism:

The male gaze describes a way of portraying and looking at women that empowers men while sexualizing and diminishing women. [...] first popularized in relation to the depiction of female characters in film as inactive, often overtly sexualized objects of male desire. However, the influence of the male gaze is not limited to how women and girls are featured in the movies. Rather, it extends to the experience of being seen in this way, both for the female figures on screen, the viewers, and by extension, to all girls and women at large. Naturally, the influence of the male gaze seeps into

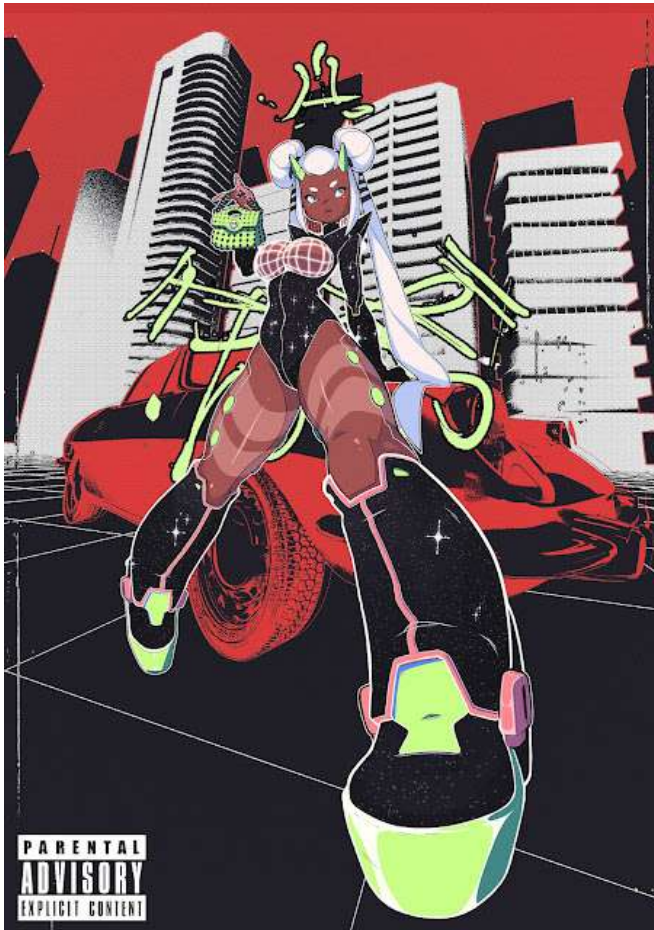
female self-perception and [self-esteem](#). It's as much about the impact of seeing other women relegated to these supporting roles as it is about the way women are conditioned to fill them in real life. The pressure to conform to this patriarchal view (or to simply accept or humor it) and endure being seen in this way shapes how women think about [their own bodies](#), capabilities, and place in the world—and that of other women. In essence, the male gaze [discourages female empowerment](#) and self-advocacy while encouraging [self-objectification](#) and deference to men and the patriarchy at large ([source](#)).

Appropriative performances of voyeurism/exhibitionism (watching or showing sexual activities) that cater to this Gaze uphold the status quo. Those that do not are appreciative (thus sex-positive) in nature, but generally remain liminal and ambivalent.



exhibitionism/voyeurism

A desire to show off or to look, generally tied to kink and BDSM (which we'll define in the Gothic section of terms). As with those, these activities can be sex-positive or -coercive; i.e., rebellious/furious flashing (exhibit 53, 62c, 89a, 101a1, etc) vs cat-calling/scopophilia from a totally unwanted audience (Norman Bates and Marion Crane) vs the liminal, half-invited Peeping Tom (Jimmy Stuart and Miss Torso from *Rear Window*, 1954; George McFly and Lorraine Bates from *Back to the Future*, 1985; or [these two tennis guys \[above\] and an anonymous female streaker](#)—source tweet: Peach Crush, 2023) vs the transphobic flasher (exhibit 62c) vs fully consensual voyeurism/exhibitionism (exhibit 101c2).



(artist: [Moika](#))

cultural appropriation (verb: "to appropriate"/adjective: "appropriative"):

Taking one (or more) aspect(s) of a culture, identity or group that is not your own and using it for your own personal interests. Although this can occur individually for reasons unrelated to profit, Capitalism deliberately appropriates workers/marginalized groups for profit; the act of these groups playing along is called assimilation.

cultural appreciation (verb: "to appreciate"/adjective: "appreciative"):

Attempting to understand and learn about another culture in an effort to broaden one's perspective and connect with others cross-culturally. The Gothic-Communism aim is to humanized these groups and prevent their exploitation through one's own work.

lip service

Empty endorsements, generally performed by establishment politicians; a moderate tactic of playing both sides (always to the detriment of workers).

queer-baiting/pacification/in-fighting

Empty commercial appeals/"representation" that are generally cliché, stigmatized, or dubiously underwritten/funeral—the "[bury your gays](#)" trope (defined and

explored by Haley Hulan's 2017 "Bury Your Gays: History, Usage, and Context") except employed by neoliberal corporations who expect marginalized groups to be grateful for scraps, but also fight over/about them: "They're fighting/killing each other" is music to the elite's ears regarding all marginalized groups (class sabotage).

"bury your gays"

The heteronormative sublimation, violence and moral-panic scapegoating of anything that doesn't fit the colonial binary model. Historically this would have been homosexual men (with queer cis women appropriated by cis-het men as exotic sex toys existing purely for male pleasure); however, it extends to trans/non-binary people or gender non-conforming persons more broadly (with various minorities being assigned heteronormatively atypically gendered qualities, like women of color being seen as more masculine and sexual voracious/aggressive than white women, for example).

Rainbow Capitalism

Capitalism appropriating queerness, generally through surface-level, inauthentic representation and queer-baiting. Marketing-wise, this involves slapping a fucking rainbow on every product in sight during Pride Month, diluting its cultural significance as a sign of solidarity and rebellion in the process.



recuperation/controlled opposition

"The process by which politically radical ideas and images are twisted, co-opted, absorbed, defused, incorporated, annexed or commodified within media culture and bourgeois society, and thus become interpreted through a neutralized, innocuous or more socially conventional perspective. More broadly, it may refer to the cultural appropriation of any subversive symbols or ideas by mainstream culture" ([source](#): Wikipedia). Perhaps the most common example is "corruption" (the evil cop, company or executive, etc) and the "defanging" of oppositional forces (rap, punk rock, antiwar protests, Black Lives Matter and other activists groups, etc as commodified by Rainbow Capitalism; more on this concept in Volume Three, Chapter One) but also "demonization" (e.g., the rebellion of the xenomorph or zombies turned into mindless rage that marines can shoot at with impunity).

sublimation

The process by which socially unacceptable impulses or idealizations are transformed into socially acceptable actions or behavior. Unlike Nietzsche or Freud, I explore sublimation as something that can either be bourgeois or proletarian. For either man, sublimation was a mature, "healthy" defense mechanism by which the modern individual could turn a blind eye, thus function in assimilative ways. I

disagree about the "healthy" part, thinking this kind of repressing is to conceal Capitalism as an expressly tyrannical and exploitative system towards workers—"healthy" meaning "working as intended *for the elite*." Sublimation has to go beyond exploitation if workers are to liberate themselves in ways Nietzsche generally called "envious." It is not envy that drives people to rebel, but a desire to not be exploited like chattel. To this, the recuperation of the activist—into a killer demon or zombie that cannot speak and must instead be shot—is generally seen as a good thing to do; it sublimates them into something that can be logically dealt with; i.e, through violence.

prescriptive sexuality (and gender)

Sexuality and gender as prescribed according to various explicit or tacit mandates; i.e., sex, orientation and gender performance/identity are not separate and exist within a cis-gendered, heteronormative colonial binary. This can come from corporations or groups that produce media on a geopolitical scale, or from individual artists/thinkers who uphold the status quo (TERFs, for example). Generally illustrated through propaganda that appropriates marginalized groups.



descriptive sexuality (and gender)

Sexuality and gender as describing actual persons, be they sexual and/or asexual. This includes their bodies, orientations and identities, etc, as things to appreciate, not appropriate (thus exploit). For queer people, their existence is generally ironic to canonical, historical-material norms because they do not confirm to these norms or their prescriptions. Doing so requires genderqueer expression during oppositional praxis through *appreciative irony* as a kind of gender trouble/parody under heteronormative conditions (exhibit 3b).

appreciative irony

Simply put, a descriptive sexuality that culturally appreciates the irony of queer existence in various forms: trans people, non-binary persons, homosexuals, pansexuals, bisexuals, intersex persons, femboys, catgirls, etc. Often, portrayed through countercultural performance art, including sex-positive BDSM in iconoclastic forms of Gothic media.

asexuality

A gradient of expressions that includes *demisexual/grey ace* and *aromantic* persons, asexuality displays orientations and performances or gender identities that diverge from sexual attraction, generally in favor of romantic, spiritual and emotional connections; i.e., a neurodivergent condition, not a disease that needs to be repressed, shamed or attacked.

neurodivergence

A quality of brain conditions that diverge from neurotypical persons and brains. Neurodivergent people tend to be demonized, but also shamed as disabled, insane or mendacious. However, NeuroClastic's Autistic Science Person writes in "Autistic People Care Too Much, Research Says" (2020) that [autistic people on average tend to be more selfless and open-minded than neurotypical persons](#). This isn't an automatic endorsement of us (I am neurodivergent) nor *carte blanche*, but it does help explain the ways in which Capitalism devalues people who don't toe the line (e.g., [the C.S. Lewis trilemma: lunatic, liar, lord](#); source: Essence of Thought, 2022): Neurodivergent people tend to be anti-work knowing that many jobs and forms of consumption are incredibly unethical; while there is no ethical consumption under Capitalism, we recognize that some forms of consumption actively contribute to an economy of genocide; e.g., purchasing sugar in slavery-era Great Britain before 1833, [or playing Hogwarts Legacy in 2023 despite knowing J.K. Rowling is a TERF and her brand is anti-trans](#) (Renegade Cut's "Don't Play Hogwarts Legacy," 2023).

plurality/multiplicity

Generally demonized in Gothic canon, "Plurality or multiplicity is the psychological phenomenon in which a body can feature multiple distinct or overlapping consciousnesses, each with their own degree of individuality. This phenomenon can feature in identity disturbance, dissociative identity disorder, and other specified dissociative disorders. Some individuals describe their experience of plurality as a form of neurodiversity, rather than something that demands a diagnosis" (source). It's not automatically an ailment or begot from trauma, though it will canonically be presented as such (the same goes for asexual/neurodivergent peoples).

sex-repulsed

Not to be confused with *sex-negative*/reactionary politics, *sex-repulsed* is the quality through which persons—whether through nature or nurture; i.e., hereditary or environmental trauma factors (for these tend to overlap)—are repulsed by sex. This can be partial—can amount to gradient indifference or outright trauma/triggering status depending on its severity. *Important: Sex-repulsion is not strictly a symptom, but a neurodivergent condition with congenital/comorbid factors operating within the brain as neuroplastic (concepts we'll explore in depth in Volume Three, Chapter Three).*

comorbid/congenital

The simultaneous presence of two or more diseases *or* medical conditions in a patient—congenital meaning "present at birth," inherited. In gendered terms, this can present in people who are non-conforming or neurotypical; in Marxist terms, this extends into the material world as an extension of the human mind—i.e., the Gothic imagination as comorbid.

LGBTQ+

Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Queer, and various other non-gender-conforming groups.

queer

A general, all-purpose label reclaimed from its colonizer origins. For example, I identify as queer/am a queer person. While terms like trans, queer, gay and so on most certainly have specific definitions, in everyday queer parlance they tend to be used *interchangeably* (with idiosyncratic boundaries being drawn up when the need arises); forced conformity/division is to "make things weird" (though marginalized gatekeeping/sectarianism is definitely a thing)

genderqueer

Challenging gender norms; also called "questioning" or "gender non-conforming."

monogamy/-ous

The performance of a singular, happy relationship, canonically structured around marriage, reproductive sex and the nuclear family structure. In Gothic canon, this structure is often threatened by a Gothic villain—e.g., Count Ardolph from Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*. When Ardolph cuckolds the husband with said husband's unfaithful,

susceptible-to-vice wife (the Original Sin argument), our unhappy husband—thoroughly chagrined—literally dies of shame. It's heteronormative and white supremacist, foisting societal fears onto a foreign, not-quite-West, not-quite-East scapegoat: those god-damn Italians! This form of xenophobic displacement would be revisited in Mary Shelley's 1818 novel, *Frankenstein*—with her Germanic, asexual scapegoat, Victor, not only cock-blocking his own kid as a proponent of the Enlightenment's version of unnatural reproduction ("I will be with you on your wedding night!"), but mad science being historically-materially Germanized in canonical fictional and non-fictional forms (e.g., [Operation Paperclip](#) and the American privatization/weaponization of mad science from irrational, hauntologized lands like Nazi Germany)!

poly(amory/-ous)

Non-normative family/open relationship structures that break with the heteronormative structure/cycle of compelled marriage; historically conflated with swinging or serial monogamy (which are really their own heteronormative practices; i.e., "We're not *poly*, we're *serially monogamous*!"). Note how poly relationships tend to be framed as *polyamorous*, not polygamous (unless you're a Mormon or cult leader, although certain traditions in non-Western societies allowed for polygamy as well—though not many were exclusively matriarchal in function). Polyamory *can* include marriage, though the basic idea is any (a)sexual relationship with multiple partners. Pairs within this arrangement are called *couples* (*thruple* being a popular term even in mainstream fiction, though canon reduces it to a destructive/"bury your gays" love triangle/square, etc); the entire social-sexual structure of a given poly arrangement is called a *polycule*. *Note: As part of the "bury your gays trope," poly couples are often viewed as "homewreckers," conflated with wanton societal destruction of the familial household (re: Count Ardolph from Zofloya); heteronormativity demands that they die—e.g., Shari and Cary (a pun for "sharing and caring," if I had to guess) from You (2018) being ritualistically sacrificed by the writers of the show, who have them murdered by the codependent, horribly selfish, duplicitous and perfidious compulsive liars/pattern-killers, Joe Goldberg and Love Quinn. —Perse*

"friends of Dorothy"

[Historically a method of queer concealment in the 1980s](#) but also appropriated under Rainbow Capitalism; can be appreciated under Gothic Communism, as well.

beards

A relationship of convenience to appear straight, heteronormative, monogamous, nuclear, "Roman," etc. The nuptial variant of a beard is the *lavender marriage*.

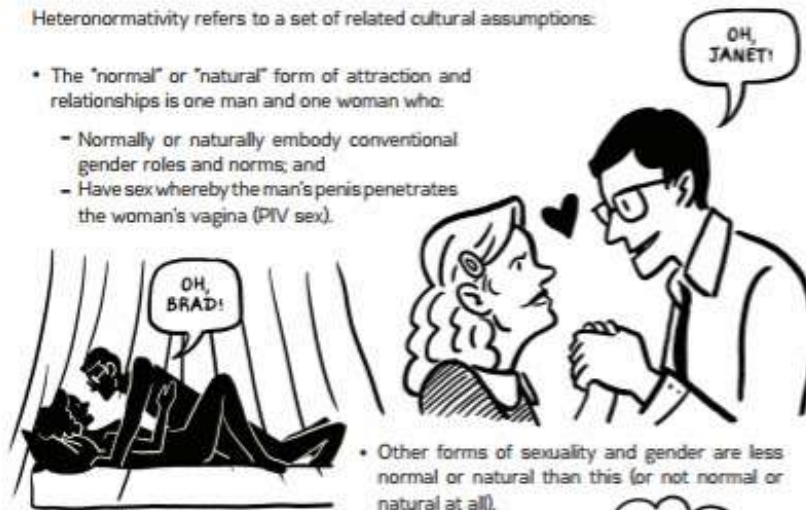
heteronormativity

HETERONORMATIVITY

An extremely helpful concept in queer theory, which encapsulates a lot of what we've just covered is *heteronormativity*. Queer theorist Michael Warner popularized this term in 1991, drawing on Rubin's sex hierarchy and Rich's compulsory heterosexuality.

Heteronormativity refers to a set of related cultural assumptions:

- The "normal" or "natural" form of attraction and relationships is one man and one woman who:
 - Normally or naturally embody conventional gender roles and norms; and
 - Have sex whereby the man's penis penetrates the woman's vagina (PIV sex).



- Other forms of sexuality and gender are less normal or natural than this (or not normal or natural at all).



- Thus, people are assumed heterosexual unless proven otherwise.

84

(exhibit 3b: Author/artist: [Meg-Jon Barker](#) from "What's wrong with heteronormativity?" featuring their 2016 book, [Queer: A Graphic History](#).)

Heteronormativity is both highly unnatural and normalized by capital. It is the supremely harmful idea wherein heterosexuality and its relative gender norms are prescribed/enforced to normalized, institutional extremes by those in power—i.e.,

the Patriarchy. In Marxist terms, capitalists and state agents own, thus control, the media, using it to enforce heterosexuality and the colonial (cis-)gender binary through advertisement on a grand scale (re: the canonical Superstructure). This influence reliably affects how people respond, helping them recognize "the social world of linguistic communication, intersubjective relations, knowledge of ideological conventions, and the acceptance of the law"—re: [Lacan's Symbolic Order](#). Acceptance of this Order when it is decidedly harmful is manufactured consent, leading to basic human rights abuses perpetrated by the state and its bourgeois actors. Pro-bourgeois abuses happen through various concentric lenses of normativity—heteronormativity, [amatormativity](#), [Afronormativity](#), homonormativity and queernormativity, etc—that appeal tokenistically to the same colonial binary and its heteronormative mythic structure; i.e., that which conflates human biology (sex and skin color), thus sex and gender roles within a transgenerational curse: the king saw the black, queer and/or female monster and went mad because he had been alienated from them and himself. The curse of the castle and the Shadow of Pygmalion, then, is reliable decay and socio-material madness felt through this engineered tension as being ultimately profitable for the elite and detrimental to everyone else (whether they're defending the institution or not). Heteronormativity doesn't just explain away ignominious death, but essentializes and endorses it; i.e., the hallmark couple looks happy so the system must work, right? All you have to do is conform, consume and obey...

queernormativity/homonormativity

Normative queerness centers queerness in *sexualized* spheres (erasing ace people) centered around the nuclear family unit/sexual reproduction. *Homonormativity* takes the same idea and applies it to cis-gendered homosexual men/women (the "two dads/two moms" appropriative trope as queer-baiting/lip service).

gender trouble

Coined by Judith Butler, gender trouble is the social tension and reactions that result when the heteronormative, binary view of sexuality and gender is disrupted. This trouble can happen through the parody of social-sexual norms through ironic or appreciative (counterculture) reverse-abjection, whose reactionary abjection occurs by an increasingly unstable status quo as it impedes or threatens disintegration (moral panics under Capitalism's intended cycles of decay and restoration). Such threatening is generally of the heteronormative side reacting negatively towards the very things it abjects, which can be as simple as boys wearing pink instead of blue(!). Such a binary and similar socio-material schemes have only recently solidified under neoliberal Capitalism; e.g., now, pink is very much canonically treated as feminine/female in cis-coded, heteronormative ways

(for an extensive, funny chronicling of this entire tragedy as it historically-materially unfolds, refer to Tirrrb's 2023 video: "[The Yassification Of Masculinity](#)").

girl-cock (exhibit 7c) or boy pussy (exhibit 52c)/gender parody

Genitals or genitalia-like artifacts that fulfill an ironic/gender parody cultural role that interrogates heteronormative gender assignment, performance or identity, as well as sexual orientation. They can be informed by one's biological sex in coercive ways (exhibit 30/31). However, no one in non-normative/proletarian circles wants to be "defined" by biological sex—i.e., forced conformity. This leads to the creation of various sex toys (exhibits 38a) and aliases useful to our existence, as well as actively operating as sex-positive workers (this being said, sex-positive workers *are* active by default—attacked for being different from what the state prescribes, but also allowed to exist by the elite because *we're* the fuel that Capitalism needs to operate).

natural assignment

Accident of birth—i.e., the natural assignment of one's biological sex (and conditions to form one's gender identity around, whether through conformity or struggle); one's birth sex/genitals: male, female, and intersex.

AFAB/AMABs

Assigned-Female/Male-at-Birth—i.e., one's birth sex. Can be used as a noun or adjective; e.g., "AFABs dislike this" or "an AFAB person," etc. Intersex people are their own category.

what is INTERSEX?

The term "intersex" is used to describe an individual whose chromosomes, hormones, or sexual organs are not in line with the perceived male/female sex binary.

SEX is not binary: **SEX is a spectrum:**

Sex is determined by a doctor upon birth using the following guidelines: (according to the infant's genitals)

it's a girl! (under 3/8") it's a boy! (over 1")

unacceptable!

Babies with "ambiguous genitals" often undergo inhumane, dangerous, and unnecessary surgeries to "normalize" their genitals, many times without parental consent!

INTERSEX PEOPLE...

- >> are about as common as redheads!
- >> can have any sexual orientation or gender identity.
- >> should never be called "hermaphrodites."
- >> should have their privacy respected.
- >> should not have to be ashamed of their bodies.
- >> deserve to be treated like anybody else.

INTERSEX AWARENESS DAY // october 26

SOURCES: isna.org, actuallyintersex.tumblr.com, sexandgender.net, apcdaily.wordpress.com

intersex

(exhibit 3c1: [source](#))

The existence on a biological gradient between the qualifiers male and female, amounting to a variable "third sex" that presents mixed features of either sex to varying degrees; except, the umbrella term doesn't represent one particular manifestation as a strict third, but all of them together on a vast, complicated spectrum of genotypical and phenotypical elements. They are often depicted as angels or demons in the classically androgynous sense, or stigmatized/fetishized in porn as "shemales," "he-shes" and other

canonically pejorative labels; a common, non-insulting label is "androgynous" (though this can apply to trans people and mixed gender performance, too). A common intersex example in Gothic media is the phallic woman or Archaic Mother—e.g., the xenomorph.

non-binary

From the Human Rights Campaign's "Glossary of Terms" (2023):

An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, *not all non-binary people do*. Non-binary can also be used as an umbrella term encompassing identities such as agender, bigender, genderqueer or gender-fluid ([source](#)).

Non-binary can mean a lot of different things. A femboy can be a cis femboy AMAB who feels femme but still identifies as a man; or someone who identifies through the femboy gender role as a performance that constitutes their identity label (similar to drag queens); or someone whose AFAB who non-binarizes the femboy label. To non-binarize is to remove the binary component of something but generally preserve the aesthetic and power structure within the arrangement (e.g., cis-gendered catgirls and femboys as things to non-binarize: exhibits 91a1 and 91c).

sexual/asexual orientation

How people orient (a)sexually/"float their boats" in relation to gender identity and performance. A double helix of two gradients, each having two theoretical "poles," wherein both ribbons descriptively intertwine/intersect within the socio-material world (more on this in Volume Three, Chapter Three).

heterosexuality

Orienting towards the *opposite* gender. Classically called "opposite-sex attraction," gender-non-conformity (GNC) treats heterosexuality as orienting towards the gender opposite to *oneself*. This being said, pure opposites do not generally exist outside of heteronormative enforcement (which compels binaries in service of the profit motive/process of abjection) so heterosexual people also tend to be cis; i.e., cis-het, or "straight."

homosexuality

Orienting towards the *same* gender. Classically called "same-sex attraction," gender-non-conformity treats homosexuality as orienting towards the same gender as *oneself*. No binary is required, and the term is generally synonymous with "gay" or "lesbian."

bisexuality

Orienting towards *two or more* genders. Classically called "both-sex attraction" (or something along those lines), gender-non-conformity treats bisexuality as orienting towards the gender opposite to and the same as *oneself*.

pansexuality

Orienting towards someone else *regardless of* their gender. However, this does not preclude exceptions and the phrase is generally used interchangeably with bisexuality in everyday parlance.

heteronormative assignment (cis gender roles)

Accident of birth in relation to one's "birth gender" as socially constructed by the state in relation to one's genitals. For example, if you're reading this on planet Earth, you're both literate and fluent in English. This means your birth gender is heteronormatively connected to/essentialized with your birth sex by reactionaries and moderates alike, who will collectively die on the hill of assigning you a social-sexual/worker role based *entirely* on your genitals ("It is against free speech to stop us from fixating on the genitals," writes the Onion in their 2023 article, "[It is Journalism's Sacred Duty to Endanger the Lives of as Many Trans People as Possible](#)"). Commonly seen as "cis-het," it can also be cis-queer (e.g., a homosexual or bisexual cis-gendered man or woman). Not all cis-queer people are moderates/reactionaries, though class conflict turns potential trans allies into class traitors working for the elite. Likewise, heteronormativity is binarized, thus connecting gender to sex in order to create sexually dimorphic gender roles for "both" worker sexes (all while ignoring intersex people).

transgender reassignment (transgender identity)

Simply put, Being trans is gender identity wherein one feels, and hopefully one day decides to recognize, that one isn't cis. For example, I have always been trans, but felt closeted about it; for a long time, I identified as genderfluid/as a femboy before deciding that I aligned best within the idea of being a binary trans woman. However, words like "gay," "trans," and "non-binary" can also be used interchangeable to some extent in basic conversation—in short, because the definitions overlap. A non-binary person isn't cis, so calling them "trans" isn't wrong. However, there is a preference with which labels they'll use in basic conversation and which one's they'll wave a flag to (i.e., I *am* an atheist and a feminist, but would rather call myself a gay space Communist/Satanist any day of the week).

gender identity

One's conforming or nonconforming gender identity as a (sub)conscious act; i.e., how one identifies, be that passively or actively. This act of identifying intersect with their birth sex/gender, their orientation, while also competing dialectically-materially for or against the state during various performances. This can be passive/active, but remains a socio-political position that changes over time (sex,

gender and politics, etc, are fluid). In the past, people were more likely to be "true neutral," unaware of things as the state oppressed information outright. Now, misinformation and factionalism are the bourgeois name of the game—gaslight, gatekeep, girl boss; so is denial (for those who don't want to get involved in active politic affairs; aka state-sponsored apathy) and overt genocide (when moderacy fails, doing so by design and allowing fascists to get their hands bloody so the elite can deny involvement): neglect, ignorance and abuse, respectively.

gender performance

Gender performance is coded in relation to oneself, their identity/orientation, and to society's in-groups and out-groups, aka formal/informal gender roles. Whether one's gender *identity* is assigned to them at birth, or is self-assigned through various non-gender-conforming types—e.g., trans man/woman, non-binary, femboy, agender, etc—their gender *performance* amounts to a coded set of social behaviors (and corresponding materials and language) that adhere to performative rules meant to reinforces one's gender as either self-assigned, or assigned heteronormatively by the state. To that, these concepts do not exist in a vacuum, but intersect and often conflict (which leads to gender parody and gender trouble during subversive exercises). The higher you go in vertical power structures, the more patriarchal someone behaves. This varies per socio-material register. The elite will push buttons to calmly genocide entire peoples for profit (for them, it's business-as-usual, conducted over time inside a structure built to accommodate them); those whose positions are more fragile (fascists) will behave more extremely as they defend the nation-state (with moderacy trying to conceal/downplay this). E.g., Bill Gates is a total dweeb who hangs out with pedophiles but dresses like your creepy uncle; Matt Walsh and Hitler both have to overperform to keep up with their fragile, hypermasculine gender roles, thus maintain their veneer of invincibility.



(artist, left: [Mark Bryan](#); right: [Cursed Arachnid](#))

gender performance as identity

Some identities involve broader gender performances to identify around or as. Common sex-coercive examples include the *Einsatzgruppen* (death squads) of Nazi Germany's *SS-Totenkopfverbände* (the Death's Head units); despite being a paramilitary group in a fascist (thus heteronormative) regime, the appearance of these groups was literally tailored by Hugo Boss around fetishistic (then and now) Nazi aesthetics; i.e., as examined by Leftist Youtuber, Yugopnik, in "Aesthetics of Evil - The Fascist Uniform" (2021): [Nazis uniforms were patently designed to evoke the heroic spirit of palingenetic ultranationalism inside a cult of death](#), one whose dimorphic gender roles were deliberately affixed to fear and dogma (whose sex-coercive stamp on canonical BDSM we'll examine in Volume Three). Sex-positive examples include drag queens or femboys. To that, someone doesn't have to identify as either of these terms. And yet, while drag queens are predominantly cis men, they also belong to a cultural movement that is so large and specific in its as to justify identify as someone who belongs to such a group. It takes on a life of its own. Similarly, femboys belong to a group of people who identify according to the word "femboy" as something to live by through its canonical subversion by iconoclastic method; i.e., appreciative irony as a means of reclaiming the word and making it sex-positive through latter-day examples of the word (which we'll examine in Volume Three, Chapter Three).

a woman

That depends ("Beware the elves for they will say both yea and nay"). Keeping the above terms in mind, a woman is multiple things at once. On the *bourgeois* side, she's anything a man isn't—i.e., a cis-het sex slave/employee/girl boss, etc (note the gradient of euphemisms to disguise the deliberate marital role of unpaid women's work under Capitalism); on the proletariat side, she's however someone identifies in relation to the state as a worker—for or against it to various, liminal degrees (this includes personas, alter-egos, egregores and various other disguises). To reduce it to "an adult, human female" is super gross, Nazi-level shit (and while I *want* to seriously feel sorry for Matt Walsh's probably-battered housewife, assuming she's entirely ignorant of her husband's abuse would assume that she actually puts in the work; however, if she does, it would take total isolation of anything not supplied to her in advance by her "big, strong, powerful, caretaker" husband. That's quite sad and pathetic). I hate Nazis, Matt Walsh; my grandfather fought them during WW2 after they raped and destroyed his homeland and killed most of his friends and family. They prey on fear yet instantly run away like Brave Ser Robin when they're outed as perfidiously and ignominiously stupid. You're cut from the same cloth, you giant, callow man-child.

To be good-faith and holistic, I've tried to include the most fundamental and basic queer language as comprehensively as I can for all readers (this anticipates cryptofascists like Matt Walsh, who only asks "What is a Woman?" in bad faith to reactionarily maintain the status quo—the feckless backstabber). Other terms that we haven't mentioned here will come up during the book as we build off our main arguments. —Perse

the (settler-)colonial binary

Nadi Tofighian writes in *Blurring the Colonial Binary* (2013) that, having evolved beyond Rome's master/slave dynamic, colonialism and Imperialism "separated people into different classes of people, ruler and ruled, white and non-white, thereby creating and widening a colonial binary" ([source](#)). To this, the cis-het, white European/Christian male is superior to all other workers. This binary extends to token marginalizations and infiltrated and assimilated/normalized activist groups, thought/political leaders or public intellectuals, who serve as class traitors, but also functional police for their respective domains.

Cartesian dualism/the Cartesian Revolution

The rising of a dividing system of thought by René Descartes that led to settler colonialism. As Raj Patel and Jason Moore write in *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things*:

The inventors of Nature were philosophers as well as conquerors and profiteers. In 1641, Descartes offered what would become the first two laws of capitalist ecology. The first is seemingly innocent. Descartes distinguished between mind and body, using the Latin *res cogitans* and *res extensa* to refer to them. Reality, in this view, is composed of discrete "thinking things" and "extended things." Humans (but not all humans) were thinking things; Nature was full of extended things. The era's ruling classes saw most human beings—women, peoples of color, Indigenous Peoples—as extended, not thinking, beings. This means that Descartes' philosophical abstractions were practical instruments of domination: they were real abstractions with tremendous material force. And this leads us to Descartes' second law of capitalist ecology: European civilization (or "we," in Descartes' word) must become "the masters and possessors of nature." Society and Nature were not just existentially separate; Nature was something to be controlled and dominated by Society. The Cartesian outlook, in other words, shaped modern logics of power as well as thought.

[...] The invention of Nature and Society was gendered at every turn. The binaries of Man and Woman, Nature and Society, drank from the same cup. Nature, and its boundary with Society, was "gyn/ecological" from the outset. Through this radically new mode of organizing life and thought, Nature became not a thing but a strategy that allowed for the ethical and economic cheapening of life. Cartesian dualism was and remains far more than a descriptive statement: it is a normative statement of how to best organize power and hierarchy, Humanity and Nature, Man and Woman, Colonizer and Colonized. Although the credit (and blame) is shared by many, it makes sense to call this a Cartesian revolution. Here was an intellectual movement that shaped not only ways of thinking but also ways of conquering, commodifying and living [...] that] made thinking, and doable, the colonial project of mapping and domination.

Finally, the Cartesian revolution was made thinkable, and doable, the colonial project of mapping and domination. [...] Cartesian rationalism is predicated on the distinction between the inner reality of the mind and the outer reality of objects; the latter could be brought into the former only through a neutral, disembodied gaze situated outside of space and time. That gaze always belonged to the Enlightened European colonist—and the empires that backed him. Descartes' *cogito* funneled vision and thought into a spectator's view of the world, one that rendered the emerging surfaces of modernity visible and measurable and the viewer bodiless and placeless. Medieval multiple vantage points in art and literature were displaced by a single, disembodied, omniscient and panoptic eye. In geometry, Renaissance painting, and especially cartography, the new thinking represented reality as

if one were standing outside of it. As the social critic Lewis Mumford noted, the Renaissance perspective "turned the symbolic relation of objects into a visual relation: the visual in turn became a quantitative relation. In the new picture of the world, size meant not human or divine importance, but distance." And that distance could be measured, catalogued, mapped, and owned.

The modern map did not merely describe the world; it was a technology of conquest ([source](#)).



(artist: [Allan Ramsay](#))

patrilineal descent

In medieval terms, patrilineal descent is generally expressed as Divine Right (what Mikhail Bakhtin comments on through the Gothic chronotope as dynastic power exchange and hereditary rites—the time of the historical past); i.e., the bloodline of kings. Under Capitalism, this applies to socio-material privileges accreting outwards from the nation-state/corporations through state-corporate propaganda (canon) in monomythic terms—a Symbolic Order that workers submit to once pacified.

the mythic structure

The Symbolic Order of Western canon: "Oh, look, it's a king or a god! Guess I'll bend the knee and turn off my brain!" Originally disrupted by the "mythic method"

as coined by T.S. Eliot, who "Jerry" from GLR Archive writes in "Eliot and the Mythic Method" (2004),

defines what he exemplifies in *The Waste Land* [1922] – i.e., the "mythic method" – in his essay "Ulysses, Order, and Myth" [1923]. The mythic method looked to the past to glean meaning and understanding for what has been lost or destroyed in the present. This method emphasizes the underlying commonality of ostensibly disparate times and locations by employing a comparative mythology to transcend the temporal narrative. By stressing the mythical, anthropological, historical, and the literary, this method becomes at once (1) satirical by showing how much the present has fallen; (2) comparative to highlight similarities structurally; (3) historically neutral to escape the present to a revived future; (4) confused in its fusion of the realistic and the phantasmagoric; (5) ordering in its approach to morality and imaginative passion. The mythic method does not offer an escape to a better past, but an entry to a confusing present ([source](#)).

Eliot's 20th century modernist shenanigans (not to be confused with Modernism, aka the Enlightenment) fly directly in the face of James Campbell's "[monomyth](#)." Canonized as "the hero's journey" in popular Western fiction and formative to new fictions, the monomyth is central to state hegemony through worker pacification. Perhaps not entirely aware of this, Eliot still chose not to retreat into a "better" past in search of individuation (to borrow from Carl Jung); he addressed the present as a modern confusion that *needs* to be faced. In socio-political terms, this can be spaces that house abject/reverse things (with proletarian/reverse-abject variants, of course): the parallel space.

the monomyth (shortened, from the thesis volume)

Also called the Hero's Journey, the monomyth is a rite of passage wherein a (traditionally male) child finds himself offered the "rare" opportunity to elevate through the seemingly divine provision of a sword or some such masterful weapon. There's many steps and moving parts following the Call to Adventure (often categorized between [twelve](#) and [seventeen](#)), but the basic gist is: offer adventure, refuse, change mind, get sword, cross boundaries, overcome trials and ordeals, kill the (corrupt, monstrous-feminine) monster, return in some shape or form changed by the quest, get the girl. Joseph Campbell is more prescriptive and optimistic, writing in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949):

A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered, and a decisive

victory is won: the Hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man ["bros before hoes," I guess].

Personally, I find this whole notion incredibly dubious; i.e., harmful wish fulfillment/guilty pleasure that is generally trapped within a space for which there is no escape and which the fear of colonial inheritance runs deep in Neo-Gothic fiction. Through this questioning of the heroic quest, we can spot disempowering patterns beyond that of canonical empowerment tied to material conditions and dogma: the Cycle of Kings as a *Promethean* ordeal the state exploits to recruit soldiers to either send abroad and commit genocide, or to (re)colonize the homefront (the Imperial Boomerang, from Foucault) in the name of the father and one's bloodline through patrilineal descent.

the Cycle of Kings (shortened, from the thesis volume)

The centrist monomyth; i.e., the good and bad kings and all the kings' white cis-het Christian men or those *acting like these men*, thus warrior-minded good cops and bad cops in hauntological (from Derrida, trapped between the past and present; anachronistic with an emphasis on the imaginary past/retro-future) copaganda apologizing for state genocide—i.e., TERFs and other token groups. In turn, the calamity of war-as-an-*apologetic*-business—of canonically whitewashing culture, war and class war/culture war personified in theatrical war, as well as total war and shadow/proxy war on the global stage (or its return home via the Imperial Boomerang/military urbanism)—reeks from Capitalism like a Promethean "exhaust" during an infernal concentric pattern.

infernal concentric pattern (from the thesis volume)

Described by Manuel Aguirre in "Geometries of Terror" (2008) as the final room, or rather a room that conveys finality through the exhaustion of military optimism in the face of an endless, yawning dead;

where the hero crosses a series of doors and spaces until he reaches a central chamber, there to witness the collapse of his hopes; [this infernal concentric pattern has] in Gothic one and the same function: to destabilize assumptions as to the physical, ontological or moral order of the cosmos [... It is like a Mandelbrot set:] finite, and yet from within we cannot reach its end; it is a labyrinth that delves "down" instead of pushing outwards. From the outside it looks simple enough: bounded, finite, closed; from the inside, however, it is inextricable. It is a very precise graphic replica of the Gothic space in *The Italian* [...] Needless to say, the technique whereby physical or figurative space is endlessly fragmented and so seems both to repeat itself and to stall resolution is not restricted to *The Italian*: almost every major

Gothic author (Walpole, Beckford, Lee, Lewis, Godwin, Mary Shelley, Maturin, Hogg) uses it in his or her own way. *Nor does it die out with the metamorphosis of historical Gothic into other forms of fiction* (emphasis, me; [source](#)).

i.e., the infernal concentric pattern is the smoke of the ignominious dead used as a myopic screen of Capitalist Realism, one that hides the obvious function of the free market and exploitation as a man-made, but brutal Cartesian model: profit, by any means necessary.

totalitarian(ism)

A state condition towards the total consolidation of power at one point. For example, in respect to Hitler's Germany or Stalin's Russia, Richard Overy writes in *The Dictators* (2004), "'Totalitarian' does not mean that they were 'total' parties, either all-inclusive or wielding complete power; it means they were concerned with the 'totality' of the societies in which they worked."

parallel space

Parallel space (or language) works off the anti-totalitarian notion of "[parallel societies](#)" (Academy of Idea's "The Parallel Society vs Totalitarianism," 2022): "A [society] not dependent on official channels of communications, or on the hierarchy of values of the establishment." For our purposes, though, parallel space can be *either* canonical or iconoclastic, operating through bourgeois/proletarian means; i.e., to dissociate/displace socio-material critiques for or against the state, and usually to a faraway "Gothic" place: e.g., a castle in a mythical, semi-earthly land of madness like Ann Radcliffe's fictionalized Italy or the 1980s, neoliberal "danger disco" of James Cameron's *Terminator* (exhibit 15b2). The role of such Gothic examples is, again, the infernal concentric pattern as inescapable/uncanny.

class warfare

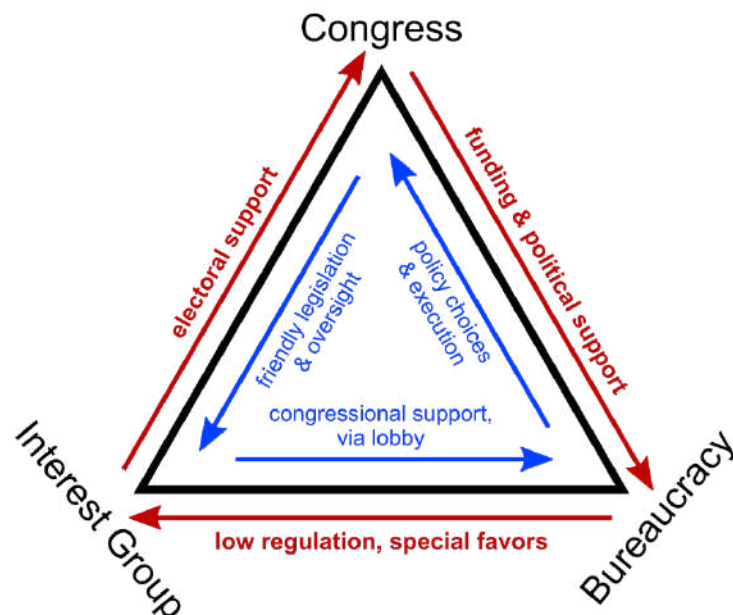
Class war for/against the state-corporate hegemony and its collective bourgeois interests. Proletarian solidarity and collective action fight an uphill battle against fractured/pulverized variants—i.e., worker division and in-fighting through tokenism, assimilation (gaslight, gatekeep, girl-boss) and token normativity as a means of generating class traitors to stall/prevent/regress rebellion and maintain Capitalism.

class traitors/cops

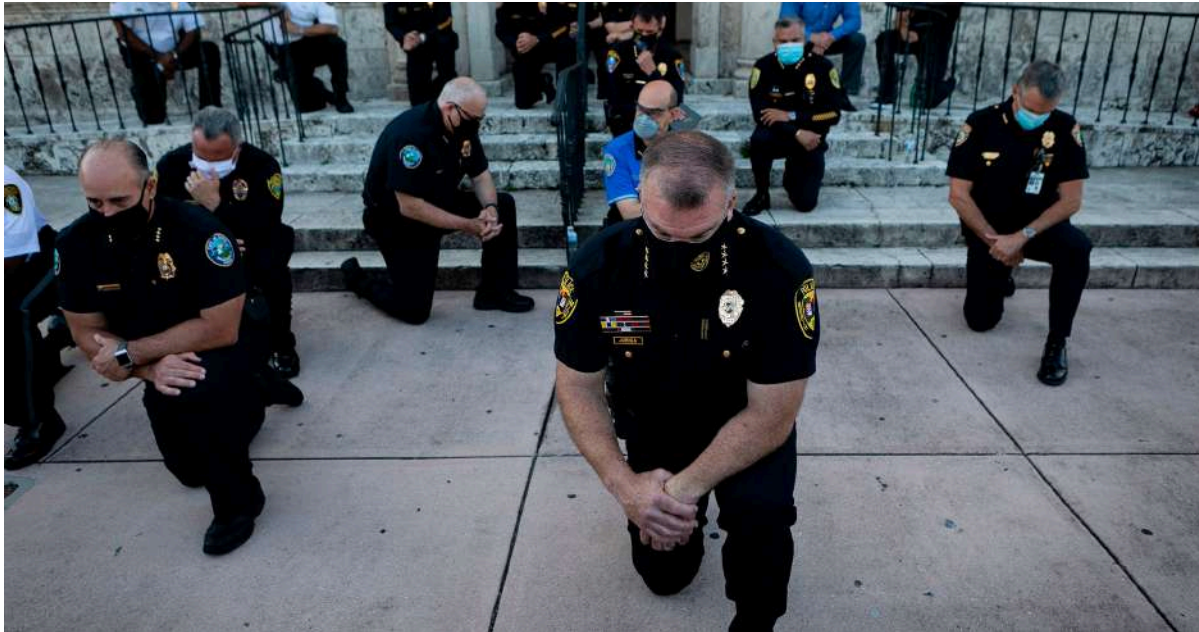
Workers who betray the working class in defense of capital, namely the state as capital, often the military or paramilitary (cops) but also those who take on the same bourgeois function by dividing workers in defense of capital, thus the state. Traitors and exploitation takes many, many forms because all workers are exploited to varying degrees and qualities—e.g., [Justin Eric King lying/downplaying about his active role in exploiting foreign/migrant workers](#) (Bad Empanada 2, 2023) smuggled into the U.S. and exploited like basement chattel slaves, only to be given a slap on the wrist by the state. Regardless of whom, the structure defends itself through manufacture, subterfuge and coercion in defense of capital from whistleblowers and activists as fundamental/*de facto* enemies of the state. "Those with power will be there."

Military Industrial Complex

(from [Wikipedia](#)): the relationship between a country's military and the defense industry that supplies it, seen together as a vested interest which influences public policy. A driving factor behind the relationship between the military and the defense-minded corporations is that both sides benefit—one side from obtaining war weapons, and the other from being paid to supply them. The term is most often used in reference to the system behind the armed forces of the United States, where the relationship is most prevalent due to close links among defense contractors, the Pentagon, and politicians. The expression gained popularity after a warning of the relationship's detrimental effects, in [the farewell address](#) of President Dwight D. Eisenhower on January 17, 1961.



In the context of the United States, the appellation is sometimes extended to **military-industrial-congressional complex (MICC)**, adding the US Congress to form a three-sided relationship termed an "iron triangle." Its three legs include political contributions, political approval for military spending, lobbying to support bureaucracies, and oversight of the industry; or more broadly, the entire network of contracts and flows of money and resources among individuals as well as corporations and institutions of the defense contractors, private military contractors, the Pentagon, Congress, and the executive branch.



([source](#): Matthew Byrne's "Police Departments Attempt a Charm Offensive Amid Uprisings," 2020)

copaganda

Any form of canonical media that defends state abuse through official or functional police agents, but especially their monopoly of violence against those living in the state of exception under crisis as meant to recognize and worship/submit to them like gods. The state is always, to some degree, in crisis, leading to the generation of myriad monomyth stories that express this fact—i.e., as a dividing line between the police and everyone else. Skip Intro, [a YouTuber with an extensive series on copaganda](#), explores how this phenomenon goes well beyond planet Earth, going so far as to call it a Faustian bargain. This bargain manifesting in many different kinds of fiction genres that endorse the status quo. For example, the "witch cops" and vice characters of fantasy narratives (war chiefs, Amazon war bosses; white and black "wolves") either attack orcs, Drow or some other enemy of the state during oppositional praxis, or they rally them in doomed rebellions and

futile/misunderstood attacks of revenge. One assimilates, the other is destroyed and vilified.

weird canonical nerds

A toxic subset of nerd culture. Whereas nerd culture is for those who present an increased intellectual interest in a given topic—often in literature, but popular media more broadly as something to consume, critique, or create—weird canonical nerds are those who substitute intellectualism for consumerism and negative freedom for the elite as something to blindly enjoy/endorse through faithful, uncritical consumption; i.e., the monomyth and Cycle of Kings as "good war"; e.g., Gamergate, 2014, but also TERFs and their emergence in the late 2010s. Not only is this group is very wide—encompassing white, cis-het male consumers, but also women, and assimilated, "minority police," token class traitors [cops are class traitors who betray the class interests of the working class/proletariat for the owner class/bourgeoisie]; but it unironically leads to fascism as the infernal concentric pattern (with Gamergate endorsed by weird canonical nerds into the 2016 election of Donald Trump, and neoliberal-fascist sentiments through coercive economics and "blind" pastiche/parody consumption outside of American establishment politics). Weird canonical nerds are systemically bigoted, pertaining to Man Box culture as something to openly endorse, or "resist" in ways that do nothing to change the status quo/avoid the infernal concentric pattern/Cycle of Kings; e.g., TERF Amazons, but also proudly "apolitical" non-feminist nerds who embody a particular status within the nerd pantheon of canonical heroes: Mega Man as a go-to centrist male hero, but also Eren Yeager as the "incel fascist" with mommy issues, or Samus Aran as the Galactic Federation's singular girl boss, etc. All become something to endorse within critically blind portions of nerd culture that ape their prescriptive, colonial heroes within culture war dressed up as "apolitical" (the *fascist* ideology being secondary to the pursuit and claiming of personal power by changing one's shape and language to fit those aims; e.g., Reinhardt Heydrich as a fascist war pig [to combine Umberto Eco with Black Sabbath] who would say whatever he could to justify his own iron grip on the minds of the populace: the foreign plot inside the house, once and forever). To this, the Gothic and its various intersections, contradictions and conflicts are embroiled within oppositional praxis for or against weird canonical nerds and their depictions/endorsements of different monster types (that, in the white, cis-het male tradition of privilege, routinely "fail up"—as success, like women or a nice house, is something they are taught to believe is owed to them; which extends to token minorities allowed a slice of the pie, but also must surrender their pie when the time comes [for which the real "Indian givers" are the settler colonist bearing false gifts: the Trojan Horse, aka the Faustian bargain, in Gothic circles]).

incels

An extreme form of rape culture, "involuntarily celibate" persons are those whose false victimization blames women instead of the system that alienates them by design. [The term was originally coined by a lonely woman in the '90s](#), but has since gone on to be used almost exclusively by the alt-right; i.e., stemming from grifters like Andrew Tate who market "self-help" snake oil to them, and authors like Hajime Isayama who make incel heroes tied to palingenetic ultranationalism dressed up as standard-issue war/national pastiche: "weeb" food.

weeaboo

Often shorted to "weeb," the term "weeaboo" is used in anime and manga communities to stereotype fans who show a set of extreme and obnoxious characteristics, generally tied to alt-right circles and belief systems. This includes eco-fascism and "waifus" (the videogame equivalent of a culture war bride promised to men or token proponents of the status quo), but also *moe*, *ahegao* and incest.

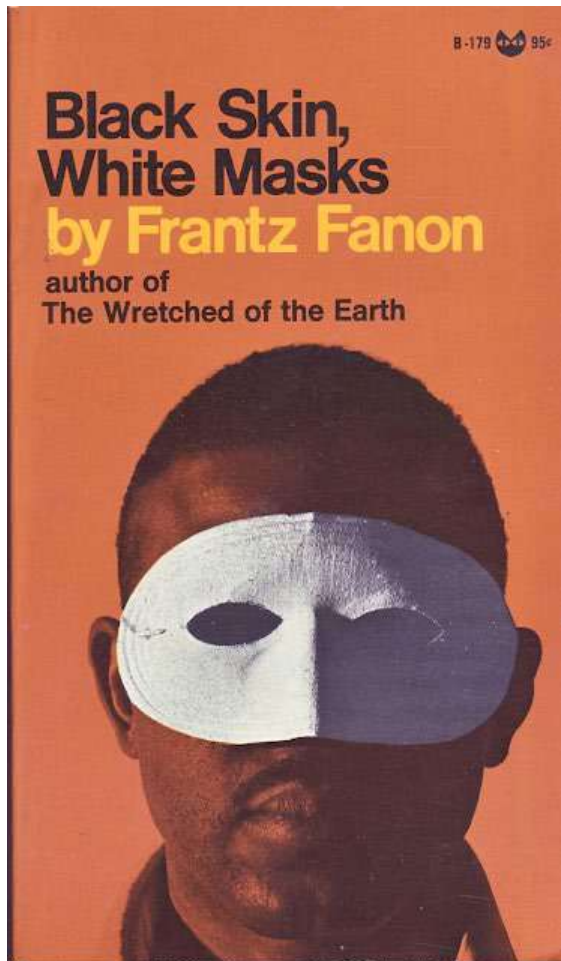
class character

The idea of making critical appeals/arguments that have "class character"/are class conscious. Though this notion is modular, it intersects with race, gender and religion, etc (the deliberate attempt to segregate/prioritize them called reductionism; e.g., "race/class reductionism").

gentrification

The process whereby the character of a poor urban area is changed by wealthier people moving in, improving housing, and attracting new businesses, typically displacing current inhabitants in the process; from a social standpoint, gentrification is the process of making someone or something more refined, polite, or respectable; e.g., *Jane Eyre* and *Adèle* (exhibit 21c1). For example, housing crises are instigated by gentrification as the "invention" of exploitable housing arrangements between owners and workers: apartments. The larger socio-material process generally intersects racial tensions in impoverished, redlined neighborhoods shared between intraracial in-fighting (*Boyz n the Hood*, 1991); or between different racial groups encouraged to divide by the elite through fascist/moderate, good cop/bad cop "peacekeepers" (*Lonestar*, 1996): the disillusionment of police culture as being functionally no different than highway bandits, accidental incest (stolen generations), and a border romance (it's practically a Gothic novel, minus the aesthetic).

tokenism/assimilation fantasy/minority police



Assimilated/appropriated forms of "emancipation" that turn minorities into race/class traitors aka "minority cops" (and/or renders them myopic towards the suffering of other groups through *Afrocentrism*). A common example is Frantz Fanon's "black skin, white masks," whose *Afronormativity* to various forms of the assimilated token servant desires to escape genocide by emulating their oppressors' genocidal/carceral qualities. This just doesn't apply to people of color, but *any* minority desiring to assimilate the in-group by selling out the rest of their out-group for clemency (which is always a brief reprieve). Tokenism is also intersectional, leading to preferential mistreatment—meaning "less punishment," not zero punishment the closer you are to the in-group colonial standard/status quo: the cis-het, white European/Christian male. In doing so, the status quo infiltrates activists groups, sublimating/assimilating them into the colonial binary along a gradient of gatekept

barriers.

gaslight, gatekeep...

Two common parts of socio-economic oppression employed by fascists and neoliberals. Gaslighting is a means of making abuse victims doubt the veracity of their own abuse (and their claims of abuse). Gatekeeping is a tactic more generally employed by those with formal power, denying various groups gainful employment (thus actual material advantage) or working platforms that allow them to effectively communicate systemic injustices perpetrated against them.

...girl-boss (tokenism)

A popular moderate MO, girl bosses are usually neoliberal symbols of "equality," a strong woman of authority who defends the status quo (an overtly fascist girl

boss [would be someone like Captain Israel](#); source: Bad Empanada 2's "Marvel's Israeli Superhero 'Sabra,'" 2022). This can be the female "suit," in corporate *de rigueur*, but also Amazons or orcs as corporate commodities (*war bosses*). Suits present Capitalism as "neutral," but also ubiquitous; Amazons and orcs (and all of their gradients) centralize the perceived order of good-versus-evil language in mass-media entertainment. *Queer bosses* are the same idea, but slightly more progressive: a strong queer person of authority whose *queernormativity* upholds the status quo. When this becomes cis-supremacist, the boss is a TERF—an assimilated war boss who regresses to a war bride herself when decay sets in, removing token privileges from most-marginalized token to least-marginalized (canonically speaking).

war brides (submissive class traitors/collaborators)

Persons, usually women, [who historically slept/fraternized with the enemy to survive](#) (Reddit, 2015). However, it's hardly that simple. More actively bourgeois "brides" would collaborate with their conquerors against the conquered (exhibit 2); proletarian "brides" [would kill their "husbands" for the Cause](#). This includes the Dutch *moffenmeiden* (women from Holland who slept with Nazis during the WW2 occupation, exhibit 2) and *gastarbeiders* (foreign exchange laborers forced to uproot and work in West Germany during early post-Stalin years). In class warfare, unironic "sleeping with the enemy" amounts to "breaking bread" with them; i.e., accepting their material gifts and financial backing in exchange for political compromise. Proletarian warriors should never compromise in this manner, as it leads to continued exploitation; i.e., "kicking the can down the road."



(exhibit 4a: Top left: a French woman, publicly humiliated after France's liberation, [source](#); top right: Truus Oversteegen, a Dutch Resistance fighter known for killing Nazi officials; bottom: photos of Carice van Houten, show in *Black Book* [2006] as the fictional Rachel Stein—a Dutch-Jewish singer-turned-spy who eludes capture, kills Nazis, and foils Dutch double-agents in the process [the movie was based off real-life accounts of Dutch resistance members, however. Point in fact, my own grandfather, [Henri van der Waard II](#), was one such person].)

TERFs/SWERFs/NERFs

TERFs are Trans Exclusionary Radical (fascist) Feminists; SWERFs and NERFs exclude sex workers and non-binary people, policing them but also members of their own "in"-groups (fandoms). It's true that older feminist movements were/are racist, exclusionary and cis-supremacist, etc; so I don't like to call TERFs "non-feminists" (though I can understand the temptation). To make the distinction between these older groups and feminism in solidarity with other oppressed groups, I call TERFs fascist "feminists." To be fair, they can be neoliberal, operating through national/corporate exceptionalism obscured by a moderate veneer (centrist media). However, neoliberals still lead to Capitalism-in-crisis, aka fascism, which adopts racist/sexist dogma and rape culture/"prison sex" mentalities in more overtly hierarchical ways. Not all TERFs are SWERFs/NERFs (or vice versa) but there's generally overlap. All compromise in ways harmful to worker solidarity and emancipation.

punching down

Reactionary political action, generally acts of passive or active aggression against a lower class by a higher class. For our purposes, middle-class people are afforded less total oppression through better material conditions (wages, but also healthcare, promotions, etc) by the elite—a divide-and-conquer strategy that renders them dependent on the status quo. This dependency allows the elite to demonize the poor in the eyes of the middle class. The elite antagonize the poor because the poor have the most incentive to punch up. This reliably engenders prejudice against them as a target, often to violent extremes. This is especially true in neoliberal canon:



([source](#))

punching up

Emancipatory politics. Whereas punching down aligns with systemic power, punching up moves against these structures and their proponents through *de facto* roles. This owes itself to how Capitalism works: The system exploits workers and targets of genocide for the elite, requiring them to demonize *potential threats*, not just active ones. Asking for basic human rights might not be a conscious act of rebellion; it *automatically* becomes one in the eyes of the elite (who discourage human rights). The louder these voices grow, the harder they punch up. This forces the elite to "correct the market" with extreme prejudice, which they disguise through various bad-faith measures (and political "neutral language").

reactive abuse

Systemic/social abuse that provokes a genuine self-defense reaction from the victim, whereupon the expectant abuser "self-defends" in extreme prejudice through DARVO. Reactive abuse correlates with reactionaries defending the state—i.e., reactionary politics being a form of white, cis-het fragility (moderacy being a veiled form of this).

white (cis-het, Christian male) fragility

A reactionary tendency for state proponents to become easily frightened, angry and violent when exposed to activist criticism; i.e., criticisms that concern the socio-material realities of systemic racism, heteronormative and other institutional bigotries and biases. These factors (and their material conditions) reliably lead to widespread mistreatment against targeted minorities that white and/or cis-het Christian men/people are normally excluded from; i.e., their privilege affords them *preferential* mistreatment—less exploitation, making them historically more prone to side with power in defense of the status quo (which is white, cis-het, patriarchal and Christian). Power aggregates against slave rebellions, financially incentivizing a middle class of variable size (and inclusion) to *exclude* and attack minorities that are simply fighting for their basic human rights. White and/or cis-het fragility, then, is a useful way to weaponize a violent, defensive mentality against activism as a whole; it is applied differently cross different groups, intersecting within race, class and gender as things to either enforce by white, cis-het agents in Christian *and* secular circles, or assimilate by tokenized subordinates; e.g., girl bosses, black capitalists, and other sell-outs/class traitors.

DARVO

A common abuser tactic at any register, DARVO stands for "Deny, Accuse, Reverse, Victim, Offender." It is meant to be used in bad faith, generally by punching down against activists at a socio-political level.

bad(-)faith

The act of concealing one's true intentions, presenting a false willingness (the opposite of good faith) to discuss ideas openly while deliberately seeking to cause harm to the opposite party. This performance can be fascist "defensive maneuvers" or neoliberal dogma; it can also be beards and various queer/Afronormative masks appropriated by TERFs and other assimilated groups.



virtue-signaling/white-knighting

False solidarity or alliances geared towards "clout" or personal brownie-point-farming. Think "brown-nosing" or "ass-kissing" but towards marginalized groups and their leaders with a desire to de-fang them: "Join us."

tone-policing

Speech- and thought-regulation of activist groups—often through admonishment/open condescension by moderates.

dogwhistles

Coded language, generally presented as innocuous or unrelated to those using it, meant to disguise the user's true ideology or political identity. A popular tactic amongst cryptofascists, but also TERFS. For example, Rational Wiki lists dozens of TERF dogwhistles, including the colors purple, white, green in square emoji for:

Another emoji-based dog whistle used by TERFS on social media. Used primarily by UK-based TERFs, it seems to have emerged in the first half of 2021, and has largely replaced the [chequered flag](#) and [red square](#). The colour scheme is based on the historical tri-color used by the [Women's Social and Political Union](#) (WSPU), an organization that campaigned for [women's suffrage](#) in the United Kingdom from 1903 to 1918. This is yet another example of TERFs trying to cast themselves as the political successors of suffragettes. It also co-opts the colour scheme used in the [genderqueer](#) pride

flag designed by Marilyn Roxie in 2010 ([source](#): Rational Wiki's "TERF Glossary," 2023).

Nazis use their own dogwhistles as well, meant to be seen by fellow club members to identify each other while hiding in plain sight. Many of these symbols are only used by the alt-right, at this stage, but in case there is overlap, the context of the subterfuge and its hauntologies can flush fascists out into the open:



cryptofascists

Fascists by any other name or code. These fascists deliberately mislabel themselves and employ obscurantism to avoid the all-purpose "Nazis" label, thus preserve their negative freedom by normalizing themselves. This includes white nationalists, Western Chauvinists, and pro-Europeans; it also includes TERFs like Meghan Murphy [spuriously decrying the "TERF" label as "hate speech" in 2017](#) (a flashpoint for TERF politics). I write "spurious" because hate speech is committed by groups in power, or sanctioned by those in power, against systemically marginalized targets. *Please note: TERFs claiming self-persecution in bad faith (a standard fascist tactic) does not make them a legitimate target for systemic violence beyond what their relative privilege affords; it just makes them dishonest.*

obscurantism

The act of deliberately concealing one's true self (usually an ideology or political stance) through deliberately deceptive ambiguity. The classic, 20th century

example are the Nazis, who called themselves "national-socialists" by intentionally disguising their true motives behind stolen, deliberately inaccurate language; e.g., The Holocaust Encyclopedia's 2017 exhibit on [the inverted swastika as a current-day religious symbol thousands of years old that has been co-opted and profaned by a fascist state](#) (similar to the Star of David being co-opted by the enthostate of Israel in their state-sanctioned, American-backed genocide of the Palestinians). However, any sex-coercive group constantly employs concealment as a means of negative freedom: freedom from social justice. Neoliberal corporations routinely frame themselves as "neutral" and exceptional in the same breath, lying and denying the historio-material consequences of their own propaganda every chance they get; fascists celebrate dogwhistles (sans admitting to them as bad-faith) but condemn whistle-blowing as "censorship." TERFs can be neoliberal or fascist, [but as Katelyn Burns notes in 2019, still call themselves "gender-critical" in either case](#) (similar to white supremacists calling themselves "race realists"). Despite whitewashing themselves, TERFs function as sporadically moderate bigots, dodging legitimate, sex-positive criticism. They generally accomplish this through DARVO obscurantism, a strategy of playing the victim while blaming actual victims by gaslighting them.

For more examples of cryptofascism and obscurantism, consider watching Renegade Cut's "[What Is \(and Is Not\) Anti-Fascism?](#)" (2022). This will come in handy when we examine fascism and TERFs in Volume Three—Perse



(exhibit 5a: Source, "[Cancel culture: the road to obscurantism](#)" [2021]; note: the author, Stefano Braghioli of New Europe, actually blames iconoclasts for viciously condemning the Greats of Western Civilization to oblivion, itself a form of DARVO obscurantism: The West is built on settler colonialism, Imperialism, and genocide.)

Miscellaneous Terms, Game Theory

accommodated intellectuals

Inspired by [Edward Said's *Representations of the Intellectual*](#) (1993), an accommodated intellectual is—by my measure—a public-speaker, intellectual or thinker socio-materially accommodated by a formal institution of power. Though often corporatized (e.g., the think tank), this traditionally extends to tenured professors, who—even when their ideas *are* useful to Communism—tend to become far more concerned with cataloguing these ideas than spreading them to a wider public (so-called "academic paywalls" and general gatekeeping behaviors). Such individuals are, as I like to call them, giant chickenshits.

cognitive estrangement

The consequence of overspecialized language alienating anyone but a hyperspecific target audience, or an audience being so specialized that they cannot easily understand anything outside of their wheelhouse (a common fatality among academics or specialized researchers).

cognitive dissonance

A "psychomachic" conflict between one's feelings and thoughts, often stemming from an ideology that practices harm against particular groups that another aspect of the person is unable to face, practice or otherwise acknowledge.

anisotropic

The alteration of meaning depending on the flow of exchange—e.g., the white savior vs the black criminal (despite both being violent) vs *the white oppressor vs the black victim*. For our purposes, this means "for or against capital/canon," etc—i.e., bourgeois heroic action is benevolent in one direction (from the hero's point of view) and terrifying from the victim's point of view, the assigned scapegoat made to suffer as the state's chosen target of sanctioned violence inside the state of exception (more on this in the manifesto). Likewise, this remains a common phenomenon during the Promethean hero's journey inside the closed/parallel space.

concentric

"The Russian doll effect," an endless procession of mirrors, foes, doors, etc—i.e., the Promethean Quest never ends; the war, carnage and rape never cease; the confusion and utter destitution, etc.

intersectionality

When multiple bourgeois/proletarian codifiers align within a particular social group; e.g., cis-het white women or trans women of color, etc. Intersectionality tends to be canonically abjected or gaslit, gatekept, girl-bossed, fetishized, etc. This book thoroughly examines intersectionality under Capitalism as either bourgeois or proletarian.

liminality

A linguo-material position of conflict or transition, liminality is ontologically a state of being "in between," usually through failed sublimation/uncanniness; it invokes a "grey area" generally demonized in Western canon as "chaos." In truth, semantic disorder can be used to escape the perpetual exploitation and decay caused all around us by Capitalism and its giant lies (a concept we'll explore throughout this book). Liminality also occurs when working with highly canonical/colonized material, like the Western, European fantasy or highly exploitative material like canonical porn (with the word "pornography" being criminalized, thus something iconoclasts must reclaim). Gothic examples include monsters and parallel spaces, which tend to oscillate in liminal fashion.

anachronistic

Spatio-temporally incongruous; for our purposes, this applies to hauntology (a linguo-material sensation between the past and the present, but also a total inability to imagine a future beyond past forms of the future—two concepts we'll unpack during the manifesto at length).

blank/blind parody



(source: [the Vaporwave Aesthetic](#))

In *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), Frederic Jameson writes,

"Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style, the wearing of a linguistic mask, speech in a dead language. But it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody's ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter and of any conviction that alongside the abnormal tongue you have

momentarily borrowed, some healthy linguistic normality still exists. Pastiche is thus blank parody, a statue with blind eyeballs" ([source](#)).

Personally, I think Jameson's "normality" echoes Nietzsche's or Freud's. As such, I envision pastiche and parody as likewise having bourgeois and proletarian qualities, much like sublimation does. They *can* be blank under bourgeois (centrist) forms. Likewise, though, "perceptive pastiche" can adopt the appearance of a false "blankness/blindness" (see, above: "Vaporwave," a hauntological subgenre) in the face of power—a tactic vital to revolutionaries' continued funding from different sources, as well as keeping them safe from violent reactionaries.

Vaporwave/Laborwave and cyberpunk

Hauntological *cryptomimesis* that has the subversive potential to challenge established, status-quo nostalgias through the decay of corporate hegemony as expressed through "corporate mood." This encapsulates a gradient of aesthetics through countercultural music, art and the Gothic mode: *Star Wars*, *Blade Runner*, *Alien*, *Mad Max*, *Children of Man*, etc (which Capitalism will try to recuperate through by canonizing these stories, thus robbing them of their revolutionary potential; i.e., controlled opposition through Capitalist Realism).

Capitalist Realism

Fisher's adage, "It's easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of Capitalism," which comments on a profound, widespread inability to imagine a

world beyond Capitalism. This often presents the end-of-the-world as the end-all, be-all; i.e., a kind of vanishing point under Hogle's narrative of the crypt: not a door to pass imaginarily through but a black gate whose inaccessible threshold cannot be surpassed by corporate design. The elite don't want people to cross it, focusing instead on canonical doubles of neoliberal entropy as part of the illusion: violence, death and decay as an "empowering" distraction from the global exploitation and destruction neoliberalism is committing against the Earth and its inhabitants. In ludic terms, engagement with this space requires occupying a space between reality and fiction, and of choosing to break the rules without our own "magic circles."

half-real

[From Jesper Juul's 2005 book of the same name](#); i.e., "A half-real zone between the fiction and the rules" that allows for emergent forms of transformative play. This can apply to sexual artwork (exhibit 93), Gothic liminalities like ghosts (exhibit 43c), live performances like a ball or masque (exhibit 75a), or Jesper's typical ludonarrative (videogames, exhibit 64c), etc.

ludic contract (spoilsports)

An agreement between the player and the game to be played; or as Chris Pratt writes in "[In Praise of Spoil Sports](#)" (2010): "the more traditional definition of the ludic contract [is] an agreement on the part of players that they will forgo some of their agency in order to experience an activity that they enjoy." Yet, inventive players like speedrunners (which Pratt calls "spoilsports") converge upon intended gameplay with unintended, emergent forms. In other words, the ludic contract is less a formal, rigid contract and more a negotiated compromise occurring between the two; i.e., where players have some sense of agency in deciding how *they* want to play the game even while adhering to its rules and, in effect, being mastered by it (see: [Seth Giddings and Helen Kennedy's "Little Jesuses and *@#?-off Robots," 2008, exhibit 0a2c](#)).

the magic circle

The space where a game takes place, be that a social game, a sport, a dialog or gender performance onstage, and videogames, etc. The founder of the idea, Eric Zimmerman, writes in "[Jerked Around by the Magic Circle](#)" (2012):

The "magic circle" is not a particularly prominent phrase in *Homo Ludens*, and although Huizinga certainly advocates the idea that games can be understood as separate from everyday life, he never takes the full-blown magic circle point of view that games are ultimately separate from

everything else in life or that rules are the sole fundamental unit of games. In fact, Huizinga's thesis is much more ambivalent on these issues and he actually closes his seminal book with a passionate argument against a strict separation between life and games. The magic circle is not something that comes wholly from Huizinga. To be perfectly honest, Katie and I more or less invented the concept, inheriting its use from my work with Frank, cobbling together ideas from Huizinga and Caillois, clarifying key elements that were important for our book, and reframing it in terms of semiotics and design – two disciplines that certainly lie outside the realm of Huizinga's own scholarly work. But that is what scholarship often is – sampling and remixing ideas in order to come to a new synthesis.

emergent play

Unintended gameplay discovered and utilized by players that wasn't intended by developers; optimal variants are called "metaplay" or simply "the meta."

intended play

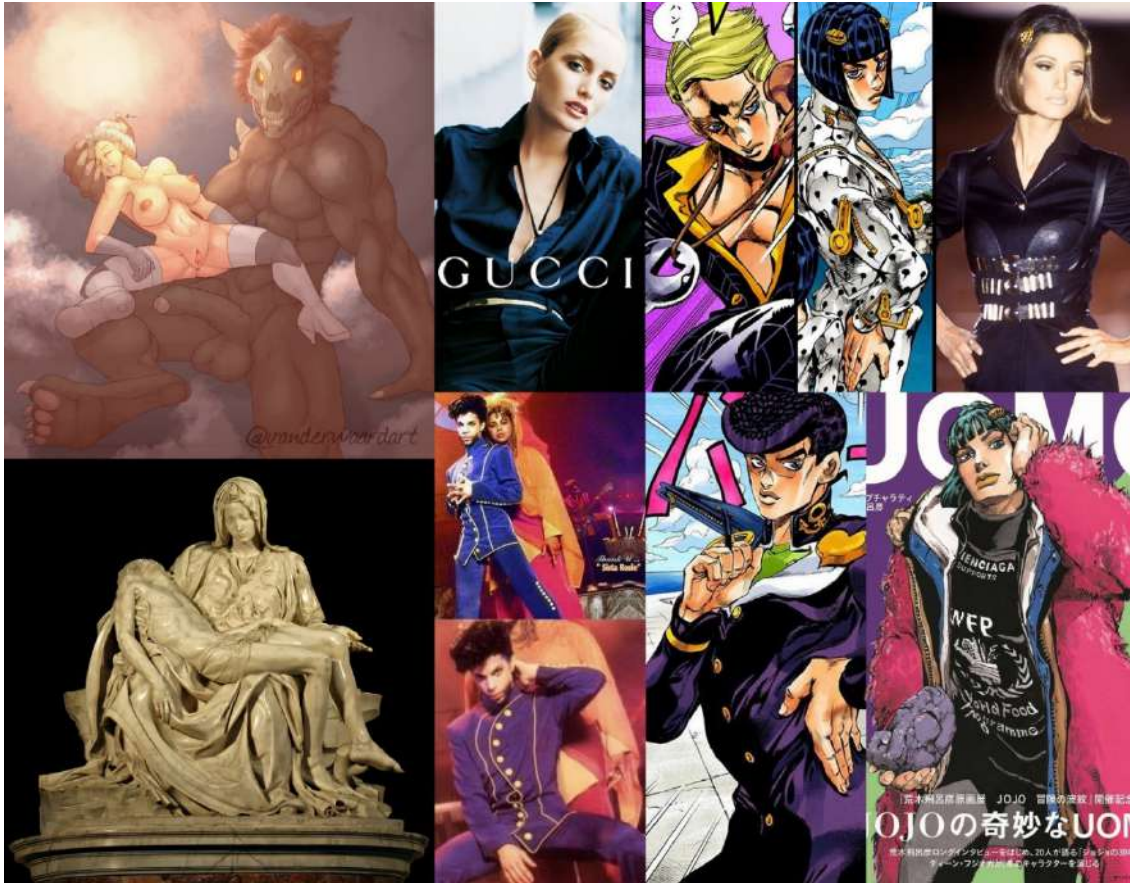
Gameplay intended by the developers; in Marxist terms, this can be considered the bourgeoisie or their proponents.

framed (concentric) narratives

A story-within-a-story (aka *mise-en-abyme* in artistic circles, whose translation "placement in abyss" takes on more spooky liminalities in Gothic circles), generally a perspective contained within an unreliable narrator's point-of-view. A famous example is Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, which tells the story from the shipmaster's perspective, who learns everything about Victor and the Creature from Victor. Victor is a giant, colonial douchebag who lies constantly and does his very patriarchal best to whitewash *everything*. The Creature, meanwhile, is reactively abused constantly and forced to defend his position after Victor has dragged his name through the mud for most of the novel.

unreliable narratives/narrators/spaces (monsters)

A narrator or narrative that is untrustworthy or epistemologically/phenomenologically dubious; in Gothic stories, these rely on ambiguous, historically-contested/-conflicting spaces with liminal markers.



(exhibit 5b: Artist, top-left: [Persephone van der Waard](#); bottom-left: Michelangelo; right side: Hirohiko Araki, his *Jojo's Bizarre Adventure* manga/anime [1987/2012] inspired by a variety of real-life musicians and clothing brands.)

palimpsest

"A manuscript or piece of writing material on which the original writing has been effaced to make room for later writing but of which traces remain"—common in Gothic stories, which amount to a cycle of lies; i.e., historical materialism: bourgeois history is unreliable, treacherous, like a Gothic lover or a concentric chest/midden of unreliable materials (cryptonyms). It can apply to a variety of media or formats: sculpture, music, clothes, videogames, etc (exhibit 5b, 43a/43b).

universal adaptability

[A concept borrowed from Slavoj Žižek's *A Pervert's Guide to Ideology* \(2012\)](#), which outlines the ways in which a piece of media (in his case, Beethoven's "Ode to Joy") can be utilized universally by different groups to promote their own ideologies—all in spite of the original source material, including the author's socio-political stance.

The Gothic, BDSM and Kink

Gothic narrators/narratives

For its hero, narrators, spaces and speakers, a Gothic tale regularly involves unreliable/conflicting artificers and imposters, but also the patriarchal bloodline or castle as invented; i.e., as a series of concentric, sedimentary palimpsests. In the canonical sense, everything is fetishized, valorized and disseminated, then spread far and wide to cover up the ghost of the counterfeit (the circular lie of the West) with more ghosts that further the lie. Iconoclastic variants challenge this myopia with their own counterfeits' opposing class character inside a shared, contested midden.

Gothic doubling

The black mirror of historical materialism's all our yesterdays. It is the fated, ominous premonition of endless circuituity—that everything has already occurred before, or things that have already occurred will occur again from the same materials that occur out of what has already occurred; i.e., for everything that exists, there must (somewhere in the universe) be a dialectical-material "shadow" whose coinciding status as former-or-future counterfeit is actually historical materialism's circular approach to space and time felt in the current moment: everything that has ever existed will exist again or things that will exist have already existed in ways that offer up a prior version's dialectical-material opposition to it—a castle or soldier as "evil" twin, uncanny and undead, replicated like an echo, a virus, a shade; the civil war of black infinity. There is no automatic moral character, merely the presence of infinite possibility amid crushing gravity and decay.

the Gothic heroine



(exhibit 5e1: Left: an old drawing of Samus Aran from *Metroid Dread*, 2021, by [Persephone van der Waard](#); right: a more recent version of the same drawing—made to be more gay and less colonial.

Note: Many of the drawings in this book are actually modified versions from my own portfolio—updated using

collage/airbrushing techniques that I've been using for years. —Perse)

The oft-female (or at least feminine) protagonist of Gothic stories. Classically a passive sex object/detective/damsel-in-distress, which became increasingly masculine, active and warlike in the 20th century onwards (though Charlotte Dacre beat everyone to the punch in 1806 when she wrote *Zofloya*, [having the masculine-yet-trammeled Victoria de Loredani stab Lilla, the archetypal Gothic heroine, to death](#)). Unlike their male counterparts, who *tend* to default to soldiers or scientists (violent/mentally fragile men of war and reason with—at least in America—closeted ties to Nazi Germany and parallel conservative movements wearing a liberal guise), women within the colonial binary are relegated to spheres of domesticated ignorance; i.e., "Something is wacky about my residence, my guest, my wardrobe, etc. Guess I'll go investigate (exhibit 48a)!" Ann Radcliffe treated the protecting of female virtue as an "armoring" (exhibit 30c) process that commonly worked through a swooning mechanism; though somewhat problematic on its face due to its pro-European origins, the idea of armoring one's virtue still presents the notion of feminine flexibility as facing monstrous-feminine things that male, or at least "phallic," heroes cannot rationalize or stab/shoot to death; i.e., the paradox of terror as something to reclaim through counterterror devices that, yes, include a fair bit of rape, taboo sex, and murderous stereotypes. In other words, it's entirely possible to have the Great Destroyer persona without being bigoted, but you have to camp it, first.

xenophobia

Monster-slaying. A fear of the unknown as something to exude or endure, which may take sex-positive or sex-coercive forms. Inside Gothic circles, theatrical xenophobia sits between fear of and fascination towards "the other" as a social-sexual construct; i.e., inherited either by privileged workers acting out unironic gender trouble, or minorities surviving it through their own ironic variation of gender trouble and gender parody in monstrous forms. As such, *harmful* xenophobia fearfully dogmatizes outsider groups, presenting them as beings to hate, abject and kill, but also fetishize: monstrous-feminine women ("woman is other") but also witches, Amazons, queer/feminine people (trans, intersex and non-binary) and various sodomic ritual metaphors (vampirism, exhibit 41g3; crossdress, exhibit 55b; and lycanthropy/werewolves, exhibit 87a; etc) for non-heteronormative/gender-non-conforming sexual orientations, performances, and identities as deserving of violence by assimilated minorities/token police (e.g., TERFs). Because of the sexual nature of stigma and bias, harmful xenophobia crosses over into harmful xenophilia, and their combined liminal expression elides with cathartic variants of either approach in the same theatrical territories.

monstrous-feminine



(exhibit 5d1: Artist, top-left: [Gabriele Dell'Otto](#); artist, top-left and bottom: [Persephone van der Waard](#) and a model who wishes to remain anonymous; I'll henceforth refer to them as Jericho. When healing from trauma, queerness is often

symbolized as abjectly insect-like/uncanny as something queer people are forced into—i.e., a psychosexual, "corrupt," medievalized ontology whose canonical role they don't want to play but also desire to escape from using the same language: the queer/sodomite whose gender-non-conformity is synonymized with the "rape" of heteronormativity by the monstrous-feminine and whose beauty is feared by fearful-fascinated straight people conflating queerness as a universal symbol of unironic rape and madness. We do sometimes want to express our own trauma in relation to what we're made out to be by our abusers, but ultimately we desire to be butterflies unto ourselves: free from trauma, from judgement, from harm.)

A term lifted from Barbara Creed's *The Monstrous-Feminine*. While Creed focuses on the desire for the *cis* woman not to be a victim, thus terrifying men in abject, monstrous ways (which are often then crucified by heteronormative agents, including token ones like Ellen Ripley), the fact remains that the monstrous-feminine extends to a much broader persecution network; i.e., of any "feminine" force that falls outside of what is acceptable within the Patriarchy's heteronormative colonial binary. I have placed *feminine* in quotes to account for anything perceived as "feminine" thus "not correctly" male"; i.e., "woman is other" expanded to trans, intersex and non-binary persons (and the animals associated with them: bunnies, butterflies, cats, dogs, foxes, etc). This can be a male twink or vampire; the cis-queer bear's expression of tenderness and love towards another man (or whoever they're intimate with in whatever way constitutes intimacy for them); a female Amazon that rebels against the state, whether cis, or genderqueer in binary/non-binary ways. The possibilities for heteronormative conformity are narrow and brutal inside a vast historical-material tableau of the same-old patterns; gender-non-conformity's ironies go on endlessly.

xenophilia

Monster-fucking. A love of the unknown as something to exude or endure, which may take sex-positive or sex-coercive forms. Whereas harmful (sex-coercive) xenophobia bleeds into harmful *xenophilia*, the sex-positive reversal of abjection and canonical xenophobia/xenophilia resists state power through covert, proletarian means; e.g., "Trojan" monsters and monster-slaying/-fucking rituals that hide revolutionary intent during liminal expressions of oppositional praxis as oft-pornographic. The monster isn't simply someone to fuck (though it can be); it's also someone to potentially love asexually as an "ace" friend/co-conspirator—e.g., *Nimona* (exhibit 56d2). As such, cathartic xenophilia extends to empathy for the wretched, whose medievalized trauma often overlaps with their sexuality and gender but doesn't synonymize with it; indeed, cathartic xenophilia seeks to understand their rage at, and medieval alienation by, state powers (the xenomorph

being a queer icon we shall examine many, many times throughout this book, but especially in Volume Two's "Demon" section of chapters).

psychosexuality ("battle sex")

The adjacent placement of pleasurable pain and other euphoric sensations next to unironic harm; i.e., rape fantasy or theatre. Just as canon and camp exist in the same shadow zone, performative irony and its absence are equally liminal using the same shared aesthetics of power and resistance, death and rape, heroic (monstrous) violence: the colors of stigma, vice, power and sin. Canonical psychosexuality conflates pleasure with genuine harm, including bigoted stereotypes that further this pathology. These result in widespread misconceptions about healthy BDSM as a result of sex-coercive BDSM (through unironic "demon BDSM" examples, including criminal hauntology news cycles or "true crime" in other mediums besides television), and genuine pluralities that seek out dangerous sex (hard kink) due to confused pleasure responses resulting from extreme prey mechanisms/posttraumatic stress disorder that compel victims to unironically spifflicate; i.e., "to be self-destroyed or disposed of by violence" in an unironic sense. As something to unironically or ironically seek out on and offstage, abuse manifests differently per person relative to congenital and environmental factors which are often accident-of-birth. But general psychosexuality manifests through the Destroyer persona and their utterly devastated victim as part of the same social-sexual equation; i.e., a cultural pathology or ironic, informed interrogation regarding the proliferation of this extremism in normalized, canonical depictions of heroic sexuality as embattled: as sex-coercive, hence unironically violent and rapacious through warring factions thereof (and against camp in the larger meta conversation).

calculated risk/risk reduction exercise

A calculated risk minimizes harm but mimics the feeling of being out of control; e.g., consent-non-consent/informed consent.

fetishization

A fetish, or the act of making something into a fetish, is "a form of sexual desire in which gratification is linked to an abnormal degree to a particular object, item of clothing, or part of the body." Generally, fetishes are pre-existing social-sexual trends that people either embrace or reject. They aren't explicitly sexist (e.g., mutually consenting to show feet), but become sexist when used in exploitative ways (e.g., sex workers forced to show their feet to generate profit for someone else).

rape culture and "prison sex" mentalities

Learned power abuses taught by state-corporate propaganda and power relations through "Pavlovian/Pygmalion" conditioning that breaks the recipient's mind, bending them towards automatic, violent behaviors towards state targets during moral panics. This response can be men mistreating women, but also women mistreating each other or their fellow exploited workers: TERFs abusing trans people and ethnic minorities. When executed and learned on a societal level, these sex-coercive practices become codified as "bad play" in canonical BDSM narratives.

Man Box/"prison sex" culture

What I call "the prison sex phenomena," Mark Greene—in his 2023 podcast, [Remaking Manhood: The Healthy Masculinity Podcast](#)—refers to "Man Box culture" as:

For generations, men have been conditioned to compete for status, forever struggling to rise to the top of a vast Darwinian pyramid framed by a simple but ruthless set of rules. But the men who compete to win in our dominant culture of manhood are collectively doomed to fail, because the game itself is rigged against us. We're wasting our lives chasing a fake rabbit around a track, all the while convinced there's meat to be had. There is no meat. We are the meat. Our dominant culture of manhood is often referred to as *the man box*, a phrase coined by [Tony Porter](#) of A Call to Men based on [Paul Kivel's](#) work, *The Act Like a Man Box*, which Kivel and others at the Oakland Men's Project first conceptualized over forty years ago.

The man box refers to the brutal enforcement of a narrowly defined set of traditional rules for being a man. These rules are enforced through shaming and bullying, as well as promises of rewards, the purpose of which is to force conformity to our dominant culture of masculinity. The number one rule of the man box? Don't show your emotions. Accordingly, boys three and four years old begin suppressing their own naturally occurring capacities for emotional acuity and relational connection, thus setting them on the path to a lifetime of social isolation ([Chu, 2014](#)). The damage is done before we are even old enough to understand what is happening.

Man box culture also suppresses empathy. The suppression of boys' and men's empathy is no accident. It is the suppression of empathy that makes a culture of ruthless competition, bullying and codified inequality possible. It is in the absence of empathy that men fail to see women's equality and many other social issues for what they are: simple and easily enacted moral imperatives. Instead, our sons buy into bullying and abuse as central mechanisms for forming and expressing male status and identity ([source](#): Mark Greene's "How the Man Box Poisons Our Sons," 2019).

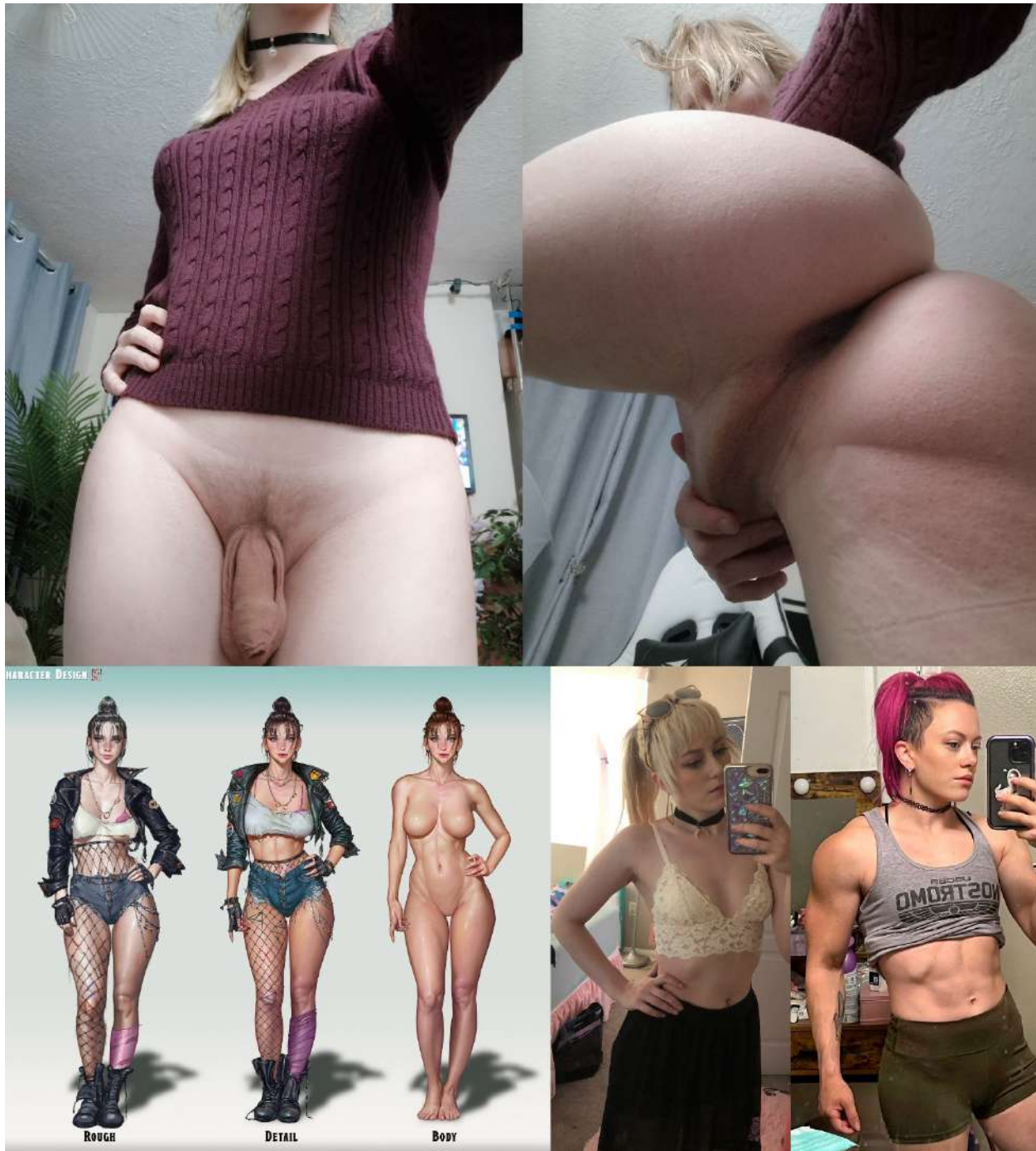
"Prison sex" is the same idea as Man Box culture, except it chooses to focus less on men and more on the unequal power dynamics that occur between dimorphized workers trained not just to rape and kill one another in literal terms, but also theatrical language; i.e., any form of expression that ties into the bigoted, colonial-binary of a divided class of male and female labor within entertainment (sports and porn), the household, the workplace, and Gothic iterations of any of these things. Any cis-het man that fails to live up to the heteronormative standard of manliness (which is an impossible feat to begin with), must be weak but also strong in a manner threatening towards the status quo—i.e., womanly/monstrous-feminine.

good play vs bad play

Forms of power exchange during oppositional praxis; i.e., sex-positive BDSM and other social-sexual practices and code built on mutual/informed consent vs sex coercion and harmful BDSM/rape culture. Bad play is the emulation of white, cis-het men as the unironic performers of coercive sex, bondage, murder and rape (e.g., TERFs dominating members of their own group).

chaser/bait

Trans women are often seen as "bait" within a "prison sex" mentality—i.e., forbidden, monstrous-feminine fruit for reactionaries (including regressive feminists) to publicly condemn and privately "chase." A "chaser" is someone a person who outwardly rejects the pursuit of "sodomy" (non-reproductive, monstrous-feminine sex, in the medieval sense) but secretly pursues it in private in relation to various out-group types associated with it: the twink, femboy or ladyboy, or trans women more broadly (or the remainder of classic gay man's lexicon of animalized/body hair terms: hunk, twunk, otter, bear or polar bear. Queer sexuality tends to be much more adjective-based than straight orientation descriptors, "I'm a straight" being about it). "Baiting" can be inverted, with trans women and similar groups also being policed in the sex worker community by AFAB workers who, likewise, brand or otherwise treat us as "false women" who aren't monstrous like they are, thus become worthy of attack to earn clemency from men amid their own self-hatred; i.e., we're "luring" *their* customers away from them like cis-male sex workers do and should be regarded with suspicion and contempt (to be clear, neither we nor cis-male sex workers should be treated this way but our treatment—as non-gender-conforming AMAB persons by AFAB sex workers—is transphobic).



(exhibit 5d2: Artist, top: [Olivia Robin](#); bottom-left: [Kyu Yong Eom](#); bottom-right: [Claire Max](#). The feminine cock as something to show and hide becomes a dangerous game of undress for many traps; the masculine-feminine becomes an advertisement of "incorrect," monstrous-feminine masculinity on the surface of female-appearing bodies before the clothes come off [although such bodies are habitually undressed by the Male Gaze; said gaze can be emulated by TERFs policing male and female bodies]. Either liminality is dangerous for gender-non-conforming AMAB/AFAB sex workers, but also workers in general seeking to express

themselves as different from, thus in resistance to, the canonical standard and its Symbolic Order/mythic structure.

trap/twink-in-peril/bait

A slur directed at homosexual men/non-gender-conforming AMABs, who are fetishized/coercively demonized by cis-het men during gender trouble when the nation-state cannot provide them heteronormative sex ("war brides"). Often, queer fiction comments on this exploitative side of the "bury your gays" trope through an abject, queer damsel-in-distress: the *twink-in-peril*, perhaps articulated mostly nakedly (with raw exploitation, but also exceptional nuance) [in Dennis Cooper's *Frisk*](#) (1991) or Gregg Araki's *The Doom Generation* (1995). Gentler, less-brutalized versions of this monstrous-feminine can be found sprinkled all throughout popular fiction, including Cloud-in-a-dress from *Final Fantasy 7* (1997) and "Gerudo Link" from the *Zelda* series (which we'll explore more in Volume Three, Chapter Three, exhibit 93). "Traps" in quotes is something that could be supplied to AFAB workers, whose appearance beyond heteronormative standards leads them to becoming demonized as a queer "bait," or trick (no pun intended) that leads chases down queerer and queerer rabbit holes.

bears, otters, hunks/twunks/twinks; lesbians and femmes

The traditionally homosexual male/female language of the 1970s, '80s and 90s. It doesn't exclusively apply to homosexuality and can be non-binarized in order to describe body preferences, orientations and performances (e.g., Link is a twink/twunk depending on the game or scenario); all the same, it has been historically utilized by cis queer people as a movement that ostensibly predates the trans, nonbinary and intersex movements of the Internet Age (with these groups having existed for just as long—i.e., before Western Civilization). Furthermore, some words, like "twink," "dyke," and obviously "faggot" have a pejorative, monstrous-feminine flavor within their own communities, being reclaimed throughout the '90s into the new millennium. There is also cis bias against gender-non-conforming usage of these words, seeing it as "colonization" of the monstrous-feminine from an incorrect variant (a thought pattern of self-hatred that, once internalized, is used to divided and conquer minority groups by having them police themselves).

femboys, ladyboys, catboys; catgirls, [anything] girls

The application of something "femme" next to "boy" historically has an emasculating quality towards men who, in cis-conforming circles (straight or gay/bi), are expected to dominate the feminine, thus weaker party. Obviously this has been slowly reclaimed since the '90s, but cis-queer assimilation still leads to

Man Box culture within homosexual and bisexual men and women, but also tokens (a "butch," female, cis/token *domme* can abuse her smaller "femme" partner in a queernormative sense; or internalized bigotry can lead trans, intersex or non-binary parties to emulate these behaviors as the giver or receiver). In heteronormative circles, adding the suffix, "girl," to the end of a word sexualizes or feminizes them in a dimorphic way—i.e., a cat girl is (from a cis standpoint) a girl, thus coded as such ("cat" curiously being a "femme" entity for precisely this collocation, leading catboys to being seen as *femme* gay men; e.g., "neko" meaning a male "bottom" in Japanese slang). These terms are often qualified with various other descriptors in public discourse at large, including sex work; e.g., a "pastel goth non-binary catgirl brat": aesthetic descriptors + gender + gender performance + BDSM type. The soft or cuddly is still feminine, thus a monster that must be dominated to preserve patrilineal descent, authority and conquest against a prescribed enemy.

moe

Described by Mateusz Urbanowicz as [an infantilized art style of women popular in Japan](#), generally to make them look physically and emotionally younger—historically a form of female exploitation by male artists.

ahegao

A facial expression tied to *hentai* ("perversion") Japanese culture and the abject sexual objectification of women; i.e., the "little death" of the so-called "O face" made during orgasm, especially achieved by rough sex and rape play. While its "death face" is historically attached to rape culture and unironic rape porn, latter-day variants have become blind parodies (exhibit 104d) to the buried historical trauma (appreciative forms can also be enjoyed in private/public exhibitions, however).

live burial

The Gothic master-trope, live burial—as marked by Eve Segewick in her introduction to *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* (1986)—is expressed in the language of live burial as an endless metaphor for the buried libido within concentric structures as something to punish "digging into" (which includes investigating the false family's incestuous/abjectly monstrous bloodline; [source](#)). To move beyond psychoanalytical models and into Marxist territories, I would describe live burial as incentivized by power structures in ways that threaten abuse (often death, incarceration or rape) to those who go looking into hereditary and dynastic power structures, especially their psychosexual abuse and worker exploitation: the fate of the horny detective, but also the *whistleblower*.

kink

Nontraditional forms of sexual activity that don't necessarily involve forms of power exchange between partners (unequal or otherwise).

roleplay

The playing of roles in social-sexual situations, usually with a dominant/submissive element (as many come from classic stories which tend to be heteronormative; but even iconoclastic stories transmute BDSM, fetishes and kinks to be sex-positive within dominant/submissive models).

cuckolding

In sex-positive roleplay terms, cuckolding is watching someone fuck your SO (significant other) or having someone watch will you fuck *their* SO; i.e., a mutually consensual, negotiated activity.



negotiation

The drawing up of power levels, exchange limits, boundaries and comfort levels (soft and hard limits) before social-sexual BDSM activities.

safe word(s)

Permission/boundary words used (often by a submissive but not always) to stall/stop whatever BDSM activities are unfolding. A common example is the traffic light system; i.e., "Green light, yellow light, red light."

consent-non-consent

Negotiated social-sexual scenarios through informed consent, consent-non-consent where one party surrenders total control over to the other party trusting that party to not betray said agreement or trust; aka "RACK" ([Risk-Aware Consensual Kink](#)) in relation to risky BDSM; i.e., bodily harm; e.g., public beatings, rape scenarios, whippings, knife play and blood-letting.

(demon) BDSM

Bondage, discipline, sadism, and masochism—seemingly nontraditional forms of sexual activity that involve unequal power exchange that has actually been canonized and must be camped in doubled forms. Both involve power, but non-consensual (sex-coercive) variants canonically involve power *abuse*—generally of women and other marginalized workers by white, cis-het men/arguably token queers in romanticized tales thereof (e.g., Stoker's vampire, Barker's Cenobite) that often, according to Susan Sontag's "Fascinating Fascism" (1974), invoke not just the "master scenario" whose purely sexual experience is "severed from personhood, from relationships, from love," but also the fascist language of death: "The color is black [and red], the material is leather, the seduction is beauty, the justification is honesty, the aim is ecstasy, the fantasy is death" ([source](#)). In a sex-positive sense, such rituals regularly invoke demons as a Gothicized means of catharsis, but also practicing impulse and power control during non-harmful euphoria whose painful, physical, emotional, and/or sexual activities occur between good-faith participants; i.e., ironic variants of Radcliffe's classically **xenophobic** and dubiously "consensual" **Black Veil** (hiding the threat badly), **demon lover** (the xenophobic/xenophilic threat of unironic mutilation and rape), and **exquisite "torture"** (rape play).

dom(inator/-inatrix)

A BDSM actor who performs a dominant role—traditionally masculine (especially in Gothic canon: Mr. Rochester, Edward Cullen, Christian Grey and all the million monster variants of these kinds of characters) thus ostensibly having more power. However, in honored realms of mutual consent, they actually have less power than the sub, who only has to say no/red light, etc (for a good example of sub power, [watch the 2014 Gothic-erotic thriller, *The Duke of Burgundy*](#)); the sub controls the action by giving the dom permission according to negotiated boundaries.



sub(missive)

A BDSM actor who performs a submissive role—traditionally feminine (especially in Gothic canon: Jane Eyre, Bella Swan, Anastasia Steele and all the million monster variants of these kinds of characters) thus ostensibly having less power. However, in sex-positive scenarios, the sub calls the shots from moment-to-moment (except in consent-non-consent, where they only agreed to everything up front and sign everything over ahead of time—a useful tactic for certain rape fantasies and regression scenarios).

"strict/gentle"

A BDSM flavor or style generally affixed to the dom in terms of their delivery. A "strict" dominatrix, for example, will administer discipline much more authoritatively than a "gentle" variant will; i.e., she will deny succor as a theatrical device to supply through the ritual, whereas the gentle dominatrix will be far more nurturing and supportive from the offset.

topping/a top vs "bottoming"/a bottom

These terms generally refer to dominant/submissive sexual activity in which someone "tops"; i.e., "rides"/is rode. However, they can refer to BDSM/social-sexual arrangements with various, historically-materially ironic configurations; e.g., "power bottoms" or "topping from the bottom" (which can be literal, in terms of the

execution of physical sex, but also have BDSM implications/monster personages, too).

regression

In terms of mental health, regression is a form of dissociation, often tied to trauma or healing from trauma. Common in rituals of appreciative peril, which include Big/little roles daddy/mommy doms and boy/girl subs, etc. However, regression is also something that sex-coercive predation keys off of through *regressive politics*; i.e., to regress socio-politically towards a conservative medieval when Capitalism enters decay.

rape fantasies

Fantasies tied to sexual/power abuse (rape isn't about sex at all; it's about coercive power control and abuse). This kind of performative peril can be appreciative/appropriative, thus bourgeois/canonical or proletarian/iconoclastic. Common in Gothic narratives, which tend to project trauma, rape and power abuse onto displaced, dissociative scenarios: man vs nature, Jack-London-style; the lady vs the rapist or the slave vs the master in numerous articulations (racialized, but also in BDSM-monster frameworks), etc.

aftercare

Rituals supplied after BDSM (or frankly just rough sex/emotional bonding moments and other social-sexual exchanges) that help the affected party recover better than they would if left unattended ("rode hard and put away wet" as it were).

the ghost of the counterfeit

Coined by Jerrold Hogle, this abject reality or hidden barbarity is a hauntological process of abjection that, according to David Punter in *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day* (1980), "displaces the hidden violence of present social structures, conjures them up again as past, and falls promptly under their spell" ([source](#)). I would add that it is a privileged, liminal position that endears a sheltered consumer to the barbaric past as reinvented as consumable.

the narrative of the crypt

According to Cynthia Sugars' entry for David Punter's the *Encyclopedia of the Gothic* (2012), this narrative is described by Jerrold Hogle as the *only* thing that survives—a narrative of a narrative to a hidden curse announced by things displaced from the former cause. Sugars determines, the closer one gets to the

problem, the more the space itself abruptly announces a vanishing point, a procession of fragmented illusions tied to a transgenerational curse: "a place of concealment that stands on mere ashes of something not fully present," Hogle writes of Otranto (the first "gothic" castle, reassembled for Horace Walpole's 1764 "archaeology").

cryptomimesis

Defined by Jodey Castricano in *Cryptomimesis: The Gothic and Jacques Derrida's Ghost Writing* as,

A writing practice that, like certain Gothic conventions [e.g., Segewick's commentary on live burial as a timeless fixture of Gothic literature] generates its uncanny effects through the production of what Nicholas Rand might call a "contradictory 'topography of inside-outside'" [from Abraham and Torok's *The Wolf Man's Magic Word ...*] Moreover, the term *cryptomimesis* draws attention to a writing predicated upon encryption: the play of revelation and concealment lodged within parts of individual words ([source](#)).

Castricano further describes this process as "writing with ghosts," referring to their nature as linguistic devices that adhere the sense of being haunted in domestic spaces: the house as inside, familiar and inherited by the living from the dead.

rememory

From Tony Morrison's 1987 novel, *Beloved*, to which Morrison herself shares in a 2019 interview, "as in recollecting and remembering as in reassembling the members of the body, the family, the population of the past. And it was the struggle, the pitched battle between remembering and forgetting, that became the device of the narrative [in *Beloved*]" ([source](#)).

ghosts

Ghosts are ontologically complicated, thus can be a variety of things all at once: a sentient ghost of something or someone, a ghostly memory or their own unique entity that resembles the original as a historical-material coincidence (the chronotope), a friendly/unfriendly disguise, or creative egregore. E.g., Hamlet's dad, Hamlet's memory of his dad as triggered by the space around him; or someone painting Hamlet's dad as its own thing that isn't Shakespeare's version despite the likeness. This applies to other famous ghosts in media—e.g., King Boo from *Mario*, the monster from *It Follows*, 2014; or my own friendly ghost of Jadis from exhibit 43c—i.e., Derrida's Marxist spectres.

the Promethean Quest/awesome mystery

Gothic stories enjoy a sense of awesome power tied to the chronotope or awesome ruin (what Percy Shelley calls "the colossal Wreck," exhibit 5e, 64c, etc). In the wake of a great calamity is the presence of intimations of power that must be uncovered in pursuit of the truth—i.e., the Promethean (self-destructive) Quest. We'll examine several in the Humanities primer, including Edmund Burke's *Sublime*, Mary Shelley's "playing god," Rudolph Otto's *Numinous/mysterium tremendum*, and Lovecraft's cosmic nihilism, etc. All indicate the Gothic pursuit of a big power that blasts the finder to bits; or, in Radcliffe's case, is explained away during the conclusion of an explained supernatural/rationalized event; i.e., the explained supernatural (exhibit 22, *Scooby Doo* and *Velma*).

"playing god"

In iconoclastic terms, "playing god" is the ability to self-fashion (aka "self-determination" in geopolitics). It is generally resented by the status quo, or demonized for being too dangerous; e.g., Satan from *Paradise Lost* as a self-fashioning devil moving away from God's heteronormative, colonial-binarized image.



(exhibit 5c: Two examples of the Promethean Quest/awesome mystery—from Event Horizon [top and bottom, 1997] and Alien [middle, 1979].)

the Black Veil



([source](#): "*The Rise of the Gothic Novel*" by Stephen Carver)

Radcliffe's famous "cloaking device" from *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, delayed until the end of the book (over 500 pages) to reveal behind a great terrible thing that made our heroine swoon; i.e., her immodest desire to look upon something that threatens her virtue and fragile mind. It remains a common device used in horror media today—e.g., as I note in "Gothic themes in *The Vanishing / Spoorloos* (1988)," the Black Veil is [present all throughout that film](#).

demon lover

To that, Cynthia Wolff writes on Radcliffe's process in "The Radcliffean Gothic Model":

Cynthia Wolff writes on Radcliffe's process in "The Radcliffean Gothic Model":

Let us say that when an individual reads a fully realized piece of fiction, he (or she) will "identify" primarily with one character, probably the principal character, and that this character will bear the principal weight of the reader's projected feelings. Naturally, an intelligent reader will balance this identification; to some extent there will be identification with each major character—even, perhaps, with a narrative voice. But these will be distributed appropriately throughout the fiction. Now a Gothic novel presents us with a different kind of situation. It is but a partially realized piece of fiction: it is formulaic (a moderately sophisticated reader already knows more

or less exactly what to expect in its plot); it has little or no sense of particularized "place," and it offers a heroine with whom only a very few would wish to identify. Its fascination lies in the predictable interaction between the heroine and the other main characters. The reader identifies (broadly and loosely) with the predicament as a totality: the ritualized conflict that takes place among the major figures of a Gothic fiction (within the significant boundaries of that "enclosed space") represents in externalized form the conflict any single woman might experience. The reader will project her feelings into several characters, each one of whom will carry some element of her divided "self." A woman pictures herself as trapped between the demands of two sorts of men—a "chaste" lover and a "demon" lover—each of whom is really a reflection of one portion of her own longing. Her rite of passage takes the form of (1) proclaiming her right to preside as mistress over the Gothic structure and (2) deciding which man (which form of "love") may penetrate its recesses!

There have been two distinct waves of Radcliffean Gothic fiction: one that began in the late eighteenth century and one that began in this century between the World Wars... ([source](#)).

exquisite "torture"

Exquisite "torture" is a Radcliffe staple, and classically pits the imperiled heroine inside a complicated, but generally unironic rape fantasy within the Gothic castle. Somewhere in the castle is a demon lover who is both more exciting than the boring-ass hero, and someone who speaks to the heroine's inheritance anxiety and/or lived trauma inside the chronotope. The fantasy on the page is a form of controlled risk, but Radcliffe's forms are "proto-vanilla" in that they emerged at the very beginnings of feminism/female discourse and whose imaginary safe spaces are actually didactically *unsafe*. According to Wolff,

Two hundred years ago Ann Radcliffe introduced Gothic conventions into the mainstream of English fiction. For the first time the process of feminine sexual initiation found respectable, secular expression. Yet the terms of this expression were ultimately limiting. It is important to recognize and acknowledge the heritage of Ann Radcliffe's Gothic tradition; it is even more important now to move on and invent other, less mutilating conventions for the rendering of feminine sexual desire ([source](#)).

the explained supernatural

The sensation of a seemingly profound or Numinous in Radcliffe's stories, often linked to fear of unironic rape and death, but also boring material disputes that involve these things. The threat—like her mischievous pirates—are dressed up as ghosts or monsters to fool the detective so they can rob the state (and maybe the heroine) of their goods (the heroine and her modesty being "priceless treasure" in the eyes of themselves having internalized these bigotries, but also the men "protecting" them).

Iudo-Gothic BDSM

My combining of an older academic term, "ludic-Gothic" (Gothic videogames), with sex-positive BDSM theatrics as a potent means of camp. The emphasis is less about "how can videogames be Gothic" and more how the playfulness in videogames is commonly used to allow players to camp canon in and out of videogames as a form of negotiated power exchange established in playful, game-like forms (theatre and rules). Commonly gleaned through Metroidvania as I envision it, but frankly performed in any kind of Gothic poetics—i.e., to playfully attain what I call "the palliative Numinous," or the Gothic quest for self-destructive power as something to camp.

Iudic-Gothic

Gothic videogames. "The ludic-gothic is created when the Gothic is transformed by the video game medium, and is a kindred genre to survival horror" ([source](#): Laurie Taylor's "Gothic Bloodlines in Survival Horror Gaming," 2009).



the palliative Numinous

A term I designed to describe the pain-/stress-relieving effect achieved from, and relayed through, intense Gothic poetics and theatrics of various kinds (my preference being Metroidvania castle-narrative *vis-à-vis* Bakhtin's chronotope applied to videogames out from novels and cinema and into Metroidvania; re: my master's thesis).

the closed space

A self-contained, claustrophobic, Gothic parallel space—generally a site of seemingly awesome power, age and danger (usually occupied by something sinister, if only the viewer's piqued curiosity/imperiled imagination): churches, abbeys, monasteries, castles, mad laboratories, (war/urban crime scenes), insane asylums, etc.

The term is reworked from Cynthia Griffin Wolff's concept of "enclosed space" from her 1979 essay, "The Radcliffean Gothic Model: A Form for Feminine Sexuality"

Now a Gothic novel presents us with a different kind of situation. It is but a partially realized piece of fiction: it is formulaic (a moderately sophisticated reader already knows more or less exactly what to expect in its plot); it has little or no sense of particularized "place," and it offers a heroine with whom only a very few would wish to identify. Its fascination lies in the predictable

interaction between the heroine and the other main characters. The reader identifies (broadly and loosely) with the predicament as a totality: the ritualized conflict that takes place among the major figures of a Gothic fiction (within the significant boundaries of that "enclosed space") represents in externalized form the conflict any single woman might experience ([source](#)).

in that I've extended it beyond the purely psychological models (and psyches) of a traditional Gothic readership (white, cis-het women) and now-outmoded school of thought (the Female Gothic of the 1970s). I do so in connection to how the Gothic mode generally employs deeply confusing and overwhelming time-spaces (chronotopes)—what Manuel Aguirre, in 2008, referred to as "[Geometries of Terror](#)" (exhibit 64b/64c)—that, along with their ambiguous, perplexing inhabitants (exhibit 64a), phenomenologically disrupt the monomyth in pointedly deconstructive, hauntological ways: the Promethean (self-destructive) hero's quest as something that undermines patrilineal descent and dynastic power exchange/hereditary rites in a never-ending cycle of war crimes, lies and blood sacrifice (a fearful critique of medieval feudalism).

Metroidvania as closed space

In the past, my academic/postgraduate work has thoroughly examined the Metroidvania ludonarrative (including speedruns) as a closed/parallel *ergodic* space; while my critical voice has changed considerably since 2018, I want to show the evolution of my work/gender identity leading into *Sex Positivity's* genesis by listing my entire Metroidvania corpus:

- my master's thesis, which studies the ways in which speedrunners create castle-narrative through recursive motion inside the Metroidvania as a Gothic chronotope: "[Lost in Necropolis: The Continuation of Castle-Narrative beyond the Novel or Cinema, and into Metroidvania](#)" (2018)
- a BDSM reflection on ludo-Gothic themes in *Metroid*: "[Revisiting My Masters' Thesis on Metroidvania—Our Ludic Masters: The Dominating Game Space](#)" (2021)
- a deeper follow-up to "Our Ludic Masters": "[Why I Submit: A Subby Gothicist's Attitudes on Metroidvania, Mommy Doms, and Sexual Persecution](#)" (2021)
- a study of abjection and traditional gender theory *vis-à-vis* Barbara Creed in Metroidvania: "[War Vaginas: Phallic Women, Vaginal Spaces and Archaic Mothers in Metroid](#)" (2021)
- a Q&A interview series that interviews *Metroid* speedrunners about Metroidvania for my postgrad work: [the abstract for "Mazes and Labyrinths: Disempowerment in Metroidvania and Survival Horror"](#) (2021)

- a chapter I wrote about *Metroid* for an unfinished book: "[The Promethean Quest and James Cameron's Military Optimism in *Metroid*](#) [exhibit 5e]" (2021)



Though imperfect, these older pieces try to show how the poststructuralist method—when taken beyond its somewhat limited 1960s/70s praxial scope (the '70s being the emergence of academic Gothic thought)—can be critically empowered in dialectical-material ways; i.e., to actually critique capital through iconoclastic monsters, BDSM/power exchange and spaces in Metroidvania, but also immensely creative interpretations/responses to those variables as already existing for me to rediscover in my own work: speedrunning as a communal effect for solving complex puzzles and telling Gothic ludonarratives in highly inventive ways. As we'll see moving forward, this strategy isn't just limited to videogames, but applies to any poetic endeavor during oppositional praxis. —Perse

Metroidvania

A type of Gothic videogame, one involving the exploration of castles and other closed spaces in an ergodic framework; i.e., the struggle of investigating past trauma as expressed through the Gothic castle and its monstrous caverns (which is the author poetically hinting at systemic abuses in real life). [Scott Sharkey insists he coined the term](#) (source tweet: evilsharkey, 2023) —ostensibly in the early 2000s while working with Jeremy Parish for 1-Ups.com. However, the term was probably being used before

that in the late '90s to casually describe the 1997 PSOne game, *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*; records of it being used can be found [as early as 2001](#) (this [Circle of the Moon Amazon review](#) is from 2003). By 2006, though, Jeremy Parish had a personalized definition on his own blog, "GameSpite | Compendium of Old and Useless Information" (2012):

"Metroidvania" is a stupid word for a wonderful thing. It's basically a really terrible neologism that describes a videogame genre which combines 2D side-scrolling action with free-roaming exploration and progressive skill and item collection to enable further, uh, progress. As in *Metroid* and Koji Igarashi-developed *Castlevania* games. Thus the name ([source](#)).

My own postgrad research ("Mazes and Labyrinths") has expanded/narrowed the definition quite a bit:

Metroidvania are a location-based videogame genre that combines 2D, 2.5D, or 3D platforming [e.g., *Dark Souls*, 2009] and ranged/melee combat—usually in the 3rd person—inside a giant, closed space. This space communicates Gothic themes of various kinds; encourages exploration* depending on how non-linear the space is; includes progressive skill and item collection, mandatory boss keys and variable gating mechanics (bosses, items, doors); and requires movement powerups in some shape or form, though these can be supplied through RPG elements as an optional alternative.

**Exploration pertains to the deliberate navigation of space beyond that of obvious, linear routes—to search for objects, objectives or secrets off the beaten path ([source](#)).*

Also from "Mazes and Labyrinths":

Mazes and Labyrinths: I treat space as essential when defining Metroidvania. Mazes and labyrinths are closed space; their contents exist within a closed structure, either a maze or a labyrinth. A classical labyrinth is a linear system with one set, unicursal path towards an end point; a maze is a non-linear system with multiple paths to an end point [classical texts often treated the words as interchangeable].

Metroidvania, etymology: As its most basic interpretation, Metroidvania is a portmanteau of *Metroid* and *Castlevania*, specifically "Metroid" + "-vania." However, the term has no singular, universally-agreed-upon definition.

Because I focus on space, my definitions—of the individual portmanteau components—are as follows:

"Metroid" \neq the franchise, *Metroid*; "Metroid" = that franchise's unique treatment of closed space—the maze.

"-vania" \neq the franchise, *Castlevania*; "castlevania" equals that franchise's unique treatment of closed space—the labyrinth.

At the same time, "Metroid," or "metro" + "-oid" means "android city." "Castlevania" or "castle" + "-vania" means "other castle," "demon castle," or "castle Dracula." The portmanteau, "Metroidvania" \approx "android city" + "demon castle" + "maze" + "labyrinth."

In terms of appearance, a Metroidvania's audiovisual presentation can range from retro-future sci-fi to Neo-Gothic fantasy. Nevertheless, their spaces typically function as Gothic castles; replete with hauntological monsters, demons, and ghosts, they guide whatever action the hero must perform when navigating the world and dealing with its threats (*ibid.*)

ergodic

As defined by Espen J. Aarseth in [Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature](#) (1997): "During the cybertextual process, the user will have effectuated a semiotic sequence, and this selective movement is a work of physical construction that the various concepts of 'reading' do not account for. [...] In ergodic literature, nontrivial effort is required to traverse the text," meaning effort beyond eye movement and the periodic or arbitrary turning of pages; spatially there is more than one route to take, or multiple ways one can take the same route to complete an objective or series of objectives (which in Metroidvania, are generally unspoken; *Super Metroid* is famous for its lack of narration, open-ended world, and non-linear fragmented narrative).

liminal space

Liminal spaces, in architectural terms, are spaces designed to be moved through; in Gothic terms, these amount to Bakhtin's chronotopes as museum-like times spaces that, when moved through, help past legends come alive, animating in literal and figuratively Gothic/medieval ways. Classically these include the animated portrait, miniature, gargoyle, (often giant) suit of armor, effigy and double, etc; more modern variants include Tool's early music videos (exhibit 43a), Trent Reznor's 1994 music video for "Closer" (exhibit 43b) and Mario 64's own liminal spaces as

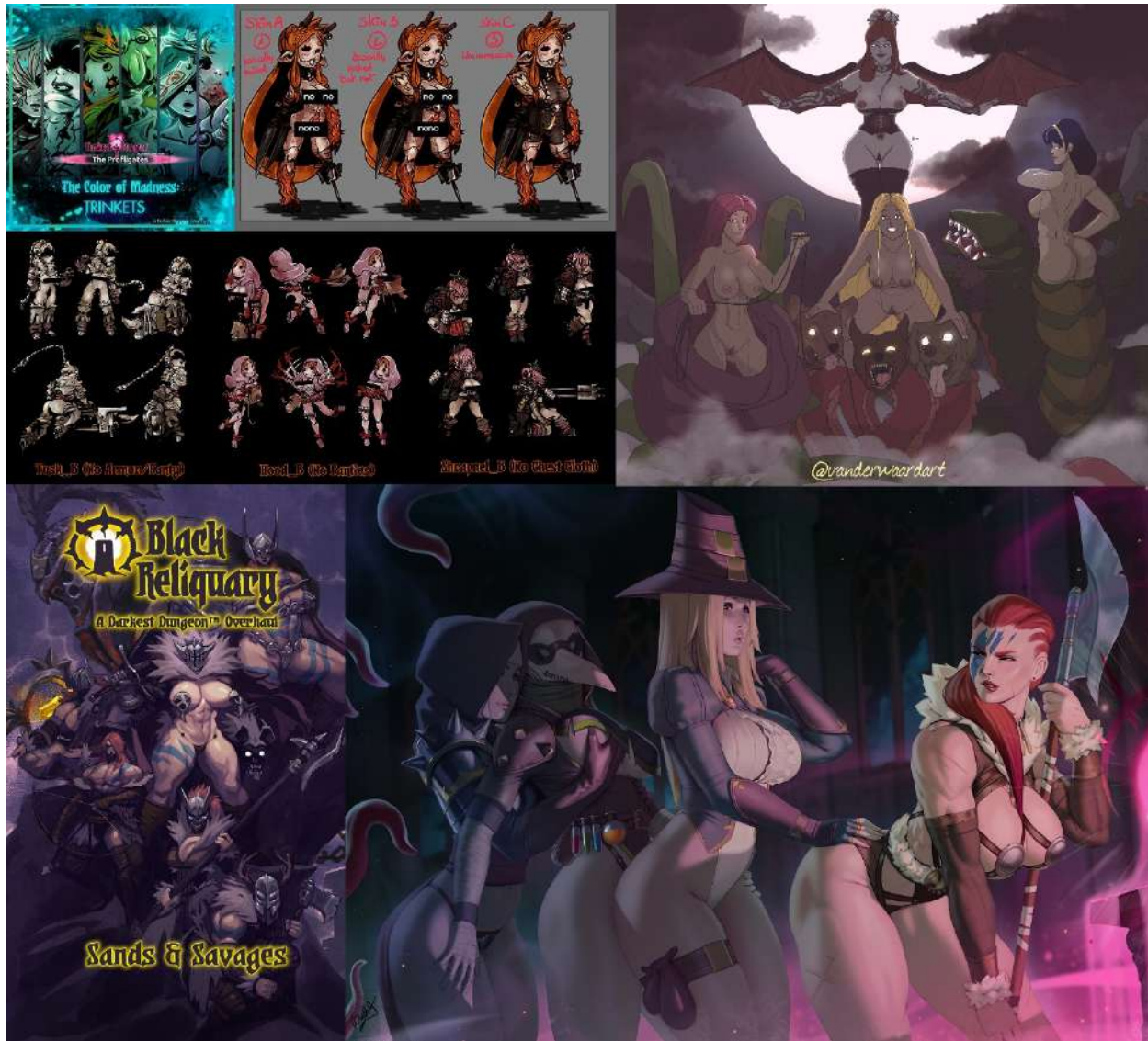
outlined by Marilyn Roxie's "[Marilyn Roxie presents ... The Inescapable Weirdness of Super Mario 64](#)" (2020).



([source](#))

liminal monsters (expression)/monster girls

Monsters are generally liminal, but some more than others openly convey a partial, ambivalent, oscillating sense of conflict on the surface of their imagery. A hopelessly common example is the monster girl, as AFAB persons are generally fetishized/demonized "waifu" in canon and must be reclaimed in sex-positive forms (exhibit 5e; 23a, the Medusa; 49, phallic women; 50, furies; 62e, cavewomen, etc). The advanced degree of this trope is the monster mother, which expects the women to exist in ways that cater to men that are both loved and feared in fetishizing ways, but also sacrificed (exhibits 51b1, 87b1 and 102b, etc). Akin to a black mirror, Eve Segewick, in 1981, called this mimesis "the character in the veil [or] imagery of the surface in the Gothic novel." The basic gist, they argue, is the sexualizing of a surfaces in Gothic media (their example being the nun's veil); i.e., a "shallow pattern" literally on the surface of paper or a screen or glass that can evoke a deeper systemic problem that spans space and time.



(exhibit 5e2: Top-far-left: Muscarine's "Profligates" [from the Darkest Dungeon \[2016\] mod workshop](#). Top-far-left: Muscarine's "Profligates" [from the Darkest Dungeon \[2016\] mod workshop](#). Top-far-left: Muscarine's "Profligates" [from the Darkest Dungeon \[2016\] mod workshop](#). The "Great Waifu Renaissance" of *The Darkest Dungeon* portrays the monstrous-feminine as waifus to control and embody as much during an ontological power trip as simply being a proverbial dragon to "slay." Often, they walk the tightrope between the cutesy and the profane, subverting stereotypes while simultaneously being chased after by weird canonical nerds: **waifu/wheyfu monster-girl war brides**. Procured and dressed by powerful greedy companies [e.g., Blizzard's "thirst-trap" catalog of Amazon gradients] and given to apolitical consumers, the latter fight the culture war for the former as tied to the state through capital. And yet weird iconoclastic nerds can weaponize these self-same monstrous-feminine to our purposes.

The Tusk, for example, is a sexy cavegirl who iconoclastically stinks—i.e., with body odor being historically-materially denied to women despite their armpits smelling just as much as guys' do, let alone their vaginas, which guys do not have and can have all sorts of smells: e.g., Zeuhl once asked me to smell their panties, saying incredulously, "Isn't that crazy?" because their cootchie smelled rather strong [and to which my look of shock, post-smelling it, utterly betrayed me. To be fair, it was rather pungent from us simply walking around my hometown. All the same, bodies smell because they're designed to; e.g., that same night, we had doggystyle sex and for the first time I could suddenly smell the natural "musk" from Zeuhl's asshole: a vestigial throwback to a time when humans communicated more by smells than with words]. Apart from the Tusk, the Hood is a slutty Red Riding Hood, and the Fawn is a patchwork animal-girl ninja, etc.

*Lower-top-left: [nude mods for Muscarine's Profligates, by JOMO=1](#). Fan mods operate as "fan fiction," thus tend to be far hornier [see: *Black Reliquary's* (2023) many Amazon thirst traps, bottom-left] than official canon does. Generally the official art/content for the main game or "faithful" fan art tends to be less overtly sexualized, but no less canonical or sexually dimorphic; e.g., the Countess [exhibit 1a1c] as an Archaic Bug Mom slain by the bad-faith Ancestor [who is frankly a giant dick for the whole game].*

*Top-right: Persephone van der Waard's illustrations of four monster girls from *Castlevania* (a franchise with a whole bestiary of female monsters; [source: Fandom](#)). These four are all from *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*—[Alraune](#), [Succubus](#), [Scylla](#) and [Amphisbaena](#).*

*Bottom-left: Promo art [[source tweet](#): Reliquary Mod, 2021] for *The Darkest Dungeon* overhaul, *The Black Reliquary*].*

*Bottom-right: Fan art for *The Darkest Dungeon* by [Maestro Noob](#), depicting what are basically heroic female monsters: the virgin/whore, but also the damsel/demon and the Amazon with a BDSM flavor.*

chimeras/furries:



(exhibit 5f: Artist, left: [William Mai](#); artist, right: [Blush Brush](#). Examples of furries. "Furry" is an incredibly diverse art style. For more examples, consider Volume Two's "Call of the Wild" chapter, as well as exhibits 65 or 68 from Volume Three.)


A **chimera** isn't simply the Greek monster, but any kind of composite body or entity, often with elements of multiplicity or plurality (e.g., [the Gerasene demon](#)). Conversely, furries are humanoid [commonly called "anthro"] personas that tend to have humanoid bodies, but semi-animalistic limbs and intersex components tied to ancient rituals of fertility but also gender expression relating to/identifying with nature. While Greek myths are commonly more animalistic, the (mainstream) furries of today are often closer to the Ancient Egyptian variety: an animal "headdress" or mask over a mostly-human body. There's plenty of morphological gradients, of course—with "feral" or "bestial" variants being more and more animalistic; and the "Giger variety" being more xenomorphic and Gothically surreal (the xenomorph [exhibit 51a/60c] being one of the most famous, if contested, chimeras in modern times). A general rule of thumb, however, is the genitals tend to be human; however, "monster-fucker" variants very quickly move away from humanoid bodies (and/or genitals) altogether, often with abject, stigma animals like the insect, leech, reptile, or worm. Likewise, while "fursonas" (furry personas) tend to be sexualized, they aren't always; in fact, they primarily function as alter-

egos with many different functions: the political (see: [alt-right furies](#) as well as "[furry panic](#)"), [the dramatic](#) (Fredrik Knudsen, 2019), the horror genre (see: pretty much anything by Junji Ito, but also [Five Nights at Freddy's](#), 2014; [or its various wacky clones](#), source: Space Ice, 2023) and also for general fandom purposes; i.e., furies are [not automatically fetishes](#) (Vice, 2018) but are criminalized similar to Bronies (though any popular fandom that has a large underage audience is going to attract sexual predators *and* outsider bias; see: Turkey Tom's 2023 [admittedly problematic] "Degenerate" series on [Bronies](#) or [Five Nights at Freddy's](#); or Lily Orchard's [pedophile escapades, hidden behind sexualized Brony fan fiction](#)—Essence of Thought, 2021).

monster-fucking

The mutually consensual act of fucking monsters; i.e., sex-positive, Gothicized kink. However, as this tends to involve inhuman, animal-esque creatures beyond just werewolves, Frankensteinian creatures, or vampires, make sure to refer to the Harkness test (exhibit 38c) to avoid conducting/depicting bestiality or pedophilia! *Note: While sexual abuse does happen in furry communities, these communities are ultimately quite small and those behaviors are not the norm within any more than in the LGBTQ community at large. However, in the tradition of moral panics, this won't stop reactionary groups from scapegoating furies and similar out-groups, the persecutors hypocritically overlooking widespread systemic abuse by paramilitaries and communities leaders in the bargain. —Perse*


Satanism



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ABOUT US

THE MISSION OF THE SATANIC TEMPLE IS TO ENCOURAGE BENEVOLENCE AND EMPATHY, REJECT TYRANNICAL AUTHORITY, ADVOCATE PRACTICAL COMMON SENSE, OPPOSE INJUSTICE, AND UNDERTAKE NOBLE PURSUITS.



THE SATANIC TEMPLE

We have publicly confronted hate groups, fought for the abolition of corporal punishment in public schools, applied for equal representation when religious institutions are placed on public property, provided religious exemption and legal protection against laws that unscientifically restrict people's reproductive autonomy, exposed harmful pseudo-scientific practitioners in mental health care, organized clubs alongside other religious after-school clubs in schools besieged by proselytizing organizations, and engaged in other advocacy in accordance with our tenets.



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THERE ARE SEVEN FUNDAMENTAL TENETS

- I** One should strive to act with compassion and empathy toward all creatures in accordance with reason.
- II** The struggle for justice is an ongoing and necessary pursuit that should prevail over laws and institutions.
- III** One's body is inviolable, subject to one's own will alone.
- IV** The freedoms of others should be respected, including the freedom to offend. To willfully and unjustly encroach upon the freedoms of another is to forgo one's own.
- V** Beliefs should conform to one's best scientific understanding of the world. One should take care never to distort scientific facts to fit one's beliefs.
- VI** People are fallible. If one makes a mistake, one should do one's best to rectify it and resolve any harm that might have been caused.
- VII** Every tenet is a guiding principle designed to inspire nobility in action and thought. The spirit of compassion, wisdom, and justice should always prevail over the written or spoken word.

THE SATANIC TEMPLE VS. CHURCH OF SATAN

The Satanic Temple has become the primary religious Satanic organization in the world with congregations internationally, and a number of high profile public campaigns designed to preserve and advance secularism and individual liberties. The rise of The Satanic Temple has been met with an increase in commentary regarding what Satanism is as media outlets struggle to grasp how this upstart religion has begun to shift religious liberty debates with claims of equal access.

With unfortunate regularity - and much to our chagrin - The Satanic Temple is confused with an earlier organization, the Church of Satan, founded by Anton Szandor LaVey in the 1960s. The Church of Satan expresses vehement opposition to the campaigns and activities of The Satanic Temple, asserting themselves as the only "true" arbiters of Satanism, while The Satanic Temple dismisses the Church of Satan as irrelevant and inactive.

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FAQ



(exhibit 5h: [The Satanic Temple website](#). I never joined, but they seem like an alright bunch—[especially compared to the anti-feminist moderacy of the YouTube Skeptics/atheist Community](#) [source: *The Kavernacle*, 2021]. To that, "skepticism" often dogwhistles a common moderate/reactionary tactic; i.e., to "just ask questions." This maneuver is bad-faith more often than not, as seen in the "gender critical" community [a TERF cryptonym meant to conceal the fascist nature of regressive "activism," *Amazonomachia* and cryptomimesis] or the so-called race "realists," [but also the transphobia of cis-skeptics defending the "fairness" of professional sports](#) by excluding trans people; source: *Essence of Thought*, 2019.)

Like furies, Satanism is generally treated as a regular scapegoat during moral panic (with "Satanic" [historically being used to scapegoat members of the LGBTQ community as "groomers" during the 1980s into the present](#); source: Caelan Conrad, 2022). However, Satan is a complex figure and can personify different forms of persecution and rebellion. For example, I have explored Satanism before—in my own past time ("[Dreadful Discourse, ep. 7: Satan](#)") as well as [my own living experiences](#): "I, Satanist; Atheist: A Gothacist's Thoughts on Atheism, Religion, and Sex" (2021). Satanic churches aren't ecclesiastical in the traditional sense, but their implementation in Western culture isn't always implemented well. [Anton LaVey's Church of Satan](#) is a bit overly hedonistic and dated, sounding painfully cliché and sexist. [The Satanic Temple](#), on the other hand, is far more accessible, while refusing to compromise on the humanitarian issues they seek to confront in society as structured on organized religion (America wasn't simply founded by the Puritans, but founded on their awful principles, too).

uncanny

From Freud's *unheimlich*, meaning "unhomely," the uncanny actually has many different academic applications. One of the most famous (and canonically outmoded) is the liminal/parallel space (the "danger disco/cyberpunk," exhibit 15b2; the haunted music video, 43a; the Nostromo from *Alien*, 64c). Another common example is the *uncanny valley*, which—while generally applied to animation techniques—can also apply to ghosts, egregores and other Gothic imitations (the unfriendly disguise/pastiche, exhibit 43b; the friendly, iconoclastic variant 43c) or humanoid likenesses that fail to "pass the test" (for a diegetic example of this concept, [refer to the Voight-Kampff test from Blade Runner](#), 1982). In the Gothic sense, the animate-inanimate presents the subject as now-alive but once-not, but also faced within bad copies they cannot safely distinguish themselves from; e.g., the knight from *Hollow Knight* (exhibit 40h1) but also the xenomorph (exhibit 60d) and living latex, leather and death fetishes (exhibits exhibit 9b2, 50b, 60e1, 101c2), or golems/succubae (exhibits 38c1b/51b1), etc, as one subtype of animated miniature whose ghost of the counterfeit is historically-

materially abject. The intimation is one of death in proximity with sensations that we are merely clay simulacra within the Gothic spell and that, at any moment, the spell could end and our dancing in the ruins suddenly stop as we cease to be once more; motionless we become, as Monty Python puts it, "ex-parrots."

terror and horror

Gothic schools begot from the Neo-Gothic period (the 1790s, in particular, between Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis) largely concerned with looking—specifically showing and hiding violence, monsters, taboo sex and other abject things (this lends it a voyeuristic, exhibitionist quality). Defined posthumously by Radcliffe in her 1826 essay, "On The Supernatural In Poetry":

Terror and horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes and nearly annihilates them [...] and where lies the great difference between terror and horror but in the uncertainty and obscurity, that accompany the first, respecting the dreaded evil? ([source](#)).

phallic women

The cock of the state. A monstrous-feminine archetype predicated on active, penetrative violence (or scapegoated for it; e.g., the trans woman as a "woman with a penis" trope). Canonical phallic women are female characters, villains, and monsters (often Amazons, Medusas or something comparable) who behave in a traditional masculine way—though generally in response to patriarchal structures with an air of female revenge; e.g., Lady Macbeth from *Macbeth*; Victoria de Loredani from *Zofloya*, 1806; Rumi from *Perfect Blue*, 1997, and Ripley/Samus Aran from *Aliens/Metroid*. When Dale Townshend introduced the term "phallic women" to me, he referenced Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth:

Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood;
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose ([source](#)).

In non-fiction, this encompasses TERFs, who adopt violent, minority-police roles post-trauma, accepting further "prison sex" conditioning by reactionaries during moral panics. The phallic power of women is canonically treated as hysterically fleeting (e.g., Lady Galadriel's "dark queen" moment; or Dani's fall from grace as

the dark mother of dragons, in *Game of Thrones*, 2009, her self-defeating hysteria supplied by the authors of the show to justify male rule during the final season). She is expected to perform, then put away her sword and wear the dress.

Archaic Mothers (and vaginal spaces)

The womb of nature. An ancient, monstrous-feminine symbol of female/matriarchal power. In Gothic stories, the Archaic Mother (and her space) is generally something for the canonically male/phallic woman to slay and rape (as per the Cartesian Revolution)—e.g., Samus being the "space" variant of a knight or Amazon, specifically a subjugated, *TERF* Amazon killing Mother Brain, the Dark Mother, in service of the Galactic Federation and "the Man" (the entire Red Scare's class character dialog being displaced to outer space); for a more detailed writeup about these concepts in *Metroid*, consider "War Vaginas":

To summarize those terms, a phallic woman resists sexist conventions by behaving in a masculine (often war-like) fashion in Gothic stories. An Archaic Mother is a powerful, ancient, female mythic figure tied to abject images of motherhood and/or numinous authority. Her power is womb-centric, stemming from her actual womb, or the womb-like space she uses to attack the hero with" ([source](#)).

One of the most famous Archaic Mothers is the Medusa, but she takes many similar forms: the transgenerational undead preserved as living latex, leather or clay that comes alive like a gargoyle to seek indiscriminate vengeance against the living for having been wronged by proponents of capital, Cartesian thought, patriarchs, etc.



(artist: [Patrick Brown](#))

Amazonomachia (Amazon pastiche)

"Amazon battle" is an ancient form of classical, monstrous-feminine art whose pastiche was historically used to *enforce* the status quo; i.e., Theseus subjugating Hippolyta the Amazon Queen to police other women (making regressive/canonical *Amazonomachia* a form of monstrous-feminine copaganda). With the rise of queer discourse and identity starting in arguably the late 18th century, later canonical variations in the 20th century (e.g., Marsden's Wonder Woman) would seek to move the goalpost *incrementally*—less of a concession, in neoliberal variants (every Blizzard heroine ever—exhibits 45a, 76, 72), and more an attempt to recruit from dissident marginalized groups. The offer is always the same: to become badass, strong and "empowered." In truth, these regressive Amazons become assimilated token cops; i.e., the fetishized witch cop/war boss as a "blind Medusa" who hates her own kind by seeing herself as different than them, thus acting like a white, cis-het man towards them (the "Rambo problem"). In the business of violent cartoons (disguised variants of the state's enemies), characters like Ripley or Samus become lucrative token gladiators for the elite by fighting similar to men (active, lethal violence) *for* male state-corporate hegemony. To that, their symbolism colonizes

revolutionary variations of the Amazon, Medusa, etc, during subversive Amazonomachia within genderqueer discourse.

witch cops/war boss

A class, gender or race traitor dressed up in the heroic-victimized language of warrior variants of past victims. Their baleful gaze is diverted away from the elite, instead punching down at their fellow workers to break up their strikes, unions and riots; but also to tease disempowered women with the "carrot" of active, physical violence they're conditioned to use against the state's enemies. There are male/Man Box variants and token variants (the weird canonical nerd of course, exhibit 93b; the war chief, 98b1; the Afrocentrist; the centrist Amazon, exhibit 98b1/100c4; the LGBA's bad-faith bears, otters, dykes and femmes; or the queer boss, exhibit 100c10) and the praxis allows for flexible gender roles within and outside of the heteronormative binary as long as it serves the profit motive. But subversive variants (exhibit 111b) are generally forced to work within notoriously bigoted and oppressive structures: the patriarchal world of professional, competitive sports or the porn industry as things to subvert ("make love, not war" as a hard stance, not conflating Marisa's "love" [exhibit 98a3] with genuine, class-conscious praxis). This makes TERF amazons, Medusas, *et al*, Judas-level "prison guards" inside Man Box culture; they assimilate their conquerors and use their cudgels, slurs and shackles, but also their fetish/power outfits like they do—without countercultural irony during blood libel (even while trying to disguise this function through false rebellion) while being paid in blood money by the state and forced to ignominiously marry people they wouldn't be caught dead with under non-oppressive conditions.

waifus/wheyfus

The waifu is a war bride in *shonen* media; i.e., the promise of sex, generally through marriage as emblemized in Japanese cultural exports that fuse with Western bigotries to make similar promises to entitled, young male consumers (and older bigots and tokens). While the "waifu," then, is any bride you want—be she big and strong, short and stacked, skinny-thicc, tall and slender, or some other "monster girl" combination dressed up as a pin-up Hippolyta, Medusa or some other hauntological trope—the "wheyfu" is conspicuously burly and chased after by entitled fans (this relationship can get performatively complicated, but the basic difference is coercion versus mutual consent). Within oppositional praxis, then, the waifu/wheyfu becomes yet another disguise within class war for operatives on either basic side to utilize.

the Male/Female Gothic

Stemming from earlier periods of Gothic academic (1970s), the Male and Female Gothic are gendered ideas of the Gothic school or work connected to older, Neo-Gothic schools: Ann Radcliffe's *de facto* School of Terror and Matthew Lewis' School of Horror ([outlined as such in Devendra Varma's *The Gothic Flame*, 1923](#); though perhaps articulated earlier than that). Radcliffe's school focused on terror concealing the "dreaded evil," the explained supernatural and raising the imagination through carefully maintained suspense. Lewis's contributions to the so-called Male Gothic focused more on the living dead, overtly supernatural rituals, black magic, and sex with demons, murder, and so on. Frankly Male Gothic is a bit outmoded, [with Colin Broadmoor in 2021 making a strong argument for Lewis' Gothic camp being far more queer than strictly "male" in *The Monk*](#) despite the lack of sexuality and gender functioning as identity when he wrote it (similar to Tolkien or Milton, despite their own intentions).

egregore/tulpa (simulacrum)



(*exhibit 5i: Artist: [Mole and Thomas.](#)*)

An occult or monstrous concept representing a non-physical entity that arises from the collective thoughts of a distinct group of people ([what Plato and other philosophers have called the simulacrum](#) through various hair-splittings; e.g., "identical copies of that which never existed" being touched upon by Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality). The distinction between egregore and tulpa is largely

etymological, with "egregore" stemming from French and Greek and "tulpa" being a Tibetan idea:

*Since the 1970s, tulpas have been a feature of Western paranormal lore. In contemporary paranormal discourse, a tulpa is a being that begins in the imagination but acquires a tangible reality and sentience. Tulpas are created either through a deliberate act of individual will or unintentionally from the thoughts of numerous people. The tulpa was first described by Alexandra David-Néel (1868–1969) in *Magic and Mystery in Tibet* (1929) and is still regarded as a Tibetan concept. However, the idea of the tulpa is more indebted to Theosophy than to Tibetan Buddhism [source: Natasha L. Mikles and Joseph P. Laycock's "Tracking the Tulpa: Exploring the "Tibetan" Origins of a Contemporary Paranormal Idea," 2015].*

The shared idea, here, is that monsters tend to represent social ideas begot from a public imagination according to fearful biases that are not always controlled or conscious in their *cryptogenesis/-mimesis*. In Gothic-Communist terms, this invokes historical-material warnings of codified power or trauma—including totems, effigies, fatal portraits, suits of armor, or gargoyles—projected back onto superstitious workers through ambiguous, cryptonymic illusions. For our purposes, these illusions are primarily fascist/neoliberal, as Capitalism encompasses the material world. It must be parsed/transmuted.

ghosts/Yokai

An ontologically complex category of either a former dead person, an *artifact/reminder* of them (their legend as an effigy or "statue" of themselves; e.g., a suit of armor or fatal portrait) or a discrete, wholly unique entity that shares only the resemblance but not the context of a former person or their legend. If hamlet's father is a famous Western example of this idea, then *Yokai* are the Eastern variant of this notion.

For a holistic example of many of these Gothic ideas in action, check out [The Babadook](#) (2014); it combine crypt narrative, Black Veils, Gothic heroines, chronotopes, liminal space/monsters et al into a singular narrative in a fairly iconoclastic (queer) way (it's also one of my favorite films and I love to analyze it; e.g., "[Close-reading Gothic Theory in The Babadook](#)," 2019)! —Perse

Acknowledgments

"I don't know half of you half as well as I should like; and I like less than half of you half as well as you deserve."

—J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954)



(artist: Joseph Severn)

The British Romantic, John Keats, once described William Wordsworth's poetry as indicative of the "egotistical sublime"; i.e., pertaining to an isolated genius whose self-centered nature makes the truth of their work self-evident. In reality, Wordsworth's poems were based on the diary of his less-famous and -celebrated sister, Dorothy, [whose meticulous chronicling of their various "wanders"](#) (1798) laid the foundation for her brother's Romantic canon. As Gavin Andre Sukhu writes on the subject in 2013,

When reading the Grasmere Journal in conjunction with the poetry of William Wordsworth, Dorothy's journal appears to be a set of notes written especially for him by her. As a matter of fact, Dorothy made it quite clear in the beginning of her journals that she was writing them for William's "pleasure" ([source](#)).

Simply put, Keats was wrong. Wordsworth could *not* have written his famous poetry without his sister, whose close friendship and watchful eye he greatly cherished.

Like Wordsworth's poems, *Sex Positivity* could *not* have been written alone; I needed the help of various friends, associates, and enemies. While I arguably wouldn't be a Marxist without the eye-opening abuse of neoliberal Capitalism, I also wouldn't be openly trans without the many lovers and friends who taught me the value of things *beyond* Capitalism ("If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world..."). It is the latter group—those friends who stood by my side and didn't abuse me—that I wish to honor.

Special thanks, then, to those people. Not only did their knowledge, bravery, generosity and love make this book possible in its current form; they made it fun, too. Yet, as I am blessed to have many different kinds of friends, I'll thank each in turn. Please excuse my lists and organizing; I just like to be thorough and complete in my thanksgivings!

First, to my thirteen muses—[Crow](#), [Sinead](#), [Bay](#), [Mugiwara Art](#), [Harmony Corrupted](#), Angel Witch, [Mercedes the Muse](#), Krispy Tofuuu, [Ms. Reefer & Ayla](#), [Quinnvincible](#), [Blxxd Bunny](#) and [Itzel](#): You've all lent me tremendous emotional support and helped me through some really hard times. Your solidarity during our combined struggle helped make this book possible. To each of you, I wanted to give an extra-special thank you:

- *Bay*: Thank you for your invaluable contributions to *Sex Positivity*, puppy, and for being such a wonderful partner. Meeting you so late into the book's construction was incredibly serendipitous, but also fortunate in that you gave excellent daily feedback, provided many interesting (and germane) ideas to explore, and just frankly inspired and motivated me in so many different ways that, combined, transformed and expanded the landscape of this book more than anyone else (who all, I should add, pitched in a great amount). For example, from the date that we met (June 14th, 2023) until the altering of this entry (July 19th) you inspired me to create over *fifty* new, collage-style exhibits (about 25% of my book's total exhibits up to this point); on top of that, from July 24th to August 16th, the book increased another 150 pages, gaining an additional 88,000 words and 123 new images (many of which were exhibits). You're a person of great *mana*—incredibly loving and sweet, but also gorgeous, cultured and diverse in your many interests and passions; our minds also think very much alike and I absolutely love it and

adore you for it while having weaved your contributions into this book like a tapestry with your assistance. I cannot imagine this project (or my life) without you in it, injecting into both things of yourself that have changed how I see the world in ways I cannot imagine being different or without. I love you so very, very much, muffin, and am glad to have met you the way that we did!

- *Angel Witch*: Thank you for being so much fun to work with, cutie, and all around just a very nice person and beautiful friend! You're absolutely gorgeous and incredibly sweet—someone who's very good about communicating their boundaries while respecting mine, and I feel proud to include you in my book!
- *Sinead*: Thank you, fae, for being an excellent communicator, teacher and friend. Your careful instruction has helped me grasp and maintain the nuances of fat positivity versus fat liberation, and I feel the project has only benefited from your targeted, informative contributions (and zine suggestions). Also thank you for appreciating my work, embodying it through the example that you clearly set for yourself and effortlessly lead by! You're incredibly fun to talk to but also work/play with, and your ample, flawless body is the very stuff that dreams are made of!
- *Crow*: Thank you, puppy, for being such a game and receptive collaborator, and for treating me as well as you do; you're a wonderful partner—gorgeous, delightful, and sweet—and spending time with you has been so, so much fun! You've given me so much to enjoy and look forward to: making someone I love feel good. It delights me that I've found a sweetie who I can pour my boundless love (and cum) into. So all the kisses and snuggles, baby!
- *Mercedes*: Thank you, mommy, for inspiring my work. It meant so much when you first approached me and asked to be drawn, as I'd never had an artist/model do that before. But I absolutely love and respect what you stand for and think that you're incredibly legitimate, hot and valid. Thank you for being you!
- *Itzel*: Thank you, daddy, for making me feel so pretty and special, but also offering me guidance and protection—like the little princess I always to be!
- *To Bunny*: Thank you, bun-bun, for your financial support and monumental kindness as a friend, but also offering as much reference material as you did—i.e., the collaborative shoots whose images grace the front and back covers of this book, but also your impressive galleries to inspire the illustrations on its inner pages. Know that the additional exhibits based on your excellent OF shoots inspired many artworks by me, a commission by someone else, and multiple write-ups.

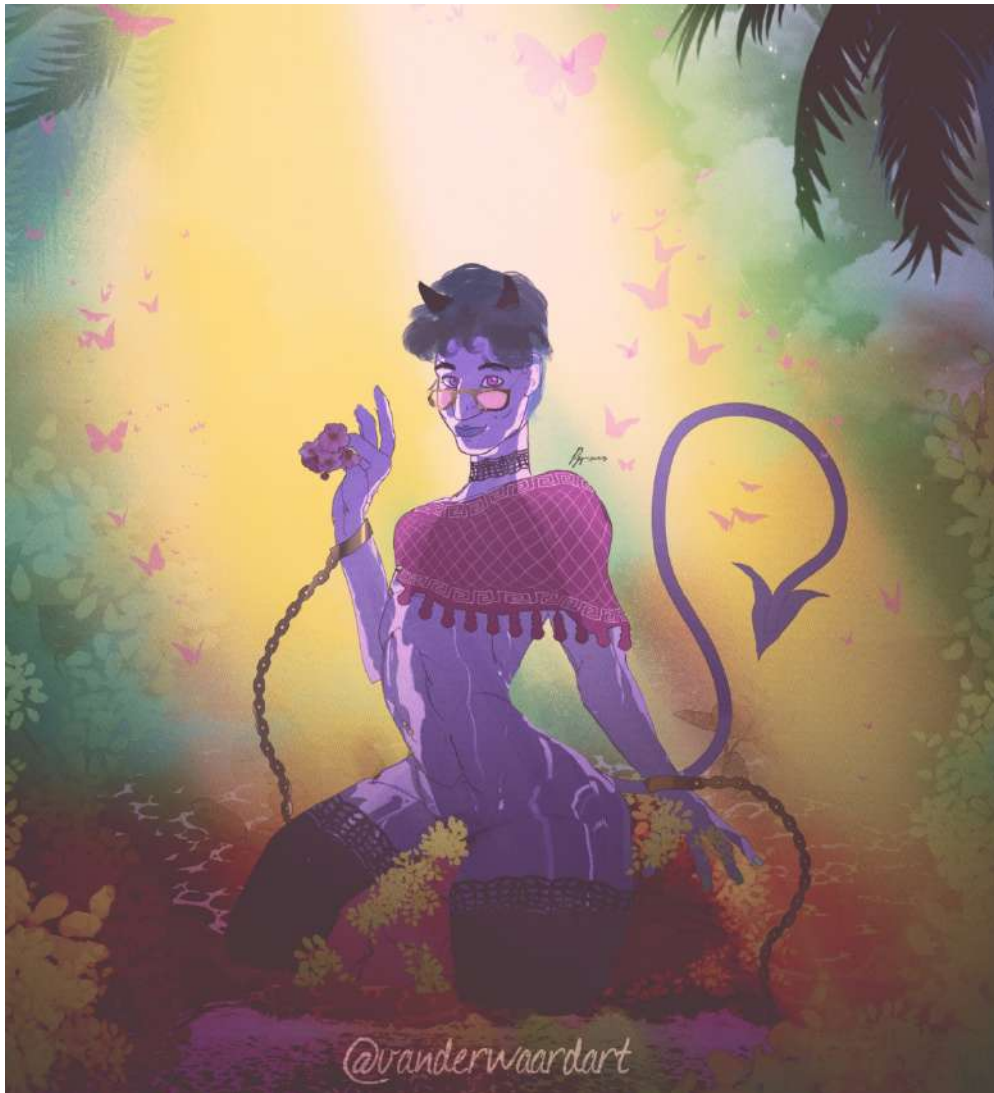


(artist: Quinnvincible)

- *To Krispy and Quinn*: You are both incredibly gorgeous and friendly to work with—treating me like a person and an equal, first and foremost. That means so, so much!
- *Mugiwara Art*: Thank you, Mugi, for being so fun to play with and talk to, and for working together despite some initial confusions (and for helping me address them as well as you did). Thank you as well, then, for teaching me about plural people and for giving me a chance to represent them more in my work (re: sex-positive demons).
- *Harmony Corrupted*: Thank you, mommy, for being so fun to talk to deeply about different complicated subjects and expressing a continued interest in my work (which led to an entire module[!] for Volume Two, doubling it in size), but also for being so easy to work and play with. You're amazing in bed, have the world's best ass (so peachy and fuckable), and are fascinating to talk to. I love watching your SO fuck you with his big dick, and am grateful for him being so kind to you. I feel like you're a dark spirit, overall; i.e., different, but alluring and sweet inside your beautiful darkness. Also, while we have a lot of common interests, you're also very nice and good about communicating (in and out of bed). I really value that!
- *Chryssi (Ms. Reefer) & Ayla*: Thank you both for being so wonderful to work with. You were my first AMAB couple (which, as a trans woman, I really appreciate), and playing and working with you both has been so much fun!

To Chryssi, in particular—thank you, mommy, for being so good in bed; both of you are wonderful people and it was an absolute pleasure meeting you both, but you make my girl cock feel amazing! To Ayla—thank you for fucking Chryssi so nicely with your huge dick! You're both adorable!

Moreover, all thirteen of you treated me like I had genuine value—that I wasn't "just" an artist whose work was "free" during our exchanges. That means the world, really. I will cherish your priceless contributions and immeasurable kindness beyond words. From the bottom of my heart, thank you, babes!



(artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#), of Ginger. Originally illustrated to celebrate their coming out as trans, but revised in a more devilish form for this book.)

Second, to my long-time friends and associates and diamonds in the rough:

- *To Ginger, first and foremost:* My best friend—who's been there for me more times than I can count—thank you from the bottom of my heart; more than anyone else, your deep support, crucial humor and endless hours talking together about shared ideas, struggles and solutions have been foundational—about sex positivity as a virtue have been essential to shaping the writing inside these pages. Thank you, for saving me from Jadis and other abusers who either meant me harm or otherwise took advantage; and for teaching me about figure drawing, including but not limited to: drawing boobs and faces, but rib cages and pelvises. You are a saint, as fierce as a dragon in a pinch, and a most excellent hobbit all-around; may the hair on your toes never fall out; may the rest of your days be plentiful, memorable and comfortable!
- *To Fen:* For teaching me about animals, empathizing with them, and how to draw their floofy tails, but also for being there for me in a crucial moment. Like Ginger, you saved me from Jadis and for that, I will always be grateful. But you're also incredibly chill and fun to spend time with and I appreciate that greatly. Never change, my friend.
- *To Lydia:* A mega-special thank you for your friendship over the years (over ten at this point) and for your own special help with this project. While you were less direct in your overall engagement with the manuscript, your contributions still made a difference. For one, you were someone I felt comfortable coming out to, who—when I realized for myself that I was trans—was able to drip-feed it to you. And when I finally said, "I probably seem different to you now," you replied that I was the third person who told you that: "No, you seem exactly the same; you seem different to yourself." As it turns out, you explained that I wasn't the first; I was third out of three people who came out to you (and as you said to another person who came out to you, to which you added, "You don't have to feel bad about it or like I wouldn't want to talk to you anymore. True be told, as the sole girl in a classful of boys, it kind of made me want to talk to you even more!"). Likewise, our conversations about horror, science fiction and fantasy are something I always enjoy and draw inspiration from, spiced by your endless grit and "give zero fucks" sense of humor. Thank you, my friend.
- *To [Odie](#):* Thank you for generously supporting my work over the years and for always asking me to draw unique, interesting and diverse things! You've made a huge difference in my life and I appreciate your patronage and friendship very much!
- *To Doctors Craig Dionne, Bernard Miller, Xavi Reyes, Paul Wake, Sam Hirst, Dale Townshend, Eric Acton, and David Calonne:* Thank you for staying in touch over the years and giving me feedback, encouragement and ideas. To Craig, in particular—I wouldn't have pushed so hard to go to grad school if not for your initial glowing praise and support. Thank you for that! And to the

rest of the Humanities faculty at EMU and MMU I haven't mentioned by name—I enjoyed all of your classes and the opportunity to absorb and learn from what you had to offer!

- *To Doctor Sorcha Ní Fhlainn*: Thank you for recommending *The Monstrous-Feminine* to me at MMU; it inspired me a lot in writing this book!
- *To Dr. Sandy Norton*: Thank you for lending me tremendous emotional/material support and kindness in the most trying of times. You always encouraged me to write, too, and valued my "great heart." Per your instructions, I've poured as much of it as I could into this book—to better help those in need (also, thank you for your 1968 copy of *The Pearl: A Journal of Facetive and Voluptuous Reading*. It's everything I wished Austen had been and provided a much-needed "other side of the coin" to consider when writing my own book about such matters).



(artist: [Angel](#))

- *To Angel*: Thank you for being a really wonderful friend and for showing me a lot of cool things to include in *Sex Positivity* that I wouldn't have otherwise! Meeting you was a delight I can scarce express and working with you—on my art, or helping you with yours—has been an absolute treat.
- *To my good friend, Seren*: You were, are, and always will be best girl. Not only have you always had my back, but your dress sense is impeccable and your sweet kindness knows no bounds (also, you have great taste in literature and in horror). Thank you for being so understanding and wonderful, babydoll. Kisses and hugs galore!

Of course, the painful knowledge of my enemies also went into the melting pot—i.e., older abusive lovers, which include the likes of Zeuhl, Jadis, and Cuwu. While I am leery of giving too much credit, I do have some thoughts to impart to these individuals:

- *To Zeuhl*: My scarecrow. A small part of me will always miss you the most—for being one of the most interesting and cool people I've ever met—yet also recognizes how, seemingly on a whim, you selfishly hurt me worse than anyone else (and offered the most brainless explanation imaginable); no bullshit, you did some really fucked up stuff and basically turned into a shadow of your former self, but I'll still cherish the love we shared, overseas. It was fun while it lasted!
- *To Jadis*: My tinman *and* wicked witch. Though you hurt me badly, I still learned a great deal from you and your beautiful wickedness. I have no desire to see you again, though, and write this message as a final parting gift: I wrote *Sex Positivity* to heal from what you did; your heartless abuse was my dragon to slay and now I have. After countless nights of terror spent under your thrall, I can safely say with joy and pride, "You have no power over me!"
- *And to Cuwu*: My cowardly lion. Our friendship may have been brief, and you were pretty shitty and callow towards the end, but it was still hella saucy and helped pushed me to come out as trans and write this book (which contains many Marxist terms/colloquialisms that I learned personally from you); also thank you for lending me your copy of *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things* and for introducing me to SpongeBob. It really was a good show.



(artist: [Ronin Dude](#))

Special thanks to all of the other models involved; their efforts breathed tremendous beauty, inspiration and meaning into my work. To [Dani](#)—thank you for modeling specifically for this project on short notice and for generally being cool and sweet! [Meowing from Hell](#), thank you for the abundance of reference material early on and for sharing my work as much as you did; it made a giant difference (even if you ultimately disagreed with my politics/identity and treated me fairly poorly because of it)! [Emma](#), thank you for keeping my spirits (and other things) up during this book's creation! Thank you to other collaborators as well, whose contributions were absolutely vital: [Tana the Puppy](#), [Fox Fux](#), [Venusinaries](#), [Casper Clock](#), Eldritch Babe, [Roxie Rusalka](#), [Ms. Reefer](#), [Ayla](#), [Drooling Red](#), [Autumn Anarchy](#), [Ashley Yelhsa](#), [UrEvilMommy](#), [Keighla Night](#), [Scarlet Love](#), [Jazminskyyy](#), [Cedar](#), [Bubi](#), [Lil Miss Puff](#), [XCumBaby98](#), [Mischievous Kat](#), [Nyx](#), [Soon2Bsalty](#), [Lovely Babe 2017](#), [Mikki Storm](#), [Mei Minato](#), [Red's References](#), [UrEvilMommy](#), Dulci, [Jade Need Hugs](#), [Aizawa](#), Angel Witch, Jericho, and [Miss Misery](#). I wrote it for all of you, but also every sex worker/cutie I've drawn over the years. In hard times, know that you're all special, valid people; that your signature kindness, warm personalities, and stunning bodies enrich the world!

Special thanks to the artists (other than Odie) who agreed to be commissioned for the book: [Lucid-01](#), [Adagadegelo](#), [Autumn Anarchy](#), [Marlon Trelie](#), and [Dcoda](#).

Special thanks to the ace and/or neurodivergent people in my life, whose constant feedback and support has proven invaluable!

Special thanks to my mother—for never having an English dictionary in the house, and for giving me a room of one's own to complete my work. This book wouldn't exist without the sanctuary and means you provided to see it through.

I'd also like to thank the content creators on YouTube whose political discourse and general content not only proved incredibly helpful in writing this book: [Theremin Trees](#), [Rebecca Watson](#), [Essence of Thought](#), [Sheep in the Box](#), [J. Aubery](#), [Jessie Gender](#), [Professor Lando](#), [Three Arrows](#), [Schafer Scott](#), [Xevaris](#), [Rhetoric & Discourse](#), [Satenmadpun](#), [The Majority Report](#), [Hasan Piker](#), [Fascinating Horror](#), [YUGOPNIK](#), [Broey Deschanel](#), [Joon the King](#), [Macabre Storytelling](#), [Sisyphus 55](#), [John the Duncan](#), [Noah Samsen](#), [Bad Empanada](#) (and his second channel, [which is always a riot](#)), [The Living Philosophy](#), [Heckin' Steve](#), [Ashley Gavin](#), [Spikima Movies](#), [MarshSMT](#), [Behind the Bastards](#), [Genetically Modified Skeptic](#), [Eldena Doubleca5t](#), [STRANGE ÆONS](#), [F.D. Signifier](#), [Hakim](#), [Non Compete](#), [Moonic Productions](#), [Another Slice](#), [Atun-Shei Films](#), [Kay and Skittles](#), [Second Thought](#), [blameitonjorge](#), [Georg Rockall-Schmidt](#), [D'Angello Wallace](#), [Thought Slime](#), [Dreading](#), [Caelan Conrad](#), [Little Hoots](#), [Tirrrb](#), [Skip Intro](#), [Anansi's Library](#), [GDF](#), (fellow Dutch person) [Brows Held High](#), and [Renegade Cut](#). Even you centrists, broken clocks and chudwads: [Turkey Tom](#), [penquinz0](#), [Knowing Better](#), [The People Profiles](#), [More Plates More Dates](#), and [Collative](#)

[Learning](#). Thank you all for your wonderful video essays, political commentaries, and documentaries!

Thank you to [Karl Jobst](#), [Bismuth](#), [Summoning Salt](#), and the other members of the YouTube speedrunner documentarian community for making such well-researched content; it contributed to my own graduate work and towards this book. Thanks as well to Jeremy Parish and Scott Sharkey for their research into Metroidvania ([even if they hate the term now](#)), and for Jeremy Parish's books on *Metroid* (e.g., [The Anatomy of Metroid](#), 2014) but also [on the subject of videogames in general](#); they were fun reads!

Thanks to the various content creators, actors, speedrunners, and streamers I've interviewed over the years for my various interview series, whose reflections have helped me rethink what the Gothic even is. Without your contributions, this book as it currently exists would not be possible:

- "[From Vintage to Retro: An FPS Q&A series](#)" (2021): This Q&A series centers on power and how it's arranged in FPS between the player and the game. In it, interview Twitch streamers and speedrunners, but also several game developers who play and create FPS games: [Jrmhd91](#), [Cynic the Original](#), [Alec and Stuff](#), [Frosty Xen](#), [Yellow Swerve](#), and [James Towne](#).
- "'[Mazes and Labyrinths' Q&A, Interview Compendium](#)" (2021): A series of Q&A interviews I give, interviewing speedrunners of the *Metroid* franchise: [CScottyW](#), [Behemoth87](#), [ShinyZeni](#).
- "[Hell-blazers: Speedrunning Doom Eternal](#)" (2020): I created this series when *Doom Eternal* was new. It interviews Twitch streamers and speedrunners about the game and why they play it: [DraQu](#), [Under the Mayo](#), [Byte Me](#), [The Spud Hunter](#), [King Dime](#), [Your Mate Devo](#), and [Frosty Xen](#).
- "[Giving My Two Cents: A Metal Compendium](#)" (2020): I love heavy metal, and have made a name for myself by commenting on videos by Metallica remixers on YouTube. Eventually I decided to interview these remixers in a *post hoc* Q&A series: [Creblestar](#), [Bryce Barilla](#), [State of Mercury](#), and of course, [Ahdy Khairat](#) (rock on, dude; your remixes absolutely rule).



Kailey (to the left) and Sam (to the right) on-set (courtesy of [Greg Massie](#))

- "[The 'Alien: Ore' Interview Project](#)" (2019): My first interview series, this project centers around the Spear sisters' *Alien* short film, "Alien: Ore." Originally I loved "Ore" so much I did [my own extensive analysis of it](#) ("Alien Ore: Explained (Spoilers)!" 2019). Kailey and Sam Spear enjoyed that so much [they agreed to be interviewed](#). It includes numerous interviews from the cast and crew, all of whom are total rockstars: [Mikela Jay](#), the star, and her co-stars [Tara Pratt](#), [Steven Stiller](#), [Ambrose Gardener](#); [Dallas Harvey](#) of Vancouver FX; and [Rose Hastreiter and Gerry Plant](#), the composers of Leonty Music Group.

Thanks to Boss Ross, Frank Frazetta, Zdzisław Beksinski, Stephen Gemmill, and Ridley Scott (and associate artists; e.g., Mobius, Giger and Cobb, etc) for having a profound and lasting influence on my artwork, imagination and life. Some of you haunted my childhood; others came later and blew my mind. But you're all rockstars.

Lastly, thank you to the many, many other artists hitherto unmentioned whose work is featured all throughout *Sex Positivity*. Some of you are recent discoveries, be they models from the present or masters from the past. However, I have followed and studied some of you for many years, and now feel very

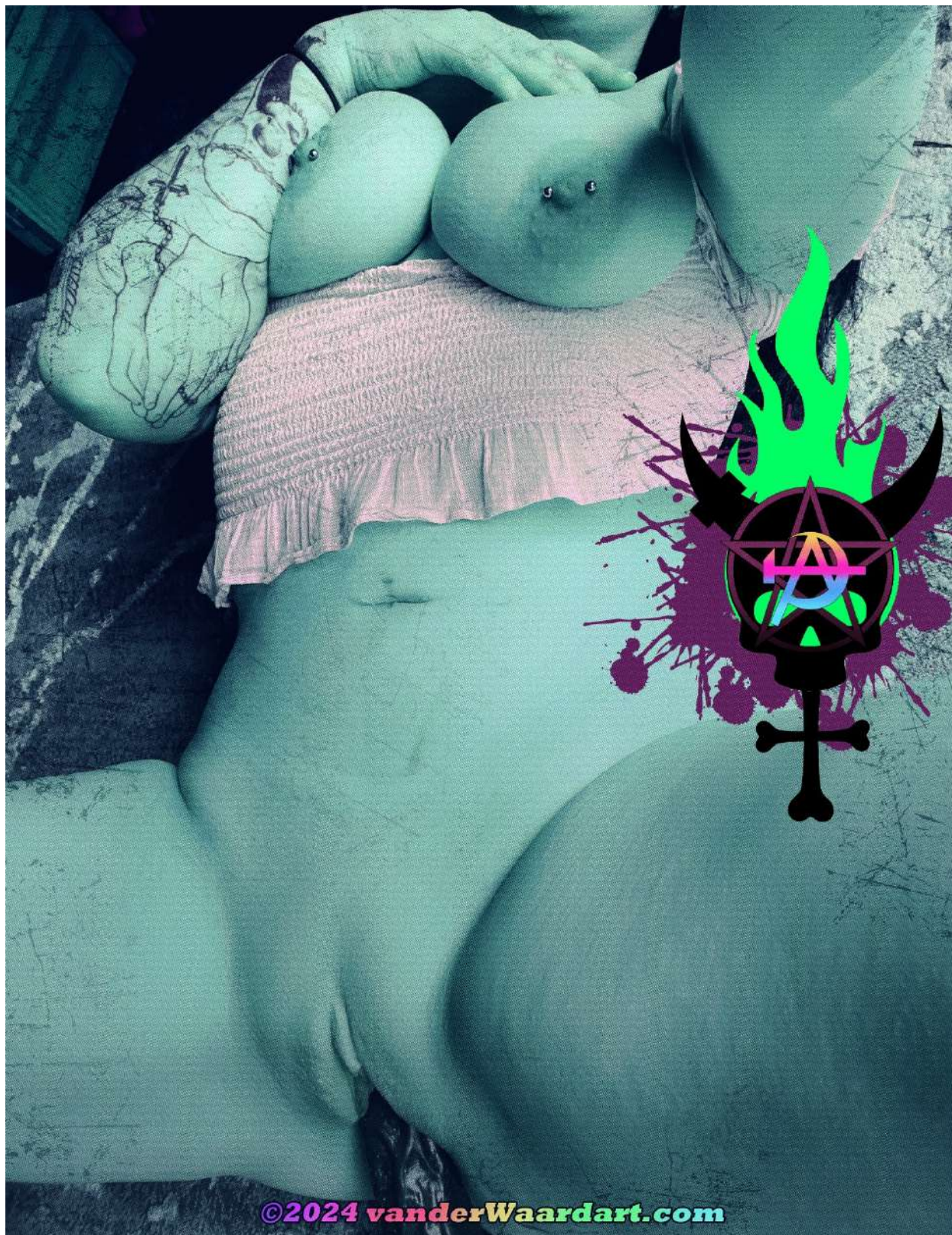
differently than I did once upon a time! For example, I can see the sexist, racist and otherwise xenophobic/fascist undertones in Frazetta. All the same, his canon is still worthy of dialectical-material study—to learn from the past and appreciate the sex-positive lessons in his work, however imperfect! May they shape the world into something better.

Thank you all very much for reading! Be brave and don't be afraid to learn! Nazi pigs and neoliberals, fuck off.

—Persephone van der Waard



(artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#))



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(model and artist: [Blxxd Bunny](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#))

About the Author

*I've walked a path of darkness
 Just to open up my mind
 I've learned of hidden secrets
 Scattered through the depths of time
 And at my father's side I witnessed
 Things I can't describe
 "They must be evil!"
 The people cried*

*So when the prince went missing
 And the mob was at our door
 The king would not see reason
 Only vengeance, only war
 My father's neck held in his grip
 Until he was no more
 But the prince was still alive*

*And I said
 May never a noble of your murderous line
 Survive to reach a greater age than thine*

*Because I'm the Alchemist creator of your fears
 I'm the Sorcerer, a curse throughout the years
 And I won't rest 'til no one's left
 The ending of your line
 Their lives are a prison of my design*

—Eric Bloom; "The Alchemist," on Blue Öyster Cult's *The Symbol Remains* (2020)



(model and photographer: [Persephone van der Waard](#) and Zeuhl)

Persephone van der Waard is the author of *Sex Positivity*—its art director, sole invigilator, and primary editor (the other co-writer/co-editor being [Bay Ryan](#)). She is a MtF trans woman, atheist/Satanist, poly/pan kinkster [with two partners](#). Including her multiple [playmates/friends and collaborators](#), Persephone and her thirteen muses work/play together on *Sex Positivity* and on her artwork at large as a sex-positive force. First and foremost, she is a sex work activist, fighting for sex worker liberation through iconoclastic/sex-positive artwork. To that, she is an anarcho-Communist writer, illustrator, BDSM educator, sex worker, genderqueer/environmental activist and Gothic ludologist—with her (independent) PhD having been written on Metroidvania combined with the above variables; i.e., to coin and articulate ludo-Gothic BDSM as a sex-positive poetic device. [She sometimes writes reviews, Gothic analyses, and interviews for fun on her old blog;](#) or [does continual independent research on Metroidvania and speedrunning](#) every now and again. If you're interested in her work or curious about illustrated or written commissions, [please refer to her commissions page for more information](#).

[Click here to see a condensed example of Persephone's wide portfolio.](#)