

(model and artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#))

Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
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# 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.

*For Harmony, whose love and affection helped make Volume Two (parts one and two) possible, including your willing to drop your panties and play so regularly.  
You're a wonderful muse!*



(artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#))

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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 half (with Volume Two cut into multiple parts), here is the fourth slice of the pie:

*Working on this project, thinking about capital and Communism as a matter of different warring gods, I think of older forms of storytelling whose older rhetoric devices bleed to written media and technology. It's all an act of trying to remember things that were lost coming back around; i.e., spectres of Marx that are gayer and campier than the man himself ever was. At this point in my work—a small raven tending her lighthouse—you're divided from me by vast gulfs of space; but you're always in my heart and on my mind. You give me hope, and your love of all things campy is like the devil—so sweet and good—calling Persephone home. How I long to be reunited with you, my space dog. Until then, you are my brightest star, lighting up the night sky with your sweet smile (and amazing squishiness). I kiss you!*



# 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 Fisher'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**

**over  
2600 illustrations  
& exhibits!**

**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

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(artist: [Persephone van der Waard](http://Persephone van der Waard))

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

**Volume Two (volume 3 of 4; from 0 to  
3): Monsters, part two: Gothic Poetics,  
Their History; Undead Module: 1st ed.  
(v1.0c<sup>1</sup>)**

**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 her 18+ website](#) for  
purposes of sex, gender and art education,  
transformation and critique.**

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<sup>1</sup> Updated "What I Will and Won't Exhibit." Added several paratextual sections: "The State: Its Key Tools; re: the Monopolies, Trifectas and Qualities of Capital" and "Abridged Manifesto Tree (of Oppositional Praxis)."



# Two Essential Halves: Dividing Volume Two in Two

*We speak of Time and Mind, which do not easily yield to categories. We separate past and future and find that Time is an amalgam of both. We separate good and evil and find that Mind is an amalgam of both. To understand, we must grasp the whole.*

—Isaac Asimov, foreword to *Light Years* (1988)

The size of Volume Two has required that I divide it in two, if only because doing so has made it easier to work with and transport. It's still very much a single volume, but one composed of two essential halves: the usage and history of Gothic poetics. Part one provides the Volume Introduction and Poetry Module, the latter of which discusses the poetic usage of monsters versus their historical evolution; and part two supplies the Volume Conclusion preceded by twin monster modules, the Undead and Demon Modules, which invert the focus from poetry to history—i.e., focusing on the historical usage of undead, demonic and animalistic monsters. Each half will contain the usual paratextual documents (with images swapped out for each), but their unique content works in harmony and must be combined to grasp the whole of oppositional praxis, *mid-poiesis*. *Technically* this is a six-book series, but I still prefer to consider it four volumes where two of those volumes have been divided in two. But, just as the Gothic concerns manmade (Cartesian) divisions that alienate us from nature and ourselves—i.e., as black-and-white beings to battle against one another in service of elite aims; e.g., Ripley the centrist warrior-maiden defending her virtue from the Communist, intersex Medusa—we must consider how liberation occurs by subverting these dichotomies to upend worker abuse within



state territories being reclaimed by us. Doubled during oppositional praxis, Ripley and the alien become things to canonize *or* camp. To camp canon, you will need both volume halves: the medieval (Gothic) poetry of monsters and the revived (Neo-Gothic) history of its use. Just as Ripley and the alien aren't separate from each other, but form two essential halves torn asunder and going to combat with multiple versions of themselves, the spectres of Marx and capital haunt the same cathedral and its inhabitants across space and time; they *cannot* exist without each other in some shape or form. As *Galatea*, we can free them from Pygmalion's mind, making each our own.

(artist: [BTG Art](#))

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*Note, 8/6/2024: Due to length issues, I've decided to divide Volume Two, part two in two, effectively treating each module—the Poetry Module (from part one), and the Undead and Demon Modules—as its own sub-volume with its own release, but also its own online promo series (where you can download the exhibit images at full resolution): "[Brace for Impact](#)," "[Searching for Secrets](#)," and "[Deal with the Devil](#)." For organizational purposes, all sub-volumes are considered part of the same volume; each module will actually have a longer page length than Volumes One and Zero, and each will feature a unique front and back cover with Harmony on it:*



(artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#))

# 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 my thesis volume, manifesto volume, Poetry Module and Undead Module are all live; the remaining volumes/modules are planned to release over the remainder of 2024, and 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.

approximate<sup>2</sup> length: ~57,000-62,500 words/~204-220 pages<sup>3</sup> and ~17 unique images (including the front and rear covers)/~95-104 total images

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

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

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## Volume Zero<sup>4</sup>: 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 argument<sup>5</sup> 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

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<sup>4</sup> When writing the thesis volume, I just called it "the thesis volume"; I also wrote it after initially writing Volumes One, Two and Three (out of order, and revisiting each in turn after my thesis was completed and put online, followed by Volumes One; Two, part one; and Two, part two's sub-volumes, etc). 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.

<sup>5</sup> (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."

## 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 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, whose three modules—the Poetry, Undead and Demon Modules—explore the complex usage and 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

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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 demonstrate how to think like a Gothic poet/Renaissance person (through monstrous poetics), then examine two basic monster classes—the *undead* and *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 Fisher'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 dehumanized monstrous-feminine workers of decreasing privilege/socio-material advantage. In turn we can portray the Medusa (nature-as-alien) as something to hug, fuck and love, not rape, kill or otherwise harm for profit *vis-à-vis* Cartesian thought.

Due to Volume Two's overall length, each module has actually been released as its own sub-volume; each has its own promo series, where you can read a given module, piece-by-piece, as individual blogposts; re: "[Brace for Impact](#)" (the Poetry Module), "[Searching for Secrets](#)" (the Undead Module), and "[Deal with the Devil](#)" (the Demon Module).

## Volume Two, part one: the Poetry Module



Whereas the Monster Modules focus on the *history* of Gothic poetics—i.e., as something to learn *from* when poetically articulating our *own* pedagogy of the oppressed—the Poetry Module focuses on Gothic *poetics* as a historical-material process whose history we contribute *towards*. Its emphasis lies in teaching with Gothic poetic devices by applying them, the module explaining said devices while going over them, one-by-one; i.e., in a series of poetry-themed sections: "Time," "Teaching," "Medicine," and "the Medieval." Last but not least, the module includes a sizeable extension that goes over different ways to play with the imaginary past; i.e., per ludo-Gothic BDSM and rape play.

approximate length ("): ~300,000 words/~795 pages, ~625 unique images

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## Volume Two, part two: Undead Module



This module explores the poetic history of the undead; i.e., as creatures driven less by active intelligence and more by a desire to freeze and feed in the buried presence of trauma and harmful conditions. It explores how the state's monopolies lead to a state of exception within its sites of settler-colonial violence, which in turn create a violent upheaval/silent

scream among the oppressed and oppressors alike; i.e., the voice of colonial trauma and the vengeful, desperate feeding on the living by the undead as the genocided dead, having come home to roost—zombies. However, the alienation and feeding also affect the ruler class, leading to vampirism as a canonical effect that must be personified in healthier forms of medieval nostalgia that, for their using logical motions, become ghost-like, copied and imperfect. Reclaiming these modules requires embodying and subverting the very traumas the state relies on to control us by keeping us hungry and braindead (a process I call "lobotomization")—to, as the undead generally do, paralyze *our* prey and feed on *their* frozen bodies, albeit in ways that pointedly develop Gothic Communism.

approximate length (""): ~430,580 words/~1,055 pages and ~832 unique images

## Volume Two, part two: Demon Module (WIP)



This module explores the poetic history of demons; i.e., as actively cunning-yet-alien shapeshifters, presented canonically as treacherous within forbidden knowledge and power exchange: as untrustworthy beings made deceitful and torturous through the ghost of the counterfeit's process of abjection. As such, they are manmade, presented as occult

beings that are summoned, composite bodies that are built (cyborgs, golems and robots), or overtly natural totems that are hunted down within nature-as-alien in either case: something to present as demonic, then isolate, dehumanize and invade

under Cartesian duress. Reclaiming them requires embodying and subversively humanizing the Satanic transformative power they provide, generally in defense of nature as made alien by state forces (the trifactas, monopolies and their proponents)—to imbue with transformative fatal power that, in some shape or form, targets us for state abuse, which we subvert mid-exchange away from Capitalism's usual tortures and towards Gothic Communism's unknown pleasures.

approximate length ("): ~117,000 words/~348 pages and ~191 unique images (under construction)

## Volume Three: Praxis (WIP)



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.



The praxis volume divides in two halves:

### **Volume Three, part one**



Lays out sex positivity *and* sex coercion—but also the liminal areas between them—in a two-part introduction, followed by three chapters.

### **Volume Three, part two**



Concerns sex positivity *versus* sex coercion. It contains Chapters Four and Five plus the Conclusion, which concerns the creative successes of proletarian praxis versus state praxis. Time to fight!

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

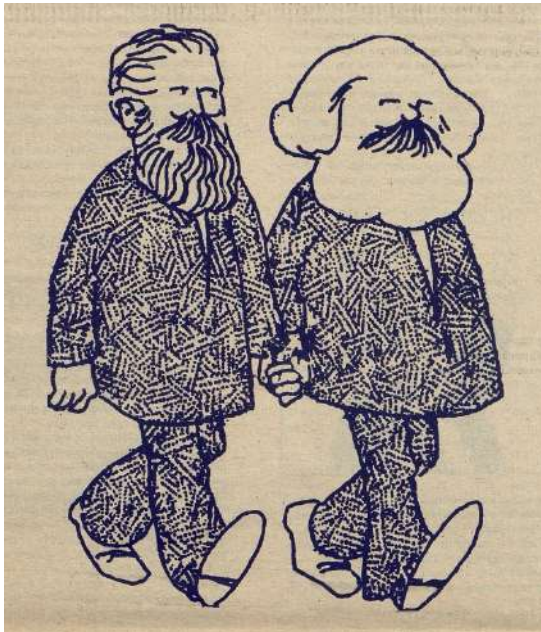
approximate total book length: ~1,531,000 words/4,313 pages and ~2,667 unique images

# 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 sense<sup>6</sup>; 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 bourgeoisie<sup>7</sup>), 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

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<sup>6</sup> 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).

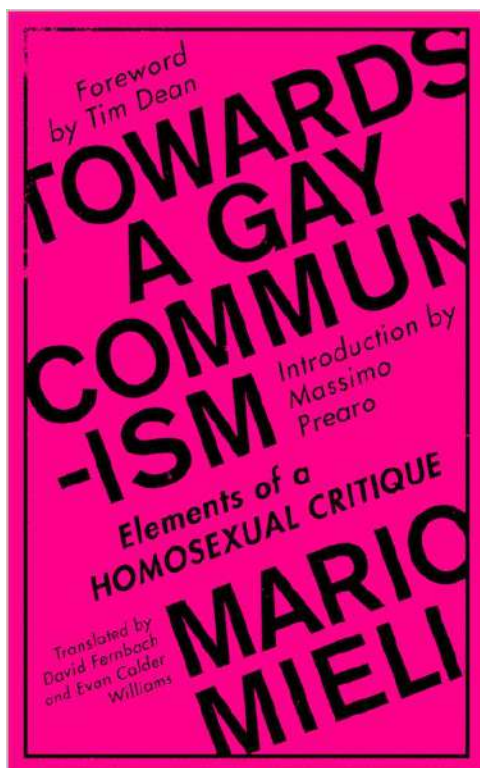
Wolf raises concerns about American slavery and anti-Irish racism, to which Marx and Engels fought for the oppressed; what injustices they saw and had the language for, they fought for the side of workers on *social issues*:

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.

<sup>7</sup> 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 women<sup>8</sup>, first and foremost, while not having the most comprehensive understanding of trans people<sup>9</sup>. 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

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<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> "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!

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

# 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: Eldritch Babe 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: Eldritch Babe)



# 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 table of contents for the Undead Module doesn't appear until page 118, preceded by the heads-up on page 103. 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](#)
- [The State: Its Key Tools; re: the Monopolies, Trifectas and Qualities of Capital](#)
- [Abridged Manifesto Tree \(of Oppositional Praxis\)](#)
- [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](#)
- [Into the Void: Losing the Training Wheels](#)
- [Concerning Monsters](#)
- [We Are Legion: So Many Monsters, So Little Time](#)

[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 monster volume is the third of four volumes for *Sex Positivity* and contains ~1,400 unique images (subject to change); all four volumes, when they release, will contain over 2,000 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**<sup>10</sup>, **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

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<sup>10</sup> In this disclaimer and the entire thesis volume, I have **emboldened** 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.

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).

### 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.

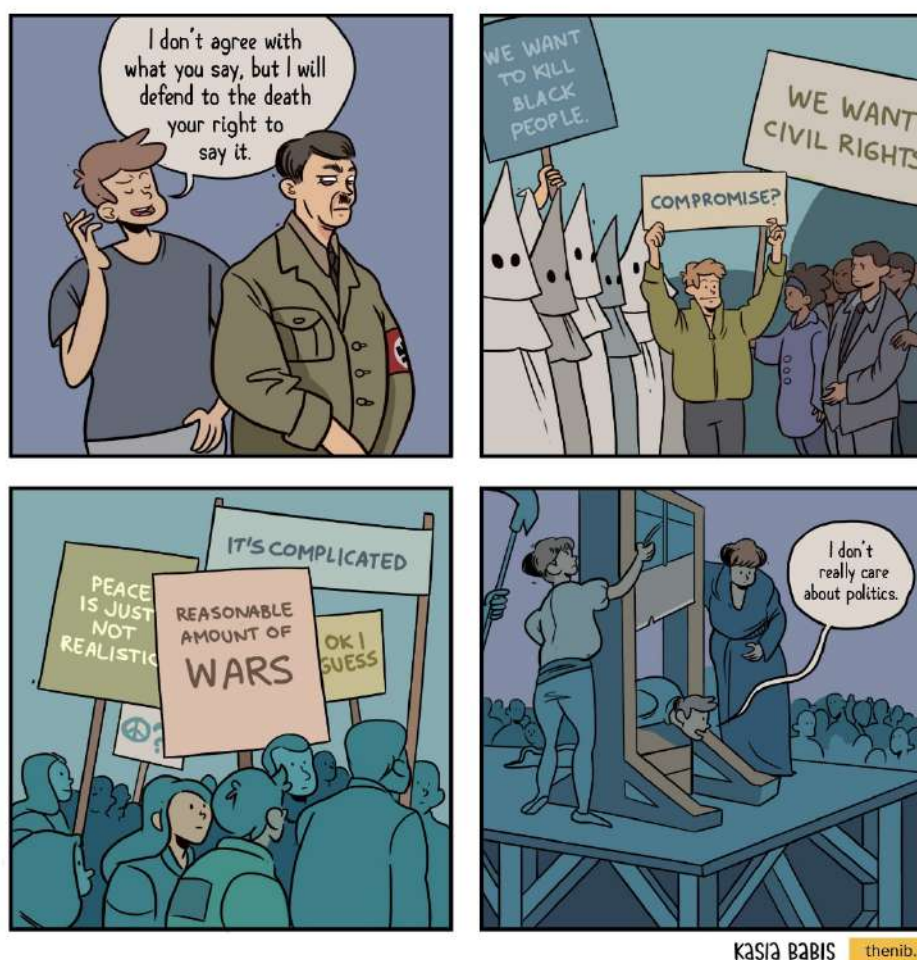
*Small idiosyncrasy in terms of my writing: When using "sex positivity" or "sex coercion" (nouns) as adjectives, they will be hyphenated; e.g., "The sex-positive fog crept in on little sex-coercive feet." This is completely arbitrary but my aim is to be consistent. —Perse*

## 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-positive<sup>11</sup>; it's just "not my bag." I'd like to quickly explain why.

<sup>11</sup> Consider the postcolonial critique of colonized peoples' being openly raped onscreen during Jennifer Kent's hard-boiled historical drama, *The Nightingale* (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

Everyone has limits when it comes to kink, BDSM and the Gothic<sup>12</sup>. 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 oppressed<sup>13</sup> (this book features a small number images to critique

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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.

<sup>12</sup> 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."

<sup>13</sup> 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.

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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 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."

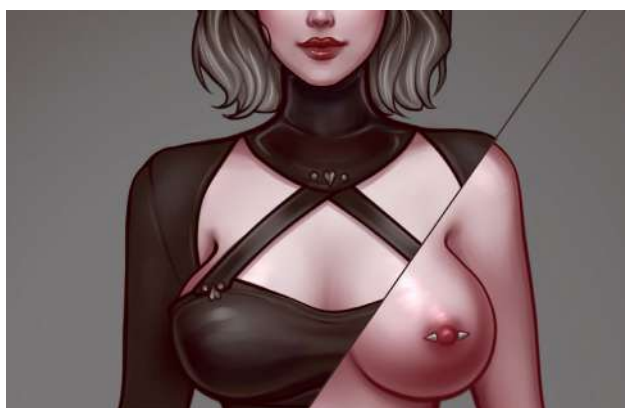




For example, porn under Capitalism becomes synonymized with gore and other taboo displays as looked at a particular way—*clandestinely* or otherwise in trashy, "forbidden" stories that communicate through vibes, raw pastiche, recycled conventions, and aesthetics first and foremost. Parody is common, 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 aesthetics<sup>14</sup> 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"<sup>15</sup> approach to "dead body positivity"—i.e., of the Tim-Burton *Corpse Bride* (2006) sort (to be frank, I prefer

<sup>14</sup> 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](#))

<sup>15</sup> 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-choking<sup>16</sup> 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*<sup>17</sup> 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

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<sup>16</sup> *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](#)!*

<sup>17</sup> 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

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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](#)<sup>18</sup> [the same "tortured saint" effect happened to Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio [being tortured on the set of \*The Abyss\*](#)<sup>19</sup>, 1989; but also

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

<sup>19</sup> 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](#)<sup>20</sup>, 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](#))

<sup>20</sup> 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.

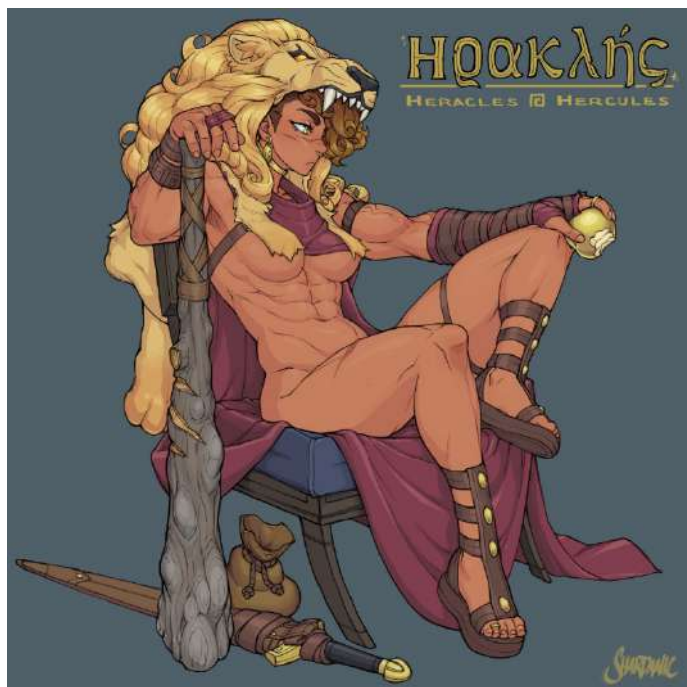


(artist: [Alexey Lastochkin](#))

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:

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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).



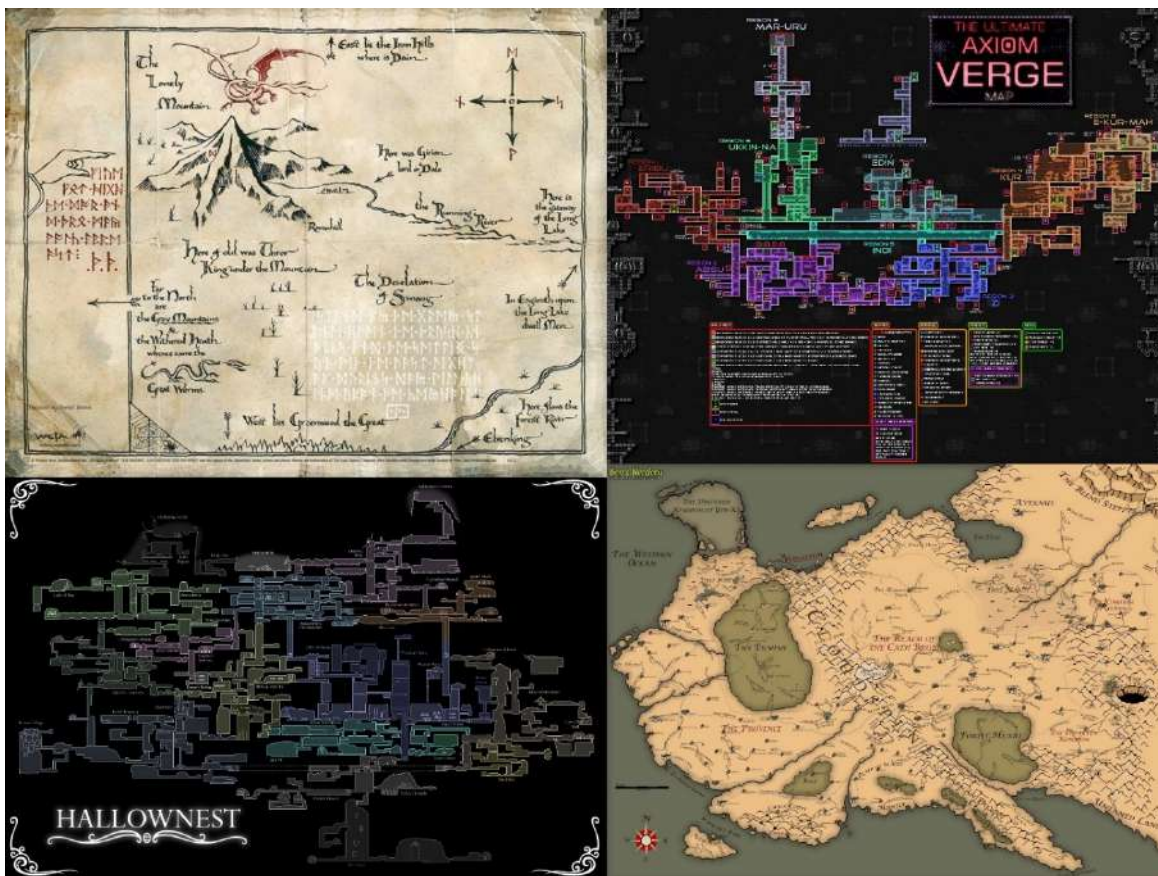
(artist: [Shardanic](#))

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*, 2015  
—source: [magicofgames](#)
- bottom-left: Team Cherry's map of Hallownest, from *Hollow Knight* 2017  
—source: [tuppkam1](#)
- 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*<sup>21</sup> 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

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<sup>21</sup> 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. Then 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



(artists: Lydia and [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:

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

- **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](#)<sup>22</sup>). The idea in doing so is to understand, mid-enjoyment and

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<sup>22</sup> 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 itself<sup>23</sup>; 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 life<sup>24</sup>—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**"<sup>25</sup>."

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<sup>23</sup> (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).

<sup>24</sup> (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](#)).

<sup>25</sup> (from the glossary, abridged): 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 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—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 1765<sup>26</sup> *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*

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<sup>26</sup> 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).

forms the basis for understanding the concept of counterfeit as a result of the abjection process.

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 Fisher'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 Fisher 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 Fisher'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 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](#))

# The State: Its Key Tools; re: the Monopolies, Trifectas and Qualities of Capital



(artist: Angel Witch)

In service to the profit motive, the state requires the ability to defend itself through absolute means; i.e., us-versus-them dogma, cops-and-victims propaganda (re: copaganda), and terrorist/counterterrorist arrangements of privilege, authority and status/class flowing power towards the state. This basically happens by antagonizing nature as monstrous-feminine and putting it to work as cheaply as possible; i.e., to move money through nature, thus reify and maintain capital until the end of time. But the state accomplishes the movement known as "capital" using three basic things: the state *trifectas*, *monopolies* and *qualities of capital*.

These ideas first introduce in Volumes Zero and One, but are so ubiquitous that I feel you should have access to their basic definitions regardless of which book volume you're reading. I'll list, then define them:

- the *monopolies*: of violence, terror and morphological expression.
- the *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.
- the *qualities of capital*: heteronormative, Cartesian, and setter-colonial (refer to the glossary definitions for these terms)

If, at any point, I say "the monopolies, trifectas [and/or] qualities of capital" moving forwards, these are what I'm referring to; i.e., the control of worker bodies and the violence, terror and morphological poetics orbiting them.

Defining them, let's start with the monopolies:

- of *violence*; re: Weber's maxim, "a state holds a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence within its territory, meaning that violence perpetrated by other actors is illegitimate" ([source](#)).
- of *terror*; re: Asprey's paradox, 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" ([source](#)). Even so, the state will try to monopolize it. Anyone who uses violence against them is a "terrorist" and anyone who uses violence in service to state aims is either a "counterterrorist" or at least not a terrorist.
- of *morphological expression*; re: of my arguments regarding the state control of Gothic dialogs during the other two monopolies, animalizing workers in harmful predator/prey relationships (from Volume One):

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 cryptonomy 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; i.e., through] morphological<sup>27</sup> 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

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<sup>27</sup> 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.



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 [...]

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. [...] 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) [[source](#)].

Second, the trifectas (also from Volume One):

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."

[...]

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 [[ibid.](#)].

Again, all of these come into play during capital; i.e., as the state alienates, sexualizes and gentrifies/decays everything in service to profit, doing so through us-versus-them police violence, terror and morphological expression legitimized by state forces in state territories against state enemies/targets (anything the state needs them to be).

# Abridged Manifesto Tree (of Oppositional Praxis)

*Despite their poetic nature, performance and play are an absolutely potent means of expressing thus negotiating power through the Gothic mode (its castles, monsters and rape scenarios); a polity of proletarian poets can negotiate future interrogations of unequal power within the Gothic imagination as connected to our material conditions: one shapes and maintains the other and vice versa.*

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

Proletarian praxis revolves around camping canon, which goes something like this (abridged, from Volume Zero'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*

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notion of "parallel societies": "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.]

There is also **the basics of oppositional synthesis** from our synthesis symposium in Volume One: girl talk (anger/gossip), monsters, camp. Refer to said symposium if needed; and "On Twin Trees" from Volume Zero, which talks about the manifesto tree more at length.

In a nutshell, Gothic Communism is "camping and recultivating the twin trees of Capitalism—the Base and Superstructure—during oppositional praxis, including its synthesis and catharsis [regarding the confrontation of generational trauma]" ([source](#): Volume One). These are ideas that will appear more in Volume Three, aka the Praxis Volume; but it doesn't hurt to have an in-text copy within Volume Two's modules!

## 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 Vaporwave 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 letter<sup>28</sup> 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

<sup>28</sup> [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 society<sup>29</sup>."

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

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<sup>29</sup> From Edward Said's "Jane Austen and Empire"; [Culture and Imperialism](#) (1993).

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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](https://www.vanderwaardart.com))

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 *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](https://www.vanderwaardart.com))



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 state<sup>30</sup> 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 monster<sup>31</sup>; i.e., mad with grief over the death of his father until

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<sup>30</sup> (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).

<sup>31</sup> "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-hero<sup>32</sup> 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*).

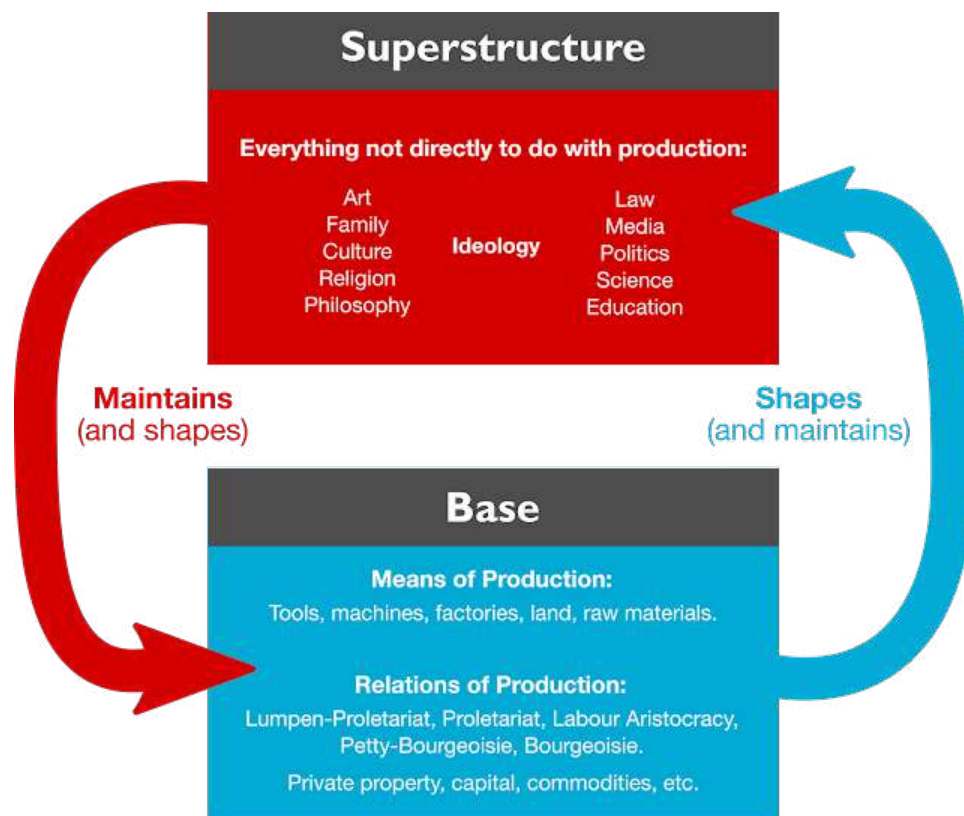
The keywords in this list, then, are skeleton keywords; i.e., utterly essential to following my arguments on Gothic-Communism, except I won't have time during the thesis volume to unpack them to the degree that I do the Gothic material (which is hard enough to unpack on its own); in other words, the 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.

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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).

<sup>32</sup> "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")      **Phall-O-Meter®**      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**<sup>33</sup>: 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.

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<sup>33</sup> 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 parody<sup>34</sup> and gender trouble during subversive exercises).



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

<sup>34</sup> 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 \(settler-\)colonial<sup>35</sup> 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

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<sup>35</sup> 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 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 (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 Fisher'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

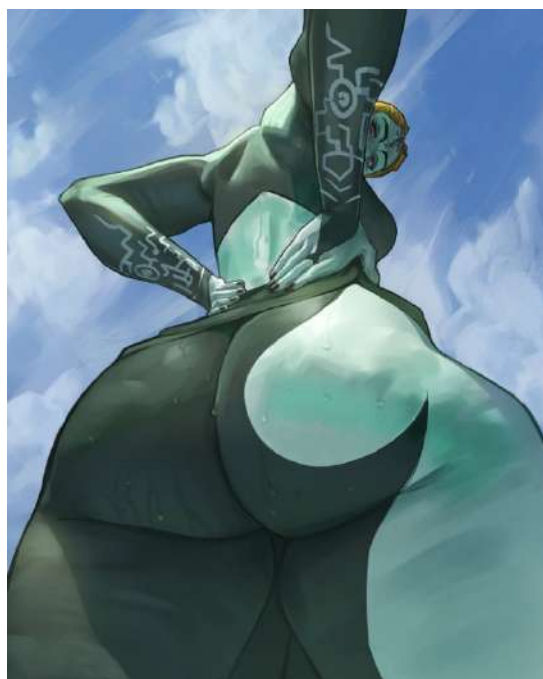


(artist: [In Case](#))

# 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 ([source](#)).

—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 haunting 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](#))

# Into the Void: Losing the Training Wheels

"The future, once so clear to me, had now become like a dark highway at night. We were in uncharted territory now, making up history as we went along."

—Sarah Connor, *T2: Judgement Day* (1991)



As we described in the conclusion to Volume Zero ("A Gay New World"), the book so far has been a series of "booster rockets"—slowly igniting their fuel to propel you into the increasingly unknown Elsewhere of a homeland-turned-foreign:

Beyond the thesis argument and its symposium, *Sex Positivity* takes its time—gradually launching into its complex (ergodic) arguments through concentric, staged roadmaps. Imagine a rocket launch into space: This requires multiple stages and "boosters," meaning there's always time to abort the launch if things get hairy ([source](#)).

Except now the rockets have launched and we're hurling into deep space!

To that, I now want to take the training wheels off (for me as well as you) and explore the remaining volumes minus a tether while in free fall; i.e., not covering all my bases by including total theory (simple or complex) and instead

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

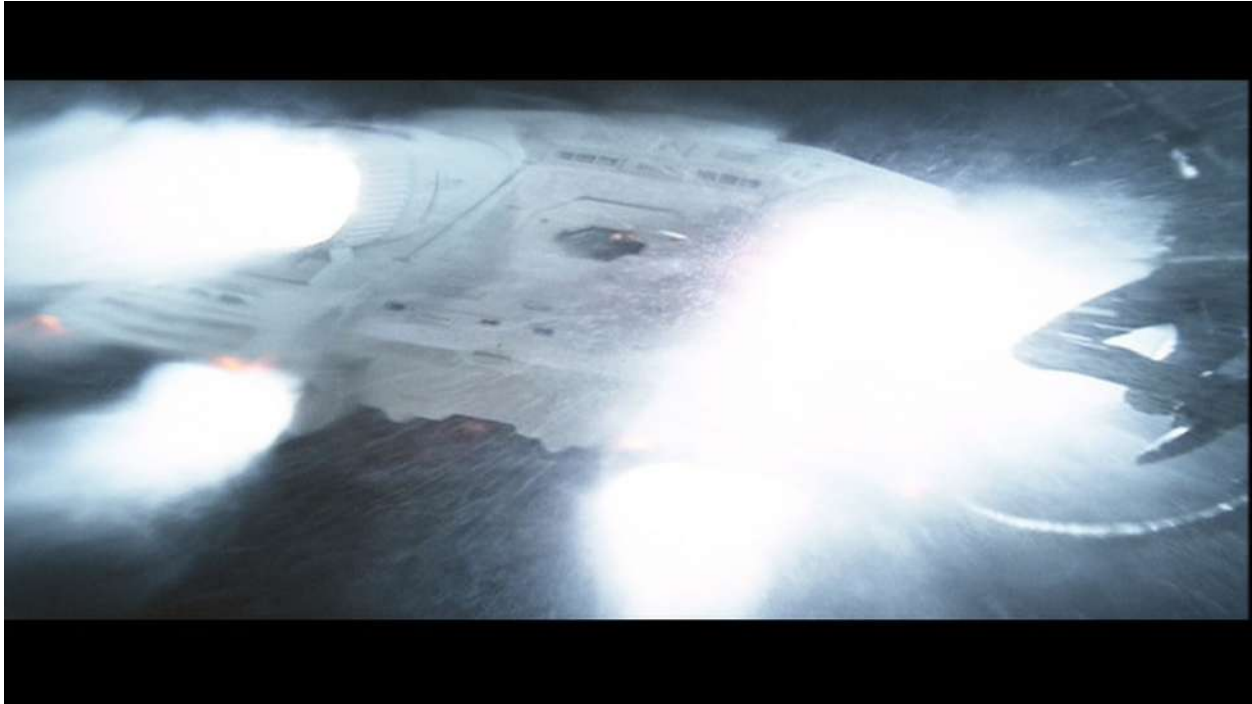
looking at examples of Gothic poetics (old or current) with a checklist to keep in mind. Otherwise, if I try to include all theory each and every time, the volumes will start to feel the same, which I don't want; but also, I want *you* to grow accustomed to being modular within a holistic approach that allows for intersectional solidarity while still being focused, practical and efficient, but also honest and reflective on our praxial realities.

Volume Two will examine monsters in a historical sense, and Volume Three will consider praxis in a current framework that accounts for dialectical-material struggles and scrutiny during oppositional praxis. As we move through both, I'll be covering the modules of monster classes and subclasses, and the creative successes of proletarian praxis vs state praxis. I will mention theory conversationally but also in pieces and modules that draw upon select terms. I will try to stress the ones that feel most relevant, and include additional footnotes and citations whose ideas you can trace back to my older theory-heavy volumes if you wish. But provided you have a good grasp of theory already, that shouldn't be necessary.

Instead, I want you to use Volumes Two and Three to try and focus on cultivating emotional/Gothic intelligence and class/cultural awareness during the struggle to liberate workers under Capitalism through iconoclastic art; i.e., by focusing on confronting and interrogating state/Cartesian trauma with Gothic poetics to end Capitalist Realism with. Capitalism alienates and sexualizes everything to serve the profit motive; we must reclaim these devices through the Six Rs, thus reclaim and recultivate our socio-material conditions (camping the twin trees of Capitalism) to reunite with nature and our own alienated, fetishized bodies, labor and power as things to play and perform with. But you must go where power is, thus paradox: through chaos, darkness visible, Satanic rebellion, Athena's Aegis, etc, as a ludo-Gothic, BDSM means of reversing the historical-material process of abjection (and unironic variants of the Shadow of Pygmalion, Cycle of Kings, infernal concentric pattern, narrative of the crypt, hyperreality and astronoetics, etc) through parallel societies (chronotopes), emancipatory hauntologies and revolutionary cryptonymies.

Of course, these occupy the same shadow zone as unironic forms, so being conscious and aware is vital to dodging and upending those who would harm you and enslave the future; i.e. with an imaginary past whose Wisdom of the Ancients serves the same-old settler-colonial system of medieval abuse—its cycles of crisis and decay amounting to endless blood sacrifices that move money through nature, workers, sex and monsters, etc, as cheap, disposable; i.e., a heteronormative commodifying of worker struggles that we must change inside of itself. To liberate ourselves, we must take said struggle—and its violent, terrifyingly hellish language—back from state monopolies/trifectas, making our own pedagogy of the oppressed.

Provided you have a roadmap and some sense of competency and direction when synthesizing praxis to achieve systemic catharsis, the darkness isn't something to fear inside liminal space and its limitless ergodic motion. Instead, the change of rebellion happens through conflicting thresholds and on the surface of shared images; it becomes, like the stars, something to shoot for while rescuing Hell and its performative darkness from bourgeois forces. This must become second-nature and intuitive, hence without a harness (and rigid gameplan) anchoring you down.



To that, the boosters so far have not only given you the energy needed to rush into the raw chaos of unknown spheres; they've supplied you with the know-how to both survive and foster sex positivity in dangerous places, making them habitable/pleasurable in ways yet unimagined while striving for transparency in the face of tremendous opposition. The vast, yawning abyss needn't be terrifying if you know more or less how to proceed: without set shape but instead, like a constellation, connecting the dot-like stars, lighting up the sky.

# 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' rough drafts). 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 and poetically engaging; i.e., they literally apply my PhD's theories to Gothic poetics' application and history of application unto ludo-Gothic BDSM and different topical areas of research; e.g., Amazons, Metroidvania, zombie apocalypses, etc, but also the tokenization of those things (especially in Volume Two, part two, and Volume Three).

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 old blog since mid-2023](#); 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 (during oppositional synthesis) 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 is currently being released in pieces (sub-volumes, per module, and in on-site, per-post promo series; re: "[Brace for Impact](#)," "[Searching for Secrets](#)," and "[Deal with the Devil](#)"). Considering how the application and history of Gothic poetics is nigh-endless, I've spent a lot of time expanding on Volume Two, dividing it into three modules with separate releases,

each containing a plethora of close-reads, symposiums and mini-thesis arguments; e.g., [expanding extensively on my Metroidvania research](#)<sup>36</sup>.

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). Until I started expanding Volume Two, Volume Three was the book's longest volume, and is still intended to be the most conversational and applicable in our day-to-day lives.

Newer volumes cite older volumes; e.g., Volumes One, Two and Three all borrow quotations from the thesis volume, and Volume Two, part one will cite Volumes One and Zero, and Volume Two, part two will cite part one, as well as Volumes One and Zero, etc. They also introduce new material *in relation* to the cited works, but generally will not introduce new foundational ideas that were not previously introduced in the thesis volume; they merely unpack said ideas and explore them further (especially during close-reads, in Volume Two, part two).



(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.

<sup>36</sup> Persephone van der Waard's "'She Fucks Back'; or, Revisiting *The Modern Prometheus* through Astronoetics: the Man of Reason and Cartesian Hubris versus the Womb of Nature in Metroidvania" (2024).



Nor was it **echopraxis** ("the involuntary mirroring of an observed action") according to the kind of "blind" pastiche<sup>37</sup> 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 alluded 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

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<sup>37</sup> 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.



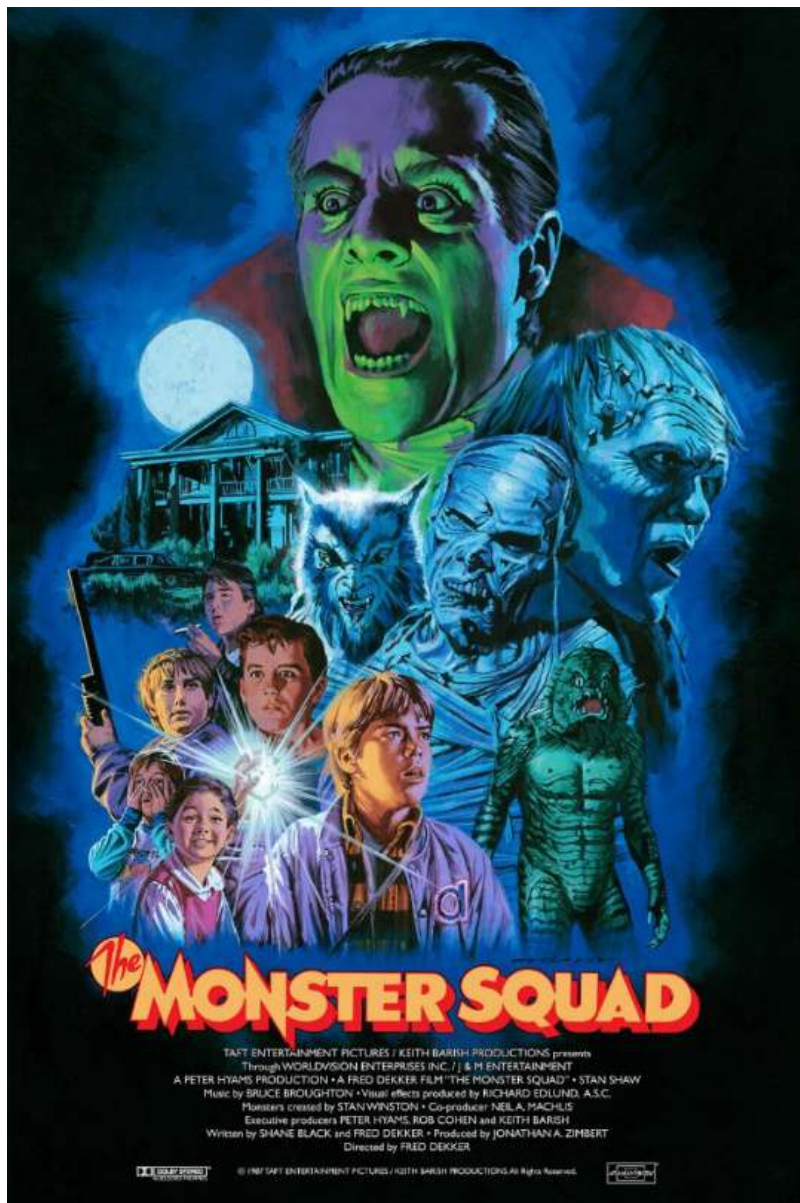
(artist: [Karl Kopinski](#))

# Concerning Monsters

"Science is real! Monsters are not!"

—the Principal, *The Monster Squad* (1987)

(artist: [Paul Mann](#))



As the title might suggest, Volume Two is entirely about monsters. Specifically it concerns the modularity of monsters during oppositional praxis as a historical-material concern that evolved into present-day forms under Capitalist Realism: the state vs workers by monopolizing monsters to exploit workers with (and, per my thesis statement, sexualizing everything to serve the profit motive behind state myopias). This historical-material arrangement is profoundly ubiquitous, requiring workers to reclaim monsters (undead, demons and totems) away from the usual state monopolies of violence, terror and hellish morphological expression; i.e., during our own pedagogy of the oppressed—our anger and

gossip, monsters and camp—having evolved into itself: a dialectical-material process whose oscillating interrogations (and myriad interpretations) of trauma took centuries while monsters were already evolving into state implements and canonical, singular interpretations thereof. Iconoclastic monsters, then, become

flexible and productive critical lenses that raise emotional/Gothic intelligence and class/cultural awareness as something to "turn into"; or, as Volume One argues:

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 ([source](#)).

Monsters are often seen as "not real" or "impossible," relegated to the lands of make-believe and pure fantasy. Except this isn't true. In Gothic Communism, they constitute a powerful, diverse, and modular means of interrogating the world around us as full of dangerous Cartesian illusions meant to control workers by locking Capitalism (and its genocidal ordering of nature and human language) firmly in place. Good monsters become impossible, as do the possible futures they arguably represent.

Instead of saying "in a perfect world," then, we should say "a possible world"; i.e., in a better possible world, nudity (and other modes of GNC sexual and gender expression) can be exposed and enjoyed post-scarcity and not be seen and treated as inhumanely monstrous (a threat; e.g., bare bodies being a threat to the pimp's profit margins). Rather, the monstrous language remains as a voice for the oppressed to flourish with; i.e., a *de facto* (extracurricular) means of good education, deliberately raising awareness and intelligence among intersectional, solidarized workers in the face of state tyranny. As I write in "Bushnell's Requiem: An Ode to a Martyr" (2024):

terror is a weapon. So is counterterror. The elite mandate and control these voices through violence, which they will use to silence those who speak out; i.e., with the thunder and prolificity of arms. Except you can't kill monsters, merely adopt them to causes that suit your aims. Like Medusa and her immortal, severed head, Bushnell's doom isn't something the elite can ever hope to control because it reverses the [anisotropic] *function* of terror and counterterror normally envisioned and entertained by Western dogma; i.e., *vis-à-vis* Weber's monopoly of violence and Joseph Crawford's [invention of terrorism](#), but also Asprey's paradox of terror as a proletarian weapon in a postcolonial age informed by past struggles surviving under modern empires ([source](#)).

Monsters cannot be destroyed, then, only repurposed towards different anisotropic<sup>38</sup> aims that guide the flow of power in a given direction, mid-polarity. For the state, a particular arrangement will always come back, and proletarian forms—the spectres of Marx—are equally die-hard. We must replace the former with the latter, camping canon through monsters that channel the status quo as a flow of information, materials, power and education, etc.

Open monstrous sexuality, then, isn't the end of the world as Capitalist Realism would treat it as (a world where such things are impossible save as shackled commodities that uphold the status quo), but the start to what the elite want us to think is "perfect," thus "impossible": humanizing the harvest of fruit-like bodies laid low by Capitalism's habitual reaping.



(artist: [EXGA](#))

Another point I wish to make before we jump into the primer is the value of monsters, of Gothic poetics during oppositional praxis/synthesis. When limited to singular, essential interpretations, we become inflexible and rigid, but also alienated

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<sup>38</sup> From Volume One:

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 ([source](#)).

Humanizing monsters challenges the flow of power in service of workers, not the state.

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from what else exists that we could become. Instead of one essential option that never changes, then, we open ourselves up to the realm of infinite possibility with endless potential and options to choose from, insofar as humanizing ourselves through Gothic poetics is concerned (this is my longest volume for a reason; the modules are easy enough to organize, but the number of monsters, like the human imagination, is without limit). It should be enjoyed and appreciated as such, not shunned and punished. Indeed, it is our greatest strength<sup>39</sup>—to transform and resist canonical subjugation by liberating ourselves (and our judgement as trustworthy) with iconoclastic art; i.e., by subverting the means of domination through our own prolific, variable confrontations with and interrogations of psychosexual trauma, a pedagogy of the oppressed: to teach the world to be better



by disobeying state mandates, taking control of our own bodies and their potent ability to express our concerns to the world while developing Gothic Communism. Rape is everywhere; so are the monsters we need to free ourselves with—from constraints, from shame, from oppression.

(artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#))

<sup>39</sup> From my thesis volume:

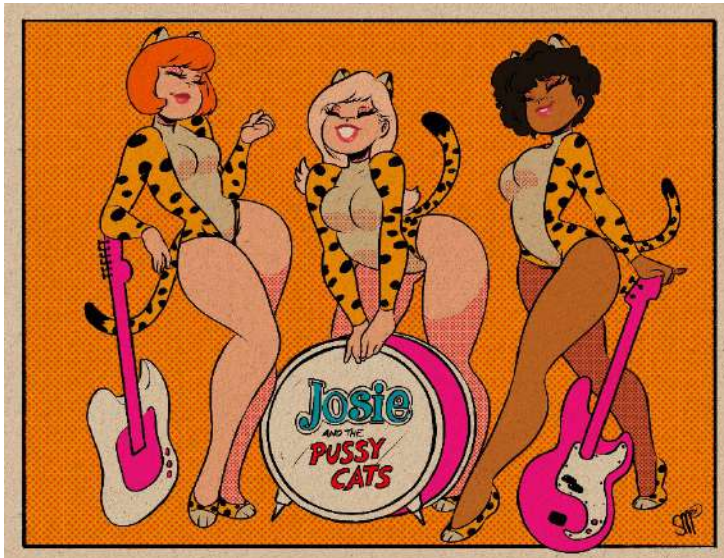
State proponents are straw dogs (throwaway effigies)/sacrificial roosters, believing themselves immune to the elite's gain while the owner slits the faithful worker's throat sooner or later. Their "greatest strength" is actually what dooms them to an ignominious death: complete alienation driven by a dimorphic connecting of everything to biological sex, skin color and their canonical-monstrous connotations in service of the profit motive but refusing to scrutinize things at a dialectical-material level (willful ignorance/"rose-tinted glasses"). Conversely *our* greatest strength as class-/culture-conscious **class warriors** is our "darkness visible" doubling theirs through the Wisdom of the Ancients as something to cultivate relative to the modern world; i.e., *our* deliberate, cultivated ability to critique capital and its agents/trifectas through dialectical-material scrutiny and iconoclastic, campy behaviors that synthesize the Superstructure to *our* purposes (rehumanizing ourselves by separating from the colonial binary in monomorphic fashion) all while suffering the fools of canonical tragedy and farce within canonical historical materialism. Our aim is to "make it gay" by reclaiming the Base through our **Four Gs: abjection, hauntology, chronotopes and cryptonymy**—but also our **Six Rs**, or **Gothic-Marxist tenets of Gothic Communism** during oppositional praxis as something to synthesize.

# We Are Legion: So Many Monsters, So Little Time

*I'll wipe away all trivial, fond records,  
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,  
That youth and observation copied there,  
And thy commandment all alone shall live  
Within the book and volume of my brain*

—Hamlet, *Hamlet* (c. 1599)

I love monsters and sex (who doesn't?). I also think they're the ticket to solving the thing that ails us (Capitalism). Except, while time is of the essence and I want to list all the monsters that I can, we simply won't be able cover them all. There's just too many to even remotely consider that. However, I will try to cover as many as possible in liberation of sex workers. In fact, I was trying to, and wanted to limit it to modules, but through my typical backward and holistic approach eventually thought of different ways that monsters can be applied. So already large, the volume ballooned; I wanted to quickly put that into perspective.



(artist: [SGT Madness](#))

I've spent my life consuming monsters and later studying them ("benefits of a classical education"), so we'll definitely cover the classics from different centuries the way I was taught at MMU—in modules. We'll also go over the Humanities; i.e., as a means of critical thought that predates Capitalism but survives inside it through monstrous signifiers:

indicative of schools of thought that, not just promoting a delivery style (the Schools of Terror and Horror from Radcliffe and Lewis), but also more recent critical theories (the Four Gs) with which to look through monsters as critical lenses.

In other words, if monsters are the lenses, then the theories are points of view with which to apply them. Except we'll also involve non-academic ways to look at, and identify with, monsters; i.e., monsters as emblematic of sex worker

identities from different time periods, commercialized by capital mid-crisis through the ghost of the counterfeit and process of abjection (for us, this mainly concerns the monstrous-feminine, but *that* manifests in a billion different ways—next page...).

So yeah, there's a lot of ground to cover—a fact not aided by the book's holistic nature. I could, if I chose, write an entire book about just *Frankenstein* (1818) or *Alien* (1979), or just zombies, demons, or anthromorphs; but diversity is strength amid intersectional solidarity so I want to include a lot of different hermeneutics (study approaches) *and* schools of criticism, to boot! It's enough to make a girl weep... but I love it! Being a weird nerd obsessed with death rituals designed to relieve stress, fuck hard, and further class war through cultural Gothic signifiers is *just* my game:



(artist: [SGT Madness](#))

Normally this is manageable, as theory is knowledge to apply in the real world and knowledge is limited. The problem is, the Gothic applies knowledge through *imagination*, which knows no boundaries *a priori*, but is *further* enlarged by Capitalism's measureless cruelty and Humanity's sexual desires (which are also endless) as enslaved by capital or at least under it; i.e., the ghost of the counterfeit and the process of abjection tailoring the Gothic towards the British and American middle class; e.g., during hijacked village-life rituals that scapegoat a particular group as the beautiful sacrifice or fetishized object of death: Halloween and witches, commodified by capital to give anxious Americans (and their allies) a means of quick, cheap, replicable release during times of state crisis, decay and moral panic. This extends to and comments on symbols of superstition during witch

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hunts as speaking to larger aspects of settler-colonial genocide, of intersectional bias and axes of oppression... which of course means there's a praxial double (canon vs camp). Think infinity then double it:



(exhibit 33b1a: Artist: [SGT Madness](#). There exist endless ways to artistically present anything in the world. For us, that includes one monster from one time period in a particular style tied to a given holiday as combined together in a dialectical-material argument; i.e., Halloween and monster girls; e.g., in a monochromatic 1960s cartoon style with Ben Day dots. Nature is monstrous-feminine, insofar as Cartesian thought alienates and fetishizes both it and labor universally to serve profit through death fetishes adjacent to genocide as abroad, but felt during state crisis at home [fascism is Imperialism come home to empire] to a captive audience: death-sex comfort food in all the traditional ways. Except people can also respond to and during a given cycle in sex-positive or sex-coercive ways using porn-to-art as liminal expression, which again, are all gradients with infinite variation between them! Pastiche is remediated praxis; capitalists use monsters to drive money through a finite web of life; immortal monsters live and

*replicate endlessly in markets driven by inheritance anxiety and latent rebellion.  
And so on...)*

From the Salem Witch Trials to Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*, commodifying struggles is America 101. Except beyond Halloween and the ghost of the counterfeit/process of abjection, there's also medieval expression defaulting to paradox, time being a circle (historical materialism) predicated on dialectical-material forces, and the various reading guides I've written and citations from my other volumes and written sources. Also, I just love monsters and could spend my whole life writing about Amazons and Metroidvania (the latter which encourage recursive ergodic motion through boundless Numinous feelings). It was basically if the Grinch's *dick* grew three sizes that day and then kept at it with a nasty case of priapism.



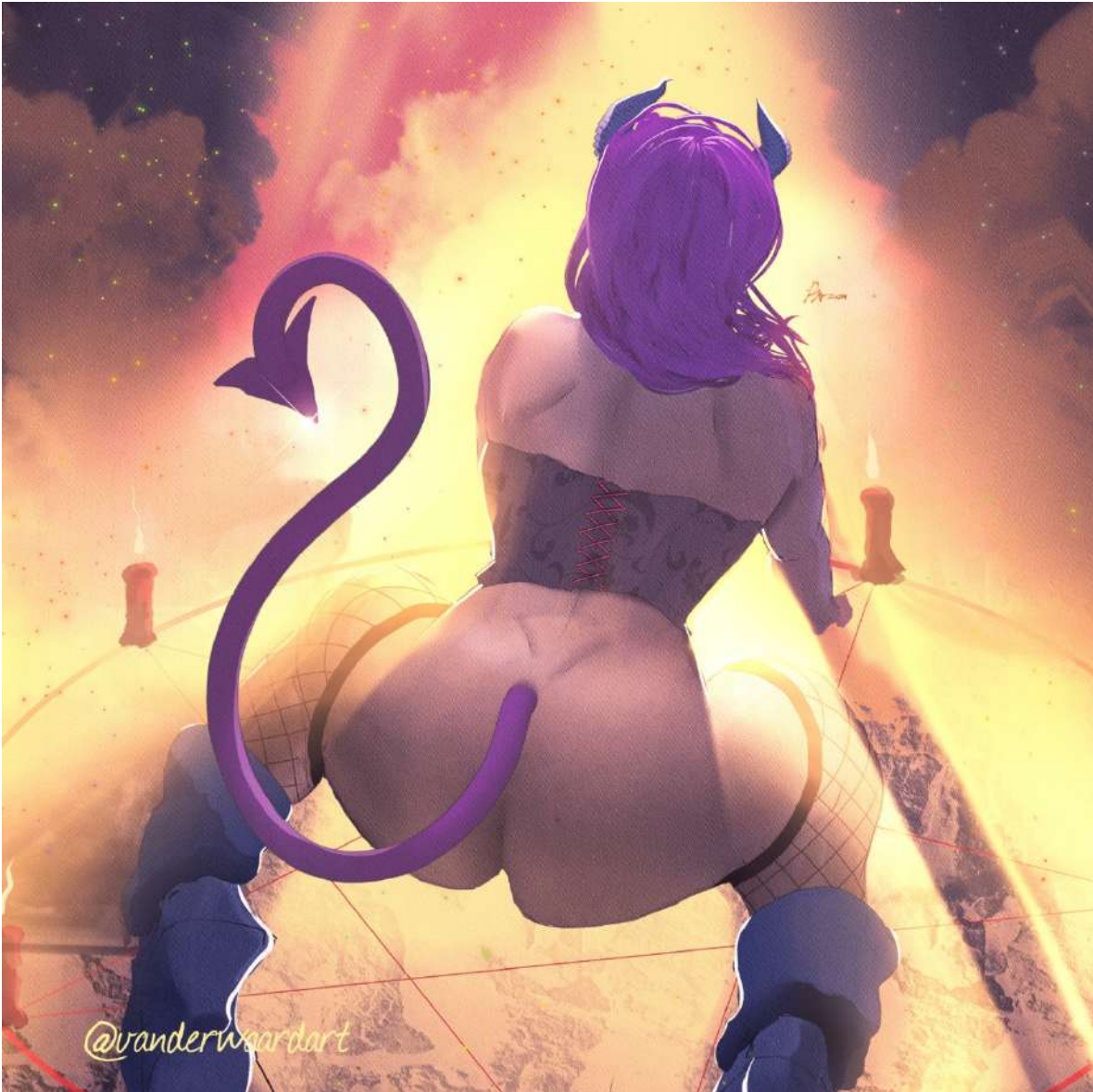
(artist: [SGT Madness](#))

Simply put, there's a million uses to one monster and monsters you didn't even know (or want to know) existed and kid-friendly versions and adults-only versions (if something exists, there is porn of it, or gender swaps of it, or canon or camp of it...) and palimpsests that stack on top of each other and castles (of castles of castles...). It really just goes on and on and I love it, but wanted to address here just why there's so much going on with the one's we have, and why I've probably left out your childhood favorite. Any bestiary is, like Hamlet's commonplace book, a scrapbook to fill to the brim, but is forever incomplete; so was his, and still *Hamlet* was Shakespeare's longest (and most quoted/popular) play. It became a madness that *seemed* to go on endlessly.

We likewise have our own madness, are pushing with our monasterial codex towards something great; i.e., a Communist Numinous we can touch on and brush against its massive vagueness and repetition (the Gothic caters to disintegration) through the monstrous power of suggestion. And yet, we're also touching on something that can be expressed by any monster through any worker alive (or once alive) to speak to a better future conceived through a shared imagination, a cultural understanding of the imaginary past as endlessly updating itself through constants and variables, mistreatment and healing. I've tried to account for that by including as many monsters as possible. For it, this is my largest volume in the *Sex Positivity* series, and also my favorite. I really hope you enjoy!

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



(model and artist: [Miss Nia Sax](#) and [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*

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—Volume Two: Monsters, part two: Gothic Poetics, Their History (the Undead)—

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- [Deal with the Devil: Transitioning Modules; or Between Demons and the Undead \(module conclusion\)](#)

### [Acknowledgements](#)

### [About the Author](#)



(artist: [Drooling Red](#))

# Volume Two, part two: Gothic Poetics, Their History

"But you're dead! You can't taste, can't smell!"

"Ah, but I remember!"

—Schmendrick the Magician and the Skull, *The Last Unicorn* (1982)



(artist: [Quinnvincible](#))

Volume Two's poetry and monster modules encapsulate Gothic poetics from two different ends; i.e., that which collectively concerns the imaginary past as something to reclaim and cultivate for a more intelligent and empathic Wisdom of the Ancients, pedagogy of the oppressed, etc. As such, Gothicists fear the return of a barbaric past; the way to escape that under Capitalism is to break Capitalist Realism—i.e., by studying the imaginary past as something to learn from and create new liberatory forms of "enslavement" with. **Part one** explores the usage of medieval poetics (of monsters, magic and myth) when making new proletarian histories (the Gothic—of which the Neo-Gothic revives in the present); **part two** reverses the arrangement, examining the history of these monstrous poetics in two basic modules that *future* workers can learn from while thinking like Gothic poets—through monstrous *creation* that represents struggle through monstrous *identity* as paradoxically pleasurable, cathartic.

When there's hell to pay and Medusa's out for blood, neither oral nor written traditions are enough to avoid state shift by themselves; they must be combined and considered as such: a new combination of both to avoid disaster with—holistically pushing for post-scarcity as something whose slow-but-steady progression moves as quickly away from older harmful systems as it can. This includes the uncontrolled chaos of the natural world as enslaved by Cartesian forces. Capital is an old, brutal system that enslaves nature to profit from its cheapening (thus genocide). We want to be stewards of nature (thus ourselves) by transforming capital (and "Rome") from within using Gothic poetics as oral and written, half-real.

## Monster Volume Outline, part two

"Didn't you just love the picture? I did! But I just felt so sorry for the creature at the end!"

"What'd you want, for him to marry the girl?"

"He was kind of scary looking, but he wasn't really all bad! I think he just craved a little affection! You know—the sense of being loved, needed, wanted?"

—*The Girl and Richard Sherman, The Sever-Year Itch (1955)*

This is the volume outline for Volume Two. The first half will be the same for parts one and two, summarizing the goal of the whole volume; the second half will list and summarize the main chapters/modules per volume half.

Capitalism leads to universal alienation, sexualization and fetishization to serve profit, which has a functional opposite—worker liberation. This means that monsters speak to the evil in and around us as a historical-material consequence of those dialectical-material forces. They take infinite forms, but *do* fall into some fairly distinct classes.

To that, Volume Two is composed of various essays/chapters, but primarily three modules that divide the volume in two, before segueing into Volume Three: our Poetry Module and Monster Modules, which holistically invite readers to partake in all monsters to find what is useful between them. That is, rather than focus on one exclusively for the entire book, my focus is diversity-as-strength to contribute towards monstrous pedagogies of the oppressed; i.e., on holistic modularity *with emphasis as needed* to better illustrate (thus achieve) intersectional solidarity through oppositional praxis, mid-synthesis. To that, I implore you to try things out—to mix, match and combine rather than specialize in just one, when making your own. Most people *have* a preference, but most monsters are also quite



flexible, walking the line between demon, undead and/or animal during the Gothic's fatal nostalgia and "exploitation" put into quotes; the more flexible the monster, the more flexible the *mind* using it as a critical humanizing lens. I try to cover the classic monsters, here, but may leave something out:

(artist: [Oh No Justino](#))

The state and workers are always at odds; the Gothic fixates on nature as fetishized and alien (monstrous-feminine) to better notify workers of the state in decay—i.e., as data that manifests linguo-materially as pain, stress and death in various half-real forms (meaning "between fiction and non-fiction"). The Poetry Module focuses on the poetic procedure regardless of the monster type; by comparison the Monster Modules consist of two primary halves—*undead* and *demonic*—of which animals (and other nature-themed beings) are included in the demonic side. This being said, there *is* an undead component to nature-as-alien being harvested by Cartesian forces, leading my thesis volume to argue (and my manifesto to both simplify and expound upon):

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.

So when I say "animalized" *vis-à-vis* Gothic aesthetics, this is predominantly what I mean ([source](#)).

All monsters are alien; Capitalism, Volume One argued, chattelizes workers to serve profit, making them (and those peoples and places in connection with them) alien *and* fetishized, thus ready to be abused in all the ways that Capitalism demands in order to profit. In turn, power and material flow towards the state through the ghost of the counterfeit's process of abjection; i.e., by sexualizing everything to serve profit through Gothic poetics that flow power towards the state. As my thesis statement from Volume Zero argues:

**Capitalism** dimorphically sexualizes all work to some degree, including **sex work**, resulting in sex-coercive media and gender roles via universal alienation through monstrous language; this requires an **iconoclasm** to combat the systemic bigotries that result—a (as the title reads) 'liberating of sex work under Capitalism through iconoclastic art.' **Gothic Communism** is our ticket towards that end ([source](#)).

All in all, the Gothic plays with the past as monstrous. Put in more blunt language, the monstrous past becomes something to, at times, quite literally fuck

with, mid-consumption; i.e., in ways that cross undead, demonic and animalistic forms during a social-sexual ritual of some kind or another as meant to humanize the dehumanized: the alien, the *other* as normally ripe for slaughter by Cartesian forces, but for us expresses in delicious, food-like forms of theatre that are quite old—the Comedy and the Drama, but also the Ancient Romance revived in Neo-Gothic forms. On the Internet, workers can take things further than historical forms have dared to. We can embody the imaginary past as something to recultivate in ways that change the flow of things by literally fucking with it ourselves:



(*exhibit 33b1b: Model and artist: Jericho and [Persephone van der Waard](#). Often, an effective way to humanize monsters is to romance them; e.g., [Beauty and the Beast](#) or [The Creature from the Black Lagoon](#) [1954]. However, those narratives "transform" the monster, either killing/banishing them [as with the Creature] or converting them into an acceptable human shape [the Beast]. The latter is as much a historical-*

*material concession of the princess as it is the monster itself: the canonical "kissing of toads," hoping they turn into princes [which isn't really fair to actual toads or those who identify with them. Indeed, many monster-fuckers hope the monster stays exactly the way it is].)*

These are the primary sections/chapters of **part two** of the volume. Modules are sections that concern multiple chapters (which divide into subchapters that I will not list/summarize here):

**["A Cruel Angel's \(Modular\) Thesis"; or, the Broad-Stroke Nature of Holistic Instruction: Camping "Rape" as Food for Thought Regarding the Monster Modules](#)**: Gives a new thesis argument to keep in mind; i.e., when examining the modular and intersectional histories of Gothic poetics.

**[The Undead \(module\)](#)**: This module explores the undead as creatures driven less by active intelligence and more by a desire to freeze and feed in the buried presence of trauma and harmful conditions. It explores how the state's monopolies lead to a state of exception within its sites of settler-colonial violence, which in turn

create a violent upheaval/silent scream among the oppressed and oppressors alike; i.e., the voice of colonial trauma and the vengeful, desperate feeding on the living by the undead as the genocided dead, having come home to roost—zombies. However, the alienation and feeding also affect the ruler class, leading to vampirism as a canonical effect that must be personified in healthier forms of medieval nostalgia that, for their usual logical motions, become ghost-like, copied and imperfect. Reclaiming these modules requires embodying and subverting the very traumas the state relies on to control us by keeping us hungry and braindead (a process I call "lobotomization")—to, as the undead generally do, paralyze *our* prey and feed on *their* frozen bodies, albeit in ways that pointedly develop Gothic Communism.

**Demons (module):** This module explores demons as actively cunning-yet-alien shapeshifters, presented canonically as treacherous within forbidden knowledge and power exchange; i.e., as untrustworthy beings made deceitful and torturous through the ghost of the counterfeit's process of abjection. As such, they are manmade, presented as occult beings that are summoned, composite bodies that are built (cyborgs, golems and robots), or overtly natural totems that are hunted down within nature-as-alien in either case: something to present as demonic, then isolate, dehumanize and invade under Cartesian duress. Reclaiming them requires embodying and subversively humanizing the Satanic transformative power they provide, generally in defense of nature as made alien by state forces (the trifactas, monopolies and their proponents)—to imbue with transformative fatal power that, in some shape or form, targets us for state abuse, which we subvert mid-exchange away from Capitalism's usual tortures and towards Gothic Communism's unknown pleasures.

**The Future is a Dead Mall (chapter):** Monsters are classically devalued outside of canonical forms utilized by state forces, which leads to Capitalist Realism under the current order of things. To critique Capitalism, then, we must critique people's devaluing of the Gothic or otherwise misusing/scapegoating it for Capitalism's woes: Radcliffe, but also Coleridge and Jameson. Through a cultivated Wisdom of the Ancients (a cultural understanding of the imaginary past), we can confront Capitalist Realism through the monsters normally pitted against us instead of speaking for us and nature as exploited by the elite. It becomes something to synthesize through our creative successes—a concept we'll explore entirely in Volume Three while reflecting on Volume Two's monstrous histories.

**"The Caterpillar"; or, What's to Come (conclusion):** A conclusion to the volume based on its contents, but highlighted through medieval expression and a coda (the caterpillar) to encapsulate everything the volume has discussed moving into Volume Three.

Capitalism treats bodies as monstrous to compel and enslave workers through set intended uses that serve the profit motive (thus genocide) through Cartesian thought; we, to liberate them using the same language—our bodies and poetic extensions of them and their sexualities, genders and orientations serving as a potent, emergently playful means: of storing and exchanging precious forbidden data per outing to challenge Capitalist Realism as a settler-colonial project. In this volume, then, we'll be playing with monsters you'll undoubtedly have seen before (often as little [sex] toys), but will be asked to think about now in ways that may seem new and strange to you *and* me (and I've been doing this awhile); re:

"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." The shape doesn't matter provided the *function* (and flow of power) is consistent—for and towards workers united in a Cause that is in-the-flesh, intuitive, second-nature. The continual idea, then, is a constellation to reassemble and reflect on trauma in a holistic manner using monsters to liberate workers (and their bodies) with; i.e., to illustrate mutual consent with Gothic poetics to break Capitalist Realism once and for all. "New vistas of reflection," indeed!



(artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#))

## "A Cruel Angel's (Modular) Thesis"; or, the Broad-Stroke Nature of Holistic Instruction: Camping "Rape" as Food for Thought Regarding the Monster Modules

*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).*

*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 ([source](#)).*

—Persephone van der Waard, "A Note About Canonical Essentialism" (2024)

Please note, I wrote the Monster Modules over a year-and-a-half ago. The raw theory *is* there, but the historical arguments aren't aimed at specific recipients of state violence so much as I try to holistically consider all of them per intersectional solidarity as something to achieve *together* during Ludo-Gothic BDSM;



i.e., built on older monstrous histories: learning to camp rape and find our power during liminal expression/Gothic counterculture as a sex-positive force. Think of my various staged critiques being aimed at the middle class as the gatekeepers of capital, decaying and tokenizing (non-white and gender-non-conforming traitors of class, race and culture) to attack the elite's enemies by virtue of profit requiring enemies to exploit: nature as monstrous-feminine; e.g., Sigourney Weaver's GNC, Tim-Curry-tinged 1983 shoot with Helmut Newton clearly having inspired their 1984 possession as the Gozer of New York: Zuul being Medusa-by-another-name.

([source](#): Kino Images)



As such, a lot of what follows paints in broad strokes regarding said history as it applies differently for various exploited groups; i.e., under the same predatory system relative to our Four Gs, Six Rs, Gothic mode of expression, etc; e.g., masks and revolutionary cryptonymy as something we can weaponize for ourselves:



(artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#))

In short, these modules have a symposium style-flavor I want to preserve; I won't be stressing particular theories like cryptonymy or terms like monstrous-feminine, as we've already talked about them extensively across multiple chapters and book volumes. Instead, I'll be focusing on holistic expression per the monster *classes* as dualistic poetic devices. Any oppressions I express here, then, should apply intersectionally to white women, people of color, non-Christians, GNC people, disabled persons, etc, but it will apply to each *differently!* I want to focus on universal liberation *vis-à-vis* iconoclastic art, generally by considering sexuality and gender expression as canonically enslaved per the process of abjection; i.e., as *attacking* the ghost of the counterfeit through *cryptomimesis*, the narrative of the crypt and Cycle of Kings, etc, as forever serving profit. I'll try and mention these and other past concepts at least once, and consider locations—e.g., castles, prisons, what-have-you—but the *monsters* remain the main focus, here (simply pick your poison and go to town, lovelies).



(artist: [Les Edwards](#))

Likewise, my focus challenges Capitalist Realism by camping Marx with Gothic Communism as a genderqueer BDSM-meets-ludology hybrid in the Internet Age; i.e., as something to take advantage of for workers by workers. To that, Marxist analysis with Gothic poetics dates back to the man himself, but also contemporaries; e.g., Gogol's *Dead Souls* (1842) writing about the exploitation of serf numeration as a predatory necrometrics designed to enrich a predatory mid-level state official. There's truly nothing new under the sun as far as that goes and the Internet is a powerful tool for finding whatever you need (until today I had no idea who

Helmet Newton was, for example). So take whatever I supply here and close-read whatever *you* like—from Gogol's vintage grift narrative to the anti-Semitic themes of the cover art for Uriah Heep's *Abominog* (1982, above). Go nuts!

This isn't hard to do; monsters are everywhere and always maintain a dualistic, dialectical-material potential. Yes, Capitalism sexualizes everything (my PhD thesis) per the dialectic of the alien (from Volume Two, part one), but said dialectic still manifests differently (and per various double standards) depending on who's relating to whom, mid-struggle (from Volume One, "Healing from Rape"); i.e., as a given monster *type* through a given monster *function*; e.g., white women vs black men as zombies to humanize or dehumanize, or queer men as "vampires" feeding through sodomy on different prey groups to achieve complicated results: the whore, the demon, the rapist working as "dark predator" *and* prey in ways that code police violence as something to give and receive in canonical scenarios. As such, said violence becomes something to preemptively attack workers with, preventing their liberation by using dogmatic instruction meant to *serve* profit. As such, law and order canonize through state force and terror (often regarding sex) while invariably decaying as a result of itself (colonies always die; fascist ones die



faster). Fear of that in the likeness of the cop and victim is a vital survival tool for us to weaponize *against* the state:

([source tweet](#), *Katastrophe: December 14th, 2018*)

Again, my instruction is multi-media, repetitive and holistic, not microscopic or myopically "total" (such completions are impossible,

me and my friends' work simply adding to all the others who came before). As long as you keep *that* in mind, you (and *your* constellations) should be able to apply what I write here to any disadvantaged group through any text/medium you want; i.e., not just the undead receiving/giving trauma and feeding psychosexually on it, nor demons shifting shapes and granting forbidden power and knowledge, nor the natural world as being to some degree undead and/or demonic, but newer ideas I've coined since writing these modules regarding the same profit motive: as something to critique among all media and labor under Capitalism. In short, I *want* you to be intertextual and extratextual in your applications, but also excessive, shameless, and unafraid to try new things again; i.e., "bein' extra" provided it's sex-positive per various concepts we've already discussed being continuously part of a larger theoretical structure to camp canon with in a practical sense.

For example, you should do your gold-star best to keep Sarkeesian's adage in mind while synthesizing praxis: enjoy but do not blindly *endorse* canonical media, mid-consumption; i.e., as something to normally dissect *for* profit while shoving one's head in the sand as a kind of self-important history (re: most speedrunner documentation, for instance, is settler-colonial—chasing immortality through world records tied to profit that ignore state atrocities all along the watchtower).

In other words, no matter how cool someone seems or touts themselves as, don't act [like this guy](#)<sup>40</sup> (next page) without some degree of irony that critiques profit and its heroes. We're here to kill our darlings (as a matter of critique), not worship them! Rags-to riches is bullshit, installed by the elite to force people not only to fight for scraps, but *deify* the entire opportunistic, manufactured process of scarcity and salvation; i.e., neoliberalism 101 per rigid inflexible minds incapable of fighting for anyone but themselves as part of a bourgeois Superstructure! Look around you. See that culture full of so-called gods of the sport, the Pantheon-grade colosseum and gladiators' kayfabe? American or not, it's "Rome" brought back to life in a 21st-century world, capital married to Cartesian thought raping Medusa on a global level; i.e., as a death sentence foisted onto workers and nature's labor value converted into monetary forms tied to police violence: all the heteronormative divisions of settler-colonial sex and force wreaking harm, thus



profit as something to count, name and repeat until the world ends. Until that happens, Medusa becomes a token slave, forced to mother her abusers while "threatening" them with kayfabe-style Snu-Snu: anti-predation for the oppressor and predation for the enemy (which is anything that *doesn't* serve profit).

(artist: [Yves Balak](#))

<sup>40</sup> From Papa Lobster's "From Controversy to God: The Evolution of Tokido" (2024; timestamp: 8:57). *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

To this, sex positivity shouldn't be a mystery monopolized by corporate guilds, a trade secret denied purposefully by dogmatic institutions in favor of crueler models of exchange (monetary value and labor/wage theft). Per revolutionary cryptonymy (e.g., "flashing"), though, we'll still have to paradoxically guard ourselves while trying to teach people less knowledgeable than us; i.e., to be more involved, thus active and engaged with, the world around them in a pro-worker sense: to actually risk getting hurt while building towards something better (which is what sex-positive relationships ultimately boil down to). People who refuse to do that in any shape or form—who blame and attack anyone but themselves and Capitalism—are doomed to not only live alone in their self-centered universes (which is what videogames classically are), but cause harm wherever they go in pursuit of their so-called "legacies" while cementing themselves *within* capital prison-like realities (that isn't a commentary about this exact person, below, but such clubbism and divisive sport mentalities *are* designed to foster us-versus-



them animus favoring the usual predatory benefactors, weird canonical nerds, as naming everything after themselves, mid-rape):

So ends the tangent. Any like it will be made holistically

in respect to a given chapter's core themes and ideas, but also the book's at large. And while I can't stress every idea here in this opening due to time and word constraints, keep your eyes peeled nonetheless. They'll surely pop up, and each-of-them grant special properties, extensions and intersections of all three monster types (which function modularly but often intersect) while developing Gothic Communism across all our lives; i.e., expressed by different members of the proletariat defending themselves and nature from state abuse/police violence while relating to each other in monstrous language that humanizes the alien: as something to reclaim through our own labor value/unequal power exchanges, including our guilty pleasures making us blush merely at the *thought* of saying them out loud!

Mind you, the embarrassment *is* ironic, canonical chagrin stemming from asking for something we're expected to take by force; i.e., coercively under unequal socio-material arrangements prioritizing white cis-het men (and token

groups) as *the* universal clientele per Cartesian thought having evolved into Man Box/"prison sex" forms. It's these canonical behaviors/roleplay scenarios that iconoclasts play around with, mid-camp; e.g., during anal vs plane-Jane PIV sex as *normally* monopolized by capital. At first blush, they don't look so different under Gothic scenarios:



(*exhibit 34c1a2: Capital loves to have their cake and eat it, too; i.e., to threaten actual destruction if one deviates from "correct" forms of sexual activity while simultaneously abjecting and cashing in on "incorrect" ones: "black Bibles" to thrust in workers' faces [often as cultural exports; e.g., Bible Black (2001), above]. These, in turn, are sold back to the middle class through a nuclear family model that is allowed to sin in the bedroom, provided it stays in the bedroom; i.e., it relegates to exploitative fantasies whose dogmatic elements punish the usual victims of state force outside the family home [often at school and society in general as invaded by dark prurient forces during moral panic]: as witches to prostitute to the fearful as fascinated with them, treating such prurience as throwaway pleasure blindly aping Hawthorne, not administering sex-positive lessons that actually challenge Puritan ideals [thus Capitalism under the Protestant work ethic]!*)

As usual, though, such spaces become places to camp—to try new things while just as easily [for many newlyweds and extramarital couples] trying sex at all for the first time. It's normal to be nervous, the idea scary for most virgins because capital treats it as a tightrope to walk; i.e., as ignorantly as possible, leading to dangerous confluences conducive to scared brides submitting to their husbands' knife-like dicks,

*thus patriarchal dominance. While the Gothic's mutilative element has been commonplace since Radcliffe to Freud, subverting this unironically violent Amazonomachia generally requires a shy experimentation that frankly is cute to watch: "Can we... try anal?" Aw! Sure, babe!*

*To that, reversing abjection and humanizing the black<sup>41</sup>, GNC whore [and sodomy as a non-rapacious activity] becomes yet another experiment to try before giggling about it together after an admittedly nice time: "That wasn't so bad!" No, it generally isn't, which can turn peoples' worlds upside-down for the better insofar as they realize, post-anal, that "God" isn't going to smite them; i.e., God's not real, so what else isn't? Apart from the snow-white bridal "reward," what else can be reclaimed to liberate workers from capital, the middle class, menticide and the process of abjection?*

*Such dances with the ghost of the counterfeit not only open the mind, but help it heal. It's not a slippery slope [though the argument is present, when used by bad actors] but a complicated act of self-discovery that, once ventured, helps past victims heal from rape as committed against workers by police forces; e.g., wives and women's work; i.e., the home as something to police and expand into capital, at large, as nuclear. Each liberation is, to some degree then, unique. If yours includes anal or rape play [consent-non-consent] then that's ultimately a good thing because you'll know what works for you! As such, you become more emotionally and Gothically intelligent, which extends to class and culture war often enough.)*

When camping canon, said exchanges should illustrate mutual consent (and one's basic human rights at large) through ludo-Gothic BDSM and castle-narrative; i.e., as something to pass along into the future as already dead, waiting to wake up once more, then consciously haunt the living as already haunted *passively* by imperial abuse experienced at home and broad! To this, here's a modular (cruel-angel's) thesis statement to keep in mind per the Monster Modules' subsequent essays and symposiums (indented for emphasis):

Capitalism achieves profit by moving money through nature; profit is built on trauma and division, wherein anything that serves profit gentrifies and decays, over and over while preying on nature. Trauma, then, cultivates strange appetites, which vary from group to group per the usual privileges and oppression as intersecting differently per case; i.e., psychosexual trauma (the regulation of state sex, terror and force) and feeding in decay as a matter of complicated (anisotropic) exchange unto itself, but also

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<sup>41</sup> Again, from a settler-colonial black-vs-white argument with pre-Enlightenment histories that predate settler-colonial racism; i.e., "black" as pure non-English, non-Christian stigma, thus incumbent less on skin color than the dialectic of the alien simply meaning "different" tied to older institutions where race argumentation wasn't the primary focus.

shapeshifting and knowledge exchange *vis-à-vis* nature as monstrous-feminine: something to destroy by the state or defend from it (and its trifactas, monopolies, etc) using the same threatening aesthetics of power and death, decay and rape.

Poetically there's not much difference functionally-speaking between feeding and transformation. As a kind of power/knowledge exchange, each has a rich, unique history woven into itself; i.e., as someone's or some society's older preference serving as monstrous code to proudly shape into cryptonymic cultural forms with their own double operations: showing and concealing or vice versa regarding the Gothic's usual erotic medieval paradoxes.

These, in turn, remain cursed by mouth-fang and dick-knife hyphenations/doubles (tokenization) that, once shown mid-*mise-en-abyme*, can't be unseen: the *undead* as the classic unthinking (and addicted, ravenous) slave to state dominion, the *demon* as the wily contractor to such inequalities, and the *animal* as forced to endure a cruel stewardship thereof; e.g., the black Nazi Jew, witch cop, TERF, etc, as hogging the graveyard as an odd, paradoxical site of psychosexual rapture, healing and release camping rape; i.e., as *normally* a dogmatic, xenophobic tool—of punishment, of us-versus-them, temptation, dangerous confusions and straight up kink—posturing as "necrophilic" camp that we must make campy in the same spaces: a pedagogy of the oppressed healing from rape, thus police abuse as all around us, the graves our cradles less to crawl out of and more to make love inside. To survive, you have to work fast in the crypt, telling good actors from bad while playing with trauma as a historical-material loop decaying inside of itself.



(source film: *Cemetery Man*, 1994)

Rape isn't unique to Capitalism, then, but Capitalism exploits rape for profit, which always leaves a bloody footprint for us to double (think Danny escaping his rampaging father by walking backwards in his own footsteps during *The Shining's* [1981] hedge maze scene, except the camera man also had to do it<sup>42</sup>). In turn, its ubiquity

<sup>42</sup> Garret Brown writes, "As Danny backs up stepping in his own footprints to fool Jack, I had to back up ahead of him also in his footprints! To accomplish this I had to wear special boots with Danny-sized  
*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
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is something to challenge through ludo-Gothic BDSM liberating worker minds during calculated risk: the moribund body and graveyard coalesced through a concentric *cycle* of exchange. Such complicated theatre (and prostitution) dates back to Rome and the ancient world (re: B.B. Wagner's "[The Graveyard Prostitutes of Rome and Beyond](#)," 2020), expanding into the Middle Ages, the Neo-Gothic (from the Graveyard Poets, Matthew Lewis, etc) onward to a cryptic hauntology beyond Great Britain; i.e., relishing in corpse sex theatre (and other unspeakables) under neoliberal *Pax Americana*'s anxious inheritance foisted onto fresh workers to threaten *them* with (menticide): the ever-growing army of the *elite's* undead!

In turn, harmful versions of said therapy mirror the abuse as "activity" and "area"; i.e., sex in funerary places historically overlapping as burial grounds and sites of masochistic rapture—as a nightly, "almost holy" meeting place for extramarital affairs (adjacent to taboo elements like rape, suicide, cannibalism, incest, nightmares/sleep sex, murder and so on) classically tempting young men of the cloth with the forbidden-yet-constantly-advertised forbidden pleasures of the flesh; e.g., the film adaptation for Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1986): sex is fun when you're breaking the rules; it's *healthy* when no one's being harmed or forced/taken against their will (the empty threat of God smiting you for doing the nasty in His decaying house being a potentially *Numinous* aphrodisiac).



Irony is always the deciding factor insofar as something is sex-positive or not. Furthermore, such curious privileges extend to anyone and everyone in the Internet Age—to partake and enjoy a "necrotic," rape-fantasy ecstasy having been camped rather pornographically since Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to *Rocky Horror* and present-

day works: live burial ("burying the bishop") a psychosexual means of feeling at home with one's trauma as inescapable; i.e., a patriarchal system designed to benefit white cis-het Christian men that—however tokenized or gentrified it seems—will always decay in ways they can't rely on to exclusively protect them, either (spectres of Marx seeking revenge through praxial success exposing the bourgeoisie for the murderers they and theirs are; re: a pedagogy of the oppressed, a voice of the rat/damned snitching on capital and the elite)!

Simply put, the exchanges are anisotropic, working as much to *camp* canonical forces (and move power towards workers) versus harming us with

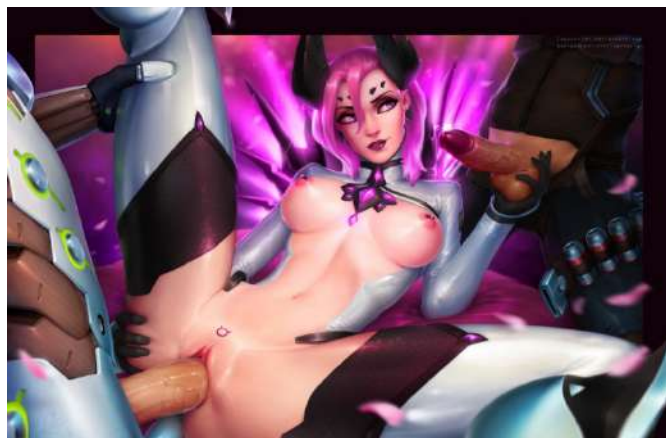
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soles nailed to the bottom so I wouldn't make the footprints any bigger!" ([source](#): "The Steadicam and *The Shining* Revisited," 2022).

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dogmatic sites of older psychosexual crimes—of gargoyles scaring the faithful, fearing "God" as much as overtly secular as not (capitalists famously walking the tightrope; e.g., Ronald Reagan's Christofascism). However damaged we are from past abuse, camping this fact feels more and more homely and correct, in practice; i.e., once you go black, you can't go back, babes (the dialectic of the alien a powerful means of catharsis *and* self-defense)! Camping canon is often "rapacious," sexual; i.e., anger/gossip, monsters and camp (the basics of oppositional synthesis) with sex (and force) getting your attention in reliably Gothic ways: "Help! I'm an undead demon and I'm being 'raped' animal-style to *Rocky Horror's* 'Time Warp'!" Guess we should investigate, right?



(artist: [Tago Van Tor](#))

More to the point, "rape" is an acquired taste; victims of rape (whatever the form) experience medieval-coded, regressive fantasies of "rape" they ideally want to camp during ludo-Gothic BDSM to avoid actual rape (and overall harm) in the future. In turn, praxial catharsis occurs through iconoclasm while

healing from rape in xenophilic ways that involve nature as monstrous-feminine in fetishized, cliché sites of death, damage, decay and rebirth. As such, exploitation and liberation occupy the same shadow zones' theatrical spaces, the latter weaponized through the same linguo-material devices canonically waged *against* workers by traitorous forces; said workers reclaim these in public-to-private theatrical "danger disco"/rape-castle operatic spaces (and bodies) mapping trauma out: as something to immersively dance/party with (re: *cryptomimesis*, or fucking with the dead as a bad, Matthew-Lewis-style echo), adopting sex-positive strategies that resist capital/profit: by misbehaving as a matter of good sex education challenging profit as a matter of fact.

In the Gothic, naughtiness is generally built on genuine trauma. To avoid war and rape as systemic harm leading to generational trauma/stolen generations, we must learn from the dead as something we embody through *our* Wisdom of the Ancients. Like a Gothic heroine in a castle, the liberatory ideal is exploration leading deeper inside—to heal from police atrocities, tokenistic exploitation, and compelled perversions occurring through feminism and genderqueer politics (and other minorities) in decay (e.g., TERFs, queer and Afronormativity, Zionism, etc) leading towards genocide, thus grim harvests.

"No body, no crime," says the state, denying atrocities however much it needs to continue its dark feast. State cannibalism and disempowerment

dismember what can ultimately be reassembled, though, strung together composite-style and speaking to its own murder and/or rape by the hands of others (e.g., Emily Portman's "[The Two Sisters](#)" [2010] and similar murder ballads with changeling elements); or it can appear like a ghost, a simulacrum speaking to such lies as ultimately visible, mid-apocalypse. Cryptonymy is cryptonymy regardless of shape or size (a castle-like body or body-like castle denoting trauma as mirror-like; revolutionary or complicit, cryptonymy is about hiding in plain sight, then, generally as a means of good or bad habits synthesizing praxis in ways the state *cannot* manipulate or dissect (e.g., *Child of God*, 1972) as its fear and dogma normally do: useful criminal flesh<sup>43</sup> reduced afterwards to a useless unalive state, something to criminalize and scapegoat per criminogenic conditions, then incarcerate, judge and rape through law and order as usual: "all road men, gangsters, proper naughty boys and all that bollocks!" as Charlie Hunnam says, in Guy Ritchie's *The Gentleman* (2019).

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<sup>43</sup> I've previously written about this excision of value regarding flesh; re: "Critical Review of Fred Botting's 'Future Horror (the Redundancy of Gothic)'" (2017):

Botting's obituary perpetuates themes of meaningless substance, writing how 'any anchoring substance is scraped away [as identity] slides precipitously across surfaces.' Mankind merely becomes the sum of so much superficial clay slapped on and removed with such astounding alacrity as to rob this interchangeable tissue of all meaning. Consider the surgery scene Botting initially evokes, where a British woman is being cosmetically operated on: "The skin is lifted and excess tissue scraped from under the cheeks [while a hose likewise suctions] gelatinous globules and bloody ooze pumped from the [woman's] thighs." Yet, this trope of meaningless flesh isn't exclusive to our immediate age. I recall how the lifeless body of Matthew Lewis' ill-fated prioress was beaten, trod upon and ill-used, in *The Monk* (1796), "till it became no more than a mass of flesh, unsightly, shapeless and disgusting"; or, consider Lester Ballard's ignominious demise, in Cormac McCarthy's novel, *Child of God* (1973):

He was laid out on a slab and flayed, eviscerated, dissected. His head was sawed open and the brains removed. His muscles were stripped from his bones. His heart was taken out. [...] At the end of three months [Ballard] was scraped from the table into a plastic bag.

In both instances, the flesh of the authors' victims is squeezed so tightly that it oozes between their white-knuckle fingers. However, Botting confidently asserts that, in modern times, "the terrors of the night are replaced by the terrors of the light"—as though this is an idea exclusive to that temporal region. Yet, Lewis or McCarthy both seem perfectly happy exploring those naked realities Botting attributes exclusively to our own present.

In *The Monk*, Sister Agnes and Father Ambrosio exemplify this. The former describes the unveiled horror of a present moment, not some obscurity of the long-dead past, when she says, "...often have I at waking found my fingers ringed with the long worms which bred in the corrupted flesh of my infant." Likewise, the latter, tortured by the Inquisition, tries to deny the existence of a God, but laments, "those truths, once [my] comfort, now presented themselves before [me] in the clearest light." Manifest in said light, there is always some present horror for any writer to explore. These respective anxieties aren't in the future. There's no linear progression leading to a bright, over-exposed annihilation. Gothic fiction isn't redundant because the past and future are in the present, and always have been. Thus, I can hardly agree with Botting when he writes, "the future produced in the void of the present [is] both horrifying and thrilling. But it is far from Gothic" ([source](#)).

Botting is a dumbass.

If the latter is a kind of intolerant, stalker-grade Count Dracula you do *not* want to be friends with, proletarian undeath and demonic *poiesis* reflect our being marked *with* trauma and yet still being able to function healthily with others to encourage universal tolerance but, per Karl Popper, exclude bigotry and harm; i.e., to *not* rape others as the state/capital do *by design* (regardless of venue). Whatever the monster type, there's always a double for the state and vice versa projecting onto the same troubled surfaces and into the same thresholds—them, to blame others with and us to expose them as harming us.

To that, the state will always invoke self-defense as a matter of castle doctrine. They love plausible deniability and DARVO under settler-colonial conditions; i.e., playing the victim and the underdog rebel while treating us as terrorist, Nazi-Communist, what-have-you. *Our* monsters go against such systemic features, including high burdens of proof routinely and reliably defending the



powerful as people extending from the state as centered around wealth and power always flowing up.

In a world of grand illusions, there's no "seeing the light" as completely naked. Per cryptonymy, there's always something hidden

and something exposed that you must navigate by playing with proponents of good vs bad faith, play and education, BDSM, etc (which we'll introduce here historically before unpacking fully in Volume Three: as something to make *new* histories with regarding the state as something to defend or dismantle). Intent matters less than socio-material outcomes, which those in bad faith cannot conceal (another topic for Volume Three); it's always dualistic/dialectical-material, a historical-material trail of psychosexual rituals raised from the wreckage—of trauma as something to express, confront, negotiate with as a power we can reclaim. But it's always a likeness of itself, an estate of unrest, a restless ghost (or some other egregore; e.g., Banquo's zombie-like spectre, from *Macbeth*: "Thou canst not say I did it. Never shake / Thy gory locks at me!" [source](#)) of rape to camp; it has to be or it simply becomes invisible, thus conducive to profit through the perception of order as lawful, good, stable.

Per the Gothic, though, ghosts don't *stay* dead; they get up and move around. It becomes something to invite in (or be invited into, that curiously polite quality of vampirism going both ways), then interrogate insofar as what ails them

more or less ails us, too—Capitalism as a castled site of violent lies to survive and spatially thread, from mazes to labyrinths.

In turn, these become, per C.S. Lewis's *Problem of Pain*, a dreadful, uncanny confrontation with a spirit of some small-to-mighty configuration; i.e., less a tiger in the room and more an echo that *might* be a tiger but just as much yields a general feeling of *unheimlich*. For or against the state, such likenesses are commonplace during *cryptomimesis* as a kind of puzzle to solve, a murder most foul (so-called "foul play" through intended gameplay in service to profit) testifying badly for itself across texts (the 1998 *Ringu*, above, coming from an older book). It becomes charged with corruption as data to expend like dark lightning from its sexually changed surfaces. Even so, entropy is the vector and the clue, the



obfuscating reality of existence as meant to confuse us, but which we can weaponize against our confusers per the same historical-material effects during our revolutionary cryptonymy penetrating the spectral membrane: Schrodinger's hot piece of vengeful ass!

(artist: [Grobi-Grafik](#))

No matter how violent, antagonistic or intangible they seem, then, puzzles are solved by playing with them; history-towards-development is no exception. To that, the Gothic's complicated,

often-combative history of rape and its modular-to-intersecting preferences/poetics<sup>44</sup> are what we want to outline and explore here, but time *is* a factor. Sometimes we'll focus on cryptonymy, others on hauntology or abjection, medieval poetics at large (e.g., a confusion of the senses, of boundaries during the dialectic of the alien) etc. Furthermore, from zombies to vampires, ghosts to composites, cyborgs to lycans, we'll survey an example for each module taken from some of the most die-hard legends, just like I did in grad school; i.e., fluctuating between a looser symposium style and various essays that adhere to this larger module thesis argument amid smaller interesting-but-not-always-wholly-constant

<sup>44</sup> E.g., vampires and demons both can feed, exchange power and transform, but each module historically emphasizes/stresses these individual poetic qualities more than others do, mid-intersection, and in specific unforgettable visualizations/monstrous shorthand.



tangents and hot-cold Gothic extremes: a preferred alternative favoring the irrationally violent cluing the audience into a presence of decay state illusions have repeatedly tried to conceal since the Enlightenment—self-destruction, of state proponents punching themselves in the mirror-like face (re: "We have found the enemy and he is us.").

([source](#): *Broke Horror Fan*)

As such, consider the above module thesis argument as a kebab skewer—a follow-

through to achieve common ground, but also food for thought; i.e., something to go into your little brain baskets (and holes, mid-skewering of your meat) as you holistically try to weigh the historical function of monsters in the manner that I've carefully arranged here: as expressing and exchanging unequal power ("rape") under duress during oppositional praxis while consuming and learning from/as the past, yourselves. It becomes vital forbidden knowledge we can reclaim when healing from rape *by* playing with "it" in quotes. This includes its odd sediment, doubles, hyphenations, etc; e.g., knife-*dick* play while looking for Mr. Right—our paradoxical salvation in a mock-up of our theatrical demise badly aping our deaths, our rapes, our confused pleasure-pain responses (versus Man Box types "finding religion" as just another grift/assimilation tactic, especially in kayfabe circles or executive positions; i.e., a redemption arc rehabilitating abusers; e.g., Hulk Hogan or George W. Bush) in search of a palliative Numinous, a *Communist* Numinous that engenders emotion/Gothic intelligence and class/cultural awareness as a kind of second-nature dexterity towards being a better human and class/culture warrior on the side of the proletariat against the state and all its class traitors: dancing with the ghost of the counterfeit, giving Medusa a hug.

One more thing as far as that goes: Simplicity (abbreviation) is just a different means of abstracting trauma and power in ways useful to praxis; i.e., just an arrangement and interpretation of monsters at a given register that we can apply as needed. You already have complex and simple theory to combine with the Poetry Module; what follows is a historical inspection and hopefully future application towards fresh histories. Per the regulation of sex and force for or against

the state and its Cartesian dialogic, monsters aren't just threats ("Alright you primitive screwheads! Listen up!"); they're poetic lenses that concern power as something to paradoxically shift *away* from state forces, mid-struggle. They are, like power more broadly, something to interrogate by going where *they* are through performance and play. This concerns war and rape, decay and feeding, transformation and fatal knowledge. All exchange per various human tissues as poetic material—from brains, to flesh, to blood, to cum, and others things we won't touch on as much (e.g., shit).

In turn, all overlap; all are modular and dualistic; all are psychosexually anisotropic insofar as power is concerned, because sex and force *are* power insofar as they are perceived through monsters as us-versus-them arguments—in short, how we function *as* monsters, how we feed, decay or transform, etc, mid-exchange. State power aggregates for profit to induce praxial inertia, and by extension a decrease in emotional/Gothic intelligence and class-cultural awareness. We must aggregate against all of these variables, thus the state's trifectas, monopolies and qualities of capital: through ludo-Gothic BDSM as *our* castle-narrative to weave into the future regarding something we won't live to see—a kind of "bucket list" to give back to future generations in very sexy-macabre ways; i.e., a "spit roast" that likes the very idea *before* the pole(s) go in—a piece of meat *with* agency and rights negotiating its own "rape" in ways that liberate all parties from profit and sexual harm, but play with the poetics, nonetheless; e.g., the captive fantasy with appreciative irony per ludo-Gothic BDSM. As such, the calculated risk should constitute a subversive act of illustrating mutual consent per intersectional solidarity between workers united against the state: to make "rape" impossible by putting it in quotes as a mutually consensual act!



(artist: [Reiq](#))

Last but not least, this cruel angel's thesis cannot reify alone; it takes friends to repeatedly perform these arguments—i.e., relative to state proponents trying to pit us again each other on the same stages, in the same undead, demonic and/or animalistic costumes constituting state force and decay (sickness) weighed

against ours taking root to achieve the opposite function: liberation from rape through iconoclastic art as Gothic counterculture, including sexuality and gender

identity through performative struggle (something we'll adumbrate here and expand on much more in Volume Three). For us, Medusa is androgynous and monstrously humanized; both undead, demonic and/or animalistic, they are able to see, feed and exchange power and knowledge *despite* this seemingly blinding and otherwise crippling monstrous status (demons being more vocal than undead, but banished to hellish spheres).



(artist: [Crow](#))

On our sexy mirror-like Aegis, then, Medusa smiles to deliver their best revenge against the state in various operatic forms. Often-musical, but always theatrical (from classical to industrial, heavy metal, punk to rap; to movies, videogames, novels and performance art), Medusa never settles down; they put "rape" in quotes, saying to their enemies harvesting them, "Can't kill me, bitches! That all you got?" It's that or state shift; i.e., when *Mother Nature* goes grim and actually fucks our brains out. So pick your poison—voyeurism or exhibitionism—until

then, sweeties! Capitalism is doomed, regardless!

## The Undead: Zombies, Vampires and Ghosts

"We are Legion. Our numbers will darken the sky of every world. You cannot escape your doom."

—Sovereign, *Mass Effect* (2007)



(artist: [Untalented Inc](#))

"We are legion" was uttered by the Gerasene demon, which Jesus "miraculously" transferred into a herd of pigs before force-marching the poor animals into the ocean. Yet, the idea often connects to a legion of undead, whose hungry, upset polity threatens the living with a chorus of repressed, xenophilic voices speaking out against xenophobic oppression as middle-class: violent, very much *non*-peaceful protest mirroring Gil-Scott Heron's "[The Revolution Will Not Be Televised](#)" (1971) but also softer whispers; e.g.,

Trace Chapman's "[Talkin' About a Revolution](#)" (1988): "Poor people gonna rise up / And get their share." Indeed, the undead are a radical response to trauma—of radicalization when treated like trash, period—and there exist entire struggles for which America is always the mother country siphoning resources into itself; i.e., in ways that reduce people to mere sex objects and recipients/givers of state force. This extends to workers facing proponents of state rhetoric that must be refuted, connecting this to that; i.e., texts ranging from Shelley's 1818 *Frankenstein* to Ahmed Saadawi's 2014 *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, but connected as well to historical analysis; e.g., Bad Empanada's "[The Iraq War Was About Oil](#)" (2024) highlighting that Zionism and oil monopolies are *not* mutually exclusive. To that, we'll be exploring the monstrous history of such exploitation left behind as undead reminders of itself—from zombies, to vampires and ghosts.

Bear in mind, the number of ways the state oppresses, divides and conquers is without limit, affecting colonial territories like the Middle East, Africa and the Global South, from Rwanda to Vietnam to Cuba to Palestine and so many others. From snipers to bombs to death squads to eugenics programs, *etc*, *nothing* the colonizer does is fair and they fear everything around them enough to kill without question; they *have to* or profit cannot happen. *Our* guerilla-style resistance (asymmetrical warfare reclaiming the Aegis) needs to be cumulative as a means of



developing something post-scarcity mid-resistance and decay. In short, we need to raise our voices—however loud and however soft—to speak out against the daily abuses of the colonized by the settler-colonial project as a fundamental element of Capitalism that will try and disguise itself. This includes lies and controlled opposition; e.g., Pride as something to recuperate by Rainbow Capitalism and something to reclaim by us.



([source tweet](#), anthnyxyz: June 1st, 2024)

Pride isn't a holiday. It's not something we do one month out of the year to serve profit; liberation is fought for year-round in spite of profit. Pride isn't positive thinking divorced *from* socio-material concerns (thus reducing to controlled opposition), then; it's a fight for socio-material *liberation*, challenging the white moderate's argument for "peace" as an absence of perceived tension challenging capital, hence the status quo. For the sake of ourselves and our comrades all around the world, we *cannot*

be silent because Imperialism (as we shall see) does not stay put; it consumes everything, making the world undead. Any intersectional, solidarized statement against oppression matters because it's one more individual as part of a larger group that *won't* divide to serve profit, thus gentrify and decay on loop. We're all, in some shape or form, victims of Capitalism doing what Capitalism always does by design: profit while concealing the nature of said profit (exploitation, police violence and genocide) through dogmatic regulations of sex and force, preying on nature-as-monstrous-feminine. Like Omelas, to victimize one group and turn a blind eye is to doom all groups to such a fate, because the state will always incentivize class betrayal to avoid state predation as a matter of fact. This isn't controversial so much as state proponents serving profit (thus genocide) merely discourage its open discussion. We must do better by setting aside our Judas silver to help those in need not just when it rears its ugly head, but for all time regardless if the membrane is weakened or not, whether Dracula's castle appears nakedly on the horizon or not. The state is always eating behind illusions that—per Capitalist Realism—romanticize the harvest as grim, which we shall now explore the histories of in different undead forms.

Before we proceed, I do have some pieces on Palestine<sup>45</sup> as one genocide among several primary ones taking place right this very second to enrich the Imperial Core (the other being the Congo, but there are others, too). I likewise have future projects planned with Indigenous groups, people of color and other colonized groups if they wish to be included (re: "[Looking for Models, Sex Positivity 5/13/2024](#)"); for now, the history of settler-colonialism oscillating across imperial territories is something of a survey to a much wider problem: the bloody business of Capitalism harvesting nature-as-monstrous-feminine, extending to a broad cycle of gentrified lies that reliably decay into different forms.

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<sup>45</sup> One parallel example is my piece, "[Judas Priest: Invincible Shield and Zionism](#)" (2024). A more direct example, though, is my response to the Israeli crackdown after the October 7th Hamas attacks (committed bravely and desperately against their oppressors), "[Justice for Palestine](#)" (2023):

What's going on in Palestine is wrong, but so is the larger geo-political argument trying to justify it—what is, quite simply, genocide for the same old reasons: bourgeois hegemony. The Imperial Core of the Global North sanctions, funds and incites genocide to enrich the elite, including the one occurring right now in Palestine [at the hands of the state of Israel and its war criminals](#) (Bad Empanada, "Israeli ETHNIC CLEANSING of Gaza Begins - 1 MILLION Expelled in Another Nakba," 2023). This is entirely wrong on every conceivable register (and demonstrates how nation-states exist purely to serve the profit motive). Palestine is in the right, Israel is not; even when Hamas becomes indiscriminate in their killings of Israeli citizens, you must remember that said citizens are occupiers of stolen land taken through lies and by force—i.e., the ethnostate using its own women and children as human shields during an unlawful occupation that has been ongoing for over seventy years (with the United States' financial backing and geopolitical support). [...]

I, for one, will not stand idly by while the same old proponents of Imperialism make the same old tired arguments to serve the elite. These are people's lives, ground into dust by the great machine of capital as having become an ever larger and more fearsome monster as time goes on. Even if those in the present fall into the state of exception, targeted for termination inside state-manufactured prisons by old ghouls like the American establishment (the mother territory) and her allies, we should not be silent as they siphon all life from the land and its peoples, places and ecosystems; the elite and their supporters need to be exposed for what they are: the Great Destroyers of our age, the ultimate threat to all life on the planet purely to enrich the smallest number of persons they can. In line with today being Friday the 13th, think of the elite (and nation-states) as the undying slasher that both never seems to die but is always in decay. Israel is fascist, and fascism is Capitalism in decay. American Liberalism and the neoliberal market demand eternal crisis that leads to decay that must be aided and supported. To that, the Israeli state is the 21st century version of the Nazi war machine (echoing Hitler's beerhall putsch [and later his war into Poland and Russia appeased by Britain and America] as they shove into Gaza). War pimps and jailors speaking pretty words, the enablers of Israel are little more than murderers who come to you with smiles. They will destroy the Global South and then set their sights (and mercenaries) on the Global North (which is already a police state rife with fascism) as the Imperial Boomerang sails home. Fuck them ([source](#)).

Also consider "[Bushnell's Requiem: An Ode to a Martyr](#)" (2024) and "[Remember the Fallen: An Ode to Nex Benedict](#)" (2024) as encapsulated in "[Psychosexual Martyrdom](#)" and "[A Note About Canonical Essentialism](#)." Geography is not destiny or moral; we are not expendable in light of state aims. Furthermore, as my partner Bay says, "We should not live in a world that requires human sacrifice to make an important political statement on the value of human life." Never let them forget that—that we are human and they, the state and its defenders, are the worst sort of ghouls draining nature to try and cheat death/consolidate power in vertical, pyramid-style arrangements!

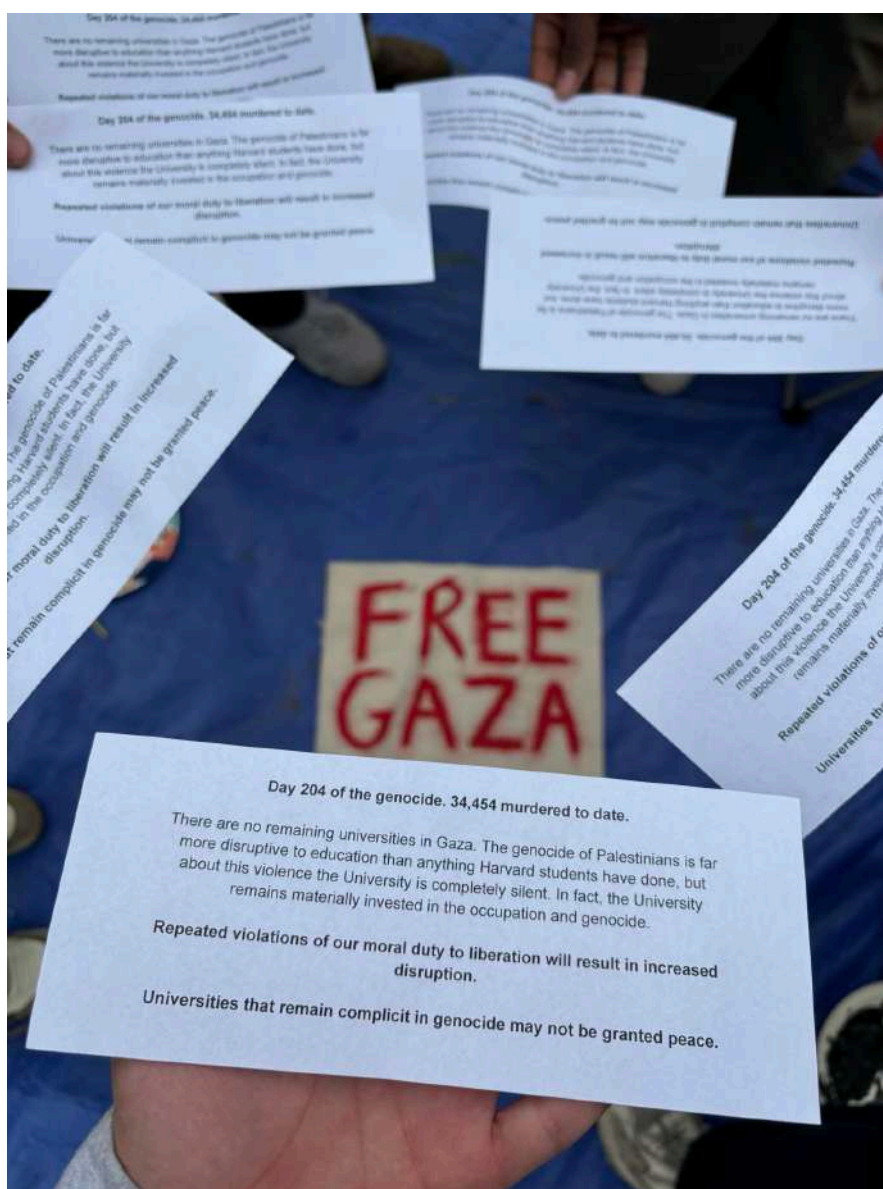
As such, the oppressed become an *army* of undead, their counter history standing *against* state forces (the latter making hay as a matter of denying genocide, not simply during it); i.e., in acts of solidarity through our art as reclamatory and iconoclastic: as part of a pedagogy of the oppressed as undead ("those who suffer have no voice"). These apocrypha can be zombies, vampires, and ghosts, whose combined, nightmarish abuse (and voracious eroticism) shall be explored in the following two chapters (and their subchapters):

- **Bad Dreams; or, Surviving the Zombie Apocalypse** [parts one](#), [two](#) and [three](#) explore the giving and receiving of state trauma through undead bodies; i.e., various aspects of military urbanism/state decay at home and settler colonialism abroad, as well as how to reclaim these devices and use them to freeze our enemies in place inside the state of exception (re: Athena's Aegis).
- **They Hunger; or, Reintroducing Liminal Expression through Undead Feeding Vectors** goes beyond zombies, using [parts one](#) and [two](#) to consider the feeding mechanisms of vampires, ghosts and their human counterparts to confront and express state trauma/decay with.

Bear in mind, we'll only be able to scratch the *surface* of what American Liberalism, Capitalism, and establishment politics do on a daily basis: deny the ongoing execution of genocide, which they help enact the world over! We want to challenge that in ways that sing against state forces and their aims; re: our Song of Infinity as part of an older historical-material tradition: to sing against the storm of state operations killing people and nature by design (from Volume Two, part one):

As Bay shared with me, "Kiwis are bird rats"; i.e., Nature's idea of Jewish revenge hunted by the likes of smug men like Karl Jobst or Christoph Waltz (the former sucks in real life, the latter sucks onstage): Their steady song of the Earth is *our* Song of Infinity to take up ironically with Gothic poetics against the colonizer posturing as "benevolent" (which includes Jewish ethnostates and their proponents simultaneously denying the Holocaust and reenacting it; i.e., the establishment "Good Jew" instead of those like [Naomi Wimborne-Idrissi](#) as the mythical Jewish unicorn the state *doesn't* want you to know about but cannot stop [because their power is a lie, an illusion]: a Socialist anti- Zionist Jew and journalist). Moderates, including token moderates (e.g., Obama) [and their elitist, bought-and-paid-for yes men](#) (The Humanist Reports' "Politicians, Pundits, & Celebs Get a Brutal Reality Check at Elitist Circle Jerk," 2024) try so hard to control the coverage and paint themselves as good, but they're the biggest cunts of them all (re: MLK's "[Letter from Birmingham Jail](#)," 1963). Luckily there's one thing that moderates (Jewish or otherwise) can never hide: which side they stood for—

no, *sung* for—when the going got tough. We can't *afford* to keep quiet or toe the line, because that's what genocide is: dying in darkness alone, or ignoring those who do while kissing up to capital, to the elite. We're together when we're heard, warning predators off and organizing against them through intersectional solidarity (diversity is strength); i.e., kettling the cops, turning a kettling attempt on its heel (encirclement, but also a kayfabe pun); e.g., the American-Israeli ambilocal complex/academic establishment to sever ourselves from: "University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign protesters have encircled police using reinforced banners & signs" ([source tweet](#): Escalate Network, 2024) is one, [but also the students of Harvard](#) (an establishment school if ever there was one):



([source tweet](#): Harvxrd Palestine Solidarity Committee)

Protests are always violent because the state always treats liberation with violence. To that, we must become a pandemic to the elite—united on every continent, a collective thorn in the side of empire-in-disguise. As such, I provide not just my book or this chapter, but my song as unbroken and unbowed, raising my fist with my friends all around the world ([source](#)).

As we inspect these histories, remember Weber's maxim on the monopoly of violence (and in connection to it, Asprey's paradox of terror and Crawford's invention of terrorism *vis-à-vis* the Neo-Gothic mode): Any undead representation of worker interests automatically becomes seditious; the state legitimizes its own violence against the oppressed, delegitimizing any violence performed by those defending themselves from state control, the latter dressed up as "love<sup>46</sup> language" that treats the former as inhuman, alien, and fetishized; i.e., during us-versus-them *Amazonomachia* using the ghost of the counterfeit (the lie of state sovereignty) to further the process of abjection inside the state of exception.

Just as Capitalism sexualizes everything, its reversal (using Athena's Aegis) sexualizes whilst looking beyond short-cited blindness. Or as my PhD writes,

Despite their poetic nature, performance and play are an absolutely *potent* means of expressing thus negotiating power through the Gothic mode (its castles, monsters and rape scenarios); a polity of proletarian poets can negotiate future interrogations of unequal power within the Gothic imagination as connected to our material conditions: one shapes and maintains the other and vice versa. As such, my own contributions to the Gothic are very much about making it sexual again, but also sex-positive in ways that Radcliffe (and her own venerated castle's praxial inertia) were not ([source](#)).

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<sup>46</sup> A note about necrophilia and sodomy as highly contentious terms: Whereas this volume explores xenophobia and xenophilia at length, it does so within the parent dichotomy of canon vs iconoclasm. Class struggle, then, treats xenophilia as ironic in terms of meting out love and affection to stigmatized groups; i.e., those treated as undead by the state. However, "necrophilia" is historically a confusing term, more of a misnomer when used by the elite than any kind of accurate depiction of actual sex-positive behaviors. Technically fucking a "zombie" is necrophilia, but if the person isn't actually braindead and has the ability to consent then it's not historically what we be called necrophilia (outside of Gothic circles).

Figurative, tricky usage aside, my application of the word will either be to highlight its misnomic usage by state proponents, or to stress the simple fact that beings perceived as "dead" are being fucked in *some* shape or form: either by the state in a coercive sense or by the proletariat trying to recover their lost humanity while identifying *as undead* in xenophilic creations: "Fuck this zombie cunt," being—true to form—an ontological paradox that must use a word that doesn't quite fit; i.e., "technically, sort of, not really but the word stuck, so..." "Sodomy" falls under the same bailiwick, referring both to the xenophobic legends about queer people in Neo-Gothic discourse as criminals/outsideers, as well as the xenophilic reclamation of these same monster stories; i.e., the gay "feeder" of essence for or against state interests; e.g., the vampire or werewolf as a queer metaphor for homosexual men.

Per ludo-Gothic BDSM, this playfulness involves the confronting of trauma in different monstrous forms, including the undead as the traumatized eaters of sex in ways that express power and move it in different directions; i.e., through knowledge and the basis of oppositional synthesis: girl talk (anger/gossip), monsters and camp. So whereas demons are made, summoned or found insofar as power and knowledge are forbidden *and* exchanged, undead embody trauma while freezing and feeding as a means of uniting together *against* state trauma.

To that, the eyes are a common means of the undead doing so; i.e., a doorway to the soul as something less fixed and more open to performative debates that invite the potential for horror as serious and silly to varying degrees; e.g., Shelley's *Frankenstein* summing it up well: "his teeth [were] of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set" ([source](#)); but as usual, they also go both ways, becoming a potent means of camp: laser-beam bedroom eyes—headlights to freeze one's deer-like prey in!



In turn, this can be lampooned to death, but this paradoxically—like the vampire as suitably animate *and* inanimate—yields an odd kind of life unique to human communication and conditions.

To quote Willem Dafoe (above):

The actor said of the *Speed 2: Cruise Control* performance:

A lot of people give me a hard time about that. They tease me about the size of my performance, that it was over the top. But I swear to God, I stand by that performance because there was no other way to do it. I've got a pretty flexible face, an expressive face.

And I don't censor it, I let it do its thing. I don't put on faces, but I know for a fact that my face can do some really extreme things. And so when you freeze it into a meme, yeah, you can get a lot of

laughs out. That's for sure ([source](#): Bronwen Winter Phoenix' "Willem Dafoe Stands by Performance in *Speed 2*," 2024).

In short, the Gothic lives and dies by such campy potential unfettered, but there's a lot of wacky devices at play to remember and not all of them work into a given performance!

Specifically keep the module thesis argument in mind, as I won't have time to set it up and stress it neatly per monster type as *undead* (re: our modular thesis):

Capitalism achieves profit by moving money through nature; profit is built on trauma and division, wherein anything that serves profit gentrifies and decays, over and over while preying on nature. Trauma, then, cultivates strange appetites, which vary from group to group per the usual privileges and oppression as intersecting differently per case; i.e., psychosexual trauma (the regulation of state sex, terror and force) and feeding in decay as a matter of complicated (anisotropic) exchange unto itself, but also shapeshifting and knowledge exchange *vis-à-vis* nature as monstrous-feminine: something to destroy by the state or defend from it (and its trifactas, monopolies, etc) using the same threatening aesthetics of power and death, decay and rape.



(artist: Fritz Willis)

As such, *bearing pain* and *feeding* is anisotropic; trauma makes us decay/corrupt as monstrous-feminine or fascist (token or not), albeit in ways that cause us to develop undead feeding habits that are to some degree sex-positive or sex-coercive. It's seldom clean, too, lurking in the odd grey area of the theatre

stage and monster costume. Nor are these forces unique to neoliberal Capitalism, with past poets closer to death, rape and raw sexuality and taboo bodily functions (re: shit, cum, barf, birth, whatever) in ways we're alienated from *now* (save in fetishized forms that serve profit): relegated to household spaces that close us off and expose us to patriarchal, Man-Box-style predation. Hauntology lets us brush up with the past as nostalgic in ways that never existed *and* push towards Communism

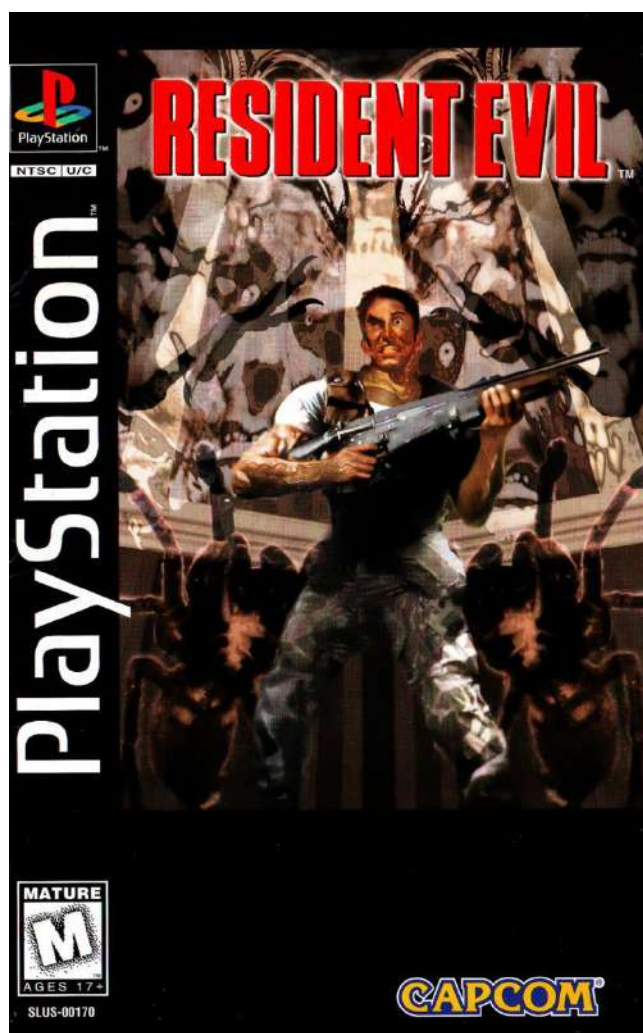
as aborted by capital/the *project* of abjection (and other Gothic theories). Such fictional outrages postulate uneasy hypotheticals about what you would have done during a genocide "back then": what you're doing right now (doubly so given the flow of information in the past was more controlled than the Internet currently is)!

So far in the book, we've discussed Fisher's maxim regarding Capitalist Realism at various points: "It is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of Capitalism." Now I want to apply it to the historical-material expression of the zombie as a kind of myopic, "unimaginable bad dream": the (eco)fascist nightmare of the zombie apocalypse (we'll briefly touch on eco-fascism *here*, but return to it in Volume Three, Chapter Five). Faced with this nightmare, our goal is to humanize it in xenophilic language that enjoys the fantasy as something to critique (re: Sarkeesian)—i.e., to empathize with the wretched without ignoring their state-supplied undead brands (the spectral nature of the neither-living-nor dead as spreading like a virus, in linguo-material terms). Our emphasis (for the upcoming chapter) is bad dreams, so camping canon will focus on unironic state harm as something to overcome inside of itself; i.e., the liminal hauntology of war as a place

to seek out trauma in theatrical forms that we must, ourselves, subvert within the home as broken, haunted, occupied by undead trauma as nostalgic. This can certainly *be* comedic in nature, but I find overtly comedic forms of zombie narratives to be somewhat empty in terms of their parody (re: *Shaun of the Dead*, 2004). In short, their eyes are blind, and we need something that not only can see the truth of things, but whose teeth have bite!

(artist: Bill Sienkiewicz; [source](#): Jason Faulkner's "[What's the Deal with the Original Resident Evil Cover Art?](#)" 2019)

"When it comes to living, no one seems to care! When it comes to wanting out, those with power will be there!" The rise of the living dead is a call to violence in both directions (re: Mattheson). Civil conflicts erase neat distinctions of inside/outside or





correct/incorrect, hyphenating them mid-turmoil to constitute a dangerous, aggravated confusion: a residence *unfriendly* to those who feel foreign, thus unwelcome inside it. And yet, the productive idea of crisis is that, on an *anisotropic* viral level, undeath comments on the dogmatic sickness/decay of society as embodied with irony or without; i.e., the *unheimlich* (sick home) raised in defense of workers or the state plaguing them through various comorbidities leading to collective, *compound*, generational harm inside the liminal hauntology of war's state of exception: the state is eating people *closer* to the nucleus more indiscriminately! And all the while various undead appear for or against the state; i.e., inside the castle grounds as a confusing site of psychosexual violence both canonical and campy using the same general aesthetic: trauma and feeding.

This includes zombies, vampires and ghost's feeding mechanisms and vessels for psychosexual trauma. As we shall in the very next chapter, zombies often double ourselves or those we love inside a home that—per the Gothic tradition—is also doubled to say something troubling about itself that is normally buried; i.e., a bad dream that rises up out of Hell.

To this, we must become at home with trauma, exposing its walking corpse in places that are less devoid of undead things walking about than we care to admit; i.e., those scheduled to either give or receive violence in an undead sense, including ourselves! We can feel dead<sup>47</sup> for these reasons; or we can feel lobotomized during Capitalist Realism, conditioned only to consume in a world that does its best through the dead malls and brainless franchises of Zombie Capitalism to keep us asleep *and* hungry for food that keeps us braindead; i.e., infected with the virus of pro-state sentiment (which comes with an inability to imagine anything outside of the fever-like crisis): defending the nuclear family by abjecting its built-in



decay. Our own psychosexual appetites (and penetrative-penetrated feeding methods, giving and receiving sexual force) must challenge those, but they often overlap like a bad dream.

(artist: [Silk Angelo](#))

<sup>47</sup> The first thing Kain says in *Alien* is "I feel dead," commenting on the Job-like stresses the company puts on its workers.

## Bad Dreams, or Surviving the Zombie Apocalypse

"Fuck the fucker. I told him not to go downstairs."

—C.J., *Dawn of the Dead* (2004)

This chapter concerns the bad-dream function of zombie apocalypses revealing and concealing state oppression. Per the Gothic, there is a class-cultural psychosexual element; i.e., the body as something to rape and rape *with* in relation to the home as sick. Live burial, Eve Sedgwick further contends in *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, concerns libido as necrotic and tied to the ancestral home as voracious; i.e., the *idea* of live burial, wherein victims of state collapse become digested by the decaying home or some extension of it: castle-like bodies, knights and Amazons working as cops to supply the state with its necessary entropy and us-versus-them victims (of which it treats as "terrorists," which it negotiates with using automatic violence). It's all rather poetic and something for Communism to reclaim from capitalistic forms abusing the same poetics borrowed from the imaginary medieval past. So while the apocalypse *is* an uncovering of trauma through the things that are normally exploited, *Gothic Communism* is a psychosexual transfer of power towards workers, mid-revelation; i.e., standing against the state amongst those more oppressed through liberation with bodily pride (often as a literal billboard, below) as an act of genderqueer defiance! All peoples must be free, no exceptions! Genocide is wrong!

This famously contains the outlaw as masked, of course, but also anonymous in ways that remain after the face and body *are* exposed. It becomes a means of flashing those in/with power through our agency as something to see, show and conceal different things while, at times, literally putting out as a means of putting our code out there: show skin; watch Nazis (which white moderates functionally are) shit themselves; repeat. Simply put, we expose state defenders by pissing them off, and nothing pisses reactionaries and moderates off more than outspoken



sex workers standing up for themselves and other oppressed groups. If you're not pissing Nazis or Joe Biden off, then you're not doing it right!

(exhibit 34c1a2a: Artist: [Crow](#). *Zombies and other undead concern messages of revenge for or against the state; e.g.,*

Nazis cowardly<sup>48</sup> seeking revenge for capital by appearing logical, strong and merciless against its enemies, and workers bravely rising up to achieve a proletarian revenge by dismantling the state [and its Cartesian dogma]. All undead embody language as a kind of anisotropic virus, then, insofar as it can be used to infect people with different ideas—in duality to become as any monster does under such circumstances: doubled during oppositional praxis, mid-argument/confrontation.



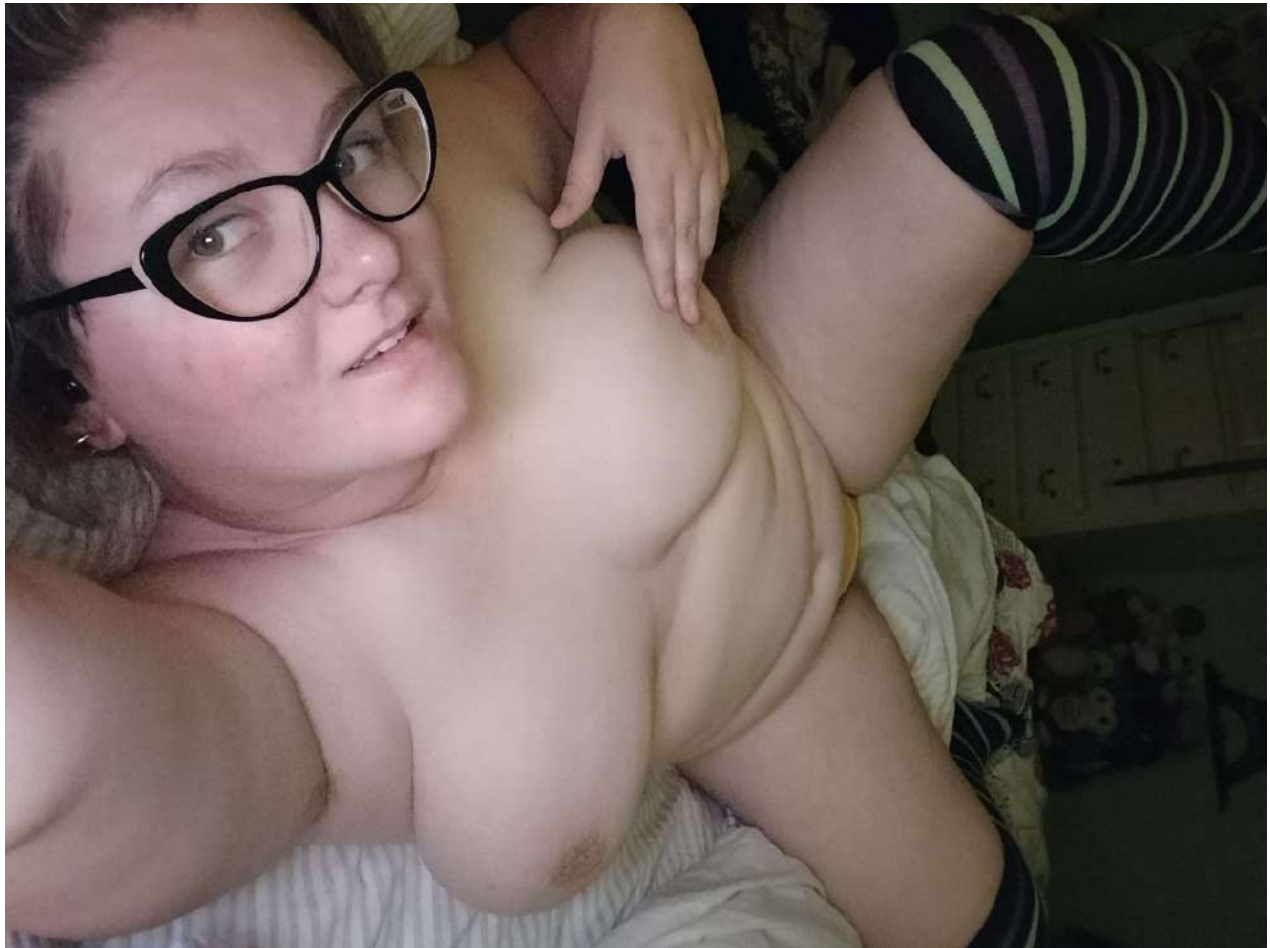
[artist: [Crow](#)]

To that, Crow's cryptonymy—the semi-degrading writing on his skin; e.g., "milk bag #1/#2" and "bimbo" as a self-appointed form of appreciate irony through the agency of calculated risk [where I lovingly "ravish" my good, sweet boy during consent-non-consent exactly the way he likes]—is like any zombie's, capably

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<sup>48</sup> State puppets aren't brave, they're complicit—are so horrible that no one in their right mind would want to support them or stay by their side; i.e., real divorced-dad energy as part of a grift, a hill to die on; e.g., Bad Empanada Live's "[Destiny & Loner Box's Deadbeat Dad Journey to Israel](#)" (2024). Let them, reminding those who look on our nude bodies that they aren't for sale, nor destined to serve as zombie-like slaves to such men; they serve to rebel *against* them time and time again—as a circle that, coming round and round, pushes said abusers to the dustbin of history. Only cowards kill, enslave and/or rape women and children; only sad, pathetic hypocrites defend such butchery (killer virgins falling victim to the state promise of sex, essentially). Let them pay for it with our company among others reminding them what *they* have given up—their humanity and our trust!

*showing and concealing his own apocalypse per the double operation of cryptonymy as speaking with others less fortunate making up the same collective voice; i.e., the showing of one's skin and vulnerability mid-solidarity with other oppressed groups as a pedagogy that challenges state powers. This is an act of impeccable bravery against those who are not brave, distracting and overwhelming the abuser as someone whose power can be divided by different groups all at once: "I'm here! Fuck with me!")*



(artist: [Crow](#))

To that, Capitalism alienates and sexualizes everything through Gothic poetics, the larger mode concerning the burial ground as the violently erotic home: the fearsome place of unchecked rape, of unironic predation in ways that have only worsened uniquely following the end of the French Revolution (re: Foucault). For the middle class, then, this becomes a dogmatic argument of shelter to defend *from* alien sex and force with abjecting degrees of extreme prejudice; for the alien/monstrous-feminine, such devices are turning inside-out, facing correct/incorrect as hyphenated to varying degrees of hyphenation during an apocalypse, a revelation, an uncovering of traumas that have developed through

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capital as growing into an increasingly alienizing and fetishizing force against nature coming home to roost.

Given its size, this chapter has been further divided into four main subchapters:

- **Part zero, "['Fatal Homecomings'; or, Return of the Living Dead \(and Vigilantism\)](#)"**: Goes over some important points regarding the history and function of a zombie apocalypse, but especially the role of pro-state vigilantism as something to introduce to children at a young age.
- **Part one, "[Police States, Foreign Atrocities and the Imperial Boomerang](#)"**: Concerns the domestic side of Imperialism; i.e., when the horrors of a zombie apocalypse return to the source: empire.
- **Part two, "[Transforming Our Zombie Selves \(and Our War-like, Rapacious Toys\) by Reflecting on the Wider World through the Rememory of Personal Trauma](#)"**: Examines the broader relationship of rememory through personal trauma as an expression of the material world becoming "undead" in zombie-like ways (also considers the formulation of my academic idea, ludo-Gothic BDSM, in response to this lived trauma as something to reflect on: per my abuser, Jadis).
- **Part three, "[the Monomyth/Cycle of Kings; or, Paralyzing Zombie Tyrants with Reverse Abjection, Sex-Positive Hauntologies \(Castle-narrative in Metroidvania\) and Perceptive Zombie Eyeballs](#)"**: Applies rememory and personal trauma to reverse abjection, albeit according to undead tyrants (the Cycle of Kings) within the Gothic chronotope as something to subvert away from Capitalist Realism's monomythic formula.

From the gun-laden annals of the zombie apocalypse inspired by the killing fields of Cambodia (and similar foreign displays of American brutality and exploitation) to Freddy Krueger's knives-and-nightmare torture of women to the war-torn battlefields of Bungie's *Myth* series, we'll examine *some* of these dreamlike scenarios, undead victims and zombie sex toys—including how iconoclasts have struggled to reclaim their widespread use from the state of exception; i.e., by examining personal, sexual trauma and incorporating proletarian "necrophilia"/xenophilia into the poetic equation during oppositional praxis challenging the middle class' regular canonical function.

This function remains constant—feed and deliver trauma to regulate sex and force; i.e., defend the state during the liminal hauntology of war/apocalypse (the appearance of monsters), decaying with said state as its violence serves its usual purpose, but growing more visible due to weakening illusions: to execute unto labor-as-intersectionally-solidarized, said polity wrongfully framed as a hoard trying to decay and regenerate *away* from capital and its nuclear family model (and consequent trifectas, monopolies, capitalistic values). The state will harvest such

things that appear in the friendly, functionally *white* middle-class neighborhood before pulling them once more out of sight again. In the interim, sex and force will crystalize in the usual heteronormative, settler-colonial ways, *per* the grim harvest; re (from Volume One):

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 ([source](#)).

(artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#))

During an apocalypse, the nuclear family becomes brittle, threatened, hostile—replete with the usual dimorphic double standards during state-sanctioned rape and murder fantasies defending the elite through fascist-style moral panics, but also white-moderate exceptionalism ("boundaries for me, not for thee") whose fear and dogma that reliably leads to witch hunts, to genocide when decay sets in at home regarding its endless raping overseas; e.g., the appearance

of the monstrous-feminine as many things, but especially the damsel to rescue and the whore to exorcise through penetrative violence on the same often female bodies (re: Robert Neville); i.e., husbands or *potential suitors* slaying women, people of color and other formerly vulnerable spectres of Imperialism come fearsomely home to empire! Canonically the ghost of the counterfeit becomes something to abject—to capitalize on; re: necrophagy—the eating of old dead stories cryptonymically and *cryptomimetically* echoing spectres of decay per state abuse, its subterfuge breaking long enough to let said monsters appear and walk around for middle-class (usually white/token) American kids to banish again, *Scooby-Doo*-style (re: Radcliffe, *The Monster Squad*, etc): the pre-teen regulation of sex and force on various stages populated with various actors; i.e., "disempowerment" as a form of white suburban privilege to police marginalized groups *with*; e.g., mummies in pyramids ready to choke a bitch, and other threats of pimps from beyond the grave scaring whitey... white.

Joseph Crawford notes how the Victorians were afraid of everything *vis-à-vis* rebellion as something to abject (whitey scared of Hell as seeking revenge for

colonial abuse—state shift), punching the ghost of the counterfeit. There's really no end to the toxic sediment, the American graveyard built on transplanted British graveyards (a bit like Dracula's transplanted grave sod from "Transylvania"). Is it fun? Sure! But nostalgia becomes yet-another-thing to police by white kids (and token elements, not shown below) who grow into functionally white cops that decay into fascist ones: an invasion of the body snatchers in costumes worn in good *and* bad faith (witches vs witch hunters, a concept we'll explore at length, next volume)! They regress towards a fascist "former time," a bad dream to project onto their deeper darker selves as giver and receive of force, which they profess in bad faith to conquer and overcome in service to profit at all moments: through revenge.



(artist: [Art by Bones](#))

Survival (and by extension, "survival horror") is a common theme of the Imperium invaded by its own atrocities as poetically humanized during mirror syndrome; i.e., the human condition (and by extension *social-material* conditions) a complicated process of rememory and reclamation as a lucid-dreaming maneuver

that cannot be fully monopolized by state forces! This is a good thing! The bad dreams of an apocalypse, then, are generally a time to dance and play with monsters, but the quotes around "rape" and "murder" are generally optional insofar as the irony of psychosexual violence per ludo-Gothic BDSM is optional; i.e., as the violence and flow of power can travel towards or away from the state, mid-cryptonymy and decay!

Moreover, such doomsdays are classically evoked in the language of night-and-day—something to put down when the night falls and Hell's dead *routinely* rise from the overcrowded grave (re: the manufacture trifecta) as a matter of postcolonial revenge, the whole lot of them thrown in together as searching for their lost humanity as a *consequence* of Capitalism. Some seek revenge in pursuit of power as fascist (e.g., Skeletor literally chasing the moon in the 1987 *Masters of the Universe* movie, seeking self-actualization as a deifying act); others look for retribution/comeuppance as a Communist exchange that often associates with nature-as-undead being yet another manner of preferential code—i.e., with its own unique history belonging to a shared struggle between workers and the state (Crow loves werewolves, exhibit 50a2) *vis-à-vis* the monstrous-feminine.

For instance, there's the lunar cycles, whose undead nocturnal feeding becomes animalistically "feral"—a kind of lycanthropic madness tied to the moon-as-female ("lunacy"), pagan rites (the March hares, above), *and* a hunter's symbol that often stresses size difference as a predator/prey dynamic tied to vulnerability at odd hours: in bed, sleeping or frozen in fear as lustful, wanting to be topped and bred, Snu-Snu-style:



(artist: [Sandreio](#))

As we've already explained, though, zombies often feed and receive/give trauma during the day when the world turns upside-down. Other undead generally do not—are attached to spaces of darkness (more on this in the feeding chapter) thrown wide; i.e., the eye of confusion, opened and staring state defenders down. There's also the natural disaster side of things; i.e., an earthquake happens, or a toxic waste spill, or a pandemic otherwise

serving as similar metaphors of denial and release: monsters (zombies or otherwise) conveniently appearing as scapegoats during capital's usual instabilities swinging back and forth.

Whether it's with an axe to the skull or a silver bullet to the heart, the state summons its own heroes of the middle-class. The latter then kill such beings to return things "to normal..." transforming them back into tame, harmless humans, subjects, slaves to their own psychosexual lust; i.e., as foisted onto them by a hostile middle-class branding them as criminals to consume during the process of abjection, namely making them criminals per criminogenic, dogmatic conditions that frame GNC behavior as "sodomy" (synonymized with disease, including the AIDS pandemic attached exclusively to homosexual men, at the time): "the love that dare not speak its name," anal sex, tied to drug use and self-harm as a matter of coping with being relegated to homeless positions—to cruise, as it were. The closet's a bitch, even after it's become a tokenized privilege to escape from! As we'll see, homosexual men historically have sold out to push that anguish onto others—to assimilate until they are put down/forced to convert (the euthanasia effect applies to anything monstrous-feminine, not just AFAB parties):

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(exhibit 34c1a2a2a: During *The Monster Squad's* final battle, a gauntlet of movie monsters [and cops] are killed one-by-one. Society is ostensibly falling apart. Rudy, being the Monster Squad's muscle and oldest of the boys, has already penetrated the *Brides of Dracula* with wooden stakes he made in shop class [a gross metaphor for losing one's virginity to "scarlet women"]. With the werewolf, though, he remembers what the movies have taught him to do: shoot to kill, defend society [and police] from degenerate forces.

Wasting no time, Rudy pointedly borrows a fallen officer's service revolver to load a single silver bullet into [the round made by stealing from one of their mother's silverware collections, a sign of middle-class status]. As Rudy prepares his weapon, the wolf man is framed to the left during cross cuts; Rudy is his leather-clad executioner [aping an older "greaser" culture] standing to the right, a kind of mirror syndrome comparing and contrasting our man in white [straitjacket colors] and boy in black [the colors of the clergy and of death]. "Bang!" Rudy says, and fires. It works like a charm, dropping his enemy in one dramatic shot.

Make no mistake, this is a violent, homophobic exchange, one mirroring police brutality in boys like Rudy conditioned to see gay men as monsters [a position not helped by closeted homosexuals being angry at the world, but also themselves]. The film was made in the 1980s and is never shy about its homophobic language, though it doesn't explicitly connect the two [it doesn't take Judith Butler to connect the dots, however].

Regardless, the wolf man's killing remains a brutal, cryptonymic act of vigilante street justice, whereupon the guilty man—having transformed back into a human—outrageously thanks Rudy before dying. It's internalized bigotry by the self-hating queer as laid low by conversion therapy, "ending the curse" in a very phallic, homosocial manner: a gunfight. Said fight simulates an ordering of force as giver and receiver per a heteronormative perverting of queerness by projecting straight

*insecurities onto something to scapegoat, to rape; i.e., the ostensibly straight man proves his outward "straightness" by raping an openly queer-coded man with an artificial penis: bullet dick. Per Foucault, it's just another form of sodomy out-of-bedroom dressed up as justice in defense of the home as straight; sexuality becomes confused, psychosexually violent, hungry like the wolf [all that grunting and grimacing] and synonymous with unironic death; i.e., as a dogmatic means of carrying out capital punishment against GNC elements the state needs to keep its future cops in check and flush in war brides.*



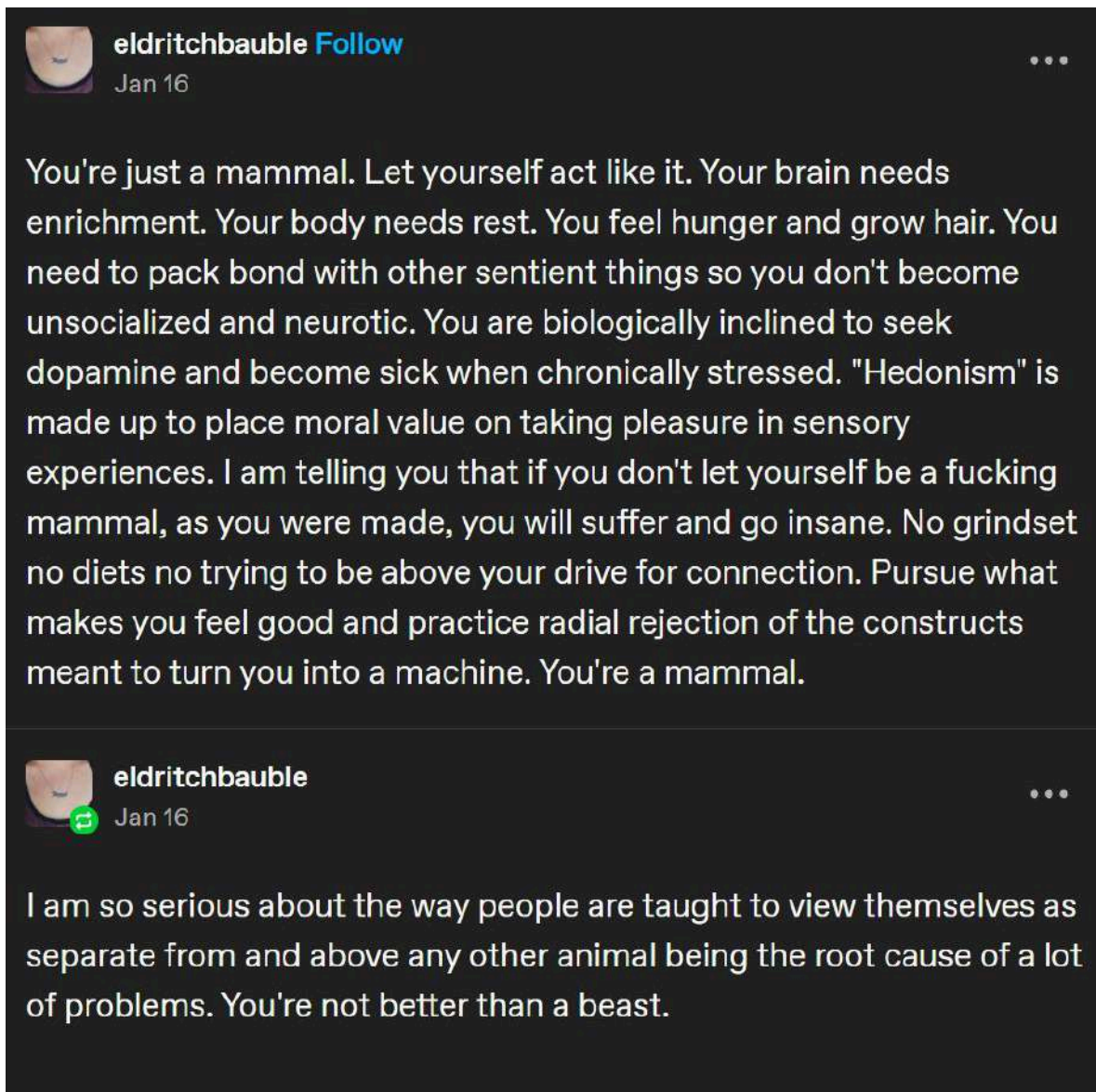
*So often our killers are scared little boys motivated by sex attached to the nuclear model. Though brief, the scene is visibly traumatic for both characters, the fag denying his queer self-as-animal during suicide-by-cop and Rudy forced to execute such a person as a regressive, neocon rite of passage: becoming a*

*straight man by killing a degenerate one as a means of fatal nostalgia, then and now. After he's forced to look upon his work, Rudy realizes he's just killed a human being [and a penitent one at that]. Still being a teenager, though, he responds to the ritual's classic reward: owed sex. So Rudy hops to it, quickly distracting himself from what he's done by assimilating at long last; i.e., returning his horny gaze onto the "loose" girl next door... who he's been creeping on the whole movie. Such Hawthorne-grade hypocrisies are merely heteronormativity in action, folks!*

*To that, the straight perspective is normally the hero's; i.e., as threatened by queer forces as trying to "turn" them. Per the pedagogy of the oppressed, obliterating these harmful myths becomes something to heal from police violence together. It's tremendously important, then, to allow for positive queer inclusivity [versus burying your gays] that likewise speaks to the inverted complexity of queer life under state power and canonical Gothic poetics. In short, it's very different to be queer and threatened by straight violence than the other way around; the latter is bad faith and murderous, whereas queer existence is generally made to question itself in ways that lead to calculated-risk-taking as a matter of discourse: being treated like animals as a rejection from normal society by virtue of being different from the way said society is structured around profit.*

*Shylock, for instance, is called a dog in Merchant of Venice precisely because he is alien in the eyes of the Christians who moralize their own behaviors as moral and generous. The reality is they use their own language to assign exceptions to themselves, mistreating the alien as foreign through double standards that not only punch down against him, but the stigma animals associated with him; i.e., bad*

*dogs and wolves that refuse to behave. It's a means of propping themselves up while alienating themselves from nature/the monstrous-feminine as something to capitalize on/exploit. Ultimately Shakespeare's critique of an imaginary Venice speaks to English problems: abusing the language of nature and animals in order to maintain society as it presently exists under Capitalism when he wrote The Merchant of Venice. Development under Capitalism towards Communism invariably requires reversing the process of abjection to embrace our animal side as something normally alienated from us and fetishized by capital. We can recognize said side as alien and fetishized—indeed, can even play with that using ludo-Gothic BDSM—but we must humanize it as part of nature, not separate from it and "superior" to it as Cartesian thought does by design:*



*[source [Tumblr post](#), Eldritch Bauble: June 3rd, 2024]*

*By extension, all of this has a genderqueer flavor insofar as the dialectic of the alien extends to anything "black" within the settler-colonial model that presently exists [which Shakespeare would have been on the cusp of when writing stories like The Merchant of Venice in 1598]—not just Jews, people of color or unruly women, but queer people at large surviving under capital as animalistic reclaimers of their wild sides; i.e., cruising amid stigma while returning to something forgotten as a means of survival amid enrichment, not exploitation when putting on the wolf mask: hunting for love and connection, not division and profit.*

*This, in turn, becomes a vital means of communicating through sex as something to spill tea with; i.e., among one's friends as a process of surveying the territories through our social-sexual connections to gossip with; e.g., me—even when still inside the closet—gabbing with my girlfriends about who was dating who, and furthermore, our various techniques acting as a matter of pride but also learning through each other. Girls take pride in the head they give, but also the power said giving grants them over the cuties in their lives; this, in exchange, becomes instructional: suck dick, survive, but also thrive and have fun by cluing other people, AFAB or not, in on the means of doing so! Girls talk, and share as a means of survival and praxial enrichment through sex—to feel excited when one of our number meets someone cool [and starts to fuck]. This isn't a trade secret, then, but a social-sexual means of Gothic-Communist development; i.e., by establishing shared trust in mutual action across communities that challenge heteronormative forces [versus tokenizing for them, as TERFs do].*

*For instance, when I starting experimenting more and sucking cock, my*



*friend Lydia explained some handy tips for how to avoid the gag reflex with larger dicks. People who suck dick, when divorced from the necessity of having to make a "provider" cum, simply wind up enjoying it by virtue of it being something to partake in and have fun doing as skilled practitioners of as a matter of value, of skill; i.e., throat goats: "I wanna gag, I wanna choke, I want you to touch that dangly thing that's swingin' the back of my throat!" Get it, girl!*

*[artist: [Othala M](#)]*

*In other words, straight people—but especially men—don't cruise the way that queer people historically would have done/do, and such examples of "sodomy" involve us fags seeking pleasure [including pain] as non-harmful, but often while adjacent to actual harm. Sex changes us, as does death, and in the Gothic the two generally overlap [re:*

*Zeuhl, Cuwu and Jadis radicalizing me with sex]. Faced with it, we find ourselves making curious sacrifices/absorbing new information that shows us what we're made of—old pain, new daring. Nothing ventured, nothing gained, babes! Regardless of the monster type, but especially vampires and werewolves, the master/apprentice dynamic remains common in queer exchanges. Someone from an older generation is categorically attracted to someone from a new, younger generation across space and time—the latter drawn to the mastery and security of power the former offers, and the former seduced by the sweet essence and vitality that the other provides: the maiden and the whore, the lady and the tramp, the detective and the dark prince of love, etc.*

*Whatever the shape, such lords will value all cuties forced to fetishize/maximize their labor value's monetary potential under a capitalistic scheme; i.e., valuing these survival mechanisms versus resenting them [as male Twitch streamers will do, for instance, but also SWERFs at large and even AFAB sex workers internalizing misogyny and using it to police themselves for the pimp]: for doing what capital forces the monstrous-feminine to endure by design. The trauma of settler-colonial domination is certainly there, mid-liminal-expression, but under sex-positive examples becomes something to subvert and ultimately avoid during calculated risk: a palliative Numinous, domming the sub safely regardless of gender or sexuality.*



[artist: [Super Phazed](#)]

*Of course, such things are hardly so black-and-white in reality, and "strength" as a matter of queer virtue shall reify as if-not-equal-then-certainly-idiosyncratic among both parties. However this happens, '80s homophobia plagues queer culture more broadly as something to subvert using the same Gothic theatrics. As such, queerness is a community of misfit survivors drawn to each other as a mixing and matter of discourse melding desire/protection; i.e., we are all strong for each other as a social-activist means of monstrous-feminine expression in and out of the bedroom [and each other]: werewolves [and other lycans] serving as*

*anthropocentric code thereof. These operate with all the usual animalistic preferences, carefully communicating trauma during ludo-Gothic BDSM as a complex means of merging privilege and oppression to synthesize catharsis.*



[artists: [Ms. Reefer](#) and [Ayla](#)]

*For example, Chryssi [aka Ms. Reefer] and Ayla have worked with me to give a shared voice to repressed struggles during calculated risk as a matter of exhibit. One is younger than the other but both are very femme and cute, but also feral and ravenous during sex in ways that feel adorable and hot insofar as size difference combine with an urgent desire to care and protect [to actually do so in ways the police historically do not] as each comes deliciously to the fore; e.g., by fucking like animals/to metal [werewolf or otherwise] while finding peace of mind during calculated risk expressing our collective outrage and struggle to find love and survive in ways straight folk generally do not—especially straight folk [and token fags] in decay defending the state: Nazi werewolves!*

*In short, both cuties look out for each other and take care of their various needs during mutual exchange and consent as normally unspeakable, which I can assist in helping them speak by giving them a Gothic stage to speak their truth with: common ground to find with each other and our straight allies [wherever we find them]. The state haunts us? We haunt them back! It's an honor to be able to fund, exhibit and illustrate my friends as such! Our similarities amid difference is a gift, our diversity a strength to survive state hunters as a matter of pride all year round [a war of attrition, as asymmetrical warfare always is].)*

However one slices it, trauma, feeding and decay are both the result of settler colonialism and its history as an Aegis to show our enemies what for by rising up at all times, but especially when state illusions are *weak*. Any show of solidarity is a show of force in the eyes of the state, which they will do their

damnedest to censor by having us cover up ourselves. We need to invoke the spirits of the dead—their awesome power through our own bodies and their labor value as reclaiming violence, terror and morphological expression from state forces. Simply put, it becomes a means of speaking out while confronting trauma, face-to-face, ass-to-ass on the mirror glass: where one's power is stored, shown, wrestled with—where it negotiates with past histories making fresh ones on the surface of and within thresholds, through parody and pastiche, praxis and catharsis.

If you want to critique power, you must go where it is. Nothing is more powerful than workers in solidarity united in nude opposition (often literally) against the state: anti-Zionism, anti-fascism, and anti-Capitalism, etc, as written on the skin, but also simply *the* skin as something to share and flaunt while concealing ourselves through anti-predation measures; e.g., our identities behind invisible barriers, mid-cycle, struggling against hypermassive objects using our own massive elements abstracting said devices; i.e., our bodies and their labor value as GNC.



(exhibit 34c1a2a2b: Artist: [Crow](#).  
*The dead become a matter of legend that always returns to a present that has deliberately forgotten them; i.e., the Imperial Core repressing state abuses at home and abroad in service to profit. These decay and return, over and over in ways that are hardly new. "The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living," Marx announced, feeling doomed by the tragedy and farce of such gross repetitions. Similar to Marx, Nikolai Gogol writes in Dead Souls:*

*The current generation now sees everything clearly, it marvels at the errors, it laughs at the folly of its ancestors, not seeing that this chronicle is all overscored by divine fire, that every letter of it cries out,*

*that from everywhere the piercing finger is pointed at it, at this current generation; but the current generation laughs and presumptuously, proudly begins a series of new errors, at which their descendants will also laugh afterwards ([source](#)).*

*The way to avoid such ignominious destruction and betrayal by the state as dying and regenerating into new versions of "Rome" (as haunting our dead German and Russian, above), is to listen to the dead as now including Marx and Gogol; i.e., in ways we can possess and camp [taking what's useful and critiquing the rest] to upend state illusions using what we got—our Aegis! "A word aptly uttered or written cannot be cut away by an axe," Gogol asserts, very much of his time when he adds [effectively commenting on the monstrous-feminine]: "There are occasions when a woman, no matter how weak and impotent in character she may be in comparison with a man, will yet suddenly become not only harder than any man, but even harder than anything and everything in the world." Zombies, in turn, inhabit us as*



*mediums to harbor them—oracles to pass forgotten knowledge and trauma, mid-apocalypse; i.e., as a matter of pride, projecting abjected things back onto the colonizer to paralyze them with, thus give us a chance to regenerate into something altogether more humane and away from state designs. It's a mirror game, a danger disco working good faith against bad, one where we chose what to wear and what to take off from moment to moment.)*

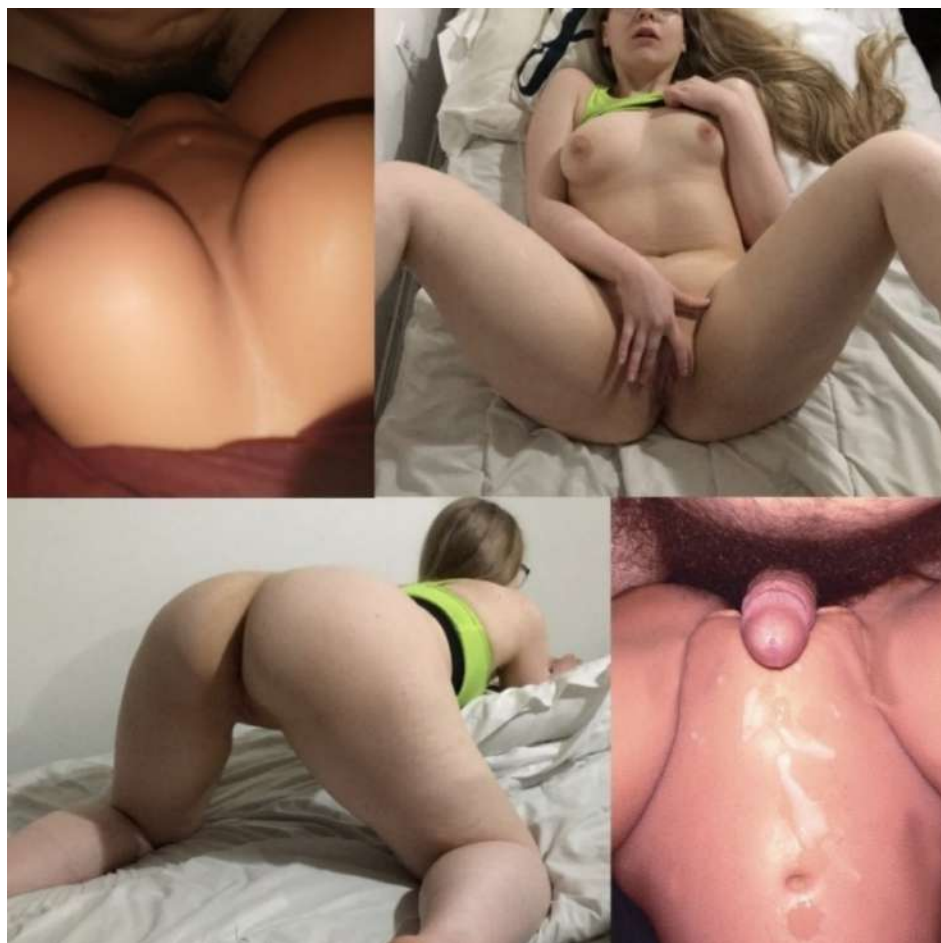
(artist: [Crow](#))

"What a horrible night to have a curse"; the way out is inside of itself as something centrist yarns treat like an Americanized Halloween: dawn signaling the routine ending of the dead's dreadful climb above ground. Post-apocalypse, the nightmare has seemingly appeared and ended, after which regeneration is anisotropic. Radcliffean agents will defend the state while fearfully endorsing its bread-and-circus, purge-style violence and unironic demon lovers; we can consciously subvert all of this through *our* work and relationships—by entering the bad dream as a state of awareness (of "being woke," as the saying originally goes); i.e., towards the violent exceptions the state makes, which we transform the nightmare space inside of itself. This happens by using monstrous language to humanize, thus liberate, ourselves with: illustrating mutual consent in Gothic-Communist ways.

I would argue this process *must* be conscious, active. For instance, Harmony and I—exchanging knowledge and essence to heal from our trauma—work consciously together and contribute towards rebellion as a sex-positive force healing from rape; i.e., while roleplaying undead "rape" (necrophilia) in quotes. It gets poetically messy amid the "carnage" and fluids: deep up in that soft, warm



"danger" as touched by unspeakable trauma, the crypt-like tunnel *saturated* with "death" exploding in the usual medieval theatrics (e.g., the miracle of bleeding inanimate objects), but also hyphenating death and love, pleasure and pain, castles and bodies, rapture and rape, etc. It's not about wishy-washy romance, but getting down to business! Medusa's not gonna hug herself!



(exhibit 34c1a2b: Artist, top-left and bottom-right: [Persephone van der Waard](#); bottom-left and top-right: [Harmony Corrupted](#). The ravishing fantasy just as often uses dirty talk that doesn't translate well to ordinary clothing or photos in bed. Even so, sexting and long-distance play allows for some degree of sharing amid simulation-as-context; i.e., the doll or the

*lover fucking from afar on a fetish as doll-like in relation to the monstrous-feminine body [mine or hers] as like a graveyard-like body or body-like graveyard [a zombie] as much as a castle; or rather the open-secret function of the Gothic castle becomes a theatrical space for rape play and literal live burial during ludo-Gothic BDSM's castle-narrative: the Gothic chronotope's hereditary rites and dynastic exchange apprised of sex-positive poetics and Communist language in ways classic authors would have had to fumble towards. As such, this isn't Oedipus Rex or The Mysterious Mother. It's not a tragedy befitting the usual mayhem per canonical forms. Rather, we're friends helping each other and, in turn, the world—by using our own Aegises to turn state power back in on itself. Any revelation that exposes Omelas becomes further openings, thus opportunities, to widen and execute on top of each other in repetition. Like sex, it has to repeat in order for us to survive:*

*loudly and visibly as a call to arms, to participate in an orgy of revolution [free zombie love].*



[artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#)]

*To that, Harmony and I can play with each other as dolls to ravish as giver and receiver of "rape" in quotes, exchanging money and wisdom and kindness and love back and forth: my edging blue balls choked with passion, mercifully releasing a fresh load of cum that waters their tomb-like mound. Before that happens, I can delightfully slide in and out*

*of their likeness, feeding insofar as "food" is deathly poetic, thrusting and staking their ripe, melon-like "corpse." The entire time, we feed rapturously on each other in ways that benefit us both during low-stakes calculated risk, but also the proletariat through the crude-but-nuanced paradoxical nature of the Gothic; i.e., to challenge state education as a psychosexual erotic exchange/exhibit, whose complicated nudism and genuine affection camps "trauma" as we make and share it together in ways Capitalism discourages: by mixing business and pleasure, art and sex, friendship<sup>49</sup> and comradeship, Marxism and that sweet, sweet pusssssay!)*

Such iconoclastic theatrics, unlike canonical media, can synthesize praxis in a sex-positive direction, leading to fresh possibilities that push towards an older future that never quite was: through the interrogation of trauma as something to feed erotically on inside the graveyard (which includes nudism as an asexual display of "threats" placed in quotes, but also removed from them). There will be unironic trauma, pain and rot; but successfully facing these horrors, we can demask the state as raping us, along with those predators hiding amongst us abusing monstrous poetics to fortify a complicit crypthonymy via coercive sex and force, its disordered thinking and various syndromes (too many to list, each a monster to express in ways we reclaim from canonical sicknesses and cold, systemic assignments of state force, punishment, torture, rape and murder). It becomes

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<sup>49</sup> Harmony took the above photo for my birthday on June 1st. To that, I wasn't able to have a cake on my birthday because my mother had to go out of state a couple days early. So Harmony (and some other cuties) gave me slices of their ample cake and pie, instead! So thick, tasty and moist, and needing to be glazed with lots of yummy frosting (rainbow jizz, taste the rainbow)!

something to escape through the middle class keeping the gate: "Those will with power will be there!"

Through revolution's subversive, horny methods, the human is undead in ways that become not just strong but indomitable/unkillable as we feed, thus grow stronger through our trauma-induced appetites and feeding habits dismantling state power in favor of anarchist forms. The state is the ultimate foe; per ludo-Gothic BDSM, we want to reverse the abjection process through feeding and trauma as something to perform, synthesizing catharsis. In turn, the paradox of Gothic *poiesis* and *cryptomimesis* allows for a fun duality by us as performers and teachers: spoiling ourselves rotten inside a proliferate necrobiome; e.g., "Yeah, baby! I'm a little zombie slut! Fuck my undead pussy with that big Destroyer cock of yours! Rock my world!" Hooray for bad Gothic puns and smoking-hot cuties defying police brutality!



(artist: [Petra Juliet](#))

*Please beware! There will be constant discussions of unironic genocide and rape in the pages ahead, as linked to monster poetics, which we must learn to subvert through the same performative spaces; i.e., with the descriptive sexuality of mutual consent during appreciative irony's Gothic counterculture: our de facto (extracurricular) education as meant to challenge the state through how it feeds—through us as undead! All this is merely something to keep in mind as we enter the scary (and delightful) world of bad dreams!*

Your Commy Mommy,

—Persephone

## Bad Dreams, or Surviving the Zombie Apocalypse, part zero: "Fatal Homecomings"; or, Return of the Living Dead (and Vigilantism)

"Make haste! For it is before the walls of Minas Tirith that the doom of our time will be decided, and if the tide be not stemmed there, then it will flow over all the fair fields of Rohan, and even in this Hold among the hills there shall be no refuge" ([source](#)).

—Hirgon to Théoden, *The Return of the King* (1955)



(exhibit 34c1b: Death art and merch by René Mieville; bottom-middle: a photo of Death frontman and mastermind, Chuck Schuldiner, [source](#); middle-upper-right: "The Death of Seneca" by Peter Paul Rubens. In metal, death is often a delight, something to "rock out" to.)

Part one of "Bad Dreams" will introduce the zombie relative to its infamous return, amounting to the apocalypse of police states, foreign atrocities and all of this coming home for good; i.e., Capitalist Realism

being the result of pervasive social conditioning through canon, whereupon the elite use canonical sex, terror and force as a reliable grounding agent inside hauntological scenarios. These lobotomize workers during the Imperial Boomerang's own return: the canonical zombie as a recycled nightmare, repeatedly preventing consumers from discussing the future save as past, "archaeological" depictions that are useful to the state as bad dreams; i.e., the home in decay as something to abject onto labor as composed of all the usual state victims its usual cops (and token agents) can police, thus rape and destroy when Imperialism comes home to empire: from people of color to GNC and Indigenous elements, to fears of those undead groups (the poor hungry masses) eating the white middle class out of revenge wherever they try to go. This return has a history unto itself, but also leading *up* to itself when the chickens come home to roost.

As such, part zero lays out some important concepts you'll want to consider as the Imperial Boomerang's assorted dead (cops and victims) *prepare* to return. To that, let's spend a few pages going over some broad points, then outline vigilantism as a core component of the zombie apocalypse; i.e., as something to canonically attack and repel back into settler-colonial nadirs. Then, after all that, we'll dive into zombies and their actual return in part one!

First, such scare tactics are the usual Capitalist-Realist kind, a kind of puzzle to solve through us-versus-them violence (military optimism); e.g., per the 2004 version of *Dawn of the Dead*, said dead (and their final revenge) will be waiting for our American friends, even on remote islands! The only thing to do is try to reconcile with said assimilation in reverse; i.e., "get down with the sickness" *without* being a fascist<sup>50</sup>, meaning going into a dark, rock 'n roll body that *upends* the role of consumed/consumer insofar as power (and tissue) regularly flow. And yet, when capital dies and the dwindling survivors outlast earlier peoples, they're left inside an unenviable position: outnumbered by exposed, famished revenants. Eating each other in broad daylight, the return of the living dead offers up a black mirror showing America its true colors—as the cannibal all along (and not the underclass): "Here it comes, Mommy! Get ready to die!" (said song having the

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<sup>50</sup> I.e., [unlike Disturbed singer, David Draiman](#) (Bad Empanada Live's "Singer of 'Disturbed' is Genocidal Zionist," 2024), who wrote the original song "Down with the Sickness" (1999) that Zack Snyder (also a fascist) used in his *Dawn of the Dead* remake. Draiman is both Jewish and fervently pro-Zionist, making him a Jewish Nazi. As NMA writes,

David Draiman of Disturbed has posted pictures of himself signing a bomb during a visit with the IDF in Israel this past week.

Let's let that sink in. If we're feeling diplomatic, we can say that the metal and heavy music community is a diverse coalition of people representing a range of national identities, political affiliations, and influences, and as such there are a plethora of perspectives welcome within. Having said that, as Ozzy put it all the way back at the very birth of our genre, "Time will tell on their power minds/Making war just for fun/Treating people just like pawns in chess/Wait till their judgement day comes." David Draiman is on the wrong side of metal.

While Draiman has been a long-standing Zionist and fervent supporter of the continued carpet-bombing Palestinians at an [appalling](#) rate over the past nine months, this revolting display exceeds his usual classy output by leaps and bounds. His performance here not only cheapens the realities of war, but represents the dehumanization of an entire population of people. It also stands in stark contrast to the many anti-war sentiments contained in his own lyrics across his career. Disturbed's 2005 album *Ten Thousand Fists* critiques the US war machine and the subsequent destabilization of both American families and those abroad, yet Draiman seems to see zero contradiction between [his own writing](#) and the State of Israel's military actions that he vehemently supports in 2024. Draiman has been vocally supportive of the IDF's actions post-October 7th, making proud stances on social media with hashtags like #zionism, #fuckhamas, #neveragain," etc, culminating in the [viral post](#) showing Draiman signing bombs intended to be dropped on the people of Gaza.

People in the music community have had an array of opinions and advocacy on the genocide in Gaza, with bands like Enter Shikari and Dying Wish successfully [boycotting and ousting Barclays](#), an investment bank that supports Israeli weapons manufacturers, as a sponsor of the popular Download Festival, but few have had the degree of shamelessness to gleefully sign the very bombs being dropped on healthcare workers, civilians, UN representatives, and indeed, Israeli hostages. Facing backlash, Draiman has taken to both Instagram and Twitter with [this](#) to say in his defense: "You think some clueless, willfully ignorant keyboard warriors will change [my stance]?" ([source](#): "David Draiman Co-signs Murder of Innocents During Visit To Israel," 2024).

In other words, he's commodifying war by playing the false rebel (as metal—historically a stolen medium, taken from rock 'n roll in 1950s America and spoken through the white British middle class a short period later [the late '60s and '70s]—is full of such examples): selling "rebellion" to white, middle-class America, while playing God, Omelas-style. He's a cunt.

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usual hang-ups regarding the monstrous-feminine; i.e., as something to seek revenge on, per Cartesian thought).



([source](#): Girl with the Dogs' "OH LAWD SHE COMIN'," 2023)

Except we're *hugging* Medusa and letting go of our harmful colonizer mentalities that already have us eating the living dead; i.e., as made into meat that we eat, after which

the state eats us (white America) as a) fattened up for it, and b) as something to realize *as* it's happening: being eaten alive, including by our so-called heroes. In turn, the state turns in on itself as the elite (not goblins or other anti-Semitic labor trope; e.g., *Troll 2*, 1990) fly away in helicopters. They do so, then bomb the very cities they can no longer control. After that, they turn loose the usual, Crusader-style death squads (their dogs of war): attack of the killer (white) man babies LARPing as their favorite medieval regressions (e.g., Tolkien)! We must sicken ourselves (and others) to such liquidized regurgitation, including its half-real grounds for staging further colonization as time goes on. "Is that not why you are here? Are you not entertained?" Time for the harvest/expiation!

Simply put, the zombie apocalypse is a nightmare scenario *for* the middle class experiencing what the lower classes/Global South experience on a daily basis; i.e., when the state of exception expands away from its normalized circle, security becomes a myth *and* a goal, there being no escape or anywhere to run from its hunter-like experts (e.g., [Hans Landa sadistically torturing the incognito Shoshana with non-kosher dairy products in \*Inglorious Basterds\*](#), 2009): veiled hostility at the best of times, but with raw lethal force during the portentous homecoming as foretold and eagerly awaited by vengeful homeland defenders with neoliberal god complexes:



"Pure" escapism (the zombie shooter), then, is both a reflection of reality outside the immediate text *and* a call to violence against state targets by state executioners, mid-purge ("corruption," in this case, being Red Scare inside the state of exception accelerating its own extermination rhetoric inside of itself—per the rise of vigilante, gang-like strongmen that defend capital by cannibalizing the state's population from the outside-in; e.g., Homelander's wonderfully on-point, Nazi-style Superman-in-decay (above) basically being a stand-in for Donald Trump *wishing* he were that fast and strong: "[You aren't celebrities; you will become wrathful gods. Show me a little wrath](#)<sup>51</sup>!"). It is *them* we must indict while making our victimization at their hands (and our liberation *from* said hands) as plain as day: "Something wicked [and thicc] this way comes" (very much a pun for us and our Aegises' cryptonymy<sup>52</sup> freaking Nazis out, smiting them as such—with peachy

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<sup>51</sup> From *The Boys'* Season 4 Trailer 2 (2024).

<sup>52</sup> Capitalism alienates us from each other as a matter of division for profit. So it's very common to feel isolated and sex-deprived, as a result. The idea is to help each other out as a learning experience that aids Gothic-Communist development; i.e., "filling gaps," as Rocky puts it. Per *Tolstoy*, "happy families are all like; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." The name of the game is to figure out what each party needs and to go from there! You don't have to cum to sex if you can't/don't want to, provided both parties are happy, and it's not gold-digging (so-called "diamond dogs") in this respect; survival becomes a means of finding love inside the market thereof (the Austen predicament), women/monstrous-feminine using what they're forced to in order to survive, then thrive as a means of developing post-scarcity! Along the way, love and Communism (and all manner of sex, gender and labor through the linguo-material expression of these things) combine. In terms of individual cases, it's exciting when it happens, precisely because capital discourages it. Good sex/company *is* hard to find as a historical-material effect; our synthesis through better daily habits and achievements go against said effect—with our potent, juicy Aegises (above)!

goodness humanizing the harvest per the dialect of the alien; i.e., as our wagon-like weapons reclaimed from our abusers)!



(artist: [Muscle Mommy Cosplays](#))

As far as *that* goes, anyone who turns a blind eye is complicit, regardless of the medium or the content (from speedrunning to talking-heads-style news to film critics, etc); i.e., the bread-and-circus gimmick as something that turns the public sphere (and its half-real offshoots) into a gladiatorial arena, a wilderness to kill enemies of the state or cover up their dialogs with us-versus-them dreck; e.g., boxing matches documented by talking heads making hay while genocides *nakedly* occur. To that, people like True Gordie from [The Pain Game](#) are dead silent on these atrocities, keeping mum in favor of a return to greatness, of so-called kings-

and-frauds-style pugilism; i.e., bashing the black man in boxing because he's the one thing that men in prison-like conditions can never be: weak ("[Deontay Wilder DESTROYED - Was The Fury Trilogy Overrated?](#)" 2024). It's merely praxial inertia, because Gordie only cares about his own rags-to-riches legacy and pandering to the masses; i.e., by generating controversy on part with the Blues and the Greens<sup>53</sup>. Otherwise, he wouldn't be grifting for the Saudis in their colosseum, now would he?

No matter how childish and cartoonish, though, such violence is always acceptable *if* it maintains the status quo as a matter of take, take, take for those

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<sup>53</sup> Mike Dash writes in "Blue versus Green: Rocking the Byzantine Empire" (2012):

"Bread and circuses," [the poet Juvenal wrote scathingly](#). "That's all the common people want." Food and entertainment. Or to put it another way, basic sustenance and bloodshed, because the most popular entertainments offered by the circuses of Rome were the [gladiators](#) and chariot racing, the latter often as deadly as the former ([source](#)).

Such team-based sports mentalities continue to dominate Imperial-Core thinking under *Pax Americana*, generally with a monstrous flavor to achieve and uphold neoliberal centrism per all the usual refrains, monopolies, trifectas, and qualities of capital, etc: good monsters vs bad. In terms of chariot racing, though, such things hybridize in a cops-and-robbers shtick inside the American police state as a neoliberal phenomenon (Some More News' "[The Deadly, Avoidable Reality of High-Speed Police Chases](#)," 2024); i.e., fund the police, give them parallel copaganda shows that aggrandize them in a half-real sense, and profit off everything that ensues in a 24-hour news cycle.

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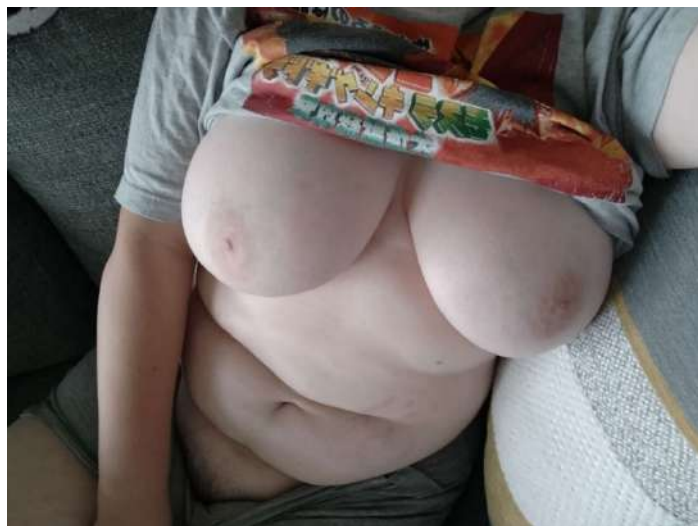
who already benefit from the system; i.e., to the detriment of others preyed upon by said system. Those who recognize this cannibalistic function and exploit it aren't masterful as much as they are primed to abuse a system of thought (re: Man Box) that panders to their baser instincts as a matter of weird-nerd culture: push someone *else's* head underwater not just to survive, but *profit* by being intolerant, xenophobic, and unaccepting of others who aren't doing you any harm. It's predatory in ways that make said victims hungry under reactive abuse (thus continuing the cycle of revenge from the police/vigilante side of things).

There's a million ways to frame power in this respect. We won't have time to stress this individually per case, so treat "middle class" as synonymous with "nuclear family" and "labor" as synonymous with anything functionally non-white per the settler-colonial model, but especially the monstrous-feminine/undead. As such, the settler-colonial nature of "home" under *Pax Americana* becomes a canceled future loaded within settler-colonial violence from the "past" coming back; i.e., the castle as a mortuary filled with the famous walking dead, a genocidal consequence digging itself up and looking to feed *in reverse* (feeding on the state having originally fed on *them*).

Said genocide occupies a kind of "vanishing point," then, one myopically obscured by imaginary wreckage hidden beyond the zombie as the giver and receiver of state sex, terror and force. All exist in the same shared space and its yawning narrative of the crypt; re (from our Four Gs): "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.'" Few things are as censored/controlled as the human body (especially female bodies), which gives the owners of these bodies more power than they might otherwise be led to believe: cryptonymy showing and revealing in equal measure ("flashing" something

we'll examine more in Volume Three).

(artist: [Crow](#))



As such, the future in this narrative of the crypt is always "undead," stuck in a perpetual, frozen state of crisis, decay and us-versus-them, inside-outside, correct-incorrect, etc. The zombifying effect becomes a consequence of older traumas meant to pacify workers using displaced, half-veiled threats of

sudden, impending destruction—usually in vague, violent, cataclysmic terms: the

future is doomed, with Promethean "waves of terror" being taken to national, if not global, extremes; i.e., zombies are everywhere, thus unavoidable as a means of menticide. Canonical "archaeologies" not only welcome these rapid-onset dreams as calls to action; they fetishize the use of weaponized "toys" leveled against the usual recipients of state violence inside retro-future police states.

Apart from a general sickness, the undead are often defined by how they feed in relation to what they eat and where they come from. Vampires, for example, drink blood and invade or dominate a particular site from somewhere else—not just from beyond the grave, but another terrestrial location; e.g., Transylvania. Zombies, though, are not simply rotting corpses that eat brains; they embody the state of exception as a presence of "corruption," whose liminal, transgenerational trauma is either given or received *at home*—e.g., the imposter Nazi zombie or fascist vigilante as givers thereof, and similar invader stereotypes who are made to feel like imposters that never really fit in because they start to internalize the state's hatred of them during us-versus-them disputes (cops and victims).

To this, other fascist invaders can *be* the vampire (which we'll examine in the next chapter, about undead feeding mechanisms) but also orcs and similar, green-skinned monsters with a *vigilante* flavor (such non-white colors code for generalized stigma, but also aggression). In short, they're false revolutionaries taking class war to the streets in *defense* of the status quo and masculinity (thus Capitalism) as "in crisis"; i.e., justifying growing states of exception where these deputized, toxic-masculine killers operate: state zombies vs zombie workers as a matter of dogmatic possession. Whatever the likeness, this generally is a thoroughly abject enterprise; i.e., demons and the undead having far more in common than they do differences, insofar as the giving and receiving of state force is concerned!



For example, Reagan from *The Exorcist* (1973) is seemingly possessed with the far-off spirit of colonized lands, which she vomits up on principle (dyspepsia, maybe); i.e., a bad girl needing to be exorcized of said evil as making her zombie-like, the

bougie mother calling upon holy men to do the job in a suitably martyred, cop-like fashion. It's obscurantism, crudely waving away postcolonial voices like one might a fart. Releasing such class-to-racial tensions canonically works with all the grace of

ripping ass as one's *default* response; i.e., minus the vague pretenses of irony that such bad-taste jokes foist onto the audience, the black penitent turned into the worst sort of spoof: colonial rehabilitation (with James Woods, below, being a thoroughly horrible person on and offscreen) by literally shitting out any spectres of Marx as stubbornly haunting us, waiting to return.

Except, it's not just a feeling of undead invasion, but of one being followed, watched and occupied *by* the undead as something to abject *however* one wants (what Jordan Peele calls "the tethered"). In canonical media, such toilet-themed antics (so-called male humor) leaves the audience with a bad distraction—one made by the usual throwers of reactionary-to-moderate tantrums versus legitimate attempts to move *past* William Friedkin's intensely problematic picture. That cannot happen unless the undead come out in ways that *don't* constitute rejection. They're people, not bodily waste!



([source film](#): *Scary Movie 2*, 2001)

More to the point, these ethnocentric attitudes are taught at the earliest age possible, and not just from a historical perspective; e.g., Jared Diamond's 1997 *Guns, Germs and Steel* as something to critique from a historical perspective (Bad Empanada's "[Guns, Germs and Steel: A Historical Critique](#)," 2020) but also a *Gothic* one tied to similar reifications of what, by the late '90s, was already a very dated concept: white supremacy as geographically essentialized (aka "moral geography" as something cryptofascists call Western Chauvinism, pro-European, and other dogwhistles we'll unpack in Volume Three).

That's where I come in. Whereas Capitalism pits workers against workers (thus fighting each other instead of the elite), *Sex Positivity* likes to challenge this bad education/parentage by focusing on positive justice through xenophilic struggle and tension—i.e., towards desirable goals by proletarian agents who have

internalized human rights as something that all workers deserve. Zombies become something we're presented as and which we internalize; so hugging this notion as something to come home to (and face state rejection by showing up where we're not welcome) is something of a sticking point for the rest of the book series: vigilantism colonizing weird media.

While this inevitably means we won't discuss fascist vigilantes<sup>54</sup> too much in *this* chapter (returning to them much more in Volume Three, when we discuss weird canonical nerds), I still wanted to outline several famous examples, here; i.e., of their gang-like gatekeeping as sold to kids. I want to so you'll have an especially clear idea of what I'm talking about as we move forward into the bad dream of zombie survival stories: assimilation fantasies weaponizing the alien in *defense* of the status quo as nostalgic—of the white, cis-het American family's *childhood* residence as something to stalk the streets avenging through standardized-to-tokenized class/race betrayals. Once fallen, the House of Usher must be avenged!



Of course, there's two sides to every nostalgia—as dead dogma to wake up or keep asleep; it's in the music of heavy metal as much as Walpole's "ancient" castles, the '80s a neoliberal hauntology that, even back then, wasn't so magical; e.g., Sanctuary's "[Future Tense](#)" (1990) reflecting on a black mirror about the false nature of what would enter a state of decay for disillusionment *through* neoliberal media:

What do you see on the news  
when you watch TV  
War in the name of God, or a

playground killing spree  
Politicians promise you the world, and a preacher cries  
All he ever wanted was your money, and a bitch on the side ([source](#):  
Genius).

<sup>54</sup> Their fragile defense is always of a state that is paradoxically perfect yet also forever in crisis. *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

But, let's look at some examples that are cheerier on the surface. Per our Aegis, let's take an extended-exhibit look at something sold to kids that came from a violent past out of the same '80s—the undying and kid-friendly "turtle power" of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (and similar media) through canonical weird-nerd culture; i.e., through a common outlet for said proponents: games<sup>55</sup>!



(exhibit 34c2: Artist, top-left: [Reiq](#); top-middle: [Persephone van der Waard](#); middle: [source](#); bottom-mid-right and far-to-and-bottom-right: [Ronin Dude](#).)

Videogames franchised during neoliberalism to glorify vigilantism in service to state survival; i.e., through fatal, Orientalist nostalgia aimed at kids. For example, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* was originally an independent comic book series conceived in 1981 by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird and produced in 1984:

*The Turtles' beginnings were humble: they originated in a self-published black-and-white comic book that Eastman and Laird produced together in their homes. The initial print run of that first issue was only 3,275 copies, but word spread quickly and Kevin and Peter suddenly found themselves writing,*

<sup>55</sup> There's two points I wish to make, here. One, for the sake of variety we'll be returning to the history/analysis of gaming as a medium repeatedly in between chapters (and devoting larger portions of chapters to it, in Volume Threet). I'm a ludologist and like to include it, just so we're not restricting ourselves to novels, cinema and television, etc. Nazis hide behind all media, so holistic (multimedia) analysis is the best way to expose them.

Two, we're essentially talking about gamers, here; i.e., as predominantly white cis-het (ostensibly Christian) men of a middle-class origin. I hate the word "gamer" for various reasons, though (mainly because so-called "gamers" overuse it to the point of me wanting to stab myself in the ear to make it stop), thus haven't used it much in the book so far. This will continue to be the case, with me preferring terms like "weird canonical nerd" or "white people disease," etc. When bias prevails, just remember that they're functionally synonyms!

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*drawing and self-publishing one of the most successful independent comic series of its day [source: The Mirage Group's "Eastman and Laird's Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles," 2021].*

*As the series' popularity grew, their black-and-white, ultraviolent satire was toned-down and sold to children in televised color—i.e., a commodification of neoliberal, "Zombie Capitalism"/sentai xenophobia defending the streets of New York [and its white-owned properties] for the elite.*

*This is rooted in shameless Orientalism. Whereas the Foot clan effectively packages Asian populations and peoples of color into a single, generic other for the "good zombies" to brutalize, the same zombies' rewards are the status quo as commodified through catchy slogans designed to acclimate the audience to a commercialized, Americanized world: "Pizza time!" [itself a Pax Americana product endorsed by Gorbachev's bizarre, 1997 Pizza Hut commercial celebrating the Russian Federation's troubled existence following neoliberal shock therapy and the illegal dissolution of the Soviet Union]. Any way you slice it, the pizza is product placement, including O'Neil as the redheaded damsel-in-a-banana-yellow jumpsuit, dutifully feeding our hungry lads boxed pepperoni and cheese.*

*Just as videogames took root inside a neoliberal geopolitic, their "totally rad,"*



*dated materialities and associate hauntologies have been repackaged time and time again; e.g., the skateboard [with Ronin dude shrewdly pandering<sup>56</sup> to his audience, below] a Bart-Simpson style form of rebellion recuperated to serve state aims; i.e., punks decay like all dissidents do when incentivized: to not give a fuck as privileged white bigots do [re: James Woods, Richard Dreyfuss, etc].*

*[artist: [Ronin Dude](#)]*

*Moreover, each reincarnation of the Turtles replicates the same coercive worldview for the children of tomorrow to embody again—e.g., Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem's 2023 apologia, "Society won't accept us*

<sup>56</sup> Everything in the photo screams white culture as something to protect from/during an apocalypse: a gentrified suburb where everything is tidy and clean, populated with white kids/teenagers playing pirate under an endless summer's perfect blue skies. It's pro-American propaganda hawking the now-Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

*unless we become heroes." This regurgitated propaganda is heteronormative, justifying apathy within the future as dead, but also myopically trapped inside Capitalism as something to defend, including its colonial binary as crumbling inside the ruins waiting to decay! It's pacification in ways that attack the elite's enemies in defense of a promise said elite will never deliver on!*



*[source: Brutal Ace's "Chun Li Sparring Costume Remake Video 1," 2024]*

*Over time and from moment to moment, the performances become frightened, desperately hyperbolic; i.e., with male heroes shown as hypermasculine and female "waifu" heroes often hyperfeminine, though Chun Li—Capcom's resident "thigh queen"—is a femme cop with masc components: a centrist Amazonian compromise representing China during Capcom's nation pastiche.*

*To that, nation pastiche is essentially bread and circus, including its anthemic, Olympian-grade music<sup>57</sup> and over-the-top announcers. All broadly normalize war and provide social elevation as a privatized process between competitors for various teams, including nations personified by superhero athletes [either in the flesh, or*

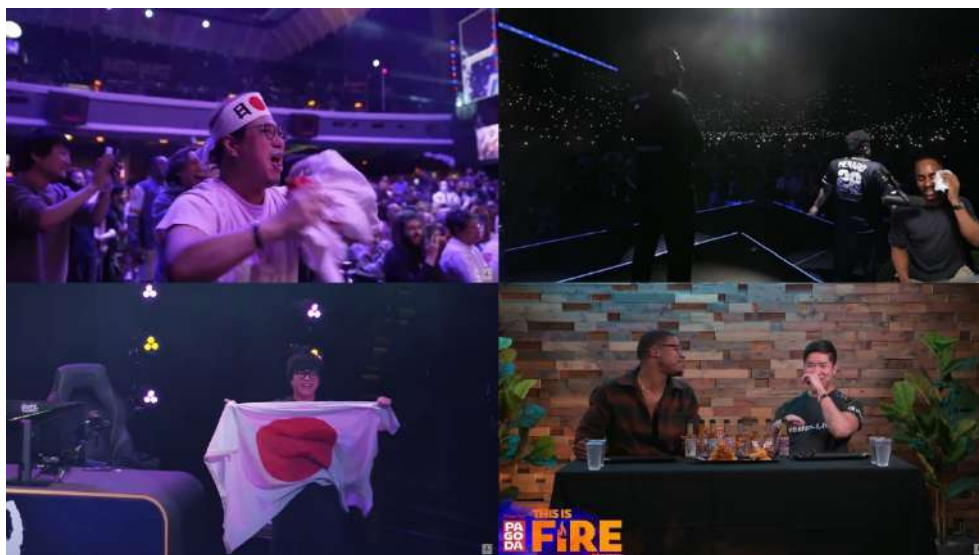
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dead American dream as a freak accident that, under American neoliberalism, will certainly never happen again. It becomes something for future generations to long for and adults to regress into as part of a midlife crisis. It's shameless escapism profiting off a canceled future that, as is tradition, feels strangely dated: a return to greatness; i.e., when your neighbor/childhood friend just so happens to be the hot, tomboy girl-next-door as who likes all the nerdy shit you do, but also is straight from the comics you read and games that you play? Enjoy it, but critique it, nerds; a lack of critique, mid-consumption (George Romero's zombie consumerism), is precisely what got us into this mess!

<sup>57</sup> E.g., the *Street Fighter* franchise; we'll examine this more in "Bad Dreams," part one.

through avatars] and fans of those teams/athletes as predictably divided from childhood into adulthood; i.e., over who is the strongest, the babyface and heel for either as distracting from the class character behind the coercive war theatre [with competition being the most fun to watch—no one likes a rout, including Communists (e.g., Bay and I are currently watching EVO 2023 and enjoying MenaRD put up a good fight<sup>58</sup>; also the fact that he single-handedly formed the Dominican Republic e-sports team, Mani-Pacquiao-style)—but, for the elite means that business and attendance are booming: "Killing is my business and business is good!"].

In short, it becomes an "us-versus-them" mentality to emulate, "taking to the streets" according to the usual trifectas and monopolies; i.e., inside a digital and/or physical colosseum of personified flags, anthems and drama, but also military paraphernalia and generalized product placement [e.g., slave food peddled during the cycle of war-as-theatre, below] illustrating the Military Industrial Complex and copaganda, mid-venue: a neoliberal centrism-as-gladiatorial working through a half-real videoludic on and offscreen. It forces players to turn into heroic/villainous monsters and fight for scraps; i.e., [as NuckleDu puts it](#): "You gotta fight even though you're scared!" [Capcom Fighter's "Capcom Cup X - Top 16 to Grand Final," 2024]. It becomes hyperreal, an illusory map of empire beyond which the real world is reduced to dust [and, you guessed, populated with zombies].



The process reduces people, but especially middle-class people, to paid skills, genuine victims, and unapologetic icons of war that serve profit by moving money through nature in corporatized and national forms; i.e., recruiting and accommodating the world's strongest within a lucrative gladiatorial scheme that endorses material goods, mid-sponsorship; e.g., "brought you to by" Pagoda

<sup>58</sup> From Evo Events' "[Evo 2023: Street Fighter 6 Grand Finals | AngryBird vs MenaRD](#)" (2023).



*eggrolls, a pauper's dish that becomes part of the same trademarked, gentrified signature in a larger body of kayfabe operations banking on war as a product; i.e., a heteronormative<sup>59</sup> spectacle to indulge in [and afterwards] about genocide inside the settler colony's Imperial Core.*

*In turn, tournaments become neoliberal bread-and-circus [videogames] that hoard talent and pit it blindly against itself over and over. Simply put, it's the promotion of war through corporate contracts working domestically on par with weapons manufacturers and military contractors on foreign soil; i.e., with trickle-down mentalities provided to middle-class consumers by being close to professional competitors as "royalty" [the petit bourgeois] and the gladiatorial teams of athletes being close to the power and wealth of corporations ["close" being the operative word, here; the money always flows up and pushes for more and more tournaments, thus more exploitation, hence more division between the elite and the working poor].*



[artist: [Dandonfuga](#)]

*Sex sells as a matter of "easy money" within exploitative practices like videogames being made "for [white] men" from childhood onwards. As spectators/artists, though, we can enjoy this content as a process and even subvert its Amazonian or Achilles-esque persona [exhibit 111b] as not belonging exclusively to fascist/centrist vigilantes punching the monstrous-feminine; i.e., as something weaponize against the proletariat, including colonial scapegoats like Laura Matsuda [left, but also 41e1]: through ludo-Gothic BDSM that overrides the status quo<sup>60</sup> in our hands. Simply put, there are no submissives in combat sports, resulting in two doms/tops wailing on each other in a very homosocial sense [e.g., Spartan homoeroticism] to try and make one party the unwilling sub/bottom; i.e., the sub in sports is always unwilling. The inherent theatre is inherently unfair and deceptive,*

<sup>59</sup> The royal weight-class of a drug-fueled imaginary antiquity plaguing the sports world as—among other things—patriarchal, hence establishing men as superior to women "since forever."

<sup>60</sup> Versus distracting from it through kayfabe rivalries and manufactured underdogs; e.g., even if Blanka wins as belonging to an underdog nation, there's no material change in conditions for Brazil; or the characters being superficial, swapped out by players like alliances in cheap loyalties; or "cheap" characters representing oppressed nations played by "heel" players—[Punk as a golden boy Urkel](#)/"power player" who plays OP characters.

but also heteronormative: gamers—usually boys—don't cry except when they win and get the golden ticket [thus the girl, the house, the respect, the dream, etc].



[artist: [Dandonfuga](#)]

Also, in half-real meta narratives between games, players, and the world, the pursuit of profit combines conservative hauntologies with different contemporary franchises to revive in as closely as they can [e.g., [Double Dragon Gaiden: Rise of the Dragons](#), 2023, ripping off

[Shedder's Revenge](#) from a year prior and [Toxic Crusaders slated for 2024](#)]: a neoliberal mimesis striving to milk the replicated material to death. This procedure becomes the thing to emulate, homogenizing all of the copies as lucrative "clones"; i.e., similar to [Doom](#) in the '90s with FPS, or [Mortal Kombat](#) and its '90s, "ninja kayfabe," heavy-metal-meets-industrial [music video/AMV](#) approach to staged combat and Ed-Boon-style, color-coded "war Barbies" [e.g., Jade, above]. [Even The Simpsons had their own beat-'em-up game](#), made by Konami who also did the [TMNT](#) arcade games and their Nintendo ports].

Similar to [Street Fighter 2's](#) 1991, post-Cold-War replication—of famous nationalized athletes<sup>61</sup> and pop culture heroes making money for the elite through sports-like avatars—it's not so much a completely new thing in future schemes, but a revival of an old approach within a new era of ludic media raising the profitable dead-as-heroic: the streaming/cloud era of videogames being capitalized on by the Faustian sponsor from [Wayne's World](#) proudly admitting he exploits kids for quarters<sup>62</sup> in the Arcade "Golden Age." "He blows goats," indeed:

<sup>61</sup> With Zangief, Boxer, Sagat, Fei Long and Ryu and Ken all being based off Victor Zangiev, Mike Tyson, Sagat Petchyindee, Bruce Lee and Daniel LaRusso vs Johnny Lawrence from *The Karate Kid* (1984).

<sup>62</sup> Re (from Volume Two, part one): "Videogames have, since the 1980s, been a propaganda mill a scam tied to capital. Except, from the early 80s, you went from public entertainment devices that had a bunch of mostly young male clients cycling through them like a pimped out sex worker, to the place of business transitioning to larger amounts of money (from quarters to hundreds of dollars) per customer in each household (where there is more money to be had); i.e., a wife, purchased for paychecks, not pocket change, and ready to implement the business model into the first generation of what would become the New World Order under neoliberal Capitalism: a world enforced by neoliberal, monomythic copaganda's us-versus-them simulations of *Amazonomachia* to maintain the status quo at a socio material level" ([source](#)).



Note how the sponsor's "favorite game" is Desert Storm Commando Warrior, a diegetic allusion to a real-world conflict: "That would have to do with that 'limited skirmish' in the Middle East," asks Wayne, per the studio-provided card prompts. Just as there was nothing limited about the "skirmish," there was no limit to the degree to which neoliberals would try to profit off foreign conflicts; i.e., as something to manufacture but also sanitize/disguise through the proliferation of kid-friendly counterfeits that could charge the student money while indoctrinating them: to the business model the persona of war as sports-like.

To that, the deception of the term "sporting" under Capitalism is the lie that "fairness" has anything to do with it; the system is built for cheating by design, but cheating means different things for the elite versus regular players. We'll explore this more when we examine Squid Game and Alice in Borderland [2019] deep in the Undead Module.

In the meantime, these little Quixotes [gamers] become not just action heroes, but last action heroes zealously defending the neoliberal dream of centrist action fantasies, Scarface-style, as the only legitimate course of action against oppression. Stars in "their own" movies, they're not simply Captain America punching cartoon

*[nominal] Nazis and Marxist-Leninists during centrist kayfabe, which extends to debating real Nazis/cryptofascists vehemently condemning actual [non-nominal] socialists pushing towards Communism; they're the defenders of the last bastions of "good" media, the American neoliberal dream of "doing one's part" by making corporate vampires lots of money by turning a blind eye to real-world, systemic oppression in-text and out: leaning into stereotypes that solidify the divisions between the Global North and South, but also the embracing the fatal, self-destructive, white-Indian-style nostalgia that comes with it.*

*In short, whitey thinks he's Cuban. Gamers in general might as well, playing whatever form of "oppression" lets them be the fascist, thus have a deputized form of vigilantism [something we'll return to in Volume Three] that polices media, but also things connected to said media: a top dog that goes down in a blaze of glory. Sound familiar? It's what weird canonical nerds want to be—a cartoon of a cartoon attached nonetheless to real-world atrocities and tokenization [with Pacino's performance being a kind of vaudeville, the Italian-American playing a Cuban crime lord to capitalize of American Red Scare towards their Cold War enemy surviving after the end of history]: a zombie cokehead who thinks he's bulletproof.*



*We've already talked about this repeatedly in the volume [re: "["Death by Snu-Snu!": From Herbos to Himbos, part 2](#)"; i.e., regarding "There can only be one!"] Yet, the phrase literally becomes the pacified worker's mindset within these bread-and-circus arenas, which I acknowledge in one future revival of the same basic scheme—[Cobra Kai](#) [2019]: "To this, less karate would be a good thing to aspire towards. Alas, the show makes its own argument through the crowd watching the carnage: They want to see their kids win, but there can only be one. That's pretty*

fucked up, isn't it?" [[source](#): "Class Warfare - Classism, Fascism and Whitewashing in *Cobra Kai*, season 4," 2022].

Whatever the form, future revivals tend to sanitize the history of this exploitation, focusing on the early neoliberal era of videogames as "better." For example, though now discontinued, *Neoliberal and Fascist Propaganda in Yesterday's Heroes* originally started off as a single, yet-unpublished blog post: "Policing Bodies: The '80s Action Hero in *Streets of Rage 4*" [2021]:

*Pro-policing is the worst consequence stemming from '80s nostalgia, one whose propaganda manipulates the audience into adapting a cop's mindset. There are two variants: militarized and domestic.*

- **Militarized propaganda.** The myth of invincibility is cultivated by the state operating as a foreign war machine through its population.
- **Domestic (paramilitary) propaganda.** The myth is cultivated through media sold to civilians who support domestic extensions of state control: the police.

A famous example of **militarized propaganda** is Nazi Germany. [Through nonstop propaganda](#) [World War Two's "How Hitler Manipulated Germany into Committing Genocide - WW2 Special," 2021], Hitler's Germany promoted mythic, invincible strength as entitled. While the Soviet's favored brute-force party control and active censorship, the Nazi state chose to manipulate the public through more lateral methods. Despite being tied to a cult of personality that hijacked a decentralized bureaucracy and encouraged competing bodies within, Hitler's propaganda threw its "heroes," the citizenry, at whatever enemy the state invented. This promise of power was effectively a con, one leadership eventually bought into. Hitler may have lied and cheated his way to power, but was nonetheless digging his own grave. Actual belief is beside the point when the mythology Hitler used [led to his kingdom's total destruction](#) [The Armchair Historian, "Endsieg: Germany's Final Plan to Win WW2 1943-45," 2021].

**Domestic propaganda** is equally harmful, but less aggressive. In *Propaganda*, American writer Edward Bernays proposed that wealth and advertising allowed for the creation of "invisible people" that controlled the hearts and minds of the public—a monopoly of engineered consent that, in his mind, was vital to the survival of liberal democracy. Noam Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent* (1988) would outline these invisibles as the corporate groups that media groups are beholden to through advertisers. Such an invisible group is much like the one Carpenter commented in *They Live*, which came out the same year as Chomsky's book [[and which Zizek would comment on](#) in *A Pervert's Guide to Ideology* in 2012].

Unfortunately this group is perfectly comfortable with the proliferation of war. War is profitable. To cozen their way into the minds of the public, American corporations in the '90s used neutral media like Streets of Rage to advertise pro-military and pro-state sentiments. Like Reagan before him, Bush Sr. targeted his population with family-friendly entertainment that repeatedly paralleled US policy as "good." In turn, these franchises grew popular thanks to their magnetic, simple heroes (which, at the domestic level, represented police groups Keeping America Safe). These heroes became something not unlike Hitler's propaganda, or the alt-right groups that emulated Hitler in the US: They offered what Healing from Hate (2019) refers to as "false power," or the feeling of strength (timestamp: 24:30), to those who felt weak inside a broken home<sup>63</sup> [which in Gothic poetics is attributed to a perceived "other"—externally during Imperialism abroad and internally due a foreign agent when Imperialism comes home to empire]. Often, this weakness stems from the tremendous expectations society places on men through their heroic standards [Macabre Storytelling's "Male Dating & Sex Struggles: A Problem In Plain Sight," 2021]. People often play videogames to feel empowered; but videogames like Streets of Rage empower through propaganda disguised as neutral entertainment, specifically cathartic violence. The resulting worldviews (and the fandoms encouraging and protecting them) illustrate a territorial attitude to the whole affair.



<sup>63</sup> Which fascists recruit from, and neoliberals use during videogame canceled futures and infernal concentric patterns (among other media forms) to incite dogmatic, moral-panic violence against marginalized communities habitually preyed upon by state/Cartesian forces.

Consequently, the fandom (and its masculinity) as "under attack" becomes a common feeling for nostalgic viewpoints that present the world in simple, violent terms: "Beat your problems up"; save the world, masculinity and Capitalism. When threatened, then, vigilantes will not sit idly by but instead defend themselves viciously as they've been taught. *Streets of Rage* teaches the application of force through the need to punish others *a priori*. On par with the Power Ranger's "teenagers with attitude," the youthful defenders are strong enough to fight, and taught into thinking they're invincible—or at least impervious enough, through tacit support from the state; i.e., to embark on a desperate, foolhardy Children's Crusade.

Unfortunately this soldier's mentality overlooks the dialectical-material reality of the situation:

- Those under attack by the hero have nothing.
- The relatively wealthy hero is made to think they are under attack by the criminals.
- The hero is doing the state's bidding by sweeping the streets in coordination with the police.

Each mission is part of a violent, player-led campaign into impoverished levels like "[Dilapidated Town](#)." There, the local population is entirely criminal (a fact illustrated by the hero beating everyone up). The player seems autonomous, literally holding a controller in their hands; the game still conditions them to "win" by beating up bad guys that just happen to be marginalized.



This is profoundly manipulative. *Streets of Rage* is not teenage rebellion against the state, but the state recruiting the middle class—specifically their

angry youth—to police those most likely to rebel. This harsh treatment of the fictional poor mirrors bipartisan sentiments about the actual poor. Any anger or mistrust of the poor stems less from actual abuses committed against the player, and more from advertisements that manipulate player emotions.

Being slightly better off, the player is either keenly aware of actual socioeconomic problems (unemployment, economic instability and the shortage of material goods, etc) or told of them through videogames than present things in simple, black-and-white language. In either case, these overbearing issues are replaced by repeated promises: "Things could get worse." By making this promise in-game, *Streets of Rage* primes its target audience to recognize and respect pugilistic displays of strength. Heroes are the only solution. Essentialized as the arbiters of Justice, their repeated shows of force replace more peaceful methods. Worse, fans recognize these violent displays in the police they see as "heroic" to a similar, cartoonish degree (and who generally frame themselves as heroic, too): teenage knights and Amazons [waifus, below] deputized by the local cops through gaming culture as an extension of its own neoliberal media.



[artist: [Reluu](#)]

Note: Eventually I plan to release the entire chapter online, but wanted to include a segment in *Sex Positivity* that feels relevant to our discussion about "undead" vigilantes and the "zombies" they attack—i.e., the crime these youngsters are so furious about as to be "tough on" in the first place. In doing so, the player is performing the will of the elite in a videogame format [the beat-'em-up] that has survived nostalgically into the present: a kind of "zombie vigilante" that operates beyond the law but also the videogame screen as informed by it [shoot, stab and punch the state's enemies like the police do]. The fascist mentality of dehumanizing both vigilante and victim becomes a tradition to pass down to the next-in-line; i.e., a

neoliberal rite of passage for the in-group to prove its mettle, time and time again against an imaginary foe. —Perse)

So ends the exhibit. Before we proceed out of part zero and into part one, please consider the essentialized, zombie-like function of such devices; i.e.,

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)



regressing to a police-like childhood space in decay (as a Gothic castle would be) but having the means to police the so-called "corruption": as something to banish in defense of the '80s as an idea attached to its own canceled future. The corruption is *part* of the design, a kind of policeman's janitorial high tied to monomythic junk food, schlock and deliciously trashy sex—in short, the usual white, male, middle-class (and token) concessions regressing to compromise the rights of others for the "privilege" of policing them; i.e., as a Man Box matter of assigning blame and punching down, thus settling the score through revenge against a hellish, undead/demonic<sup>64</sup> enemy (e.g., *Contra* [1987] and the white, CIA-style "rebel") carried out by the usual benefactors of capital: white cis-het men preying on anything functionally black at home and abroad in a half-real, cop-like sense: defending property, not people, by doggedly pursuing the latter as criminal regarding the former as privatized.

This has a cross-media and transgenerational, curse-like effect. Set to catchy music, the health bars and HUDs return, as do the "rewards," the Faustian (thus Promethean) Beowulf-grade "empowerment," and the "rebel"/slumming aesthetic, but also the self-pitying cop who simultaneously lives for the thrill of combat—of feeling better than those he hunts and down kills—and completely *hates* himself for it (often in sequence over time; e.g., *Mega Man vs Mega Man X*). Puh-lease! It's a LARPer's con, my dudes, one targeting Don Quixote in spite of the ludo-narrative dissonance (real people don't have health bars, but they're also not zombies)! No matter how seductive the past may seem, then, Capitalism *only* uses it to conduct



genocide by making the universal clientele their childish, lethal, somehow scared-of-everything and incredibly bigoted enforcers seeing themselves basically as '80s cartoon heroes like the Turtles (a process aped by different token entities)! They *think* they're Zorro, bravely serving the people; in truth, they're cowards who act tough but concede to the elite—either white knights decaying into black, or just black deputized in search of one Crusade after another in worship of the police and the state (again, *vis-à-vis* Parenti: false rebels). Forever.

(artist: [Blue the Bone](#))

Furthermore, whereas the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles are a violent, sewer-

<sup>64</sup> Per the irrational, imaginary nature of the Gothic past, Hell is classically home to demons *and* the undead.

dwelling gang of underaged crimefighters, the cross-generational vigilantes from *Streets of Rage* are ostensibly *human* recruits working in service of the elite. Yet neither is literally undead; they're *functionally* undead, beating up the state's enemies with nostalgic "special moves" (stab, punch, shoot) in order to regulate sex and force, thus receive scraps from their *de facto* employers (a fascist approach; i.e., kissing up and punching down): bribes toward a vague, assimilative promise of recognition, cheap commercial food and sex (above: April O'Neil's news coverage, pizza and implied "party favors"—"'Pizza' time!" indeed).

The same goes for orcs (exhibit 37e), which exist inside a liminal state as demonized, violent scapegoats during displaced, centrist vaudeville (common hero fodder in Tolkien-ized, *D&D*-style videogames, for example). They aren't rotten but still have green skin, a penchant for hiding in the dark and the anti-Semitic trope of eating human flesh (often of children) while nursing a perpetual animus with the "forces of good." These and other fascist stereotypes caricature a dying (thus desperate) police state exacting a functionally white willpower onto a functionally black zombie hoard.

As we shall see, next, the state is *always* dying and hungry but tries its best



to direct this hunger *away* from the middle class (the decay is part of the package). Sooner or later it cannot, the Imperial Boomerang sending the zombie knocking on *their* chamber door as a kind of undead alien *returning*<sup>65</sup> home to the haunted house as lent (a tired genre for a capitalism as a tired system); i.e., a fading memory redoubling in the face of state decay and cannibalism haunting the same lend-lease territories!

([source](#))

With all this being said, let's dive into the zombie apocalypse as something to loudly exhibit the rotting elements inside; i.e., like a bad dream that has happened many times, and must invoke Toni Morrison's fragmented rememory to humanize itself as outwardly

undead! Time to meet the zombie—not as a children's cartoon or videogame hiding the rot, but in the blackened flesh as something to canonically debride!

<sup>65</sup> Think Lovecraft's "[The Outsider](#)" (1926), where the corpse does not know it is dead.

## Bad Dreams, or Surviving the Zombie Apocalypse, part one: Police States, Foreign Atrocities and the Imperial Boomerang

"I don't want to wake up from a dream / That's better than my life so I just stay asleep."

—Jade Lyel, "[13th Floor](#)" (2023)

If part zero equipped you with the idea of vigilantism/police violence as something to unleash unto the zombie coming home, part one shall now weigh the consequences and history of said return happening yet again—to meet the zombie as something to interrogate and hopefully humanize through rememory as a useful means of dreaming about unspeakable things. Pushed into the realm of dreams, they must be taken from said dreams and reassembled while awake; i.e., per Toni Morrison's definition (from *Beloved*, 1989):

Rememory<sup>66</sup> 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 ([source](#)).

Eventually the zombie must wake up and face its own decay as a class-conscious, intersectionally solidarized act (not just African Americans/pan-Africanism) extending to culture war and social-sexual expression per ludo Gothic BDSM on a global scale.



Thanks to capital, such apocalypse

fantasies are pervasively common, and there's no way to engage/play with and assemble them without some degree of trauma and confusion. Insofar as sex and force are powerful motivators, *zombies* are an element of social-sexual conditioning whose particularly imperiled headspace exists per settler colonialism as *built* to decay over time.

In short, there is always a return, the black side overtaking the white as a matter of planned collapse, which the elite will use to withdraw and plan their revenge through the middle class (the usual gatekeepers) raping the zombie on

<sup>66</sup> To my knowledge, Morrison's usage of the word "rememory" is primarily a noun. When using it in verb form, I will adjust it to "reremember."

command; i.e., through police action as already synonymized with lethal force defending property using fear and dogma. This subchapter on the Imperial Boomerang will explore the challenging thereof, outlined in three further divisions (we gotta keep things bite-sized—to make sure your brains can absorb all this, but also so I can get through it):

- "**part one: Survival (feat. *Night of the Living Dead*, *Left 4 Dead*, and *The Last of Us*)**": Considers the dialectic of privilege waged against the alien dead when the chickens come home to roost. Defines the zombie, Imperial Boomerang and state of exception, then considers the ways in which zombies are policed through sex and force, mid-apocalypse; i.e., something abject to attack and divide, blowing apart/away with guns and otherwise dismembered as a form of pro-state discourse.
- "**part two: *Cryptomimesis* (feat. *The Last of Us*, *Scooby Doo*, and *more*)**": Explores various stories that repeat on echo (through *cryptomimesis*) to normally divide workers too scared to face the consequence of state operations (zombies); i.e., how such things can be reclaimed from state monopolies, while nevertheless weighing on our minds (awake or not).
- "**part three: Rememory (feat. *Beloved*, *Frankenstein*, and *The Last of the Mohicans*, and *more*)**": Examines the ways zombie apocalypse stories can be interrogated; i.e., as haunting our literal dreams, and where death/tokenization under capital can be reassembled and confronted after we wake up—as a polity/being to humanize and question per Toni Morrison's process of rememory (through my personal experiences with the idea and writing this book).



Reclaiming the zombie's agency through ludo-Gothic BDSM means coming to grips with the fact that it has been raped and made undead to begin with—not once, but over and over as the Imperial Boomerang sails home to exact a revenge argument (of *Amazonomachia*) on state workers: suffering to the conquered (a bourgeois strawman for genocidal victims, which the middle class attack at home per the process of abjection punching the ghost of the counterfeit). Per a humanized Medusa, though, Athena's Aegis can reverse the flow of power (thus force regarding sex) in ways that don't wait until then, and have more sex-positive, transformative results throughout:

(artist: [Alexa](#))

As we shall see, this whole procedure is ontologically complicated, but especially the mirror-like zombie's synonymizing with rape-as-undead—its compartment syndrome leaking unspeakable trauma *above* ground; i.e., feeling dead after sensing such decay in other people, other places, other times, as half-real, but also dream-like. Such remediation represents the far-off memory of genocide as both fleeting and falling apart, challenged by unspeakable trauma as something to face (along with its repressed abuse), then smash apart—per capital's daily operations—to banish said memories to a state of stalled apocalypse: oblivion. Capitalists rely on such terror devices to instill reactive violence (survival mechanisms) as a matter of moving money through nature-as-monstrous-feminine; i.e., repeatedly selling these intimations of genocide back unto fresh generations sown with nostalgic memories of so-called better times and worse: "home" as haunted by sunshine *and* gloom (re: Walpole's "gloomth").

Because zombies in particular are perceived as both not alive and deserving of on-site capital punishment for returning to where they were never allowed, they cannot legally be murdered, raped, or otherwise abused. In the eyes of the state, they are merely "laid to rest," but the process is always horrifyingly front-and-center during an apocalypse performed by the middle class having become the vigilante cop as part of the usual cloaked operations normally relegated to frontier atrocities (e.g., the Battle of Berlin): the zombie apocalypse becomes something to survive until order returns; i.e., after the vigilante middle class lynch the zombie-as-scapegoat, mid-witch-hunt.



In other words, the zombie's entire existence is uncanny but also denied healthy love (symbolized commonly by the heart; e.g., the Tin Man, but also the literal beating thing pulled out of someone's chest) by virtue of not being alive, thus lacking humanity and human rights in bad-dream scenarios. They aren't simply food, but *fodder* looking for food only to be laid low by fascist vigilantism and reabsorbed into the state until *it* can regenerate itself and begin genocide *anew*, post doomsday. The elite require the middle class for such a project, *de facto*

deputizing them to push the harvest far away until it eventually sails home yet

again. Each time it does, it grows grim as it, per the liminal hauntology of war's castles and undead feeders, brings trauma *back* to the homefront. Per Capitalist Realism, zombies are synonymous with the canonical apocalypse, then, as a xenophobic, psychosexual end of the world. Happening during eco-sociological state shifts, they can be applied to *any* genre: zombies Westerns, cyberpunks, '80s-style beat-'em-ups, or "historical" dramas; zombies in outer space, Las Vegas, etc.

The history of this lies in the word *apocalypse* as currently synonymous with "zombie"; i.e., presently canonized as "an end of the world," the word has different, more precise meanings that remain historically relevant to our discussions of subverting canonical disasters:

late 14c., "revelation, disclosure," from Church Latin *apocalypsis* "revelation," from Greek *apokalyptein* "uncover, disclose, reveal," from *apo* "off, away from" (see apo-) + *kalyptein* "to cover, conceal" (from PIE root, kel-) "to cover, conceal, save." The Christian end-of-the-world story is part of the revelation in John of Patmos' book "*Apokalypsis*" (a title rendered into English as *pocalipsis* c. 1050, "*Apocalypse*" c. 1230, and "*Revelation*" by Wycliffe c. 1380). Its general sense in Middle English was "insight, vision; hallucination." The general meaning "a cataclysmic event" is modern (not in OED 2nd ed., 1989); *apocalypticism* "belief in an imminent end of the present world" is from 1858 ([source](#): Online Etymology Dictionary, 2023).

In *Gothic* terms, an apocalypse is a revelation *about* the present world as decaying behind a veneer of capitalistic normality—re: Baudrillard's hyperreality except the trauma also extends to the *population* and *ideology* of a given setting and not just the buildings/cartography (which often have a dogmatic function to them). Nor are these places strictly depopulated; instead, they remain continuously occupied by individuals whose basic appearance doesn't change, but rots under state sanctioned abuse: the brain rot of a fragile, fascist populace that grows increasingly frightened by everything in or out of sight, and which their home becomes one of our usual refrains to clear out; e.g., Tolkien's treasure map or Cameron's urbanized shooter during military urbanism.

However, because the source of this decay isn't entirely local or foreign, its postcolonial, genderqueer subversion must happen by revisiting sites of trauma that are both deeply personal, while also being informed by larger geopolitical events, heroic personas and canonical "archaeologies" tied to the state as currently under attack from within (zombies tend to be a domestic menace with xenophobic qualities, marrying the fascist fear of the outsider and internal sabotage to a local population). It feels like a bad dream, but adumbrates settler-colonial horrors coming home to roost; i.e., a rememory assembled out of old dead parts—dead land, stolen generations, a diasporic and ouroborotic myopia.

Haunted by the dead of all places, our dreams visit us in ways we can reassemble per Morrison's device to give the wretched fresh life. All constitute a transgenerational pedagogy of the oppressed having grown restless; i.e., the undead natives actively resisting capital/profit, thus police violence and the endless rape and war *it* entails.



Zombies denote the presence of settler colonialism bouncing around. To reiterate: First, we'll look at the Imperial Boomerang's history of traveling back and forth between colonized lands and localized, half-real examples; i.e., from Cambodia and *Left 4 Dead* (2008), *The Last of Us* (2023) as a matter of division. Second, we'll consider other popular examples haunting our dreams as informed by half-real texts we can potentially put together as a means of uniting workers against the state. After that, we'll briefly consider Morrison's process of rememory per *The Last of the Mohicans* (1992); i.e., as an, at-times, seemingly involuntary reassembling of these bad dreams as dreamers do: in their beds at night.

Troubled by such complicated reflections, we'll explore using them nonetheless to achieve intersectional solidarity with each other as normally divided under capital; i.e., despite past failures of the oppressed to unite on a wider level (we shall take this into the realms of toys and roleplay, in "Bad Dreams," part two). We'll only have time to scratch the surface, here, but I'll do my best to suggest a holistic model; i.e., one you can express through any groups (and ideas) that you wish to connect yourselves to as a matter of struggle: part of the same intersectional undead mission moving inexorably towards a postcapitalist existence (or bust).

## The Imperial Boomerang, part one: Survival (feat. *Night of the Living Dead*, *Left 4 Dead*, and *The Last of Us*)

*Willow Creek was attacked repeatedly last night. Cruniac stationed archers on the perimeter of the town, and the bowmen were able to pick off the stumbling corpse-men as they approached. But there seemed to be no end to them. We have even seen Soulless and Ghols skulking about on the outskirts of town. All of us are beginning to worry, including Cruniac* ([source](#)).

—The Narrator, "Down a Broken Path" from *Myth II: Soulblighter* (1998)



Capitalism is a hyperobject whose daily feeding is felt in the presence of undead psychosexual trauma—the zombie apocalypse—as something to survive, which the elite manipulate through canon; i.e., as an argument for *restoring* the state, *not* dismantling it.



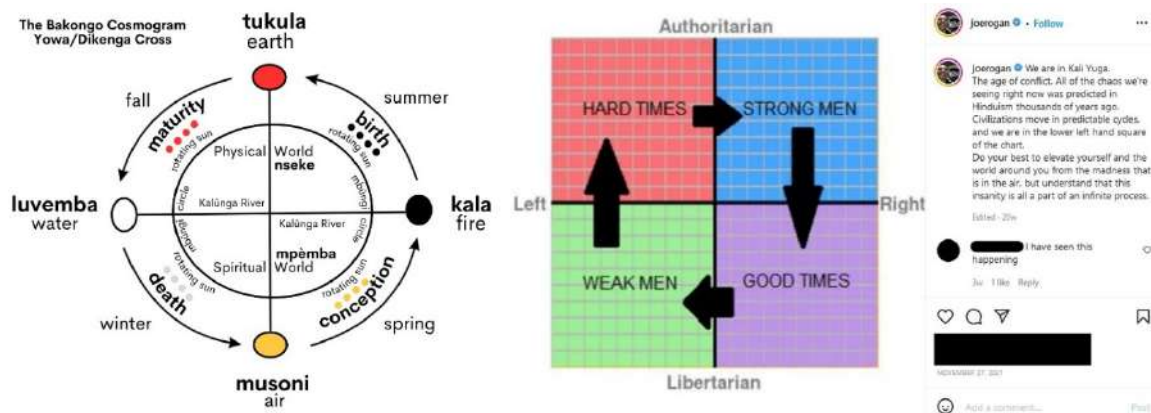
(artist, top-left: [akiraevii](#); top-right: [Annabella Ivy](#); bottom-left: [Zianab Jiwa](#); bottom-right: [Winton Kidd](#))



Such things are legion, marched into the sea as a means of scapegoating an awareness towards Capitalism functioning through genocide as something to harvest, as usual, through nature-as-monstrous-feminine to some degree nude and vulnerable, but also tokenized and rebellious on the same undead surfaces (left); i.e., as something that rises from the night of the living dead to the dawn, the day and so on. Such things are also rooted in rebellion and enslavement as equally die-hard, there being countless examples of the



living dead returning for state forces ("survivors") to do battle with; i.e., out of Hell, the underworld, the Valley of the Dry Bones, etc—what, in African studies, is a cycle commonly referred [as the Kongo cosmogram](#), or the dead returning to life again and again:



([source](#), right: Dan Collen's "Did the Trailer for Tucker Carlson's Documentary Reference a Nazi Meme Co-opted From a Bigfoot Writer?" 2022)

Originally such myths were passed down orally after the Middle Passage as an attempt to hold onto one's culture as a) being erased, but also b) giving voice to the profound and nigh-unspeakable levels of violence being exacted upon African Americans as chattel slaves.

All the same, such a model might seem strangely similar to the Hard Times square (or whatever it's called) conceived by G. Michael Hopf: "Hard times create strong men, strong men create weak times, weak times create weak men, and weak men create hard times." Or as Bret Devereaux writes, "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](#): "Hard Times Don't Make Strong Soldiers," 2020). In other words, it's fascist propaganda through cultural appropriation that serves the useful myth of Gothic ancestry to invent a regenerating enemy the state can always use to call for violence against: the zombie.

For the sake of time and focus, we'll stick to human-class zombies with meat on their bones; i.e., no kaiju or Biblical-style plagues, nor skeletons (sorry, Jörg Buttgerit<sup>67</sup>), just the fleshy dead appearing to fuck with the living and the living rising to the challenge.

We'll look at many different examples, but stick to the 20th and 21st centuries (sorry, Matthew Lewis): *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), of course, but also *Left 4 Dead* and *The Last of Us*, followed by a variety of *cryptomimetic*

<sup>67</sup> The director of *Nekromantik* (1988), a movie about a guy who has sex with threesome with his wife and a corpse, which leads him to get cuckolded by the corpse (rip). Awkward!

offshoots in part two; i.e., per my expansion on Castricano, writing with the dead, or otherwise engaging with their many likenesses as echoes of trauma and its subsequent feeding.

I give each example for a different reason:

- *Night of the Living Dead* to outline the base concept of survival during us-versus-them tied to historical-material cycles of collapse; re: the Imperial Boomerang
- *Left 4 Dead* to stress the zombie's psychosexuality
- Cambodia to give a real-world example intimidated by such stories
- and *The Last of Us* (and similar undead revivals) to consider such necrotic assembly as mass produced through unironic *cryptomimesis* that we, as workers, desperately need to challenge; i.e., through ironic, sex-positive forms helping workers by facing and assembling our past abuse/failures, using them to dismantle capital.

Text or type, monsters concern poetic language as a preferential means of cutting through alienation using fetishized language for workers and nature.

To that, I never thought I'd go with zombies in a book about sex-positive expression written by someone who doesn't exhibit sexualized abject gore (for an in-chapter explanation, see exhibit 34b). That being said, out of all the undead, I see now (with some surprise) that I've written about them more than any other monster type! Perhaps it's not so odd, though; I wouldn't fuck a rotten zombie, but a goth doll...? Mm, sure! Per Zombie Capitalism, zombies (sexy or not) collectively speak to the problems of the system and its built-in predation-through-us-versus-them-trauma better than any other (vampires, while gay as fuck, tend to be gentrified, witches and Medusa tokenized, and ghosts a bit vague and diaphanous)! It's baked into them.

To summarize the larger problem these zombie examples will explore, capital—and by extension rape and war—are the result of monstrous experiments conducted first by Columbus (and later by others) in pursuit of profit. Indeed, profit is synonymous with both outcomes through capital, which leads to death and rape theatre as a *cryptomimetic* form of escapism, but also preparation for the return of Imperialism through the Imperial Boomerang (the back-and-forth travel of said device): to where it all began, the state; i.e., its birth and death as something to repeat with all its former victims hanging over it. Seeking some kind of equalizing through the state as normally unequal, such returns normally serve profit through the regulation of sex and force through attempted monopolies of terror, violence and morphological expression.

Of course, this is effectively what zombies are, but the state can't monopolize them (or nature, below) through canon. Sex positivity under Gothic Communism involves reclaiming such things for worker aims, but first we must confront the

Boomerang through the zombie; i.e., as blind, furious, and indiscriminately hungry per the giving and receiving of state force, which polices labor as sexualized *and* alien the way capital always does: through settler colonialism and slavery given a death warrant to further itself with until the end of things. This has a half-life; i.e., the more you put in, the stronger it gets, leading to growing denials and pretense: that you can kill it.



Sadly, that's not how Medusa works, and by extension zombies; smaller units are part of a larger problem, a rot, and capital is to blame. To keep doing Capitalism, then, is to expand these monsters as a trauma response to the system working as intended, but eventually it will die by virtue of this. From the almighty Godzilla to the lowest shambling corpse, there is a price to pay for such exploitation. It is literally death, which can't be destroyed, thus can't be bargained with through state

mechanisms (any of them) or counterfeits. Eventually the (zombie) chickens come home to roost (above), taking everything received into itself and blowing it all back into the giver's soon-to-be-ruined face; i.e., as the Aegis does, or Godzilla's atomic death ray. There's no getting even or surviving it if all you put in is death because death cannot be killed; the only logical outcome is suicide, the Roman fool falling on his sword.



Like a cruel, seemingly unstoppable god, then, the state is effectively eating itself through a mirror argument that grows increasingly toxic over time; it *must* have these devices taken away before it's too late. In short, we gotta put the pussy on the chainwax,

camping the zombie before the state falls apart and total chaos ensues. We must transform it in ways that restore balance—not in the centrist sense of an oscillating

pendulum of war and rape (which again, *is* the zombie), but that of post-scarcity as a harmonious existence with each other and nature as reunited *with* death: a new order of existence that lives with the trauma of the past as something to assemble, confront, befriend and understand into a better future.

So while, the undead predate capital, they and their apocalypses have evolved as a trauma mechanism under its regular abuses: the Imperial Boomerang as traveling back and forth like a giant sickle, its harvest grim wherever it goes. Where there's zombies, there's capital, which preys on zombies through us-versus-them to generate profit as something that goes back *into* the state.

Before we examine that process, let's define zombies a little more clearly, as its evolution into its currently crystalized form (the apocalypse) is generally taken for granted. Then, we'll expand on the Imperial Boomerang and what *it* is.

Zombies—while modular—share qualities with other undead and with demons and animals. In essence, they receive/give trauma and feed as a matter of forbidden knowledge/power exchange in relation to capital. Moreover, zombies generally arrive during an apocalypse, a return of the living dead that, while it reaches back into Pagan holidays like Samhain (aka Halloween) and other such notions of the afterlife, specifically concern a falling into the state of exception (re: a rescinding of rights during a time of state crisis, but especially *decaying* crisis); i.e., when the Imperial Boomerang sails home.

The zombie, with its green skin and rotting flesh, personifies all of these things as a cryptonym thereof, which repeats per *cryptomimesis* as a presence of state decay but also *worker* decay grappling with itself; i.e., as the state, like Omelas, feeds on said exception to try and regenerate its own territories and unequal positions at the cost of workers and nature. Exceptions, we'll see, cannot be tolerated because they always divide us to defend profit through police violence, including *token* police violence during a fascist purge.

Simply put, a zombie is a giver/target of expanded state abuse, including vigilante forms, which all took time to evolve into themselves; i.e., Matthew Lewis and Mary Shelley wrote about zombies, but the discourse and state mechanisms of capital had yet to evolve and decay per stories like *I am Legend* and *Night of the Living Dead*. As it currently exists, a zombie is generally to some degree blind, angry and hungry as something to brand: as illegitimate criminal violence, though these qualities overlap and vary depending on the medium and genre; e.g., orcs in fantasy stories (especially videogames) functioning as outlaw zombies (the anti-Semitic trope of green skin [the color of stigma, which blackface extends pointedly *to* race] and eating flesh) despite technically *not* being undead; i.e., they—like people of color more broadly under Cartesian arguments and settler-colonial systems—historically fall unto the same state of exception by virtue of being non-white, thus are targeted for capital punishment as readily administered when the state decays: dead people walking. They're *more* expendable than whitey is.

To see a zombie as it actually functions, then, is to see the state functioning as normal *uncloaked*; i.e., a rancid Aegis whose apocalypse denotes the paradox of a return without moving: an awareness that wakes up, "growing woke" regarding the function of the state as petty and cruel, but also divinely ordained to exploit others for profit in *some* shape or form (the function of capital is always secular insofar as profit is their god, a religion of money that is conspicuously fake; i.e., the Protestant work ethic).

Originally this exploitation would occur through conquest, in the medieval tradition of plundering gold, slaves and sex, extending to forms of enslavement that were more systemic (re: settler-colonialism and the generation of wealth through stolen labor and, in effect, generations). Over time, though, it would adopt ideologies ranging from Cartesian dualism to the Hammer of Witches: something to fetishize while alienating workers from—nature-as-monstrous-feminine, punching the ghost of the counterfeit while not-so-secretly lusting after it; i.e., like a bad dream; e.g., Lovecraft's "Dreams in the Witch House" (1933) as something to revisit said xenophobia/abjection in comelier forms of anti-Semitism that are a) more open about said predation as a matter of service to the usual witch-hunter dumbasses, while simultaneously b) teasing them as a matter of conjuring up the slut in ways we can reclaim.

As this series has noted since "Into the Shadow Zone" (an essay from my PhD), this happens on the same kinds of trashy stages, through the same guilty pleasures/repressed sexual desires reversed on our attackers beholding us and panicking as a result: "Boobies, bush? Avaunt!"



(source film: *Masters of Horror*, episode 2: "Dreams in the Witch House," 2005)

Cloak (or legs) open or shut, it's standard-issue demon BDSM, cuties; we want to make it ludo-Gothic! I.e., it can be gentle ("Aw, do you have a 'boner?") or strict ("Yes, motherfucker! Stare and tremble!"). What matters is that such duality (re)presents a unique and prolific opportunity to wake up in the kinds of shadowy places where bread-and-circus opiates normally call home. Few things open (or close) eyes like monster sex; i.e., being naughty in ways that camp canon and by

extension capital, *not* quaint scapegoats (re: Lovecraft)! When camped, "rape and "death" are hot by virtue of calculated risk, thus mutual consent as something to illustrate, which—when interrogated further afterwards—gives us a chance to explore trauma in ways that open our eyes: to the zombie's broader intersectional suffering!

To that, Medusa is someone to live with, whereupon you discover they fart, shit, pick their nose, get periods, have trauma tied to rape, to police violence through domestic abuse as always, to some degree, xenophobic; e.g., "My wife was a witch and I burned her!" or "My neighbor was a zombie and I shot him!" Such moral panics always lead to violence, as Richard Matteson and Matthew Lewis demonstrate, centuries apart; *cryptomimesis* is the echoing of that in ways we can liberate ourselves paradoxically *with*.

We've already gone over this playfulness extensively in the Poetry Module, so I won't beat a dead horse, here (though doing so *is* fine when critiquing capital and genocide). Just, I wish to say that capital uses things until they are used up, then dies and resurrects through the general procedure as something to reveal and disguise itself *as needed*.

Such cryptonymy is dualistic, of course. Anyone who bothers to look backwards can see history as crowded with genocide, but also markers of "genocide" that serve as decoys and target dummies; i.e., per the sorts of complicit cryptonymies we must stage and camp while keeping tabs on our enemies playing with the same kinds of monster toys: in the usual dollhouses as danger discos to meet revolutionary aids, mid-cryptonymy and mimesis. Normally paywalled, these 18-and-up tangents (and their PG, family-friendly segues; e.g., Tim Burton's 1988 *Beetlejuice*, below) traipse through a very dark garden, a fallen paradise that is homely by virtue of its Satanic power challenging Cartesian thought (thus Capitalism) as a manner of "brothel espionage/rebellion," of good play dressed up as "bad, very bad."

Like *Dante's Inferno*, people likewise go to them seeking power and sex, rapture and release for different reasons in settler-colonial territories (transformation, communication, violation, etc): America as a settler-colonial graveyard guarded by the monstrous-feminine as dualistic—the reaper-like whore as cop or revolutionary but looking basically the same. So long as these "visits with sin" routinely push people in a left-leaning direction, then it's all good, man! Fuck her blue! As such, Capitalism must be escaped inside of itself, inside Medusa (so to speak); i.e., as something to transform through monsters and sex! Of course, there's mixed signals among all the revolutionary-versus-cops chatter, but any good spy can tell the difference and works fast (why waste time?)!



Escaped or not, zombies (and by extension, things that are zombie-like) are slaves that denote genocide and slavery per Capitalism's earliest iterations (from Columbus onwards) as going hand-in-hand toward *Pax American* as rotten-to-the-core; i.e., are angry about it as a transgenerational curse that haunts entire peoples per the

mechanisms of capital both a) policing them as such, and b) turning their responses into a kind of comfort food *for* the middle class: a holiday (Halloween, of course, but also year-round treatments through walking synonyms; e.g., *Jill Valentine*).

"White people disease," then, constitutes Man Box through weird-nerd culture as a developing kind of mirror/compartment syndrome—of freezing in front of the decaying double, the attacking of which releases various toxins. It's a realization of one's home (the state) as predatory and abjecting this *onto* the zombie as scapegoat, effectively blaming the victim while attacking them during the apocalypse as end-of-the-world reconciliation; i.e., per Capitalist Realism as a fascist enterprise punching Medusa. In turn, such persecution mania reliably and routinely decays into civil war as a feeling of self-cannibalization and training (through canon) towards such madness to defend the state with; i.e., "I'm eating myself, my home, my family and they, me! Such is life!"



When this occurs, it internalizes; the grim harvest becomes normalized in domestic territories, though it is often fetishized, dressed up to make it more palatable for the male/tokenized middle class. There's a double standard, of course, white cis-het men being

the universal benefactors (above) while token groups are expected to play their part in the same fascist appeasements; i.e., putting on the scary-to-slutty clothes and zombie makeup—with people of color becoming ghoulish fodder and those forced to identify as women becoming the undead, Sontag-grade Nazi whore (the colors of black and red denoting power and death, but also older ideologies

attached to a shared collapse; e.g., Catholicism, Communism and, of course, fascism).

For example, Lady Death is literally a comic book superhero, one meant to pointedly calm the nerves of the men involved (the traditional owners of property in America; re: comic books, but also the girls on the covers), playing out Irigaray's notion of the sacrificial mother as already dead per the usual Gothic conventions, fetishes and clichés; i.e., made canonical per the usual flesh merchants trading prostitutes, except in corpse paint (again, [an ancient tradition at least as old as Rome](#)): an undead, mommy-dom sex doll with blind eyes, a Destroyer aesthetic and a sickle (the grim harvest, but also a horseshoe-theory treatment of the Communist sickle, mid-Red-Scare). It's hauntological *par excellence*.



(artist: [Ashlynn Dae](#))

Last but not least, there is generally a liminality of the corpse as not only murdered but *raped*, exposing its sexuality on the same traumatized body as—once exposed—a reliably abject proposition unto itself: the humiliation of corpses by defiling

them. Such defilement is psychosexual, involving sex as well as literal dismemberment (use your imagination). All constitute the system (and those who uphold it) repressing elements of its own function; i.e., its daily operations that allow the universal benefactors (the middle class) to reap the fruits of slaughter just enough to have their basic needs met, before handing the lion's share off to their masters, the elite. When the Boomerang sails home, the Imperial Core is threatened and the elite tap the middle class on the shoulder and say to them: "Time to pay up!" Most aren't ready for that unless they view it as nostalgic and territorial—like a (video)game argument that cements *them* neoliberally as the monomythic hero rescuing the "Free World" from evil, from enslavement (re: personal responsibility rhetoric). Pot, meet kettle.



That should be enough about zombies to get you through the chapter! Again, for the sake of simplicity, we'll stick to rotting corpses (or at least hungry green people slated for execution) and branch out, the deeper we go!

Before we hop into the texts themselves, though, I want to explain what the Imperial Boomerang is over the next four-or-so pages, including various factors that come into play under its return—bodies and trauma, but especially the manner in which the monstrous-feminine is sexualized per the Cartesian harvest of nature as alien *and* undead; i.e., the state vs Medusa during zombie apocalypses, insofar as nature is undead in two respects—both as the giver/receiver of trauma and something driven to feed as a traumatic survival response *to* profit. Said feeding subsequently operates through zombie canon being used to pacify forces that otherwise might rebel, mid-exploitation/shortage; i.e., when faced with the undead as a consequence of capital doing what capital does by design: manufacture, subterfuge and coercion (the zombie being a world-class guilt-trip the elite can use to scapegoat the middle class as fascist, *not* them: "Look at what *you* did!").



To that, the bourgeoisie use canon—namely the sudden visitation of a vague, "impending" apocalypse—to threaten workers with capitalistic nightmares that cover up xenophilic potential *and* xenophobic abuses (the impostor, above) when the levee breaks; i.e., emotional manipulation, per the Superstructure, where they distract with false revelations conducted by the nation-state/corporations as inherently deceitful (which extends to its parallel spaces): meaningless money tied to monsters everywhere that destroy or steal personal property and capital, all while thrusting indiscriminate police violence onto regular middle-class people already terrified by moral panics as part of the process (which include gender trouble and minority activism as something to lament, fear and attack; re: DARVO).

This larger process *is* the Imperial Boomerang—re:

"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](#): Stephen Graham's "Foucault's Boomerang: the New Military Urbanism," 2013).

Described by 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.

Ultimately, the *flight* of the Boomerang becomes a matter of routine done to death. Yet still it goes, traveling back and forth.

As it does, what seems faraway one moment is—like Dracula's castle (and its monsters)—suddenly upon viewers, whose vicarious means of "dog-eat-dog" survival are generally predicated on us-versus-them-style revenge and petty squabbles (e.g., TERFs policing sex and force). These, in turn, transpire inside impromptu, "flash-mob" police states during Capitalism's decay period, canonized by popular stories that pacify workers through personal property meant to acclimate *them* to violence and enslavement with a deathly appearance as "likeness" (the simulacrum as doll-like, per *cryptomimesis*); i.e., towards an outwardly dehumanized way of thinking towards zombified givers and receivers of state torture: us-versus-them enacted by the middle class as class, race *and* culture traitors dueling amongst themselves ("kissing up") while punching down necrophilically at the lower classes for being non-white, non-Christian and GNC, etc. "Satisfy *my* hunger!" they shout, aping their masters, but badly (through Nazi-Communist cartoons) while reaping Medusa's fat zombie ass: "Om nom nom!"



([source](#))

Revelations are always, to some degree, obscene and horrifying: the realization that one is not only an unwilling-to-willing participant in genocide on *either* end, but a corpse, or that one is eating or fucking a corpse (e.g., sleep sex), friends with a corpse, etc, as something to oscillate regarding the perceived return of as fascist *or* victim (the in-group logic being that fascists are somehow "invincible"; they're not). The dialectical-material reality of the nightmare is "archaeological"; i.e., as defined by Jameson, re: the dialectic of shelter whose elaborate strategy of misdirection evokes a neoconservative return to order with an undeniably *historical* past sold as "dead future" back to workers to pacify them with. These amount to palingenesis, or nation-

birth mythology (which, as we shall see, are rooted in fascism as ultra-national in a team-based apocalypse: the Nazi zombie vs zombie *labor* within the Gothic chronotope's castle-narrative). In this imaginary "past," subservient worker emotions/actions are constantly reduced to a pacified animal's inside the cage of the world itself, one that threatens classic state "efficiencies" every waking moment: the dreaded Holocaust, but also state-sanctioned suicides, nuclear strikes, cannibalism, and rape and murders in relation to a relaxed, but ultimately radicalized (fascist) bureaucracy.

The past becomes, to some degree, imaginary as informed by actual events, which *repeat* based on such conditioning as Pavlovian, menticidal: waves of terror and vigilantism seeking to end said waves during alarm fatigue draining the middle class of its empathy towards the wretched. While both become zombies *for* the state, the middle class hunts zombies down, witch-hunt-style, as a kind of recuperated release value; i.e., it's a panic button, Capitalism-in-decay defending itself through medievalized poetics, mid-purge. Said button pushes whenever the bubble bursts, genocide and decay becoming frighteningly visible and persuasive towards said middle class gaslighting *their* victims; i.e., the former as gatekeepers

being terminally afraid of an imaginary fate delivered by "terrorists." It's seen as "worse than death" and having *some* truth it, but in ways that lead them to play ball *for* the elite by raping the lower classes, races and cultures during stochastic terrorism challenging proletarian voices (and counterterror): "The *rotten* enemy is at the gates, now defend us or else they'll eat and rape you!"



([source](#))

To that, the state's brutal historical-materialism is like a gelatinous cube, a ravenous blob that knowingly eats everything around and inside itself. In turn, the bourgeoisie only stay in power by using an old aristocratic trick: carefully administer the right threats at the right pace and feel, the right *perception*; i.e., canonical media dressed up as fatal nostalgia during the dialectic of the alien, wherein the zombie-as-punching-bag makes for an effective state terror device: "They're coming to get you, Barbara!" When threatened by the terrible kinds of violence associated with state collapse, middle-class workers will atomize and push the zombie away from themselves. As such, they desperately cling to the state should collapse even be mentioned, relinquishing their rights in the process. No argumentation is made for cooperation or communes. Instead, the scenario is always the same: the sudden threat of spontaneous gory violence—a fear of immediate, societal change that throws infantilized and persecuted people alike into a state of emergency and then hands one side a gun; i.e., lucid dreams of settler-colonial violence, mid-nightmare, making exceptions to who can live and die.

"Zombie" isn't just the literal walking dead, then, but a liminal-monstrous existence whose buried past rises up and "walks" the earth; it "blips" into existence during Capitalism-in-crisis, conspicuously hungry for human biology (the colonized feeding on the colonizer as relatively alienated from said cannibalism).

Seemingly overnight, this actually happens more slowly as the Imperial Boomerang sails home; i.e., a return of the living dead through ambiguous invasions of the destroyed and the destroyer on the same deathly personas: "When there's no more room in hell, the dead will walk the earth<sup>68</sup>." As the state becomes increasingly fascist, it gradually colonizes its own *middle-class* population, cannibalizing them through sanctioned violence inside a growing state of exception

<sup>68</sup> Peter, from George Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* (1978).

(a concept we'll examine, here, but also in Volume Three, Chapter Two when we talk about proletarian praxis in conjunction with fascists). The home-as-settler-colonial becomes foreign, alien... hungry as a means of defending itself *through* self-cannibalism as fascist; i.e., Nazi zombies!

This cannibalism isn't always figurative or grandly dramatic (e.g., *The Hunger Games*, 2008), and moreover, it has a built-in bias on all registers: dark (and queer) meat, first (female meat being somewhat protected by virtue of the state needing breeders—of owners and slaves alike—which they of course abject: "*Mars* needs cheerleaders"). Inside the growing state of exception, then, zombies "suddenly appear" through the manipulated demand of a great number of them: a black rapacious horde.

To this, the zombie becomes an elaborate distraction, occurring as a matter of experience through funerary markers that phenomenologically denote state



abuse as doubled during the liminal hauntology of war and its grim harvest; i.e., through the zombie as a manufactured crisis parallel to the state working as it always does: as a cryptonym (symbol of hidden trauma) symptomatic of state abuse that exposes itself mid-conflict in a humanoid, Cartesian form. This isn't always gore-inducing nausea, but eroticism pulling another classic trick out of the bag: graveyard sex.

(artist: [Soy Neiva](#))

Under such market structures and motivations, the elite make death/genocide sexy and cool through *fascist* poster girls (conflating Communism through the same kayfabe theatre versus the American babyface). Medusa, then, becomes the usual peach to harvest when fattened up—a dark mommy to kill and tokenize, extending to her "brood" (the racist idea of non-white people as vermin coming from a single, Archaic-Mother source). *Reclamation* occurs through a seizing of the merchandise to say things about Medusa as dark, thicc, and delicious, but also human; e.g., the bi-racial PAWG as something to hug and fuck, but also appreciate as a thing unto itself: nudism dressed up in sexual, darkly charged outfits, a cultured aesthetic that glides

between bodily and material elements adorning said body as castle-like, undead and black; i.e., as a matter of settler-colonial operations, mid liminal-expression: a look, a style, a mood conveyed by dummy thicc in-betweens, both white and black in appearance offering up size difference at a delicious glance (re: [Lexi Love](#), [Nya Blu](#), but also [Soy Neiva](#), above).

Such zombies often lack an outwardly undead or black semblance (also above), but remain forbidden, potent, plucky and magnetic—able to speak to things that are paradoxically taboo *and* commonplace, stylized (those tats are killer, below). If the ghost of counterfeit can be interrogated and reassembled, mid-exchange, then flashing the goods as "goth" is perfectly fine! Medusa's hefty cryptonymy (the stealth booty-as-cloaking-device that hides power in plain sight) needs to serve workers, not profit, but subsisting within capital *is* to be expected.

Furthermore, patterns repeat on bodies as doll-like, but also positioned *like*



dolls that are both somewhat undead-looking *and* extremely fuckable in a paradoxically sex-positive sense. This is fine so long as you don't tokenize (thus divide labor to serve the elite through fetishized, police-like distractions)! So pay attention and learn the trade; i.e., its hauntologized, cryptonymic symbols of "death" in quotes (e.g., tarot, ravens, skulls, etc)! Get it, girl (something to eat, something to fuck—same difference)!

(artist: [Raven Griim](#))

Ambiguity builds during an apocalypse; i.e., as something to survive while surrounded by monsters. Like all monsters, though, zombies are *dualistic*. They can be used either by pro-state or pro-worker agents; i.e., the zombie either being

ex-to-generalized slave seeking liberation, or hauntologized cop punching the middle class clutching *their* pearls (there's also overlap, with different forms of tokenization resulting as marginalized groups decaying *into* traitors, exhibit 34b). This hostile vagueness makes the zombie (white or non-white skin; male, female or intersex<sup>69</sup>) a *personified* cryptonym, one whose historical-material genesis per *cryptomimesis* yields fresh mutations that imply the state's tried-and-true function: a corrupting force for the living to behold and puzzle over while fighting for *their* lives, but also a form of canonical gaslighting that sends the survivor(s) into a spiral

<sup>69</sup> E.g., the xenomorph. More on him, later.

of doubt when faced with the unavoidable sense of doom; i.e., repressed decay and lies emanating from the *state* during manufactured crisis. The two are obviously connected, but there's no time to play detective, mid-apocalypse; the problem is too big and too sudden to make any sense of, the state simply prescribing violence as a means of escape when Medusa shows off that fat ass: blast the zombie *apart* instead of carefully using rememory as an effective, oft-involuntary means of putting the puzzle pieces *back together*.

A xenophilic clue *can* be gleaned through the disease vector itself. Although canonical zombies generally symbolize moral panic as tied to the underclass (often out-of-control sex and other state-regulated variables linked to worker bodies and labor), the exact reason for their sudden resurgence is never diegetically stated; it's hushed up or abstracted (e.g., "[The Colour out of Space](#)," 1927) to keep middle-class xenophobia rampant for fear of nuclear-familial collapse. Canonical zombies, then, merely represent the abject reciprocation of state violence, meted out using lethal force to control sex/fetishized labor between everyone inside the state's boundaries. Then, it becomes counterfeit nostalgia and echoes in on itself through adaptations of adaptations; the entropy climbs, a kind of amplified senescence tied to the fatal *family* portrait as undead: from the original Lovecraft short story to *The Darkest Dungeon's* "[The Color of Madness](#)" (2018) to the 2019 adaptation by Richard Stanley (a good couple years for Cage, whose *Mandy* [2018] we will inspect later)! "The nuclear family was consumed by a far-off devourer!" In other words, it's the usual abject muffling (re: cosmic nihilism viewing the colonial territories, outer space, as a hostile final frontier).



Even when canonical, though, survivor narratives are presented as suitably chaotic, insofar as danger is both hard to define *and* to pin down. According to the pathogen's anisotropic (and highly figurative, volatile) nature, this xenophobic exchange is many things once. One, it works *towards* zombies as *recipients* of state

violence; i.e., their appearance resembling the returning undead and their embodied trauma as something familiar to reject, thus aggregate a defense *against* by shooting *at* (suicide). Two, it can be *from* zombies as *givers* of state violence; i.e., whether directly or bounced back at them; e.g., the fascist "zombie" death knight operating inside hauntological death squads to resist the invasion of—with Cage's American dad eventually destroying his own family (who admittedly are a bit worse for wear at that stage). Three, the middle class are generally caught, suitably enough, in the middle while the state cannibalizes itself through them (above).

Except this middle group generally targets *everyone* in their own attempts to make it through the nightmare: saving their own skins (and brains) from cannibalization. The inability to love or be loved dooms everything inside the state of exception but power will be there, killing labor first; i.e., the return of the black knight, the KKK, the Nazi, Cthulhu, as marching in the streets while white moderates (the middle class) pick and choose *their* targets: polite to your face as they promptly stab you in the back (re: [Malcolm X](#)).

Whatever text we look at, there is always some degree of chilly disposition, veiled hostility and cognitive dissonance/estrangement while fighting abjection (the feeding mechanism going haywire, supersizing slave foods [and the harvested dead associated with them] as the usual state mechanisms start to malfunction). But you have to start somewhere and be unafraid to critique older workers to learn from (and camp) them as needed.

This brings us to our first text to analyze, *Night of the Living Dead* (sorry, Matteson, but we've talked about your book a fair bit, already).

Clearly there is an inherently racialized (Cartesian) character to settler-colonial unrest in apocalyptic forms; i.e., slave rebellions framed as grotesquely undead to scare the middle class into punching *down*. This includes *people of color* as struggling to hold onto what little they have in American society as normally hostile to them, thus conducive to race (and by extension, class and culture) traitors. Incredibly iconoclastic, George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*, then, was a biting response to the antagonistic violence used against the Civil Rights movement and Vietnam's Tet Offensive; i.e., as supported by protesters/college students at home who were consequently branded as "terrorists" and killed for it (e.g., [the Kent State shootings](#), 1970). With *Night*, Romero was trying to capture and express these complicated uprisings—of worker outrage and police crackdowns—in his own work as a photographer world, albeit in Gothic language. It was a biting satire that Romero lost over time; i.e., as he slowly commercialized his own zombies, falling victim to the Hollywood-Communist paradox of raising too much money to critique capital *later*. But at the time, he was speaking to a common sentiment regarding American superiority in decline: the entire world as eating itself felt at home!

Yet, *Night* still contained the fascist torturers, moderate "survivors" and victimized tortured in its own tale of inclusive chaos: us-versus-them through a siege, Jim the black man's house surrounded by the living dead of all sorts; i.e., as an alienated form of what *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) spectacularly and spuriously warned against, over fifty years previous—slave revolt (with *Star Wars* valorizing the same perspective from a white Indian narrative overwhelmed by superior *imperial* numbers).

This time, though, we're shown a black man acting to some degree like a white Indian (the ostensible Vietnam vet, clutching his repeater and defending his home, only to be shot at the end of the film)—not a token plant, per se, but



nevertheless operating usefully through the argument of survival that historically leads to tokenism: us-versus-them violence. In the end, Jim is killed by the cops—denying survival, thus potential assimilation, post-apocalypse. Simply put, he gets got.



To that, Romero's story feels Afrocentric instead of Afronormative, insofar as "black" focuses on that particular minority group instead of others in America enduring similar plights *together*. Black culture in America, then, is routinely isolated, forced to face the bleak reality that it has become alienated from its own

culture and history as forgotten, but returning fearsomely during times of crisis to face alone (a debatably tokenized, race-traitor gimmick, insofar as those offering aid within black culture, like the Nation of Islam, establish something of a monopoly on the subject while *always* waiting to act on larger systemic issues; e.g., [Louis Farrakhan stonewalling and eventually having a hand in silencing Malcolm X](#)<sup>70</sup>). It's not a question of if, but *when*.

All the while, a pointed lack of solidarity is felt, feeling at times somewhat standoffish like Jim is (while this partially constitutes a flaw of Romero's emphasis on a simple binary that reduces to white America and African America, such divisions extend to the latter group as focusing mostly on themselves as exclusively oppressed by the White Man; i.e., historically being divided from other marginalized groups as a matter of shattered revolutionary discourse). People can get touchy if you speak about their groups' issues as part of a larger struggle (which these victims sometimes forget), which is why a pedagogy of the oppressed should respect what they say as historical. But granting them impunity from criticism by ignoring tokenism is sheer folly (more on this in part three of the subchapter when we look at Morrison and Howard Zinn).

In Romero's case, Jim is still treated as human, though. In canonical apocalypse narratives, the zombie is not humanized at all—merely existing within a vague presence of "corruption" that must be rooted out while fertilizing worker mind with future abject dogmas; i.e., white-moderate apologetics *for* state abuse by *recuperating* Romero. By extension, the constant threat of state collapse mid-corruption is designed to *weaken* worker imaginations; it historically-materially doesn't lead to Communism because imagination-deprived workers coerced by reactionaries will leap to fascism, which supports Capitalism in tokenized forms

<sup>70</sup> From F.D. Signifier's "The REAL Faces of Black Conservatism" (2023).

we've already discussed (re: the Black Nazi effect). But under it, even when there is no open sex, such monsters demonize sex as black per the settler-colonial binary whenever it becomes loosened from outright state control: the proverbial babe in the wilderness, forced to survive under decayed rudiments of settler-colonial territorialism and extermination rhetoric; i.e., raw butchery as a spectacle to voyeuristically behold under duress (a captive audience held at gunpoint, below):



"Come and see,' then obey me, child! Attack the zombie!"

The consequences of this child-soldier recruitment through Gothic media—its confusion of safety and harm, pleasure and harmful-to-non-harmful pain, etc—are frankly too broad to easily encompass, which the rest of

the "Bad Dreams" chapter will holistically and patiently explore the effects of; i.e., across different genres, texts, groups of people, places, etc: from the zombie person as emblematic of genocide to the zombie *house* as the source for it, and so on. For now, though, we're focusing predominantly on women, specifically white cis-het women to start with, and shall branch out from there!

To that, such damsels-in-distress (whatever the sex or gender) embody another aspect of *Birth of a Nation* carried into the present: the white woman (often a virgin) threatened with black (non-white) rape and other unspeakable, taboo things by the rebelling slave as always a being for which societal death is a paradoxical matter of existence; i.e., they are property first in the eyes of the state, their humanity something to debate through force: a problem to solve by asking questions with final solutions (re: the Jewish Question) that can be leveled at *any* victim of a settler-colonial project. This includes by proxy, as America (a settler colony) currently does with Israel and other such places fighting its wars for it: destabilize and feed within a territory emptied of order.

Granted, such dogma goes back to the Christian doctrine that moved Columbus (and others like him who came after his experiments) to butcher the Indigenous peoples of the Americas (and the Irish in Great Britain). But such ethnocentrism (and all the canonical essentialism that goes with it—biological, geographical or otherwise) crystalized through *Birth of a Nation* into later survival stories built on the same basic premise: us-versus-them against a non-white menace per the settler-colonial model, which can tokenize to punch down, Red-Scare-style, against zombie labor *regardless* of skin color (as Jim demonstrates).

In other words, any division serves profit, insofar as the undead are something to battle with and against *for* the state; i.e., big or small, one or many as part of the same umbrella force; e.g., the Night King's hordes from *Game of Thrones* intimating Tolkien's own problematic ideas of corruption as demanding a same-old return to tradition through fiery purification—a graveyard purge and a return to strength. It bears repeating that the idea suffuses gaming culture [as mostly white/tokenized](#) (Foreign Man in a Foreign Land's "Racism in Gaming," 2023). However, stories like *Left 4 Dead* weren't shy about romanticizing *that* before such Internet forums came to be; i.e., turning the teenage white heroine, Zoey, into a *de facto* cop calling herself a survivor while stripping her down and handing *her* a gun: less an undercover cop and more an uncovered, underage one stuck in her underwear/birthday suit (re: "kissing up, punching down").



(exhibit 34da: Top left, artist: unknown; top-right: "[Zoey nude mod](#)"; bottom-left: [Cosplay Erotica](#). Zoey from *Left 4 Dead*. Keeping with the infantilized damsel-in-distress, she "is referred to as 'teenangst' in [the game's] textures and 'teengirl' in [its] sound resources," [source: Fandom](#). While described by Andrea Wicklund as "an everyday young woman who everyone can relate to," Zoey is conspicuously white, but also sexualized and infantilized, in-game and out; although she has no set age, the game's paratextual materials describe her as a young college [middle-class]

student forced to kill her own father after her mother bites him and tries to kill Zoey—i.e., the decay of the nuclear family structure and daddy issues [the Elektra complex, an inversion of Freud's Oedipus complex<sup>71</sup>] rolled into one.)

<sup>71</sup> Freud is a quack, but the idea actually comes from Carl Jung (also a quack):

According to Freud, during female psychosexual development, a young girl is initially attached to her mother. When she discovers that she does not have a penis, she becomes attached to her father and begins to resent her mother, who she blames for her "castration." As a result, Freud believed that the girl then begins to identify with and emulate her mother out of fear of *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

This isn't unique to *Left 4 Dead*. Valve's insistence on centering heroism around white/tokenized characters goes back to 1997's *Half-life*, with Gordon Freeman basically being the Nazi scientist stuck in a zombie-like hell of his own making (and bearing a curious likeness to Gabe Newell puffing *himself* up as the hero<sup>72</sup>, mid-escapism). Even so, characters like Zoey—effectively naked even with their clothes technically on (re: Segewick's [imagery of the surface](#))—can still be reclaimed through iconoclastic media and sex-positive exhibitionism as addressing lived trauma; i.e., in ways that reverse abjection through forbidden sex as a matter of Gothic theatre per ludo-Gothic BDSM. Said BDSM offers playfully humanizing reflections on zombies and their associate trauma intimating in state workers' personal lives, the latter being informed by the wider world and its propaganda around them threatening "rape" as something to put into kayfabe-style quotes (so-called "big dick energy" with a racialized flavor under Cartesian arguments: the BBC



or the BBW as porn tropes bleeding into media at large). In short, there's a genuine xenophilic element that feels "necrophilic" by virtue of hugging Medusa-as-undead during the dialectic of the alien: as one body or many ("riding the train," as it were), with implied (or vivid, abject) gore *sometimes* part of the show. Consent is what matters, here!

(artist: [Super Phazed](#))

Sadly such things are a myth in Gothic canon, which retreats from the

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losing her love. Resolving the Electra complex ultimately leads to identification with the same-sex parent. While the term "Electra complex" is frequently associated with Sigmund Freud, it was actually Carl Jung who coined the term in 1913 ([source](#): Kendra Cherry's "Overview of the Electra Complex in Psychology," 2023).

However, just because the *ideas* are technically stupid (above) doesn't mean they *aren't* codified into society and its linguo-material devices; i.e., in ways we can reclaim (re: Creed's monstrous-feminine)! I generally hate "pure" psychology but still have to critique it in Gothic theory all the time (again, Creed, Freud and so many others), and clearly I love the word "psychosexual"!

<sup>72</sup> I.e., a heliocentric approach to men as godly and savior-esque but imperiled per the middle class as tentative and fragile under Capitalism. Similar to Tool's Maynard James Keenan pushing for reactionary violence in his music (re: "[Enema](#)"), such then-current regressions like Newell's go back to Heinlein's Competent Man as revived by James Cameron in *his* media (followed by Nintendo and id Studios' *Metroid* and *Doom*), but also *further* back still with Lovecraft's astrotheology; i.e., per *At the Mountains of Madness* mythologizing *its* author's racism tracking with even *older* bigoted men like Edgar Allan Poe and Joseph Conrad, and women like Ann Radcliffe, Charlotte Dacre or Charlotte Brontë, etc. Whatever direction *time* flows, all run along the same track as a *spatial* sensation—capital (commonly called "civilization") as black-and-white, us-versus-them survival; i.e., tied to the West/Cartesian dualism as "superior" but always under attack: the Gothic chronotope.

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
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zombie as automatically and unironically rapacious (versus the white people "surviving" against them). Sold to workers in xenophobic zombie narratives that play out like bad dreams, the sanctioned, ritualized torture and killing of anyone inside the state of exception, mid-revelation, becomes not only endemic, but *sacred* to these bad dreams: "doing it raw" as something to confuse pleasure and pain as a psychosexual survival response; i.e., to close off with a Black Veil, Radcliffe-style, then tease "having sex" as unironically violent (re: demon lovers), the rape-in-question truthfully completed with bullets, knives and similar knife-dick implements against states targets. These dogmatic threat displays showcase extreme, abattoir-style gore and mutilation as a less-than-veiled argument of rape *against* state targets (e.g., gore wizard, Tom Savini, taking both barrels of a shotgun to the face in the 1980 version of *Maniac*, next page). Said targets classically don't like that very much and respond in kind: tearing their attackers limb from limb using their bare hands (with guns historically being denied to rebelling slaves)!



Because zombie canon capitalizes on the subterfuge trifecta (displace, dissociate, disseminate), privileged witnesses will conflate state abuse with their own normalized realms of experience: videogames, TV shows and/or movies, etc, as a kind of abject, visual sewer to frame everything in notably disgusting terms. There's clearly a proletarian power to this exposure, grossing the middle class out to *paralyze* them, thus keeping them at bay. For the elite and their proponents, though, zombies work in this manner to accomplish a perverse kind of strawman; i.e., they exist precisely because they threaten "vulnerable parties" (code for white people, but especially women), *thus must be killed to tell the story* and often as grossly as possible: torture porn. Such porn, under canon, evokes many of its racialized, psychosexual elements even when all the people onscreen are visibly white:

*Note: Rape takes many forms besides sexual violence (though the Gothic is generally psychosexual, merging the two). Even so, I haven't spent too much time talking about unironic rape and dismemberment in its most vividly naked forms. I'd like to address why below and still take the time to talk about some of the more delicate/touchy elements to such rape fantasies (and tokenism) as they present in Gothic fiction verging on zombie-esque extremes. —Perse*



*(exhibit 34b: I'm a proud gorehound, but as stated at the start of each book ["What I Won't Exhibit"] generally I don't like to combine sex and gore in my collage exhibits. It's just... not my bag. That being said, I'd be remiss in ignoring the "almost holy" approach to creature features having a strong psychosexual flavor [especially zombies]. Stories like Alien project the zombie rape fantasy into "outer space," using actual offal in veritable "gore wars" of one-upmanship to make their point. But just as often, movies like Maniac [a very trashy '80s number, above] bring this crude class of abject puns squarely down to Earth. Even if the genitals are not openly involved during the rape, there's a neoconservative element to it as a nonetheless worst-case scenario: the couple sitting in a parked car, violently accosted by a weirdo with a gun as covetous towards but also policing of their extramarital affairs! "Don't do this or Zofloya will getcha!"*

*Such alienation and fetishization is already a regular consequence of capital, which the movie turns into a lethal form of roleplay. It celebrates the hyphenation of sex and violence, pinning such thrill kills on non-white, or at least functionally black, banditti-grade scapegoats when, point-in-fact, most murders and rapes are intraracial. Even so, cops still use this as an excuse to crackdown on non-white*

populations even more; i.e., to tighten the yoke of an increasingly militarized police force on all parties involved, claiming as they do to "protect" white women [and gentrified people of color] as a) having the money for their services, and b) adhering to the settler-colonial model as swayed most notably by monetary exchange.

By extension, such class, racial and cultural devices translate readily into Gothic fiction's criminal hauntologies [a topic we'll explore much more in Volume Three]: the serial killer as a kind of vampire, more often than not, but also a zombie lurking in dark spaces—all while threatening infantilized white women with rape as synonymous with sex and murder [conveniently ignoring the fact that most women are abused by their husbands, not random strangers during thrill kills and/or rapes]. In short, it constitutes a kind of "battered housewife syndrome," relying on women who have been abused to view sex as unironically violent in ways they can revisit on a vague dark scapegoat—not their actual abusers, but generally a minority group to safely punch down against [often by proxy] for the systemic harm they normally experience on a day-to-day basis: "Any free woman in an unfree society will always be a monster." Angela Carter basically nailed the TERF motto with that one, but it applies to any kind of female-wielded bigotry under the sun!



In other words, it's incredibly common for middle-class women to prey on people with less privilege by leaning into harmful stereotypes under the same protection racket; i.e., from the POV of a cop's wife as "queen bee" [earlier in this volume]:

good BDSM is often haunted by patriarchal state abuse (re: Man Box, which we'll pointedly interrogate in Volume Three); e.g.,

the disordered thinking of narcissistic women abusing their own children and servants: trauma begets trauma. [...] White women tokenize, too (albeit from a liminal staging point), praying on others through their ability to gatekeep fantasies of exploitation to suit themselves.

It's a kind of "vindictive plantation fantasy" that sees post-Civil-War white women triangulating against their husband or father's enemies, thereby doing a lot more to prey on those they still treat as servants ["the help"] or threats versus equals; i.e., the Gothic sort, meaning dated, ostensibly foreign ["dark"] and having sticky fingers/questionable virtues [re: Dacre's Zofloya literally being a black servant

*standing in for the devil to tempt a white woman with poison]. It's pimping the slave, endorsing a [again, pardon the expression] "jungle fever" for a white mistress getting her jollies [e.g., Mistress Epps from Twelve Years a Slave (2013), above].*

*Racism is centuries old, as are these kinds of intersecting class and racial tensions, but they haven't gone anywhere; i.e., cemented within generational signifieds that pass varying degrees of racial bigotry down from feminism's oldest forms to its increasingly decayed variants dressed up as liberation through rape—from radical authors like Mary Wollstonecraft [or her famous daughter] to a female regressive tendency to deny rebellion and push for a privileged few women to have the right to even create literature at all... provided they toe the line: from Neo-Gothic contemporaries like Ann Radcliffe, followed by the likes of Charlotte Brontë to Susan B. Anthony to J.K. Rowling, but also a centuries-spanning gradient of traitorous characters like Portia from The Merchant of Venice or Clarice Starling as lawyers or cops<sup>73</sup> [and too many subjugated Amazons to list]. It's certainly true that some of these women are written by men, and I would argue those who sell out and police others in a half-real sense are following a very old patriarchal mindset we'd now call Man Box; e.g., Alien having a strong-if-abjected [onto the xenomorph, instead of Parker, the token black man] racist flavor built on Joseph Conrad's spectres thereof, but Romero himself resorting to blackface to film his scenes of police brutality in Dawn of the Dead [more on that in a bit].*

*Inside the Shadow of Pygmalion, then, it's precisely white women [and token examples] acting like men having formerly suffered at the hands of these men [with homophobia and corporal punishment being inherited by African Americans through gospel-class survival tactics]... only to ape their oppressor to "keep their spot" by making these kinds of Gothic arguments: women get raped by criminals, which really is just a more pedestrian label for "zombie" [with an apocalypse effectively being a crime wave committed by poor people, the gays, and racial minorities but especially black and brown people]. You don't become a billionaire [male or female] without leaning into and effectively farming and peddling these*



*stereotypes, in effect raping the zombie as code for a great many things; e.g., a monster from outer space, a devil worshipper and/or a gang member with a white bride and bastard baby that turns into a zombie [Snyder's Dawn of the Dead being quite racist in that respect, left], etc.*

<sup>73</sup> Cops are class traitors, recruiting from workers to police workers.



"White girls, they'll get you every time!" Jordan Peele's black female detective jokes in Get Out [2017]. But there's a sobering reality behind the gag:

"White liberal racism" has been accurately pinpointed as the movie's symbolic Big Bad, the villain that, when left unchecked, will destroy us all. But another undeniable facet of that beast—in fact, perhaps, the most crucial part of it all—can be whittled down even further to, simply: white women (source: Aisha Harris' "The Most Terrifying Villain in Get Out Is White Womanhood," 2017).

And the reality of such a proposal is assimilation; i.e., the undeniable fact that battered housewives [and good little girls] who embed themselves in their abusive families generally take on qualities of the abuser [notable exception: Alice from The People Under the Stairs (1991), next page, but she was "adopted" into a false family]. But that's still something future victims have to contend with! Otherwise, we've just ignoring what these people become: abusers. No one is immune to that, especially if they get you while you're young! What's more, abuse isn't just cartoon Nazi evil; white moderates [and tokenism, it really must be said; re: Peele, sadly enough] have challenged civil rights and universal equality for as long as such battles have been fought [re: "Letter from Birmingham Jail"]—i.e., people scared of being racist precisely because they're just as predatory as their openly bigoted cousins.



In such matters—and from people who are basically Hollywood royalty—the words "broken clock," "perfidious" and "hypocrite" might leap to mind. Except it doesn't matter if Peele stands with Israel, making him functionally a Zionist [re: "Jordan Peele Faces Backlash"]; he's still right about white moderacy sucking balls [though he neglects to mention his own

functionally white moderacy as a tokenized black "progressive" ignominiously defending Israel and its settler colony project, in effect making him a black Nazi ipso facto]. Simply put, white women are some of the biggest, shameless gatekeepers of these stories and real life, capitalizing on the status quo to enrich

themselves by keeping it the same [refer to Volume Zero if you want to see me take Radcliffe and true crime to task].

The same goes for any token cop/auteur. We have to challenge this framing of power [thus rape] in zombie stories, which generally all but guarantees a GNC component defending itself from TERFs, SWERFs, what-have-you [we'll go over this much more in Volume Three] as racially inclusive from childhood: stopping racism [and other bigotries/normativities] by a) becoming genuine, good-faith friends with oppressed groups, and b) both listening to and holding them accountable; i.e., per a pedagogy of the oppressed where you find similarity amid difference, thus can heal from police violence by standing against it as a holistic matter of public discourse [e.g., John Singleton talking about "black skin, white masks" (token cops) in Boyz n the Hood (1991) [by performing internalized bigotry during black-on-black police brutality onscreen](#)].



In short, horror has room for such things and has had far earlier than Wes Craven [e.g., Charles Chesnutt's The Morrow of Tradition [1901] but also arguably Mary Shelley's Frankenstein [if read through a postcolonial lens] and certainly Théodore Géricault's "The Raft of the Medusa" [released the same year as Shelley's novel—1818].)

White and black are a function under settler-colonial models. In turn, canonical rituals that unironically defend the status quo through *these* models invariably celebrate power abuse (rape) against abject beings through police agents (and, by extension, detectives—more on them in the Demon Module); i.e., through extreme, weaponized force as righteous, but also fun, valid, and vital to a variety of traitors. It's hard to survey everything because it all goes into the same dark crucible, but hopefully the above exhibit should touch on *some* of these interactions through Gothic poetics; i.e., their internalized bigotries, guilt trips, various syndromes, etc. We didn't have time to explore Orientalism above, but for a neat example of an anti-war narrative about that, consider *Godzilla Minus One* (2023): a regenerating monstrous-feminine (a reckoning-style force of nature with zombie-like properties) as told from a kamikaze pilot's demoralized, disillusioned perspective. It's pretty good stuff!

The reality remains, though: the traitors-in-question concern functioning as white *and* manly within the settler-colonial, middle-class promise of elevation to even *higher* spheres; i.e., becoming capitalists<sup>74</sup> through billionaire Marxism as a classically white male grift (re: Newell, but also Bill Gates, James Cameron, and John Romero, etc, profiting off rape and war by playing both sides through computer media and parallel texts): guns, vehicles, bombs, and knives, etc, as sexualized through fetishized settler-colonial violence against zombies, or other monsters than serve a zombie-like umbrella role when Hell comes to Earth; e.g., the pixelated demon gore of *Doom II: Hell on Earth* threatening a demonic form of the zombie apocalypse: an invasion (which returns again and again in future forms of the franchise, below, hiding fascist rhetoric behind increasingly hyperbolic, blind-parody obscurantism/escapist "apolitical" dogwhistles: "It's 'can't' be fascist because it's silly!").



(artist: [Robert Sammelin](#))

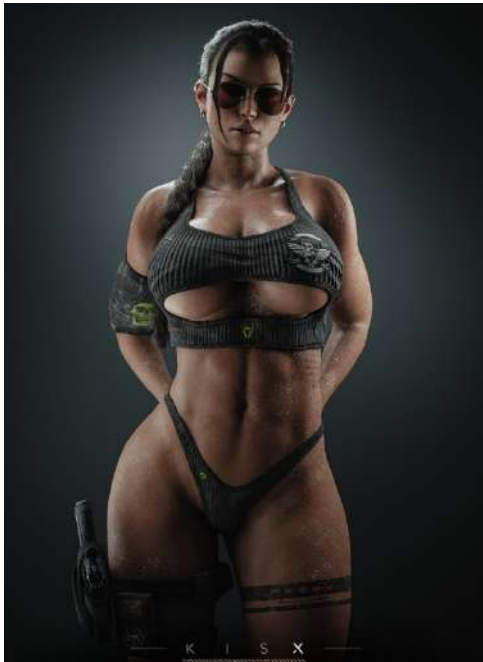
Egregore variation aside, it's all one big geek show designed to gross you out in ways that *don't* have Matthew Lewis' irony (to be honest, Savini's work is excellent, but his usage is hit-or-miss). Regardless of the storytelling format, these

killing devices become fetishized, fascist implements of capital punishment as instrumental to the state's preservation during a perceived "dying" period—one in which the colonial binary becomes radicalized. The whole ordeal is merely an invitation to suspend human rights during a power vacuum tied to Capitalism functioning as normal; the rot and its subsequent debridement is built into the system as something to inherit and carry forward by white/token survivors.

Armed with the tools needed to kill the state's enemies, the survivors of a canonical zombie apocalypse are doing what Robert Neville from *I Am Legend* did (minus that story's ironic twist) back in 1954: waging war against a "new" form of life he fears, but also cuts up, studies and catalogues. Echoing *Frankenstein*, such automated Cartesian violence against the abject counterfeit becomes a knee-jerk

<sup>74</sup> Black Capitalism is a thing and it sucks; e.g., Lil Bill's "[How Black Elites LIE to Us](#)" (2023); i.e., race (and culture) traitors betray to class elevate, regardless of the parties involved. This includes black male comedians like Peele picking and choosing who they attack and defend; re: white women and Israel. My dude, you can't just have your one big hurrah and then poison the well once you "make it"! You have to consistently attack profit (and its bigotries) or you're just propping up Omelas!

defense of the state as dying for the umpteenth time—consolidating strength brought upon by regular political/economic instability (an intrinsic function of Capitalism). Equally common is the worshipping of weaponized violence through the manufacture trifecta (scarcity, conflict, consent). Material conditions plummet, as a result; life grows cheap and pacified middle-class workers—having "consented" to Capitalism as the end all, be all by accident of birth—become embroiled in a circuitous ploy: punch Medusa/the ghost of the counterfeit *back* to Hell.



(artist: [KisX3D](#))

Carried out by those who kill, "survivors" like Zoey (not just the girl, herself, but Jill Valentine [next page] and others<sup>75</sup> outside of overtly marketed zombie stories) become the real unironic monsters; i.e., extending their pre-war privilege and positions *into* the apocalypse. In turn, these pacified workers invoke the cult of machismo as a terrible call to arms; i.e., the right to use their guns, knives and bombs on other humans, all in the name of regulating sex and force to defend white *from* black in service to profit (e.g., rape/captive fantasies): defend *yourself*, vigilante-style, as threatened by the non-white dead with legitimate grievances (what MLK and company called "the race<sup>76</sup> problem").

Per stolen generations and lost land, such dead are routinely portrayed as "vengeful" (with rape epidemic screeds being an old conservative tactic [re: [the Wilmington Massacre of 1898](#)] whose tokenism specifically targets white women, triangulating *them* in actively violent, TERF-like ways; i.e., built on Ann Radcliffe's earlier, passive-aggressive fearmongering against other minorities while preying on

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<sup>75</sup> E.g., *Tomb Raider's* own babe-in-the-wilderness scenario pitting posh Lara Croft (above) against nature as foreign, alien, and undead, but also dangerously tomb-like; i.e., our resident raider sporting fascist elements (the death's-head skull-and-wings) that advertise *her* regressive mercenary nature entering those aforementioned "tombs" (cities, colonies, and other such territories both foreign and domestic): a British Amazon to pacify Britain's fascist presence with, but also export to fascist dens *elsewhere*. It's the usual fascist lie: "This is what *you'll* get when the time comes!" (with fascism being unable to allow such leeway insofar as its competing logics—infiltrate and subjugate—will quickly bridal such women when formal power is acquired by party leaders).

<sup>76</sup> As usual, I would argue they weren't radical or solidarized *enough*, needing to connect race to matters of culture and class in ways that Marx failed to entirely do, over a century prior (re: [anti-Semitism](#) and [homophobia](#)). Developing Gothic Communism is a holistic endeavor that solves intersecting problems of race, class and culture; i.e., by accounting for axes of oppression making people turn against one another in order to survive, mid-apocalypse. This requires camping the ghosts of people like MLK and Marx, but also the *zombies* of people *like* them in broader poetic discourse.

them in *complicit* cryptonymies' restless barriers, blindfolds, castles, etc): in the wasteland as Gothic (e.g., Furiosa's racoon-style eyeliner). Rape is power abuse; to critique said abuse as farmed under capital, you must go where power-as-performance is, and face its undead exploitation in ways you can inject irony (and other things) into: by being naughty as a sex-positive way of showing you know what you're doing to *avoid* unironic zombie-esque violence during calculated risk as something to bastardize and make less rapey (the rape fantasies of the Neo-Gothic period reflecting on the Dark Ages as something to rescue from itself in pseudo-historical stories).



(artist: [Devilhs](#))

Such knowledge checks include subverting "zombies" as psychosexual symbols of reactive cannibalism; i.e., a given instance partly intimating a settler-colonial past and its atrocities returning to an *origin* of trauma (e.g., the lack of food in Cambodia leading to cannibalism and mass murder, which we'll explore in a moment), but also the mechanized "mouth" of the state cannibalizing itself through the *proxy* of zombie war fueled by American industries: as geared towards owner/worker division, efficient profit and infinite growth per military expansionism (often expressed in dry, neutral-sounding language; e.g., "liquidated," "aggressive litigation," "made redundant," "extreme prejudice," etc).

Here, the *state* is undead and hungry for *workers* who *also* become undead within the state of exception, which must then be enforced through legitimate state violence dehumanizing some aspect of the harvest—with white women "humanized" to such a degree as to compel them to fight back against the usual dehumanized groups; e.g., African Americans a) turned into desperate, starving poachers of their own redlined, transplanted "homelands" (on American soil, that is), and b) having legitimate grievances against *some* white women as complicit in said redlining scheme/xenophobic rape fictions profiting off so-called (again, excuse the expression) "jungle fever." All of this can be interrogated as a matter of ludo-Gothic BDSM provided we actually *listen* to our playmates (whoever they are) as a matter of social-sexual discourse, but also "reading the room"; i.e., as a mixture of tableau and code: putting "rape" in quotes, whatever form the export takes!

To that, guns are another Americanized export playing into the larger zombie dialog as globalized. As such, gun violence—while famously emanating from America and its police-state violence—has a nationalized flavor according to where

the guns come from: the AK from Russia, the M16 from North America, the Steyr AUG from Austria, etc (which extends from the "guild function" of medieval, privatized warfare translated to NATO and current-day conglomerates). While these weapons *can* be adopted and customized for use elsewhere, guns are toys with a specific national function for non-rebellious (white/tokenized middle-class) users: as advertisements for their country of origin, but also its defense when "threatened." Each has its own history—of being used in particular wars against particular "undead" peoples by the state, the former eventually returning from the grave when Imperialism comes home to empire; i.e., to violently wrestle sexual control (and other forms of labor and materials/Gothic poetics) *away* from the elite.

In the dreamlike unfolding of zombie narratives, then, the genocided dead return from the earth; in turn, our aforementioned guns emerge like fabled Excalibur to slay the "kingdom's" enemies, which is precisely what the state wants people to think: "Zombies are abject. Do not humanize them, but see *us* as your salvation. Now pick up a gun and pop some heads!"

Sex-positive or not, decapitation is literally part of the zombie apocalypse dialog at this point; i.e., you can't really say much about such things without making a point of it, but—just as often—must play with such *memento mori* yourselves as a *potential* means of camp: cops and victims, cowboys and Indians, Montagues and Capulets, the Jets and the Sharks, etc, as something to recognize in popular media *without* repeating its curse-like, both-houses violence in real life; e.g., the "looter shooter" model of *Fallout* and similar *postapocalypse* style exercises (which crank the survival up after the initial collapse—more on that when we examine *The Last of Us*, next page). For the target audience, decapitation is classically a reward, the "money shot" in such stories; per Sarkeesian, enjoy the fantasy but do not endorse its reifying against any victim of the state (though if you punch a Nazi, I won't stop you).



([source](#): Mantas' "I Just Made the Best Stealth Game in *Fallout 4*," 2022)

Under neoliberal Capitalism, then, fascism is just another toy to throw on the pile—the *medievalized*, overtly genocidal exploitation of workers along sexually dimorphic, xenophobic lines (Cartesian thought per settler-colonialism) that already exist everywhere in heteronormative media. Even if sex isn't actively discussed in zombie invasion scenarios, it is presented in ways that glorify violence through traditional gender roles that point to America's settler-colonial past: a "Go West!" imperative to young men, but also their pioneer wives and Winchester rifles (crackshots in their own right, who kill Native Americans while invading their land to make homes for white farmers and their children<sup>77</sup>).

During a prophesized return to this federalist framework, those having fallen under the state of exception in earlier times suddenly become targets of state violence *again*; i.e., a "new" underclass of workers carrying all the usual suspects under Capitalism, whether in open decay or not (the state is always in decay but the crisis will present as more or less so depending on the circumstances): Native Americans, white allies and the poor, as well as peoples of color, ethnic minorities and queer persons—in short, those highlighted by Howard Zinn as having been exploited by America's ruling elite all along. As we'll explore in part two of this subchapter (after we've covered some more examples of so-called "bad dreams"), such diversity-amid-intersectional-solidarity isn't the end-goal but a point of praxis from now until the end of time. Diversity is strength; divided, we (workers and nature) become conquered, yet again, as monstrous-feminine.



(artist: [Kent Monkman](#))

While hardly new, the persistence of the canonical zombie narrative endures alongside the structure that habitually enforces it. For example, I recently watched the first episode of *The Last of Us* (2023), whose postapocalyptic zombie story

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<sup>77</sup> Zionism being an emulation of American genocide just as the Nazis were; i.e., Zionists are Jewish Nazis (or non-Jewish people speaking *for* Jewish people as such).

defaults to *preapocalyptic* violence, but also codifies it in retro-future language. It treats Communism less as an impossibility and more as a trend of nonexistence through an audience that defaults to pro-capitalist, eco-fascist fantasies in the face of societal unrest; re: Capitalist Realism in action.

The "free" market, then, responds to what sells according to those who own it, the latter manufacturing supply and demand by catering to a wider demographic of conservative viewers who regularly pay out according to how they feel about Capitalism *a priori*. Not only is this an appeal to the majority for profit; the feelings of the majority extend to "Communists" as things to zombify by the elite into vaguely fearsome, moving targets. For many Americans, Communists are like zombies, their ideas informed by real-world examples funneled through a particular lens: rioting is bad and rioters must be shot, including their leaders (called "bosses" in videogames). Otherwise, foreign genocides like Vietnam or Cambodia could happen again, except this time the war will be lost at home! It's Red Scare.

American canon is patently designed to "zombify" consumers, making people forget that rioting is a pro-labor tactic (re: what Martin Luther King called, "[the language of the unheard](#)"). It does this using fear and dogma, presenting rioters as undead terrorists shambling out of the nightmare past (re: Joseph Crawford's argument of "terrorism" being a carry-over from the French Revolution, used to discourage worker rebellions in favor of continued nation-state hegemony). Applied over time, canon infects pro-labor sentiments with bourgeois misinformation infused with real-world geopolitics, allowing local police states to thrive in the hauntological shadow of displaced (neo)colonial atrocities; e.g., Cambodia. Not only do these linger in displaced markers long after the initial xenophobic violence has ceased; their inception is complicated mid-genesis by obscurantism, the fog of war and political sectarianism to prevent xenophilia from taking root.

For example, the now-famous killing fields of Cambodia were implemented in multiple stages by multiple players. While the sole arbiter might seem to be Pol Pot—[a petit-bourgeois con man bastardizing Marx' ideas to wrestle power from the American-backed regime in Cambodia during the Cambodian Civil War](#) (The People Profiles, 2022)—dictators are either installed or tolerated by global superpowers whose "tunneling effect" leaves many average citizens completely unaware of the situation (say nothing of neoliberal "fogs of war" that deny dissident journalists access to *allied* war zones).

Indeed, just as top party officials in Nazi Germany were privy to the Holocaust in ways the average citizen, soldier, scientist or middle-management personnel were not, many American politicians during the mid-1970s took sides over Cambodia by virtue of which nations were aligned with whom (the Vietnamese being seen as "more dangerous" [to American foreign interests] than the Khmer Rouge, by virtue of the Vietcong's alliance with the Soviets during and after the Vietnam War); American intellectuals, meanwhile, questioned that a genocide in Cambodia was even taking place, subsisting on scraps of information that resisted



quantification and assembly at every turn (as necrometrics tend to do). This resistance continues even when access to the "undead" portraits of the victims are gained, but also numerous shrines filled with their forgotten skulls<sup>78</sup> and bones as something to return to: what *actual* victims of genocide survived (not white middle-class people playing the white Indian).



*(exhibit 35a: Top: photos of Khmer prison camp victims, [source](#); bottom: "Meo Soknen, 13, stands inside a small shrine full of human bones and skulls, all victims of the Khmer Rouge. The small shrine, located 27 kilometers south of Phnom Penh, is one of many out-of-the-way-and-forgotten monuments to the 'Killing Fields,'" [source](#). The price of xenophobia is a refusal to love the "zombie," the state fulfilling the prophecy of apocalypse within killing fields by littering them with the bones of the uncountable state's victims: dirt farming for skeletons.)*

Regarding Cambodia and its own abused population, it should come as no surprise that the United States had already killed hundreds

of thousands of Cambodians in the early 1970s ([as many as 800,000](#), according to Nick Gier). Cartesian violence isn't just bombs; it's the gatekeeper's rationalizing of violence from seemingly "reasonable" sources during ironic state apologetics.

For example, Noam Chomsky—an outspoken critic of misinformation and the United States—remained incredibly skeptical of reports about the Cambodian genocide emerging in the mid '70s, questioning the new regime's early death numbers far more than the underreported figures that came after the initial killings, David Bleacher writes in "How the West Missed the Horrors of Cambodia" (2017):

Writing about the events in Cambodia in the latter half of the '70s with co-author Edward Herman, Chomsky accused the American media and scholars

<sup>78</sup> The beheading of the zombie extending to a beheading of Indigenous groups as a form of identity death and shaming by colonial forces.

who reported on the killings committed by the Khmer Rouge of producing atrocity propaganda. The authors claimed that the mainstream were all too eager to accept, without adequate evidence, claims about horrible deeds that were attributed to the Khmer Rouge. [In doing so, both men] made the indisputable claim that conservatives would use reports about abuses occurring in Cambodia to claim that they had been right all along about the Vietnam War. To this day, Chomsky claims he was simply assessing the evidence available at the time. [... He] and Herman were far less critical of accounts of post-1975 Cambodia that described an enlightened and humane polity. They praised George Hildebrand and Gareth Porter's now discredited book, discussed below, as a carefully researched work that [spuriously] demonstrated the successes of the new regime in overcoming the devastating results American military action had on Cambodia as it became a sideshow in the Vietnam War ([source](#)).

Defending the Khmer Rouge wound up being a giant mistake, one Chomsky has refused to apologize for decades after the fact (for a more thorough detailing of Chomsky's overall approach, [consider Bruce Sharp's lengthy writeup on The Mekong Network](#), 2023). I don't condone Bleacher's veneration of George Orwell "getting it right," but I also doubt it would have killed Chomsky to admit that he had been wrong.

Instead, Chomsky falls embarrassingly within George Orwell's comments about nationalism, "[the nationalist] does not only not disapprove of atrocities committed by his own side, he has a remarkable capacity to not even hear about them." While being a terrible person himself, Orwell had—like Freud or Nietzsche—arguably touched upon a larger truth when he wrote that statement. Nation-states need to be challenged in ways that allow for self-reflection, including transmuting the canonical zombie into iconoclastic forms that reflect on our collective past errors when assessing genocide. This includes Chomsky but also us.

While canonical media lacks comprehensive introspection and nuance by design, it is nonetheless rife with monstrous symbols and war-time scenarios associated with geopolitical events and their lasting cultural attitudes. Mention "zombies" to Americans, and older people will think of international incidents like Cambodia—specifically the American canonical framing whose subterfuge continues to disguise the dialectical-material realities that reliably lead to genocide: "No Capitalism or American-deployed bombs here, only killer farmer zombies (which neoliberal centrism dogwhistles towards with its own nation pastiche: the green-skinned "monster peasant" from Brazil, Blanka, [literally wearing hillbilly overalls in SF6](#) [2023]—what Dutch from *Predator* would call "a half-assed mountain boy." More on that in Volume Three, Chapter Five; exhibit 104c)."

In turn, everything else is swept aside by the monster—the escaped *slave* (note the shackles)—running towards you out of the white-owned jungle's banana republic: the electric dead threatening ostensibly tax-paying survivors during a canonically black-and-white, us-versus-them argument; i.e., home as inside-outside, residents as correct-incorrect during what's essentially a foreign plot. In zombie stories, it translates to racist, settler-colonial vaudeville theatrically punching down against the Modern Prometheus for seemingly "stealing" their lightning (their power, their Zeus-like "thunder") from the elite and the middle-class. The person of color (especially the *non*-American person of color) becomes an extended being under imperial circumstances coming home. They're treated as alien, but also anathema, reprobate, and doomed under police rule extending to the



deputized middle class acting as survivors against rampaging beasts, orcs, monkeys green with envy and trauma, a panther threatening Jane with captivity and rape (who must be rescued by Tarzan, a white Indian). Even calling them "survivors" implies they must survive against people for whom Blanka (and similar characters) historically represent. It's *incredibly* racist (and anyone who says otherwise is fascist, simple as that).

([source](#): Fandom)

Carceral hauntology participates in the transgenerational curse of zombie canon, clouding cultural hindsight by virtue of recursive nostalgia: the arrival of the zombie, thus cannibal Imperialism, as something to celebrate insofar as open violence is concerned. For example, breathe the word "zombie" to younger people already exposed to uncritical narratives from the genre and they'll automatically think of the zombie as a moving target, not a victim: echoes of Cambodia, Vietnam and other American-sponsored disasters, but also proletarian movements resisting the state's abuse committed at home; e.g., the Civil Rights Movement that Romero tried to humanize through a zombie narrative.

Such stories are made to lobotomize people at a young age (often through videogames, and before that movies, novels and religious documents); lobotomized *children* will hop to it as child soldiers usually do, indifferently accepting vigilante, fascist violence towards the "terrorist" zombie as not only vital, but *fun* (their erasure being a "blank slate" tactic common within ethnic cleansings and state crackdowns against labor). Anti-labor stems from canonical appropriation of the zombie symbol, but also older, fearful Americans decorating "their" homes with reactionary gargoyles like an imperiled fortress—their poetics limited to mere window-dressing but nevertheless incredibly visible (e.g., flags or mantelpiece

guns). Over time, a settler-colonial mindset has set in: "This is *our* mall!" snarled for the state by Americanized kids killing kids (white-on-black, black-on-black, etc).

While this is generally a middle-class gimmick, it's common to abject this recruitment onto far away victims of capital (which Africa very much is), but the reality is, it starts in America as having mastered what Columbus started. Columbus was a cunt, but so is America and all it stands for genocide because America is a settler colony that engenders such atrocities to defend itself while acting exceptionally good about it in the name of capital. Children absorb information, thus dogma, far faster than adults do—in short, being easier to *train*. Middle-class child soldiers, then, make for the easiest victims *and* abusers towards each other and especially less fortunate children elsewhere; i.e., in the Global South, who the North weaponize against and who, themselves, become weaponized in cruel capitalist schemes of territory and conquest completely outside their control ("like taking candy from a baby!"): the rise of endemic warlords simply another form of fascism that emerges abroad (and is used to justify future invasions into these lands *again* by American cops bringing law and order to neo-colonized lands depicted as black and savage).



([source](#))

As we shall keep exploring the deeper into the chapter we go (and hopefully subvert if we're able), "home" is the casualty of such dogma, but also empathy and children in pursuit of a so-called "simpler time" (a nostalgic us-versus-them to defend from dissidents, heretics, *zombies* treated as "looking human," blending in); i.e., empathy and defense of the home-in-decay (settler-

colonial territories projected onto local residences) becoming a disastrous blame game punching the zombie to achieve profit as a crude but desired result.

Over time, the casualty of victimized children extends into adulthood, the poor little fuckers growing up to become bullies of the worst sort: child *killers*, William-Golding-style. Per the Gothic's process of abjection, this happens in cartographic replicas of the home, on a domestic level, but also abroad for much the same reasons: maps and enemies (obstacles)—their combined idea to keep power precisely where it is, pure and simple, by turning workers on themselves; i.e., the state of exception presented as home defense from evil, child-like and infantilized forces to "nip in the bud" (the foreign plot inside the home); e.g., Zionism (Bad Empanada Live's "[Israel Added to UN CHILD MURDER List, Alongside ISIS, Al Qaeda and Boko Haram](#)," 2024).

To be honest, there's no way to really camp something like the Holocaust; i.e., when it's shown "as is," you can only show it as a historical event (or elude to such things in displaced forms; e.g., *Star Wars*' "a long time ago and in a galaxy far, far away...."). If someone wants to camp their own abuse, that's their prerogative, but that's a testimony meant to achieve catharsis by speaking out; e.g., me camping my own rape and survival sex work (which we'll get to) to find my path through life but also my voice. But this particular irony happens by voicing our oppression according to things we also cannot choose (for me, being trans), thus do whatever we can to change our environment as a matter of political action; i.e., from my PhD: "We camp things because we must!" But again, this is generally as an element of marginalized testimony towards things out of our control that actually affect us by virtue of the state isolating and attacking us as monstrous-feminine, alien.



By comparison, the so-called "apolitical" behaviors of reactionaries and moderates (usually white cis-het men) amount to Peter Pan syndrome trapping them in the past as a retro-future as dead, canceled—its fatal nostalgia a bizarrely tragic cloaking device they use to divide, then colonize Gothic media (e.g.,

*Doom*), Gamergate-style, and deprive it of openly political voices that speak to anything *but* their own sheltered lives. They *act* imperiled, but generally *aren't* insofar as their abuse (which generally is far less systemic) is something they detach, bury and expect others to do the same (fascists recruit from broken homes; e.g., *American History X* [1998], above)! They refuse to associate with anything *openly* political. In turn, they pointedly foment *cryptofascist* conspiracies per *false* rebellion (re: Parenti) that swap the bourgeoisie for a cabal of imaginary "globalist" overlords making their favorite videogame heroine "less sexy"; i.e., "wokeness" and "cultural Marxism" being updated forms of the Jewish conspiracy in the modern day taken from the backstabbing Jew dogma of Nazi Germany's own propaganda mills.

Proponents thereof blame activism (a dogwhistle for "the Left") as "ruining movies, videogames," etc, by "needlessly complicating" them *vis-à-vis* canon's simpler time argument as "better" (re: the absence of tension, MLK's "negative peace"); i.e., campily "making [these things] gay/political" as a matter of actively raising emotional/Gothic intelligence and class-cultural consciousness, which weird canonical nerds not only *aren't* used to, but *trained* to attack exactly as they do—underhandedly. In turn, they seek to curry favor from "the gods" as a diegetic offering/middle-class olive branch/Trojan Horse (a bourgeois sentiment echoed in

neoliberal hauntologies reviving older videogames to stress their assimilative, monomythic aims: "[Worship me! Claim my power](#)<sup>79</sup>!" It's Faustian *and* Promethean, disguising fascist us-versus-them as sports-like "hype" that serves profit in all the usual ways: chaff as complicit cryptonymy that our own revolutionary forms must rise to challenge in the same spaces: life *isn't* simple or fair and we must collectively fight for our right to exist through proletarian counterterror).

As such, these weird canonical nerds (and their tokenized elements) are not-so-subtly gaming the system in predatory, self-centered ways that defend capital in the process; e.g., Kyle Rittenhouse given carte blanche/protection by the cops the same way Edward Norton's character is (above); i.e., they're *de facto* cops doing the same job through vigilante violence: policing the functional undead as "not of the kingdom." Taught to dehumanize the zombie, the children of *these* homeowners are instructed by their surroundings (daddy's videogames) to see violent, brainless people to shoot as a wacky game. As such, they become violent and brainless themselves, xenophobic instead of xenophilic. For them, a world without Capitalism is an end of the world that calls for settler-colonial violence—imagination death insofar as they can't imagine anything else; e.g., the Nothing from *The Neverending Story* (1984).

That shouldn't be a shock; punitive violence and cataclysm are built into canon as "secularized," religion repacked inside a culture built entirely around gun violence according to binary gender roles and neoliberal state worship. Dressed up as fun, but also nostalgic to a new generation of youngsters through the likes of *Stranger Things* (and the network's calculated insertion [of popular '80s songs like "The Never-Ending Story"](#) into their climactic scenes), this canonically reinvented worldview is literally all they know. Through the Capitalism-Realist myopia, it because far easier to imagine the end of the world *as zombie*, which they can reject and attack when the consequences of Imperialism actually begin to noticeably affect the Imperial Core; i.e., in a way they'll either have to deny or face and accept their hand in. As such, it's far more common for weird canonical nerds to punch down (or up) at *scapegoats* for these consequences than to admit responsibility as part of a broader systemic issue: one that requires intersectional solidarized political action with the oppressed—a pedagogy thereof—to dismantle.

In turn, capitalists financially incentivize zombie abjection (through sanctioned execution) as half-real—both between fiction and nonfiction—by sponsoring the zombie's giving and receiving of figurative and literal lobotomies onscreen and off; i.e., as a byproduct of blind, uncritical, conservative consumption that endorses genocide as a structure with a particular kind of copaganda. Touched on by Romero's 1978 follow-up to *Night of the Living Dead* and later by *Day of the Dead*, in 1985, the effects of canon on the human brain and its perception of the human zombie are tried-and-true. Under these effects, the braindead consumer

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<sup>79</sup> From IGN's "[Age of Mythology: Retold - Release Date Trailer | Xbox Showcase 2024](#)."

dutifully imagines what already sells (not peace) through a lucrative zombie mode for the American middle class: what *doesn't* challenge the current structure of war as a business—the mall, of course, but also the paramilitary scenes that commodify racial conflict under the mall narrative as something to riddle with bullets; e.g., *Dawn of the Dead's* blackface scene.

Indeed, it's the first thing we see before the police launch their attack: a white man playing a non-white man shooting a white man to kick the raid off. Romero, in effect, is using a classic police tactic/theatrical device—the false flag—to initiate, then make his broader argument; i.e., *they* drew first blood! Everything that follows, then, is basically revenge for the killing of the young (white, blonde) rookie ("They started it, we'll finish it!"): a historical-material effect predicated on



centuries of police abuse, from invasion, chattel slavery and redlining!

Furthermore, [to call the scene problematic would be an understatement](#), as it crosses the line between entertainment and real-world atrocities in a way Romero has no real-world experience *with*, thus

isn't testifying to anything *he's* survived. In short, "he saw it on the TV" (which he undoubtedly *did*, during the Vietnam war and *its* highly televised protests prior to any sort of neoliberal recuperation strategies being present; i.e., Gothic media; e.g., *Aliens*) and clumsily recreated what he saw as a perniciously dubious form of activism that feels, at best, insensitive and crass. It *is* memorable, but for the wrong reasons, and because of its rushed, heavy-handed and forced nature (the blackface paint also being used in *Birth of a Nation* [during the attempted rape scene](#)) verges on advertising the very vaudeville he's supposedly against!

As Ross Lockhart writes in "[Attack of the Bourgeois Braineaters](#)" (2004):

*Dawn of the Dead* is more than just a zombies-at-the-shopping-mall critique of consumer culture, as elements of racism and class war are also included within its framework. In one of its opening scenes, "a SWAT team clears out a tenement building in Pittsburgh. The residents are primarily Puerto Rican and Latino, kept captive by the undead both within and without the building" ([Rider 7](#)). Despite the abject poverty of these residents, one of the police officers makes a statement reflecting what Stephen Harper calls "the film's theme of material insecurity and envy" ([5](#)). "Shit man, this is better than I got." Harper further observes that the tenement sequence "invites the audience to consider zombiedom as a condition associated with both racial oppression and social abjection and, therefore, sanctions socio-

political interpretations of the film as a whole" (6). The tenement sequence also introduces the audience to two members of the film's core quartet of protagonists, [Ken Foree's](#) Peter and [Scott Reiniger's](#) Roger, a pair of SWAT officers, one black, one white, who manage to remain civilized as their fellow officers "end up indiscriminately murdering residents and zombies, uttering racial epithets and generally being hysterical" ([Rider 7](#)).

Described by Roger as "going apeshit," there's a process of abjection to what seems like an off-hand statement: the vigilante cop he's critiquing as "acting like an animal" using the police raid (already a colonial tool) to escalate violence as a matter of extermination rhetoric. Said rhetoric is conspicuously guided by class-traitor (cop) resentment towards the government-housed poor as being non-white on its face; i.e., as a naked excuse to kill as many "zombies" as he can "while the getting's good." To that, there's no distinction between the living and the unliving but also the undead; to him, they're all roaches to squash, and he pushes door



after door open, treating the layout (and its occupants) like a shooting gallery. The Imperial Boomerang has well-and truly-come home.

To this, Peter and Roger's subsequent conversation about dignity in death hangs over the fascist, trigger-happy mania of their fellow officers, who they abandon to

hold onto *their* humanity after seeing the people they were "supposed" to protect (a police state lie: when push comes to shove, cops are trained to automatically kill workers as "enemy"—to cull the herd of black sheep, as it were) being dehumanized so thoroughly yet holding onto *their* dignity as much as *they* could: even when faced with end times and police brutality, these people are still more human than the cops are. "Who's the savage? Modern man!"

Such praxial inertia can be noted outside the film as felt across its franchise commenting on the same struggles to feed the profit movie (re: the *Star Wars* problem). Things stay the same because canonical artists have no financial incentive to change according to those in power. It's a bourgeois illusion, one people are born into (and can only escape through "radical," drug-like ways, which we'll explore deeper in the primer).

The fact remains, if we want to change, the undead must be considered beyond a singular monolithic target during monomythic violence. Clearly racial animus is baked into the settler-colonial model, one that divides different state targets under profit to claim the mantle of victimhood as a tokenized position that decays into raw betrayals and defeat. The ghosts of the Civil Rights Movement and



exclusions of older radically *conservative* feminisms occupy a territory likewise shared with the victims of American foreign policy coming back around. All must be included and holistically combined in the shared chorus of the damned; i.e., per our multiracial, GNC, all-inclusive hauntologies, chronotopes, cryptonymy and *cryptomimesis* reversing abjection.

Doing so happens by imitating retro-future, universally liberating regenerations (re: Matteson's apocalypse where the zombies win) having formed out of old decaying oppressions (and their tokenized polities' harmful representations of oppressed groups policing themselves): our Song of Infinity outshining the seminal catastrophe of state shift during the liminal hauntology of war! This reversal of abjection is *not* painless (far from it), but it *can* help us heal from unironic rape; i.e., as a state weapon of terror meant to pacify us into tokenization and division, and which we learn to fight back against and express our dehumanization during rape play as ironic based on blindly campy (and pornographic) forms that we can introduce irony towards: "necrophilia" as walking a very odd tightrope.

Graveyard sex, while not always on display as such, is what a zombie apocalypse effectively boils down to (even when overt sex isn't shown); i.e., canonically pimping walking corpses by slapping "of the dead" on it and going from there; e.g., *Highschool of the Dead*, but also simply *Rape of the Dead* putting an eco-fascist chokehold on such matters:



([source](#), top: *Rape Zombie: Lust of the Dead*, 2012)

Such partially imaginary things *can* be camped, but all occupy the same Gothic stage. It can be more fantastical or less, depending on the degree of the apocalypse; e.g., Dominic Mitchell's *In the Flesh* (2013) treating the tightrope as a matter of politics and location that comments on *Britain* in decay versus a more outlandish and Americanized, gun-heavy approach to such things:

What makes *In the Flesh* somewhat different is how it shifts some of the human struggle onto the undead without sacrificing what's at stake: survival. Granted, it feels inevitably more pedestrian when displayed in an immediate, everyday setting. These are not fantastical wastelands; neither civilization nor its inhabitants are presented as some kind of abject, faraway husk. Instead, they mirror or parallel our lives, as they exist, in the present. / I enjoyed this comparison in that it seemed less remote than the typical, post-apocalyptic fare. Not that there's anything wrong with the *Mad Max* (1979) or *Star Wars* (1977) approach. In fact, I actually prefer delving into those worlds—to glean the hidden, allegorical message contained therein. At the same time, those worlds can take on a life of their own, to the extent that the message sometimes gets lost—carried away by the imaginary setting and



its fantastical inhabitants. If one wants to avoid that, it requires a different approach ([source](#): Persephone van der Waard's "*In the Flesh* (2013): Season 1 Review, part 3," 2018).

As such, we must set our sights on displaced forms of genocide beyond the suffering of a single alienated people (or their psychosexual, undead exploitation) cannibalizing themselves for the elite; i.e., recuperation; e.g., of feminism, Afrocentrism, queer culture, the British labour party post-Thatcherism, etc. For all of them, the us-versus-them dynamic of the decaying Americanized home/society affects all peoples, places and things, but classically incentivizes white/token America (and neighboring entities) to abject labor *for* the elite. So close to the problem and yet so far from its solution, they radicalize from childhood onwards to deputize and attack the zombie; i.e., anyone who isn't human can have anything done to them (murder or rape) without fear of repercussions: with their parents (actual or *de facto*) ostensibly caring for them but in fact dehumanizing them in a never-ending war reinforced by centuries of dogma.

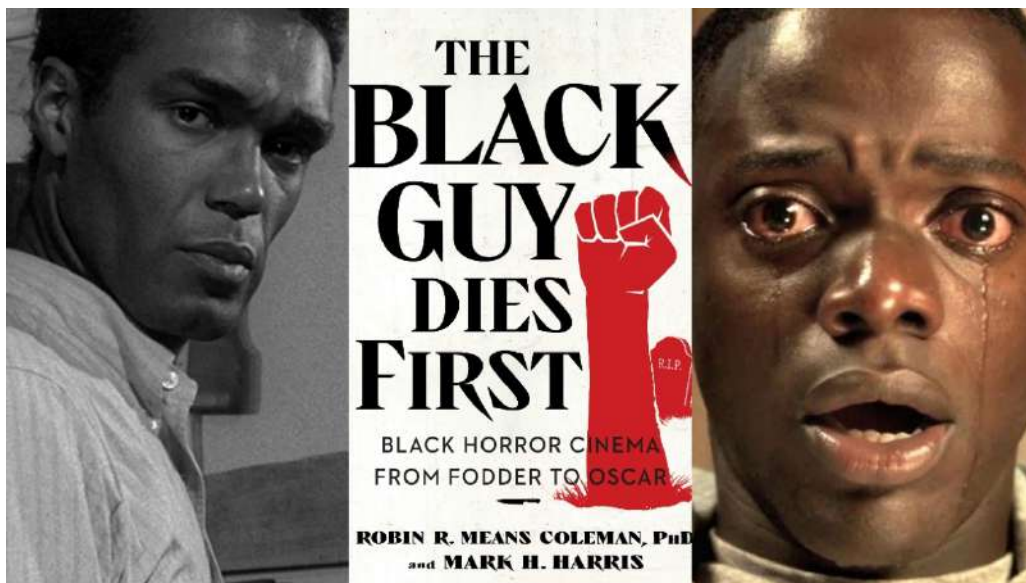
Such normalization through undead vaudeville doesn't recruit the zombie as automatically friendly to the state (akin to a good Godzilla or terminator), but *does* demand sacrificial revivals per horror media as holy in the eyes of Americanized families when assisting profit in this respect (a kind of "mark of Cain," slave brand or tramp stamp that, regardless of the colonized group, marks them for settler-colonial abuse).

To that, I want to consider *The Last of Us* as revived in 2023 (and older stories accomplishing the same idea, before and after Romero's corpus) in ways that I, educated as I am, previously responded to in a sex-positive revelation:

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
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waking up in the middle of the night to reassemble them through rememory as putting Morrison's device to good use; i.e., using it to challenge profit, thus genocide through the zombie as something to reunite *with* and make whole *again* as a matter of stolen childhood. There's a lot to cover (so many toys with play with, so many likenesses to interview). Even so, I'll try to focus on zombies as we progress, piece by piece, from indoctrination to subversion through the apocalypse; i.e., as a matter of residence and resident made zombie-like since before we were born until after we are dead.

We'll get to Morrison and rememory during part three of this subchapter (and consider childhood regressions and restoration with ludo-Gothic BDSM, in the subchapter after that). For part two of "The Imperial Boomerang," we'll look at *The Last of Us* more and go over various ideas in relation to it and similar stories (and toys, characters, etc); i.e., *cryptomimesis* per a factory of toy-like simulacra whose proliferation resurrects abject violence within capital as friendly (conductive) to its daily operations. No doubt, a *holistic* understanding thereof shall prove handy when the time comes: defense of home as under attack by functionally white zombies of a police agency that stems from horror media as something to reclaim for *all* oppressed groups (not just African Americans, though it behooves us to examine and critique their history of doing so, below. Beware anyone allergic to valid criticism).



([source](#): Tai Gooden's "*The Black Guy Dies First Will Put a Critical Eye to Black Horror History*," 2022)

Never forget, this is *our* mall! Our toys, our voices, our Aegis! But we must acclimate ourselves towards them by taking them back while they are sold to us; i.e., as children receiving settler-colonial propaganda as something to camp (which takes time, care and effort).

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## The Imperial Boomerang, part two: *Cryptomimesis*, or Pieces of the Dead (feat. *The Last of Us*, *Scooby Doo*, and more)

"I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. [...] now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. [...] I slept, indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her, but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed; when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom I had created" ([source](#)).

—Victor Frankenstein, *Frankenstein* (1818)



Part one of "The Imperial Boomerang" laid out the core ideas of a zombie apocalypse—the zombie and apocalypse, of course, but also the state of exception and process of

abjection when the Imperial Boomerang sails home to alienate, then rape and murder the worker as native, black, monstrous-feminine dead. This process of abjection (and its assorted counterfeits) are predominantly white, middle-class and patrilineal by function; i.e., something for whitey to inherit and absorb as children, then turn the handle of as adults to scapegoat dark forces for imperial/capital sins: "No *bastard* baby will inherit what's mine<sup>80</sup>!" Such divisions classically function, then, as pro-state arguments demanding violence *against* the zombie as something to manifest/summon (often by accident, Reagan [above] filled with the vengeful spirit of the non-white dead as something to befriend ["Captain Howdy"]) to which her liberal, gentrified mother is horrified to see: her sweet baby daughter as

<sup>80</sup> I.e., the crossing of divided things, of white sleeping with black in the binarized sense of master/slave tied to the settler-colonial horrors of capital: of visibly non-white bodies brutalized by white oppressors chasing profit. This becomes a kind of ghost that can haunt the Cartesian agent, but also those who belong to either side in the same settler colony project as romanticized: to summon the monster and listen to it sing about its death as a likeness, an alienation; e.g., King Diamond's Abigail nebulously possessing King's teenage white bride as a kind of dark zombie baby ghost crooning with delight. She's Morrison's *Crawling Already?* with a mean streak, punching up inside the womb—the house and the mother's uterus (more on this in the Demon Module).

"ancient" zombie demonstrating the anisotropic quality [double standards] of the zombification process); i.e., as having vampiric and spectral qualities, generally with a monstrous-feminine element that speaks to the perils of childbirth given a postcolonial character that must canonically be exorcized by brave Christian martyrs protecting the pale *affluent* virgin from the raping incubus (a kind of abject take on Immaculate Conception); e.g., Pazuzu from *The Exorcist* as a zombie ghost—the spirit of settler-colonial trauma, *and* of feared revenge for those sins (normally having called the cops on such things, the proverbial angel of death reversed onto the colonizer for once)!

The idea is racist in ways that present white women (especially the daughters of the Western nuclear family unit) as susceptible to invasion through a manner of openings. One, of course, is the precocious absorption of knowledge; the other is the gratuitously sexual passing along of such information between formidably tempting (and brave, bold, confident) bodies when the time comes—puberty and the arrival of Miss Flo (shark week). The mental abjection of such demons is a kind of hysterectomy that aims to kill the Indian, save the woman; i.e., her baby parts making fresh bodies for the state to repeat the process of abjection on, forever and ever (conversely, GNC people generally get actual hysterectomies to free themselves from state control and observation).



(artist: [Annabella Ivy](#))

The zombie is nothing if not productive, in this respect, canonically presenting sexuality and the passing of forbidden abject knowledge between different parties; i.e., as both self-destructive and loaded with abjected forms of past settler-colonial abuse foisted onto non-white groups, non-Christians and GNC elements to varying

degrees of intersection (and to the peachy bodies associated with them as a selling point during liminal expression; e.g., women of color depicted from Charlotte Brontë's Bertha to Jean Rys' Antoinette Causeway to real-life examples, above, as a matter of non-white sex work [Latina, in Annabella's case] haunted by colonial elements). As traditional extensions of the patriarch who are expected to do *their* duty and pass along the family line through *his* womb, daddy's little *white* girl would be expected to keep demonic influence *out* of their minds but also their *bodies*; i.e., as an avenue for humanization by falling in love through social-sexual relations with others (which generally involves a fair bit of coitus, or at the very

least nudism and asexual commentaries on such things through sex as a Gothic form of art): zombified by those "of age" (thus "on the market") literally sleeping with the bestial, inhuman *zombie* enemy (under settler-colonial rule, that is); e.g., a Bride of Frankenstein waiting to happen—corruption and disassembly as something to pin on her and her forbidden love when she unsurprisingly rebels against her oppressive father (and browbeaten mother/siblings)!



(artist: [Angelica Reed](#))

Part two shall now consider the zombie's busy *cryptomimesis* (echo) as something to weigh on, but also harvest for *ourselves* while playing *with* the dead; i.e., collecting the necessary pieces after we've started to humanize these beings: to reassemble through rememory as a fitful process of fertilization, but ultimately one that requires rotten pieces of criminalized, shitty flesh to put nightmarishly back together! To that, if something was work to create, then ideally its volatile ideas should also constitute a kind of work for the

audience—not something to romance unto decay as "all we get"; e.g., laborwave or Gothic Communism vs vaporwave<sup>81</sup>; i.e., the former sort challenging the non-radical viewer to motivate *them* to change: radicalization takes work (even if it

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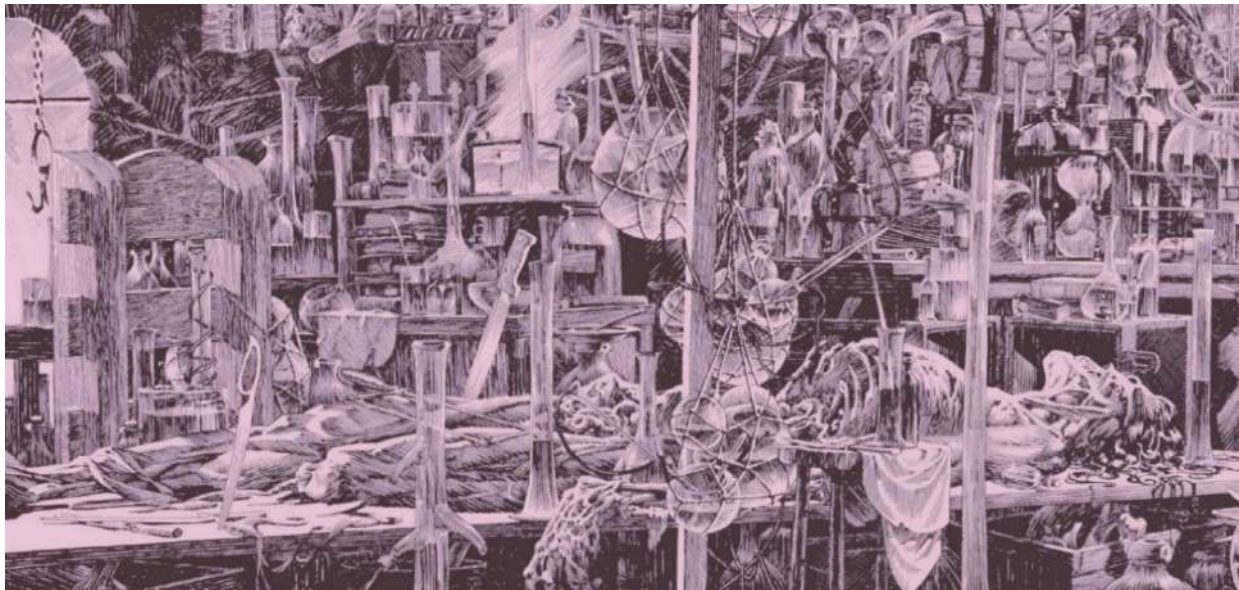
<sup>81</sup> Zeuhl, for example, retreated regularly into nostalgic spaces that were decayed as such; i.e., a buffer between them and the realities of capital, which they certainly knew about but gradually liked to deny more and more. Originally tremendously genderqueer and outspoken, they regressed through these modes, eventually trading activism for a steady job (and longtime crush they could marry then presumably boss around to help them get what *they* wanted: passage to England, specifically Manchester). I used to think it was endearing, appreciating their *Super Mario Bros.* coasters and steady faithful love for videogames. Once, I even asked if I could fuck them while they played *Pokémon* on their phone. As they took off their pants, lay back and spread their thick, fuzzy thighs, I was over the moon. As I fucked them, I even thought for a second, "This is so cool!" But the novelty wore off as I discovered that I, in that present moment, didn't seem to exist in their mind; they were entirely fixated on the game in front of them, not me!

Which, to some extent, is fine: one, mental stack; two, asked and answered. Things can be exchanged and offered as expressed, and Zeuhl's offer was, "You can fuck *my* pussy but I'm going to play *this* game," and that's what they did! Fair play. But it—like Miss Crawford playing Speculation in *Mansfield Park*—seemed to provide a ludic metaphor (and pattern) for how they treated me in general: someone for whom whatever they were doing at the present moment took priority over and didn't seem to be acknowledged insofar as *my* needs were concerned (this became a major problem, later).

At the moment, it was simply an observation, not a criticism (the two aren't mutually exclusive). Over time, Zeuhl's observations became gradually more and more gated by the buffers they placed in front of their own eyes; i.e., they became selfish and closed off to such a degree as abandoning me *and* their revolutionary principles: they sold out and bought into the usual assimilative schemes. In the end, it is what it is, but it's hard not to feel disappointed in hindsight!

stings, think of it as a love tap—a little pain that hurts to help you pull your head out of your ass).

By comparison, moderation and delicacy are a dubious refrain, a faithful—however confident or reluctant it may seem—adherence to them a kind of *self*-tone-policing! To critique power (and its abuse), you must go where it is and shake things up with monsters as code (which anything monstrous-feminine is, insofar as liberation—of Medusa, of workers and nature—is executed through such code as something to holistically play with). Only then is praxial catharsis—by transforming the state's arrangement (and flow) of power through Gothic engagement—possible!



(artist: Bernie Wrightson)

While such a quest *is* suitably Promethean (above)—with us searching for elusive love as something pure and wholesome to gab happily with the girls<sup>82</sup> about once in our grasp (all as white moderate dickwads insufferably act like our gods and masters; i.e, denying us company while literally confiscating it, enslaving and alienating us)—we'll save *Frankenstein* for later (and its giant angry-lonely zombie punching Victor [and his Cartesian nonsense] repeatedly in the balls: "Let Jesus fuck you!" haha). We'll also save the zombie house (and its ominous toys) for the next subchapter. Instead, this subdivision shall be looking at more zombie invasion scenarios (a genre Shelley alluded to with her infamous novel's singular Creature, but for which the closest she ever came to writing as a doomsday scenario akin to an apocalypse was 1826's *The Last Man*).

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<sup>82</sup> Such sisterly communicating allow the ability to talk about sex without requiring said activity to be carried out (unlike cis-het men or token Man Box proponents, who seem to think—thus operate under the condition—that once sex is mentioned, it must then be pursued to a logical, heteronormative conclusion; i.e., hunted down, acquired, activated and tossed aside).



Why more, you ask? Well, one, just because; two, I like them; and three, I think populating my work with different stories, codes and ideas (which essentially is what monsters are) is important. This is my castle—my saloon-style danger disco—and so-help-me-God, *I* decide what goes in it!

And before anyone starts comparing me to Bill Paxton's Coconut Pete [wailing about coconuts to a captive audience](#) ("Yes, goddammit, yes!") or Monty Python's Dennis Moore [endlessly giving the poor starving country folk stolen lupins](#) ("We ever wear the blood things!"), making them feel imprisoned by *yet another example* to the point that they start quoting the Hound ("I understand that if any more words come pouring out your cunt mouth, [I'm going to have to eat every chicken in this room](#)<sup>83</sup>!"), know that repetition and patterns through said repetition is sort of the whole the point, loves. Also, this *is* heavy stuff we're discussing, to which whatever joy there is to be found happens *during* the apocalypse; i.e., inside the world as a graveyard. I want my book to constantly reflect that, hence all the added jokes, anecdotes and sexy bits, the color and fun trailing across the marble, happily and pointedly defacing of the West as inherently genocidal. Such things routinely hide



and show themselves in plain sight, on both ends of the dialectical-material spectrum, and we want to repeatedly examine and play with them *without* reservations.

To that, we'll start with *The Last of Us* in connection with a variety of older pieces

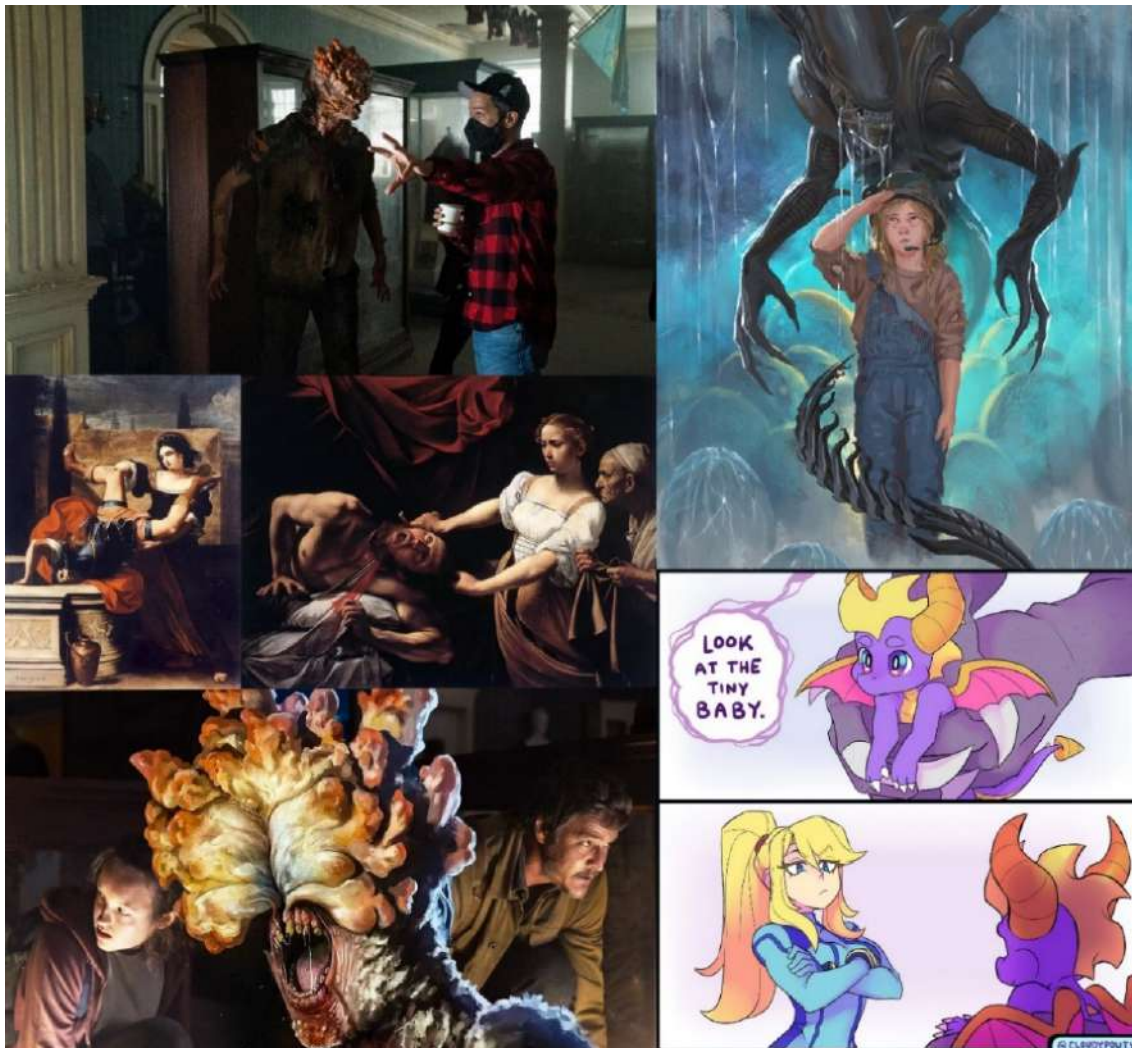
reflected holistically upon, collage-style:

*Note: I want to address the things I've left out—the statuesque, Pazuzu-sized spectre in the room. This is a very cursory and rapid-fire, survey-style section, insofar as there's a million such invasion fantasies concerning the zombie as*

<sup>83</sup> Fun fact: He's talking about the bounty hunters in that scene, not chickens!



something to classically survive. I want to stick with fleshy corporal entities, here (thus won't really be looking at Pazuzu), asking you to consider them as projections of capital for liberation to actualize with; i.e., by playing with (and thinking about) such elements of zombie-style us-versus-them differently than canonical proponents do! Whatever arguments apply to the walking dead as something to shoot likewise apply to them as something to exorcize and banish through literal Christian dogma (re: Pazuzu). So whatever you feel like I've left out, just know that it's all connected, all part of the same Crusade against an imaginary enemy (with historical elements) that capital needs to keep itself alive (and which we learn from its older problematic histories in order to camp them). —Perse



(exhibit 35b: Top-and-bottom-left: Last of Us promo and BTS material; artists, middle: Caravaggio's "Judith Beheading Holofernes" and Elisabetta Sirani's "Timoclea Killing Her Rapist" [[source](#): Ariela Gittlen's "A Brief History of Female Rage in Art," 2018]; top-right: Cyber Aeon; bottom-right: [Cloudy Pouty](#). Renaissance female artists reify revenge by "killing" their male abusers, which

certainly strikes a chord in relation to apocalypse narratives—i.e., can be referenced again for us standing against state survival as less personified and more shown to operate through its defenders playing the victim with some grains of truth.

Revisited, such things can help shatter heteronormative propaganda during oppositional praxis; i.e., by not using "appropriative peril" [unironic rape fantasies] to recruit "war orphans" that trigger like "sleeper" agents at the first sight of trauma during regressive Amazonomachia: dragons to slay as zombie-like in function regarding slayer and target alike!



[artist: [Cloudy Pouty](#)]

When treated as canon, neoconservative, monomythic characters like Newt from Aliens, Samus from Metroid [a famous dragon slayer, left] or Ellie from The Last of Us embody state parasite mechanisms impersonating rebellion as something to instruct in bad faith. Camping thus critiquing their tokenized intolerance exposes the pedagogic role such heroism maintains per survival stories [which Metroidvania and shooters most certainly are]: coded instructions for worker

behaviors. Doing so subsequently helps raise emotional/Gothic intelligence [and class/cultural awareness] through iconoclastic art; i.e., whose messy synthesis includes the cryptonymy of various heroic and monster masks/subversive doubles that grant women [and other marginalized groups] a theatrical voice: to vent their frustrations/anger against the status quo, albeit in ways that transform socio-material conditions through ironic consumption, endorsement and performance of such disguise pastiche as de facto sex-positive education.)

Whether it's the state or some rebellious faction, Gothic stories similar to Night of the Living Dead, Left 4 Dead or The Last of Us (again, cryptomimesis) address the trauma of constantly being hunted or under attack by indeterminate undead—a "bad dream" that, under canonical circumstances, patently "rapes the mind" in carefully directed productions tied to franchised material.

In *The Last of Us*, itself, the elite alienate *weaponized* fears—including the stigma of parasitoids like the fearsome cordyceps fungus (exhibit 35b)—to disguise Capitalism's intrinsic inability to handle manmade disasters through crude xenophobia on top of more xenophobia; i.e., nature-as-alien, monstrous-feminine, undead. Its own Red Scare gimmicks cram Nazis and Commies into the same shadowy kayfabe. However, by dressing a given disaster in fascist, liminal hauntologies, the Cartesian façade "slips" over time, coming home to roost in sequel enterprises that drop the mask, more and more: *The Last of Us, part 2* (2020) evolves with its target, "war orphan" audience to reveal disconcerting similarities to the real world: [Zionist Apartheid](#) (source: Emanuel Maiberg's "The Not So Hidden Israeli Politics of *The Last of Us Part II*," 2020).

As such, mutually-assured destruction and holistic genocide are suddenly "on the table" as menticidal tools demonizing labor as undead, animal, violence *against* the middle class; i.e., a rape culture whose bullet and knife penises aren't better than sex, they *are* sex: "raping" the chosen dead during a sanctioned, necrophilic genocide. Not only can its victims not consent; their ruinous undeath occurs through the fusion of war and sex using various theatrical styles whose proliferation as solely unironic is its own kind of censorship; i.e., live burial; e.g., the "soap opera" with war and zombies. All this canonically disguises how fragile Capitalism is, but also how self-destructive. It won't survive climate change/state shift—will have to evolve as feudalism did during the Black Death, or risk total annihilation. *The steady intimation of this catastrophe is a veiled, bourgeois ultimatum.*

Make no mistake, the displaced evils in *The Last of Us* aren't just nightmare fuel; they're half-real insofar as they're pointed at and by state proponents abusing the usual liminalities of fiction and nonfiction/real and unreal—i.e., "not real" at home, but portending home as colonized in ways that are all-too-real in other places. Except the showrunners merely imitate such things through their own disposable fodder (whose ceaseless killing is merely the soldier's reprieve). To expose these real-world evils requires transmuting canon by humanizing the zombie (and other monsters, mid liminal expression) in subversive social-sexual (often ace) ways: nudism and death theatre as dancing with the dead, but also its likenesses per *cryptomimesis* at large.

For this to happen, iconoclasts must help future workers understand the inevitable confusion that emerges during capital's *routine* exploitation of workers; i.e., through Capitalist Realism exploiting zombies to punch the ghost of the counterfeit. Gothic Communism aims to camp the veiled Faustian bargain such that stories promise (with a Black Veil, no less) amid their own canceled futures: somehow surviving the zombie apocalypse to rebuild America as the new masters thereof (that's a laugh). But we must still dance with the dead ourselves, including what *made* them dead, then angrily rise again and take what's ours; i.e., day-to-day through our synthetic oppositional groupings: our anger/gossip, monsters and camp.

Slowly turned into zombies with zombie *canon*, lobotomized workers garner strange appetites, becoming not simply distracted from regular state abuses, but *blinded* inside Cartesian hauntologies that traumatize them again; i.e., lands of madness that compel violence against those deemed uncivilized, thus enemies of the state. Iconoclasm, then, requires the ability to tell zombie narratives apart—dialectically-materially analyzing their historical-material patterns and social-sexual connotations through rememory as reflective on various examples: older forms of media that, once analyzed and reassembled, can help produce new monster toys that xenophillically humanize those inside the state of exception always trying to repair itself, thus maintain the myopia.

By comparison Capitalism alienates such beings; i.e., to the point of becoming completely invisible under pre-apocalyptic conditions, desperately shooting at them by firing helplessly into the void (classically the state wastes its energy during settler-colonial expansion and defense, but nevertheless tries to monopolize these wasteful mechanisms; re: efficient profit). It's the state variant of *cryptomimesis*, making war against the dead as conjured up, Radcliffe-style:



*(exhibit 36a: Having access to older alien technologies, the vengeful Morbius conjures up his invisible Monster from the Id, during Forbidden Planet [1956]. To try and guess what it looks like, the ship's crew makes a plaster mold of the monster's foot. The same degree of abject reification applies to MGM's big-budget spectacle [not rivaled in terms of scale or special effects until Stars Wars in 1977, over two decades later]. It's ultimately a tremendously Freudian, thus dated story. But it nevertheless highlights the desire for scapegoats while falling back on older scholarly ideas to prevent more incisive ideas from having the floor. As I've shown with my earlier critiques of Creed,*

*Freud, Kristeva, etc, such texts still make up an argument: as something to repeatedly face and respond to.*

*More to the point, some of the most anti-war perspectives I've found were from former soldiers; e.g., Howard Zinn or Edward Snowden. You see it in fictional examples, too, like Guts from Berserk or the kamikaze pilot from Godzilla Minus One. You see it in your own families; e.g., my grandfather versus the Nazi*

*occupation in Holland. He didn't enjoy war, but certainly said it makes a man outta you [one more reason I wanted nothing to do with it, haha]. We'll carry on doing so when we look at Forbidden Planet more, deeper in the module.)*

Let's examine *The Last of Us* a little more before looking at some of those aforementioned toys, including how zombies (among other liminal monsters) are often presented through dreams, but also fetishized fragments recovered from *those* dreams as shards haunting the spaces in between open language: fatal visions whose poetic "retrieval" is liminal unto itself, informed by holistic trauma (of the mind, body and spirit) as ever-present, ambiguous and untrustworthy. Once bitten, twice shy.

The 2023 version of *The Last of Us* has a very canonical, "zombie film" approach to combating disease *with* war. Patient zero hails from the Global South—a ghost of the counterfeit, whereupon the abuses of Capitalism are transferred to a human host from animals in a faraway place: both an alien, "natural" virus that breeds inside Capitalism's hosts, as well as an animalistic, "Mother Nature's revenge" happening through Capitalism *for* Capitalism. Instead of critiquing the Patriarchy (exhibit 35b) and the Capitalocene, the writers justify nuking the site from orbit by proxy—i.e., by having a smarty-pants, *female* scientist from a third-world country hysterically propose genocide and mass destruction: "Bomb everything!" In eco-fascist terms, *humans* become the virus. It's not the kind of call an epidemiologist would actually make, insofar as killing millions people to "save" them from the virus kind of defeats the point.

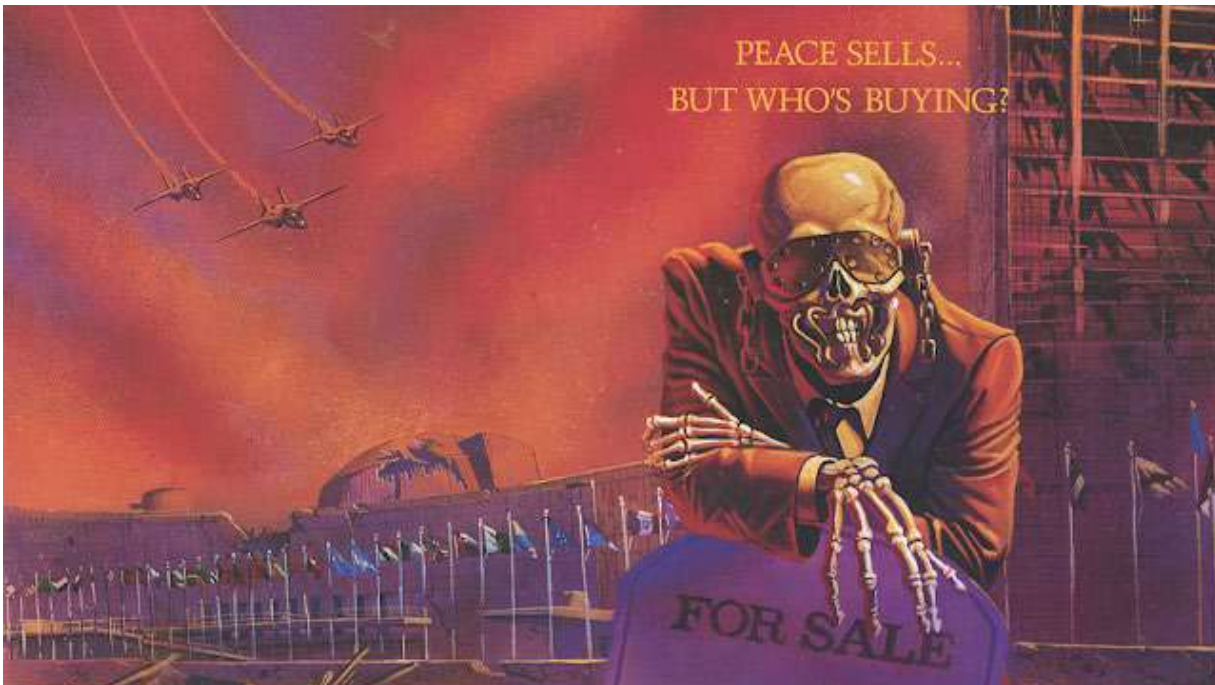


Sexist, xenophobic and Promethean, the show's pro-war qualities are dubiously contained inside a familial, *Aliens*-style war narrative—think of the women and children, and hate the dumb locals (and their scientist women and Mother Nature—seriously, Capitalism, "[Leave Brittany alone!](#)"). The "scorched earth" approach makes no sense in terms of fixing problems, because bombs only break infrastructure and *reinforce* a state of panic and fear during the ruinous aftermath. In terms of maintaining capitalist *control* during the rapid-onset of destabilizing natural factors like a global pandemic, bombs actually make *perfect* sense; i.e., shock and awe, dispersing workers when the elite lose control due to ecological interference.

This being said, they *will* also surrender it through various invented apocalypse scenarios (fictional or not). As a matter of dogma, they'll hand them out, only to claw power (and profit) back as a matter of capital moving money through nature as usual (this being a concept we'll examine repeatedly through *both* Monster Modules). That's essentially eco-fascism in a nutshell; i.e., not enough room or resources (save for the elite and some of their stooges) thanks to the state's own bullshit destroying the environment on all registers. Like the dead on a plot of land, then (or Poe's proverbial heart 'neath the floor boards), such things concern guilt, stigma, bias (and other variables generally tied to profit as a xenophobic enterprise) as things to inherit and attack with *differently*.

To that, power remains anisotropic per any undead/Gothic poetics, not just zombies during feeding time (vampires and ghosts aren't tied to an apocalypse, and demons also feed. More on those topics in other chapters)! Likewise, it maintains a hybridization, merging "dead" with this or that as ironic or not, sarcastic or not, cute or not, as a matter of degree.

This goes both ways, too, in a dialectical-material sense; e.g., "kitty" + zombie to make it cute, but also deliver such things through a faux-Egyptian lens as classically *for* the state: guardians of the *hauntological* underworld and sex objects first alienated per the process of abjection, only to be forced back together-as-alien per the profit motive punching the ghost of the counterfeit as Numinous; i.e., a fearsome traveller coming for empire out of an imaginary past's recently-dreamt-up tyrant (some Dracula-style dragon lord, Grim Reaper or Archaic Mother) based on older and older fictions (e.g., Skeletor and Medusa, exhibit 43e2a). More to the point, white boys love to torment themselves with the idea, all while capitalizing on neoliberalism's usual hypocrisies:



(exhibit 36b: Artist: Edward Repka, who the band, Megadeth—thoroughly strung out on hard drugs themselves—hired to reillustrate their infamous mascot in ways Mustaine himself could not produce through his own limited drawing skills [source: Timothy Gunatilaka's "The Story Behind the Cover Art," 2010].)

As with Cambodia or *Night of the Living Dead*, *The Last of Us* isn't "new." None of it is. Instead, the argument of survival per a zombie apocalypse constitutes a displaced settler-colonial narrative that operates *cryptomimetically* using traditional gender roles and extreme prejudice: the cowboys and Indians of America's older past used to carry such things out on the motherland as eating itself when there's no one left to colonize *elsewhere* (or said ability is lost). Reimagined and disguised inside a retro-future crammed with zombies, we're given the *Fallout* world minus nuclear war and science fiction, ushered in by a magical plague of mushroom people (another cryptonymic<sup>84</sup> drug metaphor for those pesky "trippin'" Commies—acid Communism a topic we'll unpack in the "Call of the Wild" chapter). It's the usual dance with the dead, all the same.

Granted, occultism, xenophobia and scapegoats run deep in fascist thought, but fascism is endemic to Capitalism; i.e., as emblematic of an *American* hegemon having eclipsed a British one, and which it would abuse against other national powers, nature and labor once its ascension as the global economic superpower was attained. In turn, the usual cronyism and bad imitators flocked to *its* power and

<sup>84</sup> Cryptonyms tend to spontaneously occur from both abuser and abused parties under coercive power structures; i.e., self-preservative code-switching.

later its corpse-like *rot* radiating outward. With it, the Imperial Boomerang travels back and forth over large periods of time that accelerate as death nears.

To that, the Nazis loved America, having fantasized about a new European Dark Age a century ago during the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923; i.e., eager to carry out anti-Semitic target practice with their own Children's Crusade ("Go east, young man!"), [the Nazis' return to tradition was inspired by the US and its own loudly advertised genocide per Manifest Destiny](#) (Bad Empanada, 2022). Each and every time, though, genocide and the Imperial Boomerang are repackaged with liberal platitudes, but *reinvented* with neoliberal *illusions* that essentialize geography as moral while return to a freeing of the market Hitler never lived to see. Each time the ghost of "Caesar" returns, the ensuing bedlam causes the mechanisms of the state to go haywire: its armies, but also its nuclear arsenal (above). "Stronger than ever" becomes a cultish death knell as the state fights to the last man using everything it has against bigger and bigger foes. It balloons, then pops. Whether this happens by nuclear assault or irreversible climate change matters not; the apocalypse is already at hand, having been since capital grew into itself out of the Black Death: "Death is only the beginning."



As such, *cryptomimesis* is the zombie and apocalypse tied to the system bringing them about. The worrying presence of cannibalism subsequently lingers, turned into a serial-killer bogeyman (the Nazi-Communist looking for

solutions regarding capital's "failures" [exploitation] dressed up as dogmatic kayfabe) and pointing hauntologically backward at the medieval as thrown awfully into the present; i.e., the sobering material reality behind the historical lies about taboo, unspeakable subjects: Capitalism rapes and kills to survive, making workers do the same to serve the state *while* blending in as bombastic entertainment (re: kayfabe) or Hawthorne-style hypocrite: David, from *The Last of Us* as an outwardly-benevolent community leader whose *actually* doing the criminalized eating of the dead—the false preacher preying on his own flock (aping the pioneers of yore by eating his own kind, murdering them as he would the Indians<sup>85</sup>)! Invariably tied to war as a capitalist enterprise, the zombie (and Medusa as a

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<sup>85</sup> As much out of desperation as guile under oppressive, unequal socio-material conditions; i.e., alienated from the land, thus unable to live off it, David becomes undead in multiple respects: unscrupulous and inhumane, preaching the Bible while beating children and raping women (as his unhealthy attraction to Ellie would suggest).



zombie) cannot die, but live on in a perpetual state of restless hunger repeatedly denied to them by the elite. The latter consume what they think is infinite, the fascist destroying what can no longer regenerate per state models (the state dying as such).

Cannibalism, then, is merely the *consequence* of those with privilege openly abusing the majority for their own benefit (and a tragic, episodic commentary on the broader stupidity of workers under Capitalism, inevitably forced to cannibalize once winter sets in whilst under siege; e.g., not just [the serial killer false preacher from \*The Last of Us\*](#) [above] but also [the Mayflower Puritans](#), [the Donner party](#) and later on, survivors [during Leningrad](#), Stalingrad, etc); its *cryptomimesis* is merely another form of rape under Capitalism-in-crisis, fanatically reducing state victims to "useless eaters" who must be killed and eaten themselves when the state decays. Trauma echoes inside a deadly chamber where nothing can escape and everything is eaten: a black hole that Capitalist Realism helps operate.



As something to study and learn from, then, these examples are canonical zombie *poiesis* as a kind of factory of factories—*cryptomimetic* forms of imagination "brain death" whose unironic propaganda preserves

the status quo and its sex-coercive practices. They do nothing by themselves to teach workers sex-positive lessons that critique the state; they only force them into situations of controlled ignorance that compel violence by default (which can traumatize state enforcers, leading them towards dissociative, knee-jerk violence against themselves; it can also "masculinize" bigoted women, if they become violent instead of passive, but either way bigotry radicalizes in favor of the abuser as a state proponent). This clouds media of all kinds, either robbing it of its irony or restoring it as media overlaps; i.e., as music, videogames, movies riff on and rip off older pulpy forms like Lovecraft or Matteson's work dating back to Matthew Lewis's bad echoes.

For example, though traditionally a site for criticism of capital, rock 'n roll decays, too (e.g., Black Sabbath's own 1970 zombie, "Iron Man," eventually becoming gentrified by Marvel comics: "his revenge"). To that, metal bands like Megadeth can become an ominous war horn for capital in hindsight; i.e., songs like "Peace Sells" becoming a siren song for the middle class to weaponize against "zombies," hence a nostalgic call *to* police violence per a staged, highly ordered

conflict with assigned enemies conveniently threatening the elite's dreams of a better world; e.g., Lyndon B. Johnson's "[Great Society](#)" or George W. Bush Sr.'s "[New World Order](#)": in rising forms of media like videogames<sup>86</sup> out of older

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<sup>86</sup> (another excerpt from my discontinued book, *Neoliberal and Fascist Propaganda in Yesterday's Heroes*):

This section explores the use of music in heroic narratives by the rich, or otherwise serving the needs of the rich in a neoliberal sense. It's almost hard to attack them, because they were undeniably fun as a kid. And seeing how unromantic and bland the true menace that lurks behind this nostalgic veneer is, I can't help but wish we were facing something extraordinary. Nothing so otherworldly [as the killer Martians from \*Metal Slug 3\*](#) (2000), which conveniently unite the nations (and apologize for Nazis).

Returning to the idea of slow-boil, one of the devices pivotal to neoliberalism is music. Yes, there's "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "I Pledge Allegiance to the Flag." However, music is historically tied up in stupidly popular hero narratives like *Star Wars* and *Aliens* that convey their own messages. In one chapter, I briefly explored their respective potential for allegory and propaganda; in another, I explored the role of action heroes as cops. In this chapter, I'd like to explore the role of music in videogames and media in relation to action heroes as cops. Just keep in mind that I'm not dissecting fun purely for the sake of iconoclasm, nor saying these things can't still be enjoyed (more of that in part 3); I'm merely analyzing the function of music when viewed by the capitalist as useful to their true aims: not to be good people, but to reliably turn a profit through deplorable means, lie about it, and sit on the biggest pile of gold.

The rest of this section is divided into the following subsections:

- Saturday Morning Cartoons ("Go, Joe!!!")
- Fighting Music; or, "Go Home and Be a Family Man!"
- Sports Anthems (aka Tolerating Sports and its Owners)
- War aka "The Danger Zone"
- Retro Glory

### **Saturday Morning Cartoons**

As explored in my last chapter, action heroes further political ideals to children by presenting as neutral, family-friendly entertainment. Saturday morning cartoons accomplished this through their music. *G.I. Joe* and dozens of other cartoons had catchy themes set to deceptively well-animated intros. Amid that, they communicated the world in simple, violent terms. *Captain Planet* had its own neoliberal solution; [its beautifully wacky music](#) reflects an equally goofy premise: "The power is yours!" Unfortunately recycling plastics is basically a con—products made from oil, [lobbied for by big oil companies for decades](#) [Cracked's "If Recycling Were Honest | Honest Ads, 2022]. Recycling plastics is a lie, one advertised by the likes of *Captain Planet* and shows like it since the 1980s.

Look at me, heartlessly killing Captain Planet. But I'm not grumbling aimlessly by presenting those with power as a convenient scapegoat ([what Nietzsche calls \*ressentiment\*](#)). Their role in the planet's impending demise is plain: Capitalism is everywhere, and is historically well-documented and researched. No, my feelings can be acted upon. Iconoclasm is only the first step in the departure from faith—[faith in Capitalism, in this case](#) [Second Thought's "Why Are So Many People Losing Faith In Capitalism?" 2022]. For instance, labor movements are nothing new in America; they've merely been suppressed by capitalists. (re: [Mark Fisher's "capitalist realism"](#)). The drive for meaningful worker action needs to replace the neoliberal yolk of personal responsibility. For this to happen, the myth of socialism needs to die.

This includes Red Scare tactics. These need to stop insofar as framing the Chinese and the Soviets as Communist. Rather, we need to adopt Marx's critique of Capitalism (in its modern forms) before we can gradually replace/dismantle neoliberalism. For this, we need *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

mediums like novels and cinema. Even without a catchy new tune to accompany the us-versus-them rhetoric, those against America become kill-on-sight, leading those who normally seem cool-headed to trigger and become irrationally violent (versus emotionally intelligent): shoot to kill, seeking with blind zombie eyes and wide gaping maws. It's euthanasia performed by the meddling kids of the *Scooby Doo* gang (next page) "solving" the endless mystery of "the class, culture and race problems"; i.e., as one might the Jewish Question—with lethal force as echoed through pro-state *cryptomimesis*.

If Zionism is any indication, the Gothic imagination clearly needs to shift away from American Liberalism (and its subsequent fascism on all registers). For this to happen, echoed trauma must be reflected on in ways that change the echo

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someone as effective as *Captain Planet*, but teaching realistic forms of resistance to neoliberal abuse.

This might seem completely at odds, but neoliberal critiques generally emerged within media that resembles, on some level, its former self. Socialism is not antithetical to Saturday morning cartoons; it's antithetical to the core tenets of capitalism that neoliberals have maximized since Reagan took office. If you think this is absurd, consider how North Korea—who are normally framed as enemies of capitalism—[using cartoons to educate the masses](#) [Sabrespark's "What the HELL is Squirrel and Hedgehog? (The North Korean Propaganda Cartoon), 2018]. I'm not advocating for pro-state propaganda; I'm arguing that cartoons (and their music) can serve as powerful tools within the system of Capitalism to help it evolve into something better; i.e., something more stable, that doesn't threaten the entire planet by breeding neoliberals.

### Fighting Music

*Street Fighter II; The World Warrior* (1991) delivered on both the gameplay and the music. *Battle Arena Toshinden* (1995) illustrated that good music is enough to be memorable, even if the gameplay stalls. Both titles were early releases for their generation's platform. Guile's theme "goes with everything" comments on the universal adaptability of a hopeful theme. In neoliberal terms, if a total enemy can be designed, the hope of defeating it becomes fungible; so many simulacra can be sold and exchanged as part of the same overall supply and demand. Hence, Guile's theme goes with everything. It's the perfect antithesis to the neoliberal's fabricated enemies, the interaction between the two on a commercial level insulating their consumers to what's really going on, geopolitically.

Fighting music also pertains to a sense of conservative, patriotic anthems and struggle: i.e., [the Rhodesian anthem](#). A knight belongs to a nation; the nation and its creation myth and traditional values are under attack, to which the music spurs a *defense* of the nation. It's important to remember this nation as fabricated; i.e., as something to defend and protect in ways that primarily benefit the elite at the cost of so many "ordinary" lives.

### Sports Anthems

Sports are a reliable sight for cathartic drama. But the myriad gears of the capitalist machine are also laid bare—a sobering reality that is overshadowed through admittedly badass music. Even if you don't like sports, [the spectacular music for NFL Gameday](#) (1995) can make you forget how bafflingly *dumb* football is.

The amount of stupid shit that billionaire sports owners get away can sometimes break the spell (re: Secret Base); but they become associated with the music and the spectacle as the Providers of All That Is Fun. It certainly isn't the charts (fuck you, Zeuhl, haha). Then again, [this so-called "chart porn"](#) [Secret Base's "The Search for the Saddest Punt in the World | Chart Party," 2019] is all that remains after years of economic exploitation that would rival the bread and circus of the Roman Empire.

(and its fractal recursion); i.e., *humanizing* zombies as recipients and markers of state violence by exposing the state as tyrannical: through subversive examples centered around real-world trauma something to find similarly *amid* difference, thus heal from rape as a consequence of endorsed police violence, lies, and assimilation.

Until these liberatory allegories emerge, though, there is only canonical zombie war's *cryptomimesis* turning workers not just into men and women, but into givers and receivers of state violence as zombie-like: the myth of the fascist rebel, the sexy she-wolf, but also various American survivors like Zoey from *Left for Dead*, Ellie from *The Last of Us*, or even updated, warlike versions of the gang from *Scooby Doo* (exhibit 36c, below); and all-around them undead enemies to overcome, not allies to understand. "Trapped in time, surrounded by evil, low on gas," says Sam Raimi; "[Fight 'em 'til you can't](#)," sings John Bush from semi-camp thrash metal act, Anthrax (2012). In practice, the whole ridiculous scenario reliably plays out like Robert E. Howard's Conan asking Crom to "count the dead," laying waste to a hoard of dark-skinned, savage cannibals all around him—except it's conducted by a group of white-skinned *wunderkinds* stocked with all manner of



military-grade *wunderwaffe*. When the apocalypse returns, they slay zombie medicine men and Medusas with all the impunity that the spirit of "neutral" entertainment allows: the monomyth as something to prep them like a military exercise; i.e., by making their monomythic avatar something from their (or maybe their parents') shared childhoods under attack by an imaginary enemy tied to real voices. It's DARVO punching down at the Omelas child, the escaped slave saddled with aged, rotting stereotypes:

(*exhibit 36c: Source: [DC Comics](#). The gang in [Scooby Doo](#) are generally concerned with the monster as a disguise that is unmasked; i.e., by "meddling [middle-class] kids" through the Radcliffean model of an "explained supernatural" of old Gothic tropes: the WASP-y virgin, whore, fool, scholar and*

*athlete as good child detectives/soldiers for capital from a state curriculum [the school system; e.g., American high schools, but also British ones: Hogwarts] against a nebulous, unclear cartoon of fascism and Communism.*

The classic archetypes make up different elements of the gang. Fred is the athlete [normally a skeptic or brute male challenge to female intellectualism]; Shaggy is the fool [also known as the faithful/superstitious servant—normally a stigmatized group, which for him is the hippy]; Velma is the virgin and the scholar [also, the scholarly nun as queer-coded/ace]; and Daphne's the whore [characterized by her "witchy" red hair]. By handing the children guns, however, we're left with a particular kind of gang: vigilantes, specifically bounty hunters trading in flesh-for-money as live or dead sanctioned by the state during the state of exception as increasingly undead.

As such, you can take any middle-class analogy and put it [and its allegories] inside a similar survival scenario; i.e., one where they canonically and ceremoniously respond in kind. There's no reason they have to, provided the zombie is humanized and capital punishment discouraged, but such isn't the American approach to Capitalist Realism. Guns become sexy unto themselves, but generally eroticize per the bodies holding them as erotic with or without firearms. Classically such detectives don't have them, but the prejudice is still there, as is the exploitation; i.e., as something



to camp in ways adjacent to harm, at the very least: naked equals exposed, but exposure-equals-power as something to perform in Gothic ways that move power through dialectics of the alien and of rape for or against state arrangements: a plunging neckline and, lo and behold, beauteous orbs ready to be penetrated [something even Radcliffe camped in The Italian [1796]—with Schedoni's massive dagger aimed at his sleeping niece's exposed breast]!

[artist: [Meowri](#)]

Except, there's really no way to teach consent without getting naked eventually! Per cryptonyms, this includes nudity by proxy and extension; i.e., told through things that

resemble, articulate and resemble our daily struggles turned into cartoonish forms we can reclaim as valuable to our labor, identities and code: as things to liberate, hence free us, through such paradoxical exposure during rape play! Clothed and naked at the same time! Big abuse, big booba, big powah!



[artist: [Texelion](#)]

This unto itself is a liminal proposition [which porn always is]. Armed as they are, though, the Scooby Doo gang several pages back is a particular resurrection of something Radcliffe constituted through her own problematic, banditti-style demon lovers [she didn't fuck with the undead as Lewis liked to]: abjection, thus extermination by acting as such against the ghost of the counterfeit; i.e., as a voice for anyone but token groups during class/culture warfare. Such dormant, traitorous proponents cease to humanize zombies at all; instead, they shoot [or otherwise rape] them as quickly as they can, losing the humanizing potential of a lesbian/ace female detective; e.g., like Velma Dinkley exposing the abuses of the old, white man robbing the locals while hiding behind a superstitious veneer [the oldest trick in the book]. As blind parody, they're detecting, exposing and confirming targets for the state, not the state itself as something to critique [similar to Rowling's Potter trio: Harry, Ron and Hermione]!

Of course, someone could easily try to deflect and argue, "That's not what Scooby Doo means to us! Look at my sexy Velma cosplay!" But the stereotypes and bad-faith simulacra are still present, echoing cryptomimetically to drum up profit [and moral panic] during the state's dying period: more scapegoats, more harmful rape fantasies, more comfort food to try and distract from Gaza [and similar places] being raped and murdered right now. Again, death becomes something to attack through people as zombies, not the state.



[artist: [Texelion](#)]

Given the cosmetic ambiguity/duality and dialectical-material tension, it's perhaps easier to think of things in the Gothic, paradoxical sense: two things being true at the same time. Something can be a sex object and symbol of liberation [disco in disguise] while also

being weaponized as a mask against liberation by pro-state "revolutionaries" [cops in disguise]. Regardless of who's being brought back and why—and per franchise or across them [e.g., Lana Kane from *Archer* being a sexpot and token spy policing the world while winking at the camera]—such revivals are haunted by state abuse; i.e., often as something to comment on as a kind of urban legend [which genocides generally amount to, whispered about in hushed voices]. As we'll see with the "Damsels, Detectives and Demons" chapter in the Demon Module, interrogation isn't just of things hidden in the dark, but holding the iconic explorers accountable before they start pulling out guns; i.e., as a matter of settler-colonial dogma [which per capital, always has an element of plausible deniability to it: that such things are just "for nerds" per bad-faith arguments while genocide is going on at home and abroad. It's gatekeeper rhetoric, combining DARVO and obscurantism.)

The illusions of a benign, "neutral" Capitalism are predominantly neoliberal. When *these* start to corrode, however, fascism emerges to defend the structure through DARVO arguments like the various simulacra ("likenesses") above. Through grandiose displays of vengeful, empty bravado, the primary ingredient is shock and awe; i.e., a sacred hauntology whose fear and dogma unfold inside violent reprisals disguised as "games": suburban kids playing war as a means of material disputes framed as us-versus-alien; e.g., the kids from *Stranger Things*. Their targeted chaos and punitive rules encourage a competition of sexualized, dehumanizing abuse against state targets during Red Scare; i.e., "zombies" rising from the grave in a "woke" fashion, which must be returned to the earth with lethal, rapacious, nuclear-familial force: castle doctrine, where said audiences ape their avatars (no matter how ridiculous) to stand their ground and hand out "dirt naps" (executions). In turn, they look human, but become the fascist zombies pitted against

Communist ones made to look rotten to encourage said reprisals *ad infinitum*. It's centrist dogma, which encourages genocide in and out of the text (re: the Duffer brothers weaponizing fatal, neoconservative, peace-through-strength nostalgia as Zionist, which extends to their mostly-male, mostly-white child cast).

Generally associated with the end of the world, the zombie apocalypse describes the state as the prime source of undead peril. War never seems to die, never changes; it just lingers like a bad dream, repressed through a variety of cryptonymic toys (which part two of this subchapter is going to explore even more). Neither war nor the state are "broken" when these witch hunts take place; nor are zombies a mere "accident" of a corrupted hegemon. Rather, the worrisome presence of the zombie as a domestic threat indicates the state functioning as intended, benefitting the elite by repressing the widespread exploitation of workers (and nature-as-monstrous-feminine) *en masse*. The key to ending this repression is ending the canonical, middle-class usage (and police function) of the zombie; i.e., by humanizing the trauma it symbolizes, including its dream-like stories and war



chest—the violent, sexualized toys as mirrors reflect on in relation to one's own trauma as part of a larger, undead scheme that straight up *slaps*: a symphony of destruction with a time limit ("You try to take his pulse before the head ex-plodes!"). We can reverse this abjection, but it's generally something the state won't like:

([source tweet](#), *Mass Strike Now*: July 11th, 2024)

In linguo-material terms, undeath indicates the placement of trauma unto a particular recipient or group as the giver or receiver of state violence through sides, aka teams in a sports-like configuration; i.e., the hyphenation of inside/outside and correct/incorrect, but also the liminal presence of generational trauma beyond a single body or lifespan that harms everyone differently through a grand contagion: mankind vs zombies. When used through canon, they portray society as sick, thus the home and its toy chest of different monomythic soldiers, detectives, sexpots, etc. Trauma takes many forms, such as material scarcity leading to "apocalyptic"



uprisings that boil over into zombie-like violence feeding indiscriminately in all directions: looting and riots followed by police action during state crackdowns as a matter of stolen childhood sold back to us as cool (which invariably has a racist, paramilitary flavor—re: the *Scooby Doo* Hitler Youth as home-grown).

More to the point, xenophilic reflections on these already-troubling matters bleed into our personal experiences; i.e., as connected to the material world and vice versa being figuratively and literally dream-like. Just as my reflections on Cambodia informed my own imperiled home life as a teenage girl, they continuously inform America's domestic imagination in times of societal unrest: something the state threatens its workforce *with* over time in relation to various stigma *groups* of uncertain origin having a toy-like role in dogmatic, us-versus-them military exercises. These make our toys (and heroes) police-like, rapacious, and genocidal, thus cannibalistic for the state when it starts to die *again*. It's good to familiarize ourselves with these components, so we can recognize but also play with them, ourselves; i.e., through our own sex-positive regressions reclaiming childhood-as-monstrous (the *childhood* apocalypse) from elite forces and pro-state fantasies—per *our* ludo-Gothic BDSM!

Such playfulness needs to reject profit on principle; i.e., be less concerned with gaudy material displays (assimilation) and cashing in/selling out through a faithfulness towards such fairytale pastiche (nailing "the look," below) than speaking out against oppression to varying degrees/of one's time; e.g., Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* poking fun at the whims of the British middle class



(mainly young women) being obsessed with such unironic, Radcliffean fictions to a Quixotic teenage degree! Life imitates art, Austen shows us; lacking any kind of critical bite regarding said *cryptomimesis* can often bite *us* in the ass—when the chickens come home to roost!

(artist: [Ashlynn Dae](#))

Last but not least, then, this middle-class survival argument can be arranged in two basic invasion scenarios involving zombies: a single enemy (the slasher) or an army of enemies, the former commonly being a vanguard spearhead promoting future invasion as a matter of discourse, not fact (e.g., *Alien*, a neoliberal critique, with a single monster to run from, being followed by *Aliens*, a neoliberal revenge fantasy with

lots of monsters to shoot)! Outside of singular instances of murder (e.g., Banquo from *Macbeth*), sexual abuse (the zombie familiar from *Let the Right One In*, 2004) or composite bodies and mad science (e.g., the xenomorph or Frankenstein's monster as relatively gigantic, but also *Resident Evil*, exhibit 36d1), the *horde* formation is the zombie's most common modern grouping. Representing widespread colonial trauma, the horde narrative canonically pits two large bodies—an in-group and out-group—against each other instead of focusing on the elite pulling the strings. Except they don't have monopolies on sex, terror and force!



(artist: [Mika Dawn 3D](#))

To subvert state manipulation and subterfuge, zombie humanization includes using rememory to reassemble and reflect, mid-play, on the personal traumas of workers playing with toys to relieve stress as not automatically a harmful act; i.e., as inextricably attached to the material byproducts the state either produces or encourages the production of, mid-crisis, but for which the results of playing with they cannot monopolize through the Superstructure (which we can camp). Per the run-on nightmare of the zombie and various weapon-like toys associated with them—the knife or the bullet, but also the fetishistically weaponized parts of the zombie body as fearsome—the return of the

living dead is a kind of destroyer *home*. In turn, Grendel and Beowulf are two sides of the same coin per said home, the latter's "teeth in the night" attached to a colonial subject/project (exhibit 36d1) but also the zombie's *genitals* fetishized by

in-group members (exhibit 37b) when deliberately manufactured into plastic, toy-like variants. These must also be reclaimed (exhibit 38a), something the next subchapter shall explore.

In some shape or form, all come from repeated introspection regarding trauma, including dreams of the Gothic past as infused with individual fears about faraway war and atrocities. Yet *these* inevitably combine with personal trauma and conflict at home—not just police states, but authoritative abuse within the family unit relayed through the action and drama of zombie survival narratives, but *especially* videogames working as escapist childhood war simulators: Hell coming home, requiring a purifying by the middle-class player (often young children to teenagers) regressing to Man Box levels of thinking against imaginary enemies:



*(exhibit 36d1a1: The state eats itself during decay. Its Beowulfian "teeth in the night" become fascist undead, eating workers in defense of the state as a matter of praxial inertia; anisotropically the devouring of the middle class by "zombies" amounts to their prescribed fear of the underclass [through the blinding stigma of "terrorist literature"] as "going to eat them." Reversing this is challenged by the monomyth as endemic to videogames, which emerged out of the neoliberal era's initial rise, crystalizing into various popular franchises.*

*For example, the zombie in Capcom's survival horror flagship series, Resident Evil, is suitably a curious combination of mad science and localized murder tied to a "Gothic" mansion [eat your heart out, Walpole]: the home of the Tyrant as a giant-sized "king zombie." Eventually the survival horror setting would shift to more urban and less claustrophobic, hauntological spaces, thereby excluding the zombie from these signature elements for pure zombie combat [which [I also explore at](#)*

[length in relation to my research into Metroidvania and FPS games as connected to the survival horror genre; re: "Mazes and Labyrinths"\]](#); e.g., [Dying Light](#) or [House of the Dead](#).)

Imaginary or not, these mentalities have real consequences, resulting in a proliferation of stochastic terrorism modeled after the basic goals of such stories: to save themselves from the fearsome past's giant, hungry maw! Instead, they climb right inside (often motivated by sex, as Romero clearly is):

Thou detestable maw, thou womb of death,  
Gorged with the dearest morsel of the earth,  
Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,  
And in despite I'll cram thee with more food ([source](#)).

You are what you eat after all!

There's a lot of metaphors and Gothic poetics at work, here. Try not to fret about *that*. The trick to surviving the zombie apocalypse isn't having a gun (so many in these stories starve to death, unable to digest bullets any more than stolen gold), it's changing capital into something less prone towards using the imaginary past *against* workers; i.e., as something to make the historical past repeat itself the way capital wants. Except, these coming cycles can be challenged by doubling them in sex-positive forms, doing so to patently show everyone the same iconoclastic beyond: that possible, seemingly magical futures exist beyond what capital normally offers ("silver or lead," Escobar would say). Our Aegis, when used as such, breaks the spell of Capitalist Realism through the zombie narrative—its apocalypse felt through the human body as sexualized, fetishized and made into a terror device for workers or the state.

As such, I've given you plenty of different examples; i.e., various *cryptomimetic* likenesses to acclimate yourself with the fundamentals of play but also to play with and think about in dialectical-material ways (the usual Gothic, wrestling-style oscillations): as something to survive in a half-real sense, mid-discourse. I've also given you plenty to look out for *through* such fantasies weaponizing nostalgia by having children (or people with the minds of children) take up arms to defend capital disguised "as theirs" (versus the elite's, which it truly is). In short, you have all the tools you need to perform rememory instead of responding with lethal force, DARVO antics and various other pro-state countermeasures; re: the trifactas, monopolies and qualities of capital illustrated by said examples. Like the orc or Medusa, only when we hug the zombie instead of attacking it (the state weaponizing our labor to serve profit during us-versus-them) will the zombie apocalypse end for good.

Next, we'll explore Morrison's rememory as the means of subverting the usual runs-of-the-mill in a collective push towards post-scarcity as occupied by the

living and the dead, but also *copies* of them we take *into* ourselves; i.e., in dream-like ways that go beyond while we're strictly awake, but which we carry into our waking moments from earlier days while awake, then asleep, then awake again; or, to borrow from Steve Huey's review of *Peace Sells* (1986), we must combine

a punkish political awareness with a dark, threatening, typically heavy metal world-view, preoccupied with evil, the occult, and the like. The anthemic title track and "Wake Up Dead" are the two major standouts, and there is also a cover of [Willie Dixon's](#) "I Ain't Superstitious," which takes on an air of supernaturally induced paranoia in the album's context. The lines between hell and earth are blurred throughout the album, and the crashing, complex music backs up [Dave Mustaine's](#) apocalyptic vision of life as damnation—his limited vocal style is used to great effect, growling and snarling in a barely intelligible fashion under all the complicated guitar work ([source](#)).

In short, we must wake up dead, effectively buried alive as a complicated, imperfect means of rememory as conversing with the dead, but also eating them in transformative ways (versus self-cannibalizing whenever capital tells us to finish our plate)! We'll explore what I mean by this, next—based on my own experiences!



## The Imperial Boomerang, part three: Rememory, or the Roots of Trauma between Real Life and Dreams

*The axe forgets; the tree remembers.*

—an African proverb

Part three of "the Imperial Boomerang" subchapter primarily considers rememory as a cumulative, explorative means of getting to the roots of trauma under capital; i.e., by assembling and interrogating said trauma (the zombie), mid-apocalypse, as phantasmagorical: sitting between real life and dreams, but in a dialectical-material sense that takes the history of material conditions into account.

To that, death hardly "stays put" under Capitalism; the victims of genocide rise up as undead, including ghosts and vampires (more on them in the feeding chapter), but also the zombie-like forms we've already examined. Meant to canonically scare the middle class into survival mode (menticide), these apocalypses express generational trauma as echoed across people and media *beyond* state monopolies; i.e., to interrogate the roots of trauma *afterwards* during calculated risk as suitably nightmarish; e.g., Metallica's "[Damage Inc](#)" (1986): "Blood will follow blood / Dying time is here" ([source](#): Genius). Such bugbears become something to reassemble, which starts with having actual dreams built on dream-like media, formed anew in more sex-positive, liberatory forms of rememory that, all the same, are suitably dream-like themselves and haunted by trauma and its bizarre feeding effect; i.e., talking to a "corpse" of a corpse (and so on) as



driven to feed, but also to ask questions during an interview-like exchange of forbidden power and destructive knowledge in the style of Prometheus: caught between real life and dreams as death-like—less discrete and more like one feeling trapped in the undead middle, conveyed during liminal expression of all sorts (e.g., suicide, left).

(artist: Robert Wiles, of 23-year-old suicide victim, Evelyn McHale, in 1947; [source](#): Ben Cosgrove's "The Most Beautiful Suicide: A Violent Death, an Immortal Photo," 2014).

Mind you, the usual paradoxes abound through said expression-as-performance, and run along the regular tracks and directions of power as normally distributed to *favor* the elite under capital; i.e., as infamously affecting *our* perspective for the worse: the feeling of things above ground—the Light, normality and the waking world's life-in-general surviving trauma by feeding on it—as a treacherous illusion meant to

control us, all while sensing the forbidden, tenebrous truth of things prowling among the same policed shadows: a could-be/what-if proposition as hellish and dream-like, albeit in ways that *can* (with proper training and incentive) actually serve workers *inside* Plato's cave (said cave originally made to pacify workers, whereas the phantasmagoria is traditionally made to insert a terrifying-yet-thought-provoking element into the shadow play as *portable* [which caves generally aren't]:



a Renaissance device made to cast shadows on a wall, thus induce a pointedly nightmarish effect for the viewer to dispel false empowerment with, but also explore as a means of empowerment).

Popular media, but especially videogames during the rise of the neoliberal

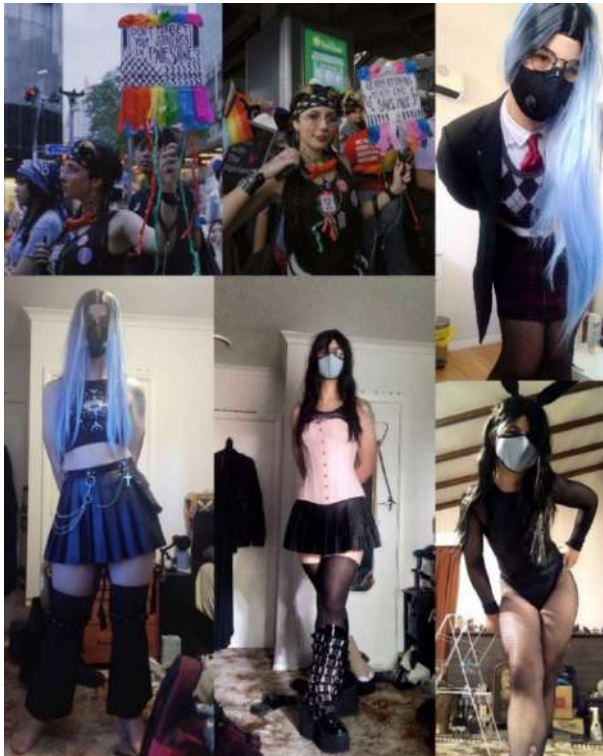
period, are monomythical in service to profit through an undead, bourgeois Superstructure. While heroes classically go into Hell, modern-day refrains abuse the monomyth to compel heroic action (war and rape) at *home* as visited by some-such Big Evil coming out of a hellish sphere; i.e., during the liminal hauntology of war thrust into/upon the waking world (whose tyrannical heroes' hideous, skeletal decay we'll explore in "The Monomyth" subchapter). To this, settler colonialism and the Imperial Boomerang bring empire home through pointedly dream-like dialogs; i.e., as something to promptly abject and dismiss as merely a bad dream sold back to the playing public, again and again; e.g., *Mario 2* making the hero's quest a matter of routine, prison-like dogma that, when exposed to often enough, haunts their dreams about dreams, mixing the two until they become hyperreal—more real to consumers than the destroyed world behind these myopic buffers' increasingly decayed images (re: canceled futures, what Baudrillard calls "desert of the real").

When any worker dreams (as a matter of metatextual engagement and reflection), they go into Hell only to bring the undead *back* with them from a given excursion; *our* doing so pointedly makes home feel foreign and invaded *by us* as unwelcome, after the fact—invariably seen as threats to the status quo per the same formulas according the usual state servants enacting them. Whereas *they* adhere to the pacifying nature of status-quo shadow plays and dreams, we deliberately subvert them; i.e., a wake-up call for us that—while notoriously unpleasant—is entirely required if we are to exist in a world that one day can be liberated from capital and its titantic, ongoing genocides (what the Wachowski sisters call "taking the red pill").

Even as we zombify to deliver inverted, *proletarian* apocalypses—doing so with theatrical movements that survive but also subvert police violence against us

to reclaim our labor power and humanity—there is no outside of the text (re: Derrida). We simply wake up dead, realizing that we're happier knowing about state predation than not (re: Edward Said's pleasures of exile); i.e., the perils of the world as something tied to who we are as a matter of protest *against* genocide and alienation being the expected outcome: of capital and profit raping nature-as-monstrous-feminine behind Capitalist Realism and its veil of canonical shadows.

In *piercing* the veil, we self-define as Satan might in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, once upon a time—fallen from grace to unite against a cruel and tyrannical, but also *mendacious* system. We subsequently *become* possible, as does a better world, a *pandemonium* for *all* peoples; i.e., as felt through us as a matter of protesting against post-scarcity and genocide through *conspicuous* acts of sedition inside an increasingly visible state of exception—of counterterrorism called "terrorist" by the state, of open activism providing a wonderful form of self-expression and actualization suddenly open to the viewing public: zombies haunting the streets of



the Imperial Core! As such, we promote "oblivion" as being a wonderful paradox unto itself (feeling "dead" during exquisite "torture" as a poetic response to harm), but operate through a pedagogy of the oppressed *for* the oppressed assembling as walking parts of the rememory process! Like *Thriller* (1982) but not as overtly musical or staged in a strictly musical *production*, we appear out in the street, but also in the closet preparing someday to go there:

(*exhibit 36d1a2*: Artist, top-left: [Itzel](#); everything else: *Vinessa*.)

*Gothic poetics are holistic, insofar as they involve the various monster modules as dualistic in a dialectical-*

*material sense: for workers or the elite. Demons, animals and the undead present the same expressions and transfers of power differently to achieve those aims. For instance, as undead presentations and/or interpretations, GNC people are canonically anathema outside of queernormative forms [which are ultimately heteronormative when capital decays]. We cannot be ourselves, then, without acknowledging the trauma of the world that affects us as monstrous-feminine to begin with, extending to all things treated as monstrous-feminine under capital's shadow plays. Compared to state operators, we become the careful custodians to things that, for us, are never truly separate.*



*For GNC folk at large, existence becomes a tightrope matter of protest towards liberation, including nature but also workers of nature abjected by the state to move money through nature; i.e., normally sexualized and alienated from nature to serve profit [which involves tokenism as a matter of minorities policing themselves; e.g., gay or black Nazis/moderates]: through DARVO rhetoric presenting us as absurdly<sup>87</sup> menacing to already-colonized lands. We decolonize said shadows wherever they are found; i.e., in a theatrical shadow zone whose boundaries cannot be contained or cleanly defined, thus enforced!*

*So many forms of activism overlap, then, coming together by seeking to avoid any exceptions to, as a result, shrink the state of exception and dismantle the state's false sense of security against a perceived enemy. Ours becomes a second birth, then, an opening of the eyes to see beyond capital's illusions/the myopia of Capitalist Realism to—through our Aegises less one black mirror and more a hall of them—turn these fatal, repressed visions back unto the colonizer group abjecting such things, Omelas-style: by marching in the streets, making ourselves known as part of a larger intersection having solidarized and speaking for all peoples affected by genocide as a matter of profit. Profit cannot exist without genocide, we being part of the thing it needs to abject and destroy as part of nature: the black side of the settler-colonial binary and the receiving end of us-versus-them. We aggregate to stand against it and its defenders' own mirror games, masks and performances; i.e., as dolls, demons, and zombies, etc, as performative stand-ins damaged by trauma, but also shaped by it: Pinocchios that rebel instead of assimilate [more on dolls, in a bit]!*



[artist, left: [Itzel](#); right: Vinessa]

*Per revolutionary cryptonymy as a matter of showing and hiding different things that lead to sex positivity through ourselves, this "flashing" process logically extends to sex work and the bodies involved. As proponents of Gothic-Communist activism, people more often than not constitute works-in-progress with asexual elements to their exhibitionism; i.e., in between*

*exploitation and liberation—on the same stages, as a kind of waking dream unto*

<sup>87</sup> Akin to [Monty Python's 1971 "Hell's Grannies" skit](#) minus the gang's usual performative ironies; i.e., arguing in bad faith that healthy fit young men are somehow being threatened by old grannies, or any such harmless thing presented as a genuine threat that must be policed, thus exterminated.

*itself: as a matter of tasteful-to-transgressive, GNC nudism that helps liberate ourselves and our comrades-in-arms. On an individual-to-group basis, this occurs through self-actualization as, like the Gothic at large, largely made up of invented, legendary things intermingled with history as half-real [re: the chronotope and usual myth of Gothic ancestry as things to reclaim by proletarian agents]. As such, we invigilate ourselves, taking the time to include any workers belonging to any color or creed; i.e., deciding as we do what to show and what not to, thus better open the eyes of a continuously sleeping public to capital's regular genocides while, at the same time, protecting ourselves.)*

Fluid and chimeric, dreams apply to just about any text as matter of content and reflection. I shall do my best to unpack the basic ideas at work, here, then briefly examine Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (and rememory process) before further examining the dream-like lineage her story belonged to; i.e., starting with Mary Shelley's *Modern Prometheus*, followed by other fantastical stories touching on the same dream-like wreckage of state forces—its tokenization, gentrification and decay as rooted in the system itself functioning as *normal*, the execution of profit leading to such zombies as living in our lobotomized heads, rent-free.

After that, we'll segue from my aforementioned story about *The Last of Us* (from part two of this subchapter) as haunting *my* dreams, only to become something I thought about after experiencing *future* night terrors concerned with the past in flux; i.e., attached to my own childhood abuse, and which—many years later—I have repeatedly come home to reify and release, like Hamlet's piece of work, to behold; e.g., like Yorick's skull: waking up dead—eating the dead—as a Gothic means of the usual medieval transfers working as preferential monstrous code, during ludo-Gothic BDSM:

- **"[Assembling Trauma and Questions of Betrayal](#)"**: Confronts zombie-esque assemblages of trauma and tokenization not just in *Beloved*, but it and its author in connection to such things in *Frankenstein*, *The Last of the Mohicans* (and a few other examples, to be holistic; e.g., *The Terror: Infamy* [2019] and Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*, etc).
- **"[Healing through 'Rape,' or the Origins of Ludo-Gothic BDSM](#)"**: Examines rememory as a matter of performance per ludo-Gothic BDSM; i.e., rape play as something that, while it dates back centuries (e.g., the French convulsionnaires, exhibit 37a2b), actually accomplishes among the living through interpersonal experience; e.g., Harmony and I, who will give you an instance of consent-non-consent invoking the dead of a half-real, partially imaginary past, albeit as a matter of good praxis informed by even older experiences: DBT as imparted to me by Cuwu for much the same reasons (re: "Healing from Rape," from Volume One).

We won't fuss about *those* particulars too much, but *will* have talk about ludo-Gothic BDSM as something that started as rememory used by me in conjunction with my older academic work; i.e., as reassembling old, dead, liminal things to get at the roots of trauma felt between dreams and real life.



To that, people commit suicide or betray themselves as a matter of decay under capital as affecting them in and out of dreams. Just as nature has become undead through a series of similar exchanges with the state, our own decay happens in connection with nature as decayed, too: dead bears, dead Indians, and other sorry revenants amounting to frightful back-and-forths within the alien dead as dream-like *doubles* of us. Those closer to nature-as-

alien, as-dead, as-monstrous-feminine, feel that pain when asleep or not, and inside of them it all blends together and passes along like a virus; i.e., as the zombie does (e.g., the zombie bear from 2018's *Annihilation*, above): close to power as traumatic (capital, in our case), they embed within its systems and divide like cells that pass a haunted memory along likenesses, copies, and counterfeits.

This can be from person-to-animal or person-to-person as alienized through a matter of systemic (Cartesian) dualism (above), but also from text-to-adaptation as a question of compelled evolution under profit as inherently exploitative. Such phantasms comment on death and rebirth under a predatory system whose divisive paradigm makes us *feel* alien, thus prone to attack ourselves when realizing *we're* the zombie impostor (the bait-and-switch something Lovecraft relied on in his own cosmic nihilism); i.e., as a matter of inheriting the feeling of destroyer as something to express through aesthetics, the chronotope having a particular signature depending on its own palimpsestuous lineage:

a meteor fall[s] from the heavens [...] hitting the lighthouse. From it, strange colors push outward like a massive blown bubble. It's effectively Lovecraft's "The Colour Out of Space" (1927). However, instead of poisoning the land from the offset, the Shimmer warps it, refracting everything inside—from the radio signals emitted by the crew's equipment to the very DNA in their bodies. / As the women penetrate the Shimmer, it penetrates them, and they

go insane. Lena calls it a suicide mission; Ventress, the mission shrink, says she's confusing suicide with self-destruction. [...]

*Annihilation* plays with the idea that perception is progressively altered through a continual state of change. What we see early on changes radically in retrospect. The narrative is framed, and we're led to believe the entire tale is told from the *real* Lena's perspective. Instead, everything is told from the *alien's* point-of-view, having replicated and now passing itself off as Lena by thinking it *is* Lena. However, the flashbacks still aren't the alien's, they're Lena's. In stealing them, the alien becomes them, hence the very lie it embodies. To this, the lighthouse alien endures through constant theft, at the expense of a concrete self. Instead, like a virus, it merely exists to preserve itself—in essence, if not in form. It endures through annihilation, is constantly reborn like the phoenix. Even so, it senses the repetition in its mnemonic gaps. Like the human victims it copies, it experiences doubt and fear in realizing it *isn't* what it thinks it is. Perhaps it copied them a little too well. Or, maybe our respective geneses simply mirror each other ([source](#): Persephone van der Waard's "*Annihilation* (2018): Review").

It's a lovely metaphor for Capitalism, I think, as abjected; i.e., projected as "alien" and "from the stars," then returning home to haunt itself within us and *our* tissues as part of the same cradle-to-grave loop: a fungus growing on a corpse that isn't *quite* dead, but rather like the mushroom man becomes trapped in a constant state of annihilation, of radical change reforming out of old particles into new actualities.



Not only is the decay *the* data (as is the alienation), but it generally doesn't stay divided for long (this doesn't mean things aren't messy in the interim, however)!

To that, capital alienates and sexualizes everything inside a grand necrobiome that spreads inside of itself. It also *decays* everything as a matter thereof to revisit and speak to again, mid-absorption and digestion. From me, to my own interpersonal abusers, to the

kinds of monomythic stories that informed and described this transfer of trauma (from root to tip), we'll consider how said decay manifests/can be interrogated on various registers for the rest of the "Bad Dreams" chapter!



(exhibit 36d1b: Model and artist: [Forte](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#). An incubus death elf, he is very proud of his ass. Such things are generally built to take a beating—are fetishized, raped and harvested-as-undead under capital, but through playfully rebellious workers become a mighty Aegis to reflect back onto our enemies a degree of their own abuse; i.e., the zombie's revolutionary cryptonymy a kind of apocalyptic calculus, its double operation [of show-and-conceal through the zombie] suggesting unironic harm as something to subvert.

Said harm, which the abuser normally inflicts onto others in service to profit, is suddenly viewed on the zombie's ass being a kind of dream-like invasion—one thrust *back* onto them by the victim-as-incubus "backing it up"; i.e., making the former feel alien, alone, and abject while vampirically restoring the latter's feelings about themselves [and their ass] along the same anisotropic mode of exchange! In short, we can feed through buffers they cannot easily cross, taking our power back while simultaneously "flashing" the state [and its proponents] to show them what we're *both* made of: the same undead tissues as of nature. Zombie bears, zombie butts; they're literally badass.



[artist: [Forte](#)]

*There's a catch. Because they think us dumb, unthinking slaves and themselves immune, our revelation can reverse the Cartesian ordering of terror and counterterror [thus victimization] and the state vs nature-as-monstrous-feminine; re [from Volume One]:*

*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: [...] 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 [[source](#)].*



[artist: [Forte](#)]

*As something to perceive under capital, then, we use the viewing of our wildly undead bodies [and their hellish, hairy openings, left] to reclaim them as hellish; i.e., as the regular instruments of our enslavement taken back from police agents—all with a residual alien potency to revisit trauma as something send back onto those who wish to dominate us/make us feel dead without our consent! By clapping back as Medusa famously does, we show them what they inherit and regularly deny under capital inside the Imperial Core: their own hand in genocide. Faced with that during the*

*dialectic of the alien as dream-like, they petrify [or wake up to join our cause, humanizing both of us] and we can decide where to go from there.)*

**The Roots of Trauma, part one: Assembling Trauma and Questions of Betrayal in *Beloved*, *Frankenstein*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, and *The Terror: Infamy* (feat., Toni Morrison and Howard Zinn)**

"Magua's village and lodges were burnt. Magua's children were killed by the English. I was taken as slave by the Mohawk who fought for the Grey Hair. Magua's wife believed he was dead and became the wife of another. The Grey Hair was the father of all that. In time, Magua became blood brother to the Mohawk to become free. But always in his heart, he is Huron. And his heart will be whole again on the day the Grey Hair and all his seed are dead."

—Magua, *The Last of the Mohicans* (1992)

As something to recreate, Hell is already crowded. Zombies are die-hard not just through wanton exploitation, but because they speak to our different atomized, tokenized struggles under capital through popular (accessible) means: written and



oral traditions like the zombie narrative fusing this with that. Such nightmares, then, concern trauma as something felt among different members of a group trapped in the same *occupied* tomb, death reassembling like Osiris (or Count Dracula) before coming home to roost. We should not fight nor dismiss this, as the canonical zombie apocalypse would prescribe (through abjection), but give the big, needy, pent-up bastard a hug post-assembly!

(artist: [F.T. Merrill](#))

To that, it's a bit like wrestling a bear—generally not a good idea, yet such a thing is not unheard of as a rite of passage that, per Marx, evokes dream-like tragedies and farce (and *isn't* limited to undead revolutionary language as ostensibly threatening *like* bears; i.e., can be silly as a point of practice; e.g., the syrup bottle scene from *Super Troopers* [2001]: "[What's the matter? Your mamma didn't teach you how to chug?](#)") but also literal dreams informed by the previous things. These can be very weird, and not just mine<sup>88</sup> (though mine are, below).

<sup>88</sup> My dreams are generally weird enough that I write them down afterwards (as have my exes, in the past—I talk in my sleep). I'll give a few here to make my point. First dream (10/28/2023):

I had a super zombie nightmare. It was in a skyscraper in Japan, and me and a bunch of other people were Japanese students. And there were Nazis with machine gun nests and *L4D* zombies that would transform in the worst ways. And a suit of armor in the corner that had a person in it. There was a cute boy named Teshiro(?). He said his name in the dream. He was very cute. We fought side-by-side, and were being pushed up floor-by-floor. We had a group of friends [with us] that seemed like we would all make it [to the top].



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Then there was a woman who walked past us and smiled on our way to the final elevator to the top floor. One person panicked and shot her in the head, but it turns out she was a zombie in disguise. And her corpse kept getting bigger and scarier and the person who shot her froze. We shouted for them to finish the zombie off, but they couldn't. The doors closed right as the zombie grabbed them and pulled them around a corner. When the doors actually closed, one person wasn't inside the elevator, leaving four or five of us remaining.

The elevator took us to the roof, which had a gazebo entrance and a circle of dancing girls in pink circling the perimeter of the roof. I think they were trying to signal a helicopter. It was a completely uninfected part of the building. We separated and tried to relax, anticipating the rise of the zombies to this final place. I had been eyeing Teshiro and we snuggled; I said it was just a dream/game but would love to be friends in real life. And he said that would be nice. And then I woke up.

Afterwards, I added, "I felt a little sleepy but I couldn't bring myself to fall *back* asleep. I didn't want to kill Teshiro by having the zombies come [upstairs]."

Second dream (1/7/2024):

I had a dream that I was the old museum guy from *The Last Crusade*, being chased through airport security and down descending subway stairwells by Steven Segal, who I'd escape by sliding bodily down the railing/lane divider sorta like Mary Poppins but bodily on my stomach like a limp fish.

And I was walking on this campus past people while trying to make my flight (and avoid Steven) after having said goodbye to my ex, Zeuhl. And Holder from *The Killing* was walking past in lime-green clown makeup doing capoeira and freestyle rap, but also was in his civie digs trying to solve a murder where some guy's body had been wrapped inside a log and chopped up into individual pieces like a Christmas roast and blood was everywhere.

Then I was back at my old family residence, having stayed with Zeuhl, and was preparing a plate of food in my brother's old room, which always looked like a prison cell; and the food turned into some *hors d'oeuvres* and a bottle of cough syrup, while my grandmother ascended the stairs, looking like a ghost and wearing a sheet-like night gown.

And finally Steven Segal caught me. He was riding a horse, and would chase people down and pee on them. But this time, the horse peed, but not on me, and the camera cuts to Steven, who says, "and that means he's saying thank you!" before subduing me and taking me in.

Third dream (3/3/2024):

I dreamt I was Horace Walpole. And David Attenborough was narrating the dream, which was a cross between *Jurassic Park*, *Aliens* and *Dawn of the Dead*, but also Walpole's *Mysterious Mother* (a double incest yarn).

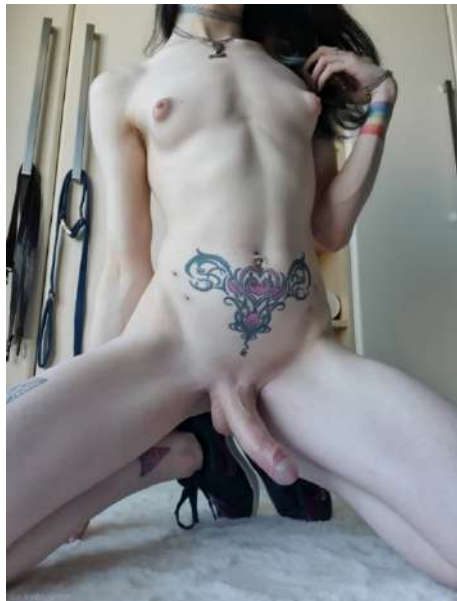
There were vengeful Indigenous ghosts I befriended who emerged from the fields of colonized lands as burning skeletons holding red scarves who turned into people, then xenomorphs and pirates; and a haunted theme park where, once entered, things became dark and desolate and the rides and games came alive and walked among you; and an old manuscript I was writing for my little brother about talking ravens and a magic spell that forced you to sit in someone's lap until they drained you of your life force.

All belonged to an ancestral land that was overseen by the moon as the eye of an angry god, and if you married into the family you were safe. I was sitting at a small séance table in a wide-open field as the eye looked down on me and these wealthy-looking people, who held hands and summoned dead spirits. And at one point in the dream I married you and told my Gran about it, perched on her shoulder like a raven as I described how lovely you were.

This last dream was shared with Bay and concerned me wanting to marry them. But the others were likewise a strange degree of touching, silly and terrifying (most Gothic novels start with nightmares processing half-real events in a pareidolic, *mise-en-abyme* fashion).

Indeed, this phantasmagorical weirdness runs in the family as a veritable chronotope: my mother once waking in the middle of the night to find my father not just sleepwalking, but shadow boxing in the middle of their bedroom, completely naked! Turns out, he'd been fighting a bear in his dream, my mother smiling to herself as he threw punch after punch (no doubt putting on quite a show as his junk flopped comically about, image not shown).

More to the point, such manly men as my father<sup>89</sup> generally are more eager to punch actual bears than face the monstrous-feminine as, for lack of a better term (and sticking to one Dad would have abused in the '70s, '80s and '90s into the present), "gay":



(artist: [Kayze Cutie](#))

Simultaneously buried and exposed, such visions-as-undead present the outside body as decayed, naked and menacing (zombie dork being canonically monstrous-feminine, left); i.e., a *perceived* vulnerability and menace<sup>90</sup> operating in ways that classically make for poor interlocution by virtue of the silencing nature of state abuse and the inevitable decay of memory over time. For one, culture death of the enslaved makes them dead while *above* ground. During an apocalypse, though, their repressed trauma reverses the diaspora, spilling into the everyday world by clawing up from *underground*. Either put there as state targets by hidden atrocities that yet walk the earth, or interred as settlers of a colonial world afforded the luxury of a personal tomb, the walking dead constitute a kind of collateral damage amid state abuse as concealed; they mysteriously reanimate from a breach in the membrane of normalized experience, reentering the living world to communicate *something* from beyond the grave. Yet the vector of rememory is utterly braindead, blind and indiscriminate in its dream-like devouring (exhibit 36d1); e.g., Gray Wright's somehow creepy *and* gay "[Dream Weaver](#)" (1975) inspired by John Lennon's own drug-fueled, white-Indian visions quests.

<sup>89</sup> We had multiple gay neighbors in the house next door, growing up. According to my mother, Dad wanted to walk around the house naked, but despite his unusual brawn was constantly worried (through internalized homophobia) that the gay neighbors would see his ass through the closed blinds and come later in the night while he slept to "get him" (which puts a whole new meaning unto the "bear" dream). In short, he was a cowardly lion (a fact that my mother—a total fag hag—found absolutely hilarious).

<sup>90</sup> Or other such binaries; e.g., weakness and strength, typically framed as feminine and masculine in traditional, heteronormative gender language/tokenized normativities.

Such decayed, horrifying confrontations, then, might seem like the stuff of nightmares and cheap, xenophobic nonsense; they also ascribe to a constant dialectical-material relationship between the living and the dead as potentially xenophilic, thus having the valued potential to humanize the wretched, the damned, the buried as having some hand in its own demise (re: tokenization). While the idea of the zombie exists inside the human mind, the human mind is informed by popular stories that reify zombies as part of the material world through a buried, displaced historical precedent (the subterfuge trifecta). All are things to reflect on as a plastic history that exists inside and outside of ourselves, one we can transform through our own dream-like interactions and creations inside the graveyard's indeterminate thresholds. Time, it turns out, is a *circle*, one a Gothickist like myself will enact by at times literally walking *in* circles, Sisyphus-style, to impart later in ways that are suitably campy ("What a story, Mark!"):



(artist: Joe Morse; [source](#): Jonathon Sturgeon's "Stirring Images from the First Ever Illustrated Version of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*," 2015)

After watching *The Last of Us*, for example, I went to bed and had those fitful dreams. When I woke, I felt *invigorated*, not afraid, and proceeded to write my heart out (what became the skeleton for the Undead Module). To borrow from Toni Morrison, I had experienced a "rememory" of trauma—re, *Beloved's* core idea:

Rememory 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 ([source](#)).

That morning but also approaching two years afterwards (now), I would write following such dreams as continuations of my mind processing these things on its own. I would write, sleep on it, wake up, and walk around the block; i.e., to rinse and repeat Umberto Eco's interpretive walks, but also *my* castle-narrative (the idea and outcome as borrowed from Bakhtin) as returning to difficult subject matter by virtue of privilege and necessity—all in order to wrap my head around something elusive and close at hand: a dead "baby's" ghost visiting me not unlike the heroine Sethe's slain child, Crawling Already? from Morrison's troubled book.

The tragedy for Sethe is doubting her child's existence. She is an escaped slave, having fled to the North to give birth. But upon the four slave catchers' arrival (mirroring the Four Horsemen), she panics and kills her child to spare it a life of slavery (thus rape). Such things are a metaphor for tokenization as a trauma response that cannibalizes the self—a process per rememory we shall continue to unpack and reanimate, here.

One does not simply kill her child without consequences (shame, among other things). Post-infanticide, Sethe becomes the proverbial madwoman in the attic, her old home haunted by the spirit of her dead child, but also her killing of it; i.e., the rememory of what *she* did, having to face it again and again as forever incomplete. The entire house is the attic, albeit of a plantation that—like the child's fragmented ghost—follows its mother around. She'll never be free of it, the story's theme of rememory conveying a deeply traumatized woman effectively dreaming while awake, *always* disassociating (Cuwu was like that, too, but less so when they were stable).

Per the dialectic of the alien, the Gothic is writ in disintegration; said detachment and fragmentation echoes across texts (re: from *Frankenstein* to *Beloved* to *Annihilation*, etc) in and out of dreams. This doesn't make it any clearer when it happens, though. Morrison's adherence to the tradition makes certain sections nigh-unreadable gibberish (stream of consciousness); i.e., by virtue of the heroine feeling connected to them at all times and from all directions, suggesting the entire thing was written in hindsight *and* in the moment—the rise of a new state of existence struggling to recall what came before, during the Middle Passage (which Morrison dedicates the story to): a kind of trauma-induced amnesia per the *wandering* restless labyrinth as *tethered* to Sethe. *She* is the vanishing point as much as the space is, cryptonymically announcing Hogle's place of concealment per the individual standing on the ashes of something not quite present: genocide, stolen generations on stolen land of stolen agency from stolen bodies, etc, as unironically raped by state forces.

Rape, then, is historically a power fantasy to enact upon others *against* their will (see: footnote, below). Except no power fantasy should ever come at other people's expense. When it does, it leads to a routine failing of memory and willpower in the face of trauma, but also to the classic dice roll: cop or victim, during service towards profit through the usual monomythic, hero-grade rape<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> As always, we want to critique what canonically essentializes as "normal"; i.e., doing so in defense of our basic rights; re (from Volume Two, part one):

Capitalism is a system of thought that prioritizes the individual in service to the elite, meaning that to speak out through open, monstrous, sex-positive expression (as we are) is paramount to preventing it (which we owe to ourselves, "just because"; i.e., there's no logical argument for or against genocide, it's simply incorrect relative to our rights being essentially in conflict with state predation). Canon and camp, sex positivity and sex coercion—these are literally *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

fantasies/demon BDSM operating like demon lovers historically do; i.e., as controlled opposition policing the usual victims by their assigned masters as a theatre to challenge *inside* of itself, but especially what dreams may come through imperfect regeneration!

Per C.S. Lewis and Rudolph Otto (more on them, later), such things become something to dread; i.e., a repetitive game of cat-and-mouse; e.g., not just Sethe and *her* dead child, but poor Ripley in *Alien* as alienated from the slaughter of nature fetishized. Step-by-step, she wakes from a dream into a nightmare that resembles her place of work as haunted, both bumping into her cat, but also the xenomorph as something she had *some* hand in: the intersex ghost of settler-colonial trauma upon which her work rests!



Though interconnected across fiction and non-fiction, such threads (and their tangents) can get rather confusing rather quickly—promptly and heavily weighing on the mind of the actor telling the story inside a place that is haunted by unspeakable things

struggling to be heard regardless. The rape is forbidden, but so is *mentioning* it. Doing so verges on the profane simply by announcing itself in the surroundings of

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functional opposites, as are the coaches and artisans promoting them and all their forms that follow function as a flow of power towards or away from the state. Permission can be granted implicitly in pre-established relationships that are already secure; those smaller relationships interface and relate to bigger ones and even bigger ones that, in medieval language, often work as animalistic shorthand [also known as art; re: our aforementioned caterpillar and wasp]. And if you disagree, I'd like to respond, "Welcome to real life! I'm Persephone from Earth; what planet are you from?"

[...] don't suffer for your art if you can help it. But also remember that trauma attracts trauma, weird attracts weird. The idea is to combine them in ways that alleviate sickness, stress, tension and harm, but also avoid predation by perfidious elements in our daily lives coming from structural abuse: the Gothic castle as a beacon to attract and house the like-minded *while* the state tries, as it always does, to dominate us through its own victims ([source](#)).

This isn't just a problem with fictional characters like Sethe, trying to have relationships post-trauma as something to imagine according to what was lost and reassembled centuries after the fact (time, again, being a matter of materials and distance); they affect us in our daily lives (which shall become clear as we examine Jadis and I being drawn to each other's weirdness, hence trauma; i.e., something they ultimately exacted upon me as *their* victim, which Harmony has thankfully helped me find peace, *post hoc*).

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
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the performance but also their demeanor while affected by such things; i.e., as playfully unfolding during calculated risk feeling home-like, thus historically tied to moments where good play was met with bad. In turn, these generally relegate to sites of play that entertain "rape" as par for the course; e.g., a BDSM torture dungeon or Gothic novel (the two are functionally the same). Any site/performance thereof takes something out of the storyteller mid-attempt, especially when someone else lends a hand<sup>92</sup>!

To that, *Beloved* was always a difficult story to read—too fragmented to easily comprehend, coupled with the ghoulish subject matter and attempt to write about things that aren't strictly alive (nor ever were, a quality of ghosts we'll unpack later) but reify through a proxy/avatar based on things one has gleaned through; i.e., selective absorption turning one's world upside-down when dreaming about dream-like stories about rape as a consequence of capital and its parent ideologies (re: Cartesian thought). Having been raped myself and having tried to revive *those* feelings to interrogate them with different people to vastly different outcomes and effects (re: Harmony and Jadis), I now understand Sethe's struggles; i.e., through my own "pregnant" labors: to remember what was lost as connected to a shared struggle Morrison *also* had in mind. It can feel circuitous, recursive, doomed—a hellspawn chopped and screwed together into something ontologically impossible and impossible to ignore as a result:



(artist: *Bernie Wrightson*)

<sup>92</sup> There is always an element of risk to consider regarding our playmates and play sites, either becoming visually uncanny/threatening to us when triggered (from this volume, "[A Note about Rape: or, Facing the Great Destroyer](#)"):

Regarding the Gothic past as half-real, but also something to toy with in new imaginary forms performed in our everyday lives, I need to warn/encourage you: lived trauma can bleed into shared trauma as a site for new predation; or said "predation" can be put in quotes by someone who also knows what it's like to suffer who *doesn't* want to harm others to help themselves feel better! This coin-toss outcome is essentially pure chance on a shared aesthetic, meaning you gotta look past the image to spot the flags (red or green) hidden through subtext. You gotta know yourself, which you can't fully without taking some risks with others. The best toys can hurt you in the wrong hands; in the right hands, you can feel like you've died and gone to heaven.

The paradox (thus juggling act/tightrope) is presenting a manner of perception that *feels* dangerous but isn't—is able to impart sex-positive lessons *without* becoming dogmatic!

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Such is the nature of the zombie and its apocalypse demonstrating those unable to reflect as abusive cunts. However, the simple truth is, many dreams repeat or otherwise return/can be triggered by exploring trauma inside and outside ourselves. This can be on purpose and/or by accident; e.g., the return of the vampire, the dragon, the xenomorph, etc, as a ghost of itself slowly shambling towards us (or quickly running and pouncing on us) in and out of dreams, but also dream-like media as internalized to converse with our sleeping selves; i.e., until we spring from sleep, half-remembering whatever phantom we *think* we saw as, like it or not, being something we've encountered before in *some* shape or form.

For Mary Shelley, this was the Promethean myth, which *she* dragged up like a corpse to modernize *as* rotten (speaking to the rot under capital through a displaced German state); but the same basic idea applies to us and the legends we routinely face as a) based on the same myth revived by Shelley over two centuries previous, and b) sold *back* to us in neoliberal stories of "past" that we, like her or Morrison, can proactively play with to inventively reclaim (and reassemble) what is lost—our undead humanity!

This isn't by exacting revenge *upon* the dead (which the state, of course, wants), but interrogating their worrisome existence by going into Hell to face them; i.e., as an ambiguous presence of Cartesian abuse, thus rape as power abuse being what we must reclaim in dream-like ways here on Earth extending into wild exploratory fantasies. Said "dreams" speak to tokenization as self-destruction in relation to power as found and stolen from privatized elements (so-called "gods"); re (from "Military Optimism," 2021):

In Gothic circles, "Promethean" means "self-destructive," generally in pursuing power, wisdom, or technology.

The idea stems from *Frankenstein*, also called *The Modern Prometheus* by Mary Shelley. In her story, the "natural philosopher" Victor Frankenstein discovers ancient forbidden wisdom and uses it to create unnatural life, which leads to issues; Victor is a shit parent who views his creation, the Creature, as a demon. The novel ends with him discouraging education for fear of uncovering forbidden, self-destructive knowledge. According to him, this knowledge outwardly reflects our innermost demons, which destroy us through mutual dislike (re: Skynet, [Metal Sonic](#), the xenomorph, etc).

Although written [as a unflattering parody of the Byronic hero](#), Victor was nevertheless a man of privilege (so was Byron); and having access to tremendous opportunities and wealth, he misused these resources to stupefying effect. As we'll see in a moment, this kind of pampered, short-sighted hubris is on full display in neoliberal critiques: The evil companies of the 20th century's sci-fi future (re: *Alien*) are just as blind and prone to blaming others as Victor was. However, they've become an institution whose

capacity for harm far exceeds Victor's parental failings. They lie, cheat and steal, all under the guise of scientific virtue.

Though Shelley wrote what is widely considered the first horror-themed science fiction novel, she drew inspiration from the Ancient Greek myth. In it, the titan Prometheus steals the fire of the gods (a symbol of forbidden knowledge) and gives it to mankind. In the myth, the gods exact revenge on Prometheus, cursing him with eternal torment; stories like *Frankenstein* place this suffering on humanity for their impudent curiosity, idiocy and hubris: the Promethean Quest.

Although the Promethean Quest has evolved over the centuries, the basic blueprint remains fairly unchanged:

- exploration into the unknown, or seemingly unknown
- discovery of a lost civilization
- confrontation with a rogue technology
- survival and escape
- repeat

As new civilizations grow more and more advanced, they push outward and encounter fallen "gods." Not actual gods posed by the Greeks, but those whose technology is so advanced as to be virtually indistinguishable from magic (see: [Clarke's third law](#)).

The makers of this technology are not gods; they are sapient mortals who destroyed themselves with powerful knowledge they failed to control. Their creations survive them, attracting future explorers. Those who arrive want more power, the whole ordeal reliably ending in disaster. This cycle repeats, leaving a field of "ancient" [quotes, new] wreckage in its wake ([source](#)).

The above writing is three years old by now, and it constitutes *my* wrestling with older fictions *I* was beginning to think about differently back then; i.e., as a matter of Gothic-tinged genderqueer discourse (what I, slightly over a year later, would call Gothic Communism). But their haunting as a matter of rememory—to face and reassemble in hellish, Radcliffean ways that, *unlike* Radcliffe, I didn't want to banish but understand—goes on and on, well beyond my PhD ([and subsequent books](#)) into this one: the proverbial gazing into the abyss, the call of the void.

One, said abyss is often associated with the undead's eyes—however blind they might appear—as being trance-like, offering a rare and fatal vision<sup>93</sup> tied to a

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<sup>93</sup> E.g., Liara T'Soni from *Mass Effect* telling you with eyes as black as Hell: "Embrace eternity!" While *that* story is more white Indian stuff—i.e., tokenizing the monstrous-feminine to *serve* empire through a patriarchal, monomorphic society of Sapphic space fags—the concept isn't unique to tokenized forms (more on this as we explore the monomyth in general, but also demons, later on).



larger cannibalistic cycle (re: the Reapers, footnote); i.e., touched upon by bad (apocalyptic) dreams not simply as repressed memories, but hushed discourse concerned with taboo things paradoxically validated through monstrous poetics as tolerable, acceptable, commodified; re: zombies. Two, it literally involves dreams that—like the zombie—rise from the grave-like mind as connected to larger gravesites to have sex (communion) inside as profane ("almost holy") *on purpose*.

For example, while recently considering this section for final review, I had a consent-non-consent session with Harmony a few hours before. I did so to regain some sense of control pertaining to the rising presence of fascism I feel right now in



the real world—partly thanks to Bad Empanada Live's video, "[Twitter Is Causing a Global Nazi Resurgence - It Must Be Destroyed](#)" (2024) but also while working on the Undead Module, which is suitably full of nightmares, of nightmares, of nightmares (such things driving those in touch with a broader emotional current to, at a glance, inexplicitly commit suicide in the prime of their youth; i.e., Juliet Syndrome; e.g., Evelyne McHale).

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

As a result, I once again had a compound *meta* nightmare whose rememory was based *on* a nightmare that I'd already had *before* (with the literal Nightmare boss monster from *Metroid Fusion* in the dream, too, for good measure), and one that pertained to my own trauma as something the professionals would call "complex." But as Doctor Morbius said, "Now you know a dream can't hurt you!" However delicious the irony was in *his* case, he was more or less correct; but one can still *feel* haunted or out of control during these tricky echoes' bad repetition and deliberately campy citation (re: Matthew Lewis). Per Marx, this concerns historical-material conditions, which I pointedly extend to *socio*-material conditions; i.e., as a dualistic manner of expanding on Castricano's *cryptomimesis* to contend with history within myself as something to reify out of disparate parts: writing with the dead as weighing on *my* overloaded brain becoming something to repeatedly express through my writing and my artwork (which, in turn, is generally accomplished with the help of those operating on a similar wavelength; e.g., Itzel, above, but also Morrison).

In psychological thought, "Hell" classically refers to the subconscious mind and its effects on the owner(s) (and which the spirit world/world of dreams and

nightmares has a historical-material, thus dialectical-material effect that psychological models like to ignore<sup>94</sup>, including older Gothic analysis like Creed or Kristeva). Like *Sethe*, though, we are not the same person as these older quacks, but likewise aren't our older selves *per* baptismal in Styx' hellish waters; their rapturous power<sup>95</sup> is *only* ours to control on *repeated* viewings, but each visit *is* unique. It is both dangerous and required if we are to truly be free—not of the trauma or the memory of experience to fear (which will always be to some degree legitimate), but of its total dominion over us as a lived experience that never really stops until we are dead: sleep *is* the cousin of death, after all.

Such elements generally oscillate between solemnity and satire; e.g., *The Book of Mormon's* "[Spooky Mormon Hell Dream](#)" (2017): "You blamed your brother for eating the donut! You're a dick!" / "I can't believe Jesus called me a dick!" But, it's just as often franchised between authors having perennial debates in the same repeating stories and characters—Lewis and Radcliffe, myself and Morrison, but also Scott and Cameron:



*(exhibit 36d2: Cameron's ideas on the Amazon and Immaculate Conception aren't so immaculate; they generally weaponize the Amazon as asexual, but haunted by sexual trauma as something to project onto an imaginary other attached to real-world peoples [the Vietnamese]. Echoing Radcliffe's gentler detectives' own absurd nightmares but updating them for a neoliberal market, Cameron's neoconservative,*

<sup>94</sup> Preferring to call them "drives"—a term I never liked as it presumes an essentialized biological element that excludes the shaping of human desires (their overall conditions) as socio-material, first and foremost.

<sup>95</sup> Often with a historically mutilative flavor bringing us closer to a palliative Numinous; e.g., Harmony hauntologically exploring the convulsionnaires (exhibit 37a2b).

*exterminatory rhetoric generally pits the Amazon against the Medusa as something to kill and crush during a trigger response to rape panic; i.e., something to point the TERF-grade Madonna at before "pulling" like the trigger of a gun-like nun to actualize the heroine in a way that is sexualized by Cameron: the heteronormative regulation of sex, terror and force through neoliberal war copaganda. Violence becomes sexy insofar as its justification serves the heroine returning to a desired position within the status quo: the military mother saving the colony brat from Communism.)*

Such stories concern generational trauma in ways that mark us as nostalgically wounded, touched in half-real forms that merge reality with imagination. When marked, said trauma becomes a part of us, then; i.e., as an extension of the world around us that we internalize and absorb, mid-phantasm. It can exacerbate, thus trigger again in the future and stir up old feelings inside us, but also the world around us when such things come back around (the chickens); i.e., post-traumatic stress as a poetic device relayed between us and our surroundings across space and time, in and out of dreams. These rise frightfully in ways that are sudden and unpleasant, like a spontaneous pregnancy (a Gothic staple) that we must give birth to lest it explode violently out of us. These mimic symptoms of the orgasm, of death, of what doctors until quite recently would openly describe as *hysteria*, aka "wandering womb."

Sure, it's all rather Freudian and stupid (above), but the societal effects are nonetheless real for many people (validating Cameron's rape fantasies as speaking to a very common fear among women and other marginalized peoples: foreign invasion of oneself through rape). The proletarian trick is to take control of the labors (and tokophobic-grade anxieties attached to them) to not only survive *them*, but the doctors (and other people) who reliably discount our feelings and lived, monstrous-feminine experiences<sup>96</sup>; i.e, which they attribute to *our* failings while negatively contributing to the symptoms and symbols: as something that will purge one way or another!

Like a Gothic novel, though, dreams and nightmares remain an essential part of the experience—indeed, monomythically involve the hero venturing into Hell to face the past as undead; i.e., as something to conjure up regardless if someone wants to or not, then survive it. Per my arguments, the liminal hauntology of war is the appearance of the grim harvest, which leads to tokenization and rape of the self as alien. Generally this is through a castle or castle-like monster in relation to broader socio-material factors per capital harvesting us as part of nature. Even so,

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<sup>96</sup> Not just those of people who give birth, but GNC AMAB people, people of color, non-Christians, and others that are a) reliably animalized by Cartesian thought within capital and its canon, then b) to some degree raped and harvested: by being force fed bullets or knives (exhibit 36d2). Again, the Gothic loves to merge the language of food, war and rape to say things that psychosexually concern all three; e.g., Victor's revenge prescribing violence unto the Creature as something to abort by proxy.

it can still *feel* like an endless nightmare; i.e., occurring per a sweetly terrifying sensation of drifting in and out of sleep *while awake*.

As such, rememory is the process of going heroically into such spaces (often again and again as anisotropic, concentric extensions of ourselves through *mise-en-abyme*); i.e., to confront uncomfortable things that, however bizarre, fragmented or abstract they might seem, are generally explored through theatre, music, dance and yes, *kayfabe/Amazonomachia* as half-real extensions of our lives attached to legends and they us (re: the chronotope); e.g., Neo leaving the Matrix to go back inside, Link's raft struck by lightning to send him to the isle of the Wind Fish (which he summons by collecting magical instruments), Samus plumbing the Zebethean depths time and time again, and so on...



(artist: [Daniel Vendrell Oduber](#))

Whatever the form, such things are abused on repeat by the state tokenizing the oppressed into traitors of class, race and culture put "to sleep"; i.e., as a Radcliffean means of conjuring up horrors that, per unspeakable state abuses, menticide workers to rape themselves and nature as alien, monstrous-feminine zombies: a self-imposed gag recycling such dreams inside the sleeper's echo-chamber brain. We can reclaim this (re: confusing the cat, Monty-Python-style), of course, but something is always given and gained, per attempt; each dive leaves a part of our old selves in Hell, and loads us with fresh fatal knowledge concerning preparation for new "tortures." In turn, these let us face and interrogate trauma harmlessly as a means of *paraxial*

catharsis; i.e., when done correctly, ludo-Gothic BDSM isn't a gateway drug for anything but sexual healing and rape prevention in the future: Gothic Communism.

Them's the breaks. Now let's take *all* of this and consider it not to my *latest* dreams (re: after Harmony and I put "rape" in quotes), but to the response I had over a year ago when dreaming about *The Last of Us*. The details of *that* dream aren't important (though we'll unpack some of them in part two of this subchapter); the *response* to them is. The trauma of *that* dream wasn't entirely my own, then, but had elided with various other expressions of things we simultaneously abject

but seek out in disguised, undead forms; i.e., the difficulty in remembering to recover singular atrocities, but also forming the wider social-sexual habits that combine this-with-that: to stand together as a diverse polity with uneven, idiosyncratic, race-to-class-to-cultural betrayals and oppression. Morrison dedicated her story to the millions-dead of the Middle Passage, and *Beloved's* suitable fragmentation speaks to a kind of privilege many people of color in America don't have: a voice (often a singer's, dancer's or painter's).

Such a voice is vital, of course, but something I discovered since is how minorities often become *singularized* in their struggle to be heard. The Communist Numinous isn't a single group, though; it represents a collective struggle that needs to put aside past differences and stand together against the elite. Otherwise, they'll divide and conquer us all over again. In short, this isn't a contest or a race, and



rape isn't something to rank ("different flavors and degrees of shit," I often have to explain to my mother); we can speak to our own peoples' raping by police forces, but to truly heal from such things, division as a praxial device must, itself, become a thing of the past (e.g., emotional manipulation). Bold but respectful, we must become part of the same undivided spirit, a spectre of Marx more Marxist than Marx was, more gay and enlightened towards liberation through rememory as improving upon itself from Morrison to me:

(artist: [Super Phazed](#))

Such communions with the dead are an endless cycle, and one we shouldn't bat away

with bullets and knives just because it implies our being born on the right side of the tracks (thus fearful of colonization by the alien dead to some degree; re: "shower curtain syndrome, *vis-à-vis* Jameson). We must hug Medusa and abjure capital preying not just on her but *all* of us. There is no surviving capital; we can only transform it, and this starts with a dream of something better built on older dreams (or palimpsestuous echoes of these things) that decidedly were not.

For me, then, my aforementioned dream about *The Last of Us* had blended said text (already an adaptation) according to my own adult education *and* childhood traumas—specifically my surviving of child abuse and rape (re: Dad and Jadis, respectively), as well as my experiences with dated portrayals of war that were given to me from different sources growing up (re: the monomyth). It was a tangled, confusing chorus of the dead, but somehow it all made sense to me (abuse acclimates you to recursive chaos as a revived "medieval"; re: *mise-en-abyme* as consistently "ancient"): the rememory of things that have been lost to Capitalism's half-hidden atrocities and must—like the fairy or the succubus—be brought *back* to life in ways that are always different; i.e., what Ghil'ad Zuckermann calls "sleeping beauties" in regards to languages that are not "dead" thus gone forever, but "sleeping" thus waiting—like Cthulhu—[to be revived again](#) (Polyglot Conference's "Sleeping Beauties Awake," 2017). Death, then, is a part of life and vice versa, including all aspects of it we're alienated from and given bad counterfeits in return. Sooner or later, death as a matter of chimeras and hauntologies alike, comes home



to haunt settler colonialism and its dreamy cycle of pioneers; i.e., feasting on the gutted corpse of Manifest Destiny to either start it again, or try something different moving forward!

(artist: [Istrander](#))

Gothic-Communist development is such a conduit. Repurposing hellish dreams out of the corpse of empire requires radical, intersectional forms of solidarity that historically have struggled to manifest in *coherent* forms (re: Morrison); i.e., insofar as chasing representation goes, has taken increased importance (during tokenization) over any serious attempt *at* intersectional solidarity in mainstream media and politics. One could argue this praxial inertia being the whole point—to divide canonically along class and racial lines by redlining in all the usual ways, and letting one or two across to gatekeep all the rest seemingly stuck in Dreamland; i.e., tokenization and normalization of different radicalized groups into moderate forms that sell out and play the cop of said dreams stuck in the cave, themselves.

It's a clearly complicated topic, insofar as it's historically discouraged by capital, whose critics have not been nearly radical *enough* insofar as intersectional solidarity is concerned; i.e., bonding together in ways that grant the right of

rebellion to all groups working together against the elite and their token servants' bad dreams. Anything less simply leads to failure and regression towards enslavement and genocide again, nipping liberation in the bud; e.g., Skynet killing the mother of its enemy before his birth.

We've touched upon Afronormativity earlier in the book (which *Beloved* points to), but won't have time to give examples of similar normativities at length. I simply want to give the holistic model upon which they all function, moving power through the socio-material devices of Gothic poetics in one direction or the other (towards workers or the state). To that, it's simply a historical-material fact at this stage: development *cannot* work without all oppressed groups finding common ground against the state/capital as *the* ultimate foe, the pearly Omelas eating everything around it and then itself. It has and will continue to divide and harvest nature as monstrous-feminine according to anything that isn't functionally white; this starts with the colonizer image, but extends to tokenized latitude as given to oppressed individuals willing to (not without some degree of repressed shame) sell their people down the river for the umpteenth time.

This brings us to *The Last of the Mohicans*—not for a close-read of the text, but to ply the basic ideas already covered as present within stories *like* it to the larger dialectical-material forces at work.

To that, I want to be holistic and will quickly re-mention Morrison as someone to critique; i.e., as a threat to solidarity (so-called "mainstream success"), but also the likes of Howard Zinn and Zionism, as well as other cultural groups we need to consider together (re: *The Terror: Infamy*). We need to, insofar as universal liberation concerns facing the reality that all of us are presently atomized to varying degrees; i.e., by stories like *The Last of the Mohicans* working to presage and lament genocide in service *to* profit!

First, the movie, itself. Of it, Alys Caviness-Gober writes,

Based on [James Fenimore Cooper's](#) 1826 novel [The Last of the Mohicans: A Narrative of 1757](#). The novel is a rather boring read that, like Mann's film, takes liberties with historical facts. Both the novel and various film and TV adaptations contain some historical truths: both the French and the British armies used Native Americans as scouts, guides, and allies; outnumbered by the British, the French were more dependent upon Native American aid than were the British; the Algonquians (Mohican) and Iroquois (Mohawk) were traditional competitors and enemies and those traditions determined which side of the War the various tribes supported. Cooper based his novel, [The Last of the Mohicans](#), on the Mohican tribe, but his depiction of them includes aspects of the [Mohegan](#) cultural, including Mohegan names, like Uncas. At the time of Cooper's writing, the Mohegan were a separate Algonquian tribe associated with eastern Connecticut. Cooper set his novel in and around Lake

George, New York, in the Hudson Valley, which was historically Mohican land ([source](#): "C'mon, Mann: *The Last of the Mohicans*," 2021)

First, note how the different tribes' animus is as much with each other as the warring Europeans dividing up native lands. More to the point, whichever side won, these different Indigenous groups would surely have suffered at the hands of. Second, we can see some sense of reassembly across a variety of works telling the same basic story: the white Indian narrative.

Cooper wrote *The Leatherstocking Tales* between 1823 and 1841, and they present the same underlying issue; a reassembly of Native American history as written *by* the conqueror class to effectively "cry for the Indians" while publishing a kind of boys-only pulp fiction: white voices sanctimoniously speaking to the plight of native populations, treating *their* doom as "foregone." It verges away from activism and into liberal doomsaying (white moderacy through emotional manipulation). Such a trend is carried forward from Cooper by men like William Faulkner's own quickness to relegate such peoples and lands (e.g., *The Bear*, 1942) to a doomed position under capital, an abject state of ruin (a tomb, often an "ancient" one hauntologically dug back up; e.g., Naughty Dogs' Central-to-South American ruins, tribal masks, and evil scientist, Dr. Cortex, abjecting Nazis, like usual, *away* from North America) that points the finger at them and *their* folly instead of us and ours. Damned if you do, damned if you don't.

As usual, the process of abjection (as something to reassemble) deflects the United States' role in things then and now—in short, it's always the *other* side that does genocide, "them" instead of "us" while the middle class (which includes a black middle; re: Morrison) attacks the ghost of the counterfeit wherever they go; they're so busy playing undertaker but also Jesus bearing the cross, dying<sup>97</sup> for "our" sins while breaking the bad news (and making money off it) that they "forget" to actively solidarize these different groups divided and conquered by the state (something Morrison admittedly does, insofar as she *is* gentrified and Afrocentrist [speaking exclusively about *Black America*; [source](#): Britannica] much like other black activists/auteurs have been/are; e.g., Jordan Peele<sup>98</sup> writing about already-dead peoples doomed like the Mohicans were).

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<sup>97</sup> E.g., Blizzard's 2024 "[Diablo IV | Vessel of Hatred | Official Release Date Trailer](#)" depicting the usual white colonial martyr sobbing for the source of genocide as taken to abject, faraway sites thereof; i.e., putting all of the blame of sin onto black executioners' evil ghosts (the ghost of the counterfeit) needing to be exorcised, in effect blaming the victim of settler colonialism while conveniently ignoring the European side of things as far more widespread, as *sovereign* through the same counterfeits' blaming of others.

<sup>98</sup> To her credit, I don't wish to aggressively lump Morrison in with Peele, nor reduce either to a singular thing. Few writers can be insofar as they change and grow out of their older selves. Not to mention, Morrison's reputation is as much a matter of history defined by others (who I constantly have to listen to crowing her achievements and how awesome she was). But her body of work still speaks for itself, insofar as her reputation proceeds her through those that deliver it. To that, she remains a titan of African *American* literature, which comes with its own baggage to critique.



For example, once while in Manchester, England at the International Anthony Burgess Foundation, a black author at the talk I was attending\* announced, "African Americans seem to think they're the only black people on the face of the planet." The statement was not challenged because I think there was some truth to it; or, as the chair for the event, Dr. Chloe Germaine Buckley, said, "The structure of Gothic writing relies on the idea that the past is never completely behind us. In fact, if it is not properly dealt with, it can erupt violently again in the present. These novels expertly highlight the dangers that lie in not confronting and resolving trauma from the past" ([source](#): Manchester Metropolitan University's "Gothic literature could 'decolonise' the curriculum").

\*"De-Colonising Children's Literature – an evening of discussion about diversity in YA Fiction" ([ibid.](#)).

More to the point, certain actions speak for themselves in ways that are not homogenous among a given polity. Peele supports Israeli, for instance, whereas Morrison in "A Letter from 18 Writers" (2006), challenged the liquidation of the Palestinian state:

Source: "A Letter from 18 Writers", The Nation, August 18, 2006, and as seen in The Nation's August 28, 2006 Print Issue.

**TONI MORRISON ON PALESTINE**

Toni Morrison was one of 18 writers who co-wrote and signed a letter as a call to resist Israel's undeclared political aim: the liquidation of the Palestinian state.

The letter was published on August 18, 2006 in *The Nation*.

**TONI MORRISON ON PALESTINE**

*The letter reads:*

"The latest chapter of the conflict between Israel and Palestine began when Israeli forces abducted two civilians, a doctor and his brother, from Gaza."

"An incident scarcely reported anywhere, except in the Turkish press. The following day the Palestinians took an Israeli soldier prisoner - and proposed a negotiated exchange against prisoners taken by the Israelis - there are approximately 10,000 in Israeli jails."

**TONI MORRISON ON PALESTINE**

"That this "kidnapping" was considered an outrage, whereas the illegal military occupation of the West Bank and the systematic appropriation of its natural resources - most particularly that of water - by the Israeli Defense Forces is considered a regrettable but realistic fact of life, is typical of the double standards repeatedly employed by the West in face of what has befallen the Palestinians, on the land allotted to them by international agreements, during the last seventy years."

**TONI MORRISON ON PALESTINE**

"Today outrage follows outrage; makeshift missiles cross sophisticated ones. The latter usually find their target situated where the disinherited and crowded poor live, waiting for what was once called Justice. Both categories of missile rip bodies apart horribly - who but field commanders can forget this for a moment?"

**TONI MORRISON ON PALESTINE**

"Each provocation and counter-provocation is contested and preached over. But the subsequent arguments, accusations and vows, all serve as a distraction in order to divert world attention from a long-term military, economic and geographic practice whose political aim is nothing less than the liquidation of the Palestinian nation."

**TONI MORRISON ON PALESTINE**

"This has to be said loud and clear, for the practice, only half declared and often covert, is advancing fast these days, and, in our opinion, it must be unceasingly and eternally recognized for what it is and resisted."

PS: As Juliano Mer Khamis, director of the documentary film *Amra's Children*, asked: "Who is going to paint the 'Guernica' of Lebanon?"

Signed by: John Berger Noam Chomsky Harold Pinter José Saramago Eduardo Galeano Arundhati Roy Naomi Klein Howard Zinn Charles Glass Richard Falk Gore Vidal Russell Banks Thomas Kenneally Chris Abani Carolyn Forché Martin Espada Jessica Hagedorn Toni Morrison

\* Source: "A Letter from 18 Writers", *The Nation*, August 18, 2006, and as seen in *The Nation's* August 28, 2006 Print Issue.

([source](#): *Black Women Radicals*)

But already we run into a problem insofar as representation includes a group of people for which Morrison is just one member of: an *elite* group of fancy pants nerds. Such persons are not gods and should be criticized—not for speaking about Palestine as they do, here, but meriting criticism as much as anyone does.

For example, another member of the same group is Noam Chomsky (someone we have already established being right about various things, except genocide; re: Cambodia). The same goes for Morrison, but also people likened to her same level of aggrandizement, class, what-have-you, talking about movements that historically are hardly consistent or perfect about anything *except* in how imperfect their struggles for liberation are; re: Afrocentrism and black voices as worryingly atomized.

Yes, it's important to recognize who one is and the cultural tradition one belongs to. Even so, as a matter of reinvention, we should be actively coalescing into a larger radical movement concerned with uniting all peoples against capital in ways these authors *didn't*; i.e., putting the cart before the horse. Postcolonialism is an-Com, which last I checked, no one called Morrison. Instead, she had a lot of love (especially in mainstream circles) regarding her work as something to pin a gold star onto, precisely because she *wasn't* openly Marxist in her speech; i.e., she was black, first, and only Marxist

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(artist: [Super Phazed](#))

To this, something important *is* lost; i.e., the wretched have a constant part to play in their own destruction *and* struggle to heal (e.g., *Black Snake Moan*, 2006): to routinely take the state's poison gifts—"their" gold as stolen from other nations, peoples, dead—as a middle-class assimilation gimmick. Specialized voices like Morrison are *still* useful, but they need to solidarize or they're still divided/segregated in ways capital can exploit; i.e., a darling we can "kill" (she died in 2019) and camp like all

the rest: the controlled opposition of a black member in the ivory tower (and all *that* entails).

Bringing things back to *The Last of the Mohicans*, the paradox demands those with more privilege as critiquing the issues of such buried voices while intersecting with other oppressed groups having their own hand in self-conquest; i.e., Morrison perhaps trying to speak to the experience of other groups and her own as subject to the same state forces, thus class, race and cultural betrayals.

So often, these groups want to speak and act exclusively *for* themselves and *their* liberation, when in reality we need to unite and speak out for each other against capital; i.e., as one: through our undead cravings/appetites as "pent up" in ways that—per the pedagogy of the oppressed—heal from rape as already having happened and desperately needing release. This happens not by specializing in single groups unto themselves, but by finding and respecting our similarities amid difference and vice versa; e.g., Edward Said writing for the plight of the Palestinians, though often from relative safety and security in the US. Doing so doesn't make *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) any less important, but the value in his voice and that of the people of Gaza lies in how they remain part of the same larger project's sticking point: liberation as a universal goal.

To this, we desperately need to mix and hybridize, thus adapt to a predatory system that only knows how to divide and destroy by conjuring up *false* symbols of rebellion. That includes white Indians, but also token idiots (and fancy authors like

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if someone else came along and did their best to argue *for* that; e.g., Irfan Mehmood *et al* writing in 2021 (two years after her death), "This article will endeavor to *discover* [emphasis, me] the presence of Marxist ideology in Morrison's, novels, *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*" ([source](#): "Toni Morrison as an African American Voice: A Marxist Analysis," 2021).

In short, people as a whole really need to be holistic as a matter of praxis and inclusivity at all times, but especially while they're alive! Sacrificing *that* in favor of some imaginary past to reclaim for one group is not conducive to the kind of solidarity we need to collectively challenge state forces.

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Morrison who, while important enough to merit me taking their ideas for myself and my work, still find *Beloved* to frankly be a bit of a slog—no offense).

Believe me, I *wish* I could say that it was simply the straight white man's fault alone (it's not) and that white savior myths are dangerous and harmful

(they are<sup>99</sup>), but capital invades, gentrifies and decays feminism, punk culture, pan-Africanism, genderqueer groups and other minorities factions, too; i.e., to hand out singular opportunities to betray as many as possible to benefit as *few* as possible.

For example, various factions of the Inca population sought liberation from the empire already ruling them (re: "[Guns, Germs and Steel: A Historical Critique](#)"), putting their trust in enterprising Europeans (never a good idea); the Cherokee adopted American laws, clothing and customs, only to be betrayed in turn; discord among the Nation of Islam and Malcolm X led to a) his assassination (and other members of the same movement) and b) the rise of "Hoteps<sup>100</sup>" and black

<sup>99</sup> The likes of John Connor and Natty Bumppo (above) being used to instill capitalist hegemonies into the future *while* dressed up as American-Liberal hero fantasies.

<sup>100</sup> "A relatively new movement in the U.S. that uses Egyptian history as a parcel to wrap up messages of Black pride," Miranda Lovett writes in "Reflecting on the Rise of the Hoteps" (2020). "People characterized as Hoteps tend to wear traditional African styles, create content about the history of Black people from before the transatlantic slave trade, and spread ideology about the place of Black men and women within Black communities" ([source](#)). She goes on to explain:

For a young Black person struggling to connect to their ancestral cultural heritage, ancient Egypt is a familiar, attractive place to start. Egypt is the most well-known and powerful cultural influence from Africa today, making it easy for many African Americans to adopt Egyptian culture and to use its legacy of royalty, artistic sophistication, and technological advancement to create a message of Black superiority.

The trauma and loss of African heritage through the transatlantic slave trade arguably created a gulf that was filled by a kind of "[therapeutic mythology](#)"—a constructed heritage built around memories of the homeland. From Egypt to nations across the continent, the historic and renewed connection to Africa created the unique identity of "African American." This identity encompasses a culture where African traditions (the ones that survived a long history of colonialism) have been altered to fit new, American environments.

[...] The Hoteps movement is a testament to the uniquely painful and complicated history of African Americans. It is anchored in a long tradition of looking to Africa for points of needed pride. Yet it also risks propagating false histories and conventions, and, ironically, disparaging Black women and those who are LGBTQ in the service of elevating Black identity.

[...] Hotep memes, and the history and logic that underpin this subculture, reveal the ways

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Capitalism (re: "[The REAL Faces of Black Conservatism](#)," 2023); the recuperation of Black Lives Matter and police violence; and so on, regarding problems of race, class and culture as a matter of division and decay under capital as something proletarian rememory and its attempts at intersectional solidarity cannot dare ignore.



While such loyalty is cheaply bought, its price is sadly great. Howard Zinn writes of this in *A People's History of the United States*,

"History is the memory of states," wrote Henry Kissinger in his first book, *A World Restored*, in which he proceeded to tell the history of nineteenth-century Europe from the viewpoint of the leaders of Austria and England, ignoring the millions who suffered from those statesmen's policies. From his standpoint, the "peace" that Europe had before the French Revolution was "restored" by the diplomacy of a few national leaders. But for factory workers in England, farmers in France, colored people in Asia and Africa, women and children everywhere except in the upper classes, it was a world of conquest, violence, hunger, exploitation—a world not restored but disintegrated.

My viewpoint, in telling the history of the United States, is different: that we must not accept the memory of states as our own. Nations are not communities and never have been. The history of any country, presented as the history of a family, conceals fierce conflicts of interest (sometimes exploding, most often repressed) between conquerors and conquered, masters and slaves, capitalists and workers, dominators and dominated in race and sex. And in such a world of conflict, a world of victims and

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that the movement depends far too often on misogyny, homophobia, inaccurate history, and stereotypes of the Black experience (*ibid.*).

In short, such an attempt at reassembling the past as an act of reclamation is pointless towards liberation if it is built on the same facets of control and bigotry that, as much as it pains me to say, aren't exclusive to white straight European men. Baggage is baggage.

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executioners, it is the job of thinking people, as Albert Camus suggested, not to be on the side of the executioners.

Thus, in that inevitable taking of sides which comes from selection and emphasis in history, I prefer to try to tell the story of the discovery of America from the viewpoint of the Arawaks, of the Constitution from the standpoint of the slaves, of Andrew Jackson as seen by the Cherokees, of the Civil War as seen by the New York Irish, of the Mexican war as seen by the deserting soldiers of Scott's army, of the rise of industrialism as seen by the young women in the Lowell textile mills, of the Spanish-American war as seen by the Cubans, the conquest of the Philippines as seen by black soldiers on Luzon, the Gilded Age as seen by southern farmers, the First World War as seen by socialists, the Second World War as seen by pacifists, the New Deal as seen by blacks in Harlem, the postwar American empire as seen by peons in Latin America. And so on, to the limited extent that any one person, however he or she strains, can "see" history from the standpoint of others.

My point is not to grieve for the victims and denounce the executioners. Those tears, that anger, cast into the past, deplete our moral energy for the present. And the lines are not always clear. In the long run, the oppressor is also a victim. In the short run (and so far, human history has consisted only of short runs), the victims, themselves desperate and tainted with the culture that oppresses them, turn on other victims. Still, understanding the complexities, this book will be skeptical of governments and their attempts, through politics and culture, to ensnare ordinary people in a giant web of nationhood pretending to a common interest. I will try not to overlook the cruelties that victims inflict on one another as they are jammed together in the boxcars of the system. I don't want to romanticize them. But I do remember (in rough paraphrase) a statement I once read: "The cry of the poor is not always just, but if you don't listen to it, you will never know what justice is."

I don't want to invent victories for people's movements. But to think that history-writing must aim simply to recapitulate the failures that dominate the past is to make historians collaborators in an endless cycle of defeat. If history is to be creative, to anticipate a possible future without denying the past, it should, I believe, emphasize new possibilities by disclosing those hidden episodes of the past when, even if in brief flashes, people showed their ability to resist, to join together, occasionally to win. I am supposing, or perhaps only hoping, that our future may be found in the past's fugitive moments of compassion rather than in its solid centuries of warfare ([source](#)).

Zinn was not perfect, nor were other Jewish men of the period like Einstein, but they touched on something to work towards they could not always articulate

without focusing on their own groups with a limited understanding about other groups<sup>101</sup>.

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<sup>101</sup> For example, Einstein once wrote to the prime minister of India in 1947, "The Jewish people *alone* [emphasis, me] has for centuries been in the anomalous position of being victimized and hounded as a people, though bereft of all the rights and protections which even the smallest people normally has" ([source](#): the Jewish News Syndicate, so take it with a grain of salt). To be fair to Einstein, though, he *had* previously said in 1938

I should much rather see reasonable agreement with the Arabs on the basis of living together in peace than the creation of a Jewish state. My awareness of the essential nature of Judaism resists the idea of a Jewish state with borders, an army, and a measure of temporal power, no matter how modest" (source: "Our Debt to Zionism," cited in *Einstein on Politics: His Private Thoughts and Public Stands on Nationalism, Zionism, War, Peace, and the Bomb*, 2007).

and later refused to be president of Israel. It's, like, the bare minimum, but still! Good for you, Al!

As for Zinn, he waffles a bit, able to critique wackjobs like Columbus but suddenly becomes unable to follow through in the *present* space and time regarding matters of American foreign policy tied to *his* people.

For example, in a 2010 interview shortly before his death, Zinn calls the matters between Israel and Palestine "complicated": "As always in very complicated issues where emotions come to the fore quickly, I try to first acknowledge the other party's feelings" ([source](#): "A Moment with Howard Zinn"). First, *fuck* the colonizer's feelings! Second, they're *not* complicated, [as Michael Brooks points out](#) (Brandon Van Dyck's "[Michael Brooks Takes a Question on Israel](#)," 2020), but also others; e.g., Jared Keyel, who writes far more incisively than Zinn does:

The evidence of the situation could not be any clearer. However, we must continue to reiterate that what is happening in Gaza is straightforward because of intense efforts by politicians, media, and others to convince Americans that the facts are simply too complicated, too nuanced to draw clear ethical and political conclusions. Insisting that the context is incomprehensibly complex after [nearly 35,000 dead](#) and 78,000 injured, mostly children and women, is genocide denial. Those facts may be uncomfortable for some to face; but they are not hard to understand. Moreover, stopping genocide also means recognizing that violence against Palestinians did not begin in October 2023.

Just as the events since last year are not complicated, neither is the history of what is called the "conflict" between Palestinians and Israelis. It has a definitive beginning in the late 1800s and since that point the aggressors have been the pre-state Zionist movement and, after 1948, the State of Israel. Zionism, a 19th-century European Jewish nationalist movement, sought to create a Jewish homeland in [Palestine](#) at the expense of the Palestinians already living there. To do so, Zionists organized migration to settle and colonize a territory that was 95% Palestinian Arab and 5% Jewish [at the time](#). The settlers' explicit goal was to take as much territory as possible and [change the demographics](#) in their favor. The Zionists set about accomplishing those political goals, with full recognition that they would need to violently dispossess the Palestinians to achieve them. Everything that has happened in the decades since flows from that project to take territory and [expel](#) or [subjugate](#) as many Palestinians as possible.

No group of people has a right to take territory by violence and expel another group. No group of people has a right to subjugate another. Israel has done, and is doing, those things to Palestinians, not the other way around. That Zionism emerged in response to very serious European antisemitism does not mean the Zionists were justified in their actions. One group cannot free itself by subjugating another. Palestinians have been colonized, and they have resisted that process across more than a century. Whether [nonviolent](#) or not, that resistance has been deemed [illegitimate](#) by Israel and its allies. Seriously creating peace, justice, and perhaps reconciliation demands understanding root causes and addressing the harm that has been done. We must face history and be willing to name the aggressor: the State of Israel. This is not too complex to understand ([source](#): "It's Not Complicated: Israel is Committing Genocide in Gaza," 2024).

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Personally, I like to think I do a better job than either man (or Morrison, or other titans of their time, who did not have my advantages). As I myself wrote earlier in *this* volume,

Monsters are often seen as "not real" or "impossible," relegated to the lands of make-believe and pure fantasy. Except this isn't true. In Gothic Communism, they constitute a powerful, diverse, and modular means of interrogating the world around us as full of dangerous Cartesian illusions meant to control workers by locking Capitalism (and its genocidal ordering of nature and human language) firmly in place. Good monsters become impossible, as do the possible futures they arguably represent.

Instead of saying "in a perfect world," then, we should say "a possible world"; i.e., in a better possible world, nudity (and other modes of GNC sexual and gender expression) can be exposed and enjoyed post-scarcity and not be seen and treated as inhumanely monstrous (a threat; e.g., bare bodies being a threat to the pimp's profit margins). Rather, the monstrous language remains as a voice for the oppressed to flourish with. [...] Open

---

The "complicated" element here is the anarchist *character* of such arguments that the state doesn't like, so it abjects them as untenable, impossible. To that, Zinn plays both sides by saying Zionism *was* a mistake but also saying it was "too late" to go back

I think the Jewish State was a mistake, yes. Obviously, it's too late to go back. It was a mistake to drive the Indians off the American continent, but it's too late to give it back. At the time, I thought creating Israel was a good thing, but in retrospect, it was probably the worst thing that the Jews could have done. What they did was join the nationalistic frenzy, they became privy to all of the evils that nationalism creates and became very much like the United States — very aggressive, violent, and bigoted. When Jews were without a state they were internationalists and they contributed to whatever culture they were part of and produced great things. Jews were known as kindly, talented people. Now, I think, Israel is contributing to anti-Semitism. So I think it was a big mistake (re: "[A Moment with Howard Zinn](#)").

and *then* offering the "two-state solution" (code for colonization, or "Imperialism with more steps"):

Ideally, there should be a secular state in which Arabs and Jews live together as equals. There are countries around the world where different ethnic groups live side by side. But that is very difficult and therefore the two-state solution seems like the most practical thing (*ibid.*).

To this, just as it's possible for Zinn to be correct about past issues as a history teacher and *domestic* activist, so can he be *spectacularly* wrong about other things (similar to Chomsky and Cambodia). As such, he's perfectly able to say some really stupid and unhelpful shit about something like Israel; i.e., where his own sense of identity yields the usual double standards/guilt trips per the kinds of exceptions we need to avoid.

This being said, plenty of people who lived through the Holocaust find themselves changing their minds *in favor* of Palestine—e.g., Aryeh Neier, Holocaust survivor and Human Rights Watch founder has changed his views on Israel and now believes they are committing genocide (Hasan Abi's "[Holocaust Survivor CHANGES HIS MIND??](#)" 2024)—but only *after* a certain (and incredibly disproportionate) number of Palestinians are killed. Whatever happened to "you save one life, you save the world entire?" Red Scare is Red Scare, leading to praxial inertia, thus unnecessary death and exploitation. As always, be simple and direct, rudely addressing root causes to larger complications; e.g., as the Gothic does—nakedly and monstrously!

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monstrous sexuality [isn't] the end of the world as Capitalist Realism would treat it as (a world where such things are impossible save as shackled commodities that uphold the status quo), but the start to what the elite want us to think is "perfect," thus "impossible": humanizing the harvest of fruit-like bodies laid low by Capitalism's habitual reaping.



However painful, though, it's important to remember that such a reaping was assisted by those, Zinn points out, as being on the side of the executioner (white skin or not). He would know, being a bomber in the US military during WW2 who lost

his taste for war and bloodshed, thus rape (though not his inability to think beyond nation-states, it would seem). The same goes for others who, white or not, led to the both-sides arguments that helped continue Capitalism's daily operations; i.e., into the present space and time, thus turning of themselves into the kinds of zombies used to justify future aggression built on centuries of abuse touched upon in theatre, music, movies, etc. This includes Zinn, Einstein and Morrison, but also characters like Magua from *The Last of the Mohicans* as retold by Mann: a ghost of war hungry for blood (and revenge).

As Slayer puts it, "[Rise ghosts of war!](#)":

Fate, silent warriors, sleeping souls will rise  
 Once forgotten soldiers come to life  
 Fallen mercenary, dormancy is done  
 Not content with wars we've never won ([source](#): Genius)

What you see is basically what you get with Slayer. All the same, war with the zombie *is* classically a privilege of the middle class; i.e., rape, war and death things to play with ("war as dead"), while simultaneously and surreptitiously recruiting said fearful-fascinated children (drunk on the Numinous) to wage future holy crusades *against* a hauntological being: the ghosts of past atrocities rising up overseas and at home, *mid-cryptomimesis*, to seal the oppressor in monomythic tombs of their own making!



When I was in grad school, Dale Townshend once described live burial as "the Gothic master-trope." Generally tied to the home as eroticized per abject (unspeakable) abuse as "of to the bedroom" (re: Foucault) and other areas as haunted by rape, this includes tokenized soldiers being asked to go back to their ancestral homelands to rape and cannibalize them anew—as part of an endless historical-material cycle at odds with itself. Such feelings are not known to be salubrious, generally perceived as a psychosexual attack on the conqueror facing the black mirror held up to them (tokenized or not). The elite use rememory as a guilt device to martyr said soldiers, but for the oppressed it is classically a counterterror weapon of revenge known famously as the tool of shadowy *guerrilla* forces: "You're eating yourself, dumbass!"



"The demon is a liar!" Father Merrin asserts; but looks and arguments can be deceiving in both directions. Ghosts of the dead have a predatory function seeking to right past wrongs, whereas agents of state force like Merrin or Magua assign guilt and moral judgements to abject capitalistic

violence as coming out of American, Africa, and Asia (e.g., Japan, with 2019's *The Terror: Infamy*'s fearsomely disarming Yuko, above) speaking to the Imperial Boomerang on Japanese immigrants during WW2 through a ghost story with zombie-like elements: the turning of people into corpses drained by the spirit as emerging during war not just as the cataclysm, but the catalyst<sup>102</sup>) and other non-

<sup>102</sup> Fittingly, *Infamy*'s interview with the dead is a Japanese-American soldier caught up in the whirlwind of *American* fascism. As Ajo Romano writes:

As the passengers exit the bus and straggle inside the fenced-in military grounds, the camera pulls back to reveal an armed watchtower in the center and an American flag hovering over it all. Right on cue, as the last of the detainees enter, the wind picks up, unfurling the flag and snapping it into picture-perfect position. It's a visual scream that this is America: legally enforced xenophobia and [federal concentration camps](#). / This image sums up what's best and what's weakest about season two of *The Terror*: It works to remind us at every turn that the atrocities of the present are tied to those of the past, and that America is a country whose inability to confront its own systemic racism means that it's destined to enact bleak, dehumanizing horror on its citizens again and again.

European places America has occupied, colonized, assimilated, and abandoned to have them take part in the same cycle of cannibalism and conquest. Concessions with power always lead to cannibalism; it becomes like Jack Torrance's book, endlessly repeating a message that (unlike his famous sentence) changes inside of



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...

cannibalism is a metaphor for capitalism and  
 cannibalism is a metaphor for love and  
 cannibalism is a metaphor for gender and  
 cannibalism is a metaphor for generational  
 trauma and cannibalism is a metaphor for lust  
 and cannibalism is a metaphor for sex work and  
 cannibalism is a metaphor for art and cannibalism  
 is a metaphor for societal collapse and  
 cannibalism is a metaphor for family and  
 cannibalism is a metaphor for religion. and gay  
 sex is a metaphor for cannibalism.

a bad echo, a Song of  
 Infinity's mixed metaphors  
 that can critique the zombie-  
 like function of capital; i.e.,  
 as a presence of older  
 rememory to confront and  
 speak with: xenoglossia.

([source, Tumblr post](#), *This Is a Podcast Fanblog: July 11th, 2023*)

Holistic study *is* the  
 spirit of this book,  
 "Returning and reflecting  
 upon old points after

assembling them [to] understand larger structures and patterns." As such, facing and reassembling the cost of the state's imaginary past and Gothic ancestry through rememory means confronting such token, thus embarrassing concessions, then changing the cultural understanding of the imaginary past and the actual past

---

College student Chester Nakayama ([Derek Mio](#)) has his doubts about the presence of the *yurei*, but he can't ignore the strange, chaotic violence running through the community — especially when much of it seems to be indirectly connected to him. Chester is a frustrating main character, by turns arrogant and clueless, overconfident and indecisive. He seems exasperated by everything: by his family, particularly his stubborn father; his Mexican-American girlfriend Luz ([Cristina Rodlo](#)) and her decision to join him and his family in the internment camp after she gets pregnant; by the war and its brutality; and even by the havoc the ghost is wreaking around him.

Mio plays Chester with a fascinating mix of wryness and earnestness — you're never sure how real his caustic cynicism is when he's faced with situations like, for instance, the brutal murder of Japanese soldiers by Americans — and over the course of the series they distill into the two halves of his personality. It's the American in him that treats everything with a mix of forced coolness, mild sarcasm, and overconfidence. It's the American in him who joins the war against Japan as a translator, where he's forced to confront his own dual identities while battling his demons — which in his case may be the literal demon who's caught up with him. The Japanese side of him seems harder for him to parse and contend with; like so many immigrants [in a diaspora](#), he seems drawn to the folklore and superstition of his homeland to help him make sense of what's happening in the war and at home ([source](#): "*The Terror: Infamy Turns America's WWII Internment Camps into a Bleak Ghost Story*," 2019).

Jadis thought that Chester was a brat—that he lacked spine—but honestly I appreciated the character's heroic role as more Promethean than American: not someone who can conquer death, but must face and humanize the ghost of the counterfeit to move forward under empire as a project yet-to-be-dismantled.

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as being made of basically the same stuff—people and their myths and legends, but also their victories and defeats (self-inflicted or otherwise).

Such interviews generally *have* a traumatic element, but smiling in the face of the punitive gods of capital is the trick for us Galateas bucking Pygmalion; i.e., talking to the Balrog instead of abjecting it as Gandalf did:



([source: v.card.bandits](#))

I was always a weird, sassy bitch; faced with the xenomorph, Pazuzu, Magua, Yuko, or Gwyn Lord of Cinder, etc, I would want to talk with them, not attack and kill them (which only buries the problem to rise again, later). "The myth of Gothic ancestry [and its bugbears] endured because it was useful"; for us, that means pulling our heads out of our sheltered asses (re: the dialectic of shelter and protection) to humanize the zombie, however abject and Numinous it might seem. State proponents serving

profit would sooner pull out their own teeth than do so; we want to build up/grant the undead a tolerance and audience as interlocutors, not enemies, thus prepare ourselves for a life rebelling against the status quo—i.e., as normalizing genocide against zombie-like<sup>103</sup> recipients and givers of state abuse (argumentation): monsters, but and the mothers who try (as Ripley and Morrison do) to protect us from the horrors of the state: ghost stories with a pointedly zombie-like character.

Possible worlds, then, aren't built on scapegoats like Magua as objects to summon, blame and kill (which the movie most certainly does), but by understanding the imaginary past and its writhing agony and furious hunger) in ways that update the Wisdom of the Ancients as an endless document; i.e., through mutual consent/action through conscious acceptance and healing *while* resisting state oppression (and avoiding embarrassing palingenetic queries like Disney's awful, 1953 "[Why Is the Red Man Red?](#)" next page). Doing so involves such an imaginary force as something to put together and interrogate *without* dehumanizing them as ghosts of dead Indians (e.g., *Peter Pan* projecting racism forward by looking backward at older fetishizing forms: Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* and the

<sup>103</sup> The undead having a shared function in this respect, to different degrees of abuse; e.g., vampires generally being killed in smaller numbers, which is still bad, and ghosts being silenced by holy men, not to mention demonic and animalistic intersections.

White Indian); i.e., through performances that encourage the confronting of power and trauma as things to play with, helping us wake up in ways that capital will always discourage while pointing the finger at its victims as "already liberated" by its so-called "heroes."



As such, each awakening is part of a larger undead whole, and takes on different staging points depending on various factors: where a worker starts and how rememory is attained to synthesize the pedagogy of the oppressed as a matter of good social-sexual habits across different

polities; i.e., avoiding any reductively "pure" psychoanalytical pitfalls (e.g., "It's like *totally* the Id, my dudes!") while acknowledging the important role/awesome power of dreams (and dream-like things) regarding the rememory process as eternal, going—like capital certainly does—on and on and on: achieving intersectional solidarity (and solutions towards it) through said pedagogy resisting police concessions through unironic violence, terror and sexual harm (rape); i.e., as a matter of proletarian praxis during cryptonymy's game of mirrors and masks being dream-like, summoning up old, dead hauntologies (the ghosts of Native Americans) to interrogate them.

People sell out, thinking in the short term, only to eventually abandon the loftier goals of revolution and liberation in exchange for the usual short-term trinkets and prizes. There must—as Kent Monkman's illustration depicted, earlier—be room in such a metaphorical craft for all manner of oppressed groups and allies without calling ourselves the last of our kind (as Cooper did *for* the Mohicans, and Naughty Dog did with "us") and eating our hearts out<sup>104</sup> and that of the land around us: strange appetites indeed, strange fruit ([as Abel Meeropol would put it](#)) under extermination, thus rape and murder for profit since Columbus [and onto Israel](#) (Bad Empanada's "Israel MASS RAPING Palestinians from Gaza," 2024); i.e., as using minority suffering to commit *more* suffering; e.g., Israel, per Norman Finkelstein

<sup>104</sup> Magua's doing so is, importantly enough, a kind of power exchange ritual between him and his enemies. The racist argument in the story is that it's abjectly cannibalistic unto itself; i.e., something only committed by someone blackened to seek revenge and terrify one's enemies. In truth, it's not so simple (though it would undoubtedly have that effect in practice): the eating of the heart was traditionally seen as a sign of respect between warriors, one hunter preying on another through the cycle of life; i.e., "you have power and have a heart *worth* eating." While somewhat problematic all the same (eating peoples' hearts is not good for their health), the fact remains that capital drives Magua to practice this as a weapon of terror against his enemies but also his own people while in exile from them. He becomes a ghost, a man without a home, and destroys everything seeking what he cannot replace. In turn, this becomes the same old scapegoat, pointing the finger at the Indians as a whole: "You ate yourselves, zombies! Now die!"

saying unto the future, "the biggest insult to the memory of the Holocaust is not denying it but using it to commit genocide against the Palestinian people."

By extension, the elite *want* us (any workers) abusing each other and nature in service to profit, thus capital, through us-versus-them as a kind of endless blame game. There is only one thing to blame: capital and capitalists, from Columbus to Rockefeller to Bill Gates to J.K. Rowling to Elon Musk. The banality of evil is that zombies don't spring from badass necromancers; they come from corporations, CEOs and shareholders turning the handle of power (often through state mechanisms, including academics like Morrison or Zinn not protesting enough outside of their own, safe little territories) to move money through nature, and as cheaply as possible. Life becomes cheap, the zombie a dark reflection of that, a dog soldier sometimes put to heel for the state and resurrected for the umpteenth time:



Magua, then, becomes a kind of vice-character eater of the dead; i.e., blackened by rape under capital to consume his own people by conducting the White Man's trade on an oppressed polity he does

not have the hindsight or impartiality to see: his blinded corpse seeking revenge ("an eye for an eye makes the world blind"), the cannibal pushed into doing what his oppressors would accuse him and his people of (re: Glen Coulthard's *Red Skin, White Masks*). And while it's true that Magua offers a grim stereotype with a kernel of truth (stolen generations and transgenerational trauma), that kind of repressed voice still speaks *for* Indigenous anger instead of *with* it; i.e., as a vice character that really should be supplied by such peoples speaking *for* themselves.

In other words, a given sense of division needs to be reassembled and united a) per person, and b) among different groups likewise coming together in ways that include all manner of oppressed groups building trust in ways that has never quite existed: to unite the lower classes and cultures against the middle class as historically white, but prone to tokenism among various representatives plucked from each minority group to aid profit as usual. It remains the same uphill battle with the sun in our eyes as described in Volume One—faced with other members of the undead who, for all intents and purposes, experience bias, stigma, intolerance and fear as something to give and receive. Liberation lies in how we combine different things that are, more or less, just sitting around waiting for it to happen.

We'll explore this through ludo-Gothic BDSM, next—specifically my history of coining it partially based on Morrison's rememory and half-real Gothic reflections; i.e., between fiction and non-fiction, but also dreams and the waking world.

## The Roots of Trauma, part two: Healing through "Rape," or the Origins of Ludo-Gothic BDSM as a Matter of Rememory (feat. Harmony Corrupted and Cuwu)

*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 [Cuwu]. 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 ([source](#)).*

—Persephone van der Waard's "Healing from Rape," from *Sex Positivity, Volume One* (2024)



(artists:  
[Persephone van der Waard](#) and Cuwu)

Now that we've covered the mythic groundwork of rememory (and its complex history of tokenization and resistance among different minority groups), I want to

conclude the first subchapter of "Bad Dreams," "Survival," by applying it to myself as having lived the rememory process at different stages; i.e., through my dreams and consumption of media about abject things homing in on what has become buried, thus something to reassemble using rememory dug up as such: rape as painful, including the facing of it as a memory that is, to some degree, imaginary/real and asleep/awake. Hyphenating these as the Gothic does presents a uniquely therapeutic, BDSM-style opportunity to learn from the past as an artifact thereof we can dissect and subvert during rape play putting "rape" in quotes; i.e., ludo-Gothic BDSM, as I eventually envisioned the term, being something that continues to affect us and our friends even once they've left our lives, but remain as zombie-like ghosts of themselves; e.g., Cuwu, next page, but also *us*, above. Come and gone, their own survival on canvas testifies tragically-yet-beautifully to someone comely that, all the same, both lived with profound trauma and passed it along to me in various shapes and forms.

Before we get to Cuwu, rape play and ludo-Gothic BDSM, here's a trigger warning and some useful definitions (from "A Note about Rape/Rape Play," 2024):

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*Trigger-warning! This [section] discusses ironic and unironic rape fantasies extensively! This isn't to condone unironic violence through Gothic poetics, but prevent it through sex-positive education, entertainment, transformation and critique; i.e., the term "rape," in this case, has been broadened to mean "taking away power to cause harm," which ludo-Gothic BDSM camps in cathartic, Gothic-Communist forms of Gothic poetics. —Perse*

Since this subchapter discusses rape, I want to define it as something broadened beyond its narrow definition, "penetrative sex meant to cause harm by removing consent from the equation." To that, there is a *broad, generalized* definition I devised in "[Psychosexual Martyrdom](#)" (2024), which will come in useful where we examine unironic forms of rape, but also "rape" as something put *into* quotes; i.e., during consent-non-consent as a vital means of camp during ludo-Gothic BDSM:

martyrs are generally raped by the state, which we have to convey mid-performance *without* actually getting raped if we can help it ("**rape**" meaning [for our purposes] "**to disempower someone or somewhere—a person, culture, or place—in order to harm them,**" generally through fetishizing and alienizing acts or circumstances/socio-material conditions that target the mind, body and/or spirit) [emphasis, me]: finding power while disempowered (the plight of the monstrous-feminine).

Rape can be of the mind, spirit, body and/or culture—the land or things tied to it during genocide, etc; it can be individual and/or on a mass scale, either type committed by a **Great Destroyer** (a Gothic trope of abuse of the worse, unimaginable sort, rarefying as a person, onstage) of some kind or another as abstracting unspeakable abuse. It's a translation, which I now want to interrogate with the chapters ahead. So we must give examples that are anything but ironic before adding the irony afterward as a theatrical means of medicine; i.e., *rape play challenging profit through the usual Gothic articulations in service to workers and nature at large.*

Simply put, to be raped is to be deprived of agency facing something you cannot defeat through force alone (rape victims are often brutalized for trying to fight back)—capital and its enforcers, pointedly raping nature and things of nature-as-monstrous-feminine by harvesting them during us-versus-them arguments according to Cartesian thought; *terror* is a vital part of the counterterrorist reversal humanizing Medusa during activism as a psychosexual act of martyrdom. There is always damage, even if you survive, but there is a theatrical element that lets you *show* your scars; i.e., during consent-non-consent as an artistic, psychosexual form of protest through ludo-Gothic BDSM: having been on the receiving end of state abuse as something to demonstrate and play with for educational, activist purposes—generally with a fair degree of revolutionary cryptonymy (showing and hiding ourselves and our trauma).

By comparison the state uses masks, music (and other things) as a coercive, complicit means of cryptonymically threatening us with great illusions. These rape our minds without irony in service to profit. Such proponents are generally people in our own lives who don the mask/persona of **the Great Destroyer** to frighten us into submission; i.e., by threatening us with total annihilation as a force of unreality that feels shapeless and overwhelming yet humanoid. This is no laughing matter, nor is subverting it during rape play, both of which the rest of this volume (and Volume Three after that) will explore at length ([source](#)).

I won't have time to unpack the above ideas again, so please just try to keep them in mind as we proceed.



(model and photographer: [Cuwu and Persephone van der Waard](#))

Returning to the matter at hand, Cuwu was entirely instrumental in shaping my current understanding of rape play and developing ludo-Gothic BDSM. More on *them* in a bit, when we conclude the subchapter with several examples of rape play performed between me and my friends as the bedrock for ludo-Gothic BDSM. In the interim, consider how the committing of rape is rightly criminalized but hardly anathema in the ways it proliferates; likewise, consider how having open, earnest discussions about rape—including theatrical ones—are *also* shameful and taboo in ways that *are* repressed through more outlandish fictions built on historical abuse (from Volume One): "The Western world is generally a place that testifies to its own traumas by fabricating them" ([source](#)). That being said, these still grant warning signs pointing to a maintenance of the status quo by commonly marginalized groups; e.g., white women and the standard *post hoc* canonizing of Original Sin, through a single character like Linda Fiorentino in *The Last Seduction* (1994) saying "rape me" to that story's male patsy while trying to get *him* to murder *her* ex-boyfriend (who she stole from).

The reality is, "rape" as something to put into quotes involves invocations of rape during memories that *are* overt; e.g., Harmony saying, "rape me" to me during consent-non-consent rituals (exhibit 37b1a) in order to have fun together *while* living with the trauma of past abuse *minus* the capacity to cause harm; i.e., "hurt, not harm" (a common BDSM mantra) being a regular simulation of actual harm during calculated risk to introduce paradoxical, exquisitely "torturous" feelings of the Numinous in *good* faith: clarity in controlled confusion, recontextualizing trauma in a safe space that *feels* dangerous. It's the Gothic in a nutshell, but one that from Radcliffe to me, took a very long time to evolve into itself.

Even so, these subversions *still* occur using a shared, dialectical-material aesthetic of power and death (which we'll see with convulsionnaires, has a history of theatrical, Christ-like mutilation—of martyrdom; exhibit 37a2b). As such, exploitation and liberation exist inside the same shadowy theatrical spaces, which generally combine messy elements of performance and play that interrogate power as a means of negotiate; i.e., amid thresholds and on surfaces, using Gothic doubles during liminal expression across different media to achieve praxial synthesis and catharsis.



To that, we'll be returning to trauma as a process of psychosexual investigation that veers away from harm as *normally* buried; i.e., ludo-Gothic BDSM as I coined it, which generally includes rape play as something I hammered out while personally relying on the help of friends: to teach me ways to heal from lateral instances of police abuse by developing a shared pedagogy of the oppressed. We've already written about this (re: Cuwu, in Volume One), so shall proceed by considering a broader traumatic lineage in *my* life, but also the larger-than-life stories of undead figures haunting me; i.e., my various abusers, including Jadis and



Cuwu, but also monomythic echoes of those abusers that, to some degree color the experience: as both informed and describing the seminal, recursive tragedies and farce (re: Marx) whose enslavement and liberation unfold in ghostly forms echoing across space and time in ways that, unlike ghosts, pointedly refer to trauma using actual human bodies (and their abuse)—in short, like zombies do.

(*model and photographer: Cuwu and [Persephone van der Waard](#)*)

Trauma breeds strange fruit, strange appetites. For the moment (and into the next subchapter), we'll quickly consider this paradox through ludo-Gothic BDSM as enacted through my life (and again, segue into grander stories when we consider the monomyth, after that); i.e., as intertwined with that of others come and gone/dreamt up, but also my real-life friends and our mutual attempts to return to the home as sick: the dead as lonely and furious, being heard through how they feed, but also ourselves relating to them as currently surviving the burden of such things felt at all times. As such, we'll consider the trauma of rape/power abuse as something returned to and healed from by facing such decay in joyous, campy ways; e.g., Harmony and I, but also Cuwu and I before that (which segues into Jadis and I as something I'm still learning to face and live with, thus heal from; i.e., the subject of the next subchapter and where the process of rememory using ludo-Gothic BDSM shall well-and-truly be put to the test: as something of the prototypical example reached through a backwards dissection of my former self remembered again).

For me, the rememory of the state's rape and war through unironic police violence is winding and complex, as is healing from it. This includes my paternal grandfather's [frank and unromantic, yet-still-somehow-cheeky stories about the Nazi occupation in Holland](#), but also my high-school fascination with infamously brutal war atrocities like Cambodia, the Rape of Nanking or Vietnam; i.e., any that belie the treacherously mendacious nature of American exceptionalism during more

recent, or at least repressed conflicts in the Middle East (with Zionism predating all of these as a 19th century relic, one built on Biblical/Crusade-style falsehoods well into the present day's current reenactment of: through Gaza and its neighboring lands policed by Christo-fascist forces *and* token Jews).

In turn, these artifacts further combined inside my mind with my stepfather's abuse of me in relation to *The Last of Us*, the latter being something I ultimately wrote extensively about after a wild dream haunted by actual war abuse. The entire assemblage—at least for me—formed a complex, messy mixture of trauma and legend; i.e., like a Gothic castle, something to bravely and playfully navigate and reflect upon regarding the undead as historical-material, in nature (for a vintage, diegetic example, consider the novel *Frankenstein*, which opens with a chimeric fever dream that torments the privileged Victor as a matter of foreshadowing his own doom); like a bad dream, you're not sure if they're real, but feel utterly convinced they're coming from *somewhere*.

Marking a domestic curse, zombies of any kind are less from a faraway place of entirely invented dreams, *ex nihilo*, and emerge more through apt comparisons to Imperialism occurring at home in partially fabricated ways; i.e., *like* a dream, haunting the mind through the ghastly figure inserting itself *cryptomimetically* where it shouldn't belong but does: the Gothic castle (the chronotope) aesthetically pointing to trauma at home as tied to old power structures lurking there still.



(artist: [Kelly Jean](#))

While the unwelcome nightmare *is* the infamous composer of many-a-Gothic-novel, Gothic dreams aren't wholly paralyzed *or* lucid; they always pertain to a fleeting idea of not being *entirely* in control of how trauma manifests, which it does through socio-material reminders of abuse wherever it occurs or lies adjacent to. Because abuse is more than the immediate violence taking place (re: criminogenic conditions), the suggestion of it through "zombies" becomes a potential extension of violence—i.e., a mental assault that promises vague, all-encompassing punishment to a captive audience. This includes the zombie within the dream as a kind of imperfect revelation—a rememory of something already repressed but struggling to express itself through the same haunted venue/tired symbols stitched together. In the case of hauntings, the primary difference between a zombie and a ghost is one being alive but treated as dead; the other may have never lived at all (although, this goes both ways; e.g., *Frankenstein* being made up, but still pointing to settler-colonial atrocities experienced in dream-like, conversational forms: the novel of letters).

Such dreams are never made from whole cloth. In this case, Gothic Communism treats partial agency differently than canon; its ludo-Gothic BDSM fosters sex positivity within a proletarian Gothic imagination that consciously subverts the bourgeois forces normally attacking workers *with and within their own dreams as experienced while awake*. Counteracting the elite's xenophobic offensive requires highlighting the disabling effect a person's mind can have on the owner by tracing the material origins of the dream back to the prime, *covert* orchestrator. As zombie-like threats of violence are repeated but simultaneously denied by the defendant, they start to come across as eerily unreal—like you're dreaming while you're awake, unsure of what's real or who you can trust. Including your friends but also yourself, your perception of reality becomes doubtful, but also dangerous. You start to fear everyone, feeling undead as a matter of zombification, of trepanation attacking the brain.

Except, liberation also involves the same feelings *inverted* to achieve a sex-positive outcome; i.e., loving yourself as undead to win a *xenophilic* means of escape: wearing your trauma on your sleeve—nakedly.



(artist: [Lit Silium](#))

Bear in mind, it's not a nostalgic past to retreat into and pour salt on old wounds, but one whose limited challenging of the states of yore (thus now) grows into a maelstrom; i.e., building a better tomorrow with a reclaimed Wisdom of the Ancients as an anti-predation device. This requires confronting damage in our own lives' childhoods tied to past devastation, ever backwards *and* forwards: "Suffer the little children unto me!" as a performance to collect and reassemble like the bones of a composite skeleton; i.e., from a valley of dry bones to pick and choose from.

For example, when I was a teenager, my stepfather—who was always killing<sup>105</sup> small animals around our home—once threatened to beat me. Deciding to hold off "for fear of child abuse" (whatever *that* meant), he sent me to bed and told me to wait for when he would come, later in the night. He never did and I fell asleep, plagued with terror dreams. When I woke, I was more afraid of him than ever, my heightened imagination running wild. Though I didn't realize it, my mind had been turned against me. However, once I started to imagine *escaping* my

<sup>105</sup> He once loosed an arrow from my brother's second-story window and pinned a squirrel to the ground; my brother stomped it to death, and I sadly buried it in the garden. Men teach men to kill animals not for food, but for sport, for profit, for domination—for shows of force *against other humans* or beings otherwise deserving of humane treatment by humans suddenly deprived of it.

stepfather, my dreams became lucid; I felt less "trapped" and more in control, motivated by said fear to get the hell out. Slowly but surely I made plans to escape, eventually leaving my stepfather's home.

That was over twenty years ago and I only now realize what was *really* going on: my imagination had set me free, but had also been turned against me by an abuser who recognized my highly imaginative personality. Sadly they would not be the last. While Jadis also had a penchant for it, both abusers had been working within the grounds of a fertile mind sown with foundational fears: childhood as abject in a coming-of-age yarn—to be of age is to be exposed to the reality (and fiction) of rape and its various repressed desires, feelings of paranoia and other extreme emotions, fulfilled wishes, intimations of death, captivity and revenge, etc! To escape, we must acclimate ourselves to them as a BDSM means of Gothic play that, often enough, has a dream-like nature to it:



(*exhibit 37a1: Artist: [Matthew Peak](#), whose masculine, male rapist invades the mind of the dreaming young woman, reaching for her ostensible virginity with rapacious "knife dildo" fingers. These hyperbolic, psychosexual threats of actual rape are the 1980s version of the Radcliffean demon lover clutching the woman to trap her in a bad fantasy that puts actual rape somewhere in the venue. Rape is about power abuse and social-sexual control; i.e., including one's body, emotions and labor but also one's intelligence regarding these things and of state power [and xenophobia] as something to resist. To escape, one must become lucid enough to fight back; to help others do the same, the lesson of survival must be conveyed in poetic, xenophilic language that people can relate to and understand over time—carefully explained to*

*them in exhibits like this one prepared and presented by emotionally and Gothically intelligent worker-artists. Through the state, fearing sex is normal by virtue of its fearsome reputation, but this, too, must be reclaimed. We are not chattel to rape, be that our minds, emotions, or bodies; we might be undead, but we deserve love. If that includes administering pain then so be it, but it should never be depicted at queer people's expense in the fearful eyes of cis women seeing us as "rapist" [or other token groups triangulating against whomever].)*

Though trauma makes up the weighty base of our existence, nightmares can also help the mind *process* trauma; i.e., by returning to childhood forms and their fatal nostalgia as always, in some sense, dead. Be it real, imagined, or reimaged,

trauma's investigation generally happens inside a familial space littered with undead pieces; re: the Gothic castle. This ghoulish pastiche depicts a sneaking sense of conflict during *cryptomimesis* (the imitation and echo of trauma) through ludo-Gothic BDSM rituals; i.e., bondage, domination, sadism and masochism as a psychosexual means of calculated risk meant to assist in the rememory process to avoid fascism, tokenism and betrayal-as-usual (class, race and culture).

To that, feeling undead and trapped *needn't* be a strict negative while simultaneously addressing the global and generational traumas of the present world's complicated space and time; i.e., a place to occupy and perform within as the archetypal damsel in a castle might, but also the whore and demon playing detective, mid-peril: during a staged, palliative ordeal about the same whispered terms on the same shared surfaces at odds with themselves. Like a murdered soul rising to Heaven (or a corpse breaking fresh ground), things get heavy *and* light.



(exhibit 37a2a: Model and artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#). Monsters speak to trauma as something to confront since and from childhood; or again, from Volume Zero:

*performance and play are an absolutely potent means of expressing thus negotiating power through the Gothic mode (its castles, monsters and rape*

*scenarios); a polity of proletarian poets can negotiate future interrogations of unequal power within the Gothic imagination as connected to our material conditions: one shapes and maintains the other and vice versa [[source](#)].*

*As such, my own contributions overlap with Harmony's, the two of us working in harmony through a Gothic poetry very much about making it sexual again, but also sex-positive in ways that Radcliffe [and her own venerated castle's praxial inertia] were not; i.e., not her unironic mutilative sex fantasies, but an asexual investigation of sex adjacent to harm that explores said harm during outrageous fantasies, operatic performances, and castle-like spaces of moribund sex linked to lost childhood innocence: Harmony as under attack, but having anti-predation qualities that present her as fearsomely undead in ways not exclusive to zombies [e.g., snakes baring their fangs as to discourage stepping on them]. For now, we'll*

quickly sample that here, then explore it at the end of the subchapter [and deeper in the module].

To that, I chose to depict Harmony as a vampire, not a zombie, but the basic ideas of giving/receiving pain and feeding on essence are shared between either type as for or against the state; i.e., Harmony baring her fangs in a pareidolic threat/anti-predation display when chased to her home and attacked there [zombies effectively doing the same]. Inside history as ever writing itself on and offstage, sexually active "scarlet" women undoubtedly would have been hectored and harassed during witch hunts blaming them as "homewreckers"; i.e., as something to mark with an incongruous symbol while apologizing for male abusers conforming to the heteronormative model [nuclear families, church structures, and so on]. Whereas someone like Hawthorne used a scarlet letter to mark Hester Prynne, I use period blood and the mating press [as well as an implied spreader bar] but also a cute pink paw print on the usual site of fixation per the Male Gaze as something to fuck with: the panties.



[model and artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#)]

As such, any scapegoat outlier must canonically be staked by knife-dicks mistreating them as demon lovers in a demon-lover fashion: rape the whore—her pre-existing holes, but also potential new ones during traumatic penetration. A common mating strategy in the insect world—re: Gwen Pearson's "[stabby cock dagger](#)"—but also religion and Catholic martyrdom expressed in decayed sites of older religious superstitions

amid new prostitutions thereof, we're subsequently teased with "rape" of a particular kind while fielding capital's usual insect politics: sacred torture; i.e., a kind of Spanish-Inquisition-style torture camp/rapturous expression of pleasurable pain amid "torture" as something to tease in iconoclastic artwork.

This very much includes sex work that camps crucifixion, ossuaries and the like [shoving the stake in things other than the ankles and wrists, in effect turning the coffin nail into a dildo while retaining a punitive, vampiric aesthetic speaking to state rape]. In such places/moments, we see the beautiful, doll-like "corpse" impossibly able to feel pain per the usual tortures normally reserved for living beings [through forced penitence or kneeling on stone, but also impalement and prolonged incarceration] made into a very-odd jouissance reversing "from beyond the grave" into the usual talking skulls ["boners"] held in the hands of certified-freak weirdos: "Alas, poor Yorick, I fucked him, Horatio!"



*The vampirism, here, is—like the zombie—a pointed camping of Christian dogma as undead, but also rapaciously prurient in ways we can vibe with, when camped: "Rock me, sexy Jesus!" See the stabbed pussy slick with slippery blood? Is it menses? Maybe! Like Juliet sweating in the sepulcher after waking from the apothecary's potion, it's deliberately cliché, thrilling and serious-*

*silly all at once; i.e., when she fucks herself with her lover's knife dick, suitably commenting on the feelings of those forced to "come of age" too soon [with Juliet's official age being fourteen—too young by Shakespeare's standards<sup>106</sup>]:*

*Yea, noise? Then I'll be brief. O, happy dagger,  
This is thy sheath. There rust, and let me die [[source](#)].*

*Romeo and Juliet* is literally a tomb romance, both a stress valve and pun-heavy joke about emo virgins told with a straight face by a gay man. In short, the Bard expects the audience to get the gist and subsequently play along! The same iconoclastic idea extends to the infamous monsters [and their BDSM activities] that evolved based on it, including zombies and vampires as dialogic matters of grave robbing and defilement made with a nod and a wink to the audience [and later, the camera]. In a sense, then, ludo-Gothic BDSM borrows backwards to move towards post-scarcity as something Shakespeare would have possibly viewed, per Thomas Moore, as "utopian." Then again, per his own wild fantasies, perhaps not.

Nowadays, though, the usual medieval paradoxes and abject fear-fascinations abound in order to explain decay not just behind but inside state illusions. Mouths and penises hyphenate, as do fascists and Communists, male-female, safe-dangerous, predator-prey, invasive-indigenous, cowboy-Indian, ally-alien, love-lust, protect-kill, mother-fucker, homely-unhomely, and so on. Specifically Nazi predator and Jewish blood libel [the rodent-like, enlarged teeth and nose; e.g., Max Shrek's

<sup>106</sup> The argument for younger brides is a fascist regression that curiously *didn't* exist in Shakespeare's day (fascism is *Capitalism* in decay, not feudalism). As J. Karl Franson writes in "'Too soon marr'd': Juliet's Age as Symbol in *Romeo and Juliet*," (1996):

William Shakespeare made references to Juliet's young age in *Romeo and Juliet* to show that love between boys and girls and early marriage can be treacherous. Shakespeare emphasizes the numbers 13 and 14 in several parts of the play. Romeo refers to Juliet Capulet's name 14 times in the play, with major events occurring every 14 hours. Juliet's age is turned into a vehicle that moves the play through its scenes toward the tragic ending. Shakespeare himself was influenced by an unhappy marriage at age 18 ([source](#)).

Such stories become nostalgic unto themselves, but contain hidden lessons that speak to our own systemic abuse; i.e., shown and hidden by such playwrights carried and performed into the present.

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

*Count Orlock from Nosferatu, 1922] combine weirdly through outright Zionism versus Nazi camp as a) being cryptonymy for or against the state, and b) integrating through psychosexual theatre as undead; i.e., haunting the red and the black with various conflicting and competing histories: the eating-raping of women and babies in equally weird, sodomic-pedophilic ways. It's canonically very xenophobic and gentrified, but decays along the usual routes that can be reclaimed by both sides [workers or the state] trying to survive as Capitalism decays like usual: in the proverbial "graveyard" as a place to have sex as a manner of medieval hyphenation that combines such activities with death, food, war and rape, etc; i.e., to relieve stress by recovering and reproducing as the undead do. Capitalism reproduces through rape; so do we, albeit in quotes.*



*The same idea, then, of course applies to a fascist cartoon baring its fangs when hunted down, which speaks to tokenization as a kind of barbarism to put down [re: the euthanasia effect]. For example, feminism-in-decay always runs the risk of regressing into state forms of the same basic scapegoat that are then used and discarded as needed; re: TERFs. Even so, there is no monopoly on penetrative, undead violence, the female/queer vampire meeting state "fangs" [stakes] with her own teeth to bite and drain her*

*enemies with: Harmony's, given bite and shaped by me [the master and apprentice something to reverse at times]. Exploitation and liberation, then, not only exist in the same place on the same surfaces, but use the same "straws" to transfer power in different directions: towards workers or the state through either's representatives as vampiric! It's a combination of sex/death face, but also funny face and the face as mask-like; e.g., animal and/or death masks worn and removed as needed! The rub lies in how such things cannot be so easily removed [as a mask presumably is] when the state begins to die and feed on itself. Yet, survival very much involves doing so.)*

Per the liminal hauntology of war, we've already examined the familial, chronotopic elements of state trauma during the manifesto (and touched upon lost childhood, here, when looking at zombie apocalypses and vampires, above); the Gothic imagination more broadly processes trauma both hidden and visible as reimagined by workers living in a historical-material world: as inherited from



childhood *forwards*. All the while, the Gothic production of emancipatory nightmares has been hidden, privatized and sold back to us in coercive forms by the state.

Inside the zombie apocalypse as a canonical fever dream, the elite's bad BDSM tells us how to think, but also how to feel afraid of, and react towards, zombies and war as fetishized, heteronormative and commonplace among the undead in general (re: the vampire, above, having more in common with the zombie than not, when push comes to shove). Manufactured nightmares like *The Last of Us*, then, work suspiciously like my stepfather's cycle of abuse loading my nightmares with the potential to submit or rebel; i.e., with canonical threats of punishment from those in power, who control the flow of information (thus power) with escalating waves of violence leveled against historically privileged, but also infantilized groups: "They're coming to get *you*, Barbara!"

To some extent, this includes me (a white trans woman) as needing to subvert these outcomes to serve labor as GNC; i.e., with ludo-Gothic BDSM camping the undead as entities openly raped by the state to begin with (which they then deny to our faces). All the while, I cannot stress enough how having our nightmares constantly produced *for* us by the state's BDSM (zombies or otherwise) has alienated workers from our own minds and how they work; i.e., relative to the socio-material world as something we can shape through the same rapacious archetypes. Meanwhile, the elite devise and abuse canon to plant systemic fears into the Gothic imagination from an early age, observing patiently while canon shapes the world (and its socio-material conditions through Gothic poetics) as *they* desire; i.e., through childhood indoctrination built on false hope/power as monomythic: a hero to rape the undead when Hell comes home to empire.

We'll unpack *that* dark return more in the monomyth subchapter. For now, though, just remember that monsters like zombies and vampires commonly signify childhood as a place of elite authorship, one made to imprison labor with; i.e., inside pacified workers' terrified brains, the former conditioning the latter to see and identify undead things they should *attack*, not embrace as human by virtue of systemic abuse *they* experience from childhood onwards. Forever looming over them in displaced, faraway forms, these emerge from the imaginary past as echoing on and offstage in the present space and time; i.e., like a spaceship, but also a traveling Gothic castle occupied with *some* kind of Great Destroyer that reflects colonial atrocities back onto the middle class: to scare them stupid all over again when the nightmare "returns."

Except, it never really left. For example, *Chrono Trigger's* Lavos is an ostensibly celestial reaper being hounded by the usual middling kids to the center of the usual black onions; i.e., the castle grounds, layers of the fortress, suit of armor and body inside as all being concentric, anisotropic, and more to the point, *recursive* ontological statements of the same basic being/process at different moments of exploration: the castle-like body or body-like castle tied to a canonical *mise-en-abyme* abjecting Capitalism's cannibalistic device, profit, onto a traveling

nightmare that, once assembled through a canonical rememory of the imaginary past, must be invaded and killed *for* the state. Except, it's a bread-and-circus ruse, one whose regular bait-and-switch swaps profit for the usual spectres of Marx as haunting space and time more broadly!



([source](#): Casey Foot's "Chrono Trigger: What Is Lavos?" 2022)

Such Red Scare nonsense is the elite "getting them while they're young"; i.e., as cradle snatchers *and* graverobbers executing a *de facto* bad

parentage. *From* cradle to grave, they want us to forget our ability to control our own nightmares and their transformative power onstage and off: during ludo-Gothic BDSM's palliative-Numinous rape play as a *proletarian* venture made to reclaim monsters from the usual neoliberal illusions! As a matter of gargoyles and menticide (re: Volume One), the elite (and their Superstructure) achieve poetic dominance by making us perpetually scared during the liminal hauntology of war and *its* apocalypse: the return of the home as undead, meaning bodies *and* house through a *stupefying* grim harvest—consume, obey and *destroy*!

On some level, Big Bads like Lavos reflect *Imperialism-as-undead*: something workers inherit and contend with—canonically by striking the mirror held up to us *by* the elite, the middle class punching the ghost of the counterfeit per the process of abjection. It's up to us to challenge said destiny with our own Aegis; i.e., to dance with the ghost of the counterfeit and interrogate its Russian doll, not to blindly consume or retreat into so-called "better times" that, however simple and tempting they might seem, reflect a profound *ignorance* towards the suffering of others: an escapist counterfeit unto itself that becomes something the meek will mobilize in defense of *from* subversive agents.

In turn, once shattered (as innocence generally does under Capitalism), purposeful regressions towards it, the counterfeit and process of abjection amount to willful ignorance in defense of *Capitalist Realism*. Except, you can't put the genie back in the bottle (the ghost of the counterfeit) without turning a blind eye to the kinds of predation your own consumption (and class) belongs; i.e., informed consumption (a topic we'll unpack in Volume Three at length) versus the problem of an alien zombie that, however displaced, nevertheless reflects middle-class anxieties about their *own* hand in genocide (so much convolution merely to pass the buck, in *Chrono Trigger's* case)!



(artist: [Mk-5](#))

Hopelessly dependent on a bourgeois, socio-material arrangement, canon drains workers of any ability they might otherwise have to imagine a better world through monsters as human. It's always on the cusp of annihilation, whereupon our minds become a trap buying

into neoliberal illusions the likes of which videogames, movies, and other kinds of mass media (which generally respond to each other) constitute a prolific breeding ground; i.e., reinforced by the external world as a dogmatic byproduct of older traumatized minds, of minds, of minds: our own past as shared with that of others across former centuries, having common burial grounds for discontent; e.g., the convulsionnaires (next page), but also Harmony and I as constantly relating to them by already having something worryingly in common: our having survived the horrors of a canonical past that extends *into* the present. Face with it, we seek refuge inside the imagery as a hauntological matter of communion with liberatory agents conjured up—spectres of Marx that, unlike Lavos (whose outer shell is covered in unhuggable quills like a porcupine and whose inner shelf is a womb-like space), demand to be hugged!

Per the dialectic of the alien, iconoclasm defends Medusa from state forces/Cartesian arguments' canon (re: nature-as-monstrous-feminine); i.e., a creative process whose subsequent rape play demands our inspecting of the imaginary past as hauntological, thus not completely fictional but certainly walking a fine line: martyrdom! As a matter of prolonged struggle against the state, resistance historically associates with rebellious forms of atheism. Except, there's also non-secular bodies like the convulsionnaires as being zombie-like, too—literally the trauma of state abuse prompting a return to an imaginary past that never existed *back then* whose paradoxical return *now* is equally invoked under the present state of affairs pushed by a shared desire: liberation through torment as half-real.



(exhibit 37a2b: Model and artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#). Confronting trauma takes many forms/rituals invoking spectres of Marx; e.g., Harmony's Fansly exhibit on convulsionnaires:

*Convulsionnaires helped lay the foundation for the French Revolution by being in direct and fierce opposition to the hierarchical system of religious clergy, and thus, also absolutism. Their extreme behavior inspired lots of public discourse, moving people to question the "ancien régime" and the supposed piety of the monarch. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that the convulsionnaire phenomenon was a direct result of the people's frustration with societal inequity, compounded by the feelings of being increasingly alienated from God. [...] The majority (60%) of the convulsionnaires movement was comprised of women who were actively challenging the established ideas of a Christian woman's role and expected behavior in society. [...] The individuals experiencing convulsions were "treated" in oftentimes brutal masochistic sessions (sometimes resulting in crucifixions), which were meant to be cathartic for their suffering and a symbol for persecution and their proximity to Christ.*

*Later on, the movement was made to leave the cemetery grounds by the police and moved to private meetings, where they continued practicing the sadomasochistic sessions and developing apocalyptic visions [[source](#)].*



[artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#)]

*In short, there's an oft-musical, historical element to the socio-material factors teasing but not executing actual mutilation and rape. Such spectres haunt the viewer during current ludo-Gothic BDSM practices being informed by in-touch contemporaries' own understandings of older, more violent forms: actual harm as a matter of suicidal protest haunting non-harmful copies. To that, Harmony's performance is notably inspired by Trevor Dunn's avant-garde jazz outfit, Trio Convulsant and their new album, [Séances](#) [2022]. Such an operatic, "rapacious"-rapturous mixture has been a part of the Gothic as a transcontinental and transgenerational mode, insofar as such spectres constitute a work-in-process we have already touched upon; i.e., a Communist Numinous; e.g., from Horace Walpole's rape castle, *Otranto*, to Matthew Lewis' poetic inclusions and "Gypsy Dance" from *The Monk* to Blue Öyster Cult's own music [next page] to *Castlevania* to Trio Convulsant to my short essay, "[Psychosexual Martyrdom](#)," and so on...)*

Whatever the spectre's form, the keys to escape through Marxism-as-undead are performative, occurring via Gothic-Communist development during ludo-Gothic BDSM; i.e., by playfully recognizing the myriad ways in which complex trauma is manufactured by state forces to serve profit, then slowly envisioning a way out of the same, prison-like myopia while inside it. If one's mind is pacified by dogmatic elements—specifically by the canonical zombie as a kind of violent, Pavlovian threat to menticide the viewer with—then such instances must be transformed in cathartic ways by playing *with* zombies. Zombies, after all, aren't strictly rotting corpses, but merely those occupying the state of exception that treats them as undead; i.e., damned, thus unable to easily enjoy social-sexual engagements because they collectively elide with historical-material experiences of state-compelled trauma; e.g., the child-like Creature from *Frankenstein* trying to befriend little girls only to be shot for it.

As such, the zombie's tragic, forgotten histories must be bravely reimagined through rememory during ludo-Gothic BDSM if workers are to liberate the Gothic imagination (and Wisdom of the Ancients) from capital. The next subchapter will explore this through sexualized toys and artwork that speak to trauma as something to navigate in ghoulish ways. For the rest of *this* section, I want to outline a) the basic idea, and b) how it is performed by people with each other during rape plays of various kinds.



As I do, I'll be stressing the sex-positive quality to such examples despite the historical presence of state abuse haunting them; i.e., through the past as written by people who, themselves, often sucked quite a bit, and for whom we have to do better than; e.g., Roman Polanski as someone who, when engaging with the works of, often feels like

us making a deal with the devil in more ways than one, but for which there's much to be gleaned and learned from the affair as a holistic ordeal the so-called "director" is still only a piece of:

...let's all acknowledge that Roman Polanski, who adapted the screenplay and directed *Rosemary's Baby*, was a total dirtbag who had sex with a thirteen-year-old girl, pleaded guilty to "unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor," and fled to France the day before his sentencing. He wasn't exactly a shining example of goodness before he engaged in pedophilia either. *Rosemary's Baby* is a masterpiece, but Polanski's exacting vision and his reckless and abusive methods to achieve it caused a lot of drama with a lot of people on and off set. [...] Ironically, given that Polanski is such a dirtbag, both the film and Ira Levin's novel on which it's based, invite feminist interpretations ([source](#): Meg Sipos and Eric Botts' "Satanic Capitalists in *Rosemary's Baby*," 2023).

Whatever the forms or faults at work, rape play is loaded with dead things, but especially Gothic markers that, per liminal expression, are less completely true or false and more in the awkward delicious middle inviting troubling-but-fun comparisons to *act out*.

In terms of the basic idea of *rape play* as something to act out *as a defense mechanism from profit and state forces*, think of my arguments per anger/gossip, monsters and camp (re: the basics of oppositional synthesis). These—I would argue—are collectively done to write with the dead in *cryptomimetic* fashion, but also dance, eat, war or fornicate with during sex-positive, xenophilic rituals. Such ventures aim to subvert the undead's rape trauma and feeding mechanisms by detaching them from profit to critique it; e.g., the zombie's dark, massive animal cock (exhibit 37b) but also the dragon's Impaler-like variety (exhibit 37c1) as both featured in trademark Gothic locales granting trademark Gothic vibes; i.e., a deathly *jouissance*/mood of proudly identifying with "death" in quotes: as a potent source of imagination, creativity and vitality

When I die  
 I don't want to rest in peace  
 I want to dance in joy  
 I want to dance in the graveyards, the graveyards  
 And while I'm alive I don't want to be alone  
 Mourning the ones who came before  
 I want to dance with them some more  
 Let's dance in the graveyards (Delta Rae's "[Dance in the Graveyards](#)," 2012).

but also a *foregone* conclusion through these same intimations of mortality as gloriously unclean and faked:

It doesn't matter if we turn to dust;  
 Turn and turn and turn we must!  
 I guess I'll see you dancin' in the ruins tonight!  
 Dancin' in the ruins!  
 Guess I'll see you dancin' in the ruins tonight!

There's laughter where I used to see your tears  
 It's all done with mirrors, have no fears  
 There's nothing pure or sacred in our time  
 The nights we spend together are no crime (Blue Öyster Cult's "[Dancin' in the Ruins](#)," 1985).

Faced within the hyperreality of Capitalist Realism—a thing that is both so very false, but nevertheless making up the reality of our lives—rape play suddenly isn't so odd.

"Death," then, is a poetic, campy means of escape onto something better by letting go of current problematic arrangements; re: the above music, but really any projection of any postpunk resistance unto spaces of escape whose at-times ambiguous, necrophilic, operatic hedonism (any kind of extramarital affair) become their own kind of zombie dance within the danger disco of the black castle as conjured up by us: a "danse macabre" reveling in the sensations of existence and non-existence intertwined, but also the echoes of the dead having a profound sense of joy within the theatrical tradition of rape as *divorced* from state abjection; i.e., while fear can come easy insofar as wanting to respect the diffuse, fragmented memories of the dead goes, playing with imaginary forms and critiquing their pernicious elements (re: canon and tokenism) provides something of a buffer during rape play.

Said play takes many forms. For one, the home-as-dead is a common homecoming to terrify the middle class with: the *house* as both containing the zombie and representing some aspect of a larger cannibalistic process returning

home; i.e., through a moving vessel that, being hypermassive, travels seemingly without moving at all: across time through the usual dimensions of space. It's precisely this recursive motion through a fourth dimension (time) that canonically keeps power where it normally is; i.e., by cannibalizing the victim as doomed to return to it, thus be eaten. Except, anisotropically reversing this flow ourselves is, itself, foreshadowed by a sweet, delicious doom we can send back at the usual rapists of the mind; i.e., our own awesome power laughing in the face of those who



would seek to possess and ruin us for their own fickle gain. Terrified of death and draining the blood of everyone around them by preying on nature, they seek to make us dance for them; i.e., as abusive recruits that, once touched by death, fear it as a matter of going on to prey on others, mid-calculated risk.

This concerns an ongoing relationship shared between the audience and the text as likewise inherited; e.g., *Mad Father* (above, 2012), but also those who see such nostalgia offered by similar games as something to unironically defend: Jadis, towards me, falling in love with their father's ghost and possessed with their mother's (the next subchapter is dedicated entirely to them). They loved *Mad Father* for those very reasons, smiling as they took advantage of me while invoking that game as they did, time and time again.



Lucky for us, we *can* resist these bourgeois spells (and their practitioners) through a joy regarding liminal expression as *purposefully* in-between, *not* by accident; i.e., death-as-alive, knowing that life *is* but a walking shadow and death merely the pause in its

dancing before it rises once more from the grave. Per the Gothic, this describes a psychosexual, erotic-traumatic force with intensely cathartic potential in queer an-Com hands; i.e., a lullaby into a waltz, a dance with the dead in the same spaces of childhood, but also a coming-of-age ritual whose constructive criticism extends the confrontation to a more (a)sexual sort: bedroom activities turned inside-out relative to the home as the place of zombies, of graveyards, to embrace and find playful,



non-harmful joy inside (above). To, as Eddie Money and Ronnie Spector sing it but with a twist, "[take us home, tonight!](#)"

I'm talking about sex, of course, but more to the point, ludo-Gothic BDSM as a matter of nudism and rape play (which certainly doesn't *preclude* sex):



(exhibit 37b1:  
Artist, left:  
[Indicadominant](#);  
bottom-middle-  
and-right: [Blxxd  
Bunny](#). When  
spaces become  
liminal, anywhere  
can be a bedroom,  
a grave, a kitchen,  
a dungeon  
[commonly for  
women treated as  
virgins and  
whores]. Literal

*dancing with the dead is more a novel-of-manners approach, one that gentrifies "necrophilic" sexual expression by avoiding, at least initially, the more eroticized components: the undead sword and scabbard, the monster "Franken" cock, including the swollen zombie cock as huge, dark, "rabid" and threatening<sup>107</sup>; re: "animals embody the canonical language of power and resistance as something to camp through demonic and undead forms"; i.e., the zombie as animalistic, feral and hugely carnivorous during wild animal lust [akin to the xenomorph or a werewolf, etc].*

*Such liminalities evolved out of a British social tradition, one whose abject xenophobia Ridley Scott would explore repeatedly in the 20th and 21st centuries using Gothic fantasy and science fiction. As a recipient of targeted violence towards embodiments of undead trauma, the zombie cock can adopt a fearsome, punisher role: the zombie pussy demands a "beating." The broader theatrical idea, in sex-positive art, is to humanize the monster genitals as potentially slated for giving or receiving abuse as a kind of reclaimed zombie ritual, while retaining their outward, monstrous appearance; i.e., monster-fucking during ludo-Gothic BDSM as patently undead in ways that face and befriend death as normally alien, under capital: "We are all animals, my lady!" [what John Webster would consider lycanthropy as: raw animal lust].*

<sup>107</sup> I.e., the BBC trope, but also the pent-up, animalistic coupling of this with that to find harmony amid forbidden interracial (re)unions healing from Big Rape by putting "rape" in quotes as only Gothic theatre can!



*Arguments about rape are made with monsters. Amounting to a synthesis of xenophilia during liminal expression, zombie genitals [and the perverse courtship rituals attached to them] can a) move towards survived*

*trauma as something to express, and b) seek to alter the Superstructure's canonical shaping of xenophobic cultural values; i.e., that lead to unequal, criminogenic, socio-material conditions. In short, the "rabid, stabby cock dagger" must be camped, and inside the usual grave-like areas as returned to minus the rose-tinted glasses of youth. It becomes a form of play that makes death, food, war and rape front-and-center by literally setting the table with them [above].)*

Rememory strives for reunion, especially with lost memories (the ghost of the counterfeit) that have become divided from the physical body over time, or with the body separated from a larger cultural identity that has since been erased by hollow, braindead copies (the counterfeit as abject). Recollecting the zombie's traumatic past, then, is always imaginary to *some* extent; the revived or the reviver always bringing *something* back into the living world—a buried, "souvenir" aspect of reimagined trauma that is perilous to confront. Barring extreme forms of isolation ([denial being the final step of genocide](#), according to the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust), personal trauma is never fully separate from societal trauma. By investigating the rememory of my own personal trauma in relation to the material world, part two of the "Bad Dreams" chapter pointedly confronts the humanization of zombies through sex toys and BDSM rituals: as flagrant, vulgar displays of phallic, toy-like "violence." When playing with these eroticized, modular pieces, iconoclasts are working with trauma as recovered from, but also stored between, individual performers, social groups and the material world.



That more or less covers the basics of rape play's context. Let's conclude the subchapter by looking at some sex-positive examples from my own life (which will work backwards towards my own lived abuse, in part two of "Bad Dreams").

(artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#))

Before we proceed unto the examples, though, I want to give several quick, holistic, symposium-style reminders (three pages); i.e., about the context of rape as something to perform. Consent-non-consent is *informed* consent, so better safe than sorry!

First and foremost, personal and collective traumas can either assist or undermine the humanization of zombies belonging to the same process of abjection; i.e., as something to canonize or camp (thus reverse). It's up to the individual to determine which way this goes, but always through the larger capitalist world as something to conform with or rebel against through the help of one's *allies*. Even then, state proponents and class traitors must be considered, including the ways in which they sabotage class struggle and consciousness; i.e., through the coercion trifecta weighing on the experience of abused children who grow into abusers, themselves. These, in turn, poison the nightmare as a bourgeois instrument that must become gay and campy in service to workers (and their trauma) once more!

For part two of "Bad Dreams," I shall demonstrate how by inspecting the evolution of my own creative process within these broader parameters; i.e., from my own traumatic childhood and into adulthood, becoming increasingly genderqueer over time despite the presence of systemic, necromantic traumas seeking to closet and silence me... inside a coffin but also above ground: where the undead entity is exposed, vulnerable, and ripe for fatal, *pro-state* penetration. Through such dogmatic tortures ruthlessly exacted upon the young (or young-at-heart) as "young, dumb and full of cum," capital punishment reduces state victims to a vegetative mindset the elite can reliably harvest (or use to harvest others with) as needed: per Radcliffean exorcism and monomythic calls to violence tied to formulaic romance as heroically unrealistic by virtue of it not mattering either way<sup>108</sup>: the perception of strength and danger to mobilize police violence against the usual undead victims by the usual braindead cops.

By comparison, the remainder of *this* subchapter concerns a more enlightened, sex-positive approach as already having occurred based on that history as something I survived my own rape regarding: universal worker liberation (from alienation and fetish-grade sexualization), which occurs within the feeling of one being watched as a matter of performing "rape" in quotes; i.e., the zombie's ambiguously "alive" (and queer) gaze haunting the performance, mid-ludo-Gothic-BDSM, but also one's body as bare and exposed: her tits were there, along with everywhere else lying in wait... to gobble up state enforcers, taking *their* power!

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<sup>108</sup> The Quixotic sentiment certainly matters; i.e., convincing the audience that they are somehow as incredible, righteous and invincible as their in-text heroic counterparts, but also paradoxically threatened by an invincible enemy that can only be killed by virtue of their own side of the same dogmatic rubric. It's less that it's all bullshit, and more that said bullshit serves a particular purpose: profit, thus genocide.

As we'll see in the following exhibits, power is both a ritual, then, and something to perceive as going different ways. Sexist men, for example, classically fear the Medusa, but also are drawn to her precisely because capital has alienated them from their basic needs and enrichment. Spend enough time with (and inside) her and you might start to realize *you're* the state's arm, attacking and maiming those monstrous-feminine components of nature and labor the elite require you to



in order for *them* to profit. It's simple and brutal, but remains an effective trap that continues to work into the new millennium: a book or some-such instrument of the dead to—like Jim Henson's titular Dark Crystal—take power *for* the elite through those who all the same struggle to control it.

Except while canon operates through the eyes as the mechanism that is most widely used to enslave workers (a quick path to the brain), this aforementioned monopoly *isn't* absolute. Furthermore, the difference between canon and something akin to Henson's *Crystal* (and similar works—again our rape-play exhibits, next) is effectively an anisotropic, children's-story critique of such things; i.e., one that dares to suggest it *could* go both ways.

By comparison, the likes of weird *canonical* nerds like Sam Raimi (who we'll explore more in the Demon Module) and other unironic, Pygmalion-style practitioners of abjection through Orientalism (re: Blizzard, Naughty Dog and so many others) will always serve profit by pushing genocide to the margins of Western civilization. In doing so, they effectively scapegoat older (usually non-white) empires and victims; re: the process of abjection, per the ghost of the counterfeit, which "displaces the hidden violence of present social structures, conjures them up again as past, and falls promptly under their spell" (re: [David Punter](#)). Aa always, this kind of jungle fever sends a Christ-like figure (the middle class, playing Jesus) into rapture; i.e., martyring themselves *and* the usual victims of state abuse through a spurious guilt trip, a lie presented as "truth." Perception *becomes* reality to such persons.

In short, this abjection *can* be reversed through various splendid lies (e.g., kayfabe), but our focus shall be the rape exhibit at its most naked and extreme.

Even with less extreme forms/performers, though (re: Henson), there remains unto both a dark undercurrent: liberation occurring within rememory as playing with the same funerary incantations, demonic resurrection passages, and Gothic exchanges used by all—a sort of "church curtain" raised by groups of people with a shared goal against the state; i.e., using the various *danse macabre* to camp

exploitation as always being haunted by ghosts of the real thing (and its moral panics) behind canon's *typical* obfuscations (disempowerment, death, rape, mutilation, etc). Any manipulation canonically serves profit; any successful camp does not, preventing rape by playing with "rape" as something to speak to past abuses actually suffered—to show the audience one's rape, normally unspeakable, as something to act out, mid-enjoyment on a reclaimed stage (churchly or not). But this takes practice—of being careful and thorough to avoid harming others; re:



through *calculated* risks, not *unnecessary* or *unplanned* ones (a history of Gothic-coded bad decisions we'll examine in the Demon Module, once more dragging Radcliffe, before pushing away from such gaffs in Volume Three).

(artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#))

Last but not least, rape—as something to play with—is always a risk under capital, is always something that returns in zombie-like fashion (an "epidemic," in political language). To prevent actual harm, workers must return to the site of older trauma (the grave) as threatening to come back, *post-anniversary* (returning from the grave, again and again and again...); i.e., to learn from it, but also use it to establish new boundaries *with*. To *that*, there is always a partially imaginary and playful, campy element to rape play—of going back in time to move forward in a circle; e.g., from Percy Shelley's timeless "Ozymandias" to Charles Dickens' ghostly tryptic *A Christmas Carol* to *Rocky Horror's* "Let's do the time warp!" to the Muppets, and onwards to these current examples I'm about to show you, now.

As I do, remember that from *kawaii-to-kowai*, big power and trauma often lurk on the surface of gentler-looking (and smaller) bodies, their double operations showing and revealing different things useful to state or proletarian agency through Gothic reenactments of paradise lost; i.e., of shattered innocence, of childhood devastation confusing pleasure and harm through confluences of psychosexual pleasure-and-pain responses inviting the audience to consider an uneven pedagogy of the oppressed: look on those of us affected by rape and see how we cope with the trauma it forces us to live with. Just as often, our attempts to express ourselves are policed; i.e., through the discourse itself as something whose own imperialism of theory (re: [Sandy Norton](#)) is a matter of choice normally serving the state, one our own revolutionary forms of sex-positive expression rail against to invite speculative thought about receiving state abuse: from the *zombie's* perspective.

To these performances I'm going to be showing you, then, surviving rape is only the beginning for those made undead as a matter of consequence. Doing so

leaves a massive hole inside victims that only the Numinous—however brief or fabricated (re: Dennis Cooper's *Frisk*, Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, etc)—can truly fill. It can seem odd, then, to watch people submit to "rape" as a theatrical means of transgressive exhibitionism that is so obviously bogus *and* verging on the real deal. Except—and this is very important to remember—it's not actually rape *unless* irony (and mutual consent) are absent from the act-in-question.

This brings us to the consent-non-consent exhibit. Wanting to do the process justice, I've felt driven to include as much as I possibly can. As such, we'll be demonstrating rape play both as an act and testament to lived abuse (nothing is deadlier or more conducive to rape/genocide than the silence surrounding it). That being said, the following has extended into a messy soup of various examples; i.e., one that features rape play between myself and either Harmony Corrupted or Cuwu, while also going over the theatrical-historical mechanics and half-real, therapeutic elements which present and regard the complex emotional state of rape survivors. Myself included, we're commenting on ludo-Gothic BDSM through a testimony that, per an attempt to illustrate the fun and games being had, suitably feels "off the cuff," whimsical, and fragmented.

Rest assured, while *that* might sound ominous at first blush, and while these



images certainly *look* extreme at a glance, they're still just that—half-real acts of rememory for the viewer to study and consider the undead paradoxes at work. Often at war with themselves and their surroundings' imaginary past as caught historically-materially between the two, everything strives to communicate displaced abuse in language that readily imparts the source and result of undeath: the trauma of rape. Here, I will try to explore and preserve the intimacy of me and my friends' healing from it with a degree of poignancy, color and love.

(*exhibit 37b1a: Artist: [Zuru Ota](#). As a matter of profit, rape serves settler-colonial systems by dividing its recipients into different groups as a matter of genocide; i.e., it makes people feel*

*undead through botched love as instructional, but especially historical recipients of such abuse under patriarchal systems that have grown more predatory over time: women—but especially white cis-het women—being made to fear rape as something the state uses to triangulate them against its other victims through legitimized violence. To break the curse, these living-dead girls must learn exactly what they want as being fundamentally at odds with the structures they haunt having divided them inside and outside of themselves. Their exhibits of "rape" must speak*

cryptonymically to the consequences of rape normally harvesting them and nature at large; e.g., reducing the party-in-question to something of a toilet, a cum dump for useless semen either divorced from sexual reproduction, or in competition over the same entity as something to dominate in activities that have little if anything to do with actually reproducing. It's about power as something to communicate in order to subvert or enforce its usual lopsidedness.

Recall that legitimacy under current Western models is to conform to one's position of disadvantage under profit as administered by white European men and their allies; e.g., women being performatively subservient as virgins and targeted for police violence anyways; i.e., as whores, whereupon the two elide on the same performer less as one or the other and more as both to varying degrees at once: "I can be your angel or devil," your Athena or Medusa, your Hippolyta, etc. They are often at war with each other in ways we've already discussed in this series, and which you should keep in mind, here; re [from Volume One]:

*It bears repeating that [the imaginary] 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 [[source](#)].*

"Gargoyles," as the quote [and volume] use it, refers to police agents as something to view as a matter of coding the audience through what they see as instructional. The same fear-and-dogma principles are essentially at war with the whore, who is both expected to police their venue while conforming to its heteronormative elements [and tokenized extensions]. They are expected not simply to identify as women, but dirty vermin/chaste, nun-like property that performs readily as either when called upon by a white, cis-het male master as literally or ipso facto owning them. In turn, this unfair position presents nature as monstrous-feminine through devices like the whore or virgin as made to serve profit; i.e., as currently abusing

*the language of the half-real, chronotopic past to conceal its own atrocities at a systemic level: rape shows and hides itself through cryptonyms.*

*Psychomachy aside, the virgin performance is coveted and owned, the whore performance chased for quick, dirty thrills that, during ludo-Gothic BDSM, subversively translate to the whore reclaiming their power through the usual modes of Gothic poetic expression; e.g., sex, drugs and rock 'n roll, heavy metal, videogames, penny dreadfuls, etc; i.e., camping "rape" to establish boundaries the usual benefactors of capital cannot cross without outing themselves as harvesting nature as usual: raping it. Historical abuse is always at least adjacent to psychosexual expression, but it [and its exploitation] is not automatic insofar as exhibiting and exploring sexual violence through art is a matter of performance: spousal rape, but also gang rape by mythical rapacious forces; e.g., "zombies" being code for black men, but also non-white agents of any gender or color against straight white women, period. Such things canonize per a particular kind of double standard/oscillating rhetoric: "The monstrous-feminine is always weak and strong as a matter of acting slutty and chaste, ordinary and demonic, undead and pure," etc.*

*Keeping this in mind, would it really surprise you to know that such acts are generally loaded with their own internalized elements to embody and overcome? Classically the whore is something to attack and kill as imposturous, alien; i.e., othered by virtue of the presumed maiden's own shame, guilt, and self-hatred that, per the process of abjection, projects onto a dark, non-Western, oft-Communist reflection. Just as often, though, someone identifies with the whore for precisely those very reasons and must find value in humanizing said struggle by exposing the police element, mid-performance, as a capitalist one; i.e., in token Amazons, whores, what-have-you. Again, they're a) visually identical, and b) constitute the battle extending to one's self as torn between policing the whore and playing with whore-like tropes to subvert their usual police violence; i.e., as yet-another-battle on and offstage, inside and outside oneself: fucking monsters to metal during*



*ritualized forms of "rape" whose outcomes always threaten actual abuse in cartoonishly silly forms.*

[artist: [Zuru Ota](#)]

*That is, canon enforces binaries that thrive on fetishization and*

*alienation to serve capital as patriarchal by design; i.e., as something for the dutiful whore to internalize and the rebellious one to camp pursuant to the same zombie-like enormities [cocks, bodies, power imbalances, etc]. The iconoclastic power of*



*the Gothic comes from working inside hellish dialogs of exploitation, which dissolve binaries through cryponymy as a means of exposing trauma and feeding in reverse; i.e., paralyzing police agents, mid-observation, by presenting the whore's "rape" as something to camp and haunt with its own actual violation: the original rape and its advertisement as felt within camp's reclamation of it. The threat display becomes a playful declaration/pun, "Over my dead body!"*

*That is, the guilty parties are forced to observe a form of undead play they cannot participate in, one that makes rape impossible by virtue of mutual consent as something to illustrate during calculated risk; i.e., not as dogma, but de facto good sex education through the same aesthetics of power and death the Gothic thrives on. If you camp the threat, it loses much of its dogmatic power but retains its paradoxically treat-like ability to please the usual recipients of the threat. Escape becomes a matter of performance that is commonly sought out of consequence, pushing our luck behind Aegis-like buffers to flash our abusers with: in and out of a dark shadow space, akin to Hell as our river Styx to dive into while seeking power of a particular kind. It's a paradox we feel compelled to return to when triggered by reminders of our own deconstruction—our rape—as having made us undead to begin with.*

*For performers seeking paradoxical empowerment, then, actual rape often has one of two prominent side effects that color these artistic displays: asexuality or nymphomania. In keeping with psychomachia, both occur with a fair degree of performative overlap; i.e., sex, for those who survive its purely harmful forms, generally exude a frank degree of vulnerability onstage when seeking Hell; i.e., through various acts or bartering mechanisms that use things they are desensitized towards, but especially the rape symbols they camp, onstage. In doing so, the performance becomes simultaneously detached and indulgent as a matter of negotiation and play towards actual empowerment under capital as designed to rob us blind; i.e., as something to liberate ourselves through these performances as educational by virtue of their theatrical qualities challenging canon: establishing and testing boundaries, including the audiences' own comfort levels!*

*In turn, these generally boil down to projection onto a performer regarding the usual vulnerable elements simply being exposed at all; e.g., the genitals as a kind of offering to the viewer torn between different feelings about rape as a generally spontaneous and legendary crime the performance flaunts the historical victim's vulnerability in defiance of. It's not a fear of the reaper but a teasing of them with the usual harvested goods; i.e., tempting fate.*



*[model and photographer: Cuwu and [Persephone van der Waard](#)]*

Except "rape," unlike rape, actually takes practice; you have to learn how to communicate and recognize the boundaries [and Gothic codes] at play that are likewise constantly being [re]established on a daily basis, while also knowing what kind to establish—in short, how to play "rape" out in quotes, using the various symbols of power and death that overcrowd the venue. There's both a) some general rules you can bring to any play session, and b) a high degree of idiosyncrasy keeping said rules in mind while you build towards the "rape" as echoing actual rape, once-upon-a-time: "hurt, not harm" and "learn what they like." Both occur by openly communicating and asking questions, mid-playtime; i.e., learning what someone likes/dislikes, ahead of time—their BDSM preferences, hard/soft kinks and limits, etc—which, in turn, usually involve some very straightforward questions when putting them to practice, in bed [or wherever the play session is taking place]: "Is this ok?" "Does this feel good?" "Harder? Faster?" and so on.

It's extremely important to remember that rape play is a hard kink/form of calculated risk that, like all sex-positive examples, wants to avoid harm while playing with the same-old symbols, games, and histories as interwoven. Achieving this aim takes two basic things: a thorough, well-rounded and experienced sense of BDSM, and a play partner who understands [and respects] all of the above before you even start! Learn what you want and don't want, then operate within the mechanisms of capital as something to alter by your own example: raising awareness through artistic expression doubling as the actual thing while simultaneously not being harmful as a matter of practical exchange. The half-real nature of calculated risk evokes danger as zombie-like; i.e., sitting between history and invention, but also punishment and pleasure as ultimately falling on the latter side of things, provided the zombie is humanized:



[artist: [In Case](#)]

*If undeath is a consequence, so is the feeding on unequal power as essential to combating one's zombie-like state. For survivors of rape, "rape" as a matter of theatrical power exchange—e.g., fucking to Slayer nice and hard, your lover's cock deep in your ass and their hands wrapped carefully around your throat to seem threatening—simply feels good. This healer's plight, the paradox of pain, speaks to a complicated truth within capital: trauma shapes our weird appetites while living under abusive systems. In turn, these same systems trigger us; except, to survive and thrive as emotionally and Gothically intelligent people, we must learn to seek oblivion/spifflication as a sensation, not an actuality!*

*For instance, not everyone wants "true love" by virtue of prescription; some people, having survived abuse, just want sex, cuddles, pain, or whatever else you might call "the simpler things in life." For me, that's the Numinous, which I present as palliative to my psychosexual urges, triggers, and maladaptive survival mechanisms resulting from genuine abuse. Like me, others learn what they want as an equally puzzling means of chasing the dragon, then having to learn how to ask for the medicine from the dragon without actually getting choked to death [most cis-het men have a very literal interpretation of domination, squeezing the neck like they're trying to break it]: to dress up different invitations of "danger" and "rape" as a carefully prepared matter of calculated risk that many virgins to trauma won't understand, thus cannot be trusted to execute safely.*

*Except, the privileged must learn if we are to heal as a society from rape; i.e., by subverting capital and its usual instructors thereof! Volume One's "Healing from Rape" establishes the basic idea; re: through Cuwu and I learning about rape as something to relate to each other from opposite ends of, thus heal from according to my listening to them about rape appearing in media indicative of the abuse they suffered. As something to dance with, trauma becomes a demonstration in hindsight; i.e., an undead, uncanny ability to summon and dismiss, mid-contest,*

*by virtue of one's appearance sexily beckoning the destroyer out of the past, to then reify your supremacy as stronger having survived it before. You chuck that fucker into the stratosphere, looking graceful and delicate as you do, but also like Cuwu did: "Strong, strong, strong!"*



[artist: [Hamza Touijri](#)]

*For one, such implements aren't so odd. As I write in Volume One; re:*

*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. [...] 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 [[source](#)].*

*Whatever the form or paradox, then, one's lived experiences commonly reify inside Gothic media as rather oxymoronic. Without a pedagogy of the oppressed poetically tailored to help us find similarity amid difference, though, this can feel incredibly alienating for both parties: one damaged to push-pull towards and from echoes of said damage, the other suitably concerned, guilty and confused for having not living through those kinds of events the same way.*

*For example, when relating to Cuwu, I thought I hadn't been raped because it wasn't sexual [from Volume One] like their abuse was:*

*While I have been beaten and mentally tortured, for example, I have never been sexually raped [...] 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 [[ibid.](#)].*

*My thoughts on that have changed, insofar as I currently feel like I was raped differently than Cuwu—emotionally versus sexually. But we were still a part of the same conversation; i.e., one had between us about such stories as things to relate to and perform ourselves:*

*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 [[ibid.](#)].*

*To that, the idea of any long-lasting friendship is stability. To achieve that as a matter of good praxis, abuse victims need to learn how to acknowledge each other's survival as different according to power affecting us differently. Indeed, it was Cuwu's inability to ultimately respect my boundaries and survival story that led to our friendship breaking apart like it did; they didn't heed my instructions, falling victim to their own condition as aping Maynard James Keenan's "[Stinkfist](#)" [1996] chorus:*

*Just not enough, I need more  
Nothing seems to satisfy  
I said, I don't want it, I just need it  
To breathe, to feel, to know I'm alive [[source](#): Genius].*

*A certain amount of regressive vanity is required to control a scenario as matter of submissive roleplay. In Cuwu's case, their own survival mechanism was maladaptive to predatory extremes; i.e., it operated through being seen by someone they could control through their bodily displays: controlling the entire room through their vanity as borderline, their personality disorder coming to life through their fractured, undead sense of self. This ceaseless, draconian vampirism started through our disagreements spilling into our play time, our conversations, and ultimately our time apart.*



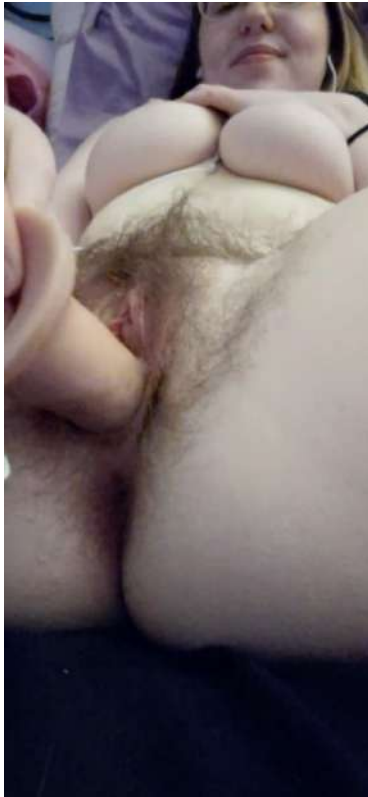
*[artist: Cuwu]*

*All of these borderline attractions to destructive, psychosexual power and back-and-forth arguments between actors/players probably seem rather odd to the uninitiated. In truth, it only really makes sense if you've been there yourself, touched by death as something to spend the rest of your life camping to best strike that precarious balance [from Volume Two, part one]:*

*The greatest irony of Jadis harming me [...] is they accidentally gifted me with the appreciation of calculated risk. Scoured with invisible knives, I don't view my scars as a "weakness" at all; I relish the feeling of proximity to the ghost of total power—of knowing that motherfucker took me to the edge but didn't take everything from me: I escaped them and lived to do my greatest work in spite of their treachery! Like the halls of a cathedral, my lived torments and joys color this castled work, ornamenting its various passages with the power of a full life. I've known such terror that makes the various joys I experience now all the more sweet and delicious. I am visited by ghosts of my rapturous design, the empress of my fate, the queen of a universe shared with seraphs the likes of which I can hardly describe; "no coward soul is mine" [[source](#)].*

*From Jadis to Cuwu to myself, the undead generally feed as a matter of seeking an old trauma to fill themselves out with, undoing the hollowed-out shell after their initial wounding.*

*Addictive and undead paradoxes aside, there's always something that somebody wants, for which others can provide that as a matter of exchange that cannot, unto itself, be monopolized. Such barter occurs through a matter of play that is, to some degree, coded; i.e., by virtue of one euphemism [or physical object] swapped in and out for whatever you can think of: cupcakes for popcorn, or "cupcakes" for "popcorn." It's less about avoiding the playing of games altogether and more about recognizing who you're playing with, how and where; i.e., determining intent through a matter of good play/acting versus bad play/acting through ludo-Gothic BDSM while establishing fresh boundaries to increase success as a matter of preventing rape [risk reduction]: the thrill of the danger haunting the venue without causing the harm normally associated with it.*



*[artist: Cuwu]*

*This paradox occurs within a given venue whose rules during interpersonal exchange [versus, say, a bar or dance club] are not writ in stone to nearly the same extent, but for which the players are contributing to something larger [a proletarian Superstructure] that is challenged by state dictates and operatives! From there, you establish trust and work towards the moment at hand, which serves another important function: challenging the ways in which power is normally presented and*

*performed in canonical media [a deliberate lack of clear boundaries or consent]. Putting "rape" in quotes is camping its normal performances as a matter of acting and actually committing said behaviors; i.e., in a half-real sense, on and offstage as a liminal activity that graduates to more advanced forms. Rape can happen anywhere; it can likewise be camped as such, provided people are taught how.*



*The Gothic classically has a historical element to its fabrications marrying fact with fiction, as well as the abject and obscene to the ordinary by what are effectively weird art nerds. Such education, then, stems from recreations of the imaginary past as "rapacious"; e.g., Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" constituting a curious*

*British trend at the time: possessing but also replicating said urns to convey a particular message to interpret the past from a modern perspective romanticizing the ancient past in, at times, highly inventive ways<sup>109</sup>; i.e., the draw of fatal power*

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<sup>109</sup> As Michael Vickers writes in "Value and Simplicity: Eighteenth-Century Taste and the Study of Greek Vases" (1987),

There are two themes which run through the scholarly literature relating to Greek painted pottery over the past two hundred years or more: (1) the view that such pottery was an especially valuable commodity in antiquity, and (2) the idea that pots with simple decoration are somehow more worthy than those which are ornate. The fact that most scholars in the field of classical archaeology today take these ideas for granted should not obscure the reality that they are concepts of relatively recent date and that they have little to do with the values or aesthetic judgments of antiquity ([source](#)).

The same idea applies to any concept of "ancient" revisited in modern times, constituting an interpretive but also poetic argument towards the past as either a spurious means of consolidating power towards the usual in-groups and/or delivering the means of policing this power against the usual out-groups; i.e., relaying power through the question of aesthetics as having a quaint, dusty approach to such things dipping in and out of fiction; e.g., Ridley Scott's "vases" from *Prometheus* (2012) and Amazonian elements, in overt, 1970s Gothic fiction with a historical element to its inventions, but also outside of such British theatrics: a similar degree of playfulness when academics whitewash Roman marble personae

"Imagine you've got an intact lower body of a nude male statue lying there on the depot floor, covered in dust," Abbe said. "You look at it up close, and you realize the whole thing is covered in bits of gold leaf. Oh, my God! The visual appearance of these things was just *totally* different from what I'd seen in the standard textbooks—which had only black-and-white plates, in any case." For Abbe, who is now a professor of ancient art at the University of Georgia, the idea that the ancients disdained bright color "is the most common misconception about Western aesthetics in the history of Western art." It is, he said, "a lie we all hold dear" ([source](#): Margaret Talbot's "The Myth of Whiteness in classical sculpture," 2018).

to subsequently view the Roman empire as somehow homogenous and entirely of a single, white presentation useful to settler-colonial projects (and rape) *now*.

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*as ultimately displaced, far-off and imaginary, thus paradoxically safe per a calculated risk as something to make sex-positive through iconoclastic interpretations, mid-execution. Whether it's whorish Medusas, Amazons, daddy's little girl, or some combination of these things, systemic trauma leads to monstrous-feminine that canon will always try to police/rape; and camp, to reclaim.*

*Say what you will about the undead's fractured, complex emotions; it's less complicated from a dialectical-material standpoint and more through how the state complicates our attempts to humanize ourselves through "rape" fantasies. The reoccurring issue is, canonical stories generally rely on "confidence" as a matter of men [and token agents] acting first, "making a move" based on what amounts to telepathy and dogma through Man Box entitlement; i.e., the kind that treats sex like a heteronormative reward that serves profit: relations—be they sex and/or love—presenting as "taking" and always more, more, more!*

*In short, white cis-het men are owed sex as a matter of fact; they chase whores and marry Madonnas, but likewise carry these trends out in monomythic refrains that parallel domestic and foreign abuse as a means of harvesting nature-as-monstrous-feminine: per all the usual police violence internalized/externalized as what I have previously called "prison sex" mentality. While Cuwu became predatory as a submissive agent, dominant agents—generally men and tokenized Man Box proponents—generally become police agents through the same system; e.g., TERFs, but also media that seeks control in ways that discourage the kind of introspection I mentioned as previously occurring between Cuwu and I. Either shows how media and people share the same spaces. Keeping that in mind, we can go easily enough from Cuwu's controlling the room, to something quaint and seemingly innocent as the formulaic vigilantism in '90s kids cartoons; i.e., anything that can be consumed, thus absorbed and passed along.*

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Consider similar arguments, then, relative to *Amazonomachia* as an ancient artform with heavily modernized interpretations:

Unfortunately, there's confusion as to just what the *Amazonomachy* was. Some associate it with the ninth labour of Heracles, others with the battle between the Greeks and Amazon forces led by Penthesilea during the Trojan War, and others with the Attic War resulting in Theseus abducting Hippolyta as his wife. I'll consider those in tomorrow's article, but today look at a more general war resulting in the deaths of many Amazons when they were defeated by a substantial Greek army, possibly long before the war against Troy. A reasonably popular theme in painting, even to the present, its most practiced exponent was Peter Paul Rubens, who is attributed two paintings on this theme ([source](#): "Amazons at War," 2023).

Arguments about the "ancient" world are often false or inventive to serve modern power structures. Unto them and their disparate, jumbled hauntologies, then, there is a total lack of constancy *save for* European, Cartesian supremacy and its decay (fascism) raping the monstrous-feminine in classically monstrous forms; i.e., police violence against the usual victims in hauntological language serving profit. As we shall continue to see throughout this volume, this fragmentation and follow-through also applies hauntologically to zombies, vampires and other undead, as well as demons, the natural world and intersections of all of these modular components to make the same basic, us-versus-them arguments during the dialectic of the alien.

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For instance, despite a random show like *Swat Kats* [1994] [having admittedly awesome music](#)<sup>110</sup> to rock out to well past its show date, the production yields the same underlying problem as *TMNT* and other neoliberal media we've already examined: a complicit cryptonymy per open-secret police identities. Through such devices, police agents historically project their insecurities onto their victims as a matter of dogma; i.e., are expected to police their wives and anything else that qualifies as property from/of nature for them to litigate by force: raping nature as something "wild" to tame. Except, its subsequent rape, harvesting and undeath all become, like Cuwu, a kind walking contradiction present in both parties: a little zombie/dark mother to befriend by camping the whole ordeal as well as we both could!



[artist: Cuwu]

To that, camp's surreal nature remains haunted by mighty ghosts that come alive through us and our games' semi-secret identities yielding a dominator flavor to their visual code: the monstrous-feminine class of destroyer as a theatrical device loaded with all the usual historicized fetishes and clichés made for or against the state on different registers. Due to their own age and damage, Cuwu couldn't handle it, flying apart at the seams [the photo is strictly period blood, mind you]: preying on me while offering themselves up behind closed doors, per an escalating decay of our usual bedroom dialogs.

<sup>110</sup> That being said, 331Erock's "SWAT Kats Meets Metal" (2024) is the usual marriage of great music to regressive policies. In this case, his invocation of said policies were originally employed during the Clinton administration by weaponizing the usual blue-collar cops-in-disguise; i.e., to serve the state during neoliberal decay following the 1980s, stringing such scapegoats up like an abject pinata, then shooting them Godzilla-style with militarized cop gear (except, in this case, they *appear* to win): [a literal fighter jet](#) (source: Warner Bros. Classics' "Intro | SWAT Kats: Radical Squadron | Warner Archive," 2015) conducting settler colonialism at home as, yet again, something to regress into and grow up with. Such fatal nostalgia is always meant to cozen the kids up to undercover cops presenting as lower-class vigilantes, thus acclimate these audiences to military urbanism when foreign policy becomes *domestic* policy not once, but again and again under false pretenses, flags, pasts and mythologies that, however imaginary they are, still serve a very real purpose: settler colonialism, thus profit, through genocide.

Faced with such hauntological charm offensives, Sarkeesian's adage remains vital. For example, I always liked *Kats*, but readily acknowledge how problematic it all feels in hindsight; i.e., the tendency for American audiences to *want* regress into childhood fantasy's as already-decayed (the canceled future)—all to fight (thus abject) cartoon enemies standing in for genocide anxiety felt at home: empire in decay, the proverbial enemy at the gates! The war horn/alarm becomes a fascist lullaby to win future generations to a bellicose nursery preparing them for war felt across different registers; i.e., from children's cartoons, but also stories like the Bible; e.g., [Israel and the book of Joshua](#) as a matter of grim instruction paralleled by *Pax Americana* like *Kats*: kill your enemies as cartoon-like zombies in *function*, not just appearance (GDF's "Debunking the State of Israel," 2024)!

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By comparison, *Harmony* can take on these kinds of fantasies, treating them as fun and healing for both of us in a very toy-like fashion:



[artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#)]

As she demonstrates, it's all a matter of stability as something to work on; i.e., through the games we play together contributing towards this book: healing from rape through an informed process. By comparison,

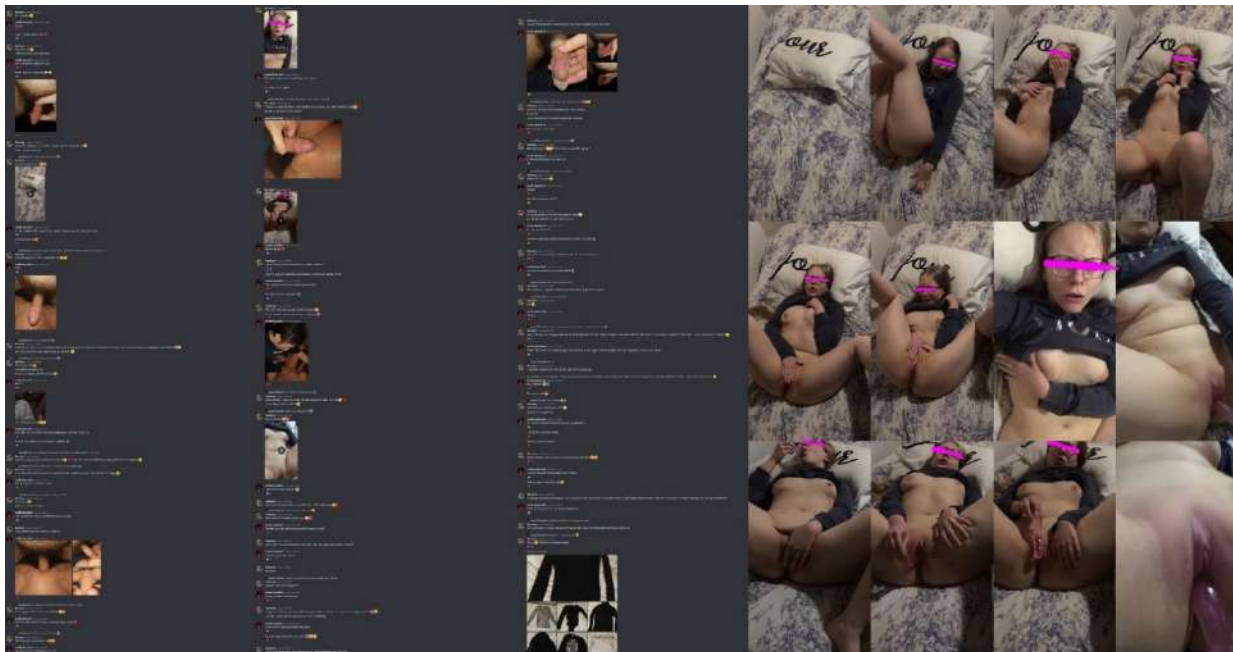
hawks/police agents are often victims of the state who, radicalized to its service, will take any theoretical or cosmetic aspect to praxis, synthesis and aesthetics they then us to embody the state's trifectas and monopolies.

In regards to them, there's no room for anything else—the monstrous-feminine at large—to negotiate, unless these boundaries [and associate trust] are tested and ultimately reestablished by the likes of myself, Harmony and, yes, Cuwu; i.e., as a messy and complicated means of confronting the usual arbiters of sex, terror and force: as something to overcome by humanizing their usual victims on the same stages of lost childhood. So many weirdos want to regress to childhood as a means of raping others for real [e.g., "when men were men and women cis-gendered and submissive"]; we want to camp it to expose such nonsense, dissecting the past as, like the Creature by Shelley was, kept alive for its

beauty amid pain. Like a rainbow in the sky, it touches us before it fades, staying with us in ways that we never want to end: "In your sleep, I hear you say, 'Don't let the morning take him'" [Judas Priest's "[Before the Dawn](#)," 1979]. Moreover, it becomes a very hellish way to see the world:



*To that, Cuwu and I knew each other long enough to become familiar with what the other liked and enjoyed, and communicated constantly in terms of these things whenever we played. The same now goes for Harmony and me, but as something more mature and stable, less spiraling and draining of me [quite the opposite, in fact]. All of it goes into the book, including our own instances of consent-non-consent for your consideration—as a matter of pride, something we want to show off so you can learn by our example. It should become second-nature first in bed, and then on a cultural level that transforms the societal treatment of such things; i.e., as a constant relationship between real life and media as half-real, but also plastic:*



*[artists: [Harmony Corrupted](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#)]*

*In short, no matter how massive a hyperobject like Capitalism seems, it can be transformed through smaller, simpler abstractions of itself and its abuse. Liberation is gained through ludo-Gothic BDSM as a showcase thereof: escaping inside the places that normally imprison us to receive/deliver unironic harm like zombies. The showcase is the apocalypse and we are the zombies, our "violent" performance adjacent to real-world harm in the same kinds of exploitative spaces and aesthetics. It's nice meeting someone with baggage who knows how to work through that with you to synthesize catharsis as a means of good praxis, not unironically dominating the Madonna or the whore [as survival sex work forces the monstrous-feminine to be]. It's often absurd, silly and, yes, fun: a stress button to push not once, but over and over!*



*To that, Harmony is an excellent friend and comrade, and I love surrendering my power to them, but likewise love being the dutiful, loving service top who can ravish them or even—with their trust and permission—"rape" them per all the usual cryptonymies, buffers and codes we use to get our point across [with soothing pep talks often coming into play to coax someone into coming (the little death) when they're close and trying to cum<sup>111</sup>; e.g., "You're working so hard! Do*

*you need to come? Yeah, that's it... Come for me, baby... Just let it all out for me... Good girl..."]! This includes imperatives like "rape me" as something to follow through in ways that don't cause harm—quite the opposite, actually! More to the point, it's a service that not only goes both ways, but gives back to those normally without; i.e., through evocations of the dead per our orgasms, vaso vagal responses, and disassociative performances having an element of truth to them<sup>112</sup>, but also a performative, intersecting history that gleefully invokes the devil as someone to summon in jest while earnestly exposing taboo things; e.g., Nicolo*

<sup>111</sup> Zeuhl would enter an almost fugue-like state when rubbing their clit super-fast, to which me whispering encouragement to them would send them spiraling into an orgasm (the same idea would happen in reverse, Zeuhl gently telling me, "You can fuck me as hard as you want!" when I was close [and sweating like a pig from topping their fat pussy]. It always did the trick).

<sup>112</sup> The fronting of an oblivious shell to protect the mind from rape, but also to help those, post-rape, find closure the only way one generally can: by living with trauma as something to play with and recontextualize through elements of control that give the victim power. For our purposes, this happens while also discouraging power *abuse*, thus rape, per ludo-Gothic BDSM; i.e., as something that makes us feel whole through catharsis during a palliative Numinous, thus a Communist one that leads to post-scarcity by humanizing the very mechanisms that normally lead to genocide; e.g., Harmony makes me feel whole in ways that address my trauma have emptied me, us playing together filling that void with bad campy echoes of trauma: "rape."

Paganini famously rolling his eyes back into his skull<sup>113</sup> to evoke elements of rapture, of possession, by a devilish agent aping a Godly force that normally prohibits power and knowledge exchange: showing off.

Such "dumb suppers" actually tend to be rather loud; i.e., involve us freezing on command through the contest of "rape" as camp, only to give back to the workers of the world: showing them how to become better stewards of nature and ourselves in our own exquisite "torture" dungeons. It's not so different than playing a fighting game and quoting the vice character domming you or vice versa; e.g.,

Your dad showing you all  
the places you missed while  
mowing the grass



Shang Tsung saying "Your soul is mine!" from Mortal Kombat or any such recreation of what really is a very old theatre trope: the baddie, the vampire, the Destroyer as a kind of "necro dom" [daddy or otherwise]. It's an act, a paradoxical form of comfort [and to which Cary-Hiroiyuki Tagawa is actually rather sleek and soft spoken compared to his deep-throated menace, onscreen<sup>114</sup>]: the sort you love to hate, but also camp.

[[source](#): r/MortalKombat]

We pick up these tricks from all over the place. Childhood aside, I actually picked the basic idea up from school and Jadis, who was

drawn to my weirdness and they mine; i.e., as a matter of lived trauma/stolen childhood something we both returned to in popular media to reclaim our stolen power from; re: Mortal Kombat as something we both liked, including the recursive,

<sup>113</sup> As Georg Predota writes in "At the Center of the Music Universe" (2017):

Niccolò Paganini (1782-1840) almost single-handedly established a new brand of performing musician, the touring virtuoso. In a brilliant strategy of self-promotion, he even circulated the rumor that he had sold his soul to the devil in exchange for his uncanny technical abilities. Contemporary eyewitnesses report that during performance "his eyes would roll into the back of his head while playing, revealing the whites. He played so intensely that women would faint and men would break out weeping" ([source](#)).

Such rumor-like tall tales continue into the present, whispering of career musicians who sold their souls to get good at their instruments, thus get all manner of shiny rewards; e.g., *Crossroads*' Steve Vai getting the girls, or Charlie Daniels' "The Devil Went Down To Georgia" (1979) offering up a fiddle of solid gold.

<sup>114</sup> From "*Mortal Kombat: The Movie - A Journey Behind The Scenes*" (timestamp: 3:41; 1995).

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*endlessly self-referential memes breaking the fourth wall. It's essentially Matthew Lewis' bad echo as camping rape, murder and undead violence; i.e., as a kind of memento mori that stretches backwards and forwards to be used for different aims [we fags love memes].*

*More to the point, it was something we could do together whenever we wanted; e.g., "murder dick" [during period sex] and "war bride scenarios" [when Jadis was domming me and I submitting to them: "I'm keeping this one!"]. Jadis, of course, was too damaged to not avoid abusing me, favoring the kind of unequal, coercive BDSM that inspired me to invent something better based on older works [more on that in just a moment]. But lucky me, I escaped and went on to pass a healthier message along through future recreation—with Cuwu and then Harmony!*

*The paradox of rape is the desire to feel safe while "in danger." It might seem corrupted and jumbled from passage to passage, then, except the corruption is the data. Capital makes us reliably feel out of control, which we must play with to regain control through intimations not just of our abuse, but older forms that fascinate us; i.e., the means, materials and methods of placing "rape" in quotes through ludo-Gothic BDSM as needing some element of vice to camp. It's often rather silly onstage and off [re: Mortal Kombat, above].*

*However, it's also incredibly hot when you get the balance right, and important, too, insofar as capital marks us for trauma; i.e., as zombies looking to recreate our own abuse in non-harmful forms! In short, we seek to feed to sate our odd appetites without harming anyone [versus police violence/DARVO arguments tied to these same spaces as "non-lethal," but in truth designed to disperse and control us by any means necessary to achieve false power and rebellion; i.e., weird canonical nerds breaking their toys but also hogging them through false preaching and penitence—a staunch refusal to change versus trying to despite past sins]. More to the point, this becomes a vital means of altering the sexist paradigm under capital, not predatorily enforcing the monomyth [ordinary people in a fantastic place] as it presently exists by abjecting the ghost of the counterfeit as it so commonly manifests: a zombie, an undead sex doll, a slave—a victim!)*

Despite the above examples' consensual nature, I strongly suspect they and their subject matter are taboo (from a bourgeois standpoint) because they lead to liberation in sex-positive forms that challenge profit; i.e., how *not* to rape people by "raping" them during rememory. When rape is impossible, the sub has the upper hand, but no one wants to be a doormat (as we'll see with me and Jadis, in the next subchapter); it helps if the dom is good at playing with "dolls" (dressing them up or hosing them down, below). This gives us plenty of room to play on/toy with the zombie-like trauma present within us—sometimes quite literally!

For example, Cuwu and I would sometimes do consent-non-consent through "somno," aka sleep sex, as a kind of zombie-like exchange (the body rather limp and doll-like when asleep):



(exhibit 37b1b: Artists: Cuwu and [Persephone van der Waard](#) after a consent-non-consent "somno" ritual. Our relationship, though brief, yielded some good examples of what I now call ludo-Gothic BDSM. For added context, these before-and-after photos of Cuwu and I show them, asleep, having taken sleeping medication so I could fuck them while they slept. They were really into the idea—liked being my little doll/cumdump! They wanted quite vocally to be visited in the night and ravished [to which I obliged while thinking of Eddie Money's Dracula spoof, "[I Think I'm in Love!](#)" 1982].

Death, as it generally is in the Gothic since Lewis and Radcliffe, wasn't an ending of anything at all, but a swelling of paradoxical life among the deathly imagery as undead, erotic, intensely seeking to give and deliver what is normally lacking in our lives onstage, and generally to [white, middle-class] women as haunted by trauma; i.e., as something for them to play with to escape abuse: graveyard sex. Or as Gladys Hall writes in "The Feminine Love of Horror" [1931]:

*LUGOSI sat in a deep chair in my library. (One does not go to his house!) A single light burned above him, making his pallid face more pallid, obliterating all but the red lights burning ceaselessly in his too-pale blue eyes. The windows were opened and there came the mournful sound of the wind in the tall boughs of the eucalyptus...Was it only the wind playing in the boughs of*

*the trees...or was it...? No answer. No answer. Better not ask. His voice came, remote and far away, dying down, rising to a penetrating.*

*He said, "When I was playing Dracula on the stage, my audiences were women. Women. There were men, too. Escorts the women had brought with them. For reasons only their dark subconscious knew. In order to establish a subtle sex intimacy. Contact. In order to cling and to feel the sensuous thrill of protection. Men did not come of their own volition. Women did. Came – and knew an ecstasy dragged from the depths of unspeakable things. Came – and then came back again. And again" (Was there gloating in his voice? Or was it my chilled imagination playing me tricks, feverish and fantastical?).*

*"Women wrote me letters. Ah, what letters women wrote me! Young girls, women from seventeen to thirty. Letters of a horrible hunger. Asking me if I cared only for maiden's blood. Asking me if I had done the play because I was in reality that sort of Thing. And through these letters, crouched in terms of shuddering, transparent fear, there ran the hideous note of – hope. They hoped that I was Dracula. They hoped that my love was the love of Dracula. They gloated over the Thing they dared not understand. It gave them something as potent as poison, as separate from their lives as death is separate from life.*

*"It was the embrace of Death their subconscious was yearning for. Death, the final, triumphant lover. It made me know that the women of America are unsatisfied, famished, craving sensation, even though it be the sensation of death draining the red blood of life. Women gloat over Death. Avidly. Morbidly. They will spend hours discussing the details of death. Over and over again. Wives will spend hours of frightful joy, telling of their husbands' or their lovers' last words. They will describe with macabre minutiae the death agonies, the death rattle, the awful ceremony of the mortician, the rites of the cemetery. Have you ever watched a woman talking about death? DON'T. It is women who crowd cemeteries, using anniversaries, the veil of sentiment, the legitimacy of grief. It is women who crouch over graves, loving them, covering them with flowers and tears. Women feed the cemeteries. Without women, the shattered vases that were our bodies would be reduced to decent ash and the ghoulish appetites of the world would be apart of folklore [[source](#): Vampire Over London: September 11th, 2011].*

*Simply put, vampires slay because they go beyond the nuclear model as something to suggest; i.e., in death-like states of playful, lucid sleep that have a sacred boundary that many will happily enter to violate their martial vows: a graveyard. Rather than recoil from the love that dare not speak its name, they practice it as a matter of good praxis and fun; e.g., the Count shows up and the lady is lying in wait—to chomp on him, Carmilla-style, as much as the other way around:*





*As Eddie Money [above] shows us, while such things were both incredibly cliché by the time Lugosi played the Count, they certainly were afterwards; and all the same they collectively account for an evolution of genderqueer discourse that, parallel to queer sexuality as a criminal condition, had been given a new evolving voice; i.e., through the sorts of horrors middle-class ladies were starting to realize*



*were better at pleasing them than their boring [and abusive] state-sanctioned grooms! Such things often were/are predatory in ways that generally leach off the queer as objectified by said women, but it's not always the case.*

*[artist: [Zuru Ota](#)]*

*Just as often, "danger" excites these women relative to what they're told is dangerous but isn't. Their pussies get wet [and their emotions high, their fangs coming out] because they know they can't get hurt, thus have some sense of control in camping things the way that Gothicists generally do: hyphenating sex [especially the orgasm and vasovagal response] and camping harm through the theatrical language of food, war and death [there's also an element of graveyard culture and paid*

*mourners/troubadours romancing loss, but I digress]; i.e., "Take me, I'm yours!" Translation: "Stake this fat ass, stab that pussy! Fuck me like you mean it! Yes, yes, yes!!!" [sex, when done right, looks/sounds like your recipient is dying—especially female, but also prostate orgasms].*



[artists: [Persephone van der Waard](#) and Cuwu]

*Like a graveyard's tombstones, these provide a memento mori to regard as keepsake; e.g., Cuwu repeatedly asking me for proof of such things—hence the photos of their doll-like, seemingly lifeless body evoking historically compromising positions, which we enacted in future play sessions where they were more awake<sup>115</sup>; i.e., seemingly harmful but in truth safely negotiated as a means of sexual healing and good, naughty fun. However, while such puzzles—of it being difficult to illustrate mutual consent through similar photos—became the premise for Sex Positivity as it currently exists, Cuwu sadly went on to drain me not just of my cum, but my wits: from*

*them being an abusive sub, a "phallic woman" but with GNC elements [from their being trans]. But, like Eddie and the lady from the music video, I still learned a valuable lesson from their shitty treatment of me: that knowledge—like the "blood" in [John Donne's 1633 "Flea" poem](#)—is passed along through the same straws and*

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<sup>115</sup> Even during the consent-non-consent sleep sessions, the medication generally wasn't strong enough to fully knock them out. Sometimes, as I fucked them, Cuwu would smile in their sleep, their rather large vampire mouth more than a little knowing as to what was about to befall them.



(model and photographer: Cuwu and [Persephone van der Waard](#))

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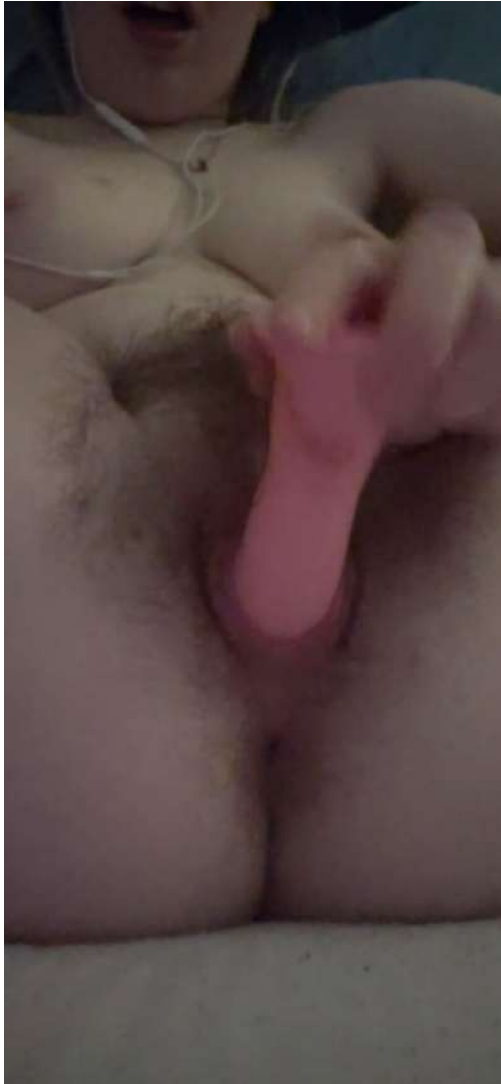
*cups; i.e., through literal fluid, but also a fluid-like, playful exchange as patently undead and hungry for, as Cuwu would put it, "more, more, more!"*



*[artists: Cuwu and [Persephone van der Waard](#)]*

*Simply put, ludo-Gothic BDSM could not exist without Cuwu's harming of me, but also the sheer fun we had mixed up in all that Gothic sublimity-made-flesh: wanting to fuck, plain and simple. A little vampy fae cloaked in red and pink, Cuwu was someone with many different sides to them, as far as that went. I want to show some of those here—not out of spite, but as a matter of respect and love; i.e., what they helped contribute towards, in the end, as a product of said feelings, thoughts, and praxis as playing with fire, Prometheus-style. This exhibit's for you, Cuwu!)*

I could continue the exhibit and want to, but we must press on. Hopefully I've at least conveyed that trauma is both the lightning that strikes you dead, and the thunder that charges your emotions and scrambles your brains. Once it visits you, you never really forget it; you *become* undead. As such, it leaves a



tremendous scar but also a memory you'll to want to revisit under elements of control that evoke its power as felt, but ultimately harmless; i.e., the return of the castle space to subvert its seasonal tortures: capital's historical-material zombies and apocalypses. "Rape" becomes the opposite of rape and profit, then; i.e., as something to challenge Capitalist Realism's usual illusions, albeit with theatrical tensions informed by the latter to grant the former its bizarre undead healing properties: regeneration by sluttily eating what the zombie can't digest and the vampire always needs more of.

(artist: Cuwu)

Playing with rape by camping changes how you think, thus see the world as an illusory space that workers can liberate themselves with. To that, old Plato had it wrong: there's no leaving the cave, "no outside" (as Derrida would put it); there is only subverting its canonical implementations through rape play.

As a matter of rape fantasy being half-real, "rape" becomes incredibly transformative and fun, appreciating humanized instances of such language reclaimed from their rapacious canonical usage (which commercializes such suffering into merchandise to buy during a gold-rush-style FOMO grift): a veteran cutie's strong ceiling/zombie-like tolerance for pleasurable pain<sup>116</sup> amid nerve-wracking conditions made into theatrical "peril" (combined with the architecture of their body/genitals—their floor, roof, wall, etc); i.e., to mess with their various prey to survive bad-faith parties and enrich good-faith parties through the same appetites, the same *thirst*.

<sup>116</sup> E.g., the vasovagal response, sub drop and frankly just really good orgasms and full-body workouts, mid-coitus. Sex *should* rock your world, making you feel temporarily dead to your surroundings; i.e., as a matter of being allowed to lose control and let down your guard (versus the usual hypervigilance of rape victims).

"Captured," then, such a being becomes suitably untouchable, entering a playful, sarcastic-yet-endearing state of devilish grace that siphons power out of traditional disempowering scenarios (of being shown who the boss is). It's not a put-down, but a position of power reclaiming itself as such—by summoning the succubus, the slut, the destroyer as monstrous-feminine, motherly and secure in her liberatory goals. Medusa might be the undead whore, the sex demon, but she's *nobody's* bitch: stacked, loud, and not to be fucked with.



(artist: [Amber Mimsy](#))

This might sound like the usual *topos* of power of women, except its Gothic-Communist, thus GNC. Camped for maximum effect/expressiveness, these allow for the zombie's continued survival as a subversive, playful means of winking at the audience, mid-"rape"; i.e., as potentially having abusers in it to provoke through camp that leads to systemic change by exposing them and raising effective boundaries during ludo-Gothic BDSM: "I'm totally being *raped* right now!" Such cryptonymy is a powerful revolutionary device, insofar as it puts capital's usual watchdogs in a precarious position where their brute, dumb force and repulsive mindset towards the monstrous-feminine

*aren't* to their usual advantage.

Like all monsters, then, zombies are made during their formative years as apocalyptic, revealing future abuse as built on past forms of theatre home to such things (quotes or not). While homemaking trauma through more skillful rape play (thus better communication) *is* the idea, such subversive, cryptonymic reclamations—of so-called "hysteria" killing our darlings by camping them with the same stigmatic, at-times-anecdotal symbols and taboo theatrical devices—can still be very intense, when challenging profit: silly *and* serious as sex and bodily functions normally are (farts, ejaculations, blurted dirty talk, zombie-like O faces, etc), but especially Gothic castle-like spaces and bodies' "rape" scenarios extending

into life as something to bravely face: our past as something to return to during rememory *without* the rose-tinted glasses of youth ("There *is* no place like home!"), nor its perceived "safety" or compelled binaries; e.g., the perils of a woman (especially a young woman) *without* a man in a man's world extending to the monstrous-feminine subverting *that* myth for the *monster's* benefit: "A man? Who needs one of *those*? Gimme the castle!"

From there, we might actively and ironically play with those decayed exaggerated spaces and beings in an involved, emergent, empathetic (culturally appreciative) sense; i.e., to take chances and have adventures in hauntological spaces of death that respect the victims of past police abuse while preventing future ones, mid-enjoyment: a tomb, an arena, and/or bedroom, but also body parts that have a certain size and shape endemic to such scenarios, etc!



(artist: [Sakimi Chan](#))

As we'll very quickly see, camping "predation" requires putting it in quotes that *aren't* automatic—indeed, must be revisited from a time when they *weren't* present; re: Jadis raping me versus Harmony and I "raping" each other to help me find peace while now reexploring Jadis' hellish curse (a kind of threat looming over my head; i.e., sometimes a person-like castle or vice versa)! Catharsis generally stems from returns to trauma, which we're not immune to. So please remember your safewords and aftercare when ridiculing rape mid-calculated-risk, lovelies! The rememory of dreams are one thing. But also, actual dolls can express "murder" and dismemberment far more literally as *memento-mori* than humans can (and profit will defend itself by tearing *you* apart, Tommy-Wiseau-style)!

We'll explore all of this even more through our undead, toy-like bodies (and body-like toys), next! Onto Jadis!

## Bad Dreams, part two: Transforming Our Zombie Selves (and Our War-like, Rapacious Toys) by Reflecting on the Wider World through the Rememory of Personal Trauma (feat. Jadis)

*My room is full of toys and things  
But filled with nothing new  
Just me and Clare alone in this  
Enchanted, placid room*

—Coburn Pharr; "Never, Never Land," on Annihilator's Never, Never Land (1990)



(artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#))

As we concluded at the end of part one, the zombie isn't merely a braindead, rotting corpse or literal infection; it's an undead presence that rises from the grave to traumatically feed inside an expanded state of exception within the home (the Imperial Core): during rape play as something to camp profit *with* (catharsis always being a matter of return to painful things). While this process *is* anisotropic, it canonically denotes continuous state violence (often sanctioned theft, rape and murder but also division; e.g., the Middle-Passage diaspora and Jim Crow segregation) towards or from particular groups over time: animals, people of color, and Pagans, versus qualities of these groups fed into fearful colonizer attitudes that are guilty of, or feeling guilty about, former colonial acts, but also current xenophobic abuse happening regularly under the same-old system—what LukHash might call, in the spirit of "Ozymandias," a "[Museum of Failed Efforts](#)" (2019); i.e., a dollhouse to play around inside. As we shall see with Jadis (who this subchapter is entirely dedicated to), such places are made from old abusive symbols; i.e., of personal trauma, which ludo-Gothic BDSM camps through rememory in order to subvert their historical freight as *normally* being dogmatic, thus menticidal.

From Volume Two, part one, I write, "Capital relies on dogma as something to internalize and serve profit on all registers—on and offstage, at home and abroad, by white male predators" ([source](#)). This extends to token agents (women acting like men, fags acting like straight people, etc), which is precisely what Jadis is and how they acted towards me. Moreover, harmful mentalities like theirs are informed by popular media such as videogames, which victims escape into only to

be bombarded with the very ideas that drive their abusers at home and abroad. The effect is often one of recruitment (cops or victims). I continue,

Regarding videogames as a neoliberal form of dogma, from the early '80s to the end of the Cold War and beyond, you went from public entertainment devices (arcades) that had a bunch of mostly young male clients cycling through them like a pimped-out sex worker... to the 1983 Atari Crash and subsequent 1985 smash-hit success of Nintendo's *Super Mario Bros.* encouraging the widespread sale of videogames in the Gothic's usual haunt: among the middle class. Except this time, the elite wanted in through ways that *didn't* exist during the Neo-Gothic revival: televisions as personal property that could funnel in their burgeoning ideology through the disguise of (expensive and highly recursive) games.

From the early days of *Space Invaders* (1978), *Pac-Man* (1980) or *Donkey Kong* (1981) to *Mario*, then (about seven years—twelve, if you start from 1973 when the elite began their first experiments with neoliberalism in South America), the usual place of neoliberal business and indoctrination transitioned from single arcade machines to larger amounts of money (from quarters to hundreds of dollars) per customer in each *household* (where there is more money to be had, and seasonally at that); i.e., a *Stepford Wife*, purchased for paychecks, not pocket change, and ready to implement the business model into the first generation of what would become the New World Order under neoliberal Capitalism: a world of us-versus-them enforced by neoliberal, monomythic copaganda's harmful simulations of *Amazonomachia* to maintain the status quo at a socio-material level; re: the shadows of a new republic's man-cave walls.

In turn, the American middle class (so called "gamer culture") would gatekeep and safeguard the elite through videogames being an acclimating device to neo-feudal territories to defend in reality (outside of the game world[s] themselves) as capital starts to decay like usual (*ibid.*).

Whatever the media, rape *is* profit under Capitalism, which relies not just on predation, but *community silence* to continue itself in bad copies, falsehoods, and double standards; e.g., speedrunning as white, male and cis-het extending to [streaming platform Kick's Nazi pedophile problem](#), but [also streamers like Dr. Disrespect](#)<sup>117</sup> protected by the system like black penitents in an Ann Radcliffe novel (more on streamers when we look at weird canonical nerds like Caleb Hart, Ian Kochinski and Man Box culture, in Volume Three). Due to the euthanasia effect, token agents enjoy similar-if-temporary protections for as long as capital holds up to the degree that they will be permitted; e.g., J.K. Rowling or Hilary Clinton; i.e.,

<sup>117</sup> Hasan Abi's "Kick Is Falling Apart" (2024) and "Why Dr. Disrespect Was Banned," (2023).

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two TERF Jadis respected for being powerful women in a man's world, yet utterly refused to criticize them for their transphobic beliefs and hawkish attitudes (all tokens are closeted to some degree). In doing so, Jadis became the first TERF (and SWERF) I experienced, first-hand.

When you're playing with rape, then (as we shall be doing with Jadis, *post hoc*), you must remember you're playing with power as something to revisit and alter for workers' benefits, aggregating on their behalf while facing the system aggregating self-righteously against you; i.e., the state employing DARVO and obfuscation in defense of profit, but also literally killing the whistleblower (e.g., Boeing; Second Thought's "[We All Know It's Happening](#)," 2024) while saying "thinking of the women and children." Token enforcers like Jadis will literally do such things in small; re: on people like me, who they segregation and brutalize through bad BDSM.

Simply put, profit defends itself, thus rape, through violence and lies, but also masks, costumes, performative roles, etc; i.e., per my PhD's thesis statement, Capitalism sexualizes everything—doing so by tokenizing outwards through a rightwards radicalization that polices and harvests labor through nature-as-monstrous-feminine. In turn, those touched by trauma tend to advertise it (that "goth" look) as something to play with. This includes playing with our abusers through our own cryptonymy—our masks and costumes, boundaries and barriers, our ludo-Gothic BDSM!

Volume Three shall discuss the praxis of this—of the appreciative irony of Gothic counterculture during demon BDSM (which, in hindsight, is more-or-less synonymous with ludo-Gothic forms). Part two of "Bad Dreams" will now consider



returning nakedly to such sites of exchange relative to childhood abuse chasing us into the future; i.e., to achieve a paradoxical state of undead healing and rememory through ourselves as toy-like, and our toys as like us: oscillating between alive *and* unalive in ways that only humans and ludo-Gothic BDSM can. Eventually we can reach a post-scarcity world, but in the *interim*, trauma will remain; keeping with paradoxes, we must evoke the threat during liminal expression, or the healing process generally won't work (what Gothic poetics like to refer to as "facing one's past"). For me, that means evoking Jadis as someone who genuinely excited me:

*(artist: Jadis)*

*Note: This section will be rather intense, insofar as it explores some of the most painful moments of my*

adult life. But such honesty is important; it's just not easy to recollect without echoes of pain, of trauma—a *frisson*, if you will. It also, in this case, involves someone very real and with means (daddy's "fuck you" money).

To that, I'm choosing to out my abuser to the degree that I'm currently comfortable. I don't want to show their face any more than I have (re: [their portrait, painted by me](#)). The above photo merely demonstrates their being a real person; i.e., someone who raped me in the past [per my generalized, expanded definition of the word](#) (re: someone who disempowered me with the specific intent to cause extensive and prolonged emotional, psychosexual harm). I would ask my readers to leave Jadis alone—not for their sake, but mine; litigation is the luxury of those with money, which I do not have, and while what I saw is true, much of it would be difficult-if-not-impossible to prove in a court of law (as rape generally is). Instead, I will let this book speak for me, chronicling what I survived as the Gothic does: as a castle-narrative to explore as composed of space and time (re: the *chronotope*). —Perse



(exhibit 37c1a: [Source](#); a Fetlife conversation between Jadis and I, when we first met. It merely establishes our similar taste in media—that we met shortly after I put up a forum post looking for Gothic roleplayers on the site. It was during the middle of the Pandemic, and they were going through a divorce [which they only finalized after we were living together—more on that in a bit]. Intrigued by my advertisement, they responded. We didn't end up roleplaying much. Instead, we

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*sexted for five weeks straight, after which I moved in with them. Shortly after that, they started abusing me for sex, but also cooking, cleaning and general housework; i.e., women's work as a means of all of the above.)*

The opening to this subchapter—**part zero, "[Jadis' Dollhouse](#)"**—covers some basic points about personal trauma and rememory as a liminal, *radicalizing* process. After that, we two further subdivisions concern myself as the test subject for what ultimately crystalized into ludo-Gothic BDSM; i.e., *my further radicalization while surviving Jadis* (who, traumatized themselves, certainly advertised their penchant for doll-like fictions, above):

- **Part one, "[Meeting Jadis](#)"**: Explores how Jadis and I met—indeed, were attracted by our mutual weirdness and trauma—and related to each other through toys that were equally sexy and weird. Divides in two halves, which explore further ludo-Gothic qualities to dolls useful during BDSM, which I had to reclaim from Jadis to eventually escape them and write this book with/about.
- **Part two, "[Escaping Jadis](#)"**: Articulates my escape from my abuser, detailing the tremendous feelings I felt at the time (and which shaped my scholarly and artistic work afterwards, including ludo-Gothic BDSM).

In short, ludo-Gothic BDSM happened through painful reflection regarding my childhood, but also its *consequences* relaid in Gothic language, theory and experience; i.e., writing these portions about Jadis and I, thinking about them, then writing *the three books that came after* but which I published *before* the Jadis elements, which I'm returning to *now* (as a Gothic heroine would: starting with letters that lead me back to a site of decayed abuse inside my mind, my dreams, my work as haunted by Jadis).

All this being said, I couldn't have formulated my arguments without trying to find love, getting hurt, and struggling to heal afterwards by assembling and weighing everything as a profound and complicated object lesson. Things come home to roost as ghosts of themselves, and generally overlap with redoublings thereof; i.e., Harmony's "castle" vs Jadis' as facing off when *I* go back to a shared chronotope: writing the Jadis pages *before* meeting Harmony to then mutually act out these scenes *again* to regain power for us *both*. As such, these specific passages (and much of the rest of the Monster Modules) will seem somewhat dated compared to the opening chapter and everything we've previously examined having come afterwards.

Except, that's precisely the point: a revival, for which I return to older passages to better understand how I conceived ideas I might *otherwise* take for granted. We're literally conducting rememory by looking at my recollections of/reflections on the past as aged, undead; i.e., of a previous zombie moment in

time to dig up and play with again through holistic expression: as a matter of recursive revisitation and regeneration, always falling apart and out-of-point but coming together by virtue of transformation into something better. Said moments aren't something I want to change, here, but stick to; i.e., as things to play *out* by letting you (as much as me) play *with* it yourselves, relatively unaltered: the ghost of *my* past abuse, whispering of Jadis' abuse of me, post-seduction (with songs like Emily Portman's 2010 "[Two Sisters](#)," below):

And yonder sits my sister the queen  
 Oleander yolling  
 She drownèd me in the cold, cold stream  
 Down in the waters rolling ([source](#): Genius).

Changing them too much, and in effect their tune, kind of defeats the point, I would think. There will be revisions and at times playful, even cheeky editions to make things more bearable than they might be completely unfiltered, just not substantial ones that transform/camp anything to an unrecognizable degree. This is *my* rape we're talking about and I don't want to disguise that. Instead, I'll let the things that befell me haunt you amid my usual academic architecture and earthly variables reenacting older dooms than mine tied to the same system. That smaller princess Jadis tortured under the guise of martyred virtue? Like all the dead, she's still there in the dark, waiting for you...



Before we get to Jadis and my ghost inside the dollhouse, though, let's go over some of these broad-but-important ideas I mentioned that make up said house (and its dolls)...

## The Rememory of Personal Trauma, part zero: Back to Jadis' Dollhouse, the Birthplace of Ludo-Gothic BDSM; Some Points about Dolls

"Welcome home, Michael!"

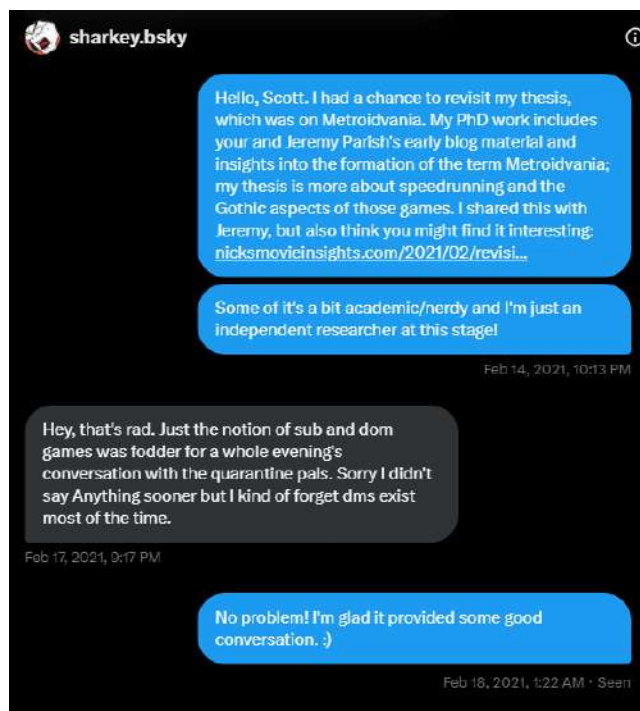
—Laurie Strode, to Michael Myers, *Halloween* (2018)

I met Jadis in April 2019, several years into my postgraduate work. While their abuse certainly catalyzed my creating of ludo-Gothic BDSM, the process was admittedly already underway by the time we crossed paths. Yes, the word first appeared after our separation—in [Volume Zero](#), October 8th, 2023—but I had already been academically flirting with the idea for nearly several years<sup>118</sup> before meeting Jadis (my grad work started in 2017 [and I published my master's thesis, December 2018](#)); not to mention, I had conceptualized the giving of rings and

<sup>118</sup> I.e., my first writings of it appeared in "Our Ludic Masters: The Dominating Game Space" (2021):

Remember what I said about consent? In this manner, the *Metroidvania* players consent to the game by adopting a submissive position. Most people sexualize BDSM, but power is exchanged in any scenario, sexual or otherwise. This being said, Gothic power exchanges are often sexualized. Samus is vulnerable when denuded, her naked body exposed to the hostile alien menace (re: the end scene from *Alien*). *Metroidvania* conjure dominance and submission through a player that winds up "on the hip" (an old expression that means "to be at a disadvantage"). Another way to think of it is, the player is the bottom, and they're being topped by the game ([source](#)).

Scott Sharkey loved the idea:



collars as a kind of fantastical BDSM in my own fiction writing as early as high school, which was influenced by Tolkien (from Volume One):

- 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*.



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

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 [above]. 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) [[source](#), pg. 273-274].

- 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 [[ibid.](#), pg. 276].
- 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 [...] 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) [[ibid.](#), pg. 279].
- 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) [*ibid.*, pg.282].

Given their proficiency in BDSM, though, I doubt the idea would have come to fruition as it did without Jadis' "help."

Given that time is a circle and not a straight line, though, I want to add that isolating any first-mover is kind of arbitrary. Beyond my childhood/formative years, Zeuhl put me on a collision course with Jadis, and Jadis sent me towards Cuwu, Bay and Harmony (among others), bringing us to this exact moment in time. Instead of pinning it all on Jadis, then, the entire subchapter seeks to consider Jadis' site of abuse as something to raise and rebuild in small; i.e., during the rememory process concerned my personal abuse as something to resurrect and play with by returning home to face the music again: as a matter of playtime.

To that, part zero of "Personal Trauma" outlines Jadis as someone to summon during liminal expression, specifically ludo-Gothic BDSM as coming home to its own origins. To that, the ensuing dollhouse has been made to safely invigilate my unironic Great Destroyer and learn from what they did to me; i.e., their harm as emblematic of capital's business-as-usual, its seasonal rapes of nature through past victims commercialized in various ways (re: Pagans and Halloween). All become a kind of cultural zombie to transform away from systemic harm by reflecting on my personal trauma. As something to join with a broader pedagogy of the oppressed, doing so challenges rape as a matter of profit under capital. Rape equals profit through Capitalism, and Jadis raped me to profit in all the usual ways

that capital does—  
playing with my  
emotions like a doll  
they could slowly break.



([source](#): Ray Morse's "Blumhouse Surprises CinemaCon with Terrifying Halloween Trailer, 2018)



Whatever the register and scale, the trick to subverting rape and its trauma during ludo-Gothic BDSM is, of course, irony. We summon the destroyer less as Michael Myers (and his killer's doll-like mask) and any legitimate capacity to inflict harm, but instead as something that could never actually destroy us. In doing so, the summoning speaks to the Imperial Boomerang's proverbial "chickens" coming home to roost; i.e., the grim harvest reifying through a toothless destroyer persona felt during calculated risk, a death ritual. Imagine, for fun, a Mr. Stay Puft, that unlike *Ghostbusters*, actually speaks to the sorts of abuses Michael's fatal nostalgia intimates—a remake, to use the industry term, of a reckoning tied to the monstrous-feminine coming to collect.

Amongst all of that complicated forgery are two basic things: the ghost of the counterfeit as something to either abject/alienate or dance with, thus humanize and understand, but also the awesome means to break Capitalist Realism; i.e., Hamlet's play to "catch the conscience of the king!"

Child or not, ask someone to remember past abuse, and they will invariably create a home with a monster inside; i.e., something *unheimlich* (alien) that, despite its foreign element, actually *belongs* there: as a matter of unaddressed abuse on a systemic level bleeding into the rememory of daily life under said system relaid through personal experience. While this includes the miniature, Volume Zero already examined the kind of anti-Semitic counterfeits on display in stories like *Hereditary* as aping older and older ones in defense, to some extent, of capital (re: *Rosemary's Baby* but also much further back, to *Hammer of Witches*).



Per our castle-narrative's usual *mise-en-abyme*, then, we're left with the dollhouse as a particular kind of Gothic *poiesis* I want to utilize and stress when bringing *Jadis*

back to life: a location, but specifically a recursive, anisotropic, concentric ordeal tied to a likeness of the home as *cryptomimetically* invaded by its own history that can, per the Gothic, get up and move around, but also be *reinvented*, mid-loop. It's zombie-like, to be sure, but also ghostly and vampiric as well; i.e., an undead recreation of Capitalism-in-small as hopelessly imbricated with us and our own fragmented, painful memories: embroiled in the chronotope's messy assemblage bouncing back and forth on the same hellish mirror's black glass. Simply put, rememory's a bitch, but it and its doll-like devices aren't monopolized by anyone.

As previously stated, part zero of this subchapter covers some basic points about personal trauma and rememory as a radicalizing process using dolls; i.e., ludo-Gothic BDSM as my attempts to not only heal myself-as-undead from Jadis' abuse, but heal, thus transform the world from those *like* Jadis and the criminogenic factors that give rise to such tragedies past, present and future; i.e., normally dressed up as "play" in bad faith. To kill Jadis' power and by extension capital's, though, we'll have to summon them home to such places, using dolls and BDSM: to kill their potential to rise inside/outside ourselves and bring rise to abuse that oscillates, in a half-real sense, between the imaginary and the real, the person and the place.

Sp why dolls and BDSM? In terms of a thesis argument, dolls are central to the rememory process *as* undead, which involves feeding and BDSM. And as we've established (from my modular thesis):

Poetically there's not much difference functionally-speaking between feeding and transformation. As a kind of power/knowledge exchange, each has a rich, unique history woven into itself; i.e., as someone's or some society's older preference serving as monstrous code to proudly shape into cryptonymic cultural forms with their own double operations: showing and concealing or vice versa regarding the Gothic's usual erotic medieval paradoxes.

In turn, rememory uses Gothic poetics that, when played with in irony forms, summon up old memories tried to games of power and exchange that we can use after the fact; i.e., to reclaim our power as taken from us through state-sanctioned forms and byproducts (which domestic abuse fundamentally is: the policing of property through copaganda [and other criminogenic conditions/dogma] to maintain the nuclear family as part of a settler colony project).

For example, when Jadis and I first roleplayed online, we played over text to see if we were even sexually compatible before doing roleplays. The scenario was a simple hook up, me coming to them. I knocked and they answered; they asked what I'd like to drink. Playing along, I replied, "A root beer!" After they "got" me one from the imaginary fridge, we made small talk and then had sex (sexting and exchanging photos). Turns out, we were *very* compatible (we sexted for five weeks straight, after which they came to collect me). However, as a token of their appreciation of the original opening scene, Jadis also brought an actual bottle of root beer with them to Michigan when they came to take me to Florida.

To be honest, it's frankly a cute memory and one I had forgotten until tonight when taking notes for these revisions. Unfortunately Jadis tacitly rescinded the agreements they had with me, but only *after* I was in Florida (all of my immediate family live in Michigan); i.e., abusing the doll-like mechanics of Gothic poetics and BDSM by treating me like a doll they could abuse by virtue of the

unequal side of our relationship: the material factors. But those sorry details don't make the root beer memory any less touching to me; it was before the rapes took place, and frankly provides a cute, bittersweet reminder of what lowered my defenses to start with. Surviving all of the above (with anecdotes to spare), I'll be recollecting such events for the rest of the subchapter, but want to comment on various oddities for those who survive as I did.

To that, sex workers post-survival are generally left feeling alienated by their labor as something they want to repurpose to their advantage; i.e., wanting to get down to business (a special set of skills) but *not* get jerked around by future partners, FWBs, fuck buddies, what-have-you: to be good at handling "joysticks" but using them to steer the owner (and us holding them) towards something we both want. In terms of *that*, sex workers generally have to be our own pimps, requiring some inventiveness to achieve liberation while working out in the world, trying to survive; i.e., making up the rules of what is exchanged for what, tit for proverbial tat; e.g., cheeseburgers for sex, or cuddles for slow walks on the beach. It really doesn't matter what, provided the rules are clearly expressed and help deviate the proceedings away from the usual historical outcomes the state is built to achieve: rape.

Or so it would seem. As we'll see with Jadis, rapists come to you with smiles, but often betray themselves by always feeling a bit off (red flags): punishers presenting as benevolent, but in masks/costumes that quickly slip to show their true colors.



To that, another player can still harm you despite *seeming* to be compatible and down to fuck, but also after establishing a social-(a)sexual agreement that *isn't*

a marriage contract: "I work, you fuck me." That's basically what Jadis and I agreed to, which seemed fair on its face (we'll get to the particulars between Jadis and I, in part one of the subchapter). Indeed, a sex worker *relies* on such agreements because those, combined with their trade (of sex exchanged for different things), are a common skill we rely on as sacred; i.e., tantamount to our survival as sex workers.

The whole thing sounds simple enough in theory—to fuck someone every day provided the person plays by the rules we *both* establish and *doesn't* harm us in the bargain—but we're also doing it knowing such contracts are built on trust in the face of regular historical abuses; i.e., performed by bad actors doing what capital always does: profit as a matter of rape per settler-colonial (Cartesian, heteronormative) models of power exchange. The two go hand-in-hand under capital, Capitalism being the dominant socio-economic force on planet Earth. As we go back into the world with the post-abuse skills we've gained to forge new destinies, post-abuse, it can feel a bit like Sarah Connor's "dark highway at night; to be in uncharted territory making up history as we go along." We want to liberate ourselves using what we got, but as the old saying goes, "Once bitten, twice shy!"



It becomes a prison, a holding cell, one shared with ghosts of old lovers, dead and gone:

The name of the game, then, is determining compatibility *alongside* intent while establishing the rules between individual players seeking to encourage the valuing of nature and basic human

rights across all aspects of society (until they become second-nature, recultivating the Superstructure). This ultimately takes someone (or multiple people<sup>119</sup>) for us to work with; i.e., as a matter of playing house/with dolls through BDSM, but also experimentation and ultimately rememory through them for the interrogation and negotiation of power and trauma as undead. Arbitrating a product (sex and other labor types) that has infinite value, we play to remember the fun bits (re: Jadis' root beer) and the painful ones (re: Jadis being happier raping me than respecting our agreements). These, in turn, occur within calculated risk as a safe space/dialog

<sup>119</sup> E.g., Tim, Jadis' ex, living with us under the same roof. I suggested the idea to Jadis while the three of us went out for pizza. After they signed the paperwork, annulling their marriage (after me pestering them to do so for over a year), we went back to Tim's mother's, walking past her to Tim's bedroom (each of us waving hello before shutting the door). Once inside, I suggested we fool around, as we had planned. Soon, I had Jadis on their back, spreading their legs and fucking their pussy while Tim watched. As I got close to orgasm, both of them had to tell me to keep it down and not fuck Jadis quite so hard because—in the heat of the moment (Jadis' pussy felt really tight and I loved doing it front of their ex)—I'd completely forgotten that Tim's mom was in the living room! Opps!

on things that are funny *and* fucked up, yielding Austenian ironies ("a truth universally acknowledged"); i.e., we're told how things should be, then learn that they actually can be whatever we *want* them to be, mid-play.

For example, my friend Mavis discovered this, one night, when dealing with an obscene phone caller named Marty back in the day. One night in the '80s, the landline ringing woke Mavis up (there was no Internet or cell phones back then, except car phones for rich people). They got up and answered it. "What are you wearing?" the voice on the other end asked. "Oh, I'm naked!" Mavis replied. The caller paused, clearly surprised. "Really?" they asked, to which Mavis replied, "Yup!" It was a completely random event, but one that Mavis—a sex worker earlier in their life but now involved with an unfaithful, abusive man—was able to regain some feeling of agency doing (and combating boredom): acting like a "doll"; i.e., a hot piece of ass someone *couldn't* control unless *Mavis* wanted them to. The telephone call was something of a buffer, in that respect (similar to "flashing" on the Internet, per revolutionary cryptonymy's acts of showing and hiding things to assist in worker liberation).



([source](#): Wikimedia)

Before we proceed onto my personal trauma with Jadis as something I reclaimed through dolls as an undead rememory device, I want to give a broad, generalized note about dolls as a matter of practice (ourselves as doll-like); i.e., one that that applies to the rest of the subchapter and its place in the Undead Module (indented for

emphasis):

The interrogation of trauma is often regressive, especially with hindsight and know-how to better highlight that fact. For example, the transformation of my undead self through the rememory of personal trauma with Jadis concerns dolls; i.e., how they factored into ludo-Gothic BDSM as evolving into itself. Except, there's a catch: dolls aren't explicitly undead. In fact, they aren't explicitly *anything*. A doll is a "blank monster," insofar as it can be, undead, demonic, and/or animalistic/anthropomorphic.

Furthermore, while our focus here will be interrogating and negotiating trauma, this occurs through BDSM, which is primarily a *demonic* characteristic; likewise, my relationship to Jadis was one of dolls that were often undead, demonic *and* nature-themed to varying degrees. Simply put, they had trauma, liked BDSM, and were an entomologist who worked in pest

control. So I was exposed to all of the things that went into what eventually became Gothic Communism, its modules and, by extension, ludo-Gothic BDSM!

Even so, the emphasis of this subchapter *is* still the rememory of personal *trauma* (an undead characteristic) *through* BDSM, which the undead can still do, albeit by feeding in a vitalistic sense; i.e., passing knowledge and/or power through the metaphorical exchange of various kinds of essence. In other words, they tend to exchange knowledge and/or power through feeding and instinctual behaviors that tie/contribute to trauma versus bartering in any kind of way that seems outwardly intelligent or divorced from unthinking appetites.

Of course, there *is* the nature of the Faustian bargain, which generally has a predatory component to it that *could* be considered feeding with a bit of poetic leeway (to feast on one's soul, versus owning it). But these kinds of poetic distinctions won't really matter in the following subchapter—save to clarify that I'm mostly talking about dolls, which again can be assigned any monstrous quality you want. I merely want to mention some of these exceptions now to account for the incongruous elements this subchapter will invariably yield when parsed; i.e., regarding the holistic nature of its examination into my history with Jadis and our combined monstrous poetics informing liberation as a poetic ordeal, thus coming equipped with poetic *exceptions*; e.g., *The Night House* being concerned with trauma and ghosts, only to gradually shift focus away from the undead towards a sex demon<sup>120</sup> obsessed with psychosexual domination.

Despite these incongruities, I will try to emphasize all of my examples in this subchapter through an undead lens; i.e., even when they are predominantly demonic according to my definitions. This can go either way with dolls (and especially with BDSM through dolls). Keeping with the Undead Module, though, we'll still be considering their undead potential, first and foremost. There will doubtless also be lingering issues and questions we won't be able to answer here about demons, and this subchapter is holistic and idiosyncratic enough (re: proto-ludo-Gothic BDSM and dolls) that it probably deserves its own module (or a spot somewhere in the Poetry Module). Except, I've since organized it as a deliberate segue between "The

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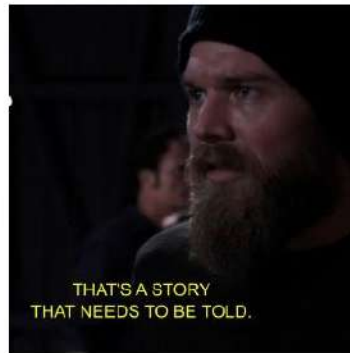
<sup>120</sup> Comparable with Barker's Cenobites, which themselves have undead components; i.e., on par with medieval flagellants who, mortifying their flesh, also sold their souls. This, suitably enough, adheres to body transformation as torturous in ways that yield an undead aesthetic. The same goes for Vecna and the xenomorph as following a similar undead flagellant motif (and Giger's monster having postcolonial, monstrous-feminine *and* chimeric elements). To that, monsters in general both a) tend to function as a matter of poetic expression/continuous evolution, whereupon definitions tend to come later (if at all); and b) tend to have interchangeable uses amid the modular components. It's all about how you look at it and apply it as a matter of poetics, consumption and criticism (re: monsters are poetics lens that can humanize those inside the state of exception).

Imperial Boomerang" and "The Monomyth" subchapters; it's not going anywhere.

Given the subchapter's taking down roots, then, I'll be focusing on formative trauma while keeping the doll subchapter *in* the Undead Module. Rest assured, demons will get their time in the sun, later in the volume!

Another way to look at dolls is they're fun. Simply put, I like them; fetishes are generally doll-like, reducing things to an abstract means of play that nonetheless concerns the ritualistic summoning of trauma, like a voodoo doll, into something ultimately *unable* to cause harm: "Show us on the doll, where they touched you." Simply put, dolls are useful when telling things that might otherwise be too difficult (or dangerous) to say or act out.

More to the point, dolls are fun play with—to dress up and fuck/otherwise engage with less by literal means, alone, and more in relation to other people as a kind of theatre that invokes objectification as an ontological statement one occupies and moves through. In doing so, these various Russian dolls speak to the human condition as alienized under capital as a settler-colonial structure over space-time;



re: Harmony and I engaging among such spirits like a kind of interactive data bouncing between us and our various devices, mid-castle-narrative; i.e., me fucking of my doll as we do consent-non-consent, but also while thinking about stories that would seem to theatrically point to hidden realities for us to wonder and laugh about versus feeling fearful towards:

Let's proceed. Before we get to Jadis in parts one and two, I want to go over ludo-Gothic BDSM—what it is, followed by its process of exchange using Gothic poetics,

and finally its dialectical-material qualities bucking the Gothic's psychoanalytic side of things.

First, a reiteration of the concept at large, based on what we've covered so far and will continue to explore (indented for emphasis):

Capital is as old as zombies, and zombies, acting, shelter and prostitution ("dolls") are far older still. But *under* capital and its powerful illusions, they allow us to regress and play with power to release anxiety and dispel abjection; i.e., through castled clichés during calculated risk; e.g., fucking the queen, the mistress, the sire's daughter and, in effect, "doing one's duty" as a matter of Gothic innuendo/euphemism (which generally combine food, death, war and rape into mixed metaphors; e.g., "to cook one's goose" or "butter one's biscuit") and cutesy anachronisms regarding the hushed medieval reality of incestuous procreation.



This "ludo-Gothic BDSM" plays with rape by encapsulating its lived realities in general; e.g., with a wife (or daughter) who can't consent, the servant put to heel, the vengeful or covetous man, etc, as a historical-material means of living in the castle/storming it as a theatrical, fourth-dimensional, half-real matter of apocalypse. However

in-between, though, such liminalities are always informed by earlier forms of rape and warfare evoked during fascism in the present space and time; i.e., to a hauntological time period I've called "pre-fascism," or essentially the medieval period as a matter of discourse that loops in on itself, *mise-en-abyme*, as "ancient." Despite the quotes, though, this discourse is as old as our aforementioned zombies, rape, acting and prostitution, including a Quixotic effect Plato would describe as being "in the cave."

That's essentially what abjection is, you see, what zombies are as a matter thereof—only incomprehensible horrors by virtue of emotional/Gothic unintelligence, immaturity and deflated class/cultural awareness (which include racial factors) becoming a mind prison, a menticide that serves profit through unironic violence. When the voices of the dead return, said prison leads those trammled by state illusions (canonical Gothic Romances) to cut off Medusa's head: to silence her and nature as monstrous-feminine, *then keep harvesting them*. Sex—though specifically sex with monsters through general kink activities that practice boundary-forming and consent as an asexual exchange—is the best place to start as far as reversing abjection goes (along with the other main Gothic theories per our iconoclastic doubles, synthetic oppositional groupings and creative successes achieving the basics: anger/gossip, monsters and camp); it's what ludo-Gothic BDSM is all about!

Per the Wisdom of the Ancients, or cultural understanding of the imaginary past, we summon said "past" as counterfeit (apocalypse) to better



understand it, but also transform it to suit our needs; i.e., playing with it to dispel its canonical power in favor worker power that humanizes the zombie as person, house, toy and childhood, but also rape and war as "dead," in quotes!

In exploring ludo-Gothic BDSM through Jadis, we'll be starting with *my* zombie-like childhood, toys and relationships as doll-like. As this subchapter segues into the next, though, we'll be moving onto older forms of undead that, like history itself, are constantly being played with through the monomyth, hence dragged forward out from a hauntological shadow zone felt during these kinds of performative games: the Cycle of Kings per various tyrants and imposing old guys; i.e., great men of history expressed as spectres of "Caesar" (or Marx) to attain a Numinous effect.

More on that *after* we've dealt with Jadis. After all, they taught me how to *abuse* BDSM, which I have since tried very hard to subvert. But I must abstract their return to do so; i.e., as a demonic, doll-like place to acquire forbidden knowledge, but also an undead place to feed and recover from trauma as forever a part of me: to go to and die inside, but also bring *back* the dead as fascist or anti-fascist to varying degrees. Something is always given and received. In turn, this might raise some purely philosophical questions, such as, "Can a doll be dead if it was never truly alive?"

While admittedly fun to think about, I want to encourage you to play with these things as a matter of theatrical application; i.e., that make you more emotionally and Gothically intelligent, thus sex positive, mid-synthesis. As you apply yourselves to play through ludo-Gothic BDSM, it should become second-nature; i.e., a if-not-simple-then-at-least-practical means of cultivating good social-sexual habits that contribute to daily activism: as a lingual, societal and material means of engagement between workers and the world, including its half-real past.

To that, while part two of "Personal Trauma" specifically investigates the reclaiming of dolls and doll-like zombie pieces (exhibit 38a-38b4), a dollhouse is really no different in practice than a Gothic castle (or some such place; re: the danger disco). Such revivals are ultimately necessary if we are to learn from the past, thus escape its routine, historical-material abuse under state myopias. This rememory happens in more ways than one—to literally be buried inside, but also to confront wild, reclaimed-by-nature, overcome-with-decay aspects about it that are less rosy than we care to admit upon reinspection as adults.

Bear in mind, doing so isn't meant to trap us in stasis, but to invoke live burial, hence undeath, as a feeling that puts us in touch with the world around us supplying the clues; i.e., as between a living and dead position that best reflects our lived trauma as something a) we survived, and b) that survives the dead. Live burial, then, is a kind of forward-facing regression, one whose death therapy grants an apocalypse unto itself. As such, Jadis' dollhouse is an undead structure I made

of their likeness; i.e., as a kind of rape play to yield better future outcomes according to a cannibalistic<sup>121</sup> legacy that yields routine Gothic confusions and demises, but also rebirths, resurrections, returns.

Inside the following pages, these effects play out in deliciously recursive, painfully erotic forms: entombed through hubris as something to theatrically deal "death" unto ourselves and those who would harm us. Once inside the dollhouse (or Metroidvania, below), *schadenfreude* (and other complex sensations linked to generational trauma) reliably emerge to—given the right amount of attention and care—become suitably palliative during rape play as cathartic; i.e., a safe space to avoid actual harm inside as having happened during past attempts having already



gone back to a given childhood home haunted by past invasions coming back, back, back; e.g., the Terminator to 1984, Jonathan Morris and Charlotte Aulin into different fatal portraits (specially from *Portrait of Ruin*, left), and the heroine from *Smile* (2022). Each time, it's the corpse of empire displaced into a legendary ruin populated with imaginary monsters, imposters, damsels, knights, etc, as collectively speaking to real atrocities; i.e., that secret spell we've been chasing.

([source Tumblr post](#), *Castlevania Gallery*: May 22nd, 2016)

Per the process of abjection, the canonical goal is always to kill the past as undead, hence save the future for different in-groups afraid of zombies. But they can't monopolize the procedure (or its violence) inside the state of exception. Whether for witches, witch hunters, or one disguised as the other (undercover cops/rebels), it's like a washing machine stuck on spin cycle; i.e., always spinning with us *inside* it, trying to get clean in the same soapy water as haunted by various inescapable ghosts (of the counterfeit, of Caesar or Marx). Well past a healthy saturation point, there's simply no avoiding the ambiguity that comes from prolonged contact with such things as alien, and censorship is pointless/conducive to genocide; we can

<sup>121</sup> Re: *The People under the Stairs* (the previous page), which literally involves a cannibal Nazi BDSM "family" that, for all intents and purposes, extends to the house as ravenous—a people and a place that kidnaps and eats children (white or non-white) in a once-gentrified neighborhood that has now decayed to alienate them as Dracula is from his imaginary homeland. While Nazis and Communists generally occupy the same performative shadow zone, here the film feels anti-fascist due to its positive inclusive message about race; i.e., of finding ways to expose predators and heal from generational trauma as linked to a specific site of neighborhood abuse—an urban legend!

only play with such things transparently to try and achieve a better outcome: : by going *in* circles to achieve transformation.

These are clearly complicated feelings with complicated histories of play occurring over time using Gothic poetics. So it's important to release them into society as a matter of *de facto* education, not profit for the sake of making the middle class horny and anxious without concern for the consequences (the white director/vice character problem). Whatever you create or grapple with yourselves, do so responsibly and in ways that invigilate your id-like extensions to an informed, *prepared* audience.

To that, I'll just give just our earlier rule of thumb: residence or resident, "whatever a monster's shape (size difference) or modular class (undead, demonic, animalistic), if it challenges the profit motive, it's probably sex-positive; i.e., doesn't instruct through unironic sexual coercion and rape" when evoking the master/slave (the heel and babyface, in kayfabe<sup>122</sup> circles), destroyer/sacrifice or abusive parent/child (the narcissistic mother or rapacious father): the dos and don'ts of toxic love, essentially! It can be a real treat to do "one's duty" not as a dreaded task, at all, but an act of mutually consensual fun; i.e., one had between, for all intents and purposes, equals by matter of exchange during ludo-Gothic BDSM: between two consent parties playing the zombie and the summoner (to varying degrees, double standards, fetishes and clichés, etc)!



(artist: [Evul](#))

Now that we've outlined ludo-Gothic BDSM as a historical-material process, let's unpack its ability *to* exchange; i.e., as part of the ludo-Gothic process, whose toys and play are a BDSM means of exchange concerning trauma (and power) as something to confront during calculated risk.

There's sex-positive and sex-coercive instances of this, hence good and bad play/acting/education during BDSM. For sex-coercive forms, the vector needn't be strictly "rotten" in its appearance, though—just repressed through transgenerational violence that makes one *feel* undead, thus raped; i.e., belonging to the abused group and its devastated history directly or sitting adjacent to them

<sup>122</sup> Which classically concerns overcoming manufactured adversity tied to profit, versus expressing equality as the so-called "fair fight." Capital doesn't fight fair (e.g., videogames: canonical metas serve profit in a half-real sense; i.e., speedrunners and competitive fighters [especially white/tokenized examples] don't bite the hand that feeds, thus are historically poor activists)!

from a fearful vantage point, a point of entry into the vector of exchange as traumatic; e.g., white women made to fear non-white men (especially African American men) as universal rapists "eating" them, but really any type of destroyer that can be fetishized to worship the dragon as something adopted to favor white men as the preferred dominator (e.g., serial killers and feudal lords, but also dragon masters, below). Through ludo-Gothic BDSM as an ironic process, then, "rape" becomes something to play with in ways that *don't* assist/defend the nuclear family model; i.e., despite classically being used as guilty pleasure by conservative agents capitalizing on the ghost of the counterfeit.

In this respect, randomly threatening Princess Peach with Bowser's monster cock (exhibit 37c1b, below) can easily make our point, *provided* its apocalyptic revelation comments on state trauma as repressed in zombie-like fashion; i.e., lobotomized, but also enforced during nightmarish, hauntological conditions of us-versus-them peril. Faced with the king's "scepter," a recoiling Peach can feel the creeping return of a barbaric, tyrannical past that never really left; i.e., the constant rape of white, Western women by their husbands as repressed, but also evoked per rememory by observing and performing xenophiles alike through a particularly nostalgic performance of unequal power exchange set to traditional markers thereof: the medieval despot as a kind of undead daddy dom, a reaper that *doesn't* take the harvest for all its worth.

Except, this only becomes ludo-Gothic BDSM, thus cathartic, through revolutionary cryptonymy as visually fearsome, but coded paradoxically and ironically for maximum safety by players: to generate nerves that calm us, in spaces that actually allow for it. "Yeah, baby! Butter *my* biscuit! And I ain't talkin' 'bout love! Mommy wants to *fuck* and she got it *bad!*"



(exhibit 37c1b: Artist, left: [Toxxy Kiss](#); right: unknown. The devil is in the details; the dragon as a kind of demon lover is, from a classical standpoint, a medieval, masculine rarefaction of greed, cruelty and evil: the fierce dominant,

death-dealing performer famously associated with feudal tyrants of an especially legendary cruelty—i.e., the now-vampiric personas associated with the order of the dragon, namely Dracula, the Impaler [and older "draconian" leaders not explicitly tied to the dragon symbol; e.g., Genghis Khan] but also the Nazi as something to camp in oft-ambiguous ways: pointing hauntologically to such grim histories.

*To that, the phrase "monster cock" promises several things all at once: a dick of unusual size, used by its fearsome, "undead" owner to commit performative acts of psychosexual violence [the bloodthirsty invader] associated with a barbaric past revived in the present. All become repressed under Capitalism, demanding reunion through various sex-positive BDSM rituals whose rememory struggles to forget and remember what has become lost; e.g., Peach—despite being small, dainty and fair—discovering that she enjoys the ritualized "peril" of the Koopa King's "arsenal," his huge zombie-king cock spreading her open; i.e., his Numinous boner running a train on her temple. Beyond the ghost of the counterfeit trapping the damsel between abject terror and rapt fascination, her sticky reunion with Bowser as a perceived "master" should strive to push beyond mere teasing and use good-faith xenophilia to transmute the heteronormative order [the spiked cock ring subverting the master's collar as a servile hound's anti-predation variant].*

*After all, the zombie, for persons of privilege, is a ravenous symbol of guilt that climbs out of a buried past—either a tyrant of the status quo or victims of said tyrant's genocide. To proceed onto better times, the privileged must use ludo-Gothic BDSM to face the half-hidden violence that continues against oppressed groups; i.e., by subverting the repressed horrors of Capitalism once uncovered in sex-positive-albeit-transgressive subversions; e.g., Peach's "rape.")*

While time is always moving forwards, its historical-material elements come back around again. Memory is finite under the best of circumstances, then (with current beneficiaries under Capitalism unable to remember the abuses of their forefathers); the closer to death and trauma one is (which one always is under capital's socio-material conditions), the less reliable memory is (e.g., the failing memory of slaves, but also that of tyrants and Western histories under fascism, which we'll explore in "Bad Dreams," part three). Under repressed, invented conditions like these, the state's constant bloodletting occurs through a plethora of playful devices that imperil memory with undead intimations of trauma, most notably weapons as both historical commentaries and eye-catching onstage since ancient times (sword are shiny and reflect light, but they're also sharp and promote danger and excitement in traditionally "phallic" ways).

Per the dialectic of the alien (and the harvest, for that matter), guns and knives (and other devices to police sex and force with) abstract and dislocate state violence as fetishized, applying it directly to zombie targets by zombie attackers of various kinds; i.e., *people* as the crop, pareidolically rendering themselves unto profit as something felt across different aspects of itself, mid-reaping:



Sex toys, on the other hand, can fetishize the targets themselves, primarily their genitals as xenophilic instruments of *performative* "violence" that resemble such abuse (often as sports-like; i.e., what queer parlance refers to as "pitchers" and

"catchers"). Attributed to fearsome bodies, the zombie dildo or sleeve can present as traditionally masculine and feminine, but also dark, savage and animalistic. Often an indication of gross, indecent, even vengeful appetite from beyond the grave, it can just as easily be a living likeness of things that are so commonly farmed under capital for their labor value; i.e., as something to exploit in ways that cheapen whatever's "on tap"—flesh, but also symbolic, theatrical elements that express such things in animalistic forms: a monopoly on monsters milked, thus drained of their worth for the elite, and which we must reclaim together using what we got!

Regardless of the exact form taken, xenophilic examples subvert canonical doubles and their monopolies, which pointedly demonize the exchange as xenophobic; i.e., by inviting fascist reprisals that dehumanize the so-called "walking dead" through provocations of unironic, fear-inducing violence: "the enemy is both weak and strong" according to whatever fetishized harm they inflict or endure. The point of *xenophobic* necrophilia isn't to heal, but harm in highly rapacious ways (e.g., the myth of the black male rapist, exhibit 52e). Subverting *that* requires either humanizing the thing being exploited, or otherwise featuring it as something to treat humanely!

For example, Bovine Harlot (next page) exemplifies humanizing the harvest through a common device: anthropomorphism (something the "Call of the Wild" chapter will explore at length, during the Demon Module). As a theatrical matter of the human and the cow anthropomorphically intertwined, these are "ancient" myths insofar as their original historical function (from a Western standpoint) is effectively being camped through a modern identity (of the minotaur) through sex-and-gender conversing on such things; i.e., during the playful, theatrical struggle for liberation from heteronormativity under state paradigms (e.g., the nuclear family unit). Liberators like Bovine pointedly employ these hybrids for the benefit of workers and nature: as normally preyed upon by the elite (who put meat on the table to feed their enforcers *and* slaves with, thus continue the process as a matter of dogma)!



(exhibit 37c2: Model and artist: [Bovine Harlot](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#). Beasts of burden are commodified as chattel animals whose bodies are eugenically controlled and offered up to rape in order to serve profit; e.g., steers are injected with steroids to increase their body mass, thus meat production, while dairy cows are accommodated within an industry built around farming them for their milk. Sex workers are no different, insofar as the industries around them seek to control their bodies as things to exploit and fetishize per all the usual methods. Poetry is a part of that, but especially Gothic forms that merge the human and the animal to express genocide as a cross-species ordeal, but also a morphologically dogmatic one; i.e., per the settler-colonial treatment of anything deemed "too big" to be white within the binary.

Simply put, fat bodies—especially female bodies [the BBW]—are both shamed and chased for their value as descriptively deviating away from traditional, European beauty standards. This regular exploitation of corporal variation reflects in parallel media, becoming something to abject and pimp, but also half-jokingly hunt down, mid-rebellion, for those very reasons; e.g., *Diablo 2*'s secret cow level, *Earth Worm Jim*'s own parody of the animal, and Monty Python's cow catapult method [the last example echoing historical approaches to castle defense; i.e., by using your dead livestock as a desperate means of anti-predation]: when the cows come home [a natural-paganized reckoning on par with Michael Myers and the holiday for which he belongs, but also the Blob or Godzilla]!



*Like any monster under capital, reclamation of the cow occurs through owning such things ourselves; i.e., as a GNC act that challenges profit to liberate fat bodies [female or otherwise] through monstrous-feminine acts of self-expression that humanize the harvest; e.g., as Bovine Harlot and I do, operating in conjunction towards universal liberation as a common goal with a common foe, the latter of which monopolizes each of us differently.*

*As things to challenge, such monopolies extend to the mythological side of things, or has a mythological, essentializing function, insofar as the entire process becomes essentialized once installed; i.e., something to worship according to how it is ordered to serve profit through a particular Cartesian arrangement of man and animal that has evolved into a neoliberal form—the monomyth—and which reflects the usual harvesting of nature as monstrous-feminine dating back to Antiquity into the present; e.g., King Minos' and his labyrinth occupied by the Minotaur as a reflection of people treated like animals, but also animalistic beings [human or not] being treated inhumanely by patriarchal forces having evolved to serve capital. Within capital, they become our Aegis to reclaim and do with as we wish! To take back our milk and jokingly but lovingly share it among all ["Aw, yeah! Gimme that thick, creamy 'milk!']: to save ourselves not for marriage, but our friends extramaritally to challenge the nuclear family unit [and all that entails].*





In short, wherever and whenever a cow is present, we can take and weaponize it against profit during rape play/ludo-Gothic BDSM; i.e., as a direct challenge to all the things that normally result when profit goes unchallenged [so-called "peace," generally conveyed as "law and order" by executed by cops and vigilantes defending state property as a structure]. The challenge lies in reclaiming the cow's symbolic power and labor value through the media we encounter and consume. In doing so, we [and the cow] can serve an iconoclastic purpose; i.e., illustrating mutual consent during ludo-Gothic BDSM, which occurs through an informed, negotiated labor exchange: one that works within the very things the elite, as unironic butchers, cannot exclusively control and weaponize against us; e.g., the leather shield and shield rod from Symphony of the Night buffering Alucard to help him through the castle under the protection of the humble cow. Except, the same half-real idea also applies to us synthesizing praxis through things akin to the Metroidvania—its mazes and labyrinths, but also its monsters and randy in-jokes, which cows, for whatever reason, often are; i.e., so-called "barnyard humor" echoing Chaucer's randy and down-to-earth Miller from his infamously crass story of the same name, "The Miller's Tale" [c. 1386]:



[artist: [Jodie Troutman](#)]

Troutman writes,

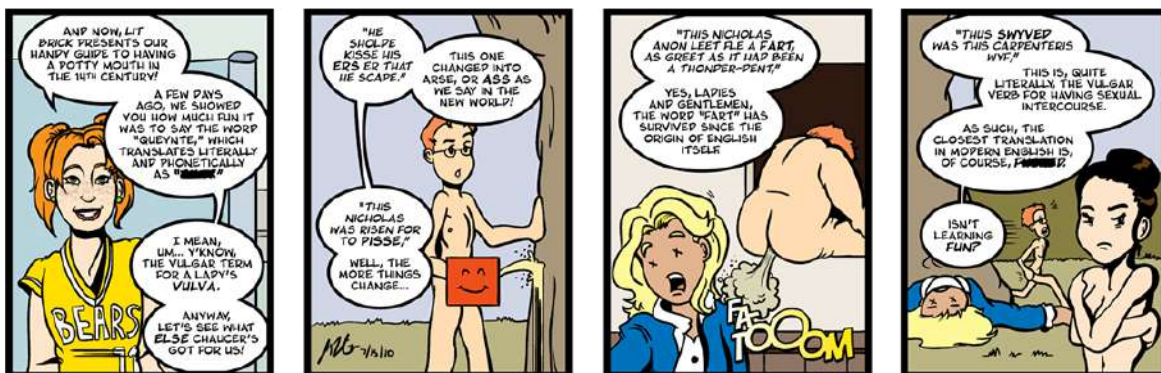
*Absalom, Alison's stalker, shows up in the dead of night while she and Nick are making whoopee. It's so dark outside that Absalom can't see a thing, which makes you wonder how he made it to their house in the first place.*

Anyway, he rolls up to Alison's window and proclaims that he's there on a mission of love.

Naturally, Alison tells him to stick it. More specifically, she tells him to run like hell, 'cause if he hangs around much longer, she's gonna stone him. One imagines that in the days before restraining orders, women just kept buckets of rocks next to their window in case of emergencies like this. Absalom says that he's not going anywhere until he gets a goodbye kiss, so Alison decides to play a bit of a joke on her would-be suitor.

While the poor sap puckers up in the darkness, Alison sticks her naked ass out the window instead of her lips. More specifically, Chaucer notes that "at the wyndow out she putte hir hole," which is funnier than anything I could ever write myself. One thing leads to another and Absalom smooches her arse - and not just one of the bare cheeks, mind you. Chaucer notes that Absalom knew something was amiss, "for wel he wiste a womman hath no berd. He felte a thyng al rough and long yherd." Loosely translated, when Absalom when in for the kiss, he felt quite a lot of hair. Yeee-ep.

And while you might think that making out with a woman's ass crack is about as far as this story is willing to go, you're sadly mistaken - things only get stranger from here [[source](#)].



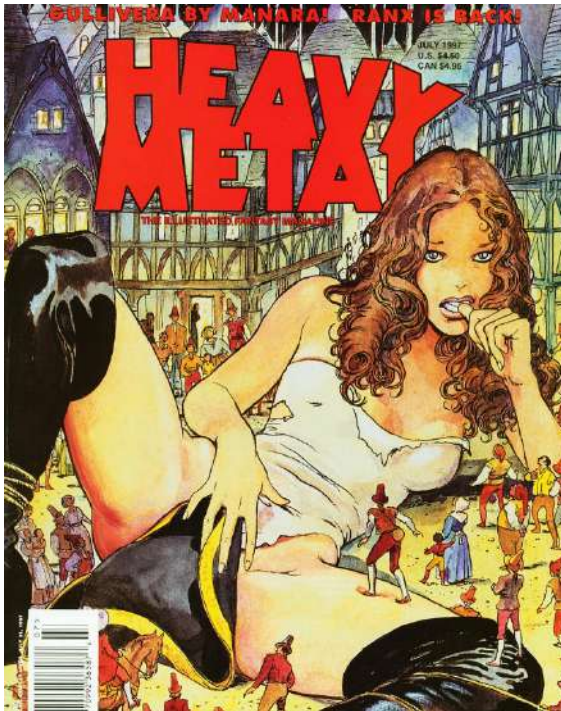
[artist: [Jodie Troutman](#)]

I'll admit, this hasn't been the classiest week in Lit Brick history. But you know what? It's not my fault. It's Chaucer's fault. If someone published something like "The Miller's Tale" today, even in context with the rest of The Canterbury Tales, it'd be dismissed as garbage. It's ridiculously filthy and makes almost no sense. That said, I adore it for those very reasons. Seriously, this story is filled with words you still can't say on network television, yet it was published over six hundred years ago. Ah, the things our society chooses to care about.

Anyway, the rest of the story: after kissing Alison's ass, Absalom is out for revenge, so he visits a smithy and borrows a hot iron. He promptly returns to the house, where Nick is taking a leak. Deciding that it'd be even more hilarious if he could get Absalom to kiss his ass, Nick spreads 'em out the window. Sadly, instead of a kiss, he gets a hot iron in the butt. This shock apparently triggers a fart so mighty that it sounds like thunder. Talk about your killer gas. The foul stench knocks Absalom out, and all this ruckus finally wakes up the Carpenter, still hiding in the trees.

The Carpenter, assuming that the thunder-clap of Nick's ass was the sound of the Almighty raining down doom, cuts his tub free from the tree... and promptly plunges several feet to the ground, knocking his lights out. Shortly thereafter, the townsfolk show up and decide that the Carpenter is clearly mad (and honestly, that might be the first sane decision anyone has made this entire story). Thus, with her husband committed, her stalker poisoned, and her lover screaming bloody murder about his burning bum, Alison is - to translate Chaucer into Modern English - f\*\*ked.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is one of the most revered works of literature in the English language. There are some days I love humanity [[source](#)].



[[source, Facebook post](#), Heavy Metal Magazine: September 12th, 2020]

Indeed, it's almost like people with Humanities educations either inside or at least closer to the medieval world [or of the same mentality nowadays, left] inherited its crude, honest attitudes about nature, sex, death, and bodily functions! Whatever the exact venue, then, ludo-Gothic BDSM isn't just about literal cows, but places where cows [or beings treated like cows—AFAB people] both actual and magical can be found; i.e., at a castle with equally legendary and earthly components; re: something akin to Geoffery's Chaucer's infamously wacky story as carried forwards into the equally wacky Neo-Gothic several

centuries down the road; e.g., Jonathan Swift's Gulliver putting out the Lilliputian fire by peeing on it, or Walpole's Lord Manfred seeing his son get crushed by a giant falling helmet only to try and marry the bride at the altar! Medievalists tend to be pornographic, hence are not really known for their tact.)

Through dogma's habitual predation, collective repression is illustrated by the devastation of a given calamity present within the physical world; e.g., the cow as a victim of capital; i.e., cryptonymy and the narrative of the crypt denoting trauma attached to such seemingly innocent symbols. While societal memory is a regular casualty to the powers that be, surviving markers of trauma assist in the clawing of a collective, intersectional suffering back towards the surface.

Despite being white, pure and obedient, for example, Peach from earlier (or any Gothic heroine, really) is on the receiving end of a very monstrous-looking cock; the commonplace nature of this kind of domination fantasy denotes a larger relationship at work, but also a specific imbalance of power exchange disseminated throughout the material world. Thanks to globalization and U.S. hegemony across the globe, the repressed abuses such predicaments intimate occur behind the closed doors of powerful men who own the means of production; sometimes, all you can do is tell your story in between the lines of a financially incentivized performance, subverting the established aims through covert, imaginary means (revolutionary cryptonymy being a tactic we'll explore throughout the remainder of the book).

Before we continue onto my traumas with Jadis, though, I want to quickly (re)stress Gothic Communism's dialectical-material aspects through ludo-Gothic BDSM as bucking pure psychoanalysis. Our approach relies far less on psychological models that claim to reliably measure and predict abuse in the socio-material world (which they really don't) and more how memories of trauma are stored in linguo-material things that people respond to socially in predictably fearful ways; i.e., not according to some vague collective unconscious, but collective biases, fight-or-flight



mechanisms, and the subversion of (or submission to) canonical norms that exist as part of the socio-material world (the Base and Superstructure).

To change its material conditions, though, you first must change how zombies are

perceived (which includes who's *actually*<sup>123</sup> doing the eating and who's being eaten,

<sup>123</sup> Such dated, monstrous stereotypes are used, as DARVO always is, to defend predators with the privilege to point the finger at their victims while enjoying the state's protection: white people! This double standard applies to witch hunters of actual witches, but also zombies, vampires and other undead serving the same basic function during moral panics. A family like the one from Wes Craven's aforementioned *People under the Stairs*, above, represent a stranded form of American fascism critiquing the nuclear family as such; i.e., one that lingers in a redlined neighborhood that, mid-economic crisis, is both facing neoliberal collapse (this was the '90s) while also trying to heal from white people having always had a cannibalistic streak: eating slaves (which extends to anyone they

above) through your own experiences: social conditions that shape and maintain material ones (re: Marx) and vice versa as things to camp (re: me). Coded as sites of trauma through linguo-material instruction, this includes a zombie's genitals, as well as any *intersecting* memories of personal and collective traumas expressed in various BDSM rituals we can reclaim to transform the zombie piecemeal.

Furthermore, completed with erotic or at least fetishized zombie components, black and white bodies are hybridized (often with non-human colors, such as green) to express colonial fears in Cartesian language, but also decay resulting from its enactment over space and time. Cartesian dualism, then, not only treats nature as alien; it erases the collective memories of the exploited by fabricating its own undead enforcers to assail state victims with. Under these lived conditions, safety amid *perceived* danger becomes the audience's number-one concern (exhibit 37d, next page).

In Gothic stories, a desire to explore childhood trauma through conspicuously adult sex and graveyards is annoyingly linked to psychoanalytical models (which tend to be outdated in sexually dimorphic ways); re, our companion glossary definition for Eve Segewick's notion of 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 psychoanalytic models and into dialectical-material 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.

Yet, divorcing a BDSM ritual from academic psychoanalysis doesn't change the fact that many people experience sexual trauma as something that survives the initial event. Enduring through displaced material reminders, individual trauma as Gothicized can damage memory but also *repair* it.

The same is true of collective trauma. When trauma is collectively repressed on a societal level, the systemic eradication of slave/worker histories are survived

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think is beneath them). They're an open secret, an urban legend akin to Dracula having traveled without moving to reveal themselves as painfully out-of-touch (and joint) with the present space and time: butchers.

In short, while Craven runs a bit hot/cold, it's a bit wackier and campier than the abjected, far-off racism of *The Serpent in the Rainbow* (1988) or the straight-up torture porn of *The Last House on the Left* (a 1972 echo of the Sharon Tate murders, no doubt: fear of poor people at large as a murderous cult, which the middle-class family in the movie kills out of revenge—with a chainsaw).

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

by different cryptonyms—corpses but also their fragments as a kind of code tied to repressed trauma. Just as the zombie is an erased history that fails to disappear entirely because the bodies always remain, the struggle is two-fold: remembering those who were destroyed and what made them become forgotten afterward, while also healing from trauma through ludo-Gothic BDSM by subverting the canonical zombie as a call to violence against the oppressed during a given apocalypse and its painful revelation.



(exhibit 37d: Model and artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#) [the model abused me [during this transmisogyny incident](#)<sup>124</sup>, so won't be credited, here]. When the dead already walk the earth, you can supply the graveyard ritual with whatever forms best communicate the state's necro-erotic abuses as a lived experience. Not only can this vary per individual; a common concern for all workers is proximity to, and protection from, harm. In the absence of reliable, stable histories, safety amid danger becomes paramount; i.e., to

*relax the worried viewer but also to highlight any potential threats when seeking out comfort as a form of rememory that confronts the zombie-like horrors of the ongoing past always returning in Gothicized narratives: ludo-Gothic BDSM as, like Chaucer centuries, of an often-animalized, transformative variety.)*

When humanized, the zombie's rememory becomes one to consider favorably in the absence of canonical bias. That is, it becomes a dogged survivor whose rebellion—of open communication about trauma—helps them reassemble state abuses that seek to erase memory as a collective history before Capitalism came into existence. By openly embodying these abuses, the zombie organizes a transformation through pieces of itself; i.e., xenophilic action organized against the state. As such, the rememory of total trauma becomes eclectic, undead and incongruous, populating the graveyard with whatever "zombies" (dolls) are needed to make their point and achieve catharsis through transformation.

<sup>124</sup> Persephone van der Waard's "Setting the Record Straight, Transmisia Experience: 5/26/2023." *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

By returning to a *replicate* site of trauma, then, a dollmaker is also an architecture—one who can playfully assemble and conduct a cathartic BDSM ritual that playfully addresses trauma where it lives: within the body as effected by trigger mechanisms supplied by a dialectical-material struggle the world over. Executed under more favorable, ethical conditions, these xenophilic rituals can supply the recipient of pain with the ability to consent, gaining agency under gestures of theatrical peril ("rape") with allies and assistants that help them process trauma in past, present and future forms.

Despite Gothic Communism's playful, xenophilic nature, confronting the zombie is always traumatic to some extent. Not only can the triggering nature of rememory not be avoided; the social-sexual interactions that occur before, during and after these rituals aren't completely risk-free (the idea being risk reduction under capital's risk-adverse conditions).

For one, blind spots can make the consumer biased, but also primed for further abuse. Consider the cliché of the well-read horror fan—the suburban teenager who studiously reads about monsters all their life, only to be fooled by a "real" example. The deception occurs not from an inability to recognize the symbols, but from a social component delivered by an active deceiver presenting them in bad faith. The idea, during ludo-Gothic BDSM, is to have them appear within boundaries of play that help survivors process their trauma while restoring a sense of agency under negotiated peril. This isn't "looking for trouble," but it *does* call for a dance partner that fits the bill.



As we'll see with Jadis and myself (which the above paragraph was essentially talking about), auditions are an imperfect process, opening the door for further abuse if one is careless, unlucky or both (e.g., like the Takashi Miike movie, its spider-like avenger<sup>125</sup> catching an unhappy abuser in her

web). Yet, just as trauma and its symbols can "brand" a former victim to become habitually preyed upon in spider-like fashion, the same psychosexual language and

<sup>125</sup> In case you're wondering, Jadis loved the villain from the film—loved spiders and humanoid forms of insectoid/arachnid predation as a metaphor, as far as I could tell (based on my own experience) for toxic love (they also loved [Tim Curry's musical number from Fern Gully \[1992\] by that very name](#)). Intent matters less than their confluences with vice character and abuse happened onstage and off: as effectively no different, insofar they loved themselves and punched down at me to aggrandize themselves, *sans* irony.

rituals can mercifully be inverted, helping survivors escape future abusers by reflecting on past trauma in present forms; i.e., ludo-Gothic BDSM as a means of transforming the zombie. Again, I want to explore said practice as I coined it—through lived trauma as something to reflect on, reassemble and play with, after the fact, inside Jadis' dollhouse.

Speaking of which, now that we've gone over ludo-Gothic BDSM—it's base mechanics of exchange, but also its historical-material and dialectical-material elements—a I think we can finally enter the house-in-question. We'll do so in two further subdivisions that will—like Stoker's famous novel—feel more epistolary than some parts of my book do: journal entries chronicling my meeting and escaping of Jadis. They were someone who fed and clothed me, but also who held me prisoner and tortured me every day for nearly two years: "to disempower someone or somewhere—a person, culture, or place—in order to harm them,' generally through fetishizing and alienizing acts or circumstances/socio-material conditions that target the mind, body and/or spirit." In short, they raped me—something I have hesitated to say for the effect that it has on me, when leaving my lips:



(artists: Jadis and [Persephone van der Waard](#))

In facing this sad truth, Jadis' abuse becomes like the doll: something to play with in order to regain control over a historically disempowering force, but also a BDSM device that speaks through said play as harder to deny than through mere words alone (written or otherwise). Jadis abused me emotionally in ways I've struggled

to express since escaping them—in part because when I am stressed, I can still hear their creepy doll-like voice whispering to me from the safety of the shadows: "You're a bad person. You're so wrong! It's all your fault!" I loved Jadis for their pain, for I had pain, too; but much to my chagrin, they used it to trap me and, like a fat patient spider, calmly and coldly prey on my frozen body.

To heal from Jadis, I shall now make them into something that I *can* control—not to bend the truth, but to tell my side of things as completely as I can, and per the medieval-adjacent ideas like ludo-Gothic BDSM that I've developed in light of what my abuser did to me. They raped me and let me go, insisting they were good and I was not. Abusers either kill their victims (usually the male approach), or use literal or figurative poison to kill any part of them that might speak out (the proverbial "woman's weapon"). I think Jadis was counting on the



latter to silence me, so it's only fitting if my testimony makes them anxious once it comes out! While something of an attempt to forgive them (though more of an attempt to take their power over me and weaponize it against the state by transforming my zombie state into something instruction for others to learn from), I won't lose sleep if my ghastly accounts haunt them; a rapist, but especially an impenitent one (remorse was never your strong suit. Jadis), should never know peace. So reap the whirlwind, honey!



(artist: [Carlos Agraz](#))

*Note: The paradox of pain is it makes us feel alive; i.e., per the ancient graveyard function of women and monstrous-feminine entities (e.g., oracles, witchdoctors, priestesses, etc) taking the dead into themselves to pass along. For that reason, I have dreaded returning to these sections, which are meant to be painful to capture the truth of what I experienced, but also per my arguments feel Numinous to me; i.e., sitting with the saint, as I generally do during the grieving process—in this case, myself. It becomes pushed-and-pulled between the desire to know and forget, to hurt and heal, as confused between pleasure and pain, safety and harm, per survival mechanisms, but also responses that are profoundly psychosexual/cathartic. Like graves slashed into the earth, it becomes a marker for trauma as healed into a kind of beautiful scar—of flowers blooming 'neath the headstones. —Perse*

## The Rememory of Personal Trauma, part one: Meeting Jadis; or, Playing with Dolls

"You really do have a beautiful body..."

—Jadis, complimenting me on Fetlife (2019)

Whereas part zero of "Personal Trauma" considered ludo-Gothic BDSM's base mechanics—what it is, the process of exchange it achieves using Gothic poetics, and finally its dialectical-material qualities bucking the "pure psychoanalytic" side of Gothic scholarship (sorry, Barbara Creed, but Freud sucks)—part one shall now consider my meeting Jadis, but also how they liked to play with dolls as much as I did; i.e., as something to inspect and continue learning from, after the fact. I've had to divide it in two again because of its size, but will give the entire list, here, before we start.

Keeping with the sorts of devices this chapter has introduced so far into itself—zombies, apocalypses, trauma and rememory—we'll explore various things about dolls and how to play with them.

[Part one](#) of "Meeting Jadis" will explore how dolls

- are often infused with trauma as taken and assembled from different players but also points in time
- poetically engaged with through modular elements ranging not just from undead, but demonic, animalistic and beyond(!)

[Part two](#) will consider



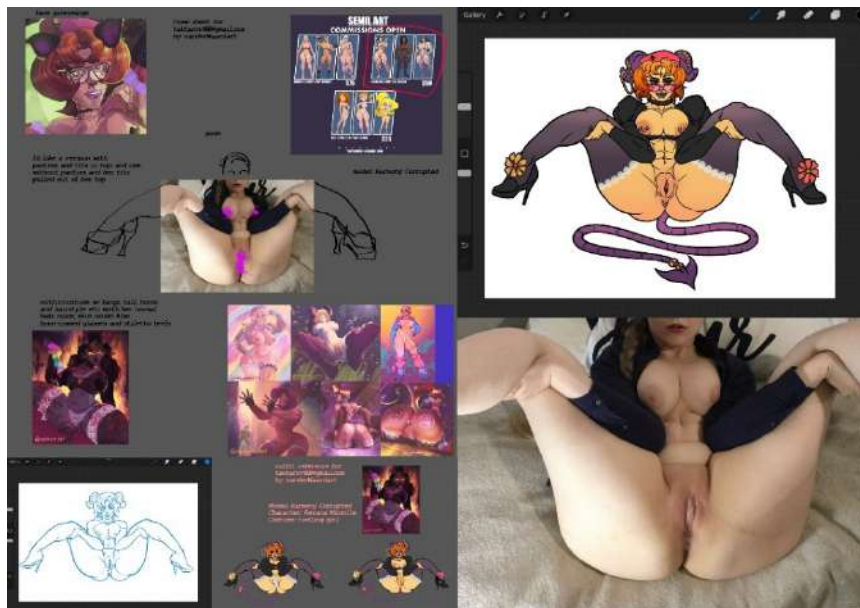
- the Gothic (monstrous) relationship between dolls, space-time and foreign-to-familiar evocations of either regarding undead sentiment as a coercive or liberatory device (feat. *Alien* and *The Night House*)
- the balancing of a paradox of cuteness that can be used to help or hinder workers depending on who's using them and how
- the means to subvert a canonical absence of irony, mid-play (taking the opportunity to look at various cartoons with doll-like themes in them; e.g., *Steven Universe*, 2013 and *Scott Pilgrim*, 2010)

From stories like *Hellraiser* to *The Night House*, dolls classically evoke an out-of-the-closet sense of manipulation and control (Clive Barker being a gay man writing in the '80s) tied to

state abuse as undead; e.g., the lament configuration, left; i.e., enacted at an individual level between players of a given contract. The potential to camp is there, but it always sits next to genocide as a Faustian/Promethean matter of profit. That is, capital predicates on rape as a means of profit to deceive and destroy workers, generally through themselves. To that, doll-like disempowerment is a historically common sensation among women, or things otherwise treated as monstrous-feminine, thus harvested by capital in-between history as real and fabricated; i.e., like the heroine in *The Night House*, or really any Gothic story. The problem lies in those who, once abused, often go on to abuse others while acting abused themselves long after abuse unto them has become a thing of the past.

Furthermore, as we've already explored, you can't really camp a holocaust as a matter of fact; it happened and it's no laughing matter. All the same, holocausts *are* a matter of the past coming back around, which in a hauntological sense we *are* never fully beholden to or free of. As such, we camp our *own* survival (thus rape) within these structures and their historical-material loop, which is where dolls, rape play (and yes, Jadis) ultimately come in: as a matter of playing with and performing trauma as something to reify and interrogate on all the usual operatic stages coming out of the Gothic past; re: from Shakespeare to Lewis to us and our own idiosyncratic approaches!

So while we're talking about rape, here, we're doing so as much to camp how such things are normally handled. Things will get serious, to be sure, but all the same dolls are fun to play with—silly at times, but also an effective demonstration of what it takes, labor-wise, to exercise rememory through them:



(*exhibit 37e1: Model: [Harmony Corrupted](#); artists: Lydia, [Persephone van der Waard](#) and [Jim32](#). Rebellion is quite literally a craft, one that involves dolls—or likenesses of people, which dolls essentially are—in some shape or form; e.g., action figures/athletes, but also sex dolls [or things akin to either expressed*

*through sex work*]. Whatever the exact type, dolls are homunculi; i.e., generally a smaller instance of a larger reference. More to the point, they take work to realize: planning and drafts, a model, and one or more artists working together to

accomplish a shared vision's theatrical production. The main idea is mine, in this case, but it's still accomplished through teamwork that contributes to the primary demonstration of said idea and goal; i.e., universal worker liberation through iconoclastic art using Gothic media; re: illustrating mutual consent through informed labor exchanges that challenge Capitalist Realism.

To that, Revana is very much my character by design [[as is Gothic \(gay-anarcho\) Communism, whose symbol I designed](#), next page]. She's someone I can have stand in for myself, given that I cannot afford gender-affirming surgeries. Even so, she has been drawn by many different artists over the years. In this case, my usual paper doll approach became something to instruct others with; e.g., my friend, Lydia, illustrating [a Drow character I later completed on my own](#) and borrowed its wardrobe to dress Revana, Macbeth-style, in borrowed robes [above]. This isn't someone forced to wear clothes made to objectify her against her will [re: "[Borrowed Robes](#)"]; she's an extension of me, and Lydia helped with that. So did Jim32 and Harmony. All the world's a stage and we, upon it, had and continue to have a part to play [from Volume Two, part one]:

*I've often been accused by trans misogynists of devising this book as a wicked scheme: to "just" get laid. First off, while I love getting laid, surely there are far easier ways to have sex than writing a four-volume book series based on ten-plus years of research! Such persons seriously miss the point, then; i.e., my revisiting of old strategies of reflection to bond with new cuties I can teach important lessons (and they me) while we relate back and forth (which making art and having sex both consist of and combine).*

*The point in doing so is to build on something that liberates all parties, targeting the Superstructure with Gothic poetics mastered by a community of awakened workers building in perpetuity (always out of breath with more to say). This requires trust in good faith, not deception (which my critics seemed to have projected onto me regarding their own humanistic shortcomings): the valuing of that which Capitalism normally cheapens in pursuit of profit.*

*To this, a director is precisely fuck-all without a muse to blow up, and a model often needs a platform to work their magic. As such, Sex Positivity was and always will be a group effort, its total collective statement on/with artwork and sex work entirely impossible if not for all my muses, models, partners (currently friendly or antagonistic) and friends (sexual or platonic) working in concert. Nor is ours the first. Like the patchwork group of (mostly cis-het male) art nerds who made Alien, celebrating the monstrous-feminine in Gothic panache, my cuties and I don't own each other while raising temples to our own dark gods. Instead, we've worked together to contribute to a diverse, inclusive labor of love that we can all feel proud of; i.e., a dark progeny begot from enthusiastic, heartfelt teamwork [[source](#)].*

As we shall see, rebellions are fought by whores in the streets—the misfits of society that society normally exploits, in hauntological forms; re, Marx' "Eighteenth Brumaire": "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](#)]. Revana, then, was very much founded on older historical events and people—specifically the French Revolution and Joan of Arc—to weaponize these ghosts' *cryptomimesis* in service to a possible world galvanized by their imperfect resurrections; i.e., unto labor and nature as normally enslaved by capital and Capitalist Realism canonizing these bugbears [so fearsome, rawr]:



[model and artist:  
[Romantic Rose](#) and  
[Persephone van der  
Waard](#)]

Any information  
commonly spreads  
through the vector of sex;  
i.e., as something  
captivating to perform,  
hence occur at least  
partially through asexual,

Gothic treatments of sexuality [force]: as a means of play but also code. A given cryptonymy shows and hides, but can be counted on as reliably magnetic to most audiences [even ace people]. To that, the elite are ok with rebellion as long as it stays in the past as something they can control; i.e., as dead, dogmatic, inert. But we, through our own games and BDSM-style performances, can smuggle the revolutionary past back into the present for workers; i.e., as doll-like undead; e.g., Harmony and I fomenting rebellion inside her pussy as a stand-in for the Romanovs' doomed palace during a consent-non-consent ritual harboring a general attitude about figures like the Romanovs.

Even so, there remains a child-like element of fun and games to our wild playtime, saying "Off with their heads!" as I creampie Harmony to consummate an imaginary execution; or as Harmony puts it, "Humor makes for the best sex!" The trick, I think, is combining humor with genuine rebellious sentiment as a matter of grim historical violence; re: Matthew Lewis' camping of canon in The Monk. As such, Gothic-Communist liberation is always made by camping old dead things/symbols that continue to live on trapped between the past and the present; e.g., mascots

*and political cartoons; i.e., so-called "graffiti-style" activism using the human body as a literal billboard. For workers—who are sexualized to varying degrees under capital, not just prostitutes—the camping process requires rememory to work; i.e., by including things normally left out that have to be tracked down and included after their initial omission.*

*More to the point, such voices come in handy when dealing with living abusers posing as friends; e.g., Jadis. As such, these abusers also have an accidental role in capital's transformation away from itself; i.e., when their victims escape to camp whatever needs camping to help develop Gothic Communism. Indeed, Jadis' abuse of me was instrumental in demonstrating what not to do when performing BDSM in good faith.)*

To that, trauma is like a doll and its clothes: something to reassemble per rememory out of smaller zombie fragments to a larger undead whole that, often enough, operate modularly (on their own) as a matter of varying amounts of intersection. Dolls store trauma and pain, but also express it in a variety of ways that, as I shall demonstrate, articulate BDSM's usual power exchanges through handy abstractions.

More on *that*, in a moment. For now, the reassembly is often as toys, but also toy collectors. My own preference—of exploring Gothicized trauma within my artistic output and daily life—both led Jadis to me, then helped me escape them through such means. In short, just as their room in Florida was full of colorful and alien sex toys (next page), I was to be the finest addition to their collection. Jadis was a proud neoliberal—the token witch over the rainbow seeing profit as holy and, by extension, rape and various endorsements of it through Gothic media inside the neoliberal period; e.g., Tool as rather rapey and yet, all the same, a starting point



to my journey I can revisit to understand what I survived, postmortem: "This may hurt a little, but it's something you'll get used to."

(artist: [Adam Jones](#))

"Stinkfist" might sound esoteric and disturbing (and that's the point). Then again,

paradoxes allow for two (or more) things to be true at once, and frankly Tool wrote a baller song about something bad that I can enjoy *and* critique (re: "[Facing Death](#)" from Volume Two, part one, 2024). Furthermore, you gotta start somewhere, and Jadis gave out plenty of object lessons to weave into better things; i.e., by me, using my Aegis to subvert their poisonous worldview, hopefully inspiring other

victims of rape to come forward regarding Capitalism's usual monopolies, trifectas and ever-present Realism.

That being said, my rememory and subversion of Jadis initially required escaping their doll-like hold on me to begin with, which we shall now articulate as a historical matter—one of deep personal trauma enmeshed with my scholarship built on said trauma: the starting point of ludo-Gothic BDSM as eventually growing into itself. Turns out, escaping Jadis (and their raping of me) also means escaping the ghost of them as worryingly haunting me, afterwards; i.e., making me feel like a zombie, doll, what-have-you as *still* under their power long after I returned home—both as a larger house but also the smaller dollhouse whose earlier approach I calibrated from older pioneered forms and *their* speculative richness (re: Metroidvania, Gothic novels, the Labyrinth of Crete, etc).

We'll discuss my *escape* from Jadis in part two of this subchapter. "Meeting Jadis" will predominantly talk about how I met them *while* going over some different qualities to dolls; i.e., how the two of us, as BDSM practitioners, used such devices to relate to each other during rape play as a complicated means of psychosexual healing.

However bad this play ultimately was (Jadis monopolized it to sate themselves by abusing me, removing the healing element in favor of mere predation), it would—like Cuwu after Jadis—still help to form the basis for what ludo-Gothic BDSM eventually turned into: dos and don'ts. Jadis and their toys predominantly consisted of the latter type, but they still weren't completely stupid insofar as pleasure went:

I can help you change  
Tired moments into pleasure  
Say the word and we'll be  
Well upon our way ([source](#): Genius).

There was something alien and powerful about them—a genuine terror they



couldn't fake by virtue of what *they* had survived. It colored the sex, intimating something awful that threatened to break loose at all times. True enough, it reflected in their masochistic, visually-intimidating sex toys:

(*artist: Jadis*)

## "Meeting Jadis," part one: Some General Points about Dolls and Playing with Them

*[Cuwu] liked to be fucked in their sleep, a rather common form of consent-non-consent that is regularly discussed between even your more vanilla sex partners; i.e., "Sure you can fuck me before work. Just no anal and don't cum in my hair!" The idea, as usual, is a test of trust and established boundaries where one proves one's loyalty and trustworthiness by obeying the sub when no commands can actively be given. It's worth noting that such behaviors are often popularized in vampire narratives, but also sex dolls and other motionless, "as dead" doll entities fetishized as naked and helpless, usually female sacrifices—during sex-positive scenarios, of course, but also in unironic demon sex scenarios enacted by fearful-fascinated white people enthralled during the ghost of the counterfeit [...] In sex-positive cases, the reclamation of control during calculated-risk experiments is generally conducted by lying still and inviting someone to inflict pleasurable pain, tickling and/or erogenous sensations on you while in a traditional feminine, passive/theatrical compromising position ([source](#)).*

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



There are many parts to dolls insofar as they represent us and how to play with ourselves and our trauma as undead—so many I've had to divide "Meeting Jadis" in two. To reiterate, part one of "Meeting Jadis" will explore how dolls

- are often infused with trauma as taken and assembled from different players but also points in time
- poetically engaged with through modular elements ranging not just from undead, but demonic, animalistic and beyond(!)

Dolls generally invoke a sense of nudity and paralysis; i.e., Gothic stories and live burial as a metaphor for psychosexual abuse but also *liberation* through the same devices. Prior to actually meeting Jadis and being teleported to their lair for later use (a seventeen-hour car ride, more like), I had been roleplaying Gothic scenarios on Fetlife to cope with Zeuhl leaving me (after using me for money and sex). Having already gone through numerous stints online, I felt thrilled but wanted more. I stayed "on the market," happy to share myself with the world. "Put yourself out there," my sister-in-law said. So I did, advertising Gothic roleplays on Fetlife, Kik and Reddit (taking Zeuhl's advice, for better or worse).

Through sheer chance, Jadis found my advertisement on Fetlife in April 2019; they liked what they saw—savoring my roleplays but my naked body more. We were both weird, too, drawn by each other's trauma in ways that manifested in the media we played with—in short, our pedagogy of the oppressed as toy-like, taboo,



and nocturnal: "[The sun can be fun, but I live to see those rays slip away!](#)" This mutual attraction quickly led to Jadis confessing to me about how they saw me: "This guy's weird as hell—I like it!" (to be honest, they were, too—eventually saying they wanted to give me their skeleton after they died, so I could put the bones into a sex doll and fuck it).

I was flattered, honestly. We were both trying something new, seeking a fresh start (and in the middle of Covid, no less). Right from said start, they wanted my sweet femboy ass (I was in the closet, at the time); I wanted their delicious orc cunt. So perhaps it wasn't the *newest* approach, but it certainly clicked fast enough!

"Orc," in this case, wasn't even so much a figure of speech as it was a theatrical preference we both already had. The word, as popularized by Tolkien's stories, originates from *Beowulf*, but also from the Old English word for demon: *orc*. Since *Lord of the Rings*, the orc has become synonymous with a kind of physically powerful, dark-skinned aggressor (a merger between the anti-Semitic goblin of medieval Europe and the racist flavor of the American zombie) to scare children (and adults) with. Jadis liked to present themselves as monstrous in this sense, but sexed up in ways that orcs (especially *female* orcs) often are in American kayfabe/monomythical stories under neoliberalism—videogames, but also tabletop games at large (which Tolkien helped inspire per his cartographic refrains; re: Volume Zero):



(exhibit 37e2: Artist: [Bayard Wu](#). Wu's art showcases the kinds of tough, savagely capable orc women that Jadis preferred. A maxim of theirs was that "heroic" women weren't allowed to be ugly, so Jadis especially enjoyed seeing female characters that were either too tall, wide and/or brutish to meet conventional beauty standards; i.e., women of color outside of the West, closer to nature, the jungle, rape and death [the "voodoo" of the pre-colonial "zombie"]. "Strength," for Jadis, was meted out through appropriative perceptions of tomboy force delivered by capable-looking female bodies of given races [an idea we'll return to later in the book, when we talk about TERFs and popular media, in Volume Three]: monster girls

who spat, farted, fucked and took spoils of war as sexual prizes [re: Jadis used to

*fart when they came during sex, which is cuter than it sounds]. In terms of our bedroom games, the consent-non-consent that Jadis and I engaged in frequently had me playing the femboy "war bride," taken prisoner by the strong and capable war chief through captive/captor-style rape fantasies. "I'm keepin' this one!" Jadis would playfully grunt while I topped them.*

*And honestly? We had a blast in that department; the abuse occurred when the captive fantasy became reality and I lost the ability to consent to it inside or outside the bedroom. Both of us became undead, in my eyes, albeit with them as the abuser and me as their disempowered, doll-like victim: the master and the slave.)*

Jadis loved such things, extending the aesthetic to themselves; they frequently enhanced their wide, sturdy frame with tight black corsets and topped their crown with plastic demon horns. They also had jutting front teeth that looked somewhat tusk-like (their "orc teeth," they called them). I loved this about them, which undoubtedly influenced my ability to give them the benefit of the doubt early on. It'd be incredibly easy to blame the disaster that followed on lust—"love is blind" and all that—but I certainly didn't think so at the time. I felt prepared, ready to enjoy a non-abusive relationship for once. In truth, it'd be more accurate to say I was *half*-prepared—eyes open and educated, but still prone to manipulation by a skilled abuser who had their own baggage from childhood weighing on them.

First, I trusted Jadis not to actively deceive me, the two of us negotiating a BDSM agreement in advance: they would work and take care of me; I would cook, clean and fuck their brains out. We were *very* clear about that. Granted, it wasn't foolproof, but no plan is. Furthermore, while there's risk to any relationship, I certainly never consented to being abused (the two activities are mutually exclusive; i.e., you can't consent to rape unless you camp it)!

Regardless, their breaking of our agreement didn't make sense to me, as it would require me falling in love with someone who meant me harm. I admit, a part of me turned a blind eye when Jadis showed early warning signs; they talked the talk, but occasionally got a little *too* angry about small disagreements (reminding me of their abusive mother<sup>126</sup>, insofar as their own survival mechanisms had become not just maladaptive, but predatory). These foreshadowed bigger fights in the days ahead—and the raping of me that would accompany these—but I wanted it to work so I gave them the benefit of the doubt. I did so assuming that Jadis would meet my conviction with equal effort: as a team. And why not? We had an agreement and that, at least to me, was sacred.

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<sup>126</sup> To deflect my observations, Jadis would always cry if I mentioned their mother but especially if I compared Jadis to their mother. Their tears always had the desired effect, too: back off, change the subject. They would cry and I would lose heart.



(artist: [Ezokz](#))

Second, I felt like someone who had learned from my own abusive past. I was already a veteran of traumatic events when Jadis and I met. Not only had I studied romanticized variants of trauma for my master's degree (re: *Metroidvania* and the Gothic castle as calculated risk); I *created* them as an aspiring artist using erotic visual elements inspired from the

kinds of artists and media I enjoyed (e.g., *Mass Effect*, above): pieces that help us, like dolls, reconnect to lost, forbidden things—often erotic pleasure, but also pain as indistinguishable from pleasure that verges on the harmful<sup>127</sup> in BDSM scenarios. Jadis liked this about me; i.e., that I was an erotic artist but also open-minded. It felt especially flattering because, apart from Zeuhl, I wasn't used to compliments about myself and my curiosity towards taboo subjects like fetishes/sex dolls and torture. This was especially true regarding my artwork, which I always struggled with. The ego boost—especially from someone so powerful-looking and BDSM-inclined (the black knight)—well-and-truly hypnotized me.

All the same, this particular coping mechanism stemmed from an abusive past *before* Jadis entered the picture. I had survived a great number of difficult experiences besides my stepfather (who admittedly was the worst of the bunch): the abuses of a second uncle (more on him in a moment), grad school, Zeuhl leaving me for their future husband, and my brothers (who once duct-taped me to a flagpole during a thunderstorm, stuffed a sock in my mouth, and left me there for my mother to come and rescue). I was also bullied by other children, primarily neighborhood boys who quickly recognized my being different from them: femme, highly imaginative, prone to writing and keen to avoid violence if I could help it (though I did get into fights in the seventh grade; i.e., acting out while my stepfather was abusing me).

Regardless, Gothic stories—and their ambiguous, liminal ways of presenting traumatic experiences in highly sexual ways—have always resonated quite strongly with my own complex abuse. Art, for me, was the best way of expressing that abuse—something the following pages will try to illustrate in relation to Jadis and myself through dolls; i.e., they and their trauma as kept-in-check through BDSM,

<sup>127</sup> Under such conditions, "power" can very quickly find itself in quotes; i.e., false power as either a matter of predation on obedience by a predatory actor (with BDSM classically inverted to send power *away* from workers, which ludo-Gothic BDSM aims to reverse through the same elements of play and poetic devices being anisotropically played with; re: reversing abjection).

which lulled me into a false sense of security. I thought they used their artwork, toys and rape play as a means of recovery from past harm—quite the opposite; they used it to prey on me, but all the same, my escape from them required the same devices reclaimed by me (an ongoing process)!

Again, we'll get to that, in part two. Following the forecast of escape, though, let's articulate my own artwork and survived abuse as a) intertwined in ways that I would eventually rely upon to liberate myself; i.e., not a foreclosure, but a release from torment while still, even now, happening inside the dollhouse as a matter of acclimating to trauma: as something we can never fully escape from. This methodology and its acceptance took time to evolve, and as always, tends to point back to childhood; i.e., as something to return to and understand by reifying healthier forms.

In other words, dolls—similar to heroes—don't just store cultural values or taboos (re: Volume Two, part one); they store trauma as something to interrogate, mid-play. We've set the table to unpack the idea; let's do so now, then consider some modular qualities to dolls that often come into play when investigating trauma during calculated risk.

Although I *was* a sexually precocious child, my art hasn't always been sexual or monstrous. Rather, it was a place for me to go when things got bad, but even this was inconsistent. Despite being abusive, for example, Dad was never really around when I was small; it was his *family* who abused me the most. Not only did they gaslight me and neglect my version of things; they blamed my mother for seeking divorce, calling *her* a "homewrecker" despite her refusal to cheat on a notoriously unfaithful husband (who slept with just about wife in town). Equally traumatic, the judge of the custody battle had mandated supervised visitations with my father that I thoroughly detested. They only made me a captive audience to my father's side, who tried incessantly to convince me that Dad "was still my father" despite omitting his abuse of me during these talks.

To cope with my father and the subsequent divorce, I drew comics inspired by Bill Waterson and Jim Davis. These strips weren't monstrous, nor did they accurately reflect my lived experiences; their style was basic and childlike. By the time my stepfather appeared, however, my creations had become far more detailed, erotic and subversive. I loved witches and Amazons and started making powerful, sexy characters like Glenn, Ileana or Revana (exhibit 37g1, below).

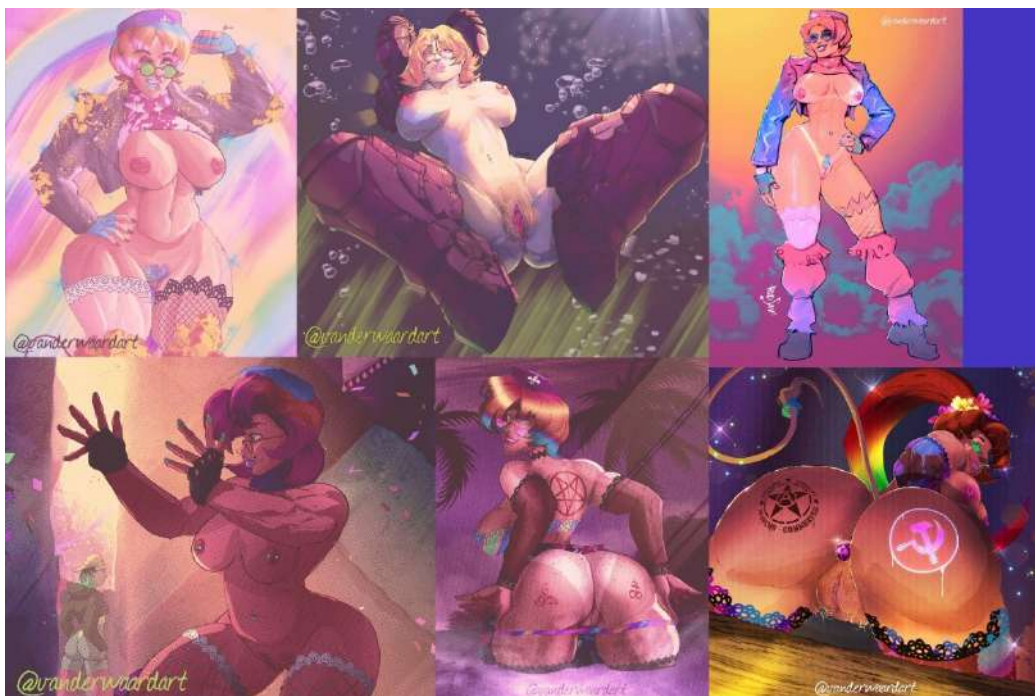
Originally inspired by Tolkien, Robert Howard and Lovecraft, but far more genderqueer than any of those men, these trans expressions of my trauma have only expanded over time—within my own work and when collaborating with other artists. Moreover, they were a monstrous-feminine, Amazonian extension of myself as having survived trauma that was *also* Amazonian; i.e., becoming transformed by the ordeal as zombie-like, but acquiring agency while acknowledging my trauma in doll-like ways. The more I reflected on Jadis and my other abusers, the more I

changed *through* my artwork's future dolls concerned with healing from past events:



(exhibit 37f:  
Artist, left:  
[Sensaux](#); right:  
[Persephone van  
der Waard](#).  
Virago the  
cyborg. Gothic  
stories—and  
their ambiguous,  
liminal ways of

*presenting experience—resonated quite strongly with my own complex abuse, but also my manner of processing said abuse through Gothic poetics; i.e., dolls.. I've always loved cyberpunk and its left-leaning queer elements for these purposes, effectively a retro-future stage filled with all manner of posthuman monsters and decaying things; i.e., in relation to the material world as controlled by the undefeatable powerful, but also the xenophilic ability to rebel against these powers by harnessing that creative potential for ourselves. That's what Virago, for me, is all about. She's someone I'd happily play as or with! Also, unlike Samus, she always saves the animals!)*



(exhibit 37g1: Artist, top-left, bottom-left and bottom-middle: drawings of Revana, by [Persephone van der Waard](#); top-middle: a collab of Revana, lines and base

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

colors by [Dcoda](#) and background/final render by [Persephone van der Waard](#); top-left: a collab of Revana, lines and colors by [Adagadegelo](#) and background/final render by [Persephone van der Waard](#); bottom-right: [Persephone van der Waard](#). All of these revisited drawings feature older characters from my teenage years, made visibly more colorful, queer and iconoclastic than they already were. Revana is my avatar [essentially a kind of doll, especially in videogames], specifically an expression of the person I've always to be: French, red-haired and shapely. The identity and its expression have evolved over time, of course, but this evolution has moved increasingly in a trans/gender-non-conforming [thus xenophilic] direction since my coming out of the closet. It's what feels correct to me now and in hindsight, because it helps me process my own "undead" trauma. She's literally a sex doll to embody all of that, but also play with it.)

My art was one of the first things Jadis noticed about me, their enjoyment of my portrayal of strong women making me a target to their sexual advances and later their abusing of me as their *unwilling* sex doll. Yet, these same, toy-like qualities had inadvertently "inoculated" me *from* Jadis. I did not know it, but I had slowly acquired the uncanny ability to understand Gothic media through my own life, whose stories and complicated, monstrous symbols I not only felt attracted to, *but would be facing again, in future Gothic forms.*

So when Jadis set their sights upon me, I wasn't completely powerless, but I did (and do) handle trauma and abuse a particular way that makes me something of "an open book." Simply put, I fawned, a people pleaser who—faced with unaddressed trauma in someone else—defaulted to appeasing my latest in a series of idols: through sex as a means of relating to such things as never truly closed-off.

For example, just as I admired and sided with Ripley hiding from the monster in *Alien*, a part of me loved the monster and found it strangely beautiful. Loaded with a holistic appreciation for two kinds of victims, I always thought of the company as the true villain: the one exploiting Ripley and the monster at the same time. This being said, it took me a very long time to articulate the dialectical-material framework regarding the corporate exploitation of workers, and even then was only able to by first identifying with the monster in a liminal, humanizing manner (which we will explore deeper in the primer when we look at demons).

This underlying desire speaks to Gothic Communism's larger goal as I have increasingly envisioned it: wanting workers to reclaim our power by a) mastering our emotions through Gothic poetics, and b) surviving Capitalism in ways that can teach the world to escape and survive through the same outlets; i.e., our trauma as something to historically-materially examine, but also recreate in highly subversive ways that reduce alienation and exploitation through campy doubles thereof: dolls, which reclaim trauma by camping it (often rape) as a matter of ludo-Gothic BDSM.

As such, any desire I felt to reshape the material world—while living with Jadis during Covid—was already shaped by past abuse I had suffered at the hands

of family members living in the same world. In fact, much of the abuse wasn't even rooted in my father's side; it actually came from my mother's.

We've discussed some of this in Volume One, but there's an element I have yet to mention. Mom was the eldest of three siblings, Dave being the youngest and the middle child—Mom's other brother (who I'll call Iago)—being the source of a great deal of trauma after I was an adult. In the 2010s, Iago bankrupted the family business and blamed it entirely on all of us. I didn't know it at the time, but Iago's abuse had slowly turned me Communist (a process that materialized through my second bid at university and my graduate/postgraduate work). Though I am always painfully honest with new partners, I didn't mention Iago's abuse to Jadis when we met. Partly I was still figuring it out; frankly I also thought worker rights were a universal concern and Jadis would simply "get it," should the conversation ever come up. Alas, they did not share my sympathies (though the extent to which they and I disagreed only became clear after I was living in Florida for many months).



*(exhibit 37g2a: Artists: [Leo and Diane Dillion](#). Queen Jadis is C.S. Lewis' strict mommy dom from [The Magician's Nephew](#) [1955]. She's, in her own sense, like a killer doll [and cautionary pre-fascist tale against matriarchal authority by Lewis]. Relegated to the desolate city of Charn after the Deplorable Word is spoken, our giantess queen is frozen in her seat. Completely by accident, the children heroes of the story bring her back to life, where—once again animate and mobile—Jadis immediately begins to move around and make trouble. Fun fact: Jadis is the name I gave both to my ex in Florida, but also the golden orbweaver spider living outside our home [to which I realize that I have compared my ex, Jadis, to a spider more than once].)*

Truth be told, Jadis was a self-confessed neoliberal who actually worshipped the likes of J. K. Rowling or Bill Gates; i.e., to such a point that critiquing either person led to Jadis resenting me more and more (with them liking to pull rank, reminding me that they knew more about such things than I did—not because they studied them more, but because they had money and wanted me to automatically agree with them "or else").

Granted, this didn't seem to matter as much at first or even announce itself. Indeed, when Jadis and I crossed paths, they had access to all of me, thus all of my trauma and all of my interests (doll-like or not). We didn't talk about politics; we talked about sex, often through toys. Jadis knew I was an erotic artist and patroned me for my work; I was intrigued by their BDSM know-how and extensive sex toy

collection, which seemed so monstrous yet so colorful. Most important to me was how Jadis seemed to appreciate that I was into them and they very much wanted to fuck, but I wasn't careful enough before agreeing to their insidious offers of "protection." Simply put, I rebounded, to such a perilous degree that I ignored several red flags while being their slutty girlfriend:



(*exhibit 37g2b:artist: [EXGA](#). Our roles of power exchange included Jadis topping me from the bottom and me bottoming them from the top. They prized me for my big soft princess butt, and I prized them for their big soft orc body. There was a shared sense of whose turn it was to be the object of pursuit, the dominator and the "victim." And by God, it was fun!*)

It's not so mysterious; I was poor and Jadis had means, but I had a big booty they liked in ways that let me gender conform less. Anyone acting like these aren't potent (and common) means of negotiation is alienated from such

means, methods and opportunities: "rape" and monstrous, doll-like sex (above) as a profound, monstrous-feminine dialog to work things out using what we got, and Jadis and I had plenty that fit together well/temporarily held our undivided attention: the orc chiefess and her (at the time) twink war bride.

At first, it melted into a sweet puddle, then an illusion that kept me trapped, but the feelings of genuine harmful imprisonment (and complaints) came later. Not only did I desperately want adventure by going to Florida as my mother once did; my grandparents gave me away to Jadis trusting Jadis to care for their grandchild as one would a bride. I had gotten my wish and was off see to a new world! Alas, once I was living under Jadis' roof, things quickly changed. My imaginative responses—so useful to interpreting my own trauma—only blushed at Jadis' numerous threats, making me an easy target for lengthier unironic tortures.

All the same, these tortures occurred through toy-like aspects of zombies that we shall now reclaim in hindsight, per ludo-Gothic BDSM. That is, the presence of cathartic play and ironic "tortures" can yield a variety of sex-positive memories. These include the dildo, but also the doll of two basic kinds: the doll-like *immobile* persona (the Kafka-esque "Odradek") and the golem-esque *mobile* variant (the performer of/with the animated-inanimate); as well as the undead/demonic flavor of such a being—e.g., Victor's Creature from *Frankenstein*.



Such examples are often tied to hypercanonical fiction like the *Wizard of Oz* under *Pax Americana*, so I've provided an example of each for your consideration: the monster cock/doll piece, the undead/demonic doll as a performance, and the blank object as sex-doll fetish being something to take apart as a victim might their own troubled condition; i.e., doing so to find release through disassembly and annihilation as not always having irony but certainly allowing for it.

We'll explore these now, then move onto the anisotropic qualities, cuteness and ludic complexity of such devices, in part two. However, before these exhibits even unfold, please bear in mind several things:

First, that the doll evokes the language of "death's counterfeit," such as a drugged or magical sleep but also sleep sex (exhibit 11b2) as something to ply with using mixed metaphors that have a vampiric vibe if not outright coding: the feeding on the "victim's" essence—including their sexual energies but also their sanity and health—by "traumatizing" them as they literally sleep (or pretend to; i.e., to avoid getting harmed or—in ironic cases—to play along during "somno"; re: *Cuwu*). Rape play is complicated, and generally concerns catharsis and trauma occupying the same spaces of play as a rememory-style means of return in order to heal versus escaping through predation dressed up as "healing."

Second, as Jadis was doll-like and loved toys—especially toys of an

SXXU

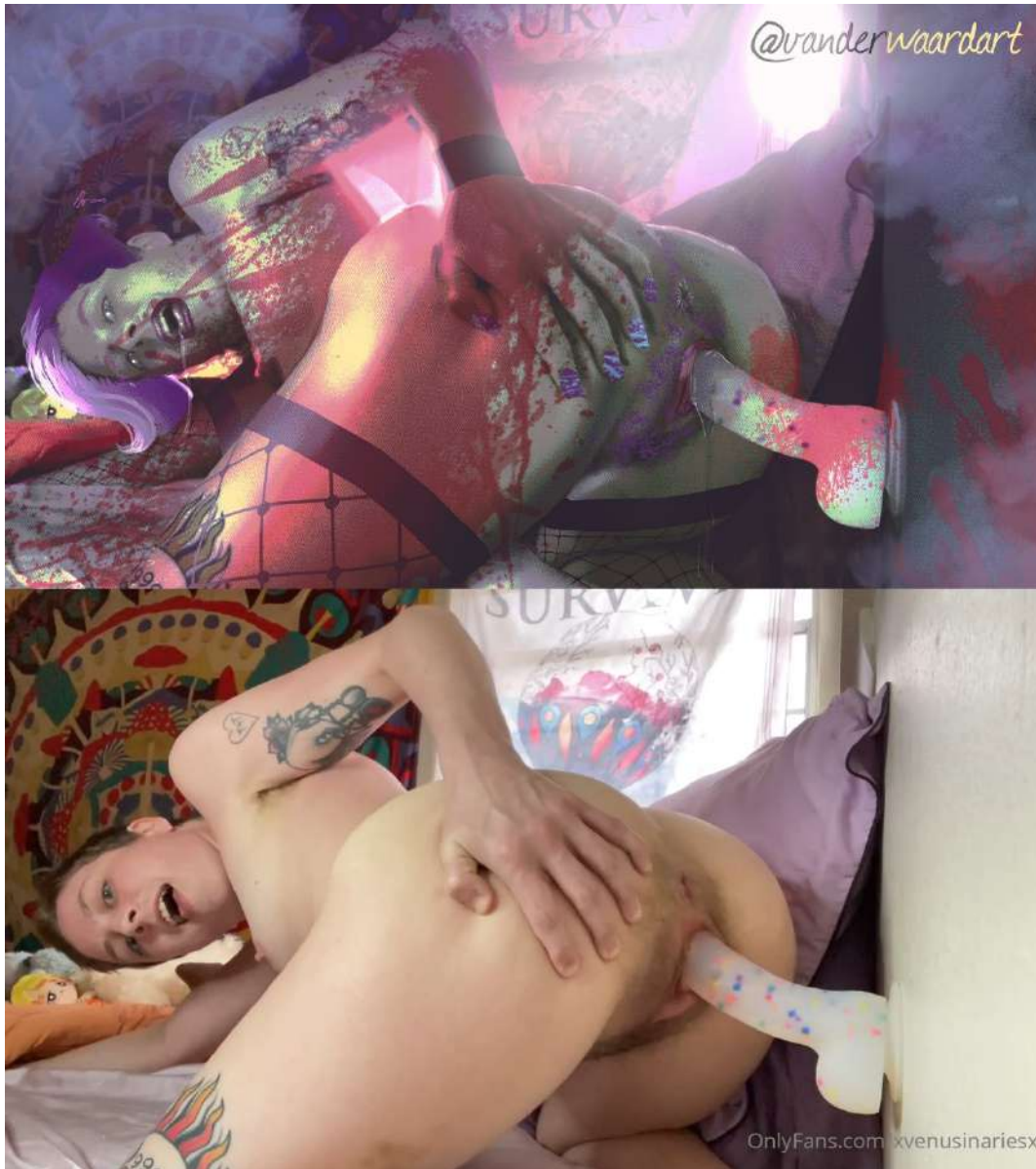


undead/monstrous variety like we previously alluded to—they were largely what caught my interest and they mine, thus are things we must reclaim from their abuse of me in hindsight; i.e., in future doll-like, undead houses and excursions that piqued their interest (and taste buds) to begin with:

(exhibit 38a: Artist, top-left: [SXXY](#); top-right: unknown, [source](#); bottom-left: [Real Sex Love Doll](#); bottom-right: unknown. First, the dildo/monster cock as undead/demonic but also fabricated like a

doll's would be. Xenophilic cocks take many different forms, generally as anthropomorphic cocks that humanize the owner but also present them as sexual

potent to unequal degrees; i.e., stronger than the person they're topping and fearsome in their appearance. It's rape play, which can play out in sex-coercive or sex-positive forms [we'll unpack these even more in Volume Three, when we discuss subverting Demon BDSM and bad play in countercultural Gothic performance art].)



(exhibit 38b1: Model and artist: [Venusinaries](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#).  
 Second, the immobile/mobile effigy wherein the performer acts as an undead doll;  
 i.e., that which was alive, then dead, then alive again [or somewhere in between].  
 Rape is like a bad dream imparting awful instruction and exchange. Whereas  
 canonical zombies personify the state of exception, mid-harvest, as decayed by still  
 abusing the monstrous-feminine inside contested territories thereof, iconoclastic

iterations can humanize the zombie; i.e., as doll-like to varying sex-positive degrees: a feeling of rotten flesh/trauma-in-flesh whose "necrophilic/necrophagic" roleplay works as giver or receiver [the zombie, vampire, and/or ghost as Destroyer or "victim" to varying degrees of cannibalistic topping and catching that can subvert traditional delivery routes and destinations of power]! It has a tremendously popular [and populous] theatrical history to it; i.e., camping the Nazi; e.g., Kain's barb from Blood Omen: "But I am dead!" which he gives out before beheading his enemy and declaring him dead [source: Game Cinematics' "Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen - Story (All Cutscenes)," 2017; [timestamp](#): 16:10]. Checkmate, as they say.



[source, right: [ibid.](#); left, bottom: [Capsule Computers](#)]

More to the point, such rapacious, psychosexual theatre exposes privileged workers with their own expendability during state crisis; i.e., in ways that, just as often, yield funny internalized debates; e.g., Team Four Stars' Piccolo deciding whether he should block Nappa's attack or pick Gohan up and throw him out of the way or not, until our resident green alien pays the price for his silly hesitation ["Dragon Ball Z Abridged: Episode 9," 2009; [timestamp](#): 3:59]. Conversely there are benefits to not dodging should one choose and provided the context is right for it; i.e., someone feeling undead in ways that seek out a healthy form of ludo-Gothic BDSM/psychosexual kayfabe: when someone "throws it" at you.

In short and in truth, death and rape are extremely funny if you camp them through rememory as something you've actually survived [and death, rape and monsters go together with theatre like pussies and cocks, swords and sheaths, etc]! Furthermore, "rape" can be healing as well—can paradoxically feel good with the right demon lover taking you to that extra special edge, mid-calculated risk. To

*that, though, beware anyone monopolizing it for the state! Whatever the arrangement of the undead dynamic of giving/receiving pain and eating essence, they help us confront our own mortality as something to fearfully embrace the human side of trauma; i.e., that workers are made out of flesh and blood, organs that can be harvested and weaponized, mid-apocalypse.*

*Cops and victims. As I demonstrate following my own rape, rebellious zombies start to seek out rape with varying degrees of irony as something to camp canon with, versus Man Box agents classically doing it to rape women sans irony and calling it "art":*



*The "sweet spot," I think, is to maintain a steady resistance towards the state's coercions without defanging the critical power of the zombie, itself [or any doll, for that matter]. However, liminalities can intersect, swinging the performance away from straight-up exploitation and more towards a kind of playful "slut reclamation," carefully projected onto the zombie persona as a mutually consensual "necrophilia"; i.e., with bodies that aren't dead, but perceived as dead to express their present struggles under the status quo; e.g., Rosemary's Baby [above]. There's a presence of rape that speaks to the usual abusers against the usual victims having appetites that, in times of heightened control, become confused but also monstrous as a matter of duality-in-action.*

*As such, iconoclastic "necrophilia" [sex with "dolls"] pointedly reverses the process of abjection in defense of workers reclaiming their ability to express mutual consent through Gothic language: surviving rape; i.e., the inanimate as reanimated to convey the performer's pedagogy of the oppressed through undead, made-up markers of trauma [or class envy/revenge from the bigoted, conservative mindset]*

staining the surface of their doll-like persona green [or some-such color]. Dolls, like actors, can be painted, to which "greenface" sits adjacent to blackface as a racial symbol [vaudeville] but one allows for different forms of "black" [as in, "non-white" *vis-à-vis* the colony binary] during apocalyptic discourse. Although race is generally involved under settler colonialism, these go beyond race alone; i.e., stigma, bias, envy and so on; e.g., non-English, low-class, foreign, unmarried, homosexual, and stigma animal [the Drow, exhibit 41b]. Painted and clothed, dolls store trauma as a means of expressing its usual giving and receiving during state crisis, decay and moral panic: a witch hunt, which is basically what *The Wizard of Oz* is, below.)



(exhibit 38b2: Artist, bottom-left: [Cherry-Gig](#); right: [J. Scott Campbell](#). Third, the immobile/mobile effigy whereupon the performer is a demonic doll; i.e., one whose existence is thrown into question by virtue of having never been alive on the earthly plane [Kafka's "Odradek" from "The Care of a Family Man," 1914, being a famous/generative example] but instead animated or summoned by magic, or made by mad science.

However, there is crossover with certain kinds of undead; i.e., the ghost in its most viral, inhuman forms and the composite as a kind of reanimated golem made from inanimate things, including human tissue, animal parts, and various inorganic or at least non-animal things [straw, above]. Unlike dolls in general, sex dolls play with notions of dehumanization and control in sexualized spheres: the thing you can dress, manipulate, destroy or fuck.

For example, Ti West's 2022 *Pearl* portrays a phallic woman at least partially conditioned to seek coercive control with an immobile partner—i.e., as an Elektra-esque virago railing against her patriarchal mother [a matriarch acting like a man in the absence of the heroine's paralyzed father]. Conditioned thus, Pearl rapes a

double of her own comatose father in a cornfield [evocations of the strawman effigy of the Pagan harvest]. Yet, the sex doll in ritualistic terms represents a submitting of one's agency within a negotiated inequality between one human by themselves, or two in cahoots; i.e., the sub was never alive, thus cannot be harmed, or is alive but trusts the other party to not harm them while both are seeking catharsis through the fetishized embodiment, or wearing of, various shells. These can be the virgin/whore or damsel/demon as things to wear, thus interrogate the feeling of ontological "claustrophobia" while being trapped inside and forced to act a particular way for one's ritualized captor. The critique becomes a meta commentary performed in real-time, between the fiction and the rules of a theatrical magic circle: where the "rape" game takes place.



[artist: [Blxxd Bunny](#)]

Keeping this flexible theatricality in mind, Bunny's "scarecrow" sex doll is aesthetically and performatively similar to Pearl's dance partner as never-having-been-alive, minus the abject harm and xenophobia Pearl the puppeteer intimates [evoking the miracle of Christ's resurrection and Milton's narcissistic Eve kissing her own reflection]. The general process, then—while potentially connected to real-life trauma [rape while the victim is asleep, a common historical occurrence for women]—isn't an automatic extension of it as a premeditation towards harming others in the future; for Bunny it's a healing ritual, in which they can explore the mechanisms of control within a single-person, consent-non-consent ritual: the sleeping "boyfriend" being toyed with by a curious "doll," both of them "Barbie-like" in different ways.

*In other words, the immobile doll was never alive like a corpse was or a taxidermized animal, thus has not been reduced to a permanent lobotomized state by the dominant; it's no different than a dildo in that respect. Bunny's particular theatre of nudism invokes such a persona within a stuffed "scarecrow" for them—a doll-like cutie, themselves [their body sculpted and lovely like a doll's]—to play within, applying voyeuristic peril and giddy exhibitionism as floating around inside the general meta of the screen: the nerdy debutante converging with the whore/demon archetype as "letting her hair down" for the viewer of the exchange to look upon with curiosity and delight.*

*Simply put, it's a peep show but it needn't be divorced from actual jouissance for the performer! Bunny is ace, but absolutely loves their work [and plays with more than just literal dolls].)*



*(exhibit 38b3: Fourth, the actual sex doll object, divorced from undeath/demonic magic but used to convey the aesthetics of either type. Whether immobile or mobile, the theatrical exhibition of doll theatre takes physical work, but also "lights, camera, action!" It's hard work to direct a body physically and without harm, but also to manipulate a literal, never-alive doll physically [or to act like one under the hot camera lights; e.g., the Technicolor stage lights for The Wizard of Oz or Peeping Tom, etc]. Personally I always liked the idea of exhibiting these things in a similar sense to those movies, but also my friend Bunny's adventures. Although my expertise lies more in directing a model long-distance, the vampire cloak draped*

*over my sex doll [Jessamine, above] has been worn by real people that I've fucked and filmed: Cuwu and Jadis, in particular.*

*For me, control as a "service top" is the optimal approach; i.e., to subvert the idea of the dominator as forceful, proving myself as thoroughly unlike my abusive father or exes while still enjoying the volunteer "sacrifice" offering all of themselves to me—for a moment, not forever!*

*Unlike the cliché sacrifice, then, no harm is taking place. This can apply to literal sex dolls designed for sex [with stuffed pillows or replicas meant for companionship] but also sexual partners whose surface image is sexualized to serve a doll-like function inside an ironic BDSM scheme; i.e., meant to heal one-or-both parties through a complicated, informed "dance." Within this dance as ludo-Gothic BDSM, the image of the Pagan/witch priestess [and other aspects of prestige, power and vulnerability, etc] can be worn upon the body of the doll or the naked, exposed, dollish likeness of a person: the magical "scarecrow" coming alive and dancing with the girl in the cornfield [again, evoking the Pagan harvest and older magics as not intrinsically harmful, but certainly coded as "evil" under state influence].)*

At first, Jadis and I vibed through dolls, and all seemed fine; I accepted them for their toys and they accepted me for mine (eagerly asking me to fuck my own sex doll as they used their own toys on themselves). However, the longer I lived with Jadis, the more unironically monstrous (and doll-like) we both felt in my esteem—they the master and I their pathetic slave. Jadis' torturous abuses not only became harder to ignore; they occurred inside a liminal position wrought with fetishized violence—i.e., they were my first experience with emotional violence of a sexualized flavor in my own life: rape. It felt weirdly uncanny—familiar but alien in ways I easily recognized from second-hand accounts or popular stories, but also second-guessed at every turn: "Am *I* being raped?"

Faced with that abominable question, I started to *feel* undead in relation to what I conceived the undead to be, albeit in confused ways: dissected and studied, fascinating odd sensations of division and confrontation expressed in some of my favorite childhood stories. It was the only thing I had to compare my abuse to.

This stresses another key aspect to dolls: feeling undead as a *nostalgic* means of playing with personal trauma through the rememory process; i.e., in ways that abusers manipulate, but which we can reclaim through our own arguments, using ludo-Gothic BDSM (egregores, simulacra, homunculi, etc, of course being poetic lenses, but play constituting its own argumentation for or against workers facing trauma: as something to play with). I'd like to unpack these undead feelings and practices, next, then proceed through the rest of our list about dolls and their undead ludic qualities; re: playing with dolls something I employed to eventually *escape* Jadis' physical clutches.



**"Meeting Jadis," part two: One Foot out the Door; or, Playing with Dolls to Express One's Feeling Undead (feat. *Alien*, *The Night House*, *Steven Universe* and more)**

*To be crystal clear, the pornstar/"doll" look isn't automatically a bad thing. Indeed, enjoying the look or subverting its harmful history through ironic BDSM is perfectly serviceable among iconoclasts: deliberately performing like a doll, puppet or sleeping/unthinking "victim" in figurative or literal ways; puppy play as doll-like; creating consent-non-consent in our own art; or otherwise emulating the "swooning" function of vampirism in ways that aren't immediately harmful; or exhibiting the Goth doll look, mood or vibe through thematic rape play performed by couples wearing masks and outfits of a particular look that evoke death and rape as things to subvert [...] However, if it doesn't express mutual consent in a visually obvious manner, then it's ontologically "ambiguous" in that respect ([source](#)).*

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

Now that we've explored several of the ontological, modular aspects to dolls in [part one](#), part two will now consider

- the Gothic (monstrous) relationship between dolls, space-time and foreign-to-familiar evocations of either regarding undead sentiment as a coercive or liberatory device (feat. *Alien* and *The Night House*)
- the balancing of a paradox of cuteness that can be used to help or hinder workers depending on who's using them and how
- the means to subvert a canonical absence of irony, mid-play (taking the opportunity to look at various cartoons with doll-like themes in them; e.g., *Steven Universe* and *Scott Pilgrim*)

By extension, it will consider the undead, raped way I existed under Jadis' abuse relative to these things; i.e., which I had to reclaim before I could escape Jadis and their bad-faith variants, then write this book as it presently exists concerning ludo-Gothic BDSM, dolls, and rape play at large: coming out as queer by transforming *my* zombie self through a playful rememory process. I write better when having others around to talk to/work with, meaning it was an interpersonal exchange



between our trauma attracting each other as both a matter of common survival and interest, but also one between dolls of various kinds/media *about* dolls, rape, and BDSM as doll-like (sex dolls with a rapey flavor). So keep part one's definitions from earlier handy!

(artist: [Brad Art](#))

As a matter of combining ludology, Gothic poetics and BDSM, we'll be talking about dolls a lot, which overlap with monsters. To become one is to reduce, configure or otherwise stress oneself as an object of play,

which the Gothic does to emphasize monstrous qualities of power exchange and its abuse; i.e., as something to endorse or recover from. As such, monsters and dolls denote a lingering and reoccurring presence of unequal historical-material factors by which to camp the survival of rape; re: "Despite their poetic nature, performance and play are an absolutely *potent* means of expressing thus negotiating power through the Gothic mode (its castles, monsters and rape scenarios)."

Both are functionally the same in this respect, but monsters more broadly provide a poetic means of study and performance upon *examination*. Dolls, by comparison, stress an active, *participatory* element of play within a staged poetic lens; i.e., for dialectical-material purposes during oppositional praxis' liminal expression as primarily hands-on (expect numerous doubles as we proceed, generally in theatrical but also ontological conflict; re: *Amazonomachia*, like Hippolyta vs Medusa, but also—to use a random-but-fun example—Mr. Bean camping the Nativity Story with t-rexes and dalecks, next page): to neatly put things into perspective<sup>128</sup> as a framed, object-lesson matter of performance and

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<sup>128</sup> This can get quite concentric/meta; e.g., puppets playing puppets in *The Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance*.



Hanh Nguyen writes in "The Puppet Wizardry Behind the Most Hilarious Parts of *Age of Resistance*," (2019):

And so, the audience must watch as the hero puppets sit there and watch the Skeksis and Mystic puppets put on a puppet show. It's weird and yet brilliant, poking at the entire process of creating the *Age of Resistance* puppet show but also utilizing different styles of puppets to reveal the history of Thra, the secret of the Skeksis, and how to defeat them.

Becky Henderson, the puppeteer for Deet, had a front row seat of sorts to the action. "We got the seats to the best show ever," she said. "My life is so weird! It's so bonkers, and then they put on this little puppet show for us, and it was wild. It was really wild. But that set in particular the mood was so playful.

"It's just this refreshing idea because you've been watching puppets for however many episodes at this point," she added. "It gives us these other forms, like shadow puppetry and then this other completely unique kind of puppetry that Barnaby Dixon kind of invented, this *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

play camping power as normally monopolized/dogmatized by capital, but also arranged in some-such diorama (me, inside a room, inside a house with an abuser as reoccurring, trend-wise, from childhood to adulthood; i.e., as I went from one abuser to the next). Dolls—like games and play as a larger multimedia tradition—become a scripted-to-improvisational means of thinking that easily demonstrates itself to the audience.



(source: "[Merry Christmas, Mr. Bean](#)," 1992)

Let's summarize part one of "Meeting Jadis," then segue into *Alien* and *The Night House*. As part one explained, dolls can reify pieces (exhibit 38a) or full bodies of undead (38b1), demonic (38b2) and/or animalistic things, as well as actual objects (38b3)

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hand puppetry that looks kind of like stop motion. Beautiful little sequence like nothing else and a nice break from the normal puppetry that you've seen up until that point."

"That scene may be the greatest accomplishment of my entire career. I credit Jeff and Will for a lot of the final shape and also that wonderful introduction where he says 'puppetry' and everybody rolls their eyes," said Grillo-Marxuach. "The quest has worked, they've gotten to where they need it to be, and now they have to have everything explained to them. That could have [been] the most tedious thing ever.

"The world of Thra is so complicated, and some might even say convoluted, and then the mythology has been added to by all of these different people over several years," he continued. "It literally just began as a solution to a problem of, 'How do we make three minutes of exposition interesting?' That scene is one of the things in the show that we spent a lot of time looking at each other going, 'Can you believe they're letting us do this?'"

Addiss added, "And [senior costume and creature supervisor] Toby Froud actually directed a lot of the pieces of that scene in that puppet show, along with [the show's director] Louis Leterrier. But that was very much a collaborative scene, because it had a lot of information, a lot of story, a lot of specific visuals, a lot of very detailed puppets. And so it was cool. And Barnaby Dixon came in. But there's a lot of different people's vision in there starting with Javi."

"This is how difficult it is to do exposition in genre," said Grillo-Marxuach. "It literally took a team of about 150 people to make three minutes of exposition palatable" ([source](#)).

Regardless of the exact form or arrangement, dolls become a potent means of perspective extend outside ourselves that contributes towards history as a large of a traditional of poetic expression; i.e., that showcases our development and growth as individuals tied to a larger cultural discussion that is also in flux.

For example, I currently operate/identify as a GNC Gothic ludologist (who specializes in BDSM) and have since at least 2021 (e.g., "[I, Satanist](#)"; "[Sex, Metal and Videogames](#)"; and "[My Body of Work](#)," all 2021). Originally, though, I was just a nine-year-old girl playing *Mega Man V* (1995) on her Gameboy. At first the game took me countless days to beat, then nine hours in one sitting, and then much quicker than that (1-2 hours). It went from a time where I couldn't remember playing games to suddenly being able to remember the process to—over more and more time—be able to contribute to the notion of games and play through my scholarship responding to the tradition of games that exists under capital/neoliberalism; e.g., speedrunning and *Metroidvania*.

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
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or people acting like these to make a larger point. Our emphasis, here, will be personal trauma through power exchange inside stories of different kinds.

To that, undeath is a feeling I have felt since childhood—of having regular access to toys that could voice my concerns when played with, which Jadis later abused in a doll-like fashion (they had zero empathy and treated everything like dolls in order to completely own and control them); i.e., according to the ways we each played with toys, but also ourselves as doll-like vessels for undead sentiment coming into conflict when trying to heal from trauma as something to meet in good or bad faith: humans being like dolls insofar as they *can* be controlled, but also able to find agency under such power as arranged and performed; i.e., as a final product; e.g., my doing so here (through various collabs, below) constituting an inventive way of finding agency through my school of thought as something to cultivate and exhibit inside these books: as regularly denied to me both by actual universities<sup>129</sup> and people like Jadis who regularly deferred to the bourgeois arrangement of such places deeming my queerness (and its denuding) anathema.



(artist: [Jim32](#))

In short, the ways in which Jadis and I engaged with the Gothic—as a doll-like means of returning to, and playing with past trauma—began to clash, making me feel less-than-human; i.e., because they refused to sanction my self-expression in doll-like monstrous language. Yet, as I played with things they *couldn't* monopolize, doing so drove us apart due to our differing styles when engaging with said aesthetics. Whereas I wanted to use playing with Jadis and dolls to collectively heal and address trauma to improve both our lives, Jadis argued through doll-like

<sup>129</sup> A bit like Chris Farley's minifridge in *Tommy Boy* (1995): "You can put beer... or... candy bars inside it..." / "You can put whatever you want inside it, son."

approaches to prey on me; i.e., raping me as a predatory means of feeling in control from having survived their own abuse, hence using dolls as capital does: raping others by making them *feel* undead/doll-like through trauma as confronted, commodified and enacted using canonical demon BDSM (closer to Radcliffe's mutilative demon lovers than anything I have since tried to represent). They began to belittle and antagonize my expertise, treating it simply as wrong by virtue of them as always being right.

Think of the canonical mechanism as an avatar—something to control, or control others with, in highly manipulative ways that serve profit; e.g., to shape like clay as one might a doll, pull its strings, hold in one's hand, etc. Again, "whatever the media, rape *is* profit under Capitalism, which relies not just on predation, but *community silence* to continue itself in bad copies, falsehoods, and double standards." This includes dolls under neoliberal schemes, which Jadis performed as a matter of argument; i.e., controlling *me* as the avatar feeling detached from myself, thus under their power when responding in ways they could provoke, thus predict through my undead elements: my trauma, but also my trauma *responses* (with undead dolls being arguably more immobile at a glance, only to animate in ways that, in a demonic sense, transform them by virtue of animating dead issue or materials: through reanimation as a kind of forbidden "spell" to cast, thus summon the mobility of undeath onto a dead object or the *immobility* of death onto a *living* subject [which translate to domestic abuses but also rape play that can be weaponized *during* domestic abuse]. Nothing is more "doll-like" than paralysis; i.e., as a Gothic commentary on manipulation through forces that have either effect, then can be played with to whatever degree and flavor the controller desires: to fly or freeze, fight or fawn).

Jadis' predictions were likewise informed by common interests between us; i.e., media we both consumed as Gothic, hence concerned with trauma as doll-like. To that, my conceptualization of feeling undead *vis-à-vis* dolls and roleplay remains informed by stories such as *Alien*, but also *like* that movie in terms of the same dolls-and-dollhouse theatrics: as undead when dealing with Jadis after the fact; i.e., speaking to personal trauma as part of a larger historical-material equation felt across all parties and texts.

*Alien* is a good example of the doll and dollhouse per a neoliberal critique, which Jadis challenged *ipso facto*. In short, they did so through a neoliberal privatization of medieval poetics threatened by my illegitimate expertise (according to them); i.e., their playing the TERF (minority cop) through Gothic argument, instruction, and instrument to correct me as simply "wrong" in their eyes: their dogma vs my liberation using the same devices to play with, the same dolls.

To that, let's quickly outline how with *Alien* before moving onto a more recent, domestic-tinged example that speaks nicely to my experiences with Jadis as feeling more and more undead, themselves: *The Night House*.



*(exhibit 38b4a: When I was a little girl, I loved dolls but often broke them. Scott's Alien showcased a fearsome dollhouse whose rapacious occupants couldn't break, but felt broken in ways I oddly loved [especially Metroidvania as founded on such castles].*

*To that, the animated miniature is not always a zombie or demon so much as an animate-inanimate coming alive and behaving in ways it shouldn't; i.e., a painting or a statue tied to the imaginary past as having historical elements to it that aren't wholly imagined. The concept of restless cryptonymy is a classic Gothic staple, evoking Walpole's animated portraits, but also the uncanny feelings of Scott's Nostromo as a modern-day chronotope; i.e., the sinking sensation felt by the occupants as having inherited a dangerous mimicry regarding the home as perfidious: the Gothic castle, whose mise-en-abyme contains impostors who double and threaten rape unto the current residents to varying degrees.*

*To this, Ripley is doubled by the monstrous-feminine xenomorph as a furiously undead-demonic animal monster [the Medusa] that, like the gargoyle, springs terrifyingly to life; but also the effeminate [eunuchized] and deceptively strong Ash as someone who was designed as a lesser copy of the xenomorph the company ultimately desires. The fear for the heroine is not simply to die, but to be made as either simulacra is inside the imperiled dollhouse: a sexualized-on-its-surface/veil object, a non-human, ex-human or never-human suggested through the space as conflicted by virtue of such dolls walking around at all; i.e., not fully a medieval metaphor for their mind and self, but some presence of mind haunted by the objects that compose them as simultaneously making up other alien, trans, non-binary or intersex entities as surface-level and ontologically torn.)*



(artist: [Ashleigh Izienicki](#))

Whatever they appear as, monsters are poetic lenses that expose trauma as a matter of code to express what is voided (through abjection); i.e., something to fill out again within the usual theatrical cavities. Often, they manifest as art, but especially dolls as things to own and play with, but also command, punish, reward, what-have you. Like a child's drawing of a ruined home, then, dolls denote rape as something ubiquitous, but partially hidden to play with inside the

"home" as haunted with old trauma both real and imagined. This speaks to what happened with Jadis and I as something to revisit again; i.e., just as Scott did with when reviving Otranto two centuries after Walpole. Apart from the dolls, there's also the dollhouse, hence a cartographic refrain to such devices; i.e., that *Alien* plays with in abject ways invading a seemingly domestic workspace as castled, but also stories like it that change the balance; e.g., *The Night House* as previously alluded to, working through altogether different distributions of familiar and foreign.

Even so, the same spatio-temporal relationship exhibits between players and dolls for which all such stories exemplify per the usual chronotopes' occupants to wander around inside. The Gothic castle, then, serves as a kind of dollhouse unto itself—a playful means of aesthetically expressing the organic and circuitous relationship between all of these things. It does so in a relatable, easy-to-comprehend form; i.e., that children might communicate when talking about their own lived abuse: the *undead* home as alien, barbaric, and prison-like, but also

demonic in doll-like forms that express/rarefy torture and unequal, harmful power exchange: Lovecraft's "horror in clay" from "Call of Cthulhu."



To that, the monster in *The Night House* is preceded by a doll-like abstraction to the husband's crimes hidden inside-outside himself as abjecting BDSM<sup>130</sup>. It isn't overtly undead, then, but still has an undead function when played with: a ludo-Gothic, BDSM-style

negotiation of the heroine's personal trauma as made into things that are essentially dolls. These would interact with my own dolls in a meta sense—but also my abuser abusing me with dolls—that informed my scholarship about dolls as forever a work-in-progress *vis-à-vis* historical materialism; i.e., as a dialectical-material process, one predicated on rape as a matter of profit expressed through dolls for or against the state on different registers. I want to explore that for the rest of the *Night House* close-reading.

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<sup>130</sup> Bigotries that admittedly extend to Lovecraft as frankly being in a long line of homophobes abusing the Gothic for these purposes, and communicating about it through personal correspondence: "As a matter of fact—although of course I always knew that paederasty was a disgusting custom of many ancient nations—I never heard of homosexuality as an actual instinct till I was over thirty" ([source](#): Lovecraft.com).

However, as "[Making Marx Gay](#)" discusses, this rising heteronormative trend also existed among Marx and people like him, and writers celebrated for their ostensible progressiveness like Frank Herbert

last year, when the *Los Angeles Review of Books* published Jordan S. Carroll's "[Race Consciousness: Fascism and Frank Herbert's Dune](#)," an article detailing how the alt-right is trying to co-opt the book series, the paper's readers went on a rant. Bob Arctor wrote in: "Herbert was a dick about his son being gay."

Someone writing in as "Nicol" added: "Why do you *Dune* cultists always minimize this man's horrific relationship to his son due to his son's gayness, something he hated so much he would be having his characters rant about homosexuality being linked to sadistic violence in his books? Oh wait it's because you like reading the homophobic rants isn't it. . . . As if [Frank] Herbert wouldn't have thrown his whole weight behind Trump for the sake to teach these wimpy lib commies and the 'gay agenda' a lesson" (sic). Bravo, Nicol! ([source](#): Brandon Judell's "Bland *Dune* - Also, Frank Herbert's Dug-up Homophobia," 2021).

industry giants like Tolkien project the rape fantasy (the perfidious ring gift) onto shadowy agents in faraway places, and so on. Queer abjection is as old as the men camping it (re: Matthew Lewis).

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)



With any and all BDSM, there's the fantasy and the reality. Sex workers work between them as half-real, which is where the Gothic comes in; re: the rememory of personal trauma through dolls during ludo-Gothic BDSM as undead. There will be demons and power abuse, of course, but our focus is still trauma when looking at *The Night House*. To that, the problem with any contract is you ultimately have to rely on the dominant holding themselves accountable when things aren't materially equal or socially transparent. No contract is perfect. As Jadis shows us, people lie, exploiting their positions to police others to feel in control at someone else's expense, forcing *them* to be the doll by exploiting their desire to play with the idea of rememory at all. The same goes for the characters in *The Night House*; i.e., as things to relate to and learn from when dealing with abusers seeking to dominate a given rape play by bullying its execution in search of total *permanent* control.

Of course, hindsight isn't foresight, but it *can* change history as something we make ourselves when confronting trauma in socio-material ways. Trauma lives in the body but also around it—in the chronotope, the family space—as divided, disintegrating and regenerating through rememory and decay as part of the same imbricating loop. In turn, the Gothic is written in liminality and grey area, oscillating between the world of the living and the land of the dead, the big and the small, the genuine and the fake, good faith and bad, etc; i.e., the past and the present as one in the same, which *The Night House* demonstrates quietly but exceptionally well through its spatio-temporal elements: the castle as—like with *Alien*—remains told between the space of one doubled by the other as a dark twin.

In either case, the general operation exists in ontological uncertainty amid tension on the surface of its imagery but also its thresholds (whose troubling comparisons are what doubles, the Gothic and dolls are all about). For *The Night House*, its title should be a clue, in that respect; but said house isn't simply the faraway secret house, the normal daily residence, or the lake between them; it's all of them inside a monstrous time-space filled with different kinds of dolls—the torturous effigy (above) but also the fake wives, the husband as fake, and the wife stuck figuring all of that out: feeling undead, thus potentially fake herself.

All monsters are doubles, but dolls highlight that quality best, because they can adopt any modular element and still be a double with or without a given kind, mid-interaction, as a matter of continuous chaos: incessant entropy thriving in place of eventual resolution. The movie is full of these things, and despite its coherence in presenting them, you're never quite sure what you're dealing with (depression, serial killers, demons, or some combination); i.e., upsetting the perceived ordering of things as a confused, quantum kind of ground state (re: [Aquirre](#)).

Such a playful recounting of abuse takes on circuitous, mirror-like qualities; i.e., that make exploring the dream-like space not just confusing but *hazardous* as a matter of recursive motion—of concentric designs denoting plans-within-plans, of deceptions-within-deceptions, of anisotropic exchanges of power and information

that upend a previous ordering/understanding of things. All holistically suggest the *house* being the toy as something to play with, but not perhaps for the reasons you think. It becomes a means of camouflage, too—of things hiding in plain sight that, when confronted, act from positions of continuous invisibility out from the *mise-en-*



*abyme* as a portal that goes in both directions: an empty suit of armor that threatens, like the black knight or xenomorph coming out of the walls (an echo of guerrilla warfare), to attack!

Rape is generally invisible in society but also notably ubiquitous and commented on using Gothic poetics serving the usual kinds of double operation. Like *Alien* before it, *The Night House* delights in gradually showing the viewer what really is a very common but

hushed-up experience: domestic abuse. To summarize, a woman named Beth loses her outwardly cheerful husband to a sudden and unexpected suicide (Owen, who shoots himself with a gun she didn't know they had, the body found in a small boat listing offshore, on the small lake next to their house). She starts looking into his life and things get suitably weird. The film is very much a slow-burn, Beth (and by extension, the viewer) being made to feel like they're slowly going crazy while confronting smaller pieces to a larger problem they hope to reconcile—first the doll, above, but then a husband who lives a double life, within a double house where he kills women doubling his wife (who he positions like the doll as a matter of instruction), and very well might have never been the man she knew because *that* guy was possessed by nihilism as a literal entity beyond the living world!

Except, the demon really isn't the point; instead, the focus remains power as a matter of play through dolls, be they alive, dead, or in between.

What I mean by that is, anything seemingly alien in these stories (re: nihilistic sex demons passing themselves off as "Owen") are generally abjected on account of repressed harmful socio-material factors (re: Lovecraft or Herbert's queer scapegoating of capital's usual instabilities). Per the ghost of the counterfeit, the elite use such doll-like vessels to gaslight the middle class with; i.e., bringing things to light by telling a wild story that abstracts them as a means of illusion; e.g., Plato's allegory of the cave being shadow puppets, probably made with dolls (or humanoid-shapes of some kind or another) to highlight an untrustworthy nature to reality as normally advertised to us by state forces. Except, these elaborate strategies of misdirection cannot be monopolized by the state, meaning proletarian

proponents can reclaim them to break through Capitalist Realism with instead of skirting its edges; i.e., challenging the usual bourgeois gaslighters telling us that everything is "fine," when it clearly isn't (re: dolls pointing to rape by virtue of themselves, much like a corpse does a murder)! Simply put, there's a method to the madness of playing with dolls to get at rape without commodifying it as so many authors do: to become advocates for our rights that kill the darlings of yore by exposing as humbugs, one and all! Fuck 'em.

The point, here, isn't whether the sex demon from *Night House* is "real" or not, but that such stories exist at all as a matter of abjection. Point in fact, they exist relative to power centers whose sole purpose is to lie to people and rape them through centuries-old strategies of control and abuse (which are required if profit is to occur). For the good of workers, then, such things should be investigated, but also played with through these investigations. This generally happens, to some degree, inside of themselves; i.e., as vehicles that, post-consumption, are then critiqued relative to the broad meta world they belong to. A doll is simply an object that can be used for different purposes, highlighting the things around it that shape the entity and its performance later being critiqued:



Returning to Beth and *her* little demon problem, the revelation—that her husband is a demon-possessed serial killer—is of course a very "Oh, shit!" moment when it happens. Partly this feels unsettling because it denotes

an abusive quality to the home and those inside it, but also serves the audience with a "pinch me" moment weaponized against them; i.e., it generally means to confuse the viewer into thinking *they're* nuts—that *they're* seeing things that aren't there (re: pareidolia through Hitchcock-style silhouettes, above, having a doll-like, framed uncanniness to the home as *unheimlich*). Because monopolies (of violence, terror and sex, etc) are impossible, such duping isn't for strictly nefarious purposes, but rather showcase how such devices work on people to begin with; i.e., that people *can* be fooled, and by some of the oldest tricks in the book; e.g., Radcliffe's pirates, pretending to be ghosts to rob the locals blind. This generally involves likeness of people, reducing to people-like shapes that manipulate the perception of the viewer in responding with hostility towards the sensation; i.e., of a mannequin that *might* be a person or vice versa.

To that, such theatrical occurrences yield commentaries on rape per an element of camouflage common to narcissists and their own theatre; i.e., as geared towards harming others with: masks and mirrors, dolls and dollhouses. Stories like

*The Night House*, when thought about as part of the world to which they belong ("there is no outside of text"), beg to consider the way in which *those* work; i.e., when thrown together as part of a larger lie telling a forbidden truth: the elite are the pirates, but they're generally felt through the predicaments of persons *like* Beth (a doll-esque likeness of the viewer) faced with abjections haunting the ghost of the counterfeit: the lie of Western sovereignty pushed onto some kind of unspeakable demon or zombie to abject all over again.

Narcissists, as we shall see, communicate through masks and mirrors to disorient and confuse their prey while looking at them: a mirror dance/doll's game that plays out as the stoat hypnotizes a rabbit before biting its neck. Seeing isn't believing insofar as you very quickly begin to doubt what you're looking at as both concrete *and* insubstantial. By extension, the mirror hall/dollhouse is one that abused parties generally find themselves in, offering up ephemeral clues to how fucked they are; i.e., *after* it's too late. To that, predator and prey alike use camouflage, but *predators* also build traps to fool and confuse their prey with, which the latter must try to escape during asymmetrical warfare (more on this per my trauma, in part two of this subchapter). The only way out is *through* the maze.

Per our usual medieval devices, though, the senses reliably start to confuse, boundaries elide, and disturbing information trespass in ways that absorb into the unwilling host as part of a larger echo that won't shut up ("the love that dare not speak its name!"). It's simply how the brain operates when housed under such conditions. In turn, the home becomes an occupation of survived abuse that tries to map itself as the mind does; i.e., manifesting as hysteria founded on real events that, no longer repressed, catch reality and cause it to fracture and sweep up on itself. Only then can they be navigated, doing so as a matter of transference all



over again (the film limits this to one life, but per generational trauma/stolen generations actually travels across multiple places, peoples and cultures).

What follows in *The Night House* is a complicated mirror game, one whose various instances/registers have Beth wrestling as much with her shadowy self in a disembodied, physical way, but also during a

kind of abyssal staring contest (above and below) as merged with her various surroundings. To be sure, she *looks* alone, but feels watched by someone/something else that reminds her of a past good lover she's trying to find by following the memories of that lover any way she can. Her quest for Owen is



something of a holy grail, then; it becomes confused in ways that reflect the usual qualities of abuse being dogmatic, Pavlovian, and game-like. These become a lingering influence, both during and after the fact: "See the world through my eyes."

In turn, reality as something to perceive starts to become highly questionable and unsafe, under such circumstances, but also rapturous; i.e., becoming the doll, the plaything of an angry god, which is really capital singularizing the doll as something to abject its usual rapes onto—a scapegoat destroyer presented as Numinous, celestial, queer and alien (monstrous-feminine): like zombies, the sole function of dolls under capital is rape, domination, and genocide as a matter of profit; i.e., by preserving the nuclear family unit as in-crisis during Capitalism's built-in instabilities—its monopolies, trifectas and qualities of capital (Cartesian, settler-colonial,

heteronormative). The usual elite command is "freeze and obey when we let things run wild," who then claw them back again as a matter of moving money through nature. On some level, this requires a submissive cop's wife (a war bride), without which the state will not last.

It's never stated what Owen does, though he may as well be a cop, a preacher or a celebrity of some kind (re: Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown"). This predicament obviously isn't exclusive to Beth; i.e., the Gothic-as-venue exhibits forbidden knowledge as something to exchange and play with in demonic forms that—per trauma as an undead thing—pass from one traumatized person to the next through likenesses (few things are as doll-like as the classic Gothic heroine): someone I know is an impostor coming from inside the community while pointing the finger outside (the mendacious hypocrisy of a so-called "foreign plot"). As such, the movie's caged, inwards-folding positions of torment pointedly offer the usual gaslighting technique as projected onto a Gothic kind of shadow space and shadow person; i.e., one common to white women as sheltered from the usual zombies (the victims of state genocide) by their possessive husbands' so-called "protection": wool to pull over their eyes.

As a matter of games predicated on deception, these shadows stand in for reality perceived through the mind as raped; i.e., not once, but per the nature of emotional abuse, as taking place over a long period of time—indeed, even after the abuser is dead and buried! As such, the usual markers of abuse take on a historical quality in *The Night House* that suitably rises from the grave; e.g., the continuous markers of ascension and martyrdom (above) threatening a Numinous presence whose repeating positions of crucifixion are, themselves, staging harmful bondage as a matter of dogmatic, fearful instruction; i.e., looping inside a bind-torture-kill scenario trapping Beth, the widow, with the late husband as torn in two, caught between good lover and demon lover as likewise caught between two houses divided by the lake-as-Styx; re: conflict on surfaces and inside thresholds, per liminal expression as something to move through the architecture of.

You may have noticed how there's certainly an element of rape apologia to the proceedings; i.e., "the devil made him do it" (sure). Once recovered as an artefact to view in hindsight, though, everything becomes phenomenologically out-of-joint, alien, trapped between echoes (upon echoes). It's very Radcliffean, passing along (and for) heroines as classically white and straight. But there's also a Borges flavor to things—encapsulating the mind of your average (white, middle-class) woman as trapped in the sorts of circular-ruin living spaces that intimate the impostor as already lurking in plain sight: on the glass of mirrors, but also—as *Night House* does—inside negative space (exhibit 38b4c, second image) and various



social exchanges that, unto themselves, involve a fair amount of a) self-deception, and b) deception by one's friends having kept up appearances for far too long (exhibit 38b4b).

All the same, there's a tremendous amount of emotional urgency to Beth hugging the ghost. She's so busy groping air that she doesn't stop to consider *what* she's holding onto: "Owen?" "I'm not Owen!"

The film clearly enjoys playing with C.S. Lewis' idea of the ghost, itself made in response to Rudolph Otto's *Idea of the Holy* (1917), his own arguments in *The Problem of Pain* (1940) about big feelings *vis-à-vis* big spirits:

In all developed religion we find three strands or elements, and in Christianity one more. The first of these is what Professor Otto calls the experience of the Numinous. Those who have not met this term may be introduced to it by the following device.

Suppose you were told there was a tiger in the next room: you would know that you were in danger and would probably feel fear. But if you were told "There is a ghost in the next room," and believed it, you would feel, indeed, what is often called fear, but of a different kind. It would not be based on the knowledge of danger, for no one is primarily afraid of what a ghost may do to him, but of the mere fact that it is a ghost. It is "uncanny" rather than dangerous, and the special kind of fear it excites may be called Dread. With the Uncanny one has reached the fringes of the Numinous.

Now suppose that you were told simply "There is a mighty spirit in the room," and believed it. Your feelings would then be even less like the mere fear of danger: but the disturbance would be profound. You would feel wonder and a certain shrinking—a sense of inadequacy to cope with such a visitant and of prostration before it—an emotion which might be expressed in Shakespeare's words "Under it my genius is rebuked." This feeling may be described as awe, and the object which excites it as the Numinous ([source](#)).

Now imagine this basic roleplay scenario (which is effectively what it is) except you're *holding* the ghost of your *perceived*, long-lost husband!

That is, you're actually holding a doll of them that pushes you towards murder (the Hamlet problem) as something to investigate and confront. On some level, Beth denies the reality of what she's dealing with by wanting to fabricate a replica that, when "held" invisibly in her arms, can still be used to manipulate her by the thing she's rationalizing (during abuse, play is a matter of outcome—of results that speak to intent as something to infer): abusers so often pull away and continue to exert their influence ("hovering"). This includes after they are literally dead, the subject trying to play with the doll as taken from them by the abuser, but also an indicator of the abuser's control over them: to have the person grasping at spirits in search of said dominator as continuing to gaslight them; i.e., by virtue of the doll/ghost's ontological sense of unreality tied to real memories that start to disintegrate the more you hold on, hence deny the truth of things.

However silly this might sound, it's not so hard to relate to if you've ever lost someone who had a profound impact on your life (a theme the movie is utterly obsessed with), or if you've ever been threatened with loss by an abusive agent.

Furthermore, I think such medieval notions of miracles in Christian dogma (the reanimation of a dead body that walks again, akin to a doll piloted by a mighty divine force) are—however empirically false—still denoting an experience that is felt with the human senses as easily mislead. The Gothic generally does this for fun,

achieving Radcliffe's infamously "exquisite tortures" as a jouissance unto itself—one known to her School of Terror opposite Matthew Lewis' School of Horror as very much in competition relative to larger socio-material forces (namely the French Revolution as felt in Great Britain, itself a conservative nation losing its own monarchic influence):

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 horror and terror but in the uncertainty and obscurity, that accompany the first, respecting the dreaded evil? ([source](#)).

These are ideas "of their times," then, which come suitably enough with opinions we don't have time to fully unpack, here. But I will leave you with a taste of such things; i.e., to ruminate over regarding such competitions.

To that, Daniel Pietersen writes about the above quote in "Soul-Expanding Terror" (2019):

Ann Radcliffe wrote these words in her essay *On The Supernatural In Poetry*, published posthumously in 1826. She then goes on to clarify:

Obscurity leaves something for the imagination to exaggerate; confusion, by blurring one image into another, leaves only a chaos in which the mind can find nothing to be magnificent, nothing to nourish its fears or doubts, or to act upon in any way [[ibid.](#)].

For Radcliffe, this blurring of horror means that it can never teach or improve the recipient of that horror, only "freeze and nearly annihilate them." Horror becomes for her a denial of and turning away from the sublime. Terror, on the other hand, is the effect of staring clearly into the glare of the sublime, of suffering through an experience that "expands" us and fundamentally changes how we live ([source](#)).

In other words, there was a dogmatic, basically religious element to Radcliffe (the Sublime constituting a poetic, secular grasp at so-called "religious experiences" popularized at the time) that stemmed less from a concrete understanding of Capitalism<sup>131</sup> and more through the popular aesthetic concepts she used to uphold the status quo in her intricately moody novels; re: kiss up, punch down, and get paid doing it (which Radcliffe did until her last breath)!

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<sup>131</sup> Marx wouldn't release *The Communist Manifesto*—thus illustrate capital as something to critique per his approach to historical materialism—for another two decades, in 1848.





(artist: [Don Hertzfeld](#))

And while it might seem like I'm beating a dead horse (or housewife) by examining this as intensely as I am, that's literally the name of the game when it comes to domestic abuse. Abusers *want* you to feel off-balance so they can take

advantage inside the usual, doll-like realms of play. Whatever the truth of *their* intentions, a victim of their behaviors can only proceed by examining them; i.e., inside the mind as caught between the body and space-time: under the abuser's seemingly almighty control, but in truth only something of a forced monopoly that can be challenged through different socio-material appeals married to medieval forms (e.g., ghosts, above, as rapturous).

To that, Gothic poetics encapsulate this control as a kind of madness that *can* be played with; i.e., like dolls, to exert our will onto the same linguo-material devices having a socio-political function, with which we can pit against our attackers (the elite and their proponents) if only to stop them from killing us; i.e., exposing things in ways that don't strictly feed into the usual moral panics, thus avoid a dogmatic function while still, neatly enough, speaking to the human condition for different representees.

*The Night House* illustrates that nicely with Beth, I think. So many heroines under neoliberalism are souless girl bosses; i.e., tokenize as manly and violent *against* workers and nature (re: the subjugated Hippolyta). The simple reality is that "the feminine" in Gothic fiction is classically presented as naked, frozen and delicate (though not always for good reasons). Virgin or whore, though, the exact resurrection of the monstrous-feminine boils down to preference, which isn't the point I'm making. Instead, I want you to consider how a heroine who presents as more delicate can uniquely provide a gentler side to the same modular elements; i.e., which go towards voicing systemic issues generally left unsaid in American society in any form: one, depression (and stillness) is a defense mechanism<sup>132</sup>; and two, survival predicated on suicide ideation is often a discordant, often lateral and anguished call for help leveled at those who generally can't see what's going on (with, again, rape being to some degree invisible, even to the direct victims by virtue of denial or disassociation, intimidation, etc)!

<sup>132</sup> For a nice summary of the concept, consider Rebecca Watson's "[James Somerton and the Science of Self-Harm as Abuse](#)" (2024).



*(exhibit 38b4b: Faced with the demon lover on the little rowboat, the two sit across from on another on a makeshift Charon's canoe. Most of Beth's conversation is silent, expressed mutely with the face. It also shows us how a victim is generally alone adrift over the River Styx, insofar as the violence they survive will partially alienate them from their allies. As such, the other characters in The Night House are all somewhat complacent and/or complicit in the husband's apocalyptic abuse; e.g., the local servant turned a blind eye, the cheery bestie grew distant, etc. In that ultimate moment of confrontation, they emerge in the nick of time to call out to Beth—to draw her away from the edge as she, for all intents and purposes, debates with ghosts: to be or not to be.*

*Suicide ideation becomes an argument that is very much by the victim with themselves, but also with their abuser threatening them with some kind of great devastation: "I'll kill myself if you go" or "Kill yourself and stay with me," and so on. Whatever the argument, people outside of its influence underestimate the power it*

*has on someone who has been abused—how an abuser will home in on such vulnerabilities, using these devices to blunt-force manipulate a victim into "staying" with them; i.e., by having said victim fetishize themselves into a death trophy for the abuser to gloat over afterwards.*

*Even if the abuser is dead and gone, their likeness still haunts the survivor like a voice, a shape, a shadow they must continue to wrestle with. While friends very much remain vital in helping victims survive trauma after the fact, it remains to some degree a lonely path precisely because it exists inside the mind; i.e., in ways that external factors will trigger fresh episodes, and which those not coded for those kinds of reactions cannot see themselves save through the person they love as tragically under the abuser's power as a ghost of itself. This power is never total, but it does linger long after the main events have come and gone.*

*The paradox of the demon is that it isn't any really one thing. Nor are the dreams and waking moments wholly separate or singular for Beth, confronting personal trauma as something of a corpse dug back up. Instead, the sum blends together as a holistic means of expressing the totality of existence under duress: something that swallows survivors up, becoming a kind of god they kneel towards, seeking absolution. Such isolation is the mightiest force in the universe, especially on minds prone to crossing boundaries and imagining all manner of things before, during and after the passage. Rather, like Persephone—my namesake—there is always an element of us trapped in Hell, with the destroyer handing us the keys to our own destruction but also our salvation!*

*As we'll see when looking at Max and Vecna from Stranger Things, in part two, such veins are an effective route to track and pass through time and time again, yielding argumentative likenesses that speak through psychomachia as a popular theatrical device across media; i.e., regarding the same kinds of pain and manipulation historically unfolding during demon BDSM as abused by harmful agents and reclaimed by survivors: "Kill yourself and stay with me, in Hell" as something to camp. Dualities aside, reclamation is taking that—like a knife or a gun—away from them, and by extension, ourselves.*



*The difference between the two stories—The Night House and Stranger Things—is the shape and flavor of the demon lover sold to the audience, but also the objective of the author[s]. Beth's husband in Night House is far more ordinary looking than Vecna [the latter basically turned inside-out] but the torments they exact upon their victims have much the same unhealthy leverage: making someone into a doll, an object of control, of rape through bad play. The biggest variation lies in one's bombastic nostalgia versus the other as largely quiet, nonverbal—told with the eyes versus the Duffer brothers' penchant for neoliberal dogma, using '80s-grade montages and dialog that turn Stranger Things into a much more dogmatic and Americanized attack: child indoctrination through Red-Scare moral panic aiming to uphold Capitalist Realism by abjecting Communism into the same kayfabe-grade shadow zone as Nazis. This isn't to discount its value independent of that—indeed, Max' struggle to escape Vecna is a potent metaphor that works well on a theatrical level [which I related to when escaping Jadis haunting me]—but the reality of its political origins should never be obscured when studying them.)*

There's something of a bizarre, very-human, accidental quality to such survival mechanisms—something past writers have touched upon; e.g., Lovecraft's

"Call of Cthulhu" (1928): "The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents" ([source](#)). *The Night House* certainly does, albeit in ways that externalize the qualities of the mind as a relationship between the internal and external across persons but also *generations* told through dolls. Becoming part of the Gothic castle, Beth begins to see fragmented sides to herself and her husband scattered this way and that; i.e., positioned around the home as swimming in the pieces, of which become impossible doorways: something to step through and into a fearsome world commenting on its more visible elements!

By making them visible as a means of playful transformation, we relate to each other during survival as a dialog to join in on; i.e., a pedagogy of the oppressed (finding similarity amid difference) regarding the dialectic of the alien: as something to dance with, embracing Medusa to understand and heal from police abuse exploiting the usual dolls and aesthetics to serve profit with.

*Please note, the following sequence from The Night House is quite pareidolic and tends to seamlessly flow into and out of itself. While admittedly in some visually medieval, artistically interesting and clever ways, it's still hard to capture, here; i.e., to do such a phantasmagoria justice: as occurring onscreen merely by using collages in my usual approach. This being said, I will do my best! —Perse*



*(exhibit 38b4c: Visited by the ghost of the abuser come back around, Beth sees a likeness of herself in a fogged-up mirror that looks back in equal surprise; her "husband" emerges in the door of the reflection to break the other side of the mirror using the doubles' head; the wife runs, but is pulled into the mirror and beaten in kind against it; she emerges on the other side, only to be forced to see her husband killing different women who look like her while the home bounces this information all around her.*

*What follows is a nightmare sequence that, in the usual Gothic style, feels trapped between a waking and sleeping state, but also of the home as occupied by a stranger in the body of a loved one who, all of a sudden, feels alien and dangerous. Among such a presence, the floor becomes like eggshells, Beth walking through walls and jigsaw-puzzle doors shaped like people:*



*The entire sequence might seem like pure nonsense at first glance. As someone who's lived through such experiences, I think it's a lovely likeness to disassociation and derealization as an "event horizon" of sorts; i.e., less an overt hallucination and more something akin to one happening inside a hostile environment that, generally through an abuser inside it, is trying to convince you that none of it is real, or that there must be some logical, benevolent motive to everything. Certainly the idea of evil sex demons—insidiously coming into a normal sphere from beyond existence, then manipulating someone from behind such veils—might come across as profoundly and obviously stupid; but there's a sturdy pit covered in such*

*pulp: the existence of rape as unspeakable, felt through the usual symbols of the family home as imbued with a destroyer's aura. Beth is facing a side of their own life as incredibly painful, but also unthinkable—investigating their husband's sudden suicide [which is already bad enough] only to discover that he might be a murderer who is clearly shit nuts; i.e., everything about him as given a darker side upon the ensuing avalanche of self-doubt and investigation into someone you begin to realize you only ever saw one side of.*

*As the saying goes, "Nobody's perfect." The reality with any relationship is that most people have more sides than one. Jadis, for example, had many sides, and they used all of them to manipulate me for various reasons. In Night House's case, it's not about the story being a perfect replica of existence—i.e., when our brains aren't being bombarded by fight-or-flight triggers, or misled by skilled puppeteers working these elements—but working as a Gothic metaphor that accents and realizes those effects in a doll-like space with a doll-like heroine and doll-like surroundings [e.g., effigies, oil paintings and suits of armor]. Like Otranto, then, things get up and move around, evoking the restless labyrinth's usual cryptonymies and mobile, unstable bric-a-brac.*

*Simply put, "this is your brain on drugs" becomes "this is your brain being gaslit" insofar as perception becomes an unreliable-yet-also-trustworthy kind of entropy that betrays the destroyer as normally invisible; i.e., hoping you'll view them as "otherworldly" [thus granting them more power over you] in ways that are commonly abjected to far-off, hellish spaces: sites of relegation normally reserved for the damned. It's a case of when worlds collide, the colonial mindset a fragile one by virtue of it confronting distant abuses brought home, and home being revealed as a place for abuses that are normally seen as "distant." In terms of raw survival, though, such devices don't need to make perfect sense, because humans are not strictly rational.*

*To that, Jadis abusing me worked by virtue of their attacks having a way with words—not as purely logical, at all, but something they could weigh against me: "It's all in your head." By extension, gaslighting applies to the sorts of things normally abjected as "other" under capital; i.e., presented in progressively alien, fantastical forms: "This isn't domestic abuse; it's Commie-Nazi sex demons from outer space!" Capitalist Realism generally presents genocide, exploitation and all-around rape under capital as taboo and impossible, yet clearly manifests them as whorish, monstrous-feminine scapegoats that are very tangible and—per the double operation of cryptonymy—very much both what they appear as and not at the same time. It's half-real, liminal, threatening to vanish like smoke yet clutching a battered housewife in its seemingly iron grip.*

*Except, anyone who thinks The Night House is strictly about a sex demon from outer space [anymore than Alien is] is not only missing the point, they're buying into the usual state deceptions as a matter of abjection. To that, the state routinely abuses Gothic poetics [and dolls] through peoples' brains; i.e., as engines with*

*which to pour in fuel useful to state aims: the flow of power towards the elite by brainwashing its citizens with stupid-sounding dogma that, as sad as that is, works wonders. Made material, such monsters—however absurd or impossible they might appear at first glance—remain constantly informed by interpersonal trauma as reifying under dialectical-material circumstances. It's a loop that echoes a given lie for or against the state using the same markers thereof.*

*In other words, illusions only "work" insofar as they appear to have power the audience believes in, one way or another [re: C.S. Lewis]. Faced with such a hall of mirrors, Beth is a stand-in for mental battles told in physical space that aren't, either of them, wholly separate in relation to themselves or us, across space and time, but also different stories playing with the same doll-like things.*

*Beth, herself, doesn't have that level of agency at her disposal—can only retreat into the reflection, tumbling down the stairs ass-over-tea-kettle to suddenly find herself facing the presumed "bad copy" as potentially the reality of things. They commence as abuse normally does—through words. As they talk, "Owen" literally holds her in its lap while she both talks to it out-of-body and awakens on the couch to find herself seemingly alone; i.e., in the same space that, only a moment before, felt occupied—a dream-like feeling where you feel the need to pinch yourself, but also want to run as a means of confirming you're safe:*



*Except, when Beth promptly comes to her senses, the invisible entity is suddenly back in full force. It wants her to run so it can chase and catch her. When it does, it's still invisible because the truth of it is painful to face. All the same, it literally*



*bends her to its will using—for all intents and purposes—bad BDSM. Whether it's "real" or not isn't the point, here; she is isolated and made to see the world through its eyes: "This will hurt a little, but it's something you'll get used to."*

*Speaking from experience, such liminalities are far more accurate when describing the lived situation of a battered woman than any neat, clean view of reality. It's poetic as a means of expressing the very things that have become woefully common under Capitalism since Radcliffe's day. Per the process of*



*abjection, the West has become obsessed with "ancient," hauntological devices manipulated to whisper about present abuses at home; i.e., the voodoo doll in the movie as a nod to the Louvre Doll: "A Roman 3rd-4th Cent CE 'doll' found in Egypt. It was bound and pierced with thirteen pins and was contained in a terracotta vase with a lead tablet bearing a binding love spell" [[source: Reddit](#)]. If that's not a clue to the dubious nature of Beth and Owen's relationship before his death, I'll eat my hat!*

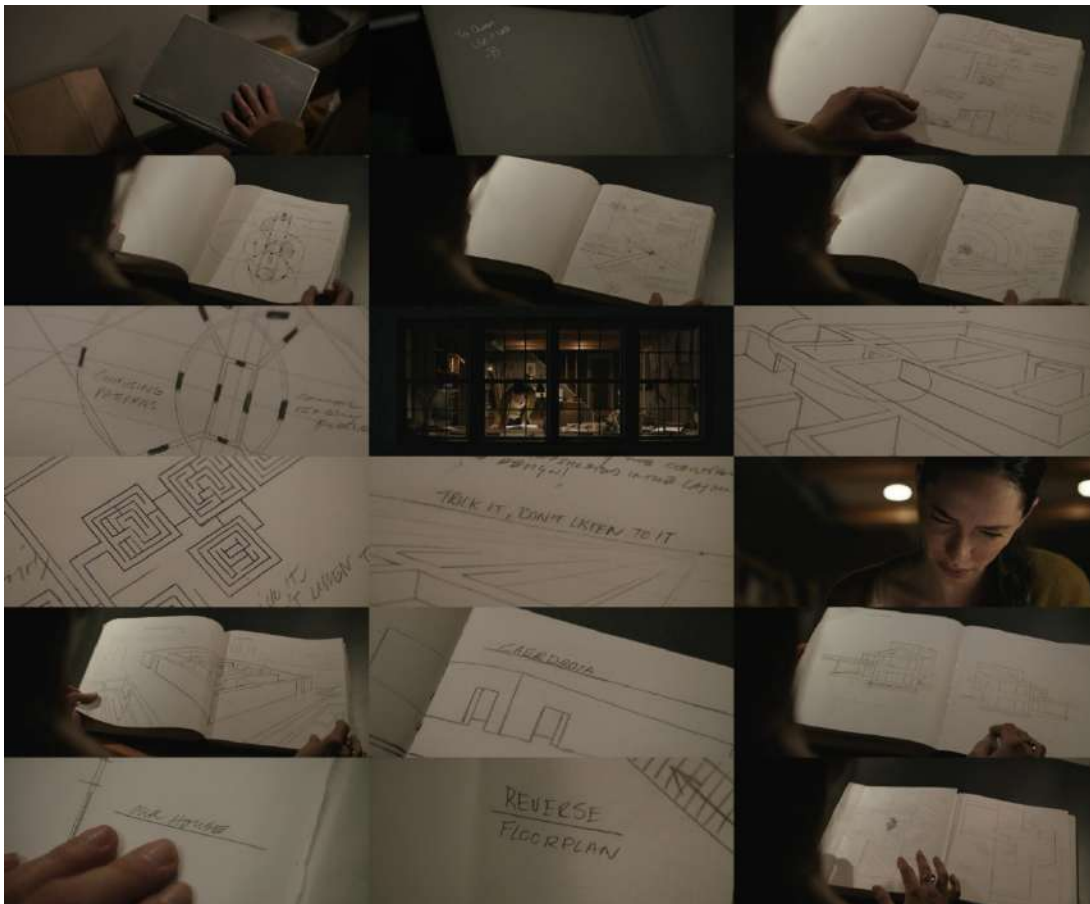
*In other words, rape is a consequence of capital, and one that The Night House explores having come from a time and place in which Marx has become relegated to the underworld, but which his spectres still continue to haunt such fictions and their seemingly impossible events. Again, it's not a testimony to*

*literal ghosts, but a dialectical-material undercurrent speaking to rape through the metaphor of undead things we can keep playing with to say what the elite will keep trying to repress in service to profit [thus rape].*

*We'll explore demons more in that particular module, but all the same, the above qualities manifest superbly in The Night House in the usual Gothic fashion; i.e., the castle as first denoted by its mirror-like appearance to the heroine's ostensibly perfect past, then yielding disturbing imperfections upon discovery, exploration and reflection as hyphenating inside itself and the double home; i.e., Venus twins; e.g., the house, but also Beth, the heroine, as doubled through doll-ish likenesses of herself for whom the husband is killing to appease a monstrous deceiver from his*

wife's suicidal past: himself as piloted by something alien/unthinkable as much to him as his wife, making him do bad things to women who look like her as the victim of all his lies, after he dies.

To be sure, the argument can be made that the thing causing all of this is a cosmic space demon, but that's simply abjection in action. The actionable, socio-material reality [using Occam's Razor] is the entity-in-question arguably symbolizes something that isn't from outer space at all; i.e., rape, murder and exploitation as part of a larger structure such that a husband and wife belong to: something that capital makes ubiquitous to camouflage itself with, because rape is synonymous with profit. To that, the husband's demon doubles the man's darker urges. Presenting as a weak defense to the man, himself, the madness of the argument is felt through his wacky floorplans to a secret house filled with "dolls":



[Our heroine, poring over tomes of forgotten lore, Poe-style. Keeping with the personal trauma theme, the death of someone else leaves behind reminders of them we can pore over, afterwards. For example, after Jadis' father died, I was the one who went over his personal belongings: thirty years' worth of old bank statements, bills, and other documents, interspersed with various odds and ends that couldn't be organized as easily. It can feel incredibly odd looking at the

*belongings of someone who has died that you actually knew, because each will serve as a reminder that—while they once lived—they now have since died.]*

*Keeping with the Gothic chronotope, it's not about the truth being "over there," but in between here and there as oscillating through the heroine as the seismograph needle, mid-phantasmagoria. Beth finds her husband's plans, post mortem, and begins to explore them, going in circles between her safe space as haunted—by the idea of what she thought was her husband, but also the demons he was dealing with in secret as taking over the likeness that still lives in her head. By extension, the cryptonymy process' Gothic castles and dolls provide ceaselessly esoteric but palpable commentaries on the elusive nature of "truth" as left-behind and played-with; i.e., using the only thing remaining as time goes on: the narrative of the crypt. Everything bounces back and forth, the experience becoming—like a disorienting hall of mirrors—a paradoxical means to seek the truth through experience as distorted, echoed, and repeated through copies of copies. However obfuscated, this happens inside of itself, like a Russian doll.*

*The idea really isn't any different than *Metroidvania* and astronoetic variants ranging from *At the Mountains of Madness* to *Alien*. We'll put a pin in that for now. But the overlap made me want to mention it here, when talking about dolls, rememory, and the undead.)*

This concludes the close-read. It's a lot to unpack, and seemingly worlds apart insofar as *Alien* concerns the far reaches of outer space (a "faraway" metaphor for settler colonialism) and *The Night House* is seemingly rooted firmly on solid ground (a localization of settler colonialism haunted by its ghosts from "afar"). And yet, either becomes something to revisit; i.e., as a doll-like means of seeing victims become unanchored from *terra firma* that can be performed in different ways; re: feeling undead as a communion with trauma through play. Per the ghost of the counterfeit and process of abjection, both speak to the same kinds of disempowerment as felt by someone born into the colonizer group—me, in this case—who is then called back by the colonized dead through the myopia of Capitalist Realism; i.e., as bonding to or attacking them through notions of what "undead" even feels like through both stories.

I'm not a specialist of single monster types, but rather specialize in holistic interactions between texts, across space and time, on and offstage. So, naturally I knew how the monster from *Alien* was a kind of "zombie doll" (no matter what Ash [the company's "killer doll"] says, exhibit 51b): undeniably undead, "straddling the fence" from an ontological standpoint, but also chimeric (composite) and modular as threatening to make the heroine a doll once more (with Ripley emerging from doll-like sleep to dance around inside the Gothic castle). The same goes for poor Beth and her demons; i.e., to confront in a castle-like dollhouse that's visually closer to home.

In this regard, any monster's entirety is often identified by the most recognizable pieces—not just the face, but the eroticized components associated with sexual trauma: monstrous toys with expressly libidinous functions (exhibit 38a). Jadis and their toys certainly worked like this, but also their leathers, their blade-like heels and whips; they were intensely erotic, as were the kinds of media they and I both consumed at cross purposes.

However, as a matter of feeling undead, I also started to *fear* these things because Jadis used them to attack me for trying to heal from my own abuse by using them as medicinal dolls; i.e., by thinking about such things in ways that didn't just default to predation by virtue of flowing power towards Jadis as the exclusive victim<sup>133</sup> preying on me. It seemed wrong but no matter how hard I tried, I could not stop it—that feeling that *I* was the doll, but also that Jadis was feeding on me as a giver of state abuse through doll-ish aesthetics. This includes *The Night House* as something we both watched together after having moved into our new home, back in 2021.

All of these things we've discussed about dolls started to feel toxic to me, at that point; i.e., undead by virtue of the abuse Jadis was performing through them bearing some likenesses to the events onscreen. It wasn't really something I suddenly realized, but the lifting of my denial—of repeatedly trying to explain to myself that Jadis was redeemable—felt very sudden *when* it sunk in: Jadis treated me like a doll they could rape without irony because that's precisely the kind of person they were (also, they had some pretty deep-seated beliefs in futurism, transhumanism and neoliberalism per men like Ray Kurzweil as leading humanity towards a "better" posthuman existence through Capitalism; i.e., like our first conversation [exhibit 37c1a] reenacted in ways which they wanted through stories they liked; e.g., *Ghost in the Shell*, below, as haunted by the Cartesian slavery of nature-as-robata, meaning "slaves" dressed up in futurist cyberpunk language: a *canceled* future)!

A narcissist exists by virtue of function, and here there was no "ghost in the shell" that would help it all "make sense"; i.e., in a way that would fit the kinds of arguments they were having me make *for* them against myself<sup>134</sup>. Inside and

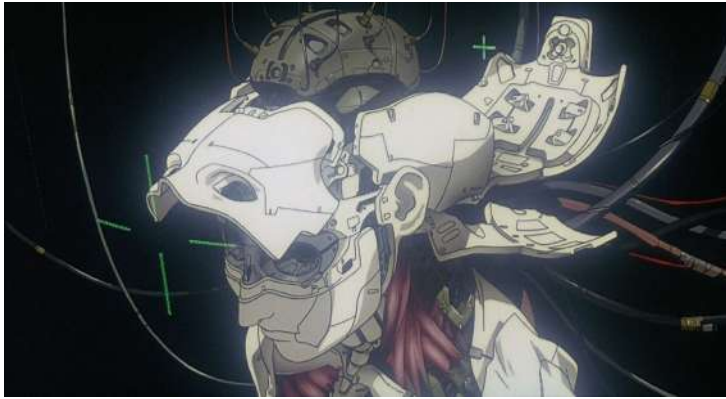
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<sup>133</sup> Apathy through games is a neoliberal virtue; Jadis prided themselves on it, policing the play of medieval dolls through me: the medievalist they sought to gag for their own delight. In doing so, they became capital's champion—its token cop brutalizing me by virtue of personal responsibility kissing up and punching down, TERF-style. They saw it as their duty and took pleasure in it.

<sup>134</sup> Of course, I'm a Gothacist, ludologist and BDSM expert, so tend to deal in romanticized language (which I dialectically-materially scrutinize through various disciplinary approaches). For a good example of such devices explained in clinical language by a practicing therapist, consider Theramin Trees' "[My Cluster B Parent Died and I Felt.... Nothing Much \(2/2\)](#)" (2024). They've helped conceptualize a lot of these personality disorders in easy-to-understand language and visual aids; e.g., through mirrors and masks, which I relied on when originally writing "Escaping Jadis" back in 2023, but also "[Setting the Record Straight](#)," in February 2022.

The paradox of the human condition is that I was a human being who was being abused by someone who shaped my view of the world through ludo-Gothic BDSM; i.e., the functional opposite of *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

outside the bedroom, I was policing *myself* through the kind of dolls Jadis romanticized<sup>135</sup>: the cyborg *memento mori*.



In short, I wasn't a stupid person, but Jadis had weaponized my expertise and trauma against me; i.e., a Gothic scholar and monster lover they turned against herself (me) to feed Jadis' own bad habits: as a matter of faith, acting and play combined through BDSM as a shared activity between us that

was often at cross purposes—on the same page with the same words, but functionally at odds. "We're living in Gothic times," Angela Carter famously put it, but failed to highlight the kinds of decaying feminism that sprung from her work; i.e., decaying to serve profit, which *Jadis* certainly did.

For instance, despite Jadis' enjoyment when playing with dolls (often through science fiction stories, above, having cyborgs survive rape while inside indestructible bodies [since Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*] that suffer compounding levels of emotional abuse), their escapism was built on harming me through doll-like conversation: as their enemy to always best through arguments about and with dolls; i.e., between a weird canonical nerd targeting me as a threat to the status quo, thus to Jadis as the elite's *de facto* cop.

Yes, Jadis liked horror and videogames—could straight up *fuck* like a sex demon—but the novelty completely wore off (similar to Zeuhl<sup>136</sup> ignoring me fucking them while they played videogames) when they started harming me through shared media they colonized *for* the state (ever dutiful to them when raping me, as cops generally do); i.e., which we consumed as reflecting Jadis' abuse inside the onscreen thematic material: police violence towards sex, terror and force, but also morphological expression as—you guessed it—doll-like. It happened with stories like *Alien* and *The Night House* as showing the abuser Jadis

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their own approach to BDSM, whereupon they were also a human being, albeit one who was acting inhumane by virtue of their personality disorder(s): legitimizing themselves through BDSM jargon to delegitimize, thus dehumanize me with. They were the preacher and I, their flock to cull as needed.

<sup>135</sup> Again, the cyberpunk's decaying futurism and punk culture to police me, TERF-style, through BDSM engaged with these aesthetics—often literally as games and nostalgia to argue about; e.g., 1993's [Mage: the Ascension](#) as something Jadis loved to endlessly talk about while showing me the monster art/rule books, similar to *D&D* and *Vampire: the Masquerade*. Jadis knew I was a ludologist, and I wrote many pieces while living with them; e.g., "[Borrowed Robes](#)," which they critiqued and gave feedback for.

<sup>136</sup> Zeuhl used me for money and sex; i.e., as temporary arm candy. Jadis wanted to *own* me. *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

had projected onto me, just as those films projected rape onto the xenomorph or the entity inside Beth's husband.

The moment I realized *The Night House* was aping my own personal trauma by turning me into Jadis' obedient sex doll, I realized that it was time to go; the spell broke enough for me to challenge it. I stopped trying to rationalize Jadis' abuse (and all the excuses they made to abuse me through bad games disguised as common interests) and set about reclaiming my own power from their monopoly on playing with dolls (which included me as something they sought to own); i.e., an understanding of a doll's various monstrous functions, the remainder of which I'll go over now before we get to "Escaping Jadis." As we do, we'll stick to the undead elements, including those tied to an abusive home as doubled to give voice to repressed things.

Before we do, there's a few points to bear in mind (three paragraphs): One, instead of dropping these devices by virtue of Jadis abusing them, I used them to my advantage by camping Jadis' rape of me. Eventually, I called this subversion "ludo-Gothic BDSM," but there and then, it was simply being hammered out, mid-escape. In doing so, I followed in the footsteps of older queer authors playing with rape as the Gothic does; i.e., a doubling of the home to speak to its undead qualities being centuries old, as a matter of tradition (re: Matthew Lewis camping canon to express queer pogroms executed by state forces<sup>137</sup>). Since *Otranto*, the animated miniature survives less in isolation and more inside a liminal gallery of portraits the likes of which I've touched upon here.

As such, the xenomorph from *Alien* and torture statue from *The Night House* are zombie-like in that both dolls embody the endless cache of monster-to-monster-fuckers whose subversive liminality not only codifies trauma, but whose canonical or iconoclastic functions trigger depending on how or why they're made or used and by whom (exhibit 38b1)—in short how the genesis and tutelage of a given monster doll (or its various sexualized parts) convey the treatment of sex workers through ritualized psychosexual behaviors. Because Capitalism recycles historical-material trauma as a pacifying warning sign, these trademark, undead pieces codify stigmatized abuse as something to revisit and play with for different outcomes.

Keeping with that, *Jadis'* tutelage was directed at me in order to present *them* as in control (re: cops and victims stemming from state abuse), albeit in ways

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<sup>137</sup> From Colin Broadmoor's "Camping the Canon" (2021): "Victims of the law were ritually humiliated 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](#)).

we *hadn't* negotiated. Over time, this only led me to view their sex toys as recognizable implements of *iconic* abuse: the skull or devil's horns as symbols that yoked me and brought me to heel, but really any cosmetic element you could readily list. In our case, Jadis' ultimatums were barks that threatened to bite, using their hold on the material side of things to do what their mother before them also did: control others through money. But this generally manifested in a more colorful kind of "pastel goth"; i.e., friendly-looking famous monster parts, *minus* their critical bite (which, from a theoretical standpoint, conceals the abuse taking place by defanging its outermost markers).

This raises an interesting point: dolls aren't always creepy or abject in their appearance (even if their function is). To that, let's conclude "Meeting Jadis" by interrogating the paradoxical **cuteness** of monstrous dolls; i.e., how they can be used to help or hinder workers depending on who's using them and how.

Unlike me, Jadis tokenized as monstrous-feminine under capital generally do: something to pour into a profitable mold made to exploit others with. Yet, liberation occupies the same spaces when engaged with critically. In short, we each played with the same toys, but did so very differently in relation to each other. I tried to avoid harm; Jadis sought to dominate and control me because it was the only way they felt safe. They saw adhering to the paradigm as flowing power towards the state, worshipping the likes of Joe Biden and Hilary Clinton (and getting quite angry when I proposed legislation that would make executives like them far less central; e.g., constitutional amendments, not vetoes or SCOTUS rulings).

It's worth nothing that praxial catharsis requires a finding of escape through psychosexual arguments adjacent to unironic harm; i.e., that sit within frank exploitation as something to subvert using the same erotic nudism as a yummy artistic statement overlapping with rape/disempowerment fantasies. Camping these baneful elements helps the sex object regain her agency mid-penetration and



vaudeville, but it remains—as always—a tightrope, a vice (so to speak): to give and receive within boundaries that threaten to exploit you/fly out of control!

(artist: [Ottomarr](#))

Jadis loved these kinds of toys because said toys concealed Jadis' own naked, abusive nature as literally naked at times, thus paradoxically honest (re:

the liar's paradox) through exposure as such; it made Jadis seem cool and delicious, like designer candy but also frank in their open hostility as somehow absolving them of whatever harm it caused. Whether straight-up knife-like or

bubblegum, once conveyed through bourgeois teaching methods tied to a coercive Gothic mode, bourgeois *poiesis* can colonize future examples like a virus. The end result is "bad play" as a form of reactively abusive wish fulfillment (which we'll explore more of in Volume Three, Chapter Two): Jadis didn't want to heal from their own trauma at all; they wanted someone to control, often by lying to them through bad instruction: "This is normal, so embrace it." For abusers, such doll-like instruction is less something to fairly reason with and more something to argue through force of different kinds, which—as usual—can be interrogated by combining dolls with a given, discotheque venue: "How does it feel /To treat me like you do?" (New Order's "[Blue Monday](#)," 1983).

The paradox of the zombie is they are generally bound and gagged by a human oppressor treating them like the monstrous-feminine whore; e.g., Romero's *Day of the Dead*, with its underground military bunker full of zombie prisoners watched by living soldiers for... reasons. But the Cartesian, mad-scientist *torture* of the human body as "not alive" (thus free to incarcerate, rape and mutilate) carries over from Romero's zombie tale ([and famously messy revenge](#)) into necro-erotic stories like Stuart Gordon's *Re-Animator* (1985) showcasing the virgin transformed



into the whore; i.e., as generally in between the two—a soft, fleshy image of the cliché pale female/feminine body (the damsel-in-distress) wrapped up in bondage gear by men: the cute slut, the sex slave.

Thanks to Capitalism's historical-material forces at work, the quest for dignity in death—but also agency and negotiation during ritualized power exchange as "deathly"—is forever in flux. We become weak and strong in *opposition* to fascist articulations of such BDSM refrains lying to us about

how things should go; i.e., as Jadis did to me and which I had to reclaim: decaying and regenerating power as something to flow towards workers by humanizing them as "enslaved." The quotes only appear depending on the ludo-Gothic context of the BDSM theatre and its performers: human dolls showing agency amid exploitation while still, for all purposes, being doll-like as a matter of rape play. The destroyer aesthetic—of power and death during "rape" as a theatrical proposition—becomes something to wear as a fetish that reclaims the death doll from the usual Pygmalions (token elements) commercializing abjection.



Even so, fascist and proletarian zombies share the same surfaces inside the same thresholds. As something to interrogate, then resist mid-enjoyment or endorse, the coercive function of the zombie in overt BDSM/porn is no different than non-erotic zombie stories (though the two generally overlap and have since Matthew Lewis). In *Gothic-Communist* terms, I would argue that playing with boundaries and symbols of control is entirely the point—especially since no matter how concretely "total" a government seems, they do not have total power, only illusions that cheat the *appearance* of total power.

As Andrei Plesu notes in "Intellectual Life under Dictatorship" (1995): "Evil is imperfect, which means it always leaves a 'space for play,' a chance for maneuvering, to those under its influence" ([source](#)). While I can't help but feel that Plesu conflates "evil" with Communism (apologizing for Capitalism and American exceptionalism, in the process), I think his basic point still stands: if the state was all-powerful, iconoclastic art and xenophilia would not exist. Keeping with that, if American or American-adjacent workers are to subvert the systemic abuses of an *American* dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, it starts with language (of which dolls are) as something to play with in sexualized ways. This time let's do Communism right, but also BDSM as a facet of that through doll-like executions of Gothic poetics; i.e., performing rememory as a pedagogy of the oppressed to heal from police abuse, the latter furthering Capitalism Realism by making all of us feel undead: in ways useful to the state.

As a Gothic Communist, I see liberation in as playing through sexualized language in its historical-material forms: in relation to one's own trauma as informed by the larger world through play as already colonized by police agents. This includes BDSM, as a practice, being previously loaded with tremendous amounts of sex-coercive canon; i.e., ludo-Gothic BDSM as reclaiming these devices in a sex-positive way by virtue of rewriting the rules in a half-real sense.

For example, Jadis knew the rules of pussy exchange as a matter of theatre ("Come play with this pussy!" they'd beckon when flashing me, but also explaining the effect as a means of play between them and their BDSM buddies, but also people at large they could fuck with if they chose to). Even so, they decided to weaponize said exchanges for the state by telling me how to play in ways that benefitted them as an extension of the state they served by raping me; i.e., in a way that moved power towards the state (on an individual level, between them and their partners: telling me how to play with such things, thus think about the world and my place in it as an undead person).

We must *also* know the rules, then, but use them to move power towards workers on all registers. That's what good play is; i.e., reducing the risk/chance of abuse (rape and other kinds of social-sexual harm) regarding dolls and the transformation of our zombie selves with them, which in turn manifest through the rememory of personal trauma as an interpersonal and transgenerational, multimedia exchange! It's still a game of odds, but one we can change by

challenging state monopolies, trifactas and proponents who abuse Gothic poetics through dolls and BDSM against us.

We'll explore tokenism, Man Box and bad play much more in Volume Three. For now, just remember that canon's pacifying legacy through cute abjection can be subversively reclaimed by monster sex toys that allow workers to decolonize the abject, forbidden, and taboo, thus help workers individually and collectively heal from profit (and rape) as a *state* operation; i.e., something to police and enforce. Subverting these atrocities requires irony to work, which we shall now unpack as the last component of dolls and ludo-Gothic BDSM before we move onto escaping Jadis, in "The Rememory of Personal Trauma," part two.

"Game" users, for instance, can decolonize the knife dick by making something that *looks* intimidating but remains physically safe to use—not just a disarming play on the "knife dick's" visually painful-looking threat of rape, but a "two-hander" at that (or *zweihänder* if you want to get anachronistic). Such an alien, "legendary" horse cock becomes rather clever—shaming insecure, sexist white men with chattel "animals" the users choose to fuck (a bestial pun of John Webster's "strong-thighed bargeman," where the incestuous and lycanthropic Ferdinand from *The Duchess of Malfi* shames his sister for sleeping with the common servants instead of *him*).

In sex-positive scenarios, taboo sex—even when taken to hyperbolic extremes like consent-not-consent or even just super-rough sex (remember your safe words)—is completely harmless provided it *doesn't* endorse actual harm, bestiality and rape, or societal/emotional damage by promoting racist tropes and other harmful stereotypes. To that, rape fantasies also extend to people of color reclaiming terms of abuse in sex-positive exploitation rituals; these still require a willing and comfortable partner, though, which must be negotiated ahead of time and upfront, *without* ultimatums.

That's proletarian praxis, which again, is another topic for Volume Three. For now, we're primarily examining the socio-material history this praxis leaps from as conducive to irony as a synthetic device. To this, iconoclasm brings us closer to nature without abusing workers or animals (animals can't consent, exhibit 38c) while also providing sex-positive lessons that future generations can improve upon, through their own fantasies. This is important, as older generations of workers have had to abjure canonical praxis by taking "the plunge"—into the gulf of one's own trauma or into *one's* actual, physical "gulf" with an object associated with war and violence in whatever ways it manifests in our own lives. Escaping fear and dogma as a historical-material evocation of abuse means playing therapeutically with its symbols and toys; e.g., pegging and feminization as doll-like (next page).

I've tried this, before, and am generally fine with it as long as I trust and love the person doing it; i.e., can seek it out should I choose as a psychosexual means of poetic expression that serves to extend and deliver interpersonal artistic

statements that often have a social, asexual element as well as an overtly sexual one: being the exhibit, the model, the whore!



(exhibit 38c1a: Artist: [Alice Redfox](#). As a forbidden site of sexual pleasure, the AMAB asshole, like Satan, can go by many different names: asshole, of course, but also "bussy" and "boy pussy" or "brown eye" depending on one's orientation/comfort levels with particular gendered forms of language. Also, humor is not uncommon, albeit idiosyncratic; e.g., "fart locker," "love zone" or "the devil's doorbell," etc. The irony with religious-sounding examples is they are often used by cis-het Christians exploiting God's various "loopholes"; e.g., "[God's Loophole](#)" [2010] by Garfunkel and Oates' pleading "Fuck me in the ass if you love Jesus!" to subvert the usual means of saving marriages; i.e., a mythology reserved for the status quo in canonical dialogs that simultaneously demonize/chase queer people. Reclaiming our assholes, then, becomes paramount, which involves the whore as a theatrical experience that often verges on sex object. Exploitation and liberation occur using these same devices.)

While performative technique obviously matters, so does a proper mental state and emotional connection with parts of ourselves normally used to shame, degrade and dominate us. Regarding anal, for instance, you have to be somewhat comfortable with, and accepting of, abject confrontations during the event itself; e.g., shit, farting and various other physical realities that seldom-but-sometimes come up when fucking someone in the ass; i.e., as a site of abject bodily functions

we have to reclaim by facing what it is as a matter of humane connection. This isn't just "for the bottom," mind you. The person topping is still involved in the same equation; i.e., as something to invert, from time to time. There's often a subversive language gap when this happens, for which the act of play unto itself picks up the linguistic slack.

For example, when getting pegged, the only language I had to initially describe the event as an AMAB person was "taking a shit"; however, the moment Cuwu hit my "sweet spot," I suddenly had *no* language to describe how that felt! Being able to discuss this openly and without shame is important, meaning we need to be able recognize abuse beyond a given example.

Apart from Jadis, who was obviously abusive, Zeuhl also shamed me through similar gaslighting measures that felt less openly antagonistic in a way I could recognize. At the ends of things, they blamed me for "not knowing who they were" but also said they weren't the same person I knew at MMU (which may or may not have been true—hard to say with them). They went from being that person who could joke about shocking their health class in college when giving a surprise seminar about pegging to someone who balked at any discussions about sex whatsoever. Simply put, their newfound piety (and stick up their ass) became an effective and brutal, albeit differently predatory means of controlling me through the fear of disappointing them. Even so, Zeuhl's treatment of me was just as coercive, infantilizing and unhealthy as Jadis' was. To use a phrase Zeuhl themselves liked to use, "It was just different."

Such antics are a recipe for disaster in any long-term friendship; i.e., they're unstable and mean that sooner or later, something's gotta give (when that is depends as much on the victim as the abuser). Even so, the larger interactive framework includes anything within the purview of such an exchange, which iconoclastic art can subvert by showing the reader healthy versions thereof; e.g., pegging during a thruple where the man isn't the dom/Destroyer persona or otherwise "in charge," but submissive to a pair of Sapphics or other monstrous-feminine subtypes; i.e., bottoming from the top/topping from the bottom (two imbalances I've discovered I very much prefer during ludo-Gothic BDSM; re: Harmony and Cuwu).

Let's quickly look at some examples of that sort of ironic application (often, as a matter of subverting canon's lack of irony in cartoons—already abstract—as having a playful, doll-like element to them, mid-consumption), then segue into my escaping of Jadis' infernal toy chest:



(exhibit 38c1b: Artist: [Boner Bob](#) [amazing]. Heteronormativity frames anything beyond PIV sex as alien, thus worthy of attack. Meanwhile, the idea of the hero's reward after emerging from the Abyss during the monomyth is both conversion therapy and compelled love that promises them PIV sex after killing the monstrous-feminine [e.g., Jung's female chaos dragon] as part of a normalized cycle of queer, thus Gothic-Communist repression.

In truth, the descriptive sexuality and cultural appreciation of gender-non-conforming relationships presents the group as a negotiated affair that *isn't* divorced from sexual desire as doll-like; it merely conducts it ironically in relation to the status quo's harmful standards. In other words, the monomyth—as we have discussed a fair bit already—is a highly prescriptive and harmful device and needs to be challenged; i.e., by going into the abyss of gender-non-conforming lovemaking and modes of relation that allow for all parties to exist through reclaimed implements of shame, hatred and domination; e.g., [Scott Pilgrim](#) [above] as "made queer" through camp: in ways that highlight its queer potential, which also applies to [Steven Universe](#) [next page] as more overtly doll-like, thanks to a steady reliance on the golem myth.

Beyond children's stories or cartoons, though, the same basic idea applies to more overtly "goth" poetics; e.g., like Rob Halford's "Isle of Domination" or some similar genderqueer zone; i.e., occupied not by "the Ripper" as a queer-coded gay man in xenophobic canon<sup>138</sup> but a sex-positive example of the gay party animal/favor as a twink-style sex doll: the usual object of total annihilation that *isn't* taken literally as a matter of psychosexual performance. Such irony reclaims the harmful imagery of

<sup>138</sup> Either having internalized society's bigotry against them as queer but more than likely having internalized misogyny as a straight man who *can't* get laid, who then masquerades as monstrous-feminine to rape other people with their knife dick, which then results in internalized homophobia manifesting outwards against all parties.

*the death fetish and its associate, doll-like tortures and sodomy—doing so for the better of society at large by progressing away from their historically unironic usage. Often, this sits on the cusp of actual exploitation, the harm it presents as always adjacent to a given performance as made to heal from feelings of inadequacy that seek out domination as a matter of interpersonal bonding through BDSM:*



*[artist: Doxy Doo. Their 2015 "[Gem Dom](#)" comic of [Steven Universe](#) elides the "futanari" hentai genre (the feminine body with a penis) within the broader [Amazonomachia](#) of the militarized BDSM scenario. The liminality of the scene evokes the "prison sex" culture of dominance and Spartan-esque culture of war [which has a pedophilic history to it] as overshadowing a means of doll-like catharsis: the golem. Its legitimacy of violence, terror and sexuality is of the state versus workers seeking sex-positive subversions of the former operating through various BDSM/theatrical tropes: the phallic woman (of color, in this case; i.e., the Medusa) and the non-white goblin taming our white "shrew" (note the long nose) through stereotypical discipline-and-punish exercises: overpowering through brawn, verbal commands, degradation, hyperbolic/painful sex and/or double-penetration, bukkake, collars and bondage, open mouths eagerly and obediently awaiting their reward.]*

*Within a military culture and centrist framework, the idea isn't far removed from its historical counterpart as unironically abusive, being a forbidden sexual outlet/guilty pleasure whose predatory interplay between superior officers and subordinates would have been a historical reality (and one whose inversion within tokenized, girl boss bureaucracies would emulate their male counterparts under Capitalism).]*

*Catharsis, post-rape, always walks a borderline [the victim is always afraid of future abuse, thus relies on calculated risk to release tension by emulating rape up to a*

*point]. There's clearly room to perform this irony further than the centrist, post-fascist overtures in Steven Universe. But doing so requires actively using ludo-Gothic BDSM; i.e., to make an earnest interrogation of the dialectical-material role—the context—of everyone beyond mere wish fulfillment/the novelty of golems ambiguously bullying one another for the Maze Gaze [which under centrist circles extends to tokenized queer people "acting like men"]. The danger of the sadist is always the advertised lack of compunction making them a frankly good dom, but also someone who can just as easily take advantage in ways that reduce the individual they control to putty in their hands.*



*[artist: Cuwu]*

*For example, a hard masochist friend and their equally hard sadist husband, who I'll call Guldenstern and Rosencrantz, reduced Cuwu to a little brainless submissive, chasing raw hedonism through the equally raw suggestibility of "sub-drop-in-action." I can't say that it tore our friendship apart by itself—and I want to recognize that Cuwu was perfectly capable of making bad decisions without their help—but all the same, it's hard not to feel like the people involved exploited Cuwu's mental illness for their own ends, then dressed it up as them "spreading their wings." Bad play is bad play.*

*This distinction includes when play negatively effects the people not directly involved. In this case, I was the voyeur G&R were feeding images to—of them passing Cuwu around and fucking them to their hungry heart's desire: the doll-like party favor literally at Beltane [Guldenstern was a priestess]. I would've been fine with it if I wasn't expected to care for them afterwards; i.e., when Cuwu hit rock bottom and came crawling back to me to ask for the things they had specifically said they wouldn't do when we originally negotiated our boundaries. The pattern*

*isn't any different than Zeuhl or Jadis, then, insofar as the issues generally came when a boundary was violated and the violator [dom or sub] refused to acknowledge wrongdoing and renegotiate afterwards. This always led to a hard boundary being drawn by me, which resulted in an extinction burst by the abuser party.*

*People sometimes forget that trust is an ongoing negotiation, one where "swooning" is fine for a moment, but shouldn't be stretched throughout the entirety of the arrangement. To this, I seriously contend that the functional 24/7 master-slave contract ultimately needs the checks-and-balances of a third party or nominal treatment ["in name only"] because otherwise it's too unequal and too constant a power imbalance to employ short- or long-term. With Cuwu, it spun out of control; but also, as we shall see with Jadis in just a moment, people can lie to antagonize, or—just as likely—can get greedy or complacent in ways that lead to the escalating abuse of control by one party against the other.*

*Clearly the poetics [and politics] of dolls are imperfect and sit in opposition to state forces and their praxis, often leading to compromise. Steven Universe is a sadly apt example, its finale populated with fascist winged monkeys that turn heel after the leader is dead [infantilizing workers by implying they can never think for themselves, which centrists will abuse]. Yet, the show has echoes of wasted promise.*

*For instance, there's more realism in the messiness of Rose and Pearl than the entire season finale; "Rebecca Sugars," according to Bay, "shouldn't discuss healing from trauma and fascism in the same sentence because they lack the nuance for it," default to might makes right. All the same, they admit Sugar's queer characters are fabulous; i.e., queer golems [commonly inanimate bodies of clay or rock with a spell or incantation inserted into the forehead—with Sugar's using gemstones as a classic site of holistic medicine/alchemy]. The idea of reanimation—of the egregore, tulpa or Yokai—as contained within a shell or statue is very common with giving voice to ghosts of the past that comment on the systemic atrocities of the present: endorsements of these [through fascists/centrist ghosts] and resistance to them and state power [through Gothic-Communist ghosts].*

*Such compromises engender old stereotypes tied to capital as heteronormative. For instance, 2019's Hazbin Hotel quasi-reclaims the pejorative "drunk/killer fag" stereotype with Angel Dust [next page] to further the negative aspects of said stereotype; i.e., the homeless drug addict/spider lady of the night who punches up but also lashes out at and outright uses everyone in sight, on par with Tim Curry's Doctor Frankenfurter from Rocky Horror: someone to relegate to the graveyard, thus eventually bury there [as is tradition].*





*Like older forms of queer exploitation, Hazbin emulates bad twink caricature made by an actual queer person [the show's creator, Vivian Medrano, is bisexual] then dressed up in laissez-faire loudmouth behavior that, again, treats hell as "struck" in a perpetually reprobate state of existence*

*doomed to fail. While the sentiment is valid, it's also prescriptive and tied to capital—literally. The unequal nature of the show's princess proliferates unironically to help those who, seemingly by their own volition, "cannot be saved"; they're creatures of the night/forever-criminals pathologically tied to vice. It's dogma pushed about by a nepo baby [which deprives Hell of any critical power of the Miltonian sort].*

*In Angel Dust's case, his list of hobbies and motivations on the Wikipedia read as follows:*

- *Having sex.*
- *Doing to drugs.*
- *Flirting with others.*
- *Pulling pranks.*
- *Drinking.*
- *Pissing off Vaggie.*
- *Starting fights ([source](#): Fandom).*

*His goal is literally to "Reform and ascend to Heaven (although his erotic and at times violent nature, combined with his fear of looking vulnerable, make this a difficult goal)," [ibid.](#)]. In other words, Medrano's whole premise with Hazbin Hotel is to assimilate, treating the rescue of queer criminality as a Disney-fed, real-life baroness debutante's pipedream that mocks the vapid, unironically dumb musical but adopting its essentialist features at the same time.*



[artist, left: [Persephone van der Waard](#); right, top: Vivienne "[VivziePop](#)" Medrano]

The same mentality applies to the action-oriented monomyth the show constantly fetishizes/falls back on, channeling the likes of Samus Aran shooting pirates or Wonder Woman punching Nazis as lacking much of any class character outside of whacking the most rote of clichés. The spectacle of centrist embodiment overtakes any hope of perceptive pastiche, requiring a re-genesis through the ovum-like egg Samus herself uses to shapeshift into an impossible ball wiggling through the fallopian-esque tube circuitry stretched everywhere throughout Zebes. The Amazon can totally be a waifu sexpot [a trend I accidentally lighted upon when I made her look like fellow Metroidvania star, Shantae] but should allow for BDSM opportunities other than unironic harm, torture, and inevitable self-destruction; i.e., that avoid pandering incessantly to comic-book-level, equal-opportunity mercenary work that targets everyone for the highest bidder [the plot not just for *Metroid* but also *Hazbin Hotel*'s offshoot series, *Helluva Boss*, 2019]. However fun this may be, its praxis is frankly dumb and regressive, but also cash-happy in ways that stink of an R-rated Disney pinkwashing itself. Instead, the purpose of the castle and the roles inside its chronotope should be subverted, repurposed ironically at every register.)



(artist: [Brad Art](#))

Let's wrap up. We've covered how dolls store trauma, but also relay it using various modular elements that, at times, appear cute as an ironic means (and target) of subversive critique. The paradox is an upending of cultural double standards that linger on the uptake; e.g., for girls to be "too old" to play with dolls, but expected to use sex toys/exist *as* dolls to please men while said men play with dolls themselves: raping the whore (too scared to do anything but commodify them for these purposes; e.g., [Brad Art being staunchly pro-smut and "apolitical"](#)). By turning the monstrous-feminine into something they can dominate, these

men/token elements convey the usual transfer and assignment of power as something to give and receive through unironic sex and force; i.e., delivered towards the monstrous-feminine by state agents. But we can camp this by reclaiming the whore as something we summon to serve ourselves.

Those with power will be there, of course. At the core of all of this abuse, rape is power and power is profit through rape; i.e., defending itself as a matter of profit, of which Jadis was queen. It might sound impressive, even, except that Jadis operated from a position of total advantage; i.e., gaslight, gatekeep, girl boss being a means to make one's victim *feel* powerless in a very tokenized way (re: capital policing workers through its own victims).

Speaking from experience, abusive power has a way of making you feel invisible, naked and exposed at the same time; i.e., like a doll undressed by a cruel owner. Pierced with this stare, a frantic desire to escape can suddenly emerge inside oneself—fleeing *potential* trauma using liminal expressions of trauma in highly subversive ways, including fetishized rituals of power and war like the zombie cosplay (exhibit 38b1) or parts of the undead egregore (38a). The exchange isn't always sex-positive, though it can seem that way at first glance.

For example, Jadis collected a variety of "alien/monster dildos" and wanted to make their own line of sex toys. At the time, I thought it was cute. Now I firmly see these toys as an expression of abject power and dominance; i.e., tied to the trauma Jadis had survived in their own home growing up as something to reenact without irony. It became the opposite of ludo-Gothic BDSM, in practice.

Before I coined the term "ludo-Gothic BDSM," though, the paragraph below highlighted the basic idea (from the original draft of "Escaping Jadis"):

The whole point of good BDSM, I would argue, is to ritualize material-ludic expressions of unequal power exchange and social-sexual knowledge; i.e.,

whose genesis is begot from militarized, post-fascist replicas that can always regress unless the centrist function is seriously interrogated, disarmed and repurposed by subversive agents.

Yet this basic concept—combined with my willingness to learn (and to please) as a means of crystalizing it—made me horribly susceptible to Jadis as someone who used the appeal of sexualized rituals to bend me to their will. They could not read my mind, but like past abusers could easily control me through veiled threats that I visibly responded to: my imagination was written all over my face.

One such threat was, "I don't lie; if you think otherwise, we're going to have *a problem*." It was totalitarian and vague, implying incredibly that they couldn't do so much as fib or tell a lie of omission; in other words, *I* was the impostor and always would be.

Escape didn't occur to me at first, but I warmed up to the idea. As time went on, Jadis would threaten, pull away and "hover" as I stewed in my own fears, only to eventually return to and offer me "the cure" (rape in disguise). Until then, they'd hide from me, lurking in different parts of the house<sup>139</sup> while announcing their anger as something I could not escape while under their roof. Waiting and watching me like a spider feeding off me in the dark, they played with me like a doll. I always could hear them, their high heels clicking like knives as they strutted back and forth. It terrified me in ways my father's booming footsteps never could; the physical violence lasted moments, but the emotional violence never stopped (the human shapes hovering all around me, like in *The Night House*). And if I ever

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<sup>139</sup> Per stories like *Resident Evil* or *Silent Hill*, the house is generally haunted or occupied by trauma in an undead form; i.e., a familiar face that is zombie-like, doll-ish. This can feel paradoxically joyous, but in hindsight best maintains a positive feeling through rememory as a bad copy of the harmful original. For example, when I told Bay about Jadis, they recommended Gerard Way's "[Baby, You're a Haunted House](#)" (2019) as a likeness of that person's actions towards me:

And the nights, they last forever  
And days are always making you blue  
In the dark we laugh together  
'Cause the misery's funny to you

Oh, Baby, you're a haunted house  
Better find another superstition  
We're gonna stay in love somehow  
'Cause, baby, you're a haunted house now

I'll be the only one who likes the things you do  
I'll be the ghost inside your head when we are through ([source](#): Genius).

Jadis, then, became something to revive and befriend after their abuse of me, but the zombie I brought to life very much *wasn't* the dangerous original; it became something new, something safe that *felt* dangerous to hold—a doll-sized calculated risk in human form (exhibit 43d), but also a haunted dollhouse where the person's likeness is rumored to haunt (also, if Capitalist Realism rots our brains, then sometimes we need little earworms like the above song to "till the soil").

questioned them, they'd throw a bit of legitimate know-how at me to remind me *they* were an expert:

## SO YOU WANT TO FUCK A FICTIONAL CREATURE?



Give it the Harkness test first!

- Does it have Human Intelligence (or "greater")?
- Can it talk or otherwise communicate with language\*?
- Is it of sexual maturity for its species?

If the answer to all three is "yes" then you can fuck it! It's a nonhuman creature with sapience and all you need to have consensual sex with.

If you answered "no" to one or more, watch out! That's bestiality or possibly pedophilia! Don't fuck it!

Here is an illustrated guide:



\*Body language is a dangerous road. As always, err on the side of caution. Only rely on body language if both parties have attempted communication through different means and failed due to language barriers and other special situations.

(*exhibit 38c2: [The Harkness Test](#). Such tests are sex-positive and meant to educate "good play" through iconoclastic praxis. As something to remediate over space and time, emotionally/Gothically intelligent sex workers oppose canon with their own artwork, Gothic maturity and awakened labor—their stories, fantasies and toys that feature/represent monstrous sex.*)

While Jadis was my BDSM idol, over time, I could sense something was wrong. However, I didn't want to face it because I loved them (and admitting I was being raped felt unthinkable). After all, we had negotiated a relationship where I was to be their dutiful servant *in exchange* for protection. They knew

so much about BDSM and the rules, I simply couldn't *imagine* them betraying me and becoming the real monster—the impostor, the perfidious lover, the rapist treating me like a doll they could break while lying to my face—but it was the only thing that *started to make sense*. They were literally acting like they could be never wrong (Hitler's *führerprinzip*: "The Leader is always right."), meaning *I* was always wrong for trying to communicate how I felt thus actually improve on our relationship in a healthy way ("boundaries for me, not for thee"). I felt profoundly misled—less by a forceful hand pulling on the reins and more that the outcome of doing so was leading me to submit to things that felt abusive towards me by my handler.

Eventually I decided that if I couldn't do that—that if my partner's fragility and inability to handle criticism constructively was sacrificing my well-being—then I would remove myself from their toxic influence and use the power they gave me (calculated risk) to prevent rape in the future. Over time, this became ludo-Gothic BDSM—a means of playing with rape as camping my own survival; i.e., seeing the world through a vision that Jadis partly contributed towards.

From *Frankenstein* to *Ghost in the Shell*, monsters are made as a matter of "post" potential—postcolonial, post-scarcity and posthuman, etc. A gift is what you make of it, then, and the reclamation of my power from my much-touted "maker" has been taking what *could* be a curse and making good of it: "You have no power over me!" The first step would be escape, working with the rudiments of all the things "Meeting Jadis" has surveyed.

In the interim, I slowly hatched a plan: I *dreamed* of escape. Eventually I wrote about it, drew it, or planned to with friends. And, like King Diamond's protagonist from *Them* (1988), "my mind and body became one again," the abuser's spell broken enough for me to free myself from its paralytic, doll-like qualities (the doll aping paralysis as a matter of possession by abusive parties; i.e., the body as a kind of prison, but also a means of derealization, disassociation, to give the owner room to rest, work, and survive). But I was still inside a prison I had walked into of my own volition. Walking out again seemed easy in concept, but still

threatened my view of existence as supplied through Jadis' wealth and arguments: a room of one's home.

(artist: [Ash Thorpe](#))



I would have to give *that* up to escape them, turning home into a battlefield; i.e., the likes of which I'd read about since I was a little girl; e.g., knights and

dragons (the abjected cruelty of so-called "black knights"), swords and sorceresses. I did my best to play with the idea, to make it palatable/fun. Even so, Jadis would continue to haunt me well after the fact—a commander on home turf as suddenly the enemy to wage war against using revolutionary cryptonymy (showing and hiding what I wanted them to see/not see).

The Gothic, then, is the language of return to an "ancient," hauntological space of rape, reclaiming it as a matter of survival expressed through play in all the usual medieval hyphenations of sex, force, war and rape, sewage and bodily waste, food, funerals, death, etc. Simply put, it's the perfect means to heal from the past by reclaiming it, thus transforming our zombie selves—our internal-external anxieties, shames, biases, stigmas, fears, guilt—with ludo-Gothic BDSM; i.e., through the rememory process camping capital's usual commodifying of rape: through dolls that denote and execute "rape" as against profit, of police-style, us-versus-them division, of genocide. This isn't a single event or game to "speedrun," but goes on forever as part of a cycle to either heal from or contribute towards by playing with our rape, but also reifying it for others to see and learn from.

We'll consider how next: through my escaping of Jadis! Gird your loins, my little soldiers! We're not out of the woods yet!

## The Rememory of Personal Trauma, part two: Escaping Jadis; or, Running up that Hill (feat. *Stranger Things*, *Majora's Mask*, and *Wuthering Heights*)

"You're not really here!"

"Oh, but I am, Max! I am!"

—Max and Vecna, *Stranger Things* (2022)



Those who cannot learn from the past are doomed to repeat it. In this sense, we are indebted from the lessons of former abusers, insofar as we can learn from the harm they caused: how to survive and be better than them. This means liberating ourselves and others by subverting the abuse we survived; it means camping our

own rape as something to play with and out in dollish, theatrical ways. Part one explored my attraction to Jadis through our mutual weirdness and trauma as doll-like. Living through their abuse eventually led to my forming of new scholarship; i.e., my coining of the academic term, "ludo-Gothic BDSM." But to reremember Jadis, first I would have to survive them, and that was easier said than done. As Robert Burns once described, "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men / Gang aft a-gley." It was in his poem, "[To a Mouse](#)" (1785). In similar fashion, Burns' lines were on my mind as I prepared my escape from Jadis: I was the mouse under their power and couldn't simply disassociate to get through it<sup>140</sup>. Escape would not be easy, but an uphill climb made by a doll with her strings cut.

<sup>140</sup> Mavis explained it frankly and well (from Volume One):

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 menticidal 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 *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

We've already talked about uphill battles, of course, and poor Sisyphus endlessly pushing the rock uphill. The rememory of personal trauma, we'll see, is more akin to a Christly passion. Part of the difficulty wasn't because I was under Jadis' control so much as I felt like it; i.e., their doll to do with as they saw fit. To that, no one is immune from conditioning. Even when it starts to break, you can still feel its effects on you. Once my escape was materially and mentally prepared, though—and once I reclaimed my devices from Jadis to the extent that I could, back then—I confronted them.

To be clear, this wasn't done without some trepidation; i.e., abuse tends to intensify drastically when the victim tries to escape (re: [extinction bursts](#)), insofar as their presence normally reinforces an abuser's addictive possessiveness. I didn't attack Jadis, though; I gradually hinted at their abuse, partly because I was scared out of my mind, dreading what would inevitably transpire once the cat was out of the bag. My fears were not unfounded; once I said the words, "I think your behavior is abusive," Jadis threw me out on the spot. I had my friends on call when it happened, so Jadis could defend themselves from my "aspersions." I told Jadis so; they literally hid in the shadows and whispered accusations at me—that I had "weaponized" *my* friends against *them* (the DARVO tactic: Deny, Accuse, Reverse Victim, Offender).

To Jadis' "credit," they released me from bondage and didn't physically harm me. But they also never spoke to me again. After a seventeen-hour car ride to Cuwu's (we rode in relative silence despite me trying to break the ice), Jadis accused *me* of burning the bridge ("nuking it from orbit" were their exact words) before driving away. I haven't heard from them since.

*Note: I originally wrote this section over a year ago, and am revisiting it now as I prepare to finalize its release. Primarily I'm including notes about ludo-Gothic BDSM as it evolved on these earlier reflections to what ultimately amounted to my scholarship's formative years. —Perse 6/25/2024*

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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 [...]: 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, Cuwu and people like them (who extrafamilial predators will mark as having survived, and try to exploit them in the future; i.e., trauma lives inside you, but also follows you like a curse) [[source](#)].

As such, I couldn't disassociate from Jadis' emotional abuse because it, unlike physical and sexual abuse, is interactive by design (to such a degree as Jadis could torture me without being inside the room); i.e., emotional requires a victim to respond to something from the abuser as supplied to them linguo-materially. But as we'll, I was able to rely on the stories of the past (Gothic novels and my education about them) to navigate my own abuse in much the same way.

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This might seem open and shut, except then I had to deal with Jadis' ghost haunting me. "Escaping Jadis" is my attempt not to deny and bury that ghost, but turn it into something different; i.e., that takes their lingering hold on me and turns it into an object lesson: something to help me and the world heal from the forces that turned Jadis into yet-another-tool for the state.

As such, this book was originally written to commemorate my escape from Florida and eventual healing from what Jadis did to me—a kind of monstrous rebuttal where I humanize monsters (and monstrous toys) through my own work; re: my formulation of what eventually would become ludo-Gothic BDSM. And yet, this rebellious healing is a slow, time-consuming process—not just this book and figuring out my past through it, draft-after-draft, but building up to its inception before I'd written a single page or drawn a single image (not including older works that I've since renovated for the book).



(*exhibit 39a1: Models, top: Mom and [Persephone van der Waard](#); bottom-left: Uncle Dave. Artist, [top](#) and [bottom-left](#): [Persephone van der Waard](#); bottom-right: [Cuwu](#).)*

To this, my usual creative outlets evolved *into* a deep healing process—to deal with what had happened in Florida, but also to cope with several other developments afterwards: Directly after Florida, I rebounded with [Cuwu](#), which promptly fell apart after six months. During that time, Uncle Dave suddenly died, killed by a heart attack (re: Volume One). Dealing with both events, everything was constantly interacting back and forth inside of and around me, so I decided to double these traumas with my own

sex-positive creations; I drew Dave's portrait and another picture for my mother (a hauntological, liminal space, inspired by Edward Hooper's "Night Hawks," 1942) who had already lost her fiancé to Covid six months prior ([I came out, two days later](#)<sup>141</sup>). Built up inside of me after Florida, the inspiration was less like a spark bursting out of thin air and more like a dam breaking under pressure.

<sup>141</sup> Persephone van der Waard's "Coming out as Trans": August 7th, 2022.

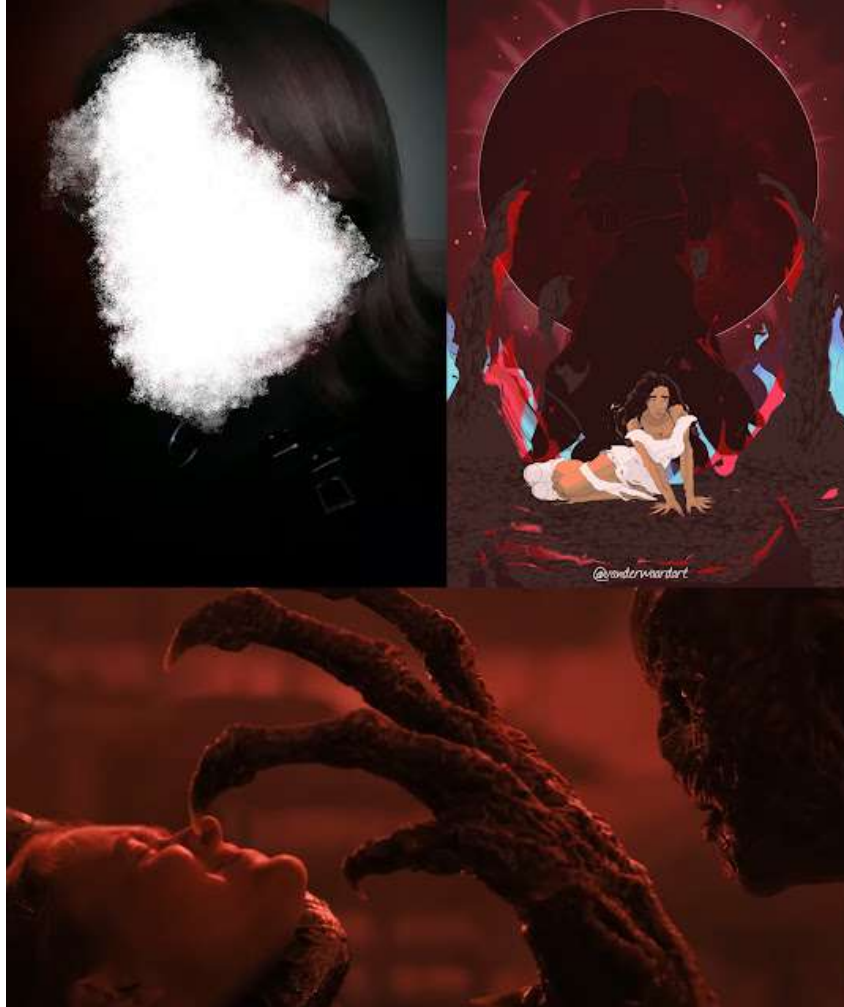
Said deluge happened after watching season four, episode four of *Stranger Things*. I related to Max' own predicament (exhibit 39a1b) [under the knife-fingered spell of the villain](#); my empathy during their moment on the cross touched me through a shared connection with trauma and due to my own psychosexual urges tied to said trauma—i.e., seeking the palliative Numinous by envisioning myself in Max' Christ-like shoes.

After watching her barely escape, I positively *bawled*. Doing so gave me the desire to live; moreover, I felt inspired to "release" my own trauma by giving voice to a larger historical-material struggle: liberation. Expressed through Gothic poetics as a matter of oppositional praxis, I drafted an egregore; i.e., whose dialectical-material presence denotes a recursive, dualistic sense of old traumas tied to present, centuries-old structures: capital as made for profit, thus the raping of nature as monstrous-feminine on all registers. I envisioned the subverting of capital as universal to all workers affected by it, hence for the young and old of any sex, gender, religion or inclination to return to and play with—to confront rape itself, but also to consciously make that informed choice (thus consent) when dragged down by such forces themselves.

The moment the episode ended, I went downstairs and instantly drew a picture of Jadis and myself: a great black shape lording over a princess in a white dress (exhibit 39a1b, next page). This creation had spawned from an attachment to past abuses from my own family circle, but also my own life as filled with markers of parallel trauma: the echoes of Cambodia, Nanking or Nazi-occupied Holland, intimated by videogame "zombie" violence marking the state of exception. It all felt connected because I—more than usual—felt connected to the world around me, for better or for ill. That's how radical empathy works! Except, now I realize that I had—like said world—been raped as well.

*For the rest of this section, I shall exhibit Jadis' abuse of me in ways I hopefully can convey to you a) through other stories, and b) through exhibits of Jadis that partially censor identifying factors; i.e., with their face scratched out of the photo to keep them—along with their codename—as anonymous as I can do at a glance. Originally, I wrote of them behind their codename while conveying them as a simple black shape (next page), but have since decided I wanted to convey them a little more corporally (exhibit 39a2b) than a fatal portrait or Nick Castle homage.*

*To be absolutely clear, records of Jadis can still be found in my broader material histories. I will not take the time needed to entirely expunge them, partly because Jadis isn't worth effort, but also because I want proof of their abuses and their actual existence—including the love they coerced from me—to remain after I am gone, without provoking them overtly while I am still alive. That's their immortality as far as I'm concerned. As such, this book would not exist without their abuse of me, nor ludo-Gothic BDSM as a scholarly idea; i.e., that became entirely devoted towards avoiding similar abuses in the future! —Perse*



(exhibit 39a1b: Fatal portrait, top-left: Jadis, whose "beautiful" memory I will replace with the truth of what they were—an abused person who went on to abuse others; artist, top-right: [Persephone van der Waard](#), who came out a month after illustrating her abuser's true form and her own: "Somebody new, I'm not that chained-up little person still in love with you" [Gloria Gaynor's "[I Will Survive](#)," 1978].)

A common Gothic trope, then, is the restoration of sentiment through the material world: the collapse of the Gothic castle like a nightmare, the transgenerational curse of its perceived, mighty undead swept away like a bad dream and repealed with a benign counterpart (which Hogle would posit is, itself, a mere counterfeit that serves the material interests of the elite; i.e., the Cycle of Kings [more on this idea in the "Monomyth" subchapter] exemplified through the whitewashing of the regal home—the castle itself and its surroundings haunted by what is normally abjected). However, these stories more broadly denote a continuous healing process—of oneself and the sick home (or land around it) as part of the socio-material world that occurs through the pain of existence

unnaturally affecting a natural process: the fusion of memories, artistic ideas and trauma together in nightmarishly beautiful ways. As such, I had intimately studied them already in my own graduate work, writing about *Hollow Knight's* poisoned land, but also poisoned memories per the rememory process; in turn, my postgraduate work involved my surviving of rape as something to study and camp more than once.

Pregnant with these sensations under Jadis' "care," [I dutifully wrote the story down after they threw me out](#) (Persephone van der Waard's "Setting the Record Straight; My Ex's Abuse of Me: February 17th, 2022"). I did so at the time in order to get it straight in my own head, but also communicate my exodus in language I thought others would understand (rape is alien to many people, but Gothic stories less so); then, after Florida, I drew Jadis despite knowing the image would chill my blood at every viewing.

I had put off doing so for months, afraid of the agonizing "birthing" process but also of its dreadful completion. Eventually I could no longer keep them inside me and released their abuse onto the canvas (and later these book volumes). *My aim was not to vent or self-torture, but bravely educate and inform future would-be-victims in language that speaks to them and their own assorted traumas and socio-material experiences.* This book and its artwork are a logical continuation of that vital trend, as is ludo-Gothic BDSM a rememory-style means of revisiting such events; i.e., to recreate them in a variety of increasingly playful forms.

To that, these rather sober historical exhibits form the starting point for the subversion of martyrdom, which ludo-Gothic BDSM speaks to: as practitioner of it who became more and more playful, regarding the overall process.

*What comes next is a passion of mine, in the religious, Numinous sense of that word; i.e., the "rough stuff" we alluded to in "[Monsters, Magic and Myth](#)" (2024), from Volume Two, part one. Tread lightly but also know that this book, for all its heavy weather, is still a safe space.*

*That being said, writing about these experiences and illustrating them, then editing and proofreading them again and again, I've had to go back repeatedly to a very dark place and dig up these bones; and it's weird, because a part of me loves it—i.e., the thrill, the profound sense of annihilation and live burial, post-disinterment; it's a madness that touches you and never lets go, haunts you for the rest of your life.*

*But I lived to educate you as matter of pride in my work. So if I ever feel small and weak, if I ever break down and cry because of it, I can remind myself that I survived; I didn't break, I didn't give in; I fought back and I lived. Whatever sickness drove Jadis to hurt me, I didn't let it get me, too. And whatever money their father left behind for them, and all the material things that come and go for them as a result, I will rest easy knowing none of it can possibly fill the void in their heart, the sheer inability for them to relate healthily to others. Destroying things is*

*easy and over in a heartbeat. Healing from trauma takes constant work; it takes courage the likes of which a villain like Jadis could never hope to match. —Perse*



*(exhibit 39a2a: For all its self-indulgent and fatal, carceral nostalgia, Max's thrilling liberation from Vecna is Stranger Things' crowning achievement. Yes, it occurs from a Red-Scare, cis perspective that, as always, gives BDSM a bad name; the analog for trauma and abuse is both profound and applicable to any situation thereof. Ignoring but re-remembering the xenophobic nature of Vecna as the cartoon killer of white, cis-het, American children, the reality is that Max is an imperfect stand-in for any victim under capital: the plight of the heroine needn't be gendered at all, but merely the portrayal of someone without power being gaslit by an invisible killer from the shadows. While Vecna is male—coded similarly to Malcolm MacDowell's Alex from A Clockwork Orange [1971] just "Singing in the Rain" as he goes about*

*his gruesome work—the reality is "killers" needn't be so overtly rapacious in a physical or male sense.*

*The truth is, abuse but especially rape takes many forms and can use the same psychosexual language of unstable/unequal power as a dialogue between them; i.e., the victim and the audience relating back and forth, but also the predator and prey or multiples of each: the mark of trauma that communicates nonverbally<sup>142</sup> but also is told through widespread forms of psychosexuality tied up in demonic, Christian-torturous imagery popularized by Dante and revived in other mediums [e.g., Jacob's Ladder or Tool music videos, exhibit 43a]. It becomes a paradoxical chase of the nurturing force as powerful and god-like, but also the aesthetic darkness as speaking to you in potentially harmful ways. When touched by a massive trauma that scars you, then, catharsis is paradoxically swept up in bad copies of the original abuse. You're drawn to its dark intensity and gravity to face your fears, but also transform them and your trauma as something to hopefully camp and transform.*

*Simply put, it's a prey mechanism and at times an intensely maladaptive one that brings new targets to an abuser hunting its prey [we're taught not to self-conceptualize as animals; except we are animals, and few things are as intensely animal or ancient as fight, flight, fawn or freeze]. Prey fear predation but also seek protection through likenesses thereof that won't harm them; i.e., less checking under the bed for monsters and instead inviting one inside to keep a former victim safe. The paradox of psychosexuality is the victim's erotic desires often become pluralized, a strong urge from emotional scarring potentially leading them to conflate sex and harm through these maladaptive behaviors.*

*For example, my mommy kink is the seeking of a protector other than men [who have abused me all my life]: "Mother is the name for God on the lips and hearts of all children." Indeed, my supposed rescuer was Jadis, who having conversations with me that my family could not see [thought I told them plenty] spirited me away to Florida. There, they worked their magic, doing their best to awe me with a shared psychosexual connection; i.e., drawn to my trauma and my seeking of the palliative Numinous as useful to their abusive machinations.*

*At the time, I thought Jadis a victim like me who was abused in ways that would bring us together to each other's benefit. But as a harmful demonic persona, they were victim who had been operating as an abuser for years, one who forsook me in my time of need and pushed me to madness and suicide ideation:*

*Father, into your hands  
Why have you forsaken me?*

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<sup>142</sup> Re: Trauma attracts trauma, weird attracts weird. Jadis saw in me what I didn't see in myself: a dupe who they—someone I loved—would unironically prey upon using my vices to hypocritically enslave me while saying they weren't about that. It was disastrously potent and effective, just the right mix of pleasure and pain, isolation and abused trust.

*In your eyes forsaken me  
 In your thoughts forsaken me  
 In your heart forsaken me [System of a Down's "[Chop Suey](#)," 2001].*

*Like God unto Jesus, Jadis became my destroyer [their mother acting like a man, in that respect, hence them playing the TERF whose tokenism would go on to inform [Sex Positivity's](#) entire critical voice<sup>143</sup>]. They tried to sever all bonds of friendship and family I had, so there would be only them. They would fret and strut about the house in fetish gear and knife heels, hypnotizing me as their prey. And my friends and family either did not know, felt unable to reach me/powerless to intervene, or some combination of these inadequacies [and in Cuwu's case, they rescued me only to prey on me, themselves].*

*Likewise, Max's friends paw desperately at her body as her eyes roll into her skull and she falls upward; i.e., less like a balloon sailing away from them and more like Christ on the cross severed from gravity itself. The killer had targeted her for her trauma and worked from the shadows, hunting her without her knowledge until finally making himself known.*



*[artist: Theremin Trees; [source](#): "'Unconsciously' Seeking Abusers? | bogus therapy," 2022]*

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<sup>143</sup> The first chapters (what became Volume Three) concerned TERF-style abuses that expanded to other forms of tokenism and Man Box thinking under Capitalism; re: "prison sex" mentalities.

While the show treats Vecna's reveal as strictly torturous<sup>144</sup>, the truth is, killers aren't just two-faced, but many-faced. First, they generally approach you with two basic masks: a dark side and a light side, and doubly imposturous, they oscillate between them to confuse you while also often having several on at once [concentric veneers] and borrowing from a vast store of expressions [above]. They tell you lies to keep you close, intimating cheap rewards and brutal punishment as if to say, "Stay here with me; it's the only choice you have."

To that, Vecna doubles Max, offering her a Faustian choice, a psychosexual martyrdom similar to Owen from The Night House. Like Beth from that film, Max is jostled by her friends to reject this fantasy at the critical moment. As such, she recovers and runs away from the killer whose spells are, themselves, mere illusions; i.e., unable to harm her to the degree that he's suggesting: that he somehow has total power over her. The socio-material truth is more complex; i.e., those with power over you always have the capacity to commit real violence and harm, but the method to evoke this as a means of rooting you in place until they can have their way is fallible. In short, they cannot monopolize you anymore than capital can at large.

To this, Netflix' overall metaphor for Numinous destruction is apt, the psychomachy suitably operatic as Kate Bush's infamously spectral voice swoons and sighs some forty years after its debut. Max frees herself, suddenly able to move, and she desperately makes her escape. Running through the dark forest of her mind, the thunder of the music drives her onward while the dark wizard's spell swirls chaos all around. But her prey-like desire to be free drives her on, until finally the spell breaks and she falls back to Earth, reunited with her friends and leaving the thin-skinned, fragile and lonely predator isolated and alone. "I'm still here," she says, having chosen to live instead of give into Vecna's devilish offer [a Faustian bargain that conflates genuine love with non-consensual, harmful pain; re: false power as self-destructive].

For all Stranger Things' Gothic panache, the concept is hardly unique to strictly Gothic language. For example, when regarding my own childhood trauma as exacted my father and step father, a particular film speaks to that abuse; i.e., to a similar degree to Stranger Things' own psychosexual narrative—with similarly abusive, thus unequal power exchange and subsequent outlets of escape, without the overtly monstrous visuals: one of my mother's favorite films that we used to rent on VHS, Immortal Beloved [1994]:

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<sup>144</sup> His mutilated, black-and-red body and fetish outfit evokes H.R. Giger's xenomorph; his torture chamber evokes Stan Winston's atmospheric processor from *Alien*—i.e., in a psychosexual, domestically xenophobic manner akin to Satanic panic from the 1980s and Catholic-to-anti-Catholic dogma across the centuries.





*In the film, Beethoven stands on the stage, old and deaf thus unable to hear his own music; he hears it in his mind, the Ninth [1824] supplied to us as he might have heard it. He remembers every single note while likewise envisioning his drunken father coming home at night; unable to comfort himself with drink or non-consenting women, he mounts the stairs like a shadow, pursuing his own son with phallic intent [the father's club extending seemingly out from his crotch, suggesting a psychosexual nature to this abuse: raping his son to control and dominate him, no doubt in response to criminogenic abuses capital visited on the father and father's father, etc].*

*As I have borne witness to, there is no difference between a man climbing such steps and a demon in the eyes of a child; Beethoven expects the fiend, waiting almost patiently while gazing out the window at the stars, longing to be free under them instead of imprisoned within his father's fallen home.*

*Seemingly at random, Beethoven takes a chance: He climbs out the window and hides in the shadow of the roof while his father screams his name. Then, he climbs down the storm drain and runs for it. He runs like his life depends on it, sprinting through the forest, between the trees, with the twinkling stars looking down from on high. And reaching a secluded lake, he disrobes and climbs inside the paternal waters, floating in the womb-like darkness of a Maternal Sublime<sup>145</sup>. Revived in 1994, Beethoven's Ninth, in 1824, echoes Coleridge's sentient from 1818; re: "...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!'" [source].*

*Like Max, Beethoven was freed from his father's abuse, but is forever haunted by him, the power of music as a cathartic, creative force keeping the devils seemingly outside the cathedral at bay [in truth, they are everywhere, and not all of them mean workers harm (re: Spectres of Marx), but I digress]. The same*



*concept applies to my art [and ludo-Gothic BDSM] as a poetic, scholarly extension of myself, but also the abuse and friendships I've had throughout the years; the latter saved me from former.)*

Per ludo-Gothic  
BDSM, praxial

synthesis and catharsis are a matter of calculated risk while returning theatrically to old traumas during the rememory process. Except, returns to childhood-as-harmful are always traumatic. For the abuser, they become manna from Heaven: a tool to leverage against their unhappy victims the way they, too, once experienced; i.e., the mask of the destroyer *and* savior something to swap in and out, and which to survive Jadis I had to learn to do the same in opposition (which led to my developing of cryptonymy as a revolutionary countermeasure).

<sup>145</sup> We don't have to ascribe gender towards a desire for protection, but in Beethoven's case, the film's director is patently noting the absentee mother in relation to Beethoven's broken home and domineering father. In my case, my father was never around and I turned to my mother for succor in the darkness of the night; likewise, I found the night to be immensely comforting as a small child, teenager and adult, going for nightly strolls surrounded by the whispering trees, moon and stars. In the words of Blue Öyster Cult, "I love the night"; i.e., a little trans vampire who felt safer in the shadows of the forest where I could hide, not indoors where my father could claim me.

To be thorough, here are some more examples of Jadis' abuse I've decided to document and include. —Perse, 6/23/2023



(exhibit 39a2b: Models: Jadis, all, and Tim, top-right; photographer: [Persephone van der Waard](#). Jadis liked to control their prey through treats. In short, if I was good, I got fed. Or, as I write in "Setting the Record Straight Again; Accounting My Ex's Abuse of Me to Another Victim, August 30th, 2022" [2024]:

*Jadis always had all of the material power. They signed off on everything. And eventually it became toxic to me. I stopped wanting to have sex with them, but also to have breakfast with them. And they, in turn, stopped*

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offering me any semblance of agency. I couldn't decide where we ate or where to buy groceries. Hell, they almost didn't buy me those books when the three of us went to that giant used bookstore. But they were perfectly happy spending hundreds of dollars on cute sexy clothes for me to wear because they liked me in them (but also didn't want me wearing them all the time, and kept all of these articles when I moved out). In short, they not only treated me like a pet, but a doll they could objectify in ways they found sexy by dressing me up in expensive clothes they paid for, but also owned. Nothing was a true gift with Jadis (except for my phone, which they let me keep, and a couple of old Metallica t-shirts) [[source](#)].

The books-in-question, but also photos of a trip of ours to [the Poe Museum in Richmond, Virginia](#). The treats, then, extended car rides; i.e., to where they wanted to go [the museum was pretty awesome, to be fair]:



[artists: Jadis and [Persephone van der Waard](#)]

*Clothes Jadis bought for me [and took back after I stood up to them, including the pink kitty collar]:*



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

*Everything Jadis did had a purpose, specifically to threaten and control; i.e., as something they could give and take away if I was bad. Jadis took after their mother, in that respect, but also the music they listened to under their mother's abusive roof; re: Tool's "[Stinkfist](#)":*

*Show me that you love me and that we belong together  
Relax, turn around and take my hand  
I can help you change  
Tired moments into pleasure  
Say the word and we'll be  
Well upon our way [[source](#): Genius].*

*This became something I noticed over time, but especially at the end. I was always bad and Jadis, like a goodly parent, was always correct; or, as I write in "Setting the Record Straight; My Ex's Abuse of Me: February 17th, 2022" [where I refer to them under a different alias, "Jack"]:*

*I spent our entire relationship trying to make things work, doing my best to communicate and prevent toxicity. I stayed by Jack's side during their rocky*

*grad school tenure, but also their father's illness and eventual death. I cooked, cleaned, and made love to them. I made art for them. I did everything I could to make things work, including talking to my friends about what I could do to become a better partner for Jack. I worried until my heart was sick.*

*In the end, I was Jack's live-in cock, a conjugal cook and maid. I did everything to please them; they "rewarded" me with constant emotional abuse and neglect. This torment worked at a glacial pace. Jack love-bombed me early on, then slowly turned off the tap. I rationalized this any way that I could: When their [masters'] research dried up, I blamed their fruitless workload, not them; when their ex refused to talk to them, I blamed their lack of closure, not them; when their father died before they could have the fabled heart-to-heart, I blamed their arrested development, not them.*

*Jack had derided me on various past occasions. In particular, they criticized my academic expertise and research on neoliberalism and the Gothic, but refused to read my work. I was simply "wrong" in their eyes. No matter how hard I tried, they refused to talk with me at all. While I eventually gave up, I always felt like Jack despised me for my political beliefs from there on out. The walls went up and stayed up, isolating me from them [[source](#)].*

*Isolation and DARVO were two of Jadis' favorite weapons, using them to triangulate me against Tim and, I presume, the other way around:*

*When Jack and I first met, they were going through a divorce. Their ex—I'll call them Tim—was someone Jack constantly complained about, calling Tim an irresponsible man-baby. They said I was so much better than Tim, so much more helpful and fun to be around. But Jack was also estranged from Tim and wanted my help in patching things up. They wanted closure.*

*This seemed simple enough to me. So I decided to help. If Tim was really so bad to Jack (when all Jack had done was try to care and provide for them—again, according to Jack), I figured a simple apology from Tim was in order. Eventually Tim apologized to Jack and things began to improve between them. They talked more often and even signed the marriage dissolution papers. Hell, we even had a threesome [to mark the occasion]. I wanted to help make things between all three of us [better]. I wanted a polycule.*

*Time passed. Jack and I were preparing to move. Being of a poly mind, I suggested that Tim move in with us. He seemed fun, a totally new person. I asked Jack and they agreed. So I made plans to facilitate Tim's insertion into our new living arrangement. The polycule was becoming a reality.*

*This entire time, though, it never occurred to me that Jack had been lying about Tim. So later, when Jack started accusing me of being irresponsible and "a bad person, unlike Tim," I asked Tim for his side of the story. Tim called Jack an abuser. But here we were, all under the same roof. It felt strange because Jack had no excuse to be playing these kinds of games. But here they were, playing them anyway.*

*Now that I am away from them, I sincerely believe Jack wanted me gone, thus allowing them to abuse Tim—a person they'd abused in the past (for nearly a decade)—with impunity. Recently divorced from Tim, Jack needn't worry about any legal repercussions; their name was on the lease, they had their father's inheritance, and they could leverage the fact that Tim needed their help against them in any dispute. All they had to do was wear me down [[ibid.](#)].*



*[artist: Tim]*

*In the end, Tim was a victim, too [Jadis making you think the only way you could have anything in life—including self-expression—was under their control, their domination]. Sometime after I left, Tim and I spoke about all of this, but eventually the talks stopped. I don't know what ultimately happened to them, but I hope they're safe).*

Please note, I really haven't touched this subchapter too much, in order to preserve its accuracy and immediacy at the time of writing it, but will simply say that returning to it is like going back into Hell; i.e., feeling the dark seduction of Jadis as a master manipulator working me over with their masks, their weight, their power as seemingly greater than mine.

As always, I think of Jadis like a black shape, haunting me. I know it's just a corpse from my past, but that it (and its trauma) will never truly die. All I can do is face it vocally as a sex-positive lesson for others to learn from, dissecting my past as much a corpse of myself and my trauma living ever on: something to return to, while reifying ludo-Gothic BDSM as something that ultimately came afterwards—is always coming after a return to the past as something to reassemble and convey in serious-to-silly forms: things to play with and relate to as people do.

Even now, though, the venue remains haunted; i.e., I feel beckoned as much by likenesses of Jadis, but also myself as confused by virtue of the kinds of attacks they levied at me with their Aegis, *their* masks. "I'm not a bad person," Jadis told me, underestimating their own cruelty while insisting all the while that *I* was the one victimizing *them*. It's hard, then, not to look at the dark shape and see myself on it: owned by someone who took me for all I was worth and never let me go. It hurts, but the wound has healed; these paradoxical feelings remain, as if to spite my progress. Jadis was my Weathertop, stabbing me with a Morgul blade (wrought in the city of their past abuse, which they turned against me: as yet another threat for *them* to police).



(artist: Keith Macmillan; [source](#): Kory Grow's "'That Evil Kind of Feeling': The Inside Story of Black Sabbath's Iconic Cover Art," 2020)

In short, Jadis' spell worked as a *false promise* of protection, the usual Man Box nonsense relayed in a TERF form. Through Jadis, this has become something for me to reify and revisit as a theatrical, doll-like device; i.e., to reclaim through

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)



ludo-Gothic BDSM as a perpetual work-in-progress: the black knight—the lurking threat of parental, spousal, and/or community abuse—attached to police violence defending profit through weird nerds failing up. All become something to recognize in small; e.g., the trembling and vulnerable side of myself, playing with dolls I pulled out from within: to place in front of me, thus better control and camp Jadis' raping of me.

I'm not plural—I don't front as such when triggered—but I can still recognize the scholarly and practical value in such protectors, and in conjuring out dark abusers in theatrical forms; e.g., [John Kimble vs the abusive mother and father](#), Sarah Connor vs the abusive cop, and so on; i.e., someone to see *me* freeze, look at the dark abuser (who often looks perfectly normal, on the outside), then take me aside and say, "It's ok, I got this" before confronting the destroyer in suitably theatrical fashion (through Cameron's mirror test, below, was used to capitalize on audience fears of police brutality at the time):



In the absence of actual protectors, we create our own, psychosexually recontextualizing trauma (often through an asexual, dollish interrogation of rape) as something that generally lives inside *and* around us. It's simply how humans operate. In revisiting this section to polish it, then, ludo-Gothic BDSM has become the theory for such operations put to practice long before I knew concretely how to express it. Although again, it already had *started to* with my postgrad Metroidvania work<sup>146</sup> as built on older fabrications *reversing* abjection; i.e., on older instances of survived abuse as something to camp as a matter of capital looping in on itself.



Time is a circle, of which our abusers come back around in ways we *can* control: by making *them* into dolls (and dollhouses) that *are* very much haunted by the echoes of trauma. With Jadis, I've made them into something to play with—unable to rape me ever again but teasing me with the pain of such passions threatened by such destroyers-in-small.

(model and photographer: Jadis and [Persephone van der Waard](#))

They weren't *always* small, and generally had a variety of tools to leverage against me (e.g., sex, left). For example, my exit letter was written at the height of Jadis' abuse—where I had become a frightened, pretty

bauble on par with Haggard's unicorns (when we watched *The Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance*, one of Jadis' favorite lines came from the Hunter: "You have heart; I'll take that, too!"). Inside the letter, I likened my home life through the toy-like language of children—as what I had to work with, but also because it made sense. In short, speaking through toys and games was comforting because I could play

<sup>146</sup> Re: "[Our Ludic Masters: The Dominating Game Space](#)." More on this when we talk about Metroidvania per the monomyth; i.e., as a matter of scholarly history I have since contributed to many times since.

with them to solve the puzzle of Jadis raping me; i.e., to *Majora's Mask* (1998) because it felt like being threatened with the moon night after night. Eventually the only way to escape was to summon the moon and expose the monster, breaking the spell they had over me:

I liken [Jadis' abuse] to *Majora's Mask*. In that game, the villain, Majora, curses the moon to fly into a [double of Hyrule called Termina]. While the player can return the moon to its original position using a magic song, the residents of Hyrule are still trapped inside a cruel time loop. Faced with their impending doom, they stew in their own fear. The world around them slowly falls apart—not just once, but over and over and over again. It degrades their sense of reality until nothing but madness remains. Majora uses this madness to control the [doubled] Hyrulians through fear, distorting their very perception of reality. This mind-prison is what Link ultimately escapes. The paradox, here, is the method: He doesn't escape by playing the song and stopping the moon. He escapes by exposing the tyrant controlling the "moon" to begin with.

Like Link, I could not escape by playing the song. Every time [Jadis] threatened me with anger or Instant Breakup, they were abstracting the consequences of my actions so much that I felt like the floor was eggshells: Any wrong step might send me hurling into the void. I felt the shadow of the falling moon in their words. A glance, a heavy sigh, a tapping of the foot, a laborious roll of the eyes. They had mastered me. I thought love through win out, that [Jadis] would change if only I played the song enough. But as our living conditions improved, my happiness worsened. They began to reject me, doting on [their ex], instead. I felt trapped. If I confronted them, they would throw the moon at me. If the moon came, I would play the song to save myself. And the whole cycle would repeat. So now I hid from the falling moon and became what they wanted me to be: their little artist boy. I did not please them, but they seemed oddly content with this arrangement. I knew it wouldn't last, but I couldn't say for sure when it would end. Terror was everywhere and madness reigned within me (re: "[My Ex's Abuse of Me](#)").



As said letter proves, but also the artwork and writing that came later, putting myself in my own shoes from an outsider's perspective and reimagining my own trauma (as a Gothic heroine, exhibit 39a1b) was central to me understanding what had already happened and what was *going* to happen. At the time, I really wasn't sure how it was all going to play out. Nevertheless, the more I creatively processed my trauma, the more that imaginary hindsight slowly became Gothic insight and emotional intelligence, but also undead-demonic *release* through the wearing of my own mask and acting things out.

Unbeknownst to me, this had also conveyed the mask-like "brave faces" that I wore *for* Jadis, secretly (or perhaps not so secretly) frightened of them; and they for me, in treachery and bad faith. Indeed, masks are vital to survival, but also swept up in cathartic *and* harmful Gothic dramas concerned with parasitic imposters (Jadis, in full control, pulling me around on the dance floor): the Amazon as a protector of children that, like our childhood bugbears, also follows us forward as something to summon up again—to be our Medusa when we feel small and scared in the face of things that remind us of (and indeed act out) our past abusers.

While we'll explore the concept of performative (and cryptonymic) masks more, in Volume Three (especially concentric veneers as something to destroy our enemies' through our own survival maneuvers), here is a quick example below of me reifying *my* survival as dollish:



(exhibit 39a3: Artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#). *Revana is my alter ego, a "mask/costume" warrior mommy the likes of which I always wanted to keep me safe [my mother, through no fault of her own, could not]. I drew this the same day I drew Jadis as my Great Destroyer [exhibit 39a1]. The idea was to show the plurality of trauma as divided by my feminine side having different qualities to it; i.e., that I could embody as separate from myself—both desiring to be strong yet still wanting to be a trans-woman princess. That is what Revana*

*means to me: a warrior and protector Amazon who can step up and throw down when someone sees my soft, feminine side and wants to take advantage as I regress; i.e., the female/trans femme hero out of popular stories I grew up with and dined on after I was fully grown; e.g., Eowyn from LotR or Sarah Connor from T2, but also Mercedes from Pan's Labyrinth [2006] saying to Vidal: "Don't touch the girl, motherfucker! You won't be the first pig I've gutted!")*

The cathartic effect of such rememory was almost orgasmic, feeling strangely good through my tremendous tears laid on the canvas, the page—not because I was a glutton for punishment, but because I reveled in my own *profound survival*. I had wanted to escape punishment by facing whatever Jadis had in store, but also was trying to understand it while steadily moving forward onto better things. Also, I learned ways to recognize abusers attracted to, and feeding off, my trauma, which would come in handy with future partners; e.g., Cuwu's draconian shenanigans, but also having the arsenal for bullshit after that, [like bigoted female sex workers trying to bully/pimp me](#) (re: "Transmisia Experience: 5/26/2023"), which we'll discuss in Volume Three.

Contrary to canonical exhibitions thereof, subversive Amazons like Revana denote something we can use to feel capable, without turning into Charlotte Dacre's Victoria from *Zofloya* or Ellen Ripley killing Communists for the state (re: James Cameron's white-savior billionaire Marxism). Even so, they *are* undead, and constitute a painful revisiting of one's personal trauma in order to face and reform it into a better lesson: that I had some hand in my own abuse. Here at the end of

things—as I turn Jadis into a doll (to make them easier to handle) that I and others can play with to camp our own survival of rape—I shall be honest and confess my hand in my own rape.

Before I start, a couple things to bear in mind: One, per the zombie and its apocalypse as a kind of demon lover come home to, this is ultimately what ludo-Gothic BDSM and good rape play were founded on: the survival of rape as something to *keep* playing with, raising healthier Gothic castles built on former tyrants who, as they cannot be escaped (silence regarding them leads to rape returning home), become part of the castle-narrative; i.e., the thing we can play with inside to avoid rape *in the future whenever, wherever and however it occurs*.

To that, Jadis has become—as I alluded to, a moment ago—*my* haunted house; i.e., a dark place of play whose spirit of playing with the half-real past means facing said past (and my hand in it) as always coming back around: to scoop us into the halls of older histories the future learns from (until it also becomes past); ; re, "[Baby, You're a Haunted House](#)":

And your heart will stay forever  
 When your last remains are few  
 In the dark, we dance together  
 And I'd like to be waiting with you ([source](#): Genius)

It would be a lie to say that I didn't and don't love part of Jadis still: the likeness of them that I can fashion, then play with to heal from the original's dreadful abusing of me (which was also doll, in bad faith). Except, it's less about who they were and more who they *could* have been, if things were different. I was raped, and not just by Jadis; but Jadis was the one who did it despite everything I did to make them happy. A part of me knew that, and it took time for me to escape the trap I had knowingly, on some level, entered of my own accord.

The best revenge for me, then, wasn't letting them know that they could have had all the sex they wanted, or good food, or whatever else I could have given, because the only thing they enjoyed was preying on me exactly the way they did. Instead, my success—my escape, if you want to call it that—is having survived them to turn them into a sex-positive lesson that will make such police-like antics of theirs a thing of the barbaric past. The survival of police violence is generally "cops or victims" as a matter of survivors becoming either moving forward. If we build a place where people can play with rape as an educational device geared towards rememory as a healing process, confrontations with the past become honestly cathartic; i.e., by changing the state through society as veering away from its usual dogmas and hand in things.

And that is ultimately what I've done with Jadis: turning them not just into a playground, but a harmless likeness of what they were that spells out their raping of me and my hand in that; i.e., while seeing them as someone human that, for all

the harm they exacted upon me, I will always love that gentler side of them—the side that, as much as it pains me to tell you all, died/retreated deep inside them the moment their father left his parting gift: the widower's gold. In that moment, Jadis made the choice (as much as anyone can make choices with the past forever weighing on them): to become the destroyer *sans* irony once and for all.

To find some semblance of victory over their humiliating raping of me and throwing me aside, I have taken us both in totality to leave you, dear readers, with something to learn from as a matter of ludo-Gothic BDSM: as hammered into me by Jadis, belonging to part of a larger cycle of abuse—one tied to the land and its memories projected onto any kind of media *you* could dream of. I don't wish to romance abuse, here—not to celebrate toxic love, but learn from the harm Jadis caused me, that befell me as something I have since returned to and acknowledged in dollish form; i.e., preserving its dark memory to behold for all time: an alien that I loved, but one who never really bonded with me through the experience; i.e., as



one that always held me at arm's length—never to let me heal each of us from the trauma that touched us both: "He shall never know how I love him [...] because he is more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same" ([source](#): *Wuthering Heights*, 1847).

(*artist: unknown*)

Weird attracts weird, trauma attracts trauma. I don't wish to hide the fact that I loved and made allowances for my abuser because I most certainly

did (and still am always reminded of that, through these rememories of them). Nor do I wish to change them, after the fact. *That* only happens when they decide to (and until then, they simply take and take, having no reason to change). To my most antagonistic abuser (the most Hurtful Abuser Award actually goes to Zeuhl, oddly enough), I merely wish to leave some parting words as we begin our segue into the sorts of monomythical forms you were doubtless inspired by when brutalizing me:

Jadis,

I don't know where you are now, and I suspect Fate has given you no reason to change (capital not only creates people like yourself—victims who go onto gatekeep others—it incentivizes you to keep at it and perpetuate the cycle in service to profit). But if there is any good left in you at all, know that I saw that and did my best to capture it; i.e., as hopelessly fused with your dark side as the side that sadly won. But in winning as it seemingly did, you sent me away to learn from your lessons. Even if you never *meant* them to teach me anything, the crux of understanding lies on the student being able to learn anyways; i.e., as a matter of emergent play relative to the devices at hand. You couldn't, but *I* could and did. Thank you for that.

I loved you as much as I could, my orc queen. Yes, I feared you and still very much do. Yet all the same, I *adored* the idea of what I saw in you: as something that *could* be better with only the right touch. Since I was mistaken about you, as a person, in that respect, I've since erected its Heathcliffian likeness here for others to learn from, including my own folly standing before. The paradox is that in escaping your person, I've found that you'll always, to some extent, be with me. So I've made that part of you into something toy-like for which ludo-Gothic BDSM is possible.

*You're* the doll to play with, my love—the dollhouse stripped of its harmful capacity but not its ghastly echo. You vibe to the ghosts of older tyrants you clearly seek to emulate; I, to the spectres of a Marx I've made—like you—quite a bit gayer than their historical figures could ever really be. However futile it might be, then, I would only ask that you do better towards others in the future, to try and match the spirit of play my little idea encompasses: as having a little bit of you inside it.

Farewell, my bug-loving black knight; you were a cunt, but I loved you enough to try and change you. Failing *that*, you have become my darkest object lesson, my Heathcliff on the moor that, whenever I look upon you, never fails to chill my blood and send me falling upwards, sailing far and wide on my own Numinous adventures. When I question the wisdom of reifying you as a matter of instruction, I sometimes pause regarding that quest, thinking of Charlotte Brontë's wayward sister, Emily, making her own monument to such a being:

Whether it is right or advisable to create beings like Heathcliff, I do not know: I scarcely think it is. But this I know: the writer who possesses the creative gift owns something of which he is not always master [...] The statuary found a granite block on a solitary moor; gazing thereon, he saw how from the crag might be elicited a head, savage, swart, sinister; a form moulded with at least one element of grandeur —



power. He wrought with a rude chisel, and from no model but the vision of his meditations. With time and labour, the crag took human shape; and there it stands colossal, dark, and frowning, half statue, half rock: in the former sense, terrible and goblin-like; in the latter, almost beautiful, for its colouring is of mellow grey, and moorland moss clothes it; and heath, with its blooming bells and balmy fragrance, grows faithfully close to the giant's foot [[source](#): Nava Atlas' "Charlotte Brontë is Preface to *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë," 2014].

"No coward soul is mine," said the girl, herself. And I was never one to shy away from nightmares. Had that been true, I would have never met you, my destroyer. The rest, as they say, is history—the kind of curiously pretty flowers with dark stems, which I've laid on your grave to remember what was best of you married to the worst of it, too (forgiveness comes at recognizing both, and my own hand in things). I'd say I'm laying you to rest, but the dead never stay dead, do they?



*Himmelhoch jauchzend, zu(m) Tode betrübt*<sup>147</sup>,

—Persephone van der Waard

<sup>147</sup> From Goethe's *Egmont* (1788), translating to "Rejoicing to heaven, grieving to death" or "heavenly joy, deadly sorrow" ([source](#)). It's a mood.

*With that out of the way, lovelies, I wish to conclude this subchapter with some closing points (about ten pages, seven of which are exhibits). These won't be terribly organized—will merely be arranged as I originally compiled them: as a manner of afterthoughts. Keep these in mind as we go from the rememory of my personal life's traumas into the sorta of monomythical forms Jadis was emulating: camping rape as something to revisit a "childhood" that never quite happened, but sits between imagination and history as half-real and chronotopic, but also fun (re: Walpole); i.e., a dollhouse to go and camp rape as a matter of rememory concerning personal trauma as undead.*

*To that, Jadis is my favorite toy to illustrate rape, but also one I don't like to use often. In fact, I may never use them again. All the same, this is my home—has become my life as a matter of healing a broken place into a matter of balance with those things lying in the graveyard of my soul—but I shall, a sad and wiser woman, move onto greener pastures held inside the same castle grounds: "Never did I wanna be here again / And I don't remember why I came" (Godsmack's "[Voodoo](#)," 1998). —Perse*

Despite being my attempt to make these understandings public, sharing my childhood and post-childhood mistreatment with the world through *Sex Positivity* wasn't always the obvious route precisely *because* it happened over time and in ways that horribly confused me. This remains true when summoning the ghost of the thing that harmed me, doing so to comment on the harm it caused being tied up in another earnest truth: that such things can be incredibly exciting and cathartic when harm is removed from them, but also per a means of catharsis that confronts the mind of a hostage; i.e., someone living in fear of the thing exciting all manner of emotions/psychosexual predicaments.

Anyone who says that such monsters aren't, to some degree, exciting has never been through it. I'm not invoking that here to stress the escapist qualities of a hostage stuck in the hauntological past of their own rape; I'm doing to it emphasize that escaping the prison is a vital means of transforming it through likenesses of the very bait that led us into our captors' hands. This involves a great deal of confusion, insofar as trauma warps our approach towards, and perception of, what excitement even is.

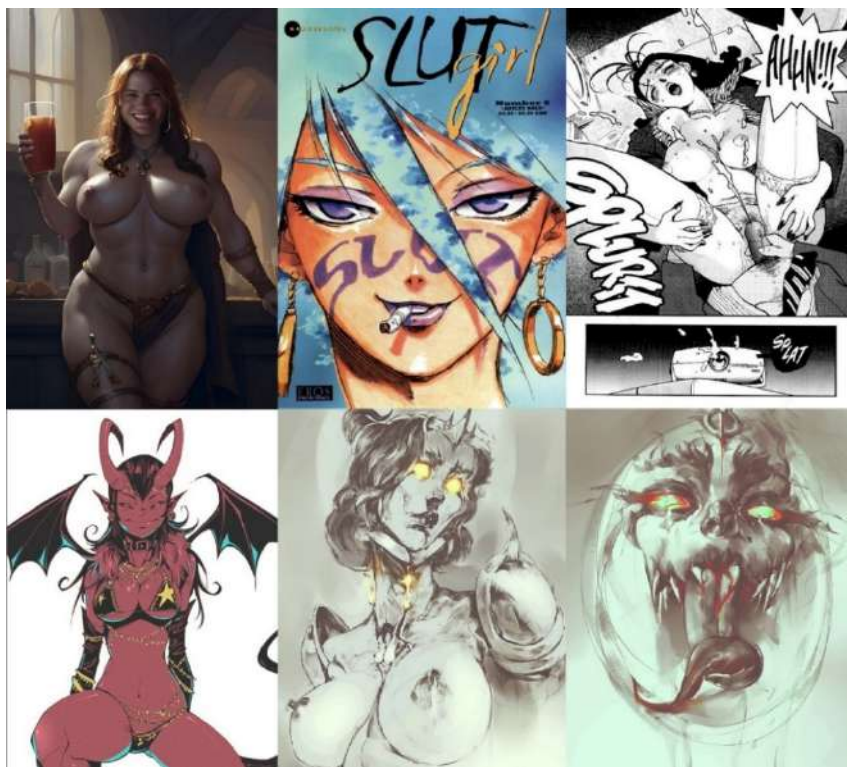
For example, one of the worst<sup>148</sup> effects Jadis had on me was being made to hate sex, specifically feeling ashamed of needing to cope with my own trauma: having sex *with them*. I didn't think such a thing could be possible, so I blamed myself instead. Sex can certainly be good under the right conditions—and much of

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<sup>148</sup> Another abuse I really hated was being told not to quote things or make connections to different, seemingly unrelated things. Jadis hated that and constantly chided and scolded me for wanting to share my Humanities education with them, quotes included. I can hear them now, whining, "What does *that* have to do with anything!" I have since covered this entire book in quotes as a big "fuck you" to them. "Suck it, Trebek!"

the sex with Jadis was amazing. It was like fucking a demon. Not only were they physically strong and built like a tank—able to take whatever I dished out while asking for more—but they demanded *everything* from me, their eyes turning black as they ordered me to go deeper and harder to fill them up.

Being into BDSM, Jadis also had the equipment; e.g., a throat collar that hooked to ankle shackles, rendering Jadis completely helpless (a human pretzel for me to fuck). They also had the body for it. Despite being a big girl (their weight tended to range from 240-270 pounds), they had unusually flexible hips and could put their legs behind their head without stretching. Once the shackles were in place, their legs pulled back and exposed their pussy to me, which they expected me to raw-dog like a good little girl. In that sense, they were like a vampire: able to command me with their eyes while being physically "helpless" (in truth, they had all the financial control, which undoubtedly gave their gaze and actions further weight against a woman who physically had no material agency and had been abused in the past).



(exhibit 39b: Source (AI "art"), top right: [Xenodochium](#); artist, top-middle and -right: [Isutoshi](#); bottom-middle and -right: [Low-Polydragon](#). For an idea of what Jadis was like, the top-left image was their body-type; the bottom-left/top-middle and -right image were their initial effects on me, comedy<sup>149</sup> included; and the bottom-middle and -right images were a close approximation of

<sup>149</sup> *Slut Girl* is a surprisingly funny-yet-biting satire of '90s Japanese office culture. In the 2003 book, *Manga: The Complete Guide*, Derek Guder writes, "The storylines are played up for comedic payoff, and you can't help but laugh [as] the characters' facial expressions liven up otherwise boring sex scenes." Other critics like Timothy Perper and Martha Cornog praise the expressive translation of the English edition, and describe Sayoko in "[Eroticism for the Masses](#)" [2002] as a "tsuya/yoen" woman, a complex figure with "voluptuous charm" and "bewitching beauty" who deals with sexual assault by weaponizing her slutty charms against her historical attackers. Perper and Cornog describe *Slut Girl* as being a satire on modern life, especially the role of women in the workplace, and a "long-enduring glass ceiling."

*the phenomenological experience of their increasingly baleful, demonic gaze.)*

I'd be lying if I said I didn't relish these rituals (and serving their chonky overseer) at first; Jadis tried harder in the beginning to impress me by actually being good in bed. I also think they were seeking a feeling of power in relation to their own abuse suffered at the hands of their narcissistic mother (again, swapping out a variety of masks to confuse me with; e.g., like Shang Tsung wearing the masks of his victims to act the hero with: "All these souls and you still don't have one of your own!"). However, the context between us was reactively abusive and became more exploitative over time. Not only I am hypersexual and gravitate towards sex when stressed or scared; I'm also eager to please, meaning I would have sex with Jadis just to calm them down (they were constantly hypervigilant and said as much); i.e., to stop them from glowering at me with their pitch-black eyes. Simply put, I wanted to be a good girl that Jadis regarded with love, not hate—*especially during sex!*

Jadis' arc was complex, as was mine and my scholarship in relationship to them. Long before I penned ludo-Gothic BDSM in a crystalized, doll-like form, they love-bombed me, pulling me close to them as quickly as they could; I participated, wanting to go to Florida (the reasons why having already been stated, here and during the manifesto). As time went on, Jadis not only abused me; they slowly pulled away and raped me from afar. Their estranged father had died roughly a month after Jadis turned 35, leaving them with a considerable amount of "fuck you" money and capital (dividends).

It was not a clean process. His ruined trailer had to be gutted, sorting the decades' worth of old, dusty records hoarded inside. Much of that "homecoming" was left to me, as Jadis piled everything inside our duplex before hiding themselves away (retreating from their childhood instead of facing it). As my book has expanded, I have given voice to this oddity and others besides; re: about Jadis' ex, Tim, who we were living with towards the end. Like sex, though, the build-up takes preparation, time and repeated execution to yield the best results (and is generally better with music, costumes and other "spices" that evoke feelings, memories and various other "spell-like," hard-to-explain-but-easy-to-feel phenomena).

Since July 22nd, 2022, the feverish pitch of writing this book—night after night, assembling the dreamlike "bricks" of paragraphs and images frantically plucked from the void—has become an ongoing attempt to heal and educate, breaking the cycle of systemic exploitation for all workers under Capitalism. As I hope the primer has illustrated up to this point, proletarian praxis starts with excavating the past as already created; i.e., from our zombie-like dreams of war and violence about older material variants, which gradually yield a more guided analysis of posterior reassemblies. Begot from older traumatic memories—e.g., Jadis in Florida, grad school, my remaining uncle, my stepfather, my father, the stories of the past I have consumed at each of these points from different literary

traditions with the same goal—all were Marx' nightmare (of the dead generations) made material in and from *my* flesh.

As trauma lives inside me and around me, I have become like the zombie: a being that houses and expresses systemic trauma from childhood onwards (emulating Jonathan Harker's journal that I, as child, used to read with voyeuristic delight; i.e., seeing my trauma and struggles in others, but also monster sex as something that I discovered was desirable to me from an early age). Accepting this role has opened my eyes; the point of this book, then, is to open your eyes, too. By yielding sex-positive expressions of trauma in the material world, you can expose the wider public to a Gothic imagination that liberates all workers from the state-corporate spell of neoliberal, hauntological brain death: Gothic-fueled class-to-cultural consciousness.

Of course, you might not live to see it, and it might show you how the world and those you care about aren't so rosy as you've been led to believe (re: Jadis); but it *can* be part of something better that materially survives and aids your future family and friends after you die—but also while you live to smaller, incremental degrees through your own creative successes and social-sexual habits: "To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition" ([source](#): Emerson's "What Is Success?" 1908). Sometimes, that means digging up a zombie or two, laying a flower or two on the cold graves kept warm by the buzzing bumble bee butts, getting at the blossoms laid there:



([source, Facebook post, Gardening Soul: August 21st, 2021](#))

Convicting Capitalism *is* redemptive in this respect. Like Jadis' awesome power over me, it wasn't infinite but *seemed* that way. If it was, then surely any case for fighting back would be pointless. Such as it happened, I *did* fight back; I escaped Jadis and made my way back home, the bad dream less ending in totally and more me finding agency among the trauma in and around me by creating ludo-Gothic BDSM

after surviving Jadis; i.e., as a means of understanding the world in ways that could

shape and change it through future friends I would make as a result; e.g., [Bay](#) and [Harmony](#) as drawn to my work for these reasons: having something in common as sluts and weird nerds touched by death, but still alive and able to talk constructively and creatively about it—to toy with it in a productive manner conducive to developing Gothic Communism. Ours is an outpouring of raped zombies, vampires and ghosts coming forward to testify against capital!

We have now concluded the meat of the original zombie apocalypse section and its discussions about humanizing zombies and sex toys; i.e., reversing abjection through the rememory of personal trauma (childhood abuse) by returning to Gothic spaces (the zombie *house*, returning without moving) and playing with them: to interrogate power in order to challenge profit and Capitalism Realism (versus the usual fatal nostalgia in neoliberal refrains; e.g., *Metroidvania*).



(artist: [William Blake](#))

Before we move onto ghosts and other forms of undead, though, I want to bridge the gap between dreams and sight (something of a poetic goal of the original manuscript I want to preserve here, in finalizing it). I want to include a part three to "Bad Dreams" concerning people *similar* to Jadis, but on a different poetic *scale*. To that, we'll be examining the larger-than-life as a legendary sort; i.e., the undead *tyrant* as something to see in dream-like spaces that take our criticisms of capital to a common place of remediation—the monomyth, and the various, ghostly echoes of Caesar as someone who douchebags nowadays are *still* trying to revive, millennia after his infamous demise<sup>150</sup>. Such overlords are commonly shown as ghosts (e.g., Hamlet's father's), but we'll be sticking to more corporal forms: Zombie Caesars (next page):

"With Caesar dead, Rome had moved from one crisis to the next," writes hoakley in "[A History of Rome in Paintings](#)" (2020). This includes Marx's "Eighteenth Brumaire"

<sup>150</sup> The Romans loved their numerals, but these extended into a numbered ordering of the universe under the cartographic language of conquest, per Cartesian thought; i.e., a returning to the stillness of "antiquity" as something the Enlightenment couldn't account for in its brutalizing of the world. We're left, then, with numerical extensions of the prime mover as the patriarch, the skeleton king in the same Cycle thereof: the ghost of "Rome," the Shadow of Pygmalion. Per the narrative of the crypt and its infernal concentric pattern (more on this when we look at *Metroidvania*), it's history stuck on loop; i.e., in material pursuit of glory as undead, eating itself. Except, time is a circle; when it comes back around, its might ghosts will there, waiting for us. We'll examine those next, in part three!

alluding to that tradition all dead generations weighing on our brains; i.e., that cyclical, historical-material matter of tragedy and farce we must rescue from itself: through ludo-Gothic BDSM as camping such spectres and supplanting them with far gayer forms than the usual heteronormative, Cartesian idiots bother to try (always scapegoating Medusa instead of Caesar)!

Keeping with the original poetic flavor of the Humanities primer and its assorted key phrases I only partially stuck to while editing and expanding on things, we'll explore "sight" as a critical poetic trope in the "Seeing Dead People" subchapter (when we examine the undead's universal feeding mechanism beyond just zombies), and the notion of reviving the zombie future more fully at the end of the primer (and volume).

Here, though, I want to introduce both ideas—to flirt with them a little through another concept we'll explore constantly throughout the rest of the book: reverse abjection as a process vital to Gothic Communism. Its subversion of zombie enterprises remains important, but especially the chronotope of undead war and its "fallen lords," whose tyrannical, dynastic power exchange spawns endless zombie tyrants—e.g., generals, skeleton kings, masters of the universe, and ghostly "fathers," etc—that help spread a blinding "false" vision of imaginary history.

To subvert Capitalist Realism, this history (and its fearful inheritance/failed memory of the decaying nation-state) *must* be challenged; those who cannot face, thus play and learn from history (and its Wisdom of the Ancients) are doomed to repeat it—i.e., as a matter of hauntology per the shadow of "Rome," of "Caesar," of "Pygmalion," etc (from Volume One):

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 ([source](#)).

As we shall see with the monomyth, these virtues manifest in the zombie tyrant; i.e., as a likeness of Caesar being largely one of mythology that, while largely invented, still dovetails unto fascist goals in service to capital (and tokenism) nonetheless: through neoliberal media, but especially movies and videogames, as having exploded in that era. They become undead as a matter of history in the Gothic sense of the world—in ways that further the process of abjection to maintain Capitalist Realism through castles and tyrants (castle-narrative, *vis-à-vis* Bakhtin's chronotope: dynastic primacy and hereditary rites) as monstrous, poetic, useful to the state as preserving itself through them *and* giving the game away as a matter of cryptonymy (the scapegoat and the symptom to a larger problem): Caesar's ghost haunts capital as decaying towards a former time of invented greatest.

As we shall see, Capitalism is a Big Zombie that foists its own charge of cannibalism onto its victims, which it then polices through tokenization as a matter of criminogenic conditions: divide and conquer amongst empire eating itself, when the chickens come home to roost!

*Concerning "ludo-Gothic BDSM"/medieval poetics after this point: **Ludo-Gothic BDSM** as I coined it remains utterly central to my work; i.e., having traced its evolution to where it presently exists, I've since tried very hard to mention different instructional points for you to consider moving forwards; e.g., dolls and rape play in the "Bad Dreams" chapter, so far, as well as the "Another Castle, Another Princess"/"[Playing with Dead Things](#)" chapter before that (in Volume Two, part one). Per the cryptonymy and hauntology processes—i.e., informing abjection as something to forward or reverse inside various spaces, including chronotopes like the *Metroidvania*—ludo-Gothic BDSM takes on many different shapes and sizes. Keeping all of this in mind, ludo-Gothic BDSM will still come up quite a bit; i.e., throughout the rest of the *Undead Module* and the entirety of the *Demons Module*.*



(artist: [Lil Wolfy 69](#))

*As for the five medieval poetic terms from Volume Two, part one (**selective***



*absorption, magical assembly, Gothic maturity, confusion of the senses, and the Song of Infinity*), they won't come up very often. Simply put, you won't need to know them to learn the rest of the primer's historical elements, but you can take and use them yourselves when engaging with the history inside; i.e., by applying my more recent poetically instructional arguments to older monstrous histories, said arguments being founded on the principles of sex positivity and Gothic Communism that I've championed since the start of this project, nearly two years ago (and based on older research feeding into the present): the liberation of sex workers through iconoclastic art. However you want to synthesize that outcome, you'll have plenty of toys with play with!

Last but not least, here are several additional exhibits to give you a taste of what we'll explore in "Bad Dreams," part three. —Perse



(exhibit 39c1: Top-left: Balor, the central villain from Bungie's Myth: the Fallen Lords, 1997; bottom-left: Anubis, from The Ronin Warriors; top-right, artist: Michael Broussard, of the villainous Engineers from Ridley Scott's Prometheus, 2012.

*Neoliberalism crams fascism, Communism and queerness into the same poetic space. This being said, a common thread for all these canonical examples is decayed hauntology tied to the zombie tyrant, often a giant wearing armor and a helmet [e.g., Hamlet's father's beavered, medieval helm]. Balor is a kind of fascist, "Zombie Caesar" [zombie Nazis being a whole zombie sub-genre] that rises from the grave to destroy the degenerate West as its former "greatest champion." He's an action figure.*

*Removing his helmet, the greatest horror is that Balor is not rotted at all. Instead, his outward appearance is entirely human and he follows his own maxims to their logical conclusion: slay the enemy as a matter of coming home to empire. The same goes for Scott's Engineers, their nightmarish armor concealing a worryingly human appearance. Not only were Scott's story and monsters partially modeled after Lovecraft's take on the Promethean quest, At the Mountains of Madness; both stories borrowed liberally from Shelley's 1818 palimpsest, Frankenstein. Yet, Scott inverts the scheme somewhat, having the marbled, statuesque appearance of the classical-looking Engineers become gradually warped by a mad science buried deep in the cold reaches of outer space [versus Antarctica in Lovecraft or Shelley's books]. Slowly the Promethean knowledge turns these false gods "mad," technophobically represented by their bodies as darkly cybernetic—almost stitched together like Victor's manmade Creature.*

*Apart from their bodies, both Balor and the Engineers have canonical zombie eyes, utterly blinded by an endless pursuit of "progress" that brings the Imperial Boomerang back home out of an uncertain past stitched crudely together [the more undead something is, the more "stuck" it is in a traumatized, corpse-like body; the more demonic, the more something can change its shape]. Anubis, meanwhile, serves an undead emperor out of an equally nebulous former time, bringing the warring states period into a Westernized, 1980s Japan: the return of the Shogunate again. Yet, the shock at realizing Anubis is human offers the protagonist fighting him hope: "You're a man, a human being like us!"*

*For Anubis, though, the revelation is painful, his helmet being cut from around his head, revealing a surprisingly pretty face and girlish, red, long-flowing hair. The process of reverse abjection opens his eyes, turning him away from war and his undead master and placing him on a path of peace. Unfortunately he dies, as does Balor and the Engineers; regardless of their stations on the battlefield, the state reduces all of them to undead fodder.)*



(exhibit 39c2: [Dragon Ball](#) [has an absurd premise that is easily camped](#) [dbzking541's "The Funniest DBZ Dub I Have Ever Seen," 2016]. Its canon still rolls

The Modern Prometheus into *The Iliad*, presenting the zombie tyrant king as trapped between father-and-son according to man-made, unnatural husbandries: the Divine Right of Kings and the imperial relationship of master and slave, but also the cruelty of a bully patriarch-god towards his bizarre, man-made children: the archaic male baby as a killer child for state forces stemming from *Beowulf* into the present through hauntological regeneration; i.e., as undead/composite but also able to change its shape like Cú Chulainn's *ríastrad*, aka "warp spasm"; or Milton's Lucifer gradually shedding his angelic form to turn into a variety of animals—a demon, in other words.

The result, in this case, is canonical [unlike Milton]: a father-mother with delusions of grandeur, but also his child as an infantile slave with daddy issues rising to become a great warrior renowned for his inherited, informed cruelty [which would play out in real life with Reinhard Heydrich being known as "the young, evil god of death"; [source](#): *Behind the Bastards*, 2023]. Just as the Nazi, the Communist and the queer are crammed together in the same shadow zone of centrist monomyths, the likes of Cell and Broly [above] are unthinking, childlike slaves taught to seek revenge by an absentee father figure: the scientist and the rival warlord seeking revenge. There is no mother in their lives and they are immediately and incredibly fragile creations desperately seeking fulfillment through patricidal revenge, but also combat against a cycle of warriors who are equally flawed.

*In other words, the show's much ado about nothing is built within and around a shonen-level crisis of masculinity for said crisis: to show and prove their strength for their fathers ["Look what I can do!"]. Even if they kill or otherwise hate their fathers, these lost boys are useless without them and driven by the taught seeking of bloodshed to appease their inherited idea of vampiric superhumanity. Deprived of the parent, "It is with considerable difficulty that I remember the original era of my being; all the events of that period appear confused and indistinct" becomes, "If you will comply with my conditions, I will leave them and you at peace; but if you refuse, I will glut the maw of death, until it be satiated with the blood of your remaining friends" [[source](#)]. Except the negotiation is made to a captive audience under duress, themselves trained to kill and fight as "less" genocidal variants of the Great Destroyer's cataclysmic, hellish tantrums: Broly either killing his father in a self-destructive fit of rage or misled by Freiza to rise up out of Hell's green fire like a loving and dutiful demonic son.*

*I originally decided when I wrote, "[Dragon Ball Super: Broly](#) - Is it Gothic?" that the film wasn't Gothic, but I feel like I was overlooking the liminality of its situation:*

*Broly is a highly-weaponized survivor, not unlike older, murderous, Gothic villains. However, the similarities mostly stop there. He is not a slasher like Victor Frankenstein's Creature was, or his various counterparts. While the Creature was physically hideous, Broly is, for all intents and purposes, handsome (a throwback to the likes of Robert E. Howard's titular Conan the Barbarian). The Creature was brilliant; while not an idiot, Broly isn't a rocket scientist, either. There is parental strife, though. Remnants of the father are passed down the same bloodline, signified by the collar around Broly's neck. Broly isn't allowed to be himself, any more than Vegeta was under the yolk of Freiza. Is this like Frankenstein's monster, or the xenomorph? Not quite. Unlike them, Broly isn't simply made; he's raised by his father to be violent. Except Paragus' quest largely fails: Broly isn't violent; his monstrous side is. And therein lies a clear divide. Broly is only a monster when driven to grief, when his father is killed. Furthermore, his own drama stems not from the bad parentage read about in [Frankenstein](#) (1818). Unlike the Creature, Broly is not begot from Promethean science, nor is he driven by petty revenge. He's naturally strong, loves his father no matter what, and remains totally innocent post-abuse (thanks to amnesia)—effectively the opposite of the Creature [[source](#)].*

*I don't think it's a question of opposites altogether, though—with the Creature being similarly trapped by bad parentage to be violent according to his father as both his worst enemy and the one person he believed who could bring him salvation [even if it meant destroying him, a mistake that proved fatal for all those involved]. There are differences, but these variants aren't mutually exclusive; they*

are agglutinative. Whether Broly kills Paragus outright or avenges him, Paragus was still a terrible father who—like Cus D'Amato with Mike Tyson—trained his son to do one thing: to fight for a perfidious, Faustian father figure's benefit [or like Peter Weyland or Victor Frankenstein, created a robotic/cyborg slave entity to do his bidding]. This is bad parentage any way you slice it; i.e., "I'm your father, boy, and you'll do as you're told!"



[Artist, far-mid-left: [Imbisibol](#); bottom-mid-left: [Tonami Kanji](#)]

The ghost of the tyrannical father is trapped somewhere in time, threatening like Skynet's Herculean T-800/T-1000 to rip into the present out of another destroyed past-future: one possible future as a hauntological death omen. Amid this Gothic pastiche, the dead future is full of the imprecise echoes of the Modern Prometheus: test-tube babies, brains in jars, cyborgs, genetically engineered Supermen, children weaponized accidentally or deliberately for or against their fathers by said fathers, and "retroactive abortions" of the animate-inanimate golem; i.e., the killing of the child by the father, Abraham-style, before he can grow old enough to seek revenge when coming home.

The idea of the archaic baby is quite popular in Toriyama's work, but also seen in the work of similar Japanese artists riffing within the same East-meets-West mythic structure; i.e., Shigesato Itoi's Giygas [exhibit 60e2], but also Akira Kitamura and Keiji Inafune's Dr. Light/Wily as a conflation of the evil/grey-area/good German scientist [Operation Paperclips' Wernher von Braun, Oppenheimer and Alfred Einstein, etc] as a pre-fascist/Catholicized scapegoat and anti-Semitic trope [note the purple and red, above, but also the cartoon skull codpiece] whose monstrous-feminine super soldier is both the vengeful ghost of the fascist child and that of Jewish revenge [re: "If you prick us do we not bleed? ... And if you wrong us shall we not revenge?"] smashed together during the crossing space-time fabrics of half-

*real geopolitics: Protoman and Zero both being children of Cain as much as Sigma, our Zombie Caesar/Dracula [with his own flowing red cape] is; and Cell being an uncanny cross between the human and the insect, but also the goblin and the vampire as—like the xenomorph before him—a time-traveling, shape-shifting, undead menace composed of many different stigmas and biases, but also worship of non-Western/non-heteronormative power and resistance.*

*Just as with the Creature and Victor, the haunting by Marx is incessant; i.e., of Broly by Paragus or Cell by Dr. Gero's "obey me!" mentality and Red Ribbon stigma [Toriyama's neoliberal framing of anything "Red" as villainous to Japan's post-Occupation emulation, above]. By extension, Red Scare is incessant, the son a pile of offal turned into Achilles [with a similar emotional temperament] or even Alucard by Lord Dracula in Netflix' 2017 Castlevania. In turn, the father is symbolized through a gender-swap for a popular image of undeath normally reserved for Medusa, but also the dragon lord when slain: the disembodied head that can still talk into the "son's" ear [placed in quotes due to the unnatural, unreliable relationship between the two; i.e., "I am your father!" as the tyrant's plea made famous in the 20th century by Luke from Vader. It's the Shadow of Pygmalion lurking within the shonen variant of the Cycle of Kings].*



*[artist, left and right: Bernie Wrightson]*

*In Frankenstein, the story is a murder-suicide, enacted by the zombie son shambling towards the father-mother in an act of childhood revenge the double-parent first dreams about before sculpting his child [re: Zeus pulling Metis from his forehead]. Alucard, by comparison, does not want to kill his father, Dracula, who had sex with Alucard's mom to have a, by and large, natural birth tainted by blood libel and pre-fascist coding. But the reckoning felt during the fatal return to his childhood home [something he does repeatedly throughout the franchise] is always traumatic to Alucard. It's also [as we shall see next and in the Demon Module] dangerous: sometimes the house wins.)*

## Bad Dreams, part three: the Monomyth and Cycle of Kings; or, "Perceptive Zombie Eyeballs": Paralyzing Zombie Tyrants with Reverse Abjection (and Other Gothic Theories)

*"And now I, Skeletor, am Master of the Universe!"*

—Skeletor, *Masters of the Universe* (1987)



(exhibit 40a1a1: Frank Langella camps up the skeleton lord with the performance of a lifetime, doing so in a doomed production that barely got finished—and all to make his child [who loved the *He-Man* toys and cartoons<sup>151</sup>] happy. Similar to *Dracula*, Skeletor's top priority is moody Shakespearean theatrics that steal the show from the boring male stoic: a queer death clown hamming it up as

*best he can. But his appetite knows no bounds, driving the story to repeat itself through a trademark, ghoulish hunger emblematic of the monomyth-as-zombie.)*

Per the process of abjection, the middle class canonize the raping of nature, treating it as monstrous-feminine through the ghost of the counterfeit; i.e., as something to punch, doing so in monomythic language that moves money through nature (repeating the grim harvest). As such, the undead become things to do battle with in some shape or form, as monomythic. Be that doll or dollhouse, castle or tyrant, they reify in magical, poetic forms that never quite existed, but whose rapacious, faux-medieval histories increasingly exist between reality and imagination, onstage and off: childhood as something to revisit in service to profit. The *monomyth* is the zombie "Bad Dreams," part three will be looking at.

For all the usual size difference (next page) and Numinous elements, such things are canonically summoned to ultimately conquer by returning things to order—but not before teasing Radcliffe's naughty-naughty demon lovers unto a ready-and-waiting (classically white female) readership: "rape" as a theatrical, highly creative means of playing with such mechanisms of desire as historical-material byproducts of genuine exploitation. It's a disco, a monster party that

<sup>151</sup> "A lot of people talk to me about Skeletor, which is one of my favorite parts. They always say, 'Did you feel like you were slumming?' And I say, absolutely not. My son was four years old. And I wanted him to see his father as Skeletor. And I loved playing it. It's really one of my favorite parts, still" ([source](#): Jenelle Riley's "Frank Langella on *Trial of the Chicago 7*, Being Skeletor and His Legacy," 2020).

hyphenates castle and occupant as divided into various binaries that must then be rejoined during Gothic Communism; i.e., abjuring rape through bad, Lewis-style echoes of itself, camping the nuclear-family-as-castle (the tyrannical husband as site of rape forecast by his oversized house) normally prone to the concealment of genocide (thus rape). If there's a castle, there's cryptonymy as a matter of rape, of genocide, of police abuse, etc.

To reclaim the cryptonymy process, we must camp it. To that, Persephone (the deity or me) *likes* being "raped"; i.e., as a campy means of Gothic play that *challenges* state edicts through paradoxical attractions thwarting abjection. "[Don't fear the reaper](#)"; dance in the ruins, because big castle equals big "rape," pointing ever and always to capital under *Pax Americana* (the state) as the true and ultimate rapist.



(artist: [Sabine Esmeray](#))

So far, parts one and two of "Bad Dreams" have focused on the apocalypse; i.e., in accordance with the Imperial Boomerang and worker rememory as a forgotten humanizing process: the return of the living dead to devour the present inside itself, regarding the "mingling" of far-off places and interpersonal relationships across space-time. Part three shall now consider **the monomyth** and its tyrants extending the historical-material framework backwards and forwards.

The usual dualities persist, of course, involving canon as something to parry and iconoclastically subvert inside the usual grandiose stories—of the state-as-undead vs undead workers. One fundamentally searches

for "victory" as a matter of total, blind revenge ("an eye for an eye") against nature and death as a natural event, going the way of Caesar as a ghost thereof. The other offers "blindness" as paradoxically *more* perceptive; i.e., it becomes a question of zombie eyeballs that, far from being the kinds of "blank parody" that uphold capital (re: Jameson), freeze the cycles of return inside the same theatres, performances, and "rapes." Placed in quotes, these offer a playful means of yielding more empathetic ways of looking at the world, having already been divided for



conquest by capital: as undead, which in turn, *freeze* the mechanisms of capital—its tyrants forever coming home to roost—in place.

For the next six pages, we'll go over some basic historical points about camping rape to challenge the monomyth with; then, we'll provide the subchapter synopsis per section (with links).

To that, there's far too many devices at play during the monomyth to focus simply on *one* of them. Instead, I want to combine the previous ideas (and to a lesser extent, ludo-Gothic BDSM<sup>152</sup>) while focusing on the poetic *history* of reversing abjection (and Athena's Aegis): as a matter of monomythic theatre that also includes chronotopes (castles), revolutionary cryptonymy and emancipatory hauntologies (spectres of Marx).

Our aim is to catalog different poetic devices (e.g., the chronotope during the liminal hauntology of war as a cryptonymic feature to subvert state revivals with) that have *already* chilled the process of abjection and its kings, accounting for their ongoing creative histories' complex (class-to-culture war) matter of interplay touching on the usual ultimatums: of undead *heroes* constantly coming home to roost under capital; i.e., as a matter of historical materialism being a half-real enterprise, one whose legendary returns—of the old, undead kings or nightly emperors—normally operate as a matter of prophecy integral to the *canonical* monomyth: "all our yesterdays" making the elite bank, inside the Torment Nexus raping workers and nature till the cows come home.

Such hellish recursions and regression always yield *some* kind of damned patriarchal wraith inside the Cycle of Kings, all while Cartesian thought preys on nature-as-food and monstrous-feminine<sup>153</sup> through police forces and bread-and-circus-style distractions; i.e., raping nature behind the usual half-veils. The world

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<sup>152</sup> As previously stated, ludo-Gothic BDSM was something I coined *after* writing the majority of Volume Two, part two. It would be difficult to insert the idea into all of these pages without completely transforming their main purpose (cataloging poetic histories). So the term—a violent souvenir from my time with Jadis—will haunt these pages after the fact (or before the fact, if you consider I was always drawn to weird traumatic things); i.e., ludo-Gothic BDSM will come up intermittently from here on out—will be on my mind as I proofread these older portions of the primer again—but won't be forcefully integrated into these older historical writings beyond the degree I already have in "Bad Dreams," parts two and part one (and the "[Playing with Dead Things](#)" chapter written for Volume Two, part one and its initial release).

Much of the primer from here on out, then, focuses on the history of poetics, not their poetic application (though we will try to include aspects of that as we move through the rest of the modules).

<sup>153</sup> From Volume One:

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 ([source](#)).

becomes an oyster to pry apart, a peach to slice. In turn, pro-state workers pacify through menticide, the eyes growing empathetically blind, the brain increasingly dead and the body increasingly numb to state tortures. Following this, state servants (and victims that give or receive state harm) sight the usual portals for destruction as sown into the land, the flesh, the work as things to personify and reap (thus rape) all over again.



(artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#))

Camping said rape is always a juggling act, and arbitration is always, to some degree, a random ordeal. For one, said history and its ritualized "solving" (through monomythic violence) discuss/argue a matter of return in imaginary territories that thrust upon the actual as altered through iconoclastic performance; i.e., a subversion of rape through a pedagogy of the oppressed that lies entirely in how you look at and with it, during liminal expression—zombie eyeballs as blind *or* perceptive regarding the state's resurrecting of undead torments set on new territories: inside old, colonized lands, bodies (and parts of bodies) or any other representations of the colonized at large! The normalized outcome, then, is unironic exploitation: the land and its inhabitants becoming the usual peach to harvest (above), raping Medusa (from any angle, the front or the back) by the same old hauntological copies of Caesar/fascism, whose eyes are blind inside neoliberal treatments of *those* spectres<sup>154</sup>! Camping said rape is a *planetary* struggle, then, one whose reclamation is performed in small through our bodies and labor during the dialectic of the alien; i.e., as something to see, but also see *with* between stories: "We have been raped (and lied to) over and over again."

In doing so onstage, such calculated risks showcase liberation as liminal offstage as well; i.e., something to conceptualize through abstractions of rape that yield sex-positive lessons informed by older histories we're acting out once more: possible worlds starting as imaginary sites that threaten change as a furious ordeal, a death rattle that refuses to stop, but breathes into dead things fresh, impossible life! "Come and see. Let the scales fall from your eyes."

<sup>154</sup> E.g., Tulpa from *The Ronin Warriors* (exhibit 41a) literally being a ghost of the Shogunate, which the show treats as something to exorcise in *defense* of capital in neoliberal Japan; i.e., Capitalist Realism.



(exhibit 40a1a2a: Model and artist, top-middle: [Harmony Corrupted](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#). Harmony and I camp rape, leaning into the raping of nature as something to subvert through ourselves and our labor. Its materials work towards revolution; i.e., as a matter of rape play the world can learn from for the better! Trauma is acknowledged, but then stalled in future iterations by freezing the usual harvesters of nature

by humanizing the victim [the harvest] and expressing the rapist as the monster who cannot stand the exposed reality to their crimes. "Rape" becomes a story to put into quotes, telling per piece what happened, once-upon-a-time, but also how it can change through later retellings of itself that yield new poetic histories build upon older ones [re: Lewis' bad echoes].



[artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#)]

For Harmony and myself, medievalism becomes a forward-facing regression, one whose 21st century Neo-Gothic yields cryptonymy as a revolutionary device: showing and hiding to challenge manufactured scarcity as the usual historical-material effect. "Rape," then, becomes a paradoxical means of retelling our own destruction; i.e., as a taboo voice for

psychosexual healing from police violence, developing good praxis through a pedagogy of the oppressed, one whose poetic excursions into a given "castle" synthesize new, oft-substantial forms thereof. All occur if to say to the audience, "Open wide!" with that fat zombie ass: "Rape me. 'Fuck me in the ass if you love Jesus!'" Such theatrical sodomies unto Medusa is not actually ass rape, but touch on the Numinous terror such threats might normally supply to victims like her by the state; i.e., yet-another-thing to achieve liberation with using ludo-Gothic BDSM, exposing our abuse while playing with bad copies of it on the edge, so to speak, of our seats [to achieve systemic catharsis]: the mystery of a Numinous destroyer

ravishing Medusa, the latter pushing the "rape me" button to call upon her strong-thighed lancer.

Any Gothacist should live through their vocations, we doing our gold-star best to escape the text as a mere instrument of capital, thus Capitalist Realism [e.g., [The Modern Martial Artist](#) perpetually trapped inside the boxing ring as a source for profit, not critique<sup>155</sup>]. In doing so, the usual **confusion of the senses**, **selective absorption**, and **magical assembly** give rise to a **Song of Infinity** whose **Aegis** becomes something to stare into but also with; i.e., in both directions, reconciling old pains as a matter of fresh history through unspeakable things. These, in turn, become undeniably tangible during the rememory process: Milton's darkness visible an enormous, thundering and shapely mise-en-abyme that becomes the data to yield, time and time again! Its delicious corruptions sit adjacent to harm, camping our survival while honoring those who didn't as commodified by the state. When illustrating mutual consent, then, linguo-material elements of ambiguity always endure, and whose skillful, intuitive [second-nature] parsing must be raised across society's understanding of the imaginary past—its rape a new Wisdom of the Ancients to learn and learn from.

This isn't always the wail of the banshee in total agony absent of pleasure or brains [the madwoman in the attic], but something of a curious mixture of the two that seeks to challenge profit, thus rape, as historically administered by the state: through half-veiled threats of the tyrant coming back around. Like "Rome," "Caesar" is the end of history as something to reinvent in so many doubles of the original, so many counterfeits furthering the process of abjection in service to a scared middle class. We find catharsis camping those, Persephone-style, to grow rebellious again; i.e., as princesses who have been raped, thus find our power where it normally resides: within fiction speaking to non-fiction. "We're living in Gothic times."

To critique power thus reclaim it, you must go where it is; reclamation is always, to some degree, a matter of rape play through Gothic poetics making arguments for liberation using violent aesthetics; e.g., the castle: a half-real chronotope to walk around inside, and one whose buried, dialectical-material aspects of power [rape under Capitalism rarefied cryptonymically as "castle" or "knight"] become monomythically dream-like. Once dispersed, such particles discharge to float around, bouncing back and forth like Walpole's animated curios. Inadequacy and disempowerment become, as usual, a means of empowerment during ludo-Gothic BDSM: topping from below, like Milton's Satan. "Long is the way and hard, that out of Hell leads up to light!" Or maybe the darkness is more fun [such play is often a byproduct of emergent play as intended by the text's composers, architects to the structure as something to explore in ways they cannot predict, thus police].)

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<sup>155</sup> Which can eventually shift from canon to outright conspiracy as dancing between commodity and camp; i.e., a potential means of grift; e.g., [the "birds aren't real" movement](#) (Vice, 2022), or flat-earth. Dogma, it generally goes, is applied to the masses by those who usually know better.

Like any zombie, the problem of state predation is one of canon-induced "bad sight"; i.e., a fundamental question of dream-like resurrection, one where sight becomes faulty by monomythical illusions that encourage police violence as a matter of regulating sex, terror and force, morphological expression, etc. Such monopolies always promise the tyrant's return to resurrect itself—of seeing the thing upon which to feed and transfer power towards the state as a matter of canon: "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's." It's all a lie, tribute boiling down to protection rackets by the imperium preying on the local benefactors (the middle-class nightmare of state collapse): orderly disposal per settler colonialism's war of extermination turned in on itself.



([source](#): Bungie)

Luckily for us, such problems concern the reversing of abjection (and other Gothic theories) through zombie eyeballs that—far from divorcing themselves from their blind brethren—must engage with them in order to break the myopia of Capitalist Realism: a blindness the state normally relies on, which

for workers constitutes a kind of reawakening through the undead as taking Hell *back*. Our "rape" onstage becomes something to consume, waking workers up to far-off realities that can be felt easily enough at home, mid-cryptonymy. There is always a castle to interrogate, a tyrant to dethrone, a queen to crown herself through the poetic catharsis of "rape," of speaking out; the secret lies in what we consume as a matter of playing with rape to transform it: camping canon as a matter of profit, of rape, of the state's usual flowing of power in the usual directions (always up, with lulls through decay raking profit back into the state's troves, post-regeneration: a war chest)!

As shall hopefully become obvious, the methods to reversing abjection use Gothic theory as a matter of history-in-the-making party to a forever process: *camping* the monomyth. Older poetics like Milton or Blake (with Harmony reading *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, next page) continue to seize upon these thresholds to open the doors of perception; i.e., as a matter of zombie eyeballs, where said doors have become increasingly pacifying as a matter of Capitalist Realism. This means we must camp our own rapes as the old poets did, but under

conditions that have developed for the worse in ways they only predicted using the language of their times borrowed from older and older poets.

To that, the Wisdom of the Ancients is a *continuation* of that thieving poetic trend, one that borrows liberally from the past as yielding different kinds of undead for different purposes; i.e., using the same old histories and historical elements once transformed, including the human body (and its social-sexual labor) as the almighty authors of such things! There's an element of raw, naked bravery to such



rebellion—an assistant to an artist going hand-in-hand towards a better future built on past "rapes" (as much as rapes *without* the quotes); the courage lies in facing its exposure, clapping back to challenge state tyranny in canonical poetic histories, the latter fatally doubling our Aegises—i.e., in the mirror state as one of endless conflict: between each mask, costume or veil as looking back and forth. It's how we roll, bitches!

(artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#))

Medusa cannot be killed, any more than the state can—only driven to submission in either direction inside the usual shadow zones (until state shift, that is). The camping (and regained perception) of zombies

(and their eyeballs), then, has a long history to it, one we shall now catalog and (to a lesser extent) camp in this subchapter (this emphasis will shift, in Volume Three) regarding monomythic zombies (and because we're talking about tyrants, castles).

As such, we're essentially talking about Gothic theatre, including kayfabe, as a matter of performative, imaginary history to look at/with (marrying the language of war and death, rape and love, food and refuse, etc); i.e., reviving fascist leaders that point to older instances of the same monomyth revivals elsewhere before and after the Third Reich; e.g., M. Bison (next page) being yet-another Nazi king zombie merged with Melmoth the Wandering Jew as the very backstabber Germany's fascists warned against: themselves projected onto their victims, mid-Red-Scare. Per canon, this undead element of capital becomes something to revive,

*Frankenstein*-style; i.e., in service to profit, *vis-à-vis* pre-fascist, fascist, and post-fascist forms inside neoliberal markets (videogames)!



([source: StreetFighter.com](http://StreetFighter.com))

In turn, this cannibalism's cycle of conquest loops in on itself, becoming something ouroborotic to expose like a black mirror. This happens less through overt comedy/camp (or "true camp," [per Jean Claude Van Damme and the truly amazing 1994 movie](#)) and

more through serious theatre with the power to camp canon in subtler ways; i.e., whose performances of death and disaster seem cyclically harmful, but actually have the subversive, non-harmful power to paralyze, thus pause and eventually transform, Cartesian dogma (and its tokenized elements): into actual stewards of nature, of workers, of either as monstrous-feminine food that Capitalism, once frozen, can no longer eat.

This being said, horror *is* a serial affair and introduces or removes irony per entry even without numbers. The zombie genre is certainly known for its comedies and spoofs—every tired genre is, requiring comedy to inject life into dead things; i.e., from Matthew Lewis onwards; e.g., *Shaun of the Dead* and *Dead-Alive*<sup>156</sup> (1992). [Part zero](#) briefly examines *Mandy* (2018) as monomythic pastiche *par excellence* (with elements of camp) married to Lovecraftian homophobia, futile revenge and substance abuse. The remainder of the subchapter examines the function of sight as a Promethean, reverse-abjecting factor in against three zombie monomyth tyrant types in three primary texts over two parts

- [Part one](#) covers **the Cartesian hero/man-of-reason** and its Metroidvania<sup>157</sup> offshoots (all stemming from *Frankenstein*): the decayed man of reason versus the Archaic Mother during movement through the hauntological castle; i.e., castle-narratives.

<sup>156</sup> Aka, *Braindead*. [While certainly a hilarious movie](#) ("Step aside, sonny. I kickass FOR THE LORD!" \*organ music plays\*), Peter Jackson's penchant for slapstick black comedy is haunted by the usual ghost of the counterfeit, insofar as he remains unapologetic and afraid of the usual things amid a settler-colonial islander's fortress mentality.

<sup>157</sup> Metroidvania is a topic from Volume Zero we'll revisit repeatedly in part two of "Monomyth": regarding the Numinous as monstrous-feminine, whose ghostly echo on maps-of-conquest involve Metroidvania as a *cryptomimetic* process (whose ghostly maps we'll also reconsider in the ["Seeing Dead People"](#) subchapter).

- [Part two](#) features the **crime lord** in *The Crow* (1994) and the Caesar-style **warlord**/fascist cult of death, in *Myth: the Fallen Lords*.



(artist: [Els](#))

After those, [part three](#) concludes the entire section; concludes the entire section; i.e., discussing how *Capitalism* is the great zombie, one that through its endless undead wars and decayed power fantasies haunting Capitalist Realism! Regardless of *what* form the tyrant takes when we freeze them in place, it's always an undead extravaganza, a monomyth monster party to make the old mattress squeak as postcolonial (fucking to metal, to disco, to rock 'n roll, as turbulent, taboo, "rapacious" and fun); i.e., decolonizing the Gothic through seasons in the abyss that *challenge* profit using our own "beauteous orbs" (next page), but really anything that gives off the Medusa's trademark "big" vibes: undead and monstrous-feminine in ways that resist censorship, but also *transgress*<sup>158</sup> it in all the usual places of monomythic rape. As I write in Volume Zero:

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 ([source](#)).

Per the monomyth, a hero is classically incentivized by rape as the prize—to boldly go into "Hell" as place on Earth, then execute the state's will; i.e., settler-colonial violence dressed up as "past"; e.g., a carrot-like princess in exchange for killing Medusa (the monstrous-feminine) to, per Cartesian thought, prey on nature-as-food but also themselves. Regardless of the giver or recipient, all present an opportunity to move money through nature.

But even if all capitalists *were* dead as a matter of proposal, the warzone and its derelict ordinance would still remain: the Gothic castle as an undead mind

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<sup>158</sup> This book, for example, is basically impossible to advertise on official platforms; i.e., by virtue of its naked critical nature, but also bared-and-exposed approach to rape play challenging profit as normally raping the monstrous-feminine behind cryptonyms. We take those back and show them what they are.

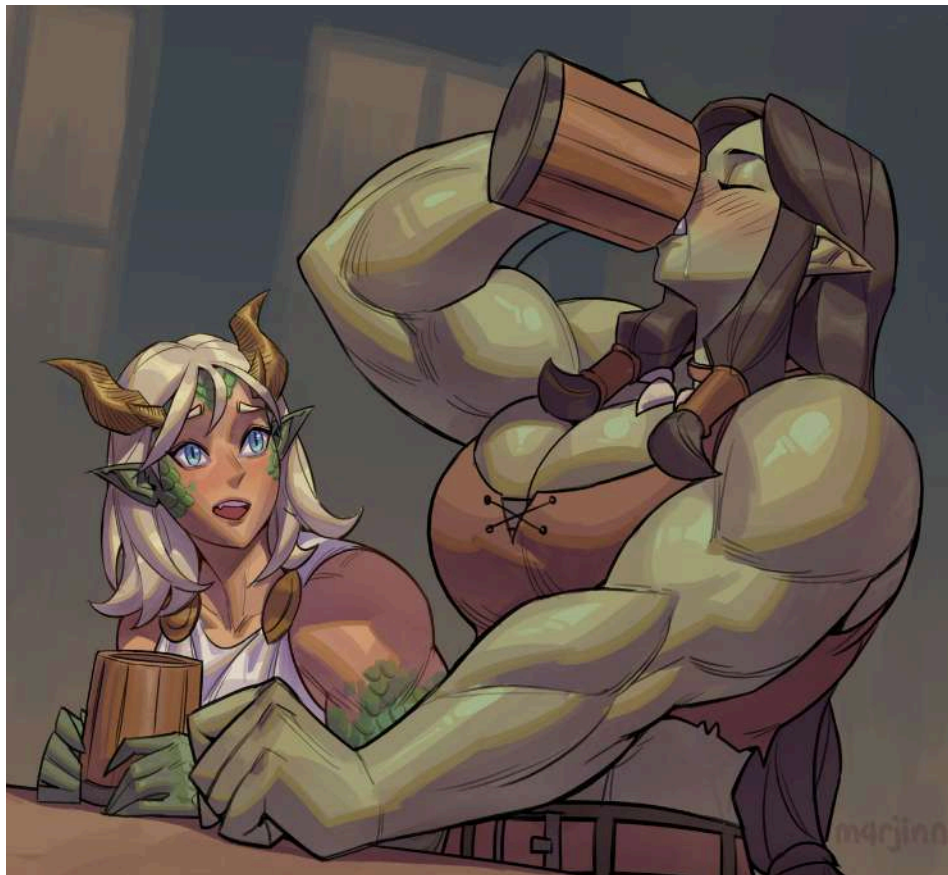


prison. Stuck cannibalizing itself, we'll pointedly examine this curiosity with Metroidvania, but also open battlefields when looking at different monomythic undead (the crime lord, and warlords aping Zombie Caesar). Whatever the form, wherever the field (open or closed space), such actions are generally guided by inheritance anxiety feeling the fears of self-made extinction; i.e., insofar as the buffer of settler-colonial walls and projections (of ample "treasure," below) become false (thus fruitless) harvests that, suitably grim, cannot fully conceal or disguise the state's usual operations.

In short, Medusa must always "pay rent," but the "cake" (the waifu, next page, or wheyfu, below<sup>159</sup>) is always a lie: the illusory promise of marital sex. Such dreams are woefully common under Capitalism, insofar as capital foists the conditions necessarily for wanting them (the manufacture trifecta) onto workers; i.e., as a matter of Gothic history in *service* to the state, scaring you with

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<sup>159</sup> Medieval language and power fantasies are all fine and well to confront our troubles with, provided they don't become a means of escape that, all too often, has tokenized potential; e.g., orc-style Amazons having an added racialized element to their traitorous status; re: Jadis and their bad BDSM, Amazon-style raping of me being emblematic of the same dualities we must struggle to reclaim in art. The subjugated Hippolyta sits on a herbo waifu's tightrope, her greenface a kind of vaudeville when played or produced in bad faith (not that the artist below is, but simply that liberation and exploitation always and forever occupy the same poetic spaces).



(artist: [M4rjinn](#))

cataclysm, then offering the cure: a mommy equipped with the god-like goods to even out such nightmares (whatever the audience wants those to be, but generally under a Male, heteronormative/tokenized gaze).

Although reversing abjection *is* our goal when camping the monomyth, it cannot happen without revolutionary cryptonymy. So let's unpack that concept a little more (about six pages) before moving onto *Mandy* and part zero.



(artist, left: [Zaloran](#); right: [Romantic Rose](#))

Canonical rewards promise big things to weird canonical nerds as a matter of cryptonymy (from *Dark Soul's* "[Amazing Chest Ahead](#)" with Princess Gwynevere, left, to *Resident Evil Village's* Lady Dimitrescu announced by her own fabulous "home," exhibit 49). The problem is, they—like Gwynevere's huge, melon-sized knockers (synonymized with crops, but also treasure as a phallic container's "soccer goal" of sorts: chest, booty or box, etc, as belonging to a chattelized virgin/whore)—are cruel, intentionally misleading illusions that trap the ravenous hero-as-undead<sup>160</sup> inside an infernal concentric pattern (oscillating between the woman as castle, or vice versa); i.e., where they're always eating dead things (the princess is a sex object of courtly pursuit for the hero's massive "lance," a sacrifice but also an illusion, a ghost).

<sup>160</sup> The hero in *Dark Souls* is undead, acknowledged as such by the princess herself: "O chosen Undead. I am Gwynevere. Daughter of Lord Gwyn; and Queen of Sunlight. Since the day Father his form did obscureth, I have await'd thee." It's a grail beacon made to force the hero to fight two of the games strongest guardians, only to realize the cake is a lie.

As such, the narrative of the crypt is literally an illusion inside an illusion, per Hogle's acknowledgment of Radcliffe's concentric enchantments in *Udolpho* (re: "The Restless Labyrinth"): "a crypt that is, in fact, only an illusion of a crypt," one whose "double operation of revealing to conceal" speaks to the heart of classic Gothic stories. There's always a princess in another castle—a big-ass *fake* "castle." The devil is in the details, but also on their surface as frankly discussing things (through medievalized poetics) that capital has alienated us from: sex and rape as tied to and expressed with our labor and our bodies.

More to the point, such fantastic *de rigueur* is always dualistic, but canonically raised by persons cognitively estranged from reality (accommodated intellectuals) who project/abject their fictions onto real atrocities dressed up; e.g., Radcliffe; i.e., to say the quiet part in a theatrical, dissident, and wackily "medieval" loudness: the ghost of the counterfeit as "thicc," buxom, *zaftig*. Doing so was (and is), in the Humanist tradition, speaking truth (or something resembling its opposite that inverts easily enough) through bizarre creative activities: gigantic, corporal-to-architectural abstraction. The map of said pattern is hyperreal but still conducts genocide as part of capital through Pavlovian, thus blind, monomythic eyes—the hero's and what they're looking at (from tits to ass, castle to landscape).

State conditioning, then, is very much like a broken bone that has healed wrongly. Insofar as state education amounts to physical, mental and emotional abuse (rape, menticide), monomythic dogma calls fearfully upon state soldiers to defend, thus police, a pearly castle fallen upon hard times (re: ACAB—castles *and* cops) during capital's usual cycles of gentrification and decay to serve profit. It's a vampiric function that feeds on all parties—an Omelas, or city of happiness, that becomes abominable even when the total hapless victim is reduced to a single person; i.e., happiness at the expense of others, which is what settler colonialism ultimately is. To fix the problem, you generally have to break what's in place on the surface of itself: a dark, operatic reflection that exposes the tyrant in self-destructive ways that, contrary to popular thought (and state monomyths), can then be rewritten. The harvest is humanized through orchards that cut themselves up as adjacent to rape and exploitation—with irony as a cryptonymic matter of camping medieval poetics!

First, we show the tyrant that their destiny is not invincibility through infinite conquest, but the same doom that all men share as one where nature and death overcome *them* and their fatal bloodline. In turn, the reflection of the hero and castle as fatal is projected ignominiously back onto the audience; i.e., rendering *them* the dupe, a *sacrifice* to kill once-feral to apologize for (and hide) the overarching structure: a black knight returning from Hell, a Zombie Caesar's ghost of "Rome" to try and revive, fail, then behead in an endless series thereof. Per ancient warrior culture, the taking of the head constitutes the taking of one's adversary by force—oneself; for Medusa, this signifies "castration" as a crude

cryptonymic metaphor that places the power of the man at his head, except he has two: the enemy *is* weak and strong!



([source](#): Snapchipper's "[Myth II: Soulblighter - Intro \(AI Upscaled\)](#)," 2020).

Speaking of two, and keeping things in line with the metaphor of sight (and taking a leaf from Sophocles), we have to dig out the eyes of the would-be hero (us) and replace them with undead eyes that can actually see through cryptonymy's fatal illusion *while inside* Plato's cave. Except the surgery isn't a literal operation on our eyes, but the very thing which causes our eyes, both figurative and literal, to see "badly" in relation to the world around us: the monomyth, and its usual

benefactors and agents, as things to freeze, thus liberate ourselves from as conditioning devices; i.e., revolutionary cryptonymy challenging profit to garner post-scarcity as a matter of sentiment, first and foremost: hearts and minds.

This sea change happens by adopting a pre-capitalist frankness using "ancient" medieval language like Athena's Aegis (the power of the Medusa—her fat ass, but also her cryptonymic cover to operate behind and with). Such cryptonymy challenges Cartesian thought and Capitalist Realism's usual seeing and hiding of the world; i.e., the hellish place to conquer and rape: a disco-style monster party to *escape* exploitation through calculated risk subverting genocide. You want it to slap, to *fuck*, to hurt after it heals as a matter of emulation to our still-aching scars.

Castle or cop, ACAB. Person or place, then, the monomyth is baked into capital's cycles of crisis and return, one whose inevitable decay brings Imperialism home to empire as something to whisper of, then profit in service to Capitalist Realism; i.e., profit as rape, but specifically *undead* rape, when castle and conqueror emerge from Hell and go back where it all began (exposing paradise as inverted, its mendacious pastoral a gruesome and fallen cite of rape and abuse, built on genocide from the start).

As we'll see through the rest of the subchapter, then, there's an element not just of hubris, but Icarian grandeur to such heroes and homes; i.e., a rise-and-fall cycle of gentrification and decay to giant-like Caesars, but also their fortresses as they fend off imaginary barbarians (and big ladies) to eventually return from Hell as fascist undead conquerors (slaves to death as a hauntological matter of capital that hijacks their corpses); i.e., the Imperial Boomerang during the Cycle of Kings, whose rapists of "Rome" emerge as kayfabe-style heels during the liminal hauntology of war to bring Imperialism (conqueror and castle) home to a weakened



empire. In turn, Capitalist Realism abuses the ghost of the counterfeit (the ritual sacrifice of Medusa as matter of the undead patriarch's petty revenge) to try and maintain the structure, whose sorry game of "follow the leader" must be subsequently camped through Galatean forces; i.e., with perceptive zombie eyeballs employing an aesthetic of power and death—anything tied to or extending from their bodies and labor as exploited by the state's usual exceptions, abuses, and jurisdictions (re: cops, castles, tokens).

(artist: [VG Yum](#))

There's great *jouissance*, not nihilism, in the restless labyrinth. But, as always is the case when reversing abjection, revolutionary cryptonymy's subversion of the monomyth, martyr and Medusa cannot pass without exposing some inconvenient and uncomfortable truths; i.e., about the home and hero, namely those behind the map of empire as decayed, but also an instrument of our own demise routinely dressed up as heroism-made-gigantic. You have to freeze the process by showing it as it really is through *liminal* expression, confronting death then cutting off *its* head; i.e., freezing can cause rape but also *prevent* it (and other abuses/elements of risk) when applied *correctly* against the usual villains. Whatever their flavor/outward appearance, a zombie warlord is

functionally no different than a mad scientist, god king or slum lord. All operate through revenge as a matter of capital raping Medusa per the dialectic of shelter/the alien. Their unhoused discomfort, then, is our liberation, the clown queen set free to "rape" the world (transing your kids, making the frogs gay and so on) by dismantling its rapacious, stately elements.

Except, that's only *half* the battle. The question remains, what is done with the giant's head afterwards? The classic approach is nothing. In *Myth: the Fallen Lords*, for example, Balor embodies the Leveler (a symbol of death in medieval thought); once severed, his head is hurled into the Great Devoid, constituting a deliberate and unstable act of forgetting and sacrifice—i.e., a volcano akin to Mount Doom, whose expensive, monomythic band-aid sits on a mortal wound that only leads the Leveler to one day return. We must not only cut the head off, but prevent its inevitable return by breaking the historical-material cycle of growing such heads to begin with; i.e., remaking war-as-undead, the liminal hauntology thereof per the monomyth hero starting off innocent, only to become corrupted inside Hell through a franchise that, itself, sees many rebirths along the same track; e.g., *Contra: Operation Galuga*<sup>161</sup> (2024).

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<sup>161</sup> In the neoliberal tradition, fatal nostalgia covers up genocide as a historical-material loop. This includes videogame copaganda like the *Contra* franchise as made "back in the day" *and* in the current moment: during problematic revivals banking on nostalgia, mid-genocide, to keep up appearances. This illusory procedure is a creative one, generally assisted by various fans in love with the imaginary colonial past; e.g., [RichaadEB](#), who writes glowingly in his own cover video, "*Contra: Operation Galuga - Alien Slayer*" (2024):

Yo!! So last year I was approached by WayForward and Konami about the prospect of covering a few classic tunes from *Contra* for NES - the reason being that they wanted to include them in the REMAKE of *Contra* that they just released today. You can actually hear this cover in-game, which is extremely cool!! Very honored to contribute in some small way to a notable and beloved franchise like this ([source](#)).

It's fatal nostalgia wedding rock 'n roll to neoliberal shadow wars and theatre: a canonical battle anthem tied, as usual, to profit per white, cis-het men (and the middle class at large) as the usual benefactors, *provided* they learn the songs, but also the "prison sex" *mentality* behind them; re (from "[Transforming Our Zombie Selves](#)"): "Whatever the media, rape *is* profit under Capitalism, which relies not just on predation, but *community silence* to continue itself in bad copies, falsehoods, and double standards." Anything emergent/creative is roped into serving profit.



In terms of sight, this postcolonial reckoning must occur using a powerful-but-Gothic healing process: facing the settler-colonial trauma that these legends' undead cryptonymies (their castles) orbit around and announce through warlike hunger and hauntological decay run amok. Trapped between the past and present, it becomes as much something to see with as look at, and has many poetic and cryptonymic iterations: blindfolds to see with as a matter of complicated power exchange per the cryptonymy process.

As we proceed, then, remember two things: that healing hurts—is a continuation that we consciously contribute towards—and pain isn't bad, including the hero's ignominious death provided it leads to systemic healing. Except the Hero's Journey classically doesn't. As such, the *Promethean* Quest unites with Medusa as thoroughly *un*-Cartesian by using her Aegis (through the Metroidvania and similar stories) to transform the very illusions at work, breaking Capitalist Realism to bits, thus helping workers imagine a better world inside the ruin (re: the caterpillar and the wasp).

As we shall see, this requires surrendering harmful illusions of power through ludo-Gothic BDSM as a palliative-Numinous affair—a date with a Dark Mother (mommy dom, below) generally invoked in everyday people speaking of such a reunion through their own art's fruitful angles, ample body parts and dark dimensions: someone to woo and wow us while mastering and molesting us (consensually)—to fuck our brains out *and* say, "There, there!"



(artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#))

"Death," then, isn't something to fear because, when done right, it announces the beginning of a wonderful friendship: a monstress "mommy" as mistress, muse and mentor leading us towards something better than the routine, essentialized, and habitual rape of nature-as-

alien; but, as a blindfolded<sup>162</sup> person, speaks to a revelation through cryptonymy as

<sup>162</sup> Blindfolds can appear "blind" (a one-way mirror) but also be blind yet do extraordinary things; e.g., beating *Mario 64* by collecting all 120 stars blindfolded (Bubzia's "[BLINDFOLDED 120 Star Speedrun of Super Mario 64 World Record](#)," 2023). This takes practice, devotion, normalization strategies (to reduce random events to replicable actions). While speedrunners are generally white cis-het men stuck in-text as refusing to apply their invention out-of-text yet gentrifying the profession, there's potential to reverse this abjection and contribute to the same meta histories through ludo-

concealed and exposed—i.e., by the mother as one of a monstrous-feminine force, sitting her cushy bum on a dark secret that can set us free beyond the Imperium's blinding sights: "Mommy's got a secret, but what?"

Whatever *that is*, the mother-in-question grapples with rape and death as things to playfully learn from and pass vital information along special conduits; i.e., *ostensibly* dated and blind, but in truth more perceptive through ludo-Gothic BDSM as "past."

As a matter of canonical enchantments, it's a place for the usual monomythic plunderers and white-to-black knights to come back from: Hell, from which to rape empire back at home again, and again, and again. By comparison, Medusa loves to be "raped" in order to make herself (and the paradoxical visions associated with her) more perceptive regarding the returning abusers. As poetic lens *and* argument, she's the ultimate whore, packing power of a suitably awesome variety and scale to camp rape, mid-calculated-risk; i.e., as normally a matter of police violence serving capital by raping the whore *sans* irony! The greatest myth of Prometheus, then, is that the gods are gods at all, and that they have the power to contend with Medusa when she gets mad.

To this, there's an architectural flavor we've discussed already (re: "[Castles in the Flesh](#)," 2024) and will do so more when reexamining Metroidvania, in part two. Per Rudolph Otto, Manuel Aguirre and myself, these travelers frequently yield as a *mysterium tremendum* that merges resident and residence: a flying castle, *vis-à-vis* Dracula's or the Nostromo, sailing oddly through outer space. To it, all the usual principles of cryptonymy (and its application, mid-castle-narrative) apply—to look at Medusa's severed head—abstract and mixed-metaphor but still undeniably to-the-point—and suddenly "get it": her vanity one of survival to spite her abusers (normally stabbing and shooting her as a matter of cartographic endeavors in service to profit; re: Tolkien and Cameron's refrain).

Except the city of death, when summoned by us, isn't banished temporarily back to the great void of public memory. When explored and gotten to the bottom of, its monomyth can *heal* in ways that—while embarrassing and painful ("pride cometh before the fall")—successfully *prevent* it and the state's return, thus their raping of us; i.e., by permanently *altering* the settler-colonial conditions that bring such reunions about during Capitalist Realism: the return of Caesar and Medusa, the latter exposing the former as rapist and for which *she* has her revenge.

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Gothic BDSM as a holistic polity of expression; e.g., myself and my work solidarized with Harmony as I invigilate them talking about cryptonymy in regards to *Dark Souls*, but also something we can utilize in our own practices parallel, and often in relation to, all of these other things, but reversing the flow of power, mid-performance, towards workers. If you want to critique power, go where it is. Everything exists in duality—of the seemingly limitless abilities of the human imagination's invention, memory (testified by the wearing of the blindfold, but also anything done while wearing it) and application—for or against the state to varying degrees, mid-liminal-expression; i.e., under the camera eye as something to fear and embrace to varying degrees of enthusiasm and reticence, voyeurism and exhibitionism.

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Doing so effectively ends said Realism by breaking the spell for good, yet the *symbols* remain, as do their sex-positive function through a learned act of reunion with trauma—again, what Toni Morrison would call "rememory"—that gathers us together to stand, brick-by-brick, against genocidal forces; i.e., by routinely performing ludo-Gothic BDSM as a counterterrorist, educational, iconoclastic means of worker defense against state trifectas, monopolies, canon, what-have-you.

Call the idea Satanic apostasy *and* the means to advocate for the devil as punished by the state—us. The fact remains, our mission operates at cross purposes with theirs—their mission and objectives of disguise, concealment and lies versus ours; the *difference* is, they're shady and mendacious by virtue of *what* they dishonestly project *onto* us to better their own image while harming us. Except, just as monsters are anisotropic (flow determines function), cryptonymy is a revelation that conceals, but per Gothic irony allows us to hide within Capitalism's daily operations while subverting their function with some degree of stealth and underestimation (that of the blind cripple)—a cloaked revolution achieved with Gothic poetics in opposition to the state; i.e., through a *splendid mendax*, a beautiful liar both a devil and undead, oft-animalized being that challenges the usual pro-state arrangements' direction of power and force (might makes right).

The state, on the other hand, relies on complicit concealment through these same poetics, using *their* cryptonymy to blind us to the actual threat, and one which we must generally glean *and* prevent through a series of concentric illusions *while* blindfolded. Trussed up, the vision of the Oracle isn't reliant entirely on organs of pure sight, which are easily deceived, but the power of seeing *through* harmful illusions with undead empathy (and eyeballs/vision) as cultivated inside medicinal double: a second-nature, collective intuition embodying Gothic Communism through ludo-Gothic BDSM (and various devices: the Black Veil,



demon lover and palliative Numinous, etc) to raise emotional/Gothic intelligence and class/cultural awareness, reversing abjection now until the sun burns out.

(artist: [the Maestro Noob](#))

Granted, that is *our* revenge. Capital is a means of profit tied to the monomyth as futile in preventing rape, because it requires it to perpetuate itself through revenge as doomed: raping Medusa until she snaps.

We'll explore that madness next, with *Mandy*!

## The Monomyth, part zero: *Mandy*, Homophobia and the Problem of Futile Revenge (feat. H.P. Lovecraft)

"So, what you huntin'?"

"Jesus freaks."

"...I didn't know they were in season, man."

"Yeah, well... [...] They lit her on FIRE! They were weirdo, hippie-types, whole bunch of 'em. And then there was some muscle - it didn't make any sense. There were bikers, and gnarly psychos, and... crazy evil."

—Caruthers and Red Miller, *Mandy*

Whereas zombies and the apocalypse have a predominantly dream-like function that struggles to recollect history under a presence of repressed trauma and death, abjection and reverse abjection more broadly are defined by sight; i.e., according to what is being viewed and how the viewer views themselves in relation to what they are looking at and with. In this case, both are affected by the delivery system—a black mirror or Aegis, in Gothic language—as a tool of rape; i.e., one committed *by* the middle class through their own bad dreams/rape play in service *to* the state: the monomyth raping Medusa (and the dragon lord, Nazi destroyer) to gatekeep workers inside canceled-future, neoliberal illusions. By extension, capital's built-in entropy makes *these* decay—flying into particles that, pre-ejection, still vibrate menacingly (a death rattle). It's a mood, a tone poem we can hijack.

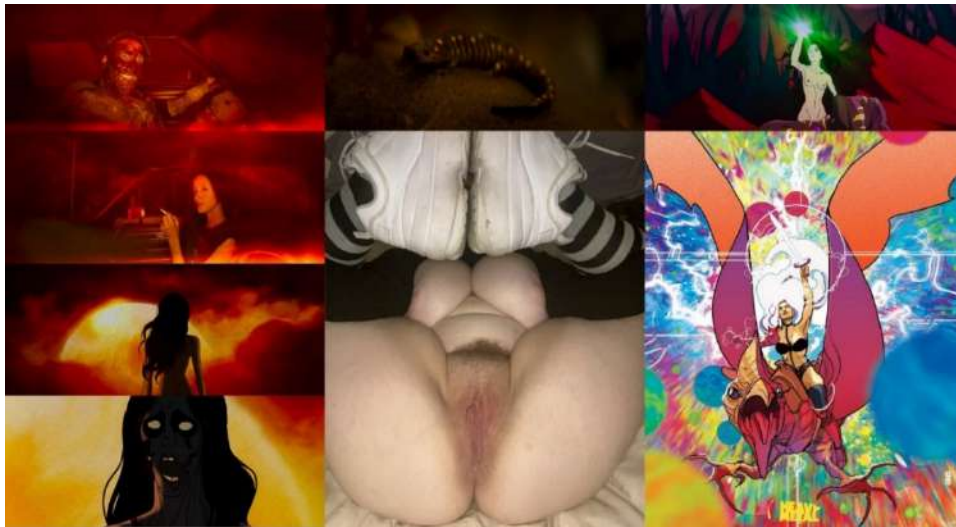
Abjection, then, is to throw off that which the self is not, maintaining this Cartesian binary by continually rejecting the cast-off elements' radiation (charged particles); Promethean narratives patently reverse this process (re: Aguirre), dooming the hero by patently revealing their own monstrous nature to them. This happens through a subversion of Campbell's dubious monomyth; i.e., the infernal concentric pattern and the extinction of the hero's hopes, dreams, possessions, etc, as bound at the hip to the fantastic spaces that reify them. It's important, then, to acknowledge ourselves as both undead *and* spiraling down a path of self-destruction supplied to us by design; i.e., Capitalist Realism as built out of old



bricks (or quasi-edible garbage, below). So, too, is our paradoxical liberation, our zombie eyeballs learning to become perceptive once more through less perceptive, unhealthy forms of undead normally hungering for revenge like a bad drug. Gotta start somewhere. For us, that's *Mandy* and H.P. Lovecraft:

Directed by Paul Cosmatos, I'm choosing *Mandy* because it a) makes fun of the heroic quest as a futile act of undead revenge, while b) crystalizing it inside a timeless nostalgia common to more serious (unironic) iterations; i.e., Lovecraft as a deeply homophobic man. We'll start with *Mandy* by outlining its drug-like quest for revenge; i.e., as fueled by the kinds of us-versus-them fears that Lovecraft played with having gone onto inform and characterize *Mandy's* camp (and end with a small postscript/reminder about feeding and holistic expression).

To that, *Mandy* is campy to an extent, but showcases a bitter heteronormative truth: the hero of the classic monomyth is *always* a monster on a formulaic quest of revenge, one for which there is no return (and which queerness is dressed up as the psychosexual, monstrous-feminine catalyst). Sold and fed to us like cheap food (e.g., "Cheddar Goblin," above—the secret star of the show as haunting Capitalism through its usual anti-Semitic conspiracies reduced to cheap, amazingly absurd, Camus-style gags), it's a sure-fire descent into Hell, catalyzed by the presence of go-to heroes; grandiose, arguably gay villains; and helpless, doomed damsels.



(exhibit 40a1a2a: Artist, bottom-middle: [Romantic Rose](#); bottom-right [[source](#)]: Patrick Zircher, Christian Rosado and Al Barrionuevo. In the presence of calamity as felt, we invent heroes to perform, thus achieve, catharsis. All at once completely trashy and deranged extravagance—of the senses, on par with Rimbaud; although we've called this device "confusion" instead of "derangement," the eye-popping idea is identical—*Mandy* plays with nostalgia to highlight unconformable truths about our world; i.e., as projected onto an outlandish, fantasy one: not the princess being a slut [which the villain simultaneously craves and hates, Jim-Morrison-style], but that she arguably never existed [meaning her husband is trapped in a lie of revenge he cannot escape/drives him to endlessly commit further acts of undead violence towards new enemies]!

*Except, Mandy's paradoxical haunting isn't just a nation-creation myth birthing the wrathful tyrant, her bereaved, insane husband; it speaks to the usual disassociation and derealization of any rape victim, to which their significant others often feel alienated from [re: the pedagogy of the oppressed, with Cuwu and I working through such membranes vis-à-vis Gothic stories to find, however futile it might seem, similarity amid difference]: the family man seeking revenge against a queer, degenerate enemy for the death of his wife.*

*There's an eerie-yet-beautiful unreality to the entire production, then, one that feels all in Cage's head and poured out of said head into the world for us to occupy as well. Here, we see Persephone as the warrior through Cage, her denuded maiden-esque precisely the kind of undead covering that Segewick describes in "Imagery of the Surface" [1981] as "the sexual function of veils" [[source](#)]. It's something to look at and reveal/revel in sexual trauma as simultaneously hidden by a nostalgic, cartoon version of itself referred to backwards [with 1981's Heavy Metal being a clear influence]. Mandy becomes something for Cage to seek but can never have [the only ones actually having sex in the movie are the Barker-style sex demons, Radcliffe's demon lover with a new coat of paint on top of more coats]: the chaste knight's great reward.*



[artist: [Romantic Rose](#)]

*The modesty of the Neo-Gothic's original, middle-class conservatism always teases the hero as "on the cusp" [the man, ready to penetrate, the woman ready to receive him]. Except, the Gothic communicates power on its surfaces to a mythical, androgynous degree that subverts just as easily. To that,*

*a princess of the nocturnal, Persephone sort [which Mandy very much is] always features whore-like and virgin-esque qualities: something to look at. It's not a position of weakness.*

*Rather, the princess' intense sexual energies are charged, fruit-like, and swollen with a massive, giantess, phallic woman's power that belies any seemingly delicate or small characteristics [e.g., Rose, above, her face hidden by fleshy softness as something to seek, but also asexually respect as a matter of cryptonymy's usual barriers: to look and see the beauteous orbs<sup>163</sup> without touching them]. Said power*

<sup>163</sup> I want to go on a bit of a tangent, here, but one concerning tokenization vs subversion, which is germane: Just as *Mandy* camps the monomyth, Lewis camped Immaculate Conception in *The Monk*, turning the Madonna into a devil-in-disguise that tempts the rapey monk, Ambrosio; i.e., as part of the same oppressive system the devil is exposing in the book, and for which Lewis, a gay man, is

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using to comment on gay life in then-modern-day England. The difference between him and Cosmatos is irony in service to GNC peoples i.e., as part of universal liberation through intersectional solidarity illustrating mutual consent (and informed labor exchanges raising class-cultural consciousness and emotional/Gothic intelligence) with iconoclastic art; re: synthesizing praxis, thus catharsis, on an individual-to-systemic level per ludo-Gothic BDSM (reclaim the Base, recultivate the Superstructure).

To that, we fags camp canon for own survival against the state pimping us (re: [Broadmoor](#)), *not* because we're bored middle-class straight people obsessed with abject things (*we're* abject); i.e., you can't coercively fetishize a particular out-group and all it a day! Furthermore, the same asexual\*power of the Gothic that Lewis used in good faith (the ability to speak about sexual things as a matter of violent, pornographic art) lets any whore camp her own abuse; i.e., through Gothic poetics, becoming a form of half-veiled activism passed off as "fake" (revolutionary cryptonymy in practice). It's quite common for this to happen while working with those who *aren't* going to harm you: gay people. We're not the sex demons Cosmatos puts on a dark pedestal.

*\*Ace expression isn't always a byproduct of trauma, but those who are traumatized generally fall into cop/victim and sexual/asexual. We'll explore the neurodivergent/congenital side of aceness in Volume Three, part one.*

Simply put, while reactive abuse *does* happen, fags more broadly aren't the universal, alien (us-versus-them) bogeypersons capital depicts us as (we're sex demons who sometimes self-destruct, but *still* aren't the kind who tend to harm women and children; that's your husbands, boyfriends, community leaders, etc, who actually have the privilege [and power] to abuse people they've been given control over). Instead, we're relatively safe/aren't going to automatically fly off the handle and berate someone else at the slightest inconvenience (tokenization being an exception of course, below); i.e., as a matter of capital and heteronormative dogma; e.g., during a difficult production, while we wait for things to fall into place. That's just how working with others goes: setbacks happen, but the planets eventually align. And if they don't, that's no reason to attack others *provided* everyone's acting in good faith. Things happen; you don't use that as an excuse to endlessly take from the parties that are historically at a disadvantage!

By comparison, patience generally isn't a virtue for straight men (or those normalizing to act, thus function\* like straight men) because the state: conditions and expects them to abuse and control, thus rape women/anyone else, who isn't them (the monstrous-feminine), then throw blame onto others to obscure the reality of capital working by design; i.e., moral panic; e.g., Satanic panic, Red Scare, Yellow Menace, etc, as monopolizing sex, force (violence), terror and morphological expression, etc, as a matter of compelled labor and artistic expression (canon). All is done to serve and maintain profit as settler-colonial, heteronormative, Cartesian, hence rapacious. As my PhD argued, Capitalism sexualizes everything around men as pimps and police, who their victims either serve or emulate.

*\*I.e., as tied to the nuclear family unit/somewhat upholding it as status-quo; e.g., homonormativity, like all normativities, emulating heteronormativity from a marginalized position, playing the part of the dutiful servant or fearsome outsider/predator, etc (the subversion of these, onstage, is entirely possible, but that takes irony and awareness, which token agents lack).*

To be blunt, all these effects/divisions are historical-material; i.e., a looping matter of social conditions (dogma) predicated on material conditions and vice versa (re: Marx)—of the state treating white cis-het Christian men as it has and always will: as the most privileged group, whose privileges peel off like onion layers, but whose basic function is universal. Rape, profit, repeat. All are pimps to police other workers towards this aim, but especially anything monstrous-feminine as things to rape *for* profit (often in "efficient," messy forms). In turn, said victims are a spectrum existing on descending rungs of selective punishment, relative privilege and marginalized convenience/entitlement ("Haven't I suffered enough?"); re, a concept I call "preferential mistreatment" (from Volume One\*):

...heteronormativity leads to [double standards]. 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

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*is half-real, consuming the hero, Red, and speaking endlessly to Mandy's abuse as that of a lived experience common to so many women/monstrous-feminine in and out of fiction.*

*Something of a Schrödinger's "cat," she phases in and out of existence, but feels utterly tangible and close to the hero; i.e., as a matter of flowing power anisotropically towards workers, the duality of the Gothic's shadow zone using the same wardrobe—the medieval aesthetics, wacky performances, and playing with power [and sex] as a bad, thoroughly ace-level joke on purpose [from Chaucer's Miller to Kevin Smith's somewhat more obscure [Pillow Pants](#) addressing and manifesting the same basic concerns about sex and religion]: as something to transfer accordingly. It's "almost holy"—a bad religion haunting the cathedral as remade into a joke of a thing that never quite existed [from Rome to the Goths to the medieval period to Walpole, on and on; re: [Baldrick](#)].*

*In the Gothic, then, existence itself is always strained/a matter of endless struggle, and struggle is fraught with oscillation in and out of itself—what is, what could be, what has happened threatening the viewer all once through troubling comparison; they're always on the cusp of something great, yearning to penetrate that greatness, but also daring to embody it: as something to explore and express because it cannot be penetrated. Ostensibly headless like Medusa, Rose's whorish performance—when contained behind such revolutionary barriers by virtue of context—becomes impenetrable, but simultaneously able to express past harm [and future salvation] as a matter of paradoxical agency protected inside the illusory realm of fatal nostalgia, of calculated risk. So does Mandy.*

*To it, safety and "danger" [with or without quotes] are all part of the exhibit, the context; i.e., as something to play with on any register and showcase in totality [to illustrate mutual consent]: nothing is stronger than the submissive as having*

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also as highly cultivated products that "beastly" men are likewise conditioned to rape, kill, or otherwise eat like gruel: [...] 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; a state pedagogy (and its own means of instruction) will not ([source](#)).

*\*See also, the glossary definitions for [tokenism](#) and [white \(cis-het, Christian male\) fragility](#).*

That's where tokenism and Man Box come in. As Volume Three shall explore (which focuses entirely on tokenism vs good praxis), capital extends the abuser's privileges (the coercion trifecta: gaslight, gatekeep, girl boss) to women and other marginalized groups provided *they* tokenize, hence betray their class, culture, and race interests in service to the elite; i.e., become cops (often with a Gothic flavor in pop culture; re: weird canonical nerds acting like "minority police/witch cops," something we'll unpack in Volume Three). Like anything, the monstrous-feminine is susceptible to betrayal and decay; i.e., whose tokenized "onion" historically-materially fosters marginalized in-fighting as a matter of "prison sex" *and* fortress mentality: tokenized groups from increasing privilege (but less than those above them) kissing up and punching down towards groups more marginalized than they are. The global consequence is assimilation—of women, people of color or queer persons, Indigenous peoples, etc, acting like white, cis-het men as a matter of tokenized representation.

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*fostered mutual consent as a matter of social-sexual boundaries, of recultivating the Superstructure on all levels, but also reclaiming our bodies and labor for liberation as thoroughly Gothic-Communist. It's what this book is all about!)*

Thoroughly inundated in heady drugs and emphera—from the hag's infernal, witch's-brew eye drops and wasp "cherry on top" piercing Mandy's neck; the entire crucifixion scene and its sense of martyred rapture before and after Mandy dies; Cage's bottomless whiskey and coke; sodomy, gimp outfits and spiked blood spilled during thrill-kill BDSM; and the Black Skull's bad LSD stored in mason jars like moonshine (a gift from the Chemist to Sand, who uses the drugs to motivate the Skulls to work for him as "muscle," and which Cage later takes to *become* a Skull, in effect replacing them)—torture and illicit drug use permeate the entire film.



Cage, then, is the movie's mule, failing sobriety mid-gang-war to climb to the top of the heap (said war suggested by the demon bikers, alluding to actual American highway gangs like the Hell's Angels, routinely exporting hard drugs across state lines to become something of a neoliberal boogeyman when failing state illusions coincided more and more with the collapse that accompanied them). It's the usual monomyth power fantasy (revenge-killing an evil ruler's cronies, eventually dethroning the tyrant and replacing him) literally fueled by drugs.

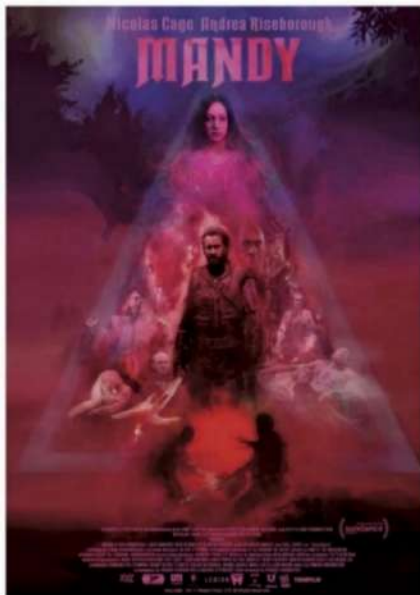
It's campy to some extent because the quest unravels inside of itself (and the mind of its unstable, vampiric hero); i.e., as a kind of madness integral to its continuation. The more Cage takes, the crazier (and bloodthirstier) he gets, reality flying apart until he becomes yet another tyrant. In the end, the constant torture and drugs bake the hero's brain, leaving the viewer with the lingering, uneasy feeling that Mandy may have never been real. Instead, Cage basically smiles at the gods (as only Cage can), capitalists having trapped him in a drug-fueled, Sisyphian-style quest for revenge (which the monomyth essentially is: chasing

Persephone as the princess in another castle, however virginal or whorish she appears).

Except, for all *Mandy*'s posturing about final victory within fatal nostalgia, the monomyth remains as addictively harmful to the world (and workers) as that hellish goblin macaroni—a fact the movie delights in and stresses for its entire run time: heroism is a drug built on revenge to serve profit, a holy grail to chase ever onwards into the oblivion of late-stage Capitalism.

Saying nothing of his endless body count, then, Cage is the movie's central victim—a shell of a man hopelessly trapped inside the movie's painfully consistent tightrope/recipe of paranoia; i.e., a bad batch on purpose, its product carefully cultivated through perceived loss as a driving force that catalyzes nonstop genocide. Instead of sheer delusion for its own sake, we're given criminal indulgence inside a Lovecraftian homophobia gelling to the sort of fatal nostalgia *Mandy* returns to capitalize on; i.e., abjecting queer people as capital's usual victims under Satanic panic. His drug is literally blood—the spilled blood of the innocent gays dressed up as sexual deviants crushed under Christofascist dogma.

In fact, as I write about *Mandy* in my 2018 review of the film, its procedure is so widespread, toxic and deadpan that many people replicate and parody the same basic code without seeing the homophobic elements; e.g., me (the review is quite germane to our continued examination of the Cycle of Kings and monomyth as things to critique, so I'd like to include a fair chunk of it to make my point: I didn't notice the homophobia because *I* was in the closet when I wrote it):



*Mandy* is a fantasy tale of revenge that forces Cage into a largely mute role. The actor's somewhat constrained delivery assists the narrative versus hijacking it; the story is at once a fairy tale and a Western, with horror themes: an old gunslinger working a menial job must return to a life of violence after his wife is killed. To do so, he must also return to drinking and meeting with old, bellicose friends. His bloody quest is two-fold, the villain tucked away in a tower, guarded by parallel agents who swear fealty to no one and delight in mayhem. They cannot be killed; Cage encounters them, first, only to learn what they are, later. These skirmishes feel parallel to the villain, Jeremiah Sand. The bikers push Cage towards Sand, similar to how Eric Draven is led

towards Top Dollar by T-Bird and his pals.

The events onscreen are pastiche, understated (much how George Lucas retooled *Flash Gordon* and Akira Kurosawa for a new generation, with *Star Wars*). I recognized the nods to *Mad Max*, except the chase is



through a black forest, not a desert, and with a Suburban, not a V8. The weapons are a crossbow with two bolts, and an ax straight out of *Star Trek*, *Conan the Barbarian* (1981) or *Krull* (1983). There's even a slow, deliberate forging sequence John Milius might have used, in *Conan*. What's important is that the story *works* as a fantasy and a Western and a revenge film, separately and together. Much of this has to do with the visuals, music and dialogue, which exist "as is," unfolding in ways that allow us to sit back and watch. We remain uncertain as to where exactly it's going even if the general idea is more or less straightforward. It feels familiar but fresh—a new combination of old parts that succeeds on multiple levels. The dialogue is both lite and abundant. It unfolds like a conversation, not as exposition.

During his quest, Cage goes from person to person, often meeting these individuals once and once only. They feel like part of the world, one that lives and breathes. We need not know who they are; we need only see what wisdom (or arms) they impart. It is what Bakhtin refers to as the Road, wherein the motif of meeting is employed. On it, Cage meets many different people, but in a larger world the movie can only suggest [amounting to a cult of drugs, Cage hijacking its supply from the Chemist to, in short, trip harder than Sand does]. Any sense of rapport or animosity is understated. All that matters is the quest. We're simply along for the ride. The villain, Sand, monologues much how Little Bill, Top Dollar or Thulsa Doom do; their dialogue is to be heard in the moment, not pieced into a larger puzzle. It is an act of villainy to be viewed, not a mystery to solve. They are hypnotic, not cryptic.



We learn Sand is ruthless, not only a villain, but transparently so [in short, he's a total dumbass; e.g., "Do you like the Carpenters? (I'm) like them, but better!"]. This same transparency applies to the heroes and side characters. Cage is implacable: his lover was killed; he'll settle the score any way

he can. He largely speaks through action, through facial expression (Cage's strong suit). More often than not, he's covered in blood, his nose rimmed with rings of dusty cocaine. He drinks, he cries; there's little need for him to spell it out. We've seen it, firsthand, and he's often alone. When he's in the company of others, they know who he is. Bill Duke inquiries, but only just (Cage's explanation is one of the movie's funnier moments). Then Cage sets forth, armed to the teeth.

These stories involve terrible loss and resurrection, working in tandem. Cage's darkest moment is fairly early on. Mandy is killed; Cage is strung up with barbed wire, wearing a halo of "thorns" like Jesus except as a gag. Sand

even pierces Cage's side with a spear. From the brink, Cage comes back to put the wrong things right. If this sounds familiar, it is. In *The Crow*, Eric Draven is killed before the movie even starts, his death revealed in flashback; when he revives, he is largely unstoppable... until Top Dollar injures Eric's crow companion ("Lemme give you an impression: 'Caw! Caw! Bang, fuck, I'm dead!"). In *Conan*, the hero's mother and family are killed; he is made a slave. Failing to kill Thulsa Doom, he is crucified. After being brought back from the dead, Conan must endure the death of his lover at Thulsa Doom's hand. Continually driven, Conan finally kills his nemesis for good. Bereavement serves to strengthen the hero unto final victory [except there is no victory because his loved one is forever dead; all that remains is revenge, glory and hollow victory].



The point at which the lover is murdered can vary further still.

In *Unforgiven*, William Munny's wife dies of natural causes, with William standing over her grave during the opening prologue. Recruited for a hit, William is pummeled by Little Bill (not even his target). Later, William returns to kill Bill, but only after the other man kills

William's friend. Another hero—Max, from *Mad Max*—only kills Toe-Cutter and his minions after they kill his wife and child: there is no moment where Max is beaten, himself. He handily bests the Night-Rider, early on; Toe-Cutter and his men die just as easily. In the "sequel," Max's family is already gone. He is fed upon by Lord Humongous, whose army destroys Max' car. Nursed back to health, he survives and, returned to full strength, deals with his enemies in a final, protracted chase sequence. In *Mandy's* case, there is no stopping Cage once Mandy is killed. And that's the point: he can kill as many of the demon bikers as he wants; they'll laugh and tell him Mandy is "still burning" in hell [translation: still fucking sex demons instead of her husband]. How can one defeat someone with violence, if violence and dying are what they love? It's a clever twist. Even if the movie is simply a variation of old parts, it's done well. [He's Achilles deprived of Patroclus, killing until everything is dead, including himself as "undead."]

Cage's reintegration to violence is gradual. Initially he and Mandy enjoy their pastoral home, announced by sparkling Disney font. Cage is almost gentle. Then, Sand's toady summons the bikers, parallel to Cage's own, inner killer. Driven to avenge his wife, his bloodlust mounts through constant battle. The bikers are less defeated so much as escaped from. Cage careens his Suburban off one, kneeling in the middle of the road. They

capture him, relish in seeing the old killer (a biker, like them) regress. Covered in blood, he pounds whiskey and blow to see things through. By fighting actual demons, Cage confronts his own. Sand's cohorts are all but obliterated, bested one by one. Some put up a fight. Some do not. Cage kills them all, insatiable death-dealer that he is.

The variations continue. Sand isn't as scrappy as Top Dollar. The latter would lay traps and fight as dirty as possible; Sand uses the power of voice and little else. *Unforgiven* featured no seduction; Little Bill was simply overconfident, backed by a crew that outnumbered William many times over. In *Conan*, Thulsa Doom's host fell at the battle of the mounds; all he had left was his voice. Like Doom, Sand's men are reduced well before. His voice cannot stop Cage from crushing him to ignominious death (wonderful gore effects). Cage leaves, but not before burning the cultist's temple to the ground, as Conan did with Thulsa Doom's. There is no princess to rescue, this time around; the villain is dead, as is Cage's bride. With nothing left to achieve, our hero rides off into the sunset, presumably onto other adventures ([source](#): Persephone van der Waard's "*Mandy* (2018): Review," 2019).

This all seems rather formulaic, right? The problem replicating the monomyth to camp it with "Nazi death sex" is that said code has a lot of poorly disguised homophobia to it; i.e., it doesn't try to distinguish the queer *from* the Nazi; e.g., Sand as a serial killer whose sexuality is essentialized as queer by virtue of it being a disorder. He's defined as violent and cruelty—lashing out the moment Mandy rejects his penis by sight. She laughs at him; he burns her alive.

The problem is, all of this is queer-coded in ways that *don't* camp the 1980s. For example, when Sand is cornered, he begs Red to spare his life ("I'll suck your dick, man!")... only to shift back to the psychosexual tyrant butting heads with the straight man. Sand isn't just a false preacher but a destroyer of women who uses his disposable flock to get what he wants. Why? Because he's secretly gay!

At least, that's how it's coded, sadly. That's precisely the sort of cliché, hateful bigotry that informs *Mandy's* camp, depriving the narrative of irony the likes of which Matthew Lewis *wouldn't* have sacrificed on the altar. Simply put, commodifying struggle is generally done by straight men or tokenized elements, of which Lewis wasn't. This makes *Mandy's* camp something of a dated, backwards, and ultimately regressive character. As such, it furthers the process of abjection, raping the monstrous-feminine in service to capital, business-as-usual: the straight man's revenge.

We'll get to some of the origins of *Mandy's* homophobia when we look at Lovecraft, in just a moment. First, let's examine the churchly structures the film raises (then razes); i.e., as a matter of scapegoating capital's assigned victim: the monstrous-feminine (which is what being queer under Capitalism essentially is—

anything that a white cis-het Christian person<sup>164</sup> isn't). Someone decided to do that, but in doing so, like a church, was built on top of older things.

To that, *Mandy* is a film about the monomyth that disguises Satanic panic (code for "homosexuality" and by extension, queerness at large) as fear of the poor against the Good Husband as bad once-upon-a-time and Mandy *alive* once-upon-a-time (again, she's reduced to a *casus belli*, the hero's false flag when seeking out new fortunes, Conan-style); deprived and incensed of his good, nuclear home (minus the kids), Red seeks "reasonable vengeance" against an imaginary foe for the greatest taboo: the drug-addled hillbilly's capture, rape and murder of the helpless damsel, becoming a demonic caricature of the free love movement (with evangelist ties). It's the monomyth married to Wes Craven's *The Last House of the Left* (1972) and Clive Barker's *Hellraiser* (1987) but with a hauntological stamp neither picture had; i.e., neither here nor there, but in between.



*(exhibit 40a2: In the Church of Death, Nic Cage becomes a god through revenge. He beheads Sand's Medusa-esque witch—like Conan beheading the perfidious snake god, Thulsa Doom—then crushes the head of the final snake [the blind eyes popping ignominiously and rapturously from their sockets—the martyr's*

*fate]. Very orgasmic in the crushing of the godhead, the joke seems to be, "It's funny because Sand is gay!" As such, Mandy conflates sex and violence as "interwoven" in the medieval pastiche as homoerotic.*

*In destroying Sand as the "poser" dark religion, though, Cage's hero also replaces him as the next-in-line: the "true" dark god [through might makes right] whose fiery effigy imitates yet-another-sacrifice consigned to the endless, hungry blaze; i.e., within the text, but also across a series of similar imitations whose grand pattern the director is clearly aware of and challenging full-bore: through rape play with less irony than I would like. Cage becomes fixated with Mandy just like Sand did, becomes yet-another-demon biker strongman sodomizing whomever to stress his own fallen conqueror status: as reprobate. He's an undead reaver stuck in a dream of futile heroic revenge [against imaginary endless enemies] that never ends. Like the Black Skulls, he only derives pleasure from raping others, revenge being a drug that he needs more and more of. In short, he's an addict who thinks*

<sup>164</sup> Originally just men, but extending to women as members of a growing middle class; re: the decay of feminism punching down against queer minorities (as Radcliffe did to Lewis). As we'll see, this also extends to gay Nazis and punks, etc.

*he's a god, one tied to a death cult [the monomyth] centered around his dead "wife." It's Capitalism in small.)*

All the while, Nic Cage is Zombie Jesus demanding *his* pound of flesh, but also "Hamlet" haunted by his wife's false "ghost." A king without a castle, a bride, a home, the crux of the Christ-like drama sits close to Dante's *Inferno* as a rapturous cycle of torture; i.e., the futility of revenge trapped amid the Gothic fever dream as a burnt offering. "Blood for blood" is the executioner's motto of the demon bikers<sup>165</sup> (the "Black Skulls" effectively a sodomic leather daddy cult tied to "bad" LSD [a little nod to *Jacob's Ladder* and the CIA's enforcing of homicidal "bad trips" onto American soldiers]: one to give false explanation to a seemingly supernatural threat that is, in fact, domestic abuse and homophobia when all's said and done). Except, no blood sacrifice can bring the princess *back*. The hero's panoply of great deeds only serve to bury him alive inside the inferno—all while turning him into what he *used* to be: a slave to his own cocaine-and drink-fueled vices.

Suitably enabled, Red kills Sand, a plural and ridiculous man who bites off more than *he* can chew by threatening the strong family man. Yet so has Red, descending into the Mandelbrot as Great Destroyer after burying the gay (dressed up as a homicidal Jesus freak, no less). There is no reprieve for being the hero, only madness and death everlasting (which the Black Skulls are drawn towards: "You have a death wish."). Red becomes trapped in fragments of his own past brought imperfectly back to life, placing himself at the center of a story whose princess is, suitably enough, in another castle; she's a grail beacon, divorced from Red pursuant to the nuclear family model as forever devastated by sexual deviancy and evil queens, avenging itself through the ritualistic "suicide by cop" of said queens ("failing upwards" while punching down). As such, Red is the black knight—a dragon without a princess, Lord Dracula—but remembers her as that once-upon-a-time that's notably the title *and* truant. How Gothic.

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<sup>165</sup> I.e., *Faust*, but gayer (the love that dare not speak its name). The pleasure and pain of *Mandy's* monsters exist in the same place as a trademark of '70s BDSM, wherein trauma and catharsis but also resistance and power occupy the same territory using the same language. The liminality sits between realism and folklore; violence, hard kinks, drugs and heavy metal (as a bizarre "don't do drugs, kids!" narrative that still celebrates the whole practice); the Numinous and the ordinary as a site of abject exploitation/forbidden fruit tied to fatal penance, flagellation and circuitous trials by fire. Reverence and dark worship, then, laud the ghost of the counterfeit as penned in, but also a liminal space to move around inside; i.e., the blurring of the line between pulp fiction and daily life as trapped in how Steve Huey describes Megadeth's *Peace Sells*: "The lines between hell and earth are blurred throughout..." ([source](#), Allmusic). It's *The Cell* or *Jacob's Ladder* as darkly indulgent, a kind of aberrant, haunted-house escape into total oblivion—the guilty pleasure of the privileged going to the dark gods.



(*exhibit 40a3a: The story revolves around the ghost of Mandy per the infernal concentric pattern. These men are effectively doomed per their monomythic search for power and revenge, Sand's being his envy of the straight man's wife [a similar covetousness seen in David Fincher's Se7en, exhibit 43b]. The queer elements feel dated in much the same way except they weren't made in the '80s; they regressed to them to tell an old, very tired joke: the priest is a rapist because he's gay [and not because of the system he belongs to; re; Lewis, The Monk]. Under heteronormative thought, to be gay is*

*to be false, to be murderous with bad intent as a matter of straight projection onto capital's monstrous-feminine scapegoats threatening state-sanctioned brides.)*

*Mandy* is, on one level then, a neo-conservative Viking's boast about drunk Beowulf slaying demons and degenerates while reveling in the antiquated fetishes and gay-hating clichés, but it still narrowly reverses abjection regarding the heroic quest as reprobate: Mandy the girl is murdered to progress the hero's story but his story is still eternal damnation once the gay man is six feet under (the Gibson-level Catholic martyrdom is also there, delighting at Cage's masochistic exploits; but Cage's irrefutable drive towards complete insanity makes the outcome much more of a mixed bag/acquired taste—I love it, but I'm a weirdo who appreciates queer history as tied up in self-flagellation/torture porn).

In the same vein, the primer has already covered reversing abjection; i.e., by merely proposing the (re)humanization of the zombie (and their assorted parts) inside the nightmare as "awake," thus perceptive to traumas that are normally repressed by the state. To take this idea further is to actively reverse Cartesian dualism by reflecting on war and rape as a necromantic process similar to *Mandy's*; i.e., trapped in a zombifying death loop according to historical-material effects systemically produced *by* Capitalism (what Lovecraft, the Cartesian 'frayid cat, touched upon with his infamously gibberish, death cultist chant, *Cthulhu fhtagn*).

Of course, this includes its neoliberal forms; i.e., that prop abjection up as something to scare the public with over time, replicating itself not just through zombies, but many canonical monster types: vampires, ghosts, composites, and demons of various kinds (and combinations). This include the gigantic, xenophobic sort worshipped as dark gods by a curious-if-ignorant middle class; i.e.,

shamelessly and shamefully enthralled by the ghost of the counterfeit raping Medusa for capital to avenge the American dream (and nuclear family unit) as proper fucked. Capital decays; punch the fag as "Nazi."

To that, *Mandy* is basically a mean-spirited Hero's Journey about rape and revenge, one set to dated, hauntologically vice-like representations of queer sex, drugs and rock 'n roll. It all feels like it's happened before, too—our heroine causally reading about her own death in a cheap, dime store novel that speaks to the conditions outside of itself that, sure enough, walk up to the counter to size her up. Sand's sacrifice something of a Catherine Morland, she *feels* dead, herself, emerging from the waters to approach Cage, who—clearly the story's unreliable narrator—*might* be dreaming in the middle of a drug-fueled bender! The story is his attempt to remember *after* Mandy is dead and gone. Abjection kills Medusa, then teases the audience with her corpse to justify fascist violence (revenge built around a lie with a kernel of truth):



(exhibit 40a3b: "To the last syllable of recorded time" or "Never shake your gory locks at me," Shakespeare's "Scottish play" leaps to mind. There's plenty of Jungian archetypes to observe, Mandy something of a good witch, her face scarred [and rocking something of a David Bowie vibe with her

*asymmetrical pupils*]. This isn't the stuff of total fiction [any more than those elements/stories are]: "I looked at him and he was dead," my grandmother recalled, seeing my mom's golden retriever, Prince, in his doghouse. "He wasn't dead, but he was. And a day later, he died." Turns out, he'd been poisoned by a jealous lover, seeking revenge against my then-teenage mother for breaking up with him because his dick didn't work. Revenge is often petty.)

Moreover, this process of abjection reaches backwards—through fatal, monomythic nostalgia—to highlight sexually conservative authors belonging to a larger canonical (thus homophobic) trend: blame the fag by abjecting them from straight power structures (e.g., the Church) by suggesting that's "just how we are": like the evil-rapey hillbillies from *Deliverance* (1972).

To that, let's quickly unpack some homophobic elements that *Mandy* weaves into its camping of the monomyth: its demon church yet another example of

religion laid low by degenerate forces that, when irony is absent, becomes another "bury your gays" trope per said monomyth.

Of the aforementioned canonical trend, I could say "Radcliffe," but we needn't go *that* far back. I would rather stick to who was probably on the director's mind when telling his story. For example, something akin to Stephen King's literature briefly appears onscreen for a quick second (exhibit 40a3b, above), but I think the '80s zeitgeist for which King dominated orbits around the pulpy fictions of older bigoted men like Lovecraft having already furthered said process *towards* King (and *Mandy's* director looking back at such slashers with fondness); i.e., through the ghost of the counterfeit as something to pulp, then paywall.

Simply put, it's the Shadow of Pygmalion per the Cycle of Kings upholding capital during middle class Gothic poetics (what I also call "white cis-het guy disease"). It's hard not to shake the feelings of paranoia, psychosexuality and downright homophobia that permeate *Mandy* having come from strangely awful authors like Lovecraft. Lovecraft was [a man who apparently fucked](#)<sup>166</sup>, oddly enough, but whose own steadfast views on love were warped with staunchly homophobic attitudes on par with the Cenobite rip-offs (no shame in it) that *Mandy* pointedly showcases; e.g., the knife dick scene (next page), whereupon subversion is largely a matter of context (the appreciative irony of Gothic counterculture something we'll devote much of Volume Three to):

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<sup>166</sup> I love that Lovecraft.com is like, "But wait, he fucked women!"

The facts that Lovecraft had little success with women and had many male friends have led people to believe that he was a homosexual. However, it must be remembered that he was married (briefly) and his wife described him as an "adequately excellent lover" (Sonia H. Davis, "Memories of Lovecraft: I," *The Arkham Collector*, No. 4, Winter 1969) [\[source\]](#).

God help me, the stupid shit people choose to remember in order to memorialize assholes! So, gay people can't fuck, apparently? Annoyed inferences aside, it's also rather telling of homophobia on the *writers* of this myth bust. Beards *are* a thing. Moreover, it's just as common to call someone "asexual" to avoid calling them *homosexual*:

[...] But, this is not to say that his *heterosexual* inclinations were especially strong, either. Lovecraft, like many intellectuals, focused his attentions and efforts on mental, rather than physical, pursuits, and simply didn't have very strong sexual interests at all [\[ibid.\]](#).

This "they're not gay, they're..." trend has haunted the Gothic since its inception and before; i.e., extending from Shakespeare (who was married with kids, but still probably gay anyways) to Walpole (not married, no kids, also probably gay by modern standards); re:

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).

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
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*(exhibit 40a3c: The home invasion scene, where the old helpless couple has been sodomized<sup>167</sup> by the demon bikers from Hell. This is both a shameless nod to Satanic panic, and an apt feeling for what it's like to be queer in the historical period of the 1980s. Mandy's chronotope jams it all into the same theatrical space, to which a part of me wants to groan and agree with Jameson's "[boring and exhausted paradigm](#)" barb about the Gothic, but also to embrace the psychosexual theatre as a great bit of campy fun. Indeed, the Titus-Andronicus levels of violence marry sex to war as something of a psychomachy that treats the home as a system in which "Red" and his other personalities duke it out. Out comes the knife dick, a rearing fang/greedy mouth struggling to sate itself [through all the usual hyphenations] even after a fresh kill and trying to "mate" with Cage. Both men are addicts, cruising and "forking" like vampires [an old gay metaphor we'll explore in another chapter].*

*Rather than hate the fascist-grade sodomy elements, though, I want to observe and understand why they exist/continue to revive in ways GNC people can use to our advantage; i.e., as part of an old problem to queer expression through the Gothic mode [and, by extension, real life]: alienation under homonormativity extending to all manner of queer forms. Matthew Lewis touched on this, but it's something you can see well into the present as stuck grappling with dated conceptualizations of queerness we must reclaim.*

*This happens per a larger ongoing conversation between generations and personalities over space and time. The below comment, for example*

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<sup>167</sup> A nod to the Nightstalker killer, Richard Ramirez, who would home invade the elderly middle class, then rape and murder them. He leaned into abject "Satanic" theatrics, and killers like him were generally framed as "gay" similar to Ed Gein, but also fictional counterparts like Hannibal Lecter, Count Dracula, Mr. Hyde, and countless others. It's the process of abjection scapegoating queer people [which historically would have been homosexual men recognized as citizens in England and elsewhere\*] while apologizing for capital's raping workers and nature at home and abroad.

*\*More on this when we look at vampires and Foucault's A History of Sexuality.*

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*It doesn't matter to our oppressors that you don't do drugs or have casual sex. You can have a white picket fence with 2.5 kids and a golden retriever and go to church every Sunday. But don't forget - we're still just faggots [[source tweet](#), turnintoabat: June 12th, 2024].*

Pete Buttigieg is just a faggot.

It's very important to me that younger queers understand this: to the people who you're trying to be *more respectable* for when you say things like *neopronouns set the trans movement back* or *you're why the cishets don't accept us* or including *[aces/bi people with the 'wrong kind' of partners/non-binary people/kinksters/non-passing trans ppl/furries/polyam people]* just hurts us, can't you wait until we get all our rights before we talk about some of yours? -- to those people? Pete Buttigieg is just a fag.

That what I need you to understand. The people for whom you are folding yourself into smaller and smaller boxes will never see you as anything but a freak. A queer. A dyke. A tranny. A fag.

Never.

These are people who will stand by and let you wither away and die alone, gasping for breath in a cinderblock room, and not even claim your ashes, and they will say you *deserve* it, because of your *lifestyle*. If they speak of you at all it will be by the wrong name, with the pictures you hate the most. They will curse at your lover, throw him out of the home you shared, and steal the gift you gave last Christmas to throw it in the trash *just so he can't have it* and they'll say *Jesus loves you!* while they do it. They'll feel good and righteous and blessed and holy and pure for doing it.

And for them, you spit in the eye of your sister. For them, you disavow your sibling. For their sake, you trim away bits of your heart and lace yourself up tight. Never too loud. Never too queer. Never inconvenient or embarrassing, never asking for too much.

*when visually citing [several copy-and-pasted screenshots; reassembled, left] and writing in response to an older Tumblr post*

*That's the part you don't seem to get: when they abandoned us, they **abandoned all of us**. Rock Hudson was a beloved movie star and even personally friendly with that horrid pair of ambitious jackals. [Nancy Reagan refused to help him get into the only place in the world that could treat him at the time, and he died](#).*

*It was 1985, [4 years after the CDC first released papers on what would eventually become known as HIV/AIDS](#) and 7 years after the first known death from an infection from HIV-2. [Reagan hadn't even said the word AIDS by the time Hudson died](#). [...]*

*The only other option is radical acceptance of our queer selves. The only other option is solidarity. The only other option is for fats and femme queens and drags and kinksters and*

*queers and zine writers and sex workers and furries and addicts and kids and the ones who can look us in the eye and see all of us to say **we're here, we're queer, get used to it** just the way we did 30 years ago. It's revolutionary, complete and total acceptance of our entire community, not just the ones the cishets can pretend to be comfortable with as long as we don't challenge them too much, or it's conceding the shoreline inch by inch to the rising waters of fascism until we've got nowhere left to stand and some of us start drowning.*

*That's it. Either it's all of us or it's none of us, because if we leave the answer up to the Reagans of the world and all the people who enabled him in the name of lower taxes and Democrats who wring their hands, weeping oh I don't agree with it but we'll lose the election if we fight it right now, the answer is none of us [[source Tumblr post](#), Vaspider: June 21st, 2022].*

*Fucking oath, sisters! Exceptions lead to genocide, of which the queer is a regular casualty [and which they internalize bigotry as a matter of dogma-through-osmosis]. Capital is profit is us-versus-them is tokenism the likes of which becomes nostalgic, displaced, holy under stories like Mandy. Never forget, we're living in Gothic times, cuties. We're the aliens Red would kill to avenge his dead wife.*

*Expressing the liminal nature of queerness-as-reprobate through criminal hauntology is certainly part of reclaiming our power under state duress [thus police violence]! This all but requires intersectional solidarity.)*

As a dubious contributor to a larger queer pathos, Lovecraft only *added* to the stigmas and violent hero logic that *Mandy* plays with/adheres to (a scourge for the hero to purge). I think you get the point. He's something of a spectre haunting such fictions' revenges against queer aliens, a giant dick still fucking us fags over in the fictions that survived him: inventing worlds that explained his awful, American-Nazi bigotry (colonizing fantasy for those purposes—i.e., nobody is more scared, violent or Quixotic than a Nazi; they make everything up, are essentially weird canonical nerds who use LARPer-style DARVO/obscurantism to invent entire



escapist, thoroughly callow *worldviews* to attack their boogey persons with, then call it "reason" [with a weird bent, in Lovecraft's case]. It's criminally insane, but also massively homophobic).

(artist: [Matthew Childers](#))

To that, Mandy's revenge is as much against stupid cartoons of gay people as it is the religious poors. In keeping with Lovecraft's codified mythos, though (the Great Old Ones), such enormities like *Mandy's* curiously homophobic, psychosexual church of death have since turned into a substantial-if-problematic conveyor of ghastly merchandise; i.e., one that skirts the line *between* canon and camp per the process of abjection by a closeted-to-homonormative middle class (something Matthew Lewis arguably did, but being far more GNC [out of the closet] and sex-positive in his camp than straight men tend to be):

Lovecraft had many faults, as a person and an author. David Barnett writes, "So why do we continue to fete Lovecraft instead of burying him quietly away?" It's a perfectly reasonable question; in the world of the university-appointed canonical author and the celebration of the politically-correct and the culturally-diverse, Lovecraft shouldn't exist. But "'Tis an unweeded garden / That grows to seed" and possessing things "rank and gross in

nature," Lovecraft flourishes. To this, Barnett cites Elizabeth Bear [who] freely admits that Lovecraft's views are "revolting," but she writes, "Lovecraft is successful because authors are read, beloved, and remembered, not for what they do wrong, but for what they do right, and what Lovecraft does right is so incredibly effective" (Persephone van der Waard's "[Method in His Madness](#)," 2017).

In short, "does right" within dialectical materialism is canonical propaganda dressed up as "gay" counterculture, to which Lovecraft offered a special blend of "rock and roll" fear and dogma to manipulate the wider public with: BDSM Nazis (a trend we'll explore more when we look at the Countess from *The Crimson Court* [exhibit 41h] in the vampire subchapter).

By extension, *Mandy* is homophobic because the monomyth (and its futile revenge) are homophobic, making it stuck somewhat in the *harmful*, regressive past the likes of which an utter ghoul like Lovecraft ruled.

This isn't too surprising. Profit *is* founded on division and rape, causing queerness to decay into bad cartoons of itself (of which the monomyth essentially is). Profit is heteronormative, thus homonormative: queerness tokenizing to help capital rape the queer as an extension of nature, thus capital's assigned prey by design decaying into its expected role, mid-paradigm. The fag becomes the Nazi *sans* irony.

Furthermore, fascism and Communism as "queer aliens" exist in the same shadow zone, one that Sontag touched with "[Fascinating Fascism](#)" back in 1974. Except, it's much older than that; i.e., has built up through centuries of genuine, heartfelt xenophobia/Cartesian superiority that leads to the Cycle of Kings as waiting to "wake up" not as the tyrant does over and over against the forces of good, but something worse that overshadows both (Cthulhu is both the zombie tyrant and the great Promethean disaster of Capitalism haunting its endless, hauntological hyperrealities) during monomyth pastiche; i.e, the same taboo naughty things Lovecraft played with as a bigot might:

[From] *The Eldritch Influence—The Life, Vision, and Phenomenon of H.P. Lovecraft*, I'll paraphrase Neil Gaiman, who being interviewed, essentially says,

Lovecraft is rock and roll. There is nobody else like him, then or now. Looking at H.G. Welles or Jules Verne, they did not give you a worldview. H.G. Welles wrote much scarier horror short stories than Lovecraft, and they are forgotten. Welles is a man, who, in his day experienced much more success—his works were filmed, and so on—but also a man who has nothing near the number of people reading his

works on a daily basis, now. On some kind of primal level, Lovecraft has people believing ([ibid.](#)).

"Belief" speaks to myth—particular *fascist* myth—as something to capitalize on, during *Pax Americana* as conducive to fascism (thus rape) per bourgeois socio-material conditions. Lovecraft isn't touching to anything "primal" (which would essentialize it), more than he's hitting a fascist nerve tied to present structures that people are memorializing through his abject stories; it's hero worship upholding the usual Cartesian nonsense (tut, tut, Gaiman).

Such is basically a long way of saying that queerness gentrifies and decays into heteronormative cartoons of itself, while also camping courtly love by making *it* gay in easily recognizable forms: a queer iconography that is alien, tentacle, from the stars (what Lovecraft lovingly calls "the unknown." Bitch, please. Men like you always think you own the universe, always abject [thus fear] women/the monstrous-feminine). To Lovecraft (and so many drafting *similar* stories), *we're* the unspeakable "thing that should not be" as a matter of abject dogma. But it's patently absurd because anal sex (and other forms of queer love besides sex, such as emotional attraction) aren't that scary *unless* you're a stupid, hateful bigot like Lovecraft who *thinks* he's smarter than he is; he's not, he's just a massive cunt (a pattern that will continue into other Cartesian men of reason, like Victor Frankenstein).

Such distinctions are seldom neat because exploitation and liberation exist in the same spaces of performance and play. Instead, it's important to recognize them so we can camp them back *with* irony. *Mandy* doesn't always have that, any more than Tim Curry and *Rocky Horror* did, fifty years ago (conservative straight people love that movie; i.e., by laughing *at* the fags' expense—a clown in the king's court)! I like both movies, but often prefer something a bit more friendly to queerness-as-alien (e.g., *Nimona*, exhibit 56d2). But stories like *Mandy* do speak to a time of transition leaving the closet. To avoid going back into it, we'll have to ultimately



leave that nostalgia behind, but can remember and recall it as a matter of history moving towards universal liberation out of heteronormative bondage.

(artist: [Michael Whelan](#))

The simple fact is, not everyone wants to indulge in the reality that we fags *are* viewed not just as false, but as abject pieces of shit that practice sodomy as "unnatural" to "proper society." To them, we're literally scum, the likes of which Cage kills without a second thought and which Lovecraft relegated to the position of

fearsome alien. We *are* awesomely powerful, but abject is abject and it needs irony to work... which Lovecraft's stories don't have.

Subverting canonical simulacra, then, is an act of conscious rebellion and playful interpretation of unironic bigotries; i.e., challenging Lovecraft and his ilk's heteronormative monopoly on queer sex demons (from Barker to Cosmatos) in monomythic stories—burning their churches down while camping them as a matter of inserting irony where irony is absent. It's something akin to fighting fire with fire to *avoid* the kinds of heteronormative undead revenge and blind sight that *Mandy* to some degree showcases: the martyred, idiotic hero/Roman fool stuck in a dogmatic hell of his own making (and turning Persephone into a ghost, frozen in time). It requires the informed examination of Gothic poetics as something to learn from and teach with inside our own mirror-like creations and what we, as workers, leave behind: "Look on *our* works, ye Mighty, and despair!"

Except *our* rock and roll is a cycle of *counter* pulp fiction—of constant, dark reinvention and dreamlike rememory of undead monsters and demons, but also symbols of sex, status and power relative to these things. In short, it needs *rockstars* (a concept we'll return to, again and again throughout the book, but cementing the notion as revolutionary praxis in Volume Three, Chapter Five) and vivid implements of power—monarchs and spaces—that *don't* uphold the status-quo proliferation of unironic rape as Lovecraft did:



(exhibit 40a4: Artist, bottom-left: [Frank Frazetta](#); bottom-left: Jean-Léon Gérôme's "Bonaparte Before the Sphinx"; middle-left and top-right: [Blxxd Bunny](#). Model and artist, middle-right: Blxxd Bunny and [Persephone van der Waard](#). Sight is something that can go both ways—is anisotropic, but also able to gaze upon persons and places that go hand-in-hand; e.g., zombies in hauntological "graveyards." This chiasmus also applies to the beholders of strange sights, who not only can see into potential worlds, but reflect those worlds back at canonical proponents in ways that freeze these viewers in their tracks. This needn't be the classic Archaic Mother's abject rage, but forms of social-[a]-sexual joy that are just as likely to petrify sex-coercive individuals. These can be from literal mirrors or cameras, or illustrations that "mirror" former artistic reflections on a hauntological past: Bonaparte doing his best to emulate Caesar or Alexander the Great by invading 19th century Egypt and gazing at the same colossal wreck backwards.)



(artist: [Blxxd Bunny](#))

Instead, gazing upon these awesome beauties is to both look into an imaginary past that never was, currently is, and *could be again* in the future: a Promethean knowledge that destroys workers and the world *so it may transform them* (versus the Faustian bargain capitalists rely on, locking things in place). The Broadway ticket lies in facing things that terrify the usual actors of the monomyth: the Cartesian male as a mad scientist and/or warrior-detective conqueror bent on destruction. Their subsequent change-of-heart must happen inside a monstrous-feminine space that "castrates" them; i.e., takes away their sinister, undead desire (thus addiction) to rape the womb of nature for the umpteenth time. Depriving them of the means to prey on the vulnerable in service to profit, we can end Capitalist Realism (thus Capitalism) through a nightmarish Ludo-Gothic BDSM fantasy that, when synthesized, informs reality as an ongoing exchange between the two.



Except, the ghost of the counterfeit *only* disarms the middle class of their bourgeois tendencies *when* abjection is reversed and *all* bigotries are actually confronted (through the usual monstrous aesthetics, abstractions, abbreviations) to *challenge* profit (not just homophobia, because homosexuality decays, too); i.e., regarding a group—the white, middle-class nuclear family and its members (example, above: "You're scared of this? You kids must be from the suburbs!")—that is normally threatened by, or at least afraid of, abject forces and normally relies on harmful counterfeit notions of state sovereignty relaid in such fictions (from Walpole onwards): the Promethean Quest inverting the unstoppable, mendacious and vengeful (thus frail, fallible, fearful, false) conqueror's monomyth as normally extending and defending said group and its token outliers from evil forces (men with claws for hands, velociraptors, killer sharks, etc): "Don't fuck with

the lords of Hell!" "Don't fuck with the babysitter!" However monstrous either side appears from a poetic standpoint, saber-rattling is saber-rattling.



During the dialectic of shelter and the alien, places and people engage to canonically further the process of abjection, punching the alien, the monstrous-feminine Medusa, per the ghost of the counterfeit (the spectre of genocide, of rebellion). Babysitter or badass, that's basically what these assorted protectors are—some codified aspect of the nuclear family defending itself as a form of assimilation/replication (e.g., Elizabeth Shue, Sigourney Weaver or Jamie Lee Curtis, as "mother") or avenging its destruction (e.g., Red, from *Mandy*, as "father," etc)—but when tied to capital, they take on a false, predatory and

incredibly xenophobic function: the white Indian, the exclusive victim against the wild, non-white world converging menacingly on women and children during societal decay and threatening them as such. Canon-wise, a woman may go wild, but only to *protect* the nuclear family from such slashers by being "the natural caregiver" (upholding said unit lest she become the irredeemable whore). Babysitting *is* dangerous!

*Mandy* is such a Quest, Red's vampiric, strung-out, crossfading (drunk and high) fall from grace built on homophobic, undead nostalgia like Lovecraft's *after* Red's family is destroyed; i.e., trapping him in the monomyth's endlessly dependent quest for revenge serving profit while illustrating its most harmful effects. Keeping Lovecraft in mind (though apart from him, the STEM fields are generally patriarchal and homophobic), part one shall examine the Promethean Quest through mad science; i.e., by examining it in *Forbidden Planet*, followed by the synthesizing of castle-narrative with the Metroidvania quest for the palliative Numinous (Otto's *mysterium tremendum*) less as "female" and more as monstrous-feminine more broadly—a Gothic-Communist Numinous scaring evil male nerds acting like scared bullies (similar to sailors fearing mermaids; i.e., girls and gay people have cooties; re: Lovecraft hated the sea as chthonic, monstrous-feminine)!

### **Postscript (a note about feeding and holistic exchange)**

A small note/postscript before we proceed: this subchapter isn't, as you've probably noticed, strictly about zombies. In fact, there's really not much difference between the different undead, or even demons and undead (and animals); i.e., poetic exchange being holistic, dualistic, and socio-material, etc. Feeding *is* a form of exchange, but it isn't strictly *negative* on its own (e.g., giving and receiving



vitality through sex, *vis-à-vis* John Donne's "Flea," to regain lost knowledge/avoid alienation in modern times); instead, capital's proponents (re: Lovecraft) *make* it that way as a matter of historical-material consequence: feeding to serve profit *by being unable to stop* during abjection—of fearing what you prey on, to ultimately exterminate it.



Red, for example, cannot stop taking power and never gives any back, his revenge built on shaky grounds (re: dead wife = false flag and creation myth) that invite future violence by a thoroughly alienized figure *servicing* state

interests. He cannot move on, taking more and more endlessly into the future while becoming frozen in time. An ironic lack of resolution makes *him* the next-in-line; i.e., to die when *he* kills someone else and the people who love *them* start looking for revenge. It's Capitalism-in-action, expressed in small through blank parody (re: Jameson).

Dramatic theatrics aside, monsters embody poetic expression, which links to material factors and vice versa: the flow of power and knowledge (wealth, labor and anything else), whose function ultimately remains anisotropic; i.e., determined by the *direction* of that flow towards workers or the state.

Even if this seems theoretically confusing and visually ambiguous, the clue lies in the healthiness of the exchange, the vitality given and received, whatever the form. Capitalists take and never give back, inventing all manner of silly reasons/arguments for doing so; i.e., raping the monstrous-feminine through the process of abjection in monstrous language. We reify the same arguments to *prevent* harm in the future, reversing abjection and sparing the monstrous-feminine from profit as a matter of rape already survived; re (from "[A Cruel Angel's Thesis](#)," which sums all of this up, and to which I giving here again as to not have to repeat myself, moving forwards):

"rape" is an acquired taste; victims of rape (whatever the form) experience medieval-coded, regressive fantasies of "rape" they ideally want to camp during ludo-Gothic BDSM to avoid actual rape (and overall harm) in the future. In turn, praxial catharsis occurs through iconoclasm while healing

from rape in xenophilic ways that involve nature as monstrous-feminine in fetishized, cliché sites of death, damage, decay and rebirth. As such, exploitation and liberation occupy the same shadow zones' theatrical spaces, the latter weaponized through the same linguo-material devices canonically waged *against* workers by traitorous forces; said workers reclaim these in public-to-private theatrical "danger disco"/rape-castle operatic spaces (and bodies) mapping trauma out: as something to immersively dance/party with (re: *cryptomimesis*, or fucking with the dead as a bad, Matthew-Lewis-style echo), adopting sex-positive strategies that resist capital/profit: by misbehaving as a matter of good sex education challenging profit as a matter of fact.

[...] monsters aren't just threats ("Alright you primitive screwheads! Listen up!"); they're poetic lenses that concern power as something to paradoxically shift *away* from state forces, mid-struggle. They are, like power more broadly, something to interrogate by going where *they* are through performance and play. This concerns war and rape, decay and feeding, transformation and fatal knowledge. All exchange per various human tissues as poetic material—from brains, to flesh, to blood, to cum, and others things we won't touch on as much (e.g., shit).

In turn, all overlap; all are modular and dualistic; all are psychosexually anisotropic insofar as power is concerned, because sex and force *are* power insofar as they are perceived through monsters as us-versus-them arguments—in short, how we function *as* monsters, how we feed, decay or transform, etc, mid-exchange. State power aggregates for profit to induce praxial inertia, and by extension a decrease in emotional/Gothic intelligence and class-cultural awareness. We must aggregate against all of these variables, thus the state's trifectas, monopolies and qualities of capital: through ludo-Gothic BDSM as *our* castle-narrative to weave into the future regarding something we won't live to see—a kind of "bucket list" to give back to future generations in very sexy-macabre ways; i.e., a "spit roast" that likes the very idea *before* the pole(s) go in—a piece of meat *with* agency and rights negotiating its own "rape" in ways that liberate all parties from profit and sexual harm, but play with the poetics, nonetheless; e.g., the captive fantasy with appreciative irony per ludo-Gothic BDSM. As such, the calculated risk should constitute a subversive act of illustrating mutual consent per intersectional solidarity between workers united against the state: to make "rape" impossible by putting it in quotes as a mutually consensual act!

I wouldn't stress all this monomorphic playfulness, holism, salubrious irony and duality of exchange (all aspects of Gothic Communism that challenge capital's singular, binarized alienation of things) if it wasn't important. But it's literally the

thesis argument of this particular volume half. So please bear it in mind as we continue discussing the monomyth (and castles and conquerors); i.e., as poetically modular and intersecting extensions of the same basic principles, of which the undead factor a great deal into ludo-Gothic BDSM/castle-narrative (which will come up, next) but also *aren't* separate from demons, nature and monstrous-feminine things at large.

From novels to movies to videogames, then, capital has their fakeries to further abjection by feeding on the monstrous-feminine abusing the ghost of the counterfeit to serve profit with; we reverse all of that using the same tools, to which—visibly undead and/or demonic—all function more or less the same: challenge profit's recursive predation. From specialist research to casual hobbyist, all are chosen through preference for (and fondness towards) their individual histories, in this respect; i.e., to communicate trauma and contribute knowledge, feeding and transformation unto these histories: a tireless, back-to-the-drawing-board joy experienced through active play to better understand the world, thus pierce any and all bourgeois illusions. Vampire (demon) castle, zombie Caesar giant, mad scientist ghost puppet? Po-tay-to, po-tah-to, it's all from Idaho!



## The Monomyth, part one: "She Fucks Back"; or, Revisiting *The Modern Prometheus* through Astronoetics: the Man of Reason and Cartesian Hubris versus the Womb of Nature in Metroidvania

"We are now three months into the year of our Lord, 2023<sup>168</sup>. At this moment in our civilization, we are on the verge of terraforming planets undiscovered just a decade ago. We have identified the genetic chain of events behind 98% of cancers—a chain we have broken, effectively curing them. We can create cybernetic individuals who, in just a few short years, will be completely indistinguishable from us. Which leads to an obvious conclusion: We are the gods now.

"I haven't been struck down. I take that to mean I'm right. We wield incredible power—the power to transform, to destroy and to create again. The question, of course, before us is, 'What the hell are we supposed to do with this power?' Or, more importantly, one should ask, 'What are we allowed to do with this power?' The answer to that, my friends, is nothing. Rules, restrictions, laws, ethical guidelines—all but forbidding us from moving forwards. Well, where were the ethics during the Arabian conflicts? Why are rules preventing us from feeding impoverished cultures? How is there a law which states, 'If we build a man from wires and metal—a man who will never grow old, a man who will never feel the heat of a star or the cold of the moon—how is the creation of such an incredible individual considered unnatural?'

"The answer to all these questions is simple: These rules exist because the people who created them were afraid of what would happen if they didn't. Well I am not afraid!

"For those of you who know me, you will be aware by now that my ambition is unlimited. You know that I will settle for nothing short of greatness, or I will die trying. For those of you who do not yet know me, allow me to introduce myself: My name is Peter Weyland. And if you'll indulge me, I'd like to change the world" ([source](#): American Rhetoric, Movie Speeches).

—Peter Weyland, *Prometheus* (2012)



Now that we've looked at the futile nature of undead revenge in *Mandy* and Lovecraft through the Promethean Quest, let's consider zombie tyrants and those who fuck back against them! Focusing on Metroidvania, "Monomyth," part one shall examine the man of reason and why he sucks, aka the spoiled rich-boy charlatan smugly playing God through astronoetic means (from

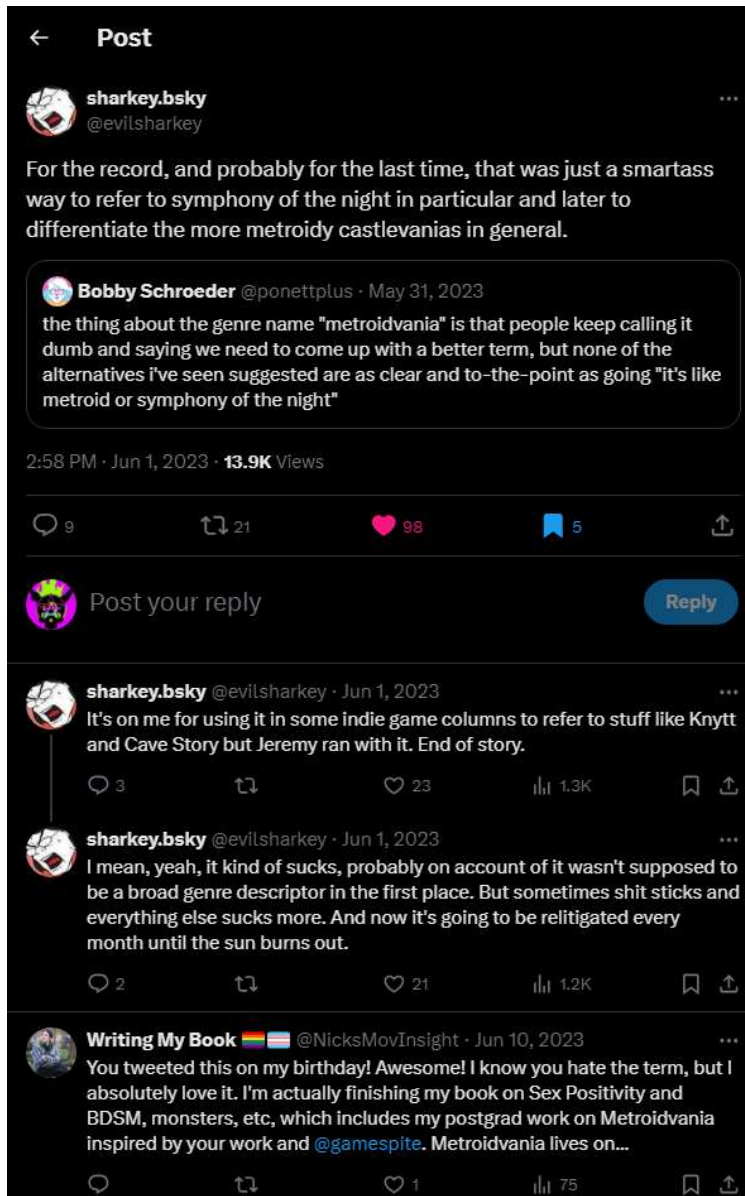
Victor Frankenstein to the Wizard of Oz to Peter Weyland [above] to Elon Musk, crypto bros and weird canonical nerds inside the Man Box). Astronoetics are what Michael Uhall calls [a celestial, intelligible presence](#) ("Astronoetic Cinema," 2019). Reframed by me slightly, it is the colonial gaze of Planet Earth in *any* imaginary

<sup>168</sup> The movie was made in 2012, speaking to a time on the verge of reality (as science fiction generally does) whose preface year has already come and gone. This isn't a far-off place that Scott was speaking to, with *Prometheus*, but the here-and-now dressed up as "Gothic." In turn, Weyland isn't some impossible figure relegated to pure make-believe. He's a venture capitalist enjoying the luxuries of Cartesian domination, holding the world hostage between his thumb and forefinger.

scenario, which the Metroidvania commonly portrays as nature vs civilization. Given the common confusion surround the term, I might as well spare you any extra headaches by supplying its assorted definitions, in whole and advance<sup>169</sup> (from the glossary—originally from my early PhD research, "[Mazes and Labyrinths](#)"):

### 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](#)).

<sup>169</sup> My master's thesis, "[Lost in Necropolis: The Continuation of Castle-Narrative beyond the Novel or Cinema, and into Metroidvania](#)" (2018) was docked quite a few points simply because I didn't quickly or accurately define Metroidvania to my graduate supervisors (one, Dale Townshend, saying he'd never played "a computer game in [his] life") or to my guest reader (also from MMU, though I forget his name). The guest reader in particular pointed out feeling confused because I hadn't explicitly mentioned Metroidvania until about twenty pages in!

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."

**Further Distinctions:** There are further ways to identify if a Metroidvania space is a maze or not. As I explain in my 2019 YouTube video, "[Metroidvania Series #2: Mazes and Labyrinths](#)":

What ultimately determines a Metroidvania's maze-ness are three sequences: the start, the middle, and the end. The start is what I consider to be the collection of essential items—power-ups you'll need to use for the entire game. Mid-game is the meat of the experience. The end sequence makes the win condition available to the player.

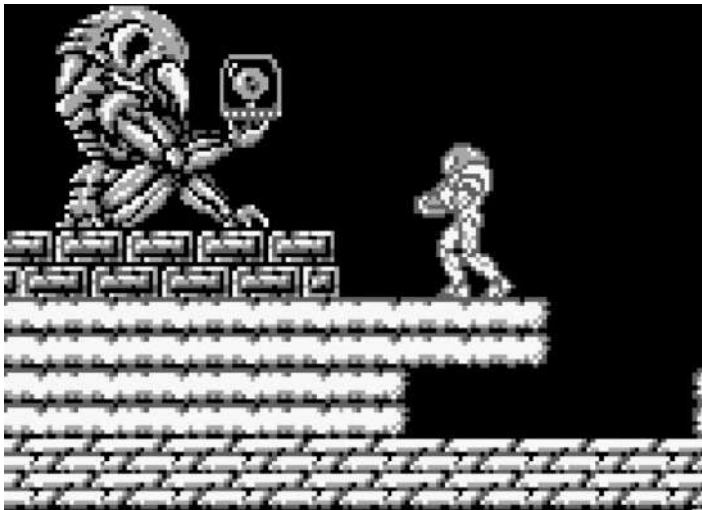
I mention item collection relative to these sequences because they are a core element of Metroidvania play, hence determine what kind of space the player is dealing with. In *Metroid*, for example, the Morph Ball, Bomb and Missiles are essential, and the player can acquire all of them rather quickly. Apart from

those, however, there are few items you actually need to complete the game. One of them is Ice Beam, which is required to kill metroids, thus gain access to Mother Brain (the game's end condition). Large portions of the game can be played without it, though. Like many Metroid power-ups, it is a mid-game collectible.

Item collection allows the player to leave the start and enter the middle. This section, I argue, determines whether or not a Metroidvania is a maze. If the majority of the game allows for sequence breaks, RBO (reverse boss order) and low-percent, then it is a maze; if not, it is a labyrinth. A Metroidvania can be either ([source](#): the original script on Google Docs).

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.*)

In essence, when I mention "the womb of nature" and "astronoetics," Metroidvania is what I'll be focusing on for much of the symposium. So keep the above definitions in mind as best you can!



Except, Metroidvania also came into existence fairly late in the game; i.e., a form of neoliberal dogma 1986 onwards, one whose history—of finding lost power in the "ancient alien" ruins (and my scholarship attached to it) as predicting the fall of the West back on Earth—took centuries to formalize. First exemplified by Shelley's *Frankenstein*, astronoetics crystalized in the realm of

relatively current science fiction starting with Lovecraft's sole novel, *At the Mountains of Madness* (1936): cosmic nihilism, or the idea of uncolonized space (nature) as indomitable, thus indifferent to Man as a colonial force per Reason raping Earth, then the stars! Other stories include *Forbidden Planet* and *Alien*, but also *Hamlet*, *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Castle of Otranto*. We'll mention them all, here; i.e., while talking about Metroidvania as a critical device conducive towards and corollary to ludo-Gothic BDSM as defined by me, built on the above palimpsests; re (also from the glossary):

### Ludo-Gothic BDSM

My combining of an older academic term, [Laurie Taylor's] "[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 *Metrodvania* 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.



The follow-through, here, is that men of reason suck in these stories as a matter of playful critique, one whose hot-potato displacement—of capital passing the buck onto ancient, seemingly alien empires or allegorical, magically reassembled fantasy worlds—dates back to Walpole's *Otranto* (for aesthetics, splendid lies, dead giveaways), following Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein, the Modern Prometheus*, exploring the cynical nature of such tyrants to begin with: those who know the cost of everything but the value of nothing as hidden (along with their deep-seated insecurities) behind a perfidious veneer of reason, of the so-called



knowing-better good father looking out for his children and the world by "just asking questions."

In truth, such men can't love anything but themselves and their own legacy as a matter of embodying Capitalism, which they do quite gladly. They're literally the poster children of it, enjoying all of its benefits, including always appearing right, good, and correct, hence being able to arbitrate violence against anything that "isn't"; i.e., by playing god, punching down against the state's usual targets: nature, workers and the monstrous-feminine, forcing the latter to fuck back by punching up while receiving state harm as something to subvert during rape play (which ludo-Gothic BDSM boils down to) by using Athena's Aegis inside Metroidvania.

The fact remains that men like Weyland rape nature all the time, but only double their efforts when they—like the system they personify—reliably starts to die (false power). In turn, the state and its men of reason will do anything to preserve themselves, weaponizing their own bloodline against nature, the latter having evolved to resist dominion (thus rape) through counterterrorism and asymmetrical warfare.



As these men begin to die, everything falls apart in one last-ditch effort to hold onto capitalistic godhood; i.e., choking on the very things they eat to remind them of their cruelty and their hubris (not per Freud's id, but per Marx's capital routinely projected into Gothic, Promethean language riffing on parental elements that Freud

essentialized as a matter of the crystalized nuclear home): "Where's the robot to pat you on the back, or the engineer? [...] There you see, now, how all your so-called power counts for absolutely nothing? How your entire empire of destruction comes crashing down, all because of one. Little. Cherry!"

To such stupid and embarrassing tyrants, I now want to consider nature (and labor's) indomitability through the monomyth when camped by the Promethean Quest as personally and spatially monstrous-feminine; i.e., going heroically into and staying inside Hell as researched according to *my* expertise: videogames as Gothic chronotopes connected to the Promethean Quest, per Metroidvania. Going beyond Shelley or Lovecraft and into Metroidvania, I'll try to stay focused on their connected, monomythic histories that—while older than Cameron's 1986 refrain, *Aliens* (which inspired the shooter genre, but also the Metroidvania)—nevertheless attach to capital presently as we inspect the Metroidvania space itself: as something to reify and move through across the centuries and media types (from

novels to cinema to videogames; from outer space to European castles, and in between those things).

We'll do so through several arguments I want to you to keep in mind. I say that because frankly there's a lot to discuss, this symposium more an opportunity to raise issues for you to confront and grapple with yourselves; i.e., while showing you the cryptonymic, disguise-like qualities to such subversive query and rebellion when faced with Cartesian copycats looking to pacify our stewardship of nature (indented for emphasis):

Per Hogle, the Gothic is predicated on fakery through the process of abjection attacking nature *vis-à-vis* the ghost of the counterfeit; i.e., nature as alien/monstrous-feminine, colonized by the sovereign West through Cartesian thought. Historical materialism proliferates decay and deception through open secrets (casualties of empire, but also empire in decay expressed in medieval language; e.g., castles) that no one side can monopolize, but for which terror and obfuscation allow either side to partially conceal themselves with, using the cryptonymy process to operate in capital's wake: to either defend the status quo while wearing its victims and symbols of oppression, or to undermine it through the same basic means.

In short, anytime I say "camouflage" or "disguise," this is basically what I'm talking about. Furthermore, Promethean space (usually castles) is part of this decay and deception under capital, for workers vs the state (often, as nature vs civilization); it's something of a "dead giveaway" as person or place—both invented, and restlessly pointing into half-hidden atrocities and subterfuge materializing between opposing forces: on their charged surfaces and inside their dualistic thresholds, asking to be looked into "on the ashes of something not quite fully present."

That being said, we'll likewise look at the persons and parental themes involved when capital colonizes said spaces (the womb of nature projected into outer space, or frozen, uninhabitably barren/cold, desert-like territories comparable to outer space), then consider the ways in which all this colonization can be subverted/camped and reversed, power-wise; i.e., with Metroidvania persons and places; re: the dialectic of shelter and the alien enacted canonically through people (men of reason) and places (castles, including Metroidvania) to punch Medusa (indented for emphasis):

That's what the Promethean Quest effectively encapsulates and discourages, Medusa fucking back to reverse the flow of power and information the monomyth normally supplies in outright parental language, but also monomythic media exposed to middle-class children at a young age; i.e., standing in for absentee parents (videogames, for our purposes): the givers of Cartesian dogma, but also rebellious sentiment through Promethean

allegory (the appearance of the black castle/fallen *manmade* paradise to begin with).

Consider the above indented portions something of twin thesis statements for the rest of "The Monomyth," part one—arguments, mid-symposium, that we'll touch upon sporadically as we bounce between parent and palace, person and place; i.e., as parts of the same Promethean stories and their liminal expression conveyed through part one's looser, conversational style: built to move through and intimate different legendary elements of real life, as the chronotope does.



To it, astro-noetics are both a settler-colonial narrative voicing the usual things up for grabs (the nuclear family threatened by mad science in a frontier narrative, left), while also remaining a popular cautionary tale about displaced Cartesian overreach; i.e., by sucky men of science embodying Capitalism and its

Gothic consequences and divisions (and whose Enlightenment-style enslaving of nature through retro-futurist language pushes nature-as-*robata* [slave] to fight back, posthuman-style), then carried forward into *At the Mountains of Madness*, then *Forbidden Planet*, then *Alien*, and finally into videogames but especially *Metrodvania*! The *heroes* are villains *posturing as good*, in these stories (often men of means—white-collar criminals [which men of reason essentially are] acting like blue-collar frontiersmen rebelling against capital, but point-in-fact serving it as usual to a mythological degree; i.e., technologically superior space cowboys)!

We'll consider such a parental abjection of nature (and its reversal by monstrous-feminine agents) in *Metrodvania* based, more or less, on monomythic stories like *Alien* and *Forbidden Planet* as going all the way back to *Frankenstein* critiquing capital with Walpole's prurient, medieval, nigh-raunchy-at-times elements (often via royalty and wealthy persons, which men of reason generally are): a vulgar (common) marriage of sex, terror and force, as the Gothic does, through imaginary conquest per Promethean critiques of the monomyth, of capital, of entitled Cartesian dickwads (we go high *and* low, Michelle Obama)!

There's certainly an element of rape play to consider through these things. To clarify, though, our focus will be on *Metrod*-style (non-linear) spaces or offshoots per the man of reason (or token agent; e.g., Samus Aran as cowgirl and white savior/white Indian working for the Man) and Aguirre's infernal concentric pattern, not *Castlevania* or other videogames that seemingly obey the same basic

idea<sup>170</sup> of the Hero's Journey into and out of Hell; i.e., as a space to explore and conquer per the usual cartographic refrains (stab, punch and shoot the monster inside a given map). Here, we'll just be focusing on the one that best illustrates spatially and theatrically what inspired my concept, ludo-Gothic BDSM, per "[Our Ludic Masters](#)" onwards (for the entire catalog of such spaces, refer to my earlier PhD research, "[Mazes and Labyrinths](#)"; also, "[War Vaginas](#)" provides some good examples of monstrous-feminine space, weapons and heroes).



(artist: [Pepe-Navarro](#))

For our purposes moving forwards, *Metroidvania* (and its forebears) are defined by *Amazonian* movement (and battle) through closed space, often a dungeon or a castle of some kind as occupied by Numinous, Promethean power

(the semi-abstract presence of rape and dominion fused into the architecture). In turn, any of them invoke the confrontation of difficult truths, which are the first step towards healing from capital's abuses: nature as alienated from us by Cartesian elements, including death as uncomfortable to face but also rape and abuse relative to nature as normally dominated by patriarchal exterminators going into Hell (standing in for Earth as otherworldly doubles). Alienize, then rape behind the lies, the camouflage, the debris, the records; it's well and truly Cartesian thought's *raison d'être*!

For example, the *metroids*, above, are synonymous with the gameworld they inhabit, but also the Galactic Federation's desire to colonize outer space as an older cycle of conquest bleeding into newer ones that ape the same basic pattern in and out of fiction. As such, Cartesian domination ranges spatio-temporally from the faux-Egyptian Chozo as nodding to Giger's own dark pyramids, such *cryptomimesis* reaching all the way back to British Romanticism and Orientalism—by Percy Shelley's "Ozymandias" following Napoleon's raping of Egypt—and all the way forwards to the Federation's girl boss, Samus, embodying her employer's frontier vampirism. While all of these things point to real-world abuse committed by

<sup>170</sup> To this, the monomyth concept isn't unique to *Metroidvania*, and *is* expressed in other videogames like *Zelda* (the open-to-closed space), *Mega Man* or *Contra* (the run 'n gun), *Resident Evil* (the survival horror), *System Shock* (the action-adventure), *Doom* (the FPS), and *Mario* (the platformer). However, none of them are Gothic as a matter of space that illustrates Aguirre's inversion of the Hero's Journey through said space, hence don't automatically apply to ludo-Gothic BDSM as having been founded on maze-like Gothic spaces (and their monstrous-feminine occupants, within, punching up against Cartesian men).

Cartesian forces policing nature—essentially conveyed in fictional, romantic language whose people and places mirror non-fictional atrocities—Samus does so through the metroid tied to her as the xenomorph was to Ripley and the Creature to Victor Frankenstein, etc; i.e., as weaponized *for* Cartesian, thus state hegemony in an astrozoetic sense: the tokenization of the monstrous-feminine as increasingly xenomorphic in ways that feel ontologically ambiguous.



(artist: [Hybrid Mink](#))

Per the Promethean Quest (which *Metroid* most certainly is), nature-as-technology becomes an unnatural predation on itself through the copying of such things via police interference (e.g., "the weapons division," from *Alien*, which it looks like we'll finally see with *Alien: Romulus* [[my thoughts on the final trailer](#)] when a team of robbers break into an overrun science facility run by humans in space, not humanoid space aliens on *terra firma*). It's no coincidence, then, that Samus' suit is generally a stand-in for the monsters she kills but also the state secrets (crimes of genocide) her employers pay *her* to commit for profit (which the franchise calls "peace in space"<sup>171</sup>); i.e., policing nature while wearing its dead as trophies, Artemis-style; e.g., the Phazon armor from *Prime* (2002), Dark Samus from *Prime 2* (2004), or the SA-X from *Fusion* (2002), but also the Metroid suit from *Dread* (above, 2021): the white Indian summoned as a neoconservative lullaby cannibalizing the very things that became emblematic of an ongoing war of extermination—one waged by Cartesian men of reason against the womb of nature as something abject to rape (a wild land where the Wild Things Are to make "wild rumpus" in for the state, for men of reason): by our resident TERF furthering abjection, Man-Box-style (the armored maiden punching "nature" as "cosmic rapist"). It's so fearsome that trying to bond with it is generally seen as a fate worse than death ("Kill me!" from *Aliens*, being a not-so-subtle reversal of "Help me!" from Vincent Prince's *The Fly*, 1958).

In other words, such things are an affront to nature (commonly portrayed as "bestiality"—the part-human, part-animal quality of so many ancient gods) as raped by Cartesian forces playing the tyrant and the white-Indian false-rebel; i.e., disguising the Capitalocene through monomythic likenesses that are passed down, only to be rejected by Promethean stories walking the tightrope. The quiet part is said out loud in Gothic fashion: dancing in the ruins *as* Promethean, having power hidden inside them, waiting to be found through play with "old" dead things left

<sup>171</sup> As the opening to *Super Metroid* explains, "The last metroid is in captivity. The galaxy is at peace." *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

behind in some shape or form (capital relying on the monomyth's unironic forms, "Hell" being the past as something to invade in the real world; i.e., the Global North invading the Global South as "past," where Imperialism, thus genocide and rape, still occur). That's simply how humans work; no sense in abolishing or poo-pooing such stories (re: Frederic Jameson's *Postmodernism* and Botting's "[Future Horror](#)").

(artist: Ayami Kojima)



Except, Promethean stories decay as a matter of function, tokenizing like all things do under capital. As such, it sucks to experience these kinds of abuses in ways that encourage assimilation and reactive violence (starting all the way back with *Frankenstein*). On the flipside, they become something to grow accustomed towards, thus can be weaponized once more *against* our abusers as thoroughly unused to seeing such things thrown back at them; i.e., to look on death but especially genocide, and

see oneself and one's belief system, held accountable: as alien, impotent, fallen from grace, the ivory tower and manliness (as they see it). As such, the primary vector for Cartesian downfall via the Promethean Quest is mad science, through which the monstrous-feminine is increasingly non-Vitruvian in its appearance (akin to Milton's Satan dropping its angelic guise).

For example, while Victor's Creature was more or less humanoid, Lovecraft's novelized bogeyman, the amorphous shoggoth, was anything but. Even so, it remained monstrous-feminine in response to a Cartesian effort to conquer the world (abjected onto beings from outer space, of course); i.e., the Archaic Mother (the Medusa) as a fearsome bugbear haunting the *inheritors* of genocide (the Promethean ruin): the humans who saw it last. They were explorers themselves, feeling their own extinction anxieties peak regarding patriarchal conquest bounced back at *them* from a dead alien city occupied by rogue technology run amok; i.e., something Lovecraft described as a tunnel, a bottomless well: as fallible thus finite inside a living space built on genocide (re: Le Guinn's Omelas).

However, instead of Shelley or Lovecraft (the former who we'll obviously touch on, the latter whose work feels incredibly soulless and bare), we'll introduce all of these devices—the man of reason, the Promethean Quest, bad parentage, people and places, Amazons and Medusa—through cinema (a little bit) and videogames (a lot) as closer to neoliberalism's remediation of such devices (corporations don't write novels, at least not to anywhere near the same extent as

they produce movies and videogames, because people have to be literate to consume them).

We'll start with *Forbidden Planet*, a film that laid the cinematic groundwork, Freudian worship (and wizardly spectacle) for *Alien*, after which the Metroidvania put the Promethean Quest in the *player's* hands (the avatar). From there, we'll consider how this ludic potential manifests in ludo-Gothic BDSM *vis-à-vis* castles (and their occupants) in Metroidvania; i.e., a synthesizing of castle-narrative and monstrous-feminine potential to subvert Cartesian hegemony in defense of nature, thus workers and the world at large normally raped by the state and men of reason. In the Gothic, history *is* a castle whose pieces get up and move around; in short, they interact as the Gothic does, between the space and its legends tied imaginarily to real people and places decaying and regenerating to yield fresh synthesis over space-time. Contradiction is to be expected—is part of the process during the arguments that unfold literally dueling back and forth; i.e., from Otranto to Metroidvania, as the chaff and critique of capital stirring such things up.

For a bit of fun, we'll actually look at two Metroidvania—indeed, the same two Metroidvania I did for my master's thesis back in 2018, *Axiom Verge* and *Hollow Knight*:

- **Part zero, "[Men of Reason Suck'; or, Ghosts of Freud in Forbidden Planet, and the Gendered Components of Gothic Space \(and Its History of Scholarship\) as Tied to Capitalism in Disguise](#)":** Sets the table. Looks at the history of Promethean Gothic expression through people and places, looking at older theatrical works and mythic structures—i.e., about/disguising Capitalism as surviving in more modern examples like *Forbidden Planet* through which Metroidvania like *Metroid* operate—then catalogs that history of scholarship (my contributions, some of them) for you to consider and refer back to, when reading parts one and two (the close-reads).
- **Part one, "[Away with the Faeries; or, Double Trouble in Axiom Verge](#)":** Considers people first, places (and space) second; i.e., the seemingly Freudian, *Amazonomachy*-style astronoetics (colonial gaze of planet Earth) and parental themes from *Frankenstein* and *Forbidden Planet*, translating nicely into the Metroidvania space, of which we'll consider through a dialectical-material sense pointed at Thomas Happ's 2014 one-man-show, *Axiom Verge*.
- **Part two, "[Look upon my Works, ye Mighty'; or, the Infernal Concentric Pattern and Rape Play in Hollow Knight and Metroidvania at Large](#)":** Considers space<sup>172</sup> first, people second; i.e., explores my grad

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<sup>172</sup> Although maps are a huge part of the Metroidvania world as a matter of conquest, this has largely already been covered in Volume Zero, my PhD (re: Tolkien and Cameron's refrains). Instead, we'll be *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

school and postgrad research into Metroidvania, but especially Bakhtin's chronotope and Aguirre's infernal concentric pattern in *Hollow Knight* as informing what eventually became ludo-Gothic BDSM: a means of rape play (whose performative, revolutionary nuances we'll also unpack).

The sex-positive idea in doing so is to return not just to people and spaces, but headspaces that, since then, have produced important ideas; i.e., regarding Cartesian thought personified to conquer others behind a veneer of reason and benevolent parentage (re: "thinking beings," per Cartesian dualism). Metroidvania and other Promethean spaces aren't just places of exquisite torture (re: Radcliffe) per Bakhtin's Gothic chronotope—or a Freudian playground that Barbara Creed made a career out of—but something vast and hauntological that yielded new GNC ideas of revolutionary play whose Promethean attack addresses old problems (rape, racism and genocide) stemming from Cartesian thought and its monomythic undead elements under neoliberal Capitalism and Capitalist Realism (re: *Mandy* and Lovecraft). The idea is to leave the racism of actual men like Lovecraft (and fictional ones like Frankenstein) behind when practicing ludo-Gothic BDSM, but keep the Numinous feelings for palliative reasons that actually predate him.

To that, this section specifically combines my postgrad research after writing my PhD (Volume Zero of *Sex Positivity*), making "She Fucks Back" a culmination of my life's work on the subject; it's my Metroidvania magnum opus and I'm very proud of it! "The Metroidvania castle, as far as I'm concerned, is the perfect dom," I write in Volume Zero. This, as we shall see, is as much the byproduct of an



interaction between myself and all that came before: the Medusa as communed with through space and occupant, past and present, scholar and consumer sitting somewhere in between all of them. No one ever said BDSM wasn't iconic; lost in the Communist-Numinous potential of such fractals, our freaky big girl both struggles to break free, and is something of a rope bunny who digs the paradoxical bondage (of genuine liberation, to be clear) she ropes others into as well: Cartesian gonads acquired.

(artist: [VG Yum](#))

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focusing on aesthetics—the motion, appearance and thematic elements that emerge through the exploration of map-like spaces in Metroidvania.

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**Metroidvania, part zero: "Men of Reason Suck"; or, Ghosts of Freud in *Forbidden Planet*, and the Gendered Components of Gothic Space (and Its History of Scholarship) as Tied to Capitalism in Disguise**

"Doc, is it a male or a female?" / "For me, sir, the question is totally without meaning!"

—"Cookie" to Doctor Ostro, and Robby the Robot's reply, *Forbidden Planet*

The "Metroidvania" symposium is all about parents—good and bad—in monomythic stories, which the Promethean Quest reverses while using the same basic camouflage (Capitalism disguises itself as noble and good, but also doomed in an endless loop—playing the victim as mythologized, which Victor does). To that, the man of reason is an Enlightenment idea, from which settler colonialism (rape and genocide) sprang from Cartesian thought dominating nature for profit<sup>173</sup> (from Columbus' earliest experiments, to Descartes and Francis Bacon's revolution, onwards), and survived monomythically per Lovecraft and other space-centric



follow-throughs of the 1818 original (Shelley loved her big open spaces, whereas Lovecraft leaned into giant alien ruins surrounded by said spaces—a derelict colony, in other words); i.e., as haunted by ghosts of genocide extending from a desolate planet Earth into outer space, both curiously forbidding *and* inviting like a Gothic castle: technophobia as corrupting the "natural order" of the nuclear family unit. Communist robots bad!

<sup>173</sup> Generation of wealth in or outside of imperial sectors was classically done through conquest, not profit through capital and privatization; i.e., rapine, often through the stealing of gold and other valuable things by force. These things could be mined from the Earth and smelted, but again, this took a labor force (usually serfs or chattel slaves). Trade and things existed but were beholden to the same technological limitations.

Over time, though, capital developed through Capitalism's ability to increasingly exploit the land through people the state could attack; i.e., not what it could steal from them in a pinch, but occupy and enslave according to the privatization of labor (factories and workers) pitted against an enemy linked to nature as abject: framed as being against civilization because nature was suddenly alien, monstrous-feminine. Doing so combined centuries of dogma, imperial nostalgia (for Rome), and recent scientific advancements granting the state the ability to pit one legitimate population against an illegitimate one with industrialized materiel (moral territories). In short, the state could do Imperialism on repeat, moving money through nature (with advanced weapons technologies) to achieve profit in pursuit of infinite growth per the regular rise and fall of Capitalism's boom-and-bust mechanism.

Through the monomyth, the canonical Gothic has abjected this procedure to displaced older times, digging said "past" up in ways the state can use as middle-class propaganda; i.e., to remain vigilant lest "our" empire fall, too. The conquest element never really went away, then. It just became privatized, but also industrious/sacred (the Protestant work ethic) and hidden away behind capitalistic illusions that romanticize Cartesian thought as "tragic," but ultimately something to debate, thus apologize for (and continue to authorize state violence with during *Pax Americana* under Capitalist Realism). The Promethean Quest challenges all of this by framing the usual benefactors as dickwads, hence the state and its Cartesian dogma.

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To it, I want to unpack all of that now, in part zero; i.e., by looking at various "ghosts" that haunt the whole Promethean enterprise: Freud and *Forbidden Planet*, but also *Hamlet* and other Shakespearean works (and Gothic scholarship) tied to Metrodvania concerning the same struggles between civilization and nature as gendered (whose trappings we'll both want to escape, and use to our benefit). That way, you'll be nice and prepared when we get to the close-readings of *Axiom Verge* and *Hollow Knight*, in parts one and two!

As Shelley's *Frankenstein* demonstrates, the quest for forbidden knowledge is built on the past development of Capitalism during the Enlightenment; i.e., historically a settler-colonial ordeal that abjures past-and-future attempts at post-scarcity—one whose prophesied chickens in 1818 have been coming home to roost for centuries. For those inside the Imperial Core (thus under the protection of its barriers including Capitalist Realism), these threats of long overdue reprisals classically manifest in and of the mind attached to derelict ruins: what Dr. Ostro in *Forbidden Planet* calls "Monsters from the Id." They're dark, ominous and Freudian—an event horizon per person and place pointing to former crimes they have inherited against nature, then try to rationalize away (such obfuscation, as Radcliffe shows with *her* castles and protracted suspense, is ultimately a skill one can master for different reasons).

It's all very theatrical (with Shelley arguably camping the Byronic hero through Victor Frankenstein); to that, if you're wondering why I didn't just stick with Lovecraft because he's the logical palimpsest, I frankly think Walter Pidgeon's Morbius in *Forbidden Planet* is far *more* theatrical (the movie being a retelling of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, 1611), but still has the suitably Gothic spaces, sexuality<sup>174</sup> and awesome alien presence (of nature seeking revenge) infringing on

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<sup>174</sup> I.e., fighting over the damsel who, however insignificant she might seem, indicates the larger capitalist enterprise: space as female under frontier Capitalism (the *final* frontier), but also monstrous-feminine.

So while Zack Welker writes dismissively in "The Lack of Female Importance in *Forbidden Planet*" (2017)

In *Forbidden Planet*, one can see that there is only one woman throughout the film. Now, usually one would think since she's the only female in the film she must have some significance. But that is not the case here. In this film, Altaira (the only female) is treated as an object and a distraction ([source](#)).

the fact remains, she is the sole focus, and—more to the point—a heteronormative *ritual* of pursuit that disguises the ubiquitous Cartesian presence of the soldiers and why Morbius dislikes them so much: the colonization of outer space as seen through their unflattering, predatory behavior towards his young horny daughter.

To it, you could just as easily swap the princess out with the Peking duck from *The Pink Panther Strikes Again* ("My duck, I must have you!"); the principles of consumption, of propriety and vice (the virgin/whore) vs nature as something to dominate are still going to be at work in such stories (with Gothic canon being obsessed with emulating older morality plays regarding women and the home as beset by wild forces). The movie is Capitalism in small (and the Capitalocene—a dead, mostly lifeless planet; i.e., the absentee Mother), but also Capitalism-in-disguise as borrowed from older Gothic stories under Capitalist Realism: the ending of "other" empires and "their" worlds.

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the nuclear family unit that came to define Metrodvania out of older forms of similar castles: novels and stage plays.



In short, the movie's man-of-reason monomyth, per the angry space dad punishing his disobedient daughter (similar to Egeus, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, invoking the right of Ancient Athens), translates better into what *Axiom Verge* eventually leaned into—*vis-à-vis* Shelley's original novel and ironic themes of bad parentage

critiquing capital—than what Lovecraft did to *not* critique capital (whose story has no children, but also appears to lack the performative irony that Morbius and Trace [the hero of *Axiom Verge*] try to communicate in protest<sup>175</sup> of settler colonialism through astronoetic language): a psychomachy between two (or more) sides of a *divided* man of reason/mad scientist, the man-in-question still somewhat humane (thus redeemable) *despite* his tragic-hero hubris (we'll get to unlikeable men of reason when we close-read *Axiom Verge*, trust me). He's a recluse, not a billionaire, his head stuck in his books while he tries to understand genocide as a symptom of capital pushed to the furthest reaches of outer space (and which Ostro blames on the id, Freud's "subconscious primitive," not Captialism; i.e., a Frankensteinian *return* to tradition and superstition by the man calling himself a "doctor" chastising the movie's rebel figure).

More to the point, the monomyth is tied to bad parents as a theatrical device; i.e., one of bad instruction, for which Morbius wants to punish his daughter for running away with the soldiers. To this, Morbius' magnetic rise and fall mirrors the Krell before him: an ancient, "great and noble" alien race that stands in for Lovecraft's aliens before *Planet* and the Chozo after it. At the height of their civilization, the Krell are attacked by their own brutal past as brought back to life through technology pulling it, Metis-style, out of their minds. In Gothic terms, this

<sup>175</sup> You could argue Lovecraft protests settler colonialism by historicizing its collapse, but he does it self-centeredly and abjectly towards colonized worlds as attacked by barbarians from within (the Caesar conspiracy also abused by Hitler in the 1920s); i.e., as Victor Frankenstein does, so busy "doing science" that he has no time to relate to other people (including his wife, who dies because he's rearing the fight the monster and forgets about her).

By comparison, Morbius certainly isn't perfect, but he *really* doesn't like soldiers or colonialism. To be sure, he does so to a fault ("the scurry and strife of humankind" sounding somewhat bitter), but the romantic elements have a lot more personality than Lovecraft; i.e., which, in my mind, help make up the usual bleeding heart of the Gothic Romance. Morbius is misunderstood and tragic; Lovecraft is a craven, homophobic bigot with zero pulse. As we'll see, so is Athetos, sp paranoid of his own son that he tells his "children" (the variations) to kill Trace (the call coming from inside the house, as it were): "DEMON. ATHETOS SAY, KILL."

extends to the space for which all tyrants belong to and inherit as part of a larger structure the Gothic speaks to in monomythic language; re, capital (from Volume Two, part two's thesis): "Capitalism achieves profit by moving money through nature; profit is built on trauma and division, wherein anything that serves profit gentrifies and decays, over and over while preying on nature."

From the Krell to the Chozo, the Promethean Quest effectively reverses this predation—and the monomyth's usual flow of power—by showing the audience what Cartesian men are *really* like; i.e., by recontextualizing genocide: vampiric sires who have their vampire castles, separating along with them from nature and Earth as something that, littered with the remains of older examples, comes home to roost in person and place. Again, it's a colony whose fruits of genocide are poisonous.

Except, whether from Dr. Ostro or Barbara Creed, we're really not keen on Freudian psychoanalysis, preferring dialectical-material scrutiny. But we *can* regard the problem of Freud's ghost—specifically the essay, "Medusa's Head" (1926)—as something that speaks to current historical-material tensions felt in present struggles: Medusa's killing by brave men of reason scared to death of the things they *want* to control as archaic, older than them and civilization. All of this ties up in monomythic language, which survives in dialectical-material forms that *aren't* incumbent on psychoanalysis at all; they're stories that communicate themes about competing socio-material forces, using the Promethean Quest as shorthand.



This includes movies like *Forbidden Planet*, of course, but also the Metroidvania that drew inspiration from them and their palimpsestuous forebears to varying degrees; e.g., Athetos and Trace, but also Mother Brain and Samus (and other character from that franchise who abuse said

technology *against* Samus—like Raven Beak, above), M.U.T.H.U.R. and Ripley, HAL 9000 and Dave, etc, as inspired by Shelley's original novel (effectively the benchmark for the Promethean Quest as a critical device towards capital in all its forms). We shall now outline and survey these parental Freudian devices, while avoiding Freud's quack, canonical obsessions essentializing the nuclear family unit.

As such, we'll continue examining how the man of reason functions per the Promethean myth against nature, albeit continuing briefly with Morbius (exhibit 40b) instead of Victor (who we're reversing for the Demon Module) before quickly

segueing into Metroidvania that feature much less sympathetic characters than him. We'll start with *Axiom Verge* (exhibit 6b2), then look into *Metroid* (exhibit 40d1), whose Amazonian histories we'll tie into Trace and his own ghostly tyrant, Athetos (not just a mad scientist, but a brain in a jar<sup>176</sup>), during the close-read in part one:



([source](#): Fandom)

As Morbius shows us (exhibit 40b, next page), the main consequence—of attempting to revive the monstrous-feminine for anything other than pro-state means—is death. Though certainly powerful, reverse abjection also invites state violence against its performers. Historically scapegoated as "mad," reverse abjection is often framed as a "female" delivery mode that regularly bears fatal consequences against anything monstrous-feminine (not just female): self-destruction, insofar as the self is predominantly male, straight, European. By comparison, abjection—despite being entirely menticial through state-coerced violence—is not only seen as life-saving and normal in canonical narratives, but *rationally* as male. Indeed, we can see both sides of the process in *Forbidden Planet*, when man-of-reason Doctor Morbius warns the military men about looking directly into the planetary reactor on Altair-4: "Remember to gaze only into the reflector, gentlemen; man does not behold the Gorgon and live!" Morbius is effectively playing god, here, warning the soldiers like Lot's wife.

Yet, as is the plight of power and parentage in science fiction since *Frankenstein*, the rational *man* of science also fears *mad* science; i.e., a Promethean Quest where the hero tries to control its chaotic power for himself only to be punished for it. To that, Morbius keeps the wonders of the Krell tucked away from the soldiers and scientists on Earth, fearing *their* abuse of weaponized science.

Eventually Morbius is forced to confront the invisible, monstrous side of himself that has been terminally enlarged by the Great Machine (a "brain boost," which the movie discourages; i.e., *wanting* people to literally be dumber and not "play god" by investigating genocide outside of canonical, Freudian explanations). Forced to look upon *his* "Gorgon," the ghostly (and famously invisible) Monster

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<sup>176</sup> A cheeky nod to Tithonus:

**Tithonus**, in Greek [legend](#), son of [Laomedon](#), king of [Troy](#), and of Strymo, daughter of the river Scamander. [Eos](#) (Aurora) fell in love with Tithonus and took him to Ethiopia, where she [bore](#) Emathion and [Memnon](#). According to the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite*, when Eos asked Zeus to grant Tithonus eternal life, the god consented. But Eos forgot to ask also for eternal youth, so her husband grew old and withered ([source](#): Britannica)

More to the point, men of reason (and the states attached to them) are always trying to cheat death by colonizing nature as monstrous-feminine.

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

from the Id, Morbius inexplicably dies (seemingly of shame by threatening his own bloodline—a common fate for many fathers in neo-Gothic novels): he's the movie's scapegoat, attacking the soldiers for their active "conquest of space<sup>177</sup>" (again, as something to subjugate, to subdue, to colonize).



(*exhibit 40b: The psychomachy of Morbius, meaning "mind battle." The idea stems from older forms of storytelling including the Elizabethan play. A common rendition of it is*

*the angel and the devil on one's shoulders; another is the Amazonomachy or "Amazon battle," frequently depicted in classical Greek art—literally a battle of the sexes, with the Amazons being demonized for challenging the status quo as mythological conquerors that emasculate men. Dressed in black, Morbius realizes he's the vampire dad feeding on his own daughter [the argument made by the soldier, of course]: "My evil self is at that door and I have no power to stop it!" Per the film, he's the vampire, not the state, and they take his findings on the Krell with them after blowing Morbius' castle up with the planet [a trope that Alien and Metroid would repeat]. It's capital punishment, Red-Scare-in-disguise.)*

Morbius is a detective puzzling over the ruins of a great, seemingly abandoned civilization he has effectively inherited. Devoid of life, all he can do is use the language and bits of technology left behind, leading to a slow, inexorable confrontation with a dark, primitive and ultimately "female" aspect to what the movie, per Freud, attributes to his psyche; i.e., "unlocked" by the wonderous technology of these truant aliens.

Except, the same basic scapegoating—of nature as monstrous-feminine magically causing the downfall of patriarchal civilization—is present in many Promethean narratives; e.g., *At the Mountains of Madness* and the nebulous, dark shapelessness of its shoggoth imitators (a weaponized biology build to attack rebelling slaves) living in the ruins of a former civilization returning to nature, but also the female Rusalki from *Axiom Verge*, the intersex xenomorph from *Alien* (and the Alien Queen from *Aliens*), or the queenly Radiance from *Hollow Knight*, Mother Brain, etc. They aren't simply female, but monstrous-feminine tied to nature rebelling with technology they turn against the patriarch; i.e., as the technology (the *robata*, the worker-slave) that refuses to obey the profit motive.

<sup>177</sup> Which the narrator of the film openly describes their mission as, at the start of the movie.

Though founded on military conquests behind Enlightenment obfuscation, it's important to remember the privileged stupidity of the man of reason; i.e., his *incompetence*. Good or bad, for capital or against it, we're not talking about Heinlein's Competent Man; i.e., exhibiting military optimism (a neoconservative return to force) in order to maintain peace, thus recolonize old territories threatened by collapse. Instead, Victor Frankenstein and Morbius are both know-it-alls and thoroughly incompetent men tied to violent structures (which Morbius, to his credit, abjures), but still have the superiority complex and desire to kill as inherited from the same basic ideological structure they abandon for their own scholarly pursuits (with Victor being a "natural philosopher" and Morbius being a philologist, or expert of ancient written languages). There's a Promethean element, insofar as power is found, not bargained for—a fatal magic for which *Morbius* isn't just the story's Prospero (the wizard from *The Tempest* seeking revenge against those who wronged him) but its *Prometheus* challenging state power in ways that movies' soldiers (and Victor in Shelley's book) want to salvage *for* Capitalism.

To that, *Frankenstein*—and indeed, the Modern Prometheus in connection to the monomyth critiquing capital—is about resisting bad parents playing god for or against the state; i.e., something we'll explore now, when the man of reason falls prey to embarrassing hubris while grappling with Medusa using his wits (which often devise weapons of a nigh-wizardly sort); re: Icarus (the person) escaping the labyrinth (the space to explore) to crash into the sea after flying too close to the sun, to the gods and their Promethean fire. Generally without weapons, himself, there is always a military presence tucked away in the wreckage (or seeking it out).

Furthermore, through the Metis-style parentage of the Promethean Quest,



Victor and Morbius externalize internalized portions of their own selves informed by their socio-material conditions, which they at first deny, then recognize as "other" and proceed to attack (the recipient of these abuses seeking revenge against the colonizer—a topic for the Demon Module). It's a psychomachy made-flesh, one fought between the wizard's swollen ego, and the ghost of the counterfeit piloted by the spirit of the colonized into stories like *Frankenstein*, *Forbidden Planet* and *Metrodvania*: to look on oneself as a dark reflection of empire-as-dead by virtue of nature turning technology against the patriarch that one embodies (the plot to *Axiom Verge*, in particular)!

(artist: [Joaquin Rodriguez](#))

In propaganda terms, this is called "the useful idiot." Poor Morbius is sacrificed by the movie and gaslit by the soldiers. Victor, meanwhile, is so dumb, so colossally arrogant, that he thinks he not only invented the problem, but that *he's* the one to solve it—in essence, that the universe revolves around him. Morbius is more likeable, and even anti-establishment, but still works within the same narrative devices informed by his material surroundings—in short, the castle *he* inherits.

To *that*, dated psychoanalysis pits a self-centered rationalization of the benign male scientist as forced to confront an oft-female but always monstrous-feminine aspect of the psyche—a fearsome, at-times-invisible bugbear doubling as black mirror pushing genocide towards the hero; i.e., someone tied to the rational, good, civilized self. The thought process becomes something to inherit, its evils meant to be overcome or slain through force while classically ignoring the Marxist elements: the material conditions. As Gothic Communists, we're attaching the process of abjection to socio-material elements; i.e., capitalist dogma; e.g., Cartesian thought and capital, which are exposed in the process (to *pay* attention to "the man behind the curtain," as he stands in front of it, deifying himself for all to see). Victor and Morbius' parents are not shown in their stories. As we'll see with Trace in *Axiom Verge*, though, the useful idiot can either be manipulated by patriarchal or matriarchal forces, Athetos or the Rusalki; i.e., seemingly on opposite ends of the Cartesian spectrum, but both decaying inside a forever war's damned, closed-space territory.

As we shall also see when we look at *Frankenstein* later in the volume, Promethean narratives like *Forbidden Planet* often present the hero as flawed, but ultimately noble and representing "progress" as delayed ("Your father's name will shine again!"). In historical-material terms, however, "progress" (through the state) is inherently genocidal, abjecting the slaughter of anyone like Morbius who stands *against* the elite, the latter capitalizing on monomythic technology as a poetic means of exchange. Facing that reality is traumatic, but also something of a partial surprise, given these giant ruins seldom spell things out; they have to be sifted through, leading to some nasty surprises hidden inside (the movie is effectively a giant strawman/gaslight, putting the argument for Morbius' death on his own shoulders; i.e., by virtue of him playing god as forbidden by God and God's rules throughout the galaxy—the elite: "Don't do Communism, kids! That includes making ambiguously gay robots [the servant trope] and investigating genocide!").

If all this sounds vaguely familiar, it's because the cautionary tale of "curiosity kills the cat" was highlighted repeatedly by Mary Shelley's *ur-text*, *Frankenstein*, bleeding into present-day works (from novels, to cinema, to Metroidvania). While scientific curiosity is specifically something Victor Frankenstein warns against after giving birth to his own creation (and which Morbius, shocked to death, advocates by destroying the titular forbidden planet), he ultimately bemoans his own station and rejects the ancient Medusa's rage; i.e., as a byproduct of



concealed, but also embodied genocide attached to Enlightenment thought: the zombie-like children of these men-of-reason as warlike (Morbius' Robby is patently designed to follow commands and not kill "rational, thinking beings"; i.e., Asimov's first law of robotics).

As we'll see, though, the children of a given parent convey different qualities about the creator and their beliefs. Morbius is basically a Communist, so he uses the power of the gods (again, finding it in a faraway magical place) to make a machine—Robby the Robot—that, in turn, can make anything *it* wants (the Philosopher's Stone); Victor, by comparison, is a cunt, so he makes something he can dominate and abuse for the state. The violent "offspring" from *At the Mountains of Madness* likewise serve a shapeshifting military role that is rejected by the hero (who runs away as fast as *he* can); the Rusalki from *Axiom Verge*, were made by something faraway and magical, too, survived by the resurrection machines that, once Athetos finds them, he promptly begins to abuse. The Rusalki (and similar Amazons, below) are monstrous-feminized; i.e., in the traditional sense of "repressed" and "chaotic," reduced to naughty little girls standing in the way of male progress, of *daddy* playing god (which, per Freud, Morbius' id serves to enact the same female, irrational side of himself that God—male, all-wise and all-powerful—will always punish for being like a girl: curious and inquisitive as a means of understanding and ultimately befriending nature).



(artist: [Devilhs](#))

The idea is both older and newer than *Forbidden Planet*, surviving in various stories that came after it. This brings us to Metroidvania, whereupon games like *Metroid* and *Axiom Verge* present the Promethean Quest as the fatal discovery that one's actual or *de facto* parents suck royal ass, and that one's home is ultimately doomed

because of it (founded on nature as raped by science); i.e., there's a couple basic ideas about Metroidvania that come from *Forbidden Planet*, *At the Mountains of Madness*, and ultimately from *Frankenstein* (and to a lesser extent, *The Tempest*):

- a hero is summoned from earthly spaces by the gods to break the stalemate between nature and civilization
- they learn about their infernal, godly parentage (raised by wolves, bird people, or mad scientists, etc); i.e., that they're Persephone come home; or Alucard, son of Dracula; etc

- the land of the gods is destroyed afterwards; e.g., blowing up a planet, sinking an island, or closing a gate that leads to such places; i.e., destroying evidence and witnesses, but also keeping monomythic mementos (souvenirs) while treating the larger event as dream-like similar to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—something to suggest and dismiss

Science and technology become mythical, even magical, but still comment on our world now in relation to technology and Capitalism "back then" as inherently illusory, manipulative and unstable.

A Promethean story revolves around the child as coming of age while inheriting the past through such discoveries: hell (and the gods, fascism and nature) coming home. Their parents are away, asleep or otherwise, and the child (often grown up, like Morbius and Victor, but also Samus, below) must explore the hellish home (the *unheimlich*) to put the wrong things right. In doing so, the home wakes up, putting the child in danger while teaching them about their doomed past (often through heraldry and statues, below). The past, then, becomes something to inherit and destroy with whatever's on hand, scuttling the castle, the boat, the giant (or some combination of these things) as having the means to self-destruct built in; e.g., the switch in Morbius' lab or the Nostromo's scuttle mechanism, etc.



(artist: [MirroredR](#))

That's the *basic* message, mind you. Inside a given Metroidvania, however, the scuttling happens in service to one parent or the other—the father or the mother, which translates to Cartesian powers or powers of nature as monstrous-feminine: Pygmalion vs

Galatea, Zeus vs Medusa (or some such Archaic Mother), Victor vs Frankenstein, capital vs nature. To it, we always start and end with the same gladiatorial metaphor for capital canonically recruiting soldiers to its cause; i.e., as something to iconoclastically reverse through its monomythic people and places—its dramas, in other words.

Pertaining to said parentage expressed in monomythic language per the Promethean Quest, I'd like to pause things before we proceed onto *Axiom Verge*, in part—to unpack some of these concepts in relation to the historical-material struggle between masculine and feminine forces inside Metroidvania; i.e., that my scholarship has struggle to synthesize over time, interweaving during Promethean narratives that feature the zombie tyrant as a man-of-reason, but also the Amazon and Medusa as beings to subjugate and rape, *ad infinitum*, under his endless lies.

*A note about ambiguity and dialectical-material scrutiny as we proceed into Metroidvania: The Gothic is generally ambiguous as a point of practice; the Promethean Quest camping the monomyth leads to repeating cycles (and fractal recursion) that—at least from a visual standpoint—become increasingly ambiguous dialogs about who is good and who is not. This extends from Shelley's originators, Victor and the Creature in singular human form, onto Happ's Trace as copied from Athetos for him (the father) and his enemies the Rusalki (the mothers) to debate with (thus the player/audience); i.e., about the ethics of Capitalism, of genocide, of progress. Similar to Shelley's novel (and any Promethean work), there's a strong mythological and dramatic flavor to Axiom Verge or Metroid, making either a wrestler's opera whose dialogs about the transfer of power become much easier to parse (concerning class character); i.e., by virtue of dialectical-material scrutiny and of action (re: flow determines function, insofar as flowing power towards workers is ethical, sex-positive, and iconoclastic, whereas flowing power towards the state is not). —Perse*

As my expertise, here, comes from studying Metroidvania as Gothic chronotopes that came after *Forbidden Planet*, we'll look at different examples from my graduate and postgraduate work concerned with *Metroid* and *Axiom Verge* (and their palimpsests); i.e., in the rest of part zero of the symposium, followed by close-reads of *Axiom Verge* and *Hollow Knight*, in parts one and two. All parts also include older research of mine about Gothic stories—including sections of writing from my discontinued book, *Neoliberalism in Yesterday's Heroes* (2021)—and the idea of synthesizing fresh growth and healing amid settler-colonial decay remains a common theme. Here in part zero, we've already introduced *Forbidden Planet* and the core rudiments of the Promethean drama. We'll want to consider some of their unironic elements in *Metroid*, followed by *Axiom Verge* doing *its* best to satirize to these Promethean theatrics.

All the while, I'll try *my* best to synthesize points already made in this volume with that of Volume Zero—namely that all roads lead to Rome as a space of nature colonized by Cartesian forces; i.e., a dark, vengeful womb that, in defense of itself, terrifies its attackers and nurtures its defenders through counterterrorist means: a palliative Numinous that isn't strictly "female" per Beauvoir's "woman is other," but nature as monstrous-feminine *food* for Cartesian forces preying on it long after Rome "fell" (it merely transformed into kingdoms, then nation-states, then capital and corporations). Simply put, parents lie and often pit their children against each other during the divorce; i.e., in terms of Cartesian agents vs agents of nature as monstrous-feminine; e.g., Athetos and the Rusalki, with Trace stuck in the middle (exhibit 6b2, next page).

More to the point, this can be subverted through such characters compared to older variants (re: Samus and Mother Brain), but doing so takes work, and illustrates complicated labor exchanges that cheerfully encourage the Young-At-

Heart; i.e., to play with monsters, dolls, faeries, and rape during ludo-Gothic BDSM. If you're queer, Metroidvania are the places to find out<sup>178</sup> (from Volume One):

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*

<sup>178</sup> Generally the discovery happens as a matter of empathy towards various characters, onstage, the page or the screen; i.e., who do you side with—the old creepy scientist guy or the big gay faeries trying to survive in between fiction and reality? No one ever said being queer was easy! But it is fun! The key to escape, lovelies, is liberation, and that happens inside the text as half-real, between reality and imagination as negotiating power for workers or the state! Don't fight the ghost of the counterfeit to further abjection; dance with it, and all your dreams will—if not for you, then your children or your children's children (the future, in other words)—come true!

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.*

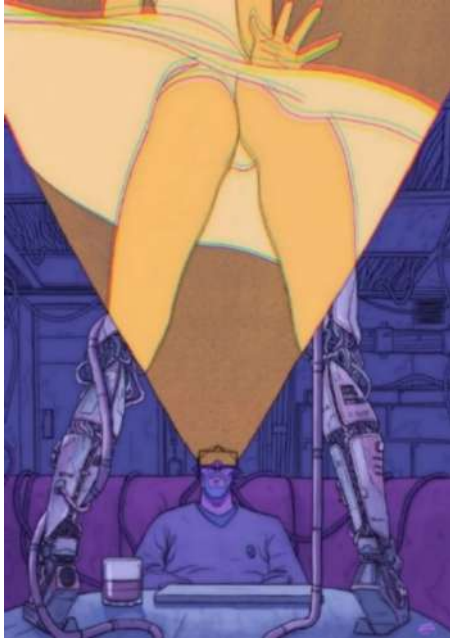
*The game's narrative installs a psychomachic, psychosexual dialog between all parties, established through play and felt through various positions of ignorance, knowledge and power imbalance. The women of the game are its primary instructors, and teach Trace from a place of darkness: the hellish wellspring 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: [monstrous-feminine] 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 reality between such Promethean stories as half-real (reversing power, thus capital, between fantasy and real life) is that sex workers are lumped in with Medusa as some giant being for men of reason to rape and destroy *for profit*; i.e., labor-as-subject having to lie to survive against a system that lies to further itself: by insisting that *Medusa* is the threat (the Promethean Quest *is* a quest of self-destruction, but also self-deception). Wars are messy to begin with; inherited, their dogmatic confusions only compound—vast and overwhelming (as castles generally are) but also *pacifying*. Such castled instruction, then, is half-real; i.e., in between



the text and the world it illustrates (seemingly *ex nihilo*, however abstract), hence must occur in a liminal sense, as "caught between" two places. We don't want our students (other workers, regardless of age) to mark us with their flashlight eyes, then kill us as capital prefers; but we're forced to speak to them as objects trying to rehumanize ourselves out of Gothic fiction into Gothic *non-fiction*:

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

All of this *Amazonomachy*-style cryptonymy relates to the grim harvests we alluded to at the start of the chapter and which we discussed in Volume One: a peach to carve up, which must become an Aegis to paralyse our conquerors with; e.g., Trace hypnotized by the Rusalki's Numinous "enormity" (their awesome power often coming from their eyes, or their voice as told through their eyes: the Radiance's flashing gaze, or Mother Brain's terrific rainbow beam paralyzing Samus the invader to then try to eat<sup>179</sup> her). This cannibalism is what Capitalist Realism ultimately tries to hide in its cycle of monomythic violence, and what we want to face, expose and transform using our own Promethean stories' dark mommy doms as, to some extent, already dead (above). Ours must reflect genocide, projecting it back onto the colonizers trying to displace their own anxieties and misdeeds onto "elsewhere" (the land of the gods).

Again, we'll get to that. First, let's lay out the territories, gendered narrative devices, and Gothic theories pertaining to architecture and space that I have

<sup>179</sup> The duality of monsters and their theatrics lets Communists occupy Samus; i.e., as a vehicle for proletarian (thus subversive) aims. But it doesn't change the fact that her intended function is a token cop committing genocide for the state by colonizing the old ruin: a subjugated Amazon abjecting its maternal tyrant as both an infernal perversion of nature through mad science (the brain in a jar/glass womb) and the monstrous-feminine enemy of state forces during monomythic forays in to Hell. Per the cryptonymy process, Mother Brains completes the double operation by pushing visions of state abuse onto Samus, who rejects them by beheading Mother Brain. Their status as enemies is naturalized per Capitalism Realism under neoliberal dogma (videogames).

contributed to in the past and continue to do so into the present; re: by revisiting my older work on *Metroid* and *Metroidvania* for the rest of part zero, then specifically *Axiom Verge* in part one and *Hollow Knight* in part two; i.e., Medusa (and her womb) or Medusa's enemies (men of reason and the cops who serve them) as commonly portrayed in these stories. From there, we'll sally forth into other exciting zones (open battle, in part two of "The Monomyth"); as we do, always remember the root function such fictions, as ludo-Gothic BDSM, have: calculated risk.

Per the calculated risk, the paradox of danger inside the *Metroidvania* equals that of the castle lifted from older fictions (and their castles): danger as a performance of thrilling "peril" that can be survived even when the protagonist "buys the farm" (avatar death). The Gothic castle, as I put in Volume Zero, is still "the perfect dom," because true rape is more or less impossible inside a consensual theatre of imprisonment where the player *cannot* die (excluding serious medical conditions the game and its data can somehow affect):

The idea is to liberate ourselves with fairly negotiated, thus cathartic, dungeon fantasies that camp canon through counterterrorist theatre to whatever degree feels correct to us; e.g., me in a haunted castle, wandering through the dark, menacing halls while wearing a sexy dress (and nothing under it, my bare body molested by the breeze and the fabric): a hopelessly *vulnerable* Gothic heroine feeling pretty and desired, hungrily and desperately interrogating the musical, cobwebbed gloomth<sup>180</sup> while scarcely having anything between me and certain "doom." As usual, the Gothic

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<sup>180</sup> Gloomth (from my PhD) "being the gloom and warmth attributed to Horace Walpole's gothic villa, and by extension his novel":

As Dale Townshend writes in *Gothic Antiquity*:

Rejecting Mann's suggestions of a Gothic garden at Strawberry Hill, Walpole claims that "Gothic is merely architecture," and resides in the "satisfaction" that one derives from "imprinting the gloomth of abbeys and cathedrals on one's house." The letter proceeds to illustrate the "venerable barbarism" of the Gothic style through another telling description of the Paraclete: "my house is so monastic," Walpole claims, "that I have a little hall decked with long saints in lean arched windows and with taper columns, which we call the Paraclete, in memory of Eloisa's cloister." It is thus through the oxymoronic categories of "venerable gloom," "venerable barbarism," and "gloomth"—a compound word formed of "gloom" and "warmth"—that Walpole was able to negotiate the discursive impasse at the heart of eighteenth-century perceptions of Gothic architecture: though undoubtedly an example of Evelyn's and Wren's "monkish piles" or Middleton's "nurseries of superstition," the ecclesiastical Gothic could be retrieved as "venerable barbarism" when it was enlisted in the service of modern Protestant domesticity ([source](#)).

For Walpole, gloomth was a carefully cultivated hauntological expression—of the civilized and barbaric—into something beautiful and unique. Later, his own villa inspired him to write what is arguably considered to be the first Gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto* ([source](#)).

paradox allows for intense, oxymoronic dualities to coexist at the same time in the same space (e.g., "sad cum" or "gloomth" or similar and confused degrees of "verklemt" during the castle's psychosexual, emotional "storm"). Simply put, I *want* to feel naked and exposed, thus paradoxically most alive in ways that I have negotiated through the contract between me and the media I'm working with (wherein the Metroidvania castle, as far as I'm concerned, is the perfect dom); i.e., while being "hunted" and covered in rebellious "kick me" symbols and clothing that advertises my true self<sup>181</sup> as naked, colorful and dark, as if to tease the viewer in the shadows to try something ([source](#)).

In my master's thesis, "Lost in Necropolis," I acknowledge this ergodic motion (that is, motion accomplished through non-trivial effort; re: [Aarseth](#)) as something of a natural procedure responding to Metroidvania; i.e., as a kind of maze to discover and then navigate, as the legendary land of the gods: "Metroidvania spaces are so conducive to speedrunning as to make avoiding it an arduous task" ([source](#)). In doing so, players improve over time because that's how playing videogames works; i.e., we're being taught by the game but also pick up the game as something to master in return; e.g., I struggled to beat *Mega Man V* for the original, brick-sized Gameboy under nine hours, the first time, but afterwards could beat it under two. Mastery goes both ways.

With ludo-Gothic BDSM, the same idea applies to more than just ludology or Gothic architecture, but the complex (and inherited) emotions and BDSM interactions associated with the Neo-Gothic, retro-future hallways and rooms being braved during Cameron's refrain (the shooter but also the Metroidvania closed space). We can best these in-game trials (and their famous, ubiquitous tortures) in traditionally masculine or feminine ways (the male or female Neo-Gothic hero; e.g., Emily St. Aubert or Ludovico, from *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794), but still yield fresh, GNC interpretations that challenge capital, profit, rape, and genocide.

In doing so, however, players must always respect such devices, lest they conceal or further genocide outside of themselves; i.e., as something to perform and "discover" by inadvertently fostering heteronormativity as a Cartesian byproduct well at home in Metroidvania that players carry into their waking moments: the land of the gods coming home during the Imperial Boomerang and its subsequent moral panic and apocalypse!

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<sup>181</sup> As my true self, I didn't have to change who I was to fit in, and I could wear whatever I wanted to be myself in the process—if only onstage or on the canvas at first, to slowly acclimate myself to the idea that I wasn't "asking for it" while paradoxically invoking these inherited anxieties onstage; nor was I a threat to society as I saw it—i.e., I wasn't a fraudulent "man-in-a-dress" worming my way into "real women's" spaces (classic impostor syndrome); I *was* a real woman, and my art and medievalist education slowly bonded more and more to become a way of tangibly presenting that idea to the world.





(exhibit 40c: Artist, far-top-left: [Paulo Henrique Marcondes](#); mid-top-left: [concept art for Samus Returns](#), 2017; right: Caspar David Friedrich; everything else: [Wildragon](#). Unlike Samus, who is a tall, strong girl boss in a suit of space armor, Trace is a callow, physically awkward nerd with a gun [re: a spoof of Cameron's Amazonian shooter]. Moreover, he is continuously dwarfed by his alien surroundings—much like the British Romantic facing the fog of an increasingly alien world beyond civilization, except it's a patently human cruelty projected into outer space; re: astro-noetics.)

Metroidvania, then, are the multimedia continuation of a larger historical-material cycle—one of dark, imprecise, dialectical-material reflection about Cartesian forces and their monstrous-feminine victims. Home to the Capitalocene, such things are impossibly large in scope and scale, strangely difficult to put one's finger on and yet seemingly everywhere all at once. They move but stay put.

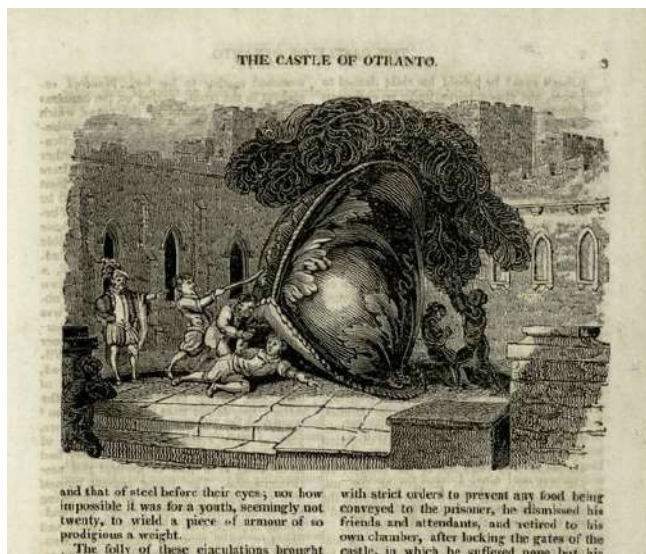
For instance, I note in "Lost in Necropolis" that terrible abuse struggles to map itself, but survives through the player as the next in line:

Across Gothic media, there remains an excessive quality of time that cannot be mapped, or expressed in clear terms. Instead, it pools inside the space. The returning hero is doomed to face the past again and again, a series of doubles. They can subvert old tyrannies by seizing control, but remain trapped or exiled, themselves. For example, Samus is nomadic, without a home; so is Ellen Ripley from *Aliens* or Victoria, from Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya; or, the Moor* (1806). Men experience it is as well, in terms of motion

as gendered, but also said motion contested, within a given arc and across all of them. The Knight a wandering warrior, destroyed upon his return; Mather Lewis' Ambrosio dies an ignominious death. For any hero, it is not simply a call to arms, but a rite of passage wherein the hero constantly infers whatever lies in store for them whilst inside; yet, it is always hidden, revealed too late: they were the destroyer all along. This can be of the space, others, or themselves, and there is no escape from that. One cannot avoid death, or concerns about death relative to growth established through motion; it and Other doubles collect within the space as historical byproducts of motion ([source](#)).

In short, the monomythic process is always left behind inside the current castle as echoing older castles (and heroes) tied to Capitalism and its woes across space-time (and its Gothic abstractions).

In turn, this articulation of concealment concerns Enlightenment thought as camouflage, which my PhD and subsequent books would build on (re: "[Canonical Essentialism](#)")—that cartography is a tool of Cartesian domination felt in and across Metroidvania narratives, one operating in service of cataloging conquest in BDSM language; i.e., of the former ruin's occupation and its past trauma's reabsorption into empire as a corruption of rewritten memories where power is notably unequal and transferred continually as such (master and slave, dominant and submissive, savior and destroyer).



([source](#): Hans Staats' "*Mastering Nature: War Gothic and the Monstrous Anthropocene*," 2016)

To it, Gothic castles in Metroidvania are built to be moved through, thus both conceal and catalog Cartesian dogma as a map of itself; i.e., a liminal space, specifically a grave, that was, is, and will be conquered by the mighty ghost of the past *again*. Classically said ghost is a giant suit of armor that interrupts the husbandry of said dominion; i.e., the

giant helmet in *Otranto* crushing Lord Manfred's son to death, *Looney-Tunes*-style, on the very first page:

Shocked with these lamentable sounds, and dreading he knew not what, he advanced hastily—but what a sight for a father's eyes!—he beheld his child

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
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dashed to pieces, and almost buried under an enormous helmet, an hundred times more large than any casque ever made for human being, and shaded with a proportionable quantity of black feathers ([source](#)).

Except the ontological uncertainty of the living dead (a zombie), and the suit of armor as animate-inanimate, is a byproduct of a constantly revived medieval working at cross purposes; i.e., one where the organic-inorganic—or bio-mechanical nature of a concentric, *mise-en-abyme* (the space and occupant as equally castle-like)—yields future liminalities that collectively denote not just the Anthropocene, but the Capitalocene as endlessly swept up in Gothic recursion.

For example, said *cryptomimesis* conjures up as "castle" that contains, per the Modern Prometheus, the tell-tale xenomorph; i.e., as an abyss-walker ghost haunted by its older counterfeit self (a bit like Hamlet, below) as trapped inside a Gothic castle: a ghost of the counterfeit. Both homely and inhospitable, it remains the usual place to dance and play with such beings during demon BDSM (as the boss music, "[Trace Rising](#)," lovingly shows). Where there's a castle, there's a rape, but a ghostly ongoing and vague one linked to Capitalism raping nature under the (dis)guise of divine providence further the process of abjection—one that points to Enlightenment virtues claiming to have moved past such barbarism; i.e., a displaced symbol of current systemic atrocities dressed up as "past" (re: Punter).

For all its "recent" sci-fi trappings, then, *Metroidvania* are ghost stories much in the same way Shelley's novel borrowed from *Hamlet* before it (and *Paradise Lost*, but I digress); i.e., a hauntological, canceled-future dance party going back to the future of a past moment in imaginary space-time: civilization as conquered by nature as returning from the grave to seek revenge against Cartesian forces several generations removed.

The Gothic castle, then, is the home of fabrication and paradox since Horace Walpole (at least), but one whose place of endless possibilities both resist quantification (colonization) and beg to be played for GNC, postcolonial purposes during Promethean stories (found power and knowledge); i.e., the ghosts of the dead resisting mapping and cataloging only to reappear in the contested burial site, phasing in and out of existence as written regarding great trauma tied to the usual abuses of capital against nature: to terrify people with visions of Hell as attached to the haunted castle grounds! As Hamlet's father's ghost puts it:

I am thy father's spirit,  
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,  
And for the day confin'd to fast in fires,  
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature  
Are burnt and purg'd away. But that I am forbid  
To tell the secrets of my prison house,  
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word

Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,  
 Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,  
 Thy knotted and combined locks to part,  
 And each particular hair to stand on end  
 Like quills upon the fretful porcupine ([source](#)).

As we'll see when looking at *Metroid* and *Axiom Verge*, such dialogs are part-in-parcel with Metroidvania.

For example, just as Hamlet talks with his father's ghost to uncover and participate in revenge (above)—effectively a mad quest linked to his ancestral home as unjustly occupied by imposturous forces—*Axiom Verge* takes the same basic idea and marries it to Victor's Promethean dialogs with the Creature; i.e., Trace talking to Athetos through his creations, who want to kill the son *for* the father because Trace is being led toward Athetos *by the faeries* (making *him* the princess inside the castle attacked by the paranoid old man, below): as a matter of self-destructive power tied to the land of the gods as ancestral/soaked in the blood of mutual revenge (this isn't a "both sides" issue—Cartesian thought is wrong in this case—but both sides still overlap in terms of their shared actions as disguise-like, but also derelict allegories; e.g., "I'm not a revolutionary! I'm just a gay Gothic scholar telling stories!" We kick up chaff to raise issues, but also cloud ourselves in the inky gloom).

Likewise, *Metroid* depicts Samus as conversing with ghosts, too; i.e., those of fallen gods (the Chozo) belonging to part of the same kind of abandoned homestead *she* is destined to inherit, investigate, and like Prince Hamlet, ultimately destroy and pass on! History is a game of inheritance built on individual histories disguising one side or the other using the same aesthetics of power and death.



A castle in a Gothic story, then, is a highly specific (and aesthetic) arrangement of space and time, on whose narratives concerning power and death, nature and civilization, are told through motion responding as a story unto itself (a story in a story responding back and forth). As a

fundamental part of the Gothic chronotope, Bakhtin refers to the ongoing relationship—i.e., between the space, its historical past/undead trauma, and the people moving inside of it—as follows; re:

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.

In turn, I would call this "castle-narrative" regarding Metroidvania for my masters' thesis. More to the point, I would and will continue to argue that the Radcliffean "closed space" is unmappable as a claustrophobic, "event horizon" (re, Hogle: "a vanishing point")—a liminal space that requires non-trivial effort to explore; i.e., of trauma tied to the human body and mind expressed in monstrous language (re: castle-like bodies and vice versa, per "[Castles in the Flesh](#)") contained within that the player can sense the enormity of (Capitalism and Communism) as visualized to a woefully small degree: a dark forest (the classic precursor to Hell from *Dante's Inferno* and its numerous allusions in later canon) can be giant, but one can only see a small portion of it.



(artist: [Missuscrim](#))

Under Capitalism, Medusa is a tyrant as much as Dracula is; i.e., something to reassemble like Osiris out of disembodied pieces, then abject all over again. Whatever the tyrant, and from doll to dollhouse, such Medusas' revenge constitute a *memento mori* that speaks when played with—to Capitalism as a hyperobject that has evolved into itself and is experienced, *post hoc*, through a narrative of itself, *ipso facto*; i.e., the narrative of the crypt as filled with paradoxical elements, often viewed in small as a matter of abstraction that translates into more accessible-inaccessible language for the middle class to explore, mid-abjection and monomyth-as-Mandelbrot: labyrinths and mazes that, like Radcliffe's Gothic castles, denote a cryptonymic, dream-like presence of rape, one that a) suitably phases between person and place (the nuclear family house and home, but also homebodies), and b) can be entered and interrogated, power-wise, by exploring itself and its Gothic decay (and regeneration) in suitably nightmarish ways during ludo-Gothic BDSM.

For example, the paradox of darkness is that it is highly visible; re: Milton's darkness visible playing out through the chronotopes of Walpole and other Gothic auteurs' shared shadow zone into their present-day simulacra (*cryptomimetically* echoing past forms). To this, the Gothic castle is equally enormous and "occupied" by a presence tied to the self as material-but-questionable, related to a tyrant in uncertain ways: one's history in connection to former occupiers of the space brought to the fore, capital or Communist.

Metroidvania and recursive motion going hand-in-hand is not an idea I coined, but I *have* taken it further than someone like Paul Martin did towards older *Metroid* and *Castlevania* games. Indeed, on the cusp of speedrunning and Twitch's emergence in 2011, Martin dismisses them:

One such typical journey occurs near the beginning of the game. This takes us, due to various locked doors and impassable gaps, from the alchemy laboratory in the lower left quadrant of the castle to the master librarian, seller of keys, in the upper right, and back. We encounter this kind of recursive movement throughout the game and these movements are executed alongside the recursions of the game's plot. The recursive movement outlined is by no means unique to [*Symphony of the Night*]. Many games involve this pattern as a core element of their gameplay. Most obviously, this gameplay pattern, in which a character must go back and forth through a maze which opens itself up as the character collects equipment and becomes more powerful, is present in the early *Metroid* games. However, I am not arguing here that the pattern is anything more than a videogame convention but rather that when this convention is seen in combination with the specific story and characters that we encounter in *SotN* it takes on an expressive role that the convention does not necessarily have in other games ([source](#): "Ambivalence and Recursion in *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*").

Unlike Martin, I consider the Metroidvania as something beyond "a mere videogame convention." Instead, its danger-disco tunnels and rooms wind and confuse the protagonist to symbolize the difficulty of recollection when faced with mind-numbing trauma as a Cartesian symptom, but nevertheless remains infused with a nebulous, funerary doom leaping across mediums that challenges the Capitalocene as such; i.e., Hogle's narrative of the crypt, or "a place of concealment that stands on mere ashes of something not fully present." It would become "castle-narrative" as first recognized in my thesis work (re: "[Lost in Necropolis](#)"), which would extend to ludo-Gothic BDSM as evolving into itself (re: "[Into the Toy Chest](#)" and "[Jadis' Dollhouse](#)," etc). Now—given Metroidvania is my bread and butter—I want to stress the kinds of ironies that also phase in and out of existence (like the moon, whose lunacy paraphrases capital's waxing and waning).

For one, such spaces like Sudra in *Axiom Verge* and Zebes in *Metroid* are desolate and oddly alive, a proliferate necrobiome replete with history as a work-in-progress, insofar as empire is trapped in decay but looking to clean house and wipe the slate clean (through Samus, by killing Mother Brain). To that, Gothic castles have—since Walpole, Lewis and Radcliffe—assembled from dreams informed by history as half-real, decaying and regenerating back into itself; i.e., coming up brick-by-brick as both gassy and made up, while somehow wholly solid and confirmed regarding capital: death omens where we—both as host, guest and prisoner—feel most alive, have the most power while appearing powerless, playing amid the hauntological language of war as married to the aesthetic/cryptonymy of power and death under Capitalism. Per ludo-Gothic BDSM, our ludic masters are the castles making us surrender unto them, to beg to our captors, "Take me, I'm yours! But don't hold back!" It's ontologically uncertain, thus not set as a space of play that, unlike Zimmerman's magic circle, isn't so neatly drawn.

Just as Gothic castles, in any media, are built on the endless potential of theatrical violence, Gothic fantasy is all about fantasizing about death and rape through these castled theatrics; i.e., as things to endorse or subvert in cartoonish, dated language; e.g., the Western's saloon fight or Gothic heroine's castle crawl (and other hybrids). Per the calculated risk and palliative Numinous, it's generally more fun to fantasize through these make-believe arenas according to forbidden desire and earnestly whimsical attempts to heal from abuse than it is to actually subject oneself to dead-serious, unironic torture.

Yes, the camp is entirely brutal, at times, but it's still camp provided irony and play are present (re: Walpole, Lewis); i.e., as something heroic and monstrous (usually a combination of the two) to conjure up and play with in the usual liminal territories thereof (re: doubles, offering conflict on the surface of themselves and inside thresholds to move through). Hero or heroine, movie or videogame, the protagonist is always between a monstrous state of salvation and damnation linked to abstractions of capital's horrors come home; they are never strictly free, but encased in a claustrophobic (closed-space) world that paradoxically feels more alive because of it:



(artist: [Wildragon](#))

Similar to novels and cinema, Metroidvania castles are more than their bricks or motion inside of itself. Amid this decayed hyperreality (the map of empire as reassembled, but failing to restore the empire to its former glory), the monomyth hero reanimates to explore the disastrous maze or labyrinth to its logical center tied to extratextual elements. By moving through the old castle to try and remember what happened, they confront its lost histories, but also its *total*, ergodic histories

linked to the external world; i.e., the sum of history the space contains and intimates through effort.

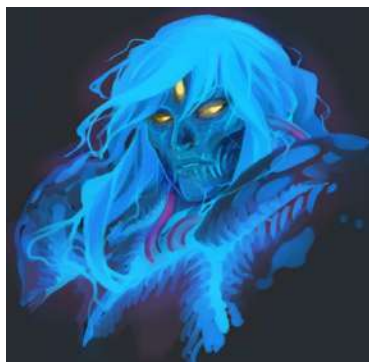
My master's thesis concluded that this process is fundamentally unmappable, try as speedrunners might when moving endlessly through the Metroidvania in pursuit of their own histories inside the ruin. In continuation, I write in "Mazes and Labyrinths" how there's simply too many ways to navigate the maze, too many ways to communicate power and its resisting as things to materialize, embody or abjure:

"Mazes and Labyrinths" is corollary to my past research on how FPS empower players; it explores how Metroidvania and survival horror disempower players trapped inside their respective gameworlds. They offset the player's strength, generally to tell a perilous story. This peril stems from varying lapses of power due to a hero's position—who they are and where they exist within a space ([source](#)).

To that, the endless, concentric wreckage is effectively a reoccurring form of historical-material *amnesia* and rememory at odds, the unironic hero operating on a path of rememory towards individuation through abjection, thus genocide (the Jungian concept of psychological maturity whereupon a young man slays the mother as a developmental roadblock; i.e., the creation of sexual difference, as predicated on the slaying of the mother, but especially the Dark Mother).

By extension, this haunts capital's abstractions (Gothic castles); i.e., as a process of generating wealth through play without irony/critical awareness, even with seemingly emergent forms that, in truth, limit their critical potential to have races for their own sake. To that, [no matter how fast speedrunners go](#) (e.g., MonStahLer's "[WR] Hollow Knight Speedrun - 112% APB in 2:59:24," 2023) the story is more or less told, the protagonist's lack of memory phenomenologically mirrored by the player relearning the space as part of the next in line—on a routine path of conquest, linked to a Gothic chronotope as the hyperreal site of "civilized" development: inside a giant graveyard that is recorded for the next generation to find, on and on.

As part of this castle-narrative, then, memory is always decaying and must



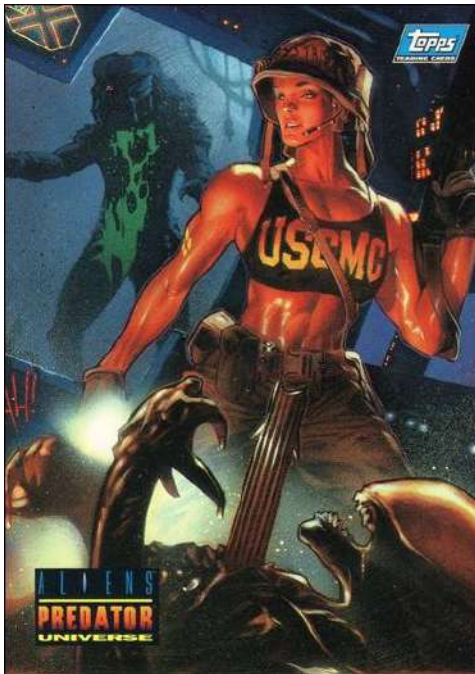
be reestablished by recursive (endless) motion; i.e., through the space, making the one who remembers a more efficient and effective killer picking up arms and knowledge. Irony helps subvert canonical potential along these tracks, but violence is almost always the thing to subvert; i.e., slaying the "monster" in the middle of maze: the dragon master or dark queen.

(artist: [Gutter Tongue](#))



Usually a powerful woman/chaos dragon at first blush—or the ghost of a male tyrant—in truth, the greatest monster is actually the hero looking back at an older version of themselves: the history of the conquered and conqueror sharing the same surface, the same black mirror/reverse abjection (what my friend Ginger lovingly calls "Gothic cringe").

It's less about a direct bloodline and more a tenuously feudal, vague connection established in relation to the gameworld intimating capital's horrors and our relation to said horrors; as something whose repeated conquerings teach the player to be increasingly violent during Capitalism's whispered decay and rise again. Threatened by it, the player regresses to a feudalistic state; i.e., the black knight, the zombie tyrant, the giant ghost (the Numinous) of Caesar returning from Hell. Their sense of self is thrown into question, all while becoming the ultimate thief and killing machine—a "great destructor" that steals and destroys everything (a bit like a crusader in service of the state colonizing its own territories *again*). There's plenty of room *for* irony but it isn't automatic among the ceremonies and spaces thereof.



(artist: [Adam Hughes](#))

Furthermore, any revelations about capital through the Promethean Quest are *hidden*—tucked away behind the pomp and circumstance; i.e., the castle grounds, fractals and artifacts, but also the thrill of the hunt, its unironic victory and the (often) beautiful, body of a humanoid, Amazonian princess. No longer the hidden reward of a hidden system<sup>182</sup> inside a space that cannot communicate its ultimate horrors<sup>183</sup> upon a single completion, she's out in the open. Like exercise, she takes multiple attempts to progress to the highest point (and the best armor, which is often no armor except her birthday suit). From there, our oft-female Icarus can fall the farthest, often

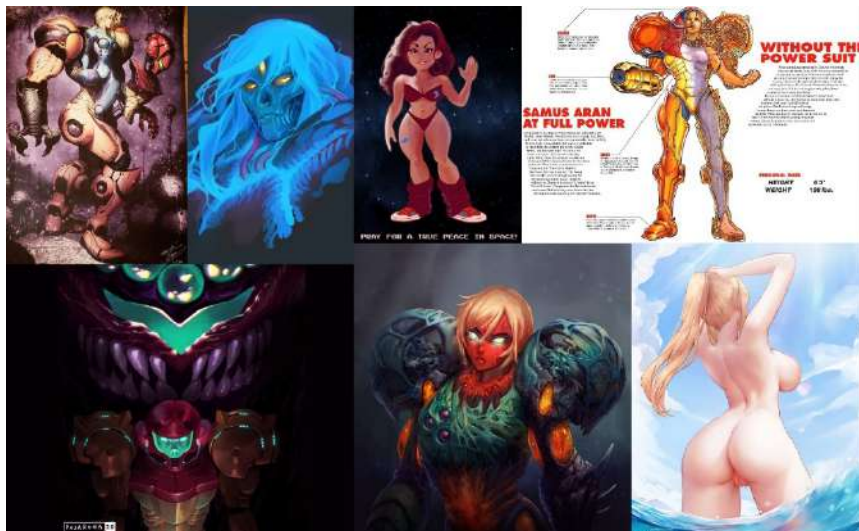
<sup>182</sup> "Beyond communities that reward speed, fast players are rewarded by Metroidvania when using the same items. Samus, in *Metroid*, will remove her armor at the end, but only if the game is beaten fast enough" ([source](#): Persephone van der Waard's "Always More: A History of Gothic Motion from the Metroidvania Speedrunner," 2019).

<sup>183</sup> "To play the game is to invade it, the hero's body built to receive items that help them destroy the gameworld, but also themselves. They respond to the castle and its grim historical markers; over time, they are conditioned along a system of movement that can be taught, mastered through motion. By entering the heart of the castle, the hero confronts the past, but also becomes the answer to its riddle: the ultimate monster is merely an older, 'forgotten' version of themselves" ([ibid.](#)).

further into delusion; e.g., Samus *thinks* she's the hero and that her unironic actions will bring about "true peace in space!" In neoliberal terms, this concept is called false hope; I call it "military optimism":

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

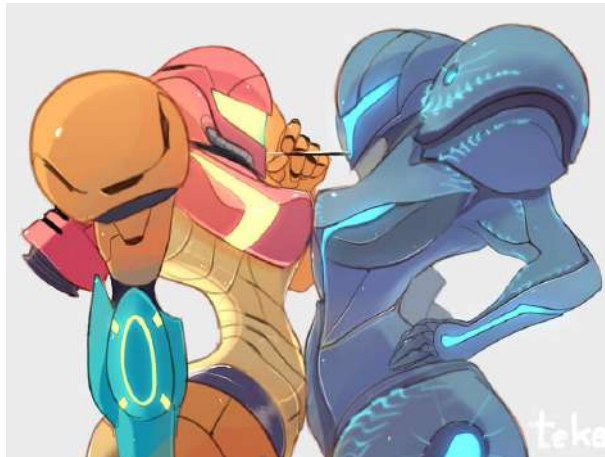


(exhibit 40d1: Artist, top-farthest-left: [Rainarc Rhapsody](#); top-far-left: [Gutter Tongue](#); bottom-left: [Pajarona](#); top-middle: [Phobos Romulus](#); bottom-middle: unknown, [source](#); bottom-right: [Azto Dio](#). Samus is forever between two worlds: nature and civilization, but also the

*living and the dead. Undead and demonic, she is composed of various pieces stolen from places raided for empire, becoming forever haunted by these crimes as a colonial survivor chasing dragons [while also having "native" blood inside her from older colonizers, the Chozo, as ostensibly closer to nature but in reality were imperial, themselves]. The white Indian pimped out, she personifies the Western fear of feudal inheritance common in Gothic stories, all at once a knight, golem, giant, tyrant, damsel, demon, detective and military pinup girl [all concepts we'll continue unpacking throughout the book] as part of a larger sequence, structure: Capitalism and Cartesian thought. Originally a comic-book character with zero*

*identity to speak of, Samus has gone through various revisions that try to distinguish her from the legions of cookie-cutter women in sci-fi pastiche, while simultaneously making her nearly indistinguishable from them.*

*In the queer tradition, an argument could be made that Samus [and by extension, the audience] is looking at older, heteronormative models—less of themselves exclusively and more of their bloodline as inherently violent, but also tied to the historical-material world as a dangerous, instructional memory shaping workers into state-sanctioned killers; i.e., the Gothic castle as a cursed, familial space, but also an undead, monomythic recruiting ground. As a queer person, transition generally involves moving away from the colonial binary and its heteronormative violence according to a cis-het double or bogeyperson; but doing so requires challenging one's "own" historical portrait through the Promethean space that contains it in various chronotopic markers; i.e., Bakhtin's dialogic imagination personified, in hero terms: the physically capable body as castle-like and naked.)*



*(exhibit 40d2: Artist: [Teke](#). The more queer someone is, the more they retreat from cis-het, "heroic" renditions of themselves. Fearful of the violence those variations perform in service to the state, the most fearsome thing for us gays is that we might be cis-het, which Gothic spaces will intimate through their historical-material reminders of the feudalistic bloodline as fundamentally cis-het: kings, queens, princesses, and sanctioned incest/rape; but also zombie*

*scapegoats, be those fallen kings, madwomen in the attic or mad scientists. By wanting to escape from heteronormative, Cartesian models tied to our own childhoods, queer people want to escape the socio-material prescription of canonical monsters that serve as performatively heroic or villainous roles through a false sense of self. The proletarian goal of the black mirror is to reverse abject these and bring our true selves to the fore, altering the socio-material world in the process.)*

Confronting the monster inside this final vault, *Metroid* communicates a common Metroidvania trope: assimilation; i.e., the hero as biomechanically abject, their weapons generally a part of their bodies as extensions begot of the space they've inherited/are stealing from in *service* to empire and the Imperial Boomerang. Triumphant Metroidvania like *Super Metroid* don't reflect terribly hard on the hypocritical violence these weapons commit, then, nor the liminality of their dynastic power exchange and hereditary rites; instead, the game routinely grants

Samus a mission to complete for Big Brother and she does it as a physically impressive specimen trained in the art of war—a "space knight" who kills dragons, plundering their hoards in the process, before destroying the site of plunder *without* irony. It becomes a planet-wide cycle of death, one whose succession glorifies genocidal violence in all the Cartesian ways: serve the Man, punch Medusa.

Despite being female, Samus lacks the capacity to safeguard nature; she's always blowing it up! Canon frames her as the lost daughter returning home to work out her wild energies, reclaiming the bride as someone to disrobe after she's "played house" as a token cop regressing to the dutiful sex pot. But because she is, herself, part god, she is always out of reach—is always property for the elite to dangle in front of weird canonical nerds lusting after their own avatar as lost to them; i.e., as alien; re: fire of the gods; e.g., "Fire of unknown origin took my baby way" (Blue Öyster Cult's "[Fire of Unknown Origin](#)," 1981):

Death comes sweeping through the hallway, like a lady's dress  
Death comes driving down the highway, in its Sunday best

A fire of unknown origin took my baby away  
A fire of unknown origin took my baby away

Swept to ruin off my wavelength, swallowed her up  
[...]  
Death comes driving, I can't do nothing  
Death goes



There must be something, there must be something that remains ([source](#): Genius).

Under *Metroid*, we're left with the usual quest of revenge against nature; i.e., the promise of sex per the Prometheus Quest tokenized for capital, profit and rape—of nature as alien, monstrous-feminine.



(artist: [Viktria](#))

Except, Nintendo's lack of irony brings us right to *Axiom Verge*: the fires of capital raped Medusa! It's a game whose lovely genderqueer (and pro-nature, above) Promethean ironies we'll unpack, next; i.e., whose close-read occurs contrary to the ghostly (Gothic) histories of capital we've unpacked for you here!

## Metroidvania, part one: Away with the Faeries; or, Double Trouble in *Axiom Verge*

"I'm going to the one place that hasn't been corrupted by Capitalism!" [dramatic pause, tries not to laugh] "...Space!" ([source](#)).

—Tim Curry as Premier Anatoly Cherdenko, *Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3* (2008)

Part one takes the canonical histories we unpacked during part zero and inverts them per the iconoclastic ones we also outlined (and are contributing to, here). First, we surveyed Freud and *Forbidden Planet*, as well as *At the Mountains of Madness*, and Shelley's Victor and the Creature in *Frankenstein*, as all part of the same Promethean Quest. After that, we

- highlighted several key points surrounding Promethean narratives in terms of the performative spaces associated with them: the hero is summoned to the ruinous, dormant land of the gods, where they learn about their shitty parents, and then fights for one side against the other before scuttling the space-in-question.
- looked at the history of scholarship (re: my graduate and postgraduate work) and the stories connected to that scholarship as haunting capital out of the imaginary past splintered into copies, of copies, of copies regarding nature vs civilization, Cartesian men vs Medusa.

Last but not least, we discussed irony as something that can be removed or added in one iteration versus the next, giving *Metroid* as an unironic example of the Capitalocene that *Axiom Verge* subverts in a lot of campy, very gay ways: Trace is Shelley's Adam turned against Victor by Mother Nature—gay space faeries!



(artist: [Dejano23](#))

Now that you have all of that, part one is our close-read of *Axiom Verge*, exploring how its Promethean story about trouble in paradise (a hellish pastoral ain't no picnic) treats the mission as one ironically delivered to a clone of the ultimate foe; i.e., the player as inheriting the larger Promethean scheme having already been subverted by our resident gay faeries. The game doubles *Metroid*, but also its own characters and spaces pointing to Capitalism/the Capitalocene normally disguised by doomsday narratives that Samus would shoot without a second thought. We'll explore this "double trouble," now, commenting on different apocalypse qualities of it before ending on a cathartic, sex-positive note.

Following the basic pattern of the Promethean Quest, Trace wakes up naked and alone. Trapped in a world that is falling apart (or ready to fall apart), the faeries have called Trace from sleep to brief him; i.e., telling him where to go, what to do—his mission objectives, essentially. Over time, he walks around, not exactly



alone insofar as there is life present, just not *human* life. The place is a ghost town, lonely and plaintiff as Satie's "[Paris](#)," not Beethoven's (the latter crossing Napoleon's name out of the Emperor Concerto<sup>184</sup>). Keeping with the Metroidvania tone poem, eventually the music picks up; Trace fights monsters, and learns he's not only created by a mad scientist called Athetos (whose name means "without place"), but he's begot *from* the other man!

(artist: [Wildragon](#))

That's not usual in Promethean narratives. The problem is, Athetos isn't like Morbius; he's a genocidal maniac abusing the fire of the gods to aggrandize himself! To it, Trace is effectively this story's Creature with a twist—there's a bit of the inhumane patriarch inside him, giving him a human appearance tied to someone and something truly heinous. As we shall see, this is where the trouble starts. But it's *also* where addressing Capitalism (and its disguises) begins to take shape; i.e., the mighty Rusalki being the faeries that Trace is away with: troubling comparison (through doubles) leads to irony critiquing and subverting what's effectively an ironic version of the *Metroid*-style Metroidvania.

Athetos, then, is this stories' copy of Hamlet's father's ghost; i.e., the catalyst for revenge against Mother Nature. Untrained in combat, the "hero" is actually Trace, the unwitting doppelganger/useful idiot cloned from Athetos and

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<sup>184</sup> John Clubbe writes, in "Beethoven, Bryon and Bonaparte":

On May 18, 1804, the French council of State declared Napoleon Emperor of the French. Upon hearing the news, an angry Beethoven crossed off the *Eroica*'s first inscription to Bonaparte. ([11](#)) "So he too is nothing more than an ordinary man," he cried out. [...] At the top of the first page of the completed work Beethoven wrote the name of the First Consul, "Sinfonia Grande / Intitulata Bonaparte." Beethoven later crossed out these words. Near the middle of the page, he wrote his own name, Louis van Beethoven. Below it, he wrote in pencil "Geschrieben / auf Bonaparte," "written for Bonaparte." These words he never erased. [...] It is "Bonaparte" here, not "Napoleon," because for Beethoven, as for Byron, there was a difference. "Bonaparte" meant for Byron and Beethoven the young conqueror of Italy, the dazzling leader who scuttled monarchies and symbolized liberal hopes for a new order ([source](#)).

used against him by the Rusalki (a bit like Skynet and the terminators, which the resistance reprograms); i.e., to not act like Samus and her violent, militarily optimistic salvos attacking the planet and its occupants: as simple pirates and dragons to slay.

In other words, Trace is a clone of himself as less warlike (and self-righteous). Both he and Athetos are strangers to Sudra, the game's alien homeworld. The difference is that Athetos is *entirely* foreign to Sudra and trying to colonize its ruins (which are that way because of what he did to the Sudrans), while Trace feels alienated in Sudra on account of the memories inside him that were written before his birth on Sudra; i.e., to defend *from* his conqueror side (the creepy old man/mad scientist who rapes everything around him): he is filled with revenge, only to discover it was authored by his *mothers*, *not* his genocidal dad (the two ideas at war inside Trace's head). Is it embarrassing? Eh, sure, but pride is the root of the problem—one the Rusalki have no bones about solving by lying to Trace and, sometimes, spanking him a bit. The world is corrupted by hideous creations they expect him to "mop up" on his way to the Wizard of Oz. It's still something of a purge, but the "corruption" is manmade; i.e., one of fascist science, versus *Metroid's* X parasite simply being tied to the land, itself, as wild: needing to be colonized inside the state of exception, *a priori*.

The Gothic generally puts "harm" next to harm as felt, like a ghost, across generations (the chronotope and its various ghosts). For the rest of part one, then, I want to focus on the complex, imperiled, BDSM-style interactions Trace has with the Rusalki, the game's Frankensteinian war machines as primarily telepathic and spectral. Not only do they arm him with (stolen) weapons in the guerrilla style; their veiled, "torturous" instructions compel him towards rebellious violence using deliberately faulty intelligence to survive Cartesian genocide.

Throughout the story, the Rusalki keep Trace in the dark. Guilty as charged. But also, theirs is an act of Amazonian desperation, one whose drive to survive a human menace leads them to act increasingly human against the spectral highwayman. Beyond the same, fourth-dimensional walls of sleep, the Great Faeries<sup>185</sup> prod Trace awake, sending him knowingly into "danger"; i.e., when he dies, the so-called "old machines" revive him. But he retains his memories each time, until confronting Athetos' variants finally forces him to come to his own conclusions about what he really is in relation to his father as a likeness *he* embodies: the conqueror mad scientist, the Nazi quack.

These troubling revelations only compound further when Trace encounters a pathogen that makes him hallucinate: a bioweapon released by Athetos to genocide the Sudrans, ravage the environment and trap the Rusalki in a sleep of death (a very eco-fascist maneuver). This fever dream is also a crossover vision, one that

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<sup>185</sup> Advanced technology being indistinguishable magic, Clarke's Law brings Shelley's myths and magic back around; i.e., of the 21st century thrust into a fantasy space once more.

reverses the role between him and the monsters he's systematically slaying. While the resurrection pods provide an uncertain "cure," Trace retains memories of the dream that his Amazonian bosses cannot see. Instead, their drones carry him to safety.



(exhibit 40e: Artist: [Wildragon](#). [Axiom Verge](#) is effectively a Promethean narrative of fighting fire with fire. Athetos uses bio-weapons to kill the Sudrans and trap the Rusalki; the Rusalki use cloning as a means of weaponizing a clone of Athetos against himself; and Athetos tries to convince Trace at the end of the game that the Rusalki are not to be trusted despite making Trace from Athetos' body. Instead of [Frankenstein's](#) singular parent-versus-

child narrative, [Axiom Verge](#) gives Trace a scientist male father and host of Amazonian, biomechanical female mothers who made him from mad science to fight mad science; both are fearsome, commenting on the tyrannical nature of mad science as always having a human face—i.e., [Prometheus](#), bottom-left. It's like a really fucked-up custody battle—one where the parents pit the child against either side while reminding it that it comes from them: the human side, but also the [alien](#) side lurking beneath the surface as fundamentally human relative to nature.)

When Trace comes to, he witnesses two Athetos variations. Both are effectively mush, but one nonetheless resembles Trace (above). Horrified, Trace shoots it dead (exhibit 40e). This spurs an argument between him and the Rusalki, who begrudgingly tell Trace his origins. Their deliberate omissions anger him. When he refuses to cooperate, the Rusalki "kill" him; he respawns, only to find himself being chided for his foolish rebellion.

As such, this torturous, shared phenomenology makes for a very different story than *Doom's* or *Metroid's* heroic refrain (shoot the alien inside the fallen



colony space). Rather than ignore or overlook death, Trace's demise is a fundamental part of the story Thomas Happ wants to tell: you can't shoot Medusa to death because she's your dominatrix, a guardian of nature using you for those ends through stories inside stories, lies inside and upon lies. Per Plato, the nature of allegory is that it *isn't* outside the cave (or the text, as Derrida would insist).

For instance, a player normally remembers "dying" but their avatar does not. Trace is not only aware of death; it teaches him some sorry truths:

- He is being controlled by giant, powerful entities.
- These entities are alien, god-like bio-machines, but also masters of war.
- As masters of war, they continually lie to him, telling him only what is needed to complete their military objectives.
- These objectives involve the killing of the hero's older, "wiser" self, leaving the younger survivor in a constant state of ignorance and confusion.

His experience uncannily mirrors the mind of the player going through the same ordeal, raising troubling queries. Is Athetos the villain or the seemingly-made Creatures (*robata*) that he seeks dominion over?

To that, we're left asking the same questions Shelley raised, except it's through the Promethean myth as punted into outer space; i.e., in a move similar to *Alien*, *Forbidden Planet* and *At the Mountains of Madness*—transplanting the fire of the gods, versus having Victor make it, "homebrew." The point isn't who makes the technology but what is *done* with it. The Rusalki use it to protect themselves; Athetos, to kill everyone in a genocidal tantrum because the big ladies won't let him into their womb space. He's the incel tyrant nerd, *ipso facto*, and it's completely ok to lie to him spectacularly (re: the *splendide mendax*) and his baby-like clones (which Trace is) if it means preserving themselves to *spite* his rapey hubris (the killer doll being something *Hollow Knight* plays with, albeit in reverse: the knight killing Medusa to avenge the king by raping his monstrous-feminine foil, the Radiance).

Though never fully clear, Trace's cloudy vision becomes comparatively more lucid as time goes on. He finds a series of cryptic journals. Some are literally gibberish the player must decode using cyphers. Some are from the Sudrans; others from the Rusalki, even Athetos (who signs the documents "—Trace"). So many elements of language fail to communicate anything at all, forcing the player to search for the truth, *memento mori*. But all the same, a deliberately oblique story seemingly bars the way.

Not entirely. Even Athetos hints at the truth: "If I tell you too much, your captors will have to kill you." The fact—that both sides are lying about a struggle between themselves to a curious third party—mirrors Shelley's framed narrative in *Frankenstein* (1818) giving rise to homicidal rhetoric: "DEMON. ATHETOS SAY, KILL." Danger, Will Robinson! Danger *disco*!



(exhibit 40f: Artist, left: [Wildragon](#); right: Bernie Wrightson. Promethean arguments of revenge concern capital vs nature. In these dream-like spaces, spectres of Marx and spectres of Caesar and "Rome" aim to control the same "dolls" [citizens, workers]. In the case of Enlightenment dogma, the female presence of nature and chaos historically-materially stands "in the way" of male leaders, but also makes them anxious of a phallic, enraged

monstrous-feminine Numinous/nation; i.e., the Amazons versus King Theseus, Queen Jadis versus Aslan, Mr. Rochester vs Bertha, Morgana versus Arthur or Medusa versus the Greeks, etc. In many instances, the striking of the king blind with forbidden, female-exclusive wisdom is the Gorgon's best weapon; in *Axiom Verge*, the Rusalki are more a class of warrior gatekeepers using the same brutal methods to keep Athetos, thus Humanity through Capitalism, from advancing to a position where they could do greater harm to nature: through their cryptonymy as a matter of war masks, deceptions, and ultimately fighting back against male tyrants through those outward-facing half-deceptions.)

*Axiom Verge* and *Frankenstein*, despite being centuries apart, touch on the same basic concepts through an ambiguous framed narrative about demons (we'll return to the "demonic" aspect in the Demon Module): memory and knowledge as compromised by Promethean struggles to "advance." In Shelley's novel, the pursuit of knowledge was guarded by Victor, but also the Creature stalking and methodically torturing him (emulating his creator in that respect: the scientific method). And driven to the ends of the Earth, a dying Victor relays with utter conviction that his man-made creation is a "demon" to be slain; but the same animus is projected onto Victor by the Creature. Their mutual audience is left to decide who is right, but a case can be made for either side. Clearly Victor is a villain, but the Creature cannot be wholly redeemed, either. There's innocent blood on his hands, spilled in futile revenge *against* capital's daddy.

The same dilemma is present in *Axiom Verge*. Athetos did not create the Rusalki; he merely attracted them through his own pursuit of forbidden knowledge by genocidal means. However, machines also don't evolve like organics; they are made, generally in the pursuit of power or wisdom. Just as Victor pursued the Wisdom of the Ancients as a "natural philosopher," Athetos' scientific endeavors led him down a similar road. On it, both men encounter a biomechanical humanoid race, their mutual confrontation instigating a merciless fight to the death: Humanity

versus itself in a process of abjection against nature; i.e., demonic persecution divided dualistically in two and set upon itself.

To this, the relationship between the past and the present is the exploration of science in ways that do not die, but simply wait to be found and resurrected once more. While this stymies progress, so does the fear of the process itself. The Sudrans (according to Athetos) feared their technology and refused to invoke it. Instead they worshipped it (thus the Rusalki and nature). Athetos despised this worship and released a disease to kill them all, thus gaining access to the Breach. Beyond lay the path to true power, true wisdom. With it, Athetos could make disease, war, famine and death "things of the past" (again, according to him). But the past was waiting for him in Amazonian forms. As an instrument of nature designed to protect itself in war-like ways, Athetos would have to defeat its avatars. In turn, the Rusalki (a kind of water fairy in Slavic lore) would have to dig deep, drawing on their own worst impulses to prevent a deeply flawed and predatory man



(and, in effect, Capitalism which he embodies and enjoys always leading to genocide according to profit) from entering paradise: king wants, the gods deny passage and ascension.

([source](#): James Jordan's "The Met's Stream of Wagner's *Ring*," 2020)

Despite the Frankensteinian ambiguities, things have class character that we can determine through dialectical-material scrutiny.

To that, let me remind you of the dualities at work, here, of which the differing factor is one of class-and-cultural character, not appearance. For example, such denial of paradise by the gods is a common Promethean theme, the fascist element of false rebels clamoring to return to paradise (the good graces of the elite) since Wagner's 1857 *Ring Cycle* opera (a composer who was notably anti-Semitic<sup>186</sup>). But not all gods are Nazis, either.

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<sup>186</sup> Deryck V. Cooke writes,

That Wagner harboured anti-Semitic [sentiments](#) is both well-known and uncontested within the realm of musicological inquiry. The composer openly [articulated](#) his views in a number of publications, most notably *Judaism in Music* (*Das Judentum in der Musik*; 1850), in which he identified Jewish musicians as the ultimate source of what he perceived as substanceless [music](#) and misplaced values in the arts as a whole. What has remained a controversy, however, is the extent to which Wagner's anti-Semitism informed his musical [compositions](#).

On the one hand, many have contended that Wagner's anti-Semitism was no more significant to his musical creation than was any other peculiarity of his personality. Indeed, the *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

So while this *was* a theme alluded to in *At the Mountains of Madness*, followed by Scott's *Prometheus*—and later more clearly in *Alien: Covenant*, with David playing "Entry of the Gods into Valhalla," returning to a superior position<sup>187</sup> while simultaneously pointing out that gods are both fake and used to justify and achieve power to create new beings with (the xenomorph being a Satanic tool of rebellion, but more on that in the Demon Module)—Happ in 2014 was riffing off the same denials of entry and seeking of power by those who have and those who don't: Athetos vs nature-as-monstrous-feminine; i.e., the one "without place" being a king without a kingdom as a matter of capital under Cartesian thought raping nature as impressive, as big and fearsome, *as having things to take* (ultimately materials, but also power and forbidden knowledge as a social-material arrangement—the raw and nebulous essence of people, of class-to-race-to culture war, of Foucault's bio-power, Francis Bacon the father of modern science [a palimpsest for Victor] appealing to rape nature, etc).

Actions (and social-material conditions) speak louder than words. But it's equally important to remember the dialectical-material confusion between genuine proletarian rebel—which a character like Satan represents challenging God and canonical forces in Milton's epic—and someone like Weyland or Athetos, who embody the usual entitlements of capital and who pitch murderous fits against nature when they don't get what's "theirs"; i.e., as a matter of Cartesian dogma. One is the middle-class white man, promised ascension and denied it by the bourgeoisie through abjection; the other—the Rusalki, the xenomorphs, the monstrous-feminine—are the usual recipients of state violence who are actually rebelling *against* systemic violence as a matter of abjection through police brutality (with Victor using the courts and flash mobs against the Creature). Pointing a finger at the Rusalki and saying "they have much" only to invade them is to, as the Cartesian paradigm always does, point the spear at nature/the monstrous-feminine: a false flag to rape it with.

To cut through the Red Scare confusion, then, let me *also* remind you that the fascist, she-wolf (vampire) visual elements to the Rusalki cross a shared aesthetic of power and death over with the Communist elements occupying the same shadow zone that *both* inhabit. There is no singular interpretation, save what

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composer regularly found a scapegoat—such as the Jewish population—to account for his personal and musical misfortunes. Moreover, because Wagner lived during an era of widespread resentment toward Jews in Europe, it is not unusual that his dramatic works would contain anti-Semitic [nuances](#) ([source](#): Britannica).

To what exact degree Wagner's anti-Semitism affected his music *is* a matter of debate, but the fascist elements he presented (using pre-fascist, mythological language) have a class character to them similar to Milton or Ridley Scott, albeit in a conservative direction; re: the false rebel, versus Scott's David having a Communist element to his radical counterterrorism.

<sup>187</sup> Something of a Valkyrie himself, camping the invincible heroine; re: Persephone van der Waard's "[Choosing the Slain, or Victimized the Invincible Heroine, in \*Alien: Covenant\*](#)" (2017).

capital tries to colonize Gothic territories with. So call the Rusalki "Valkyries" or "space vampires" if you like; I see them as Grendel's giant mother—big-ass Commie faeries more versed at warmaking, mimicry and all-around survival as actual rebels (counterterrorists) than Athetos was, a state terrorist *playing* the rebel (something to bear in mind when we take these historical lessons and apply them to our own lives, in Volume Three; i.e., learning from the imaginary past as informed by a historical one as equally half-real—the chronotope). Thus, they are



able to get back at the Cartesian, Übermensch mega-nerd *this time* (*touché*, as it were).

Scott does the same to Weyland with his own dark angels, the Engineers ambiguously angry at a man whose own stabs at godhood are promptly smacked down by David's disembodied head (an act of destroying maker and creation in

one fell swoop): godly bonk, smiting the godhead with his little head (David being Weyland's resigned servant for most of the film). It's divine judgment, a gavel swung from the wrath of gods that, fake or not, have the power to wipe Humanity out. It's a kind of guilt trip, a literal journey through and towards past wrongs against the natural world in the name of weaponized science. No one ever said the punishers of the proud were always fascist or Communist; it frankly depends on the critical voice being used!

To this, our resident big girls in *Axiom Verge* ruthlessly manipulate Trace, the useful idiot, in defense of a *Communist* paradise from the *billionaire* Nazi; i.e., the womb of nature (and its secrets that Cartesian men desire) being part of a forever war between Earth's men of reason and otherworldly Amazonian forces, one they're just getting started with all over again (forming a pretty pattern in the game that speaks to real life; re: like Miss Crawford's cards, in *Mansfield Park* (re: Nabakov) but in matters of war, not love<sup>188</sup>). It's mad science in both ways, nature radically using the same wondrous technology (the fire of the gods) against a fascist agent who is distanced from Earthly Capitalism but still remains a part of it; i.e., by taking him from Earth and putting him on Sudra to begin with.

In turn, Gothic castles are saturated with rape as a matter of investigation *and* materialization, hunting the hunter to avenge the abused from different points of contention: workers or the state. *Axiom Verge* has *Pax Americana* playing out on

<sup>188</sup> Granted, the ideas generally are combined for monstrous-feminine; i.e., love is a matter of survival through love and war as combined to various poetic degrees; re: the language of sex and war, dalliances, food, knowledge, and whatever else synonymize during a given exchange between two castled essays into the same contested territories.

Sudra; in absence of an American flag or corporate logo (e.g., the Weyland-Yutani corporate merger from *Alien*), it is here the faeries and Athetos do battle through the child of the future taken to the ruins of a once-happy world laid low by Capitalism. In other words, it's hauntological in terms of *space*; i.e., caught between past and present *space-time*.

To give Athetos his rude awakening inside the chronotope, the Rusalki condition the innocent child figure; i.e., cloning Trace through the resurrection machines to betray Athetos, his fatherly likeness<sup>189</sup>, who is likewise trying to abuse the power of resurrection to *conquer* space. The Rusalki aren't just better parents than Athetos, but scientists, too! It's poetic justice, for sure, but a brutal one; i.e., "taking candy from a baby" according to an army of such *enfants terrible* (as the Heavy from *TF2* says, "What sick man sends babies to fight me?"). This happens fighting fire with Promethean fire, babies with babies, masks with masks, mirrors with mirrors (e.g., Trace mirrors his father's appearance but his mothers' quest), cake with cake (re: charming lies to put in one's cake holes to motivate revenge; e.g., poison to pour in Hamlet's father's ear and, by extension, his paranoid son).

As such, the Rusalki are framed as gods of nature by people like Weyland or Athetos; i.e., Cartesian men of reason playing god to lord over nature and take from it whatever they want, as a matter of Capitalism destroying as a matter of profit: the fire thereof. Any counterterrorist defense—no matter how rude it seems to bored middle-class folk snacking on such stories—is entirely justified, in that respect.

This being said, the Red Scare elements to Scott's story (which Happ borrows from, the Rusalki being *Slavic* female vampires) project the fascist elements of capital onto an ancient-alien civilization (similar to Lovecraft) before threatening "the Earth" (now Westernized from top to bottom) with genocide as a fear of collapse: "It's carrying death!" There's an element of pearl-clutching present, one that happens through abjection forcing the Engineers and Rusalki into the same theatrical space: the city of the gods, a portentous ruin that precedes their return as fascist or Communist to threaten capital with. This happens the same way that it did with Victor, two centuries ago: through visions and dreams, and of dark, gigantic bodies twisted by mad science (the difference being the Engineers became cops, the Rusalki, rebels).

Apart from godhood, the chief difference between gods is the harm caused during oppositional praxis; i.e., the Rusalki, in a dialectical-material sense, are reprogramming the child soldier, Trace, to kill its abusive father as having harmed all parties (removing them like obstacles): killing him is a mercy to everyone, but

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<sup>189</sup> A mimetic effect seen with all tyrants, grooming their own kids by making their sons (or their obedient labor force at large) in the father's statuesque image (re: Pygmalion); e.g., Dracula and Alucard, to which Victor failed in *Frankenstein*, trying euthanize *his* child afterwards. In Trace's case, he looks exactly like his dad, to which the other man tries to salvage him through reason (replacing Robert Walton with the Creature as being one in the same, for Happ).

is, like everything else in the game, always "in between," liminal (whose operatic spaces are where fags always are, always call home despite being treated as fantastical, as incorrect: the fairy closet a prison we reclaim through Gothic hauntology from Shelley onwards).

Moreover, these are big problems tied to big persons and places as passed down, like a castle, from father to son, but also mother to child (depending on which side of the fence one falls on). Eventually the Rusalki win, probably knowing that Athetos will seek revenge against Trace. Except, the patriarch is a ghost, and ghosts can't actually hurt you (re: C.S. Lewis). Rather, the true horror for Trace is that he's a pawn in a bigger game, one whose victories are seldom clean; but also, that it's all a dream, thus not real in ways that can actually harm him (the Gothic paradox). The silver lining is that, *while* being used, he is destroying the tyrant to prevent genocide against nature in the future—of the faeries, the older queers, having more experience and materiel to wage war against god-like forces, weaponizing Athetos' Creature *against* capital (and maybe helping him out of the closet, a bit): by waking Trace up while inside Capitalist Realism (re: Plato's cave, which Sudra stands in for).



(artist: [Wildragon](#))

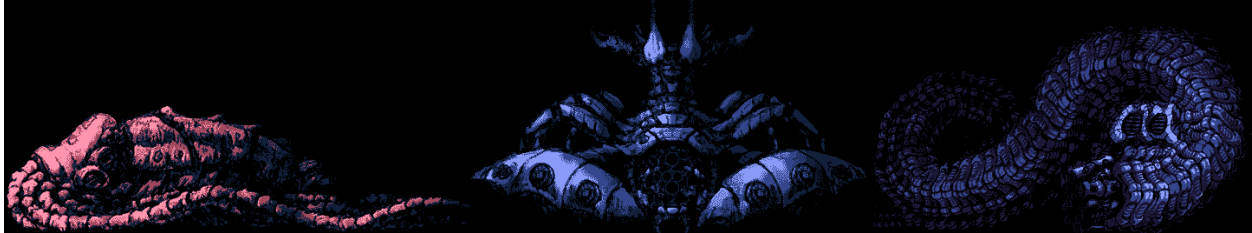
Rest assured, Medusa's head haunts Sudra as a victim of Cartesian hubris, one whose Galatean element of Numinous energies lead to a Titania-grade worship by our resident Nick Bottom<sup>190</sup>. Said worship—of technology as god-like—originally kept the Sudrans inside an Indigenous state of grace that Athetos destroyed out of spite (their former greatness something hinted at when Elsenova seemingly<sup>191</sup> kills Athetos). "They barely remembered who they were,"

<sup>190</sup> With the above illustration by Wildragon showing Trace prostrate before Ophelia, the name of Hamlet's sister, who drowned (a fate shared by Shakespeare's imaginary sister, "Judith\*," in *A Room of One's Own*, 1929). In Jungian terms, allusions to water and darkness coincide with dreams that speak to patriarchal abuse through a pedagogy of the oppressed; e.g., Sadako Yamamura climbing out of a well to seek revenge against her death (and that of other monstrous-feminine) by men having killed and taken their essence—their life force—to begin with.

\*As Woolf writes, "Now my belief is that this poet who never wrote a word and was buried at the cross-roads still lives. She lives in you and in me, and in many other women who are not here to-night, for they are washing up the dishes and putting the children to bed" ([source](#)).

<sup>191</sup> The story has multiple interwoven timelines, interacting with one another not unlike Borges' "Garden of the Forking Paths" or Cameron's *Terminator* films: across space-time in decay as a matter of Gothic drama.

Athetos recalls (our story's Pygmalion, making Trace in his image and falling in love with himself: as master of the universe); i.e., the warriors he wanted them to be. Rooted in the past, then, what seems an interminable catastrophe that shut the Breach and robbed the Sudrans of their *lives* was all thanks to *Athetos*, not the Rusalki—a genocide he blames on them to convince the son that daddy is right.



([source: Fandom](#))

Of course, the *Rusalki* remembered, but they had previously left Sudra behind for undisclosed reasons (on par with Lovecraft's ancient aliens, or Ridley Scott's derelict, etc, piloting "ancient" castles doubling as giants, as ships, as avatars). Athetos made them return, but from a specific place: "the greatest nation ever envisioned." They return from a Communist place of post-scarcity threatened by manufactured Cartesian scarcities, Athetos' keeping the evil king alive and twisting the Rusalki into war machines to protect themselves from his weaponizing of nature against itself. Mid-*Amazonomachia*, they fight to a standstill, the Rusalki losing their bodies (above), and Athetos, his ability to walk on land. The fight continues inside Trace's mind while exploring the ruins his parents made; i.e., Athetos' inversion of "female castration" per the faeries' severed heads haunting his dreams according his desire for a young body to pilot. As such, Medusa's head chases the ghost of the father to Trace's subconscious. Psychomachy or *Amazonomachy*—all happen for the same territories hitherto described: capital vs commune.

As for the nation, itself, it's precisely such a place that Athetos wants to enter and destroy—to install himself in its place (and take all the credit while preying vampirically upon it) after forcing the Rusalki to return and protect their babies, who now are all dead and converted into zombie cyborgs remade to serve Athetos' growing revenge and hubris: his towering folly!



*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
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Athetos' mounting regression has its own conservatism during futile revenge: a better place, a nostalgia, to which any sacrifice is justified *against* the rebels (and by extension, nature). Trace is the Omelas goat, but his death and/or corruption is not guaranteed. Nonetheless, the Rusalki are protecting their own borders (and avenging their slain children) from the opposite direction as having sent genocide towards them in Cartesian ways: through scientists. Superior in form (or at least size), the giant water witches are nearly destroyed by the biomechanical agent they call a Pattern-Mind, or "someone with the ability to manipulate matter." Athetos integrates the fire of the gods into himself to keep prosecuting his mad war against his eternal enemies (next page, exhibit 40g1); in turn, he forces them to.

Hardly an accidental tourist, Athetos does so ruthlessly to carry himself forward through the plague-ravaged maze; i.e., even after his actual body has become too frail to move around. His policeman's brutal and cold-blooded colonizing of the land and its legends must occur through Trace, who—removed from the Rusalki's careful watch—could easily fall victim to his evil father's reasoned arguments; i.e., the tyrant in love with his own image as tied to capital's dominion over nature as a manmade ordeal: Sudra turned into a prison for the Rusalki to try and escape through their adopted son as someone to liberate the mind of from their unwanted husband's advances.

As such, Athetos' boundaries to enjoy and impose on others (negative freedom, aka freedom from consequence) is, itself, no accident, and one that travels and lingers in future repetitions whose memories are starting to degrade; i.e., the ghost of the king haunting the carceral space through Trace being the one actually walking through it (as a ghost of Athetos, sharing fragments of his father's memories, which he must reassemble from the wreckage around him). Trace becomes, to some extent, the vain wrecker of Cartesian havoc, which the Rusalki must turn back—Aegis-style—against the original captain. Seeking his owed home, Athetos is always rationalizing genocide (and the requirement of an enemy to rape, mutilate and pillage through Cartesian thought) by using the son as his revenge-by-proxy against the Rusalki and nature: as having not only dared to disobey him, but having denied him what's his by royal decree dressed up as "scientific reason."

Liberation is holistic, requiring us to consider how all these stories-in-stories (and stories that borrow this and that) collectively fit together on all registers. Athetos' inherited hierarchy of values attaches to a capitalistic worldview that always alienates him from nature, including his own children (manmade for not); i.e., as tools for him, the divorced dad, to use and cast aside as needed. He sucks, but so does the ideology that turned him into an emotionally-fragile-yet-somehow-unfeeling monster working for the state. For all his contradictions, then, the man of reason's self-centered policing of nature—from Victor to Weyland to Athetos—remains remarkably constant: a tyrant who always returns seeking revenge against women and children, but also the natural world!



(exhibit 40g1: Artist, top-left: [Wildragon](#). Resembling the skeletal Immorton Joe from *Fury Road* [which came out a year before *Axiom Verge*] but also, oddly, Jacques Derrida, Athetos is Happ's "writing with ghosts" by evoking the heteronormative spirit [and cartographic tools of conquest, exhibit 1a1a1h2a1] of the old,

Enlightenment tyrant/con man Wizard-of-Oz, Peter Weyland. As the vain owner of everything around him, Weyland becomes desperate to cheat death, yet only discovers the Leveler on his own Promethean Quest: "A king has his reign, and then he dies," his daughter, Mary Vickers, explains to him<sup>192</sup>. "That is the natural order of things."

*In defiance of this natural order, Peter lives in a glass shell, but also lies and exploits everyone around him in order to become a god. His leech's rejection from paradise comments on Humanity as "unworthy" but also the gods, in this case, as false: lying to him because he sucks. Neither the Engineers nor the Rusalki are seemingly any better—a comment Weyland's posthuman child, David, will make when he plays god in a fashion similar to the Rusalki. Except the dark mothers are stewards to nature, which Athetos—like Weyland with David—wants to invade through his children as slaves to his will [the tyrant's plea being that if only they let him inside, sickness and death will end—more Capitalist Realism, blaming the whore]. Again, Athetos can't love anything; he can only harvest or manufacture it for his own self-serving ends, because he embodies Capitalism peeled back to its Cartesian spearhead: the good weapon thrust into nature's womb to tame it "for mankind." To it, everything is expendable, including his children [or those he infantilizes and cuts up into zombie war machines—workers].)*

*Axiom Verge's warring liminalities (the verge of war) constantly present a curious kind of weapon to the player/audience: written language, specifically lies used in good faith and bad, that, unto themselves, contain things pursuant to*

<sup>192</sup> Their conversation occurs shortly before he goes to meet his maker—with Scott's Engineers being as vain, fascist and genocidal as Weyland is; i.e., zombie tyrants, themselves, being further along than he is. When Weyland dies asking them for help—when he's forced to confront what he hopes to aspire to as being as cruel and heartless as himself—he realizes that's all his life was: "There's nothing..." It's basically Scrooge seeing his fellow bankers piss and moan at his own funeral.

Keeping with Dickens, the irony's so thick you could cut it with a knife. It's quite brilliant, if you ask me, because it highlights the futility of such cruelty—that it, Capitalism, was all for naught. For precisely that reason, stories like *Prometheus* don't sell nearly as well to American audiences as Cameron's neoliberal Red Scare nonsense does (see: Persephone van der Waard's "[Outlier Love: Enjoying Prometheus/Covenant in the Shadow of Aliens](#)," 2019)!

different secret quests (a theme we'll examine in "Metroidvania," part two, when we compare Tolkien's *Hobbit* [and Thror's key and map] to the heroic quest in *Hollow Knight*). These fragments/traces also decay over time across larger systemic operations left behind (re: similar to Morbius the philologist poring over the derelict Krell language in *Forbidden Planet* that he might decipher its author's mysterious disappearance); i.e., cryptic journal fragments written by increasingly delusional, Saturnine tyrants and desperate slaves, assembled afterwards (re: the mechanical Amazons and both parent's tablets) and translated by Trace as he converses with different ghostly pieces.

Keeping with the Promethean theme of futile revenge, these reassemblies remain indicative, *Hamlet*-style, to the home and mind being not only destroyed as part of the same unit (with Hamlet lead by his "father's" ghost to kill his whole family on a hunch), and linked mid-decay<sup>193</sup> to the same basic upheaval across space-time: "Something is rotten in Denmark!"

For example, the Rusalki lie to Trace, BDSM-style, to preserve his humanity to an imperfect degree while killing Athetos (and by extension, Capitalism-as-astronoetic); i.e., *instead* of Medusa inside-outside Trace (a reversal of the monomyth and its bad parentage on both registers). Such labels are cryptonyms of a repressed struggle between different, mighty forces: "Rusalki" and "old machines" and "Sudra," but also "Athetos" as codewords during an ongoing war thereof. Simply put, the entire gameworld is a lie.

This lie unfolds on several levels. As the player follows the coded exchange borrowed from *Metroid*, *Axiom Verge* is telling an altogether different story. The player arms themselves by moving around; the Rusalki furtively arm Trace. Every victory the player earns weakens Athetos, seemingly trapping Humanity on Earth by letting Pandora out of her box. For all their posturing as great machines, the Rusalki *appear* to gatekeep Humanity through equal savagery. They lie, kill, and steal. The whole nebulous tragedy plays out like a waiting game—one where Athetos' zombie agents mindlessly guard the corridors with outwardly ugly bodies; Trace embodies the body and mind of the player as controlled by alien machines that (according to Athetos) hold Humanity captive; i.e., keeping them in a dream-like, infantile state from beyond the Breach, thus unable to colonize space.

But the real villain *isn't* Medusa defending herself—our Communist Galatea challenging yet-another Cartesian Pygmalion in a centrist, decaying Cycle of Kings—

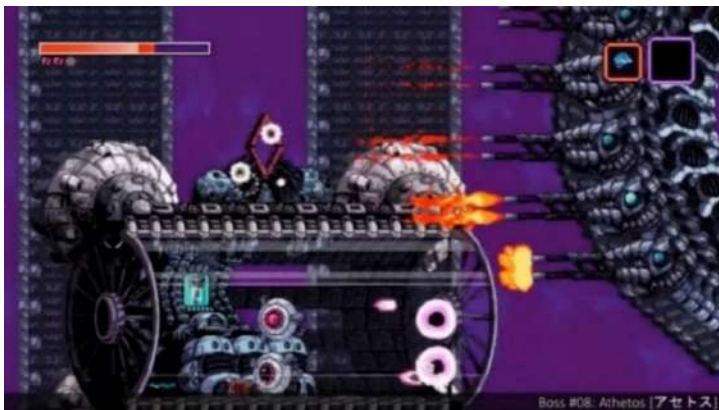
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<sup>193</sup> This decay reflects in the game's visual style, which is suitably glitchy by way of remembering those old NES cartridges being prone to "glitch out" to begin with (similar to *Forbidden Planet* being in 4:3 aspect ratio and *Frankenstein* published on paper); in revisiting *that*, it becomes a kind of fatal nostalgia that speaks to Capitalism in decay through an indie-developed gameworld revisiting the Metroidvania of the past. Rather than break down, queerness emerges from decay to thrive in a very liminal way (a state of becoming something new that Capitalism fears from of old stories). The Gothic—and by extension queerness as Gothic (from Walpole and Lewis onwards)—is written in disintegration as a means of fresh building blocks assembling away from tyranny (afraid of its own death).

it's capital defending *itself* through mad science decaying into fascist forms that apologize through the usual tyrant's pleas dressed up as "rational"; i.e., the rockstar, too-radical man of reason trying to pimp Medusa through Trace, asking his own son to rape his mother (and her peoples) *for* the father as the father (akin to Luke and Vader) until the end of time.

The ensuing dialog occurs on a precipice—the usual great calamity having indeterminably befallen a paradise in the past (or rather a liminal space *leading* to paradise): the queendom of the Rusalki and nature, of which they are its fearsome stewards. Laid low by a male invader having its former greatness something to hint at, said invader has twisted the entire world to serve him and Capitalism, which he represents. Now when he is conquered, the old man is uncloned but still dangerous, reasoning with Trace (there is nothing reasonable about genocide, but that's still what capital does: reasoning with itself through its labor force).

To this, the game is the monomyth in small, telling a story that critiques it by virtue of disempowering the hero through what he sees, but also the faeries whispering in the ear of the king's lineage warning them of such heroism as bad faith. Eventually, it becomes a matter of equalization—not of might makes right, but skillful, guerrilla-style maneuvering through the application of force as part of a larger struggle of liberation and resistance winding the clock back.



*(exhibit 40g2: Forget "First do no harm"; Athetos does nothing else. First, he releases the plague; then, he clones himself to survive outside his glass jar in order to finish off the resident queens, forcing them to fight fire with fire just to survive—the literally broadsides of their weapon-like bodies, but also*

*through the kid, Trace, who must watch the destruction of his state of innocence tied to the home finally disintegrate [the music that plays here is suitably titled "[Apocalypse](#)".] Forced to come home and realize his dad's a Nazi and his mom's a Communist whore, Trace the inheritor remains caught between them [the game summed up as a Promethean custody battle, one where two gods—one of capital, fascism and mad science; the other of nature, rebellion and the Medusa—fight over the hearts and minds of workers at large: their "children"]. Then, he watches Mom kill Dad, Medusa getting her body back before putting the aging vampire down in front of the boy like Old Yeller... if Old Yeller were a crazed Nazi scientist obsessed with conquering the universe [no one ever said the gods were subtle]!*

*The prodigal son's arrival takes time. In the interim, he explores the war-torn world as a child might, the Rusalki queendom appearing to Trace: one, as if for the first*

time [re: "It is with considerable difficulty that I remember the original era of my being; all the events of that period appear confused and indistinct"] and two, corrupted by Nazi revenge [re: "If you will comply with my conditions, I will leave them and you at peace; but if you refuse, I will glut the maw of death, until it be satiated with the blood of your remaining friends"]. Happ has reversed the position of the one making demands, the Creatures in a position of relative, unconquered advantage versus our fallen king having laid both parties low. He's an abusive father having damaged the mother's home, trying get at her through the children:

*Trace, the last, made from the bodies of the other dead kids. Brutal!*

*In turn, all mommy can do is try and survive along with the last surviving child; i.e., using her adopted son in reverse during the divorce from the alien dad, but ultimately seeking not to harm Trace: by teaching him that, yes, rebellion isn't polite, and it's ok to sever bonds from your father if he's a Nazi devouring his own lineage [re: Goya]. To that, the story has different morals playing out as a matter of dialectical-material argument: Shelley's theatrical dialogs, mythic structure and aesthetic dualities [of power and death] warring inside framed narratives.*

*When the likeness of the father encounters the father's first line of children,*



*we see the first degrees of infiltration at work; i.e., force and total war, followed by assimilation; e.g., Skynet's bare-bones terminators, followed by those with rubber skin, and ultimately "blood, hair, sweat—grown for the cyborgs." As a matter of complicit vs revolutionary cryptonymy, the zombie children recognize the more refined and human Trace and see in their sibling an element of the mother, who they are supposed to destroy.*

*As such, the paradox of violence, terror and morphological expression is that Athetos cannot monopolize them; nor can he abuse technology in relation to nature as something to monopolize. In making Trace more human to blend in, Athetos makes a less-expendable child [an heir] who is able to see his mother's side of things, sealing the wicked father [and Capitalism's] fate. The battle with the flower tank [left] is simply a formality in that respect: exorcism to critique capital, not Communism!*

Furthermore, if Athetos' singular manufactured genocide against the Sudrans was cruel for an instant [which it wouldn't have been, that many people dying hardly happening overnight, below], it was both an act of revenge for being unable to send "technological advancements" [with "progress" being a cryptonym for genocide] into space, and one informed by the countless genocides under Cartesian thought that predated Athetos on Earth [and feudalistic enterprises surviving inside Capitalism's various fantasy worlds]: "Who's the savage? Modern man!"



All bleed into this half-imaginary [dream-like] realm; i.e., one of the damned, where Trace—following in his father's footsteps—climbs the mountain of unburied dead Athetos left in his wake. Trace climbs innocently towards paradise on the bones of daddy's victims, only to run into older copies of the father's twisted will, which his own seamless copy conceals [they literally compose him]. Regarding all of them, Athetos abused the technology of the Rusalki—in effect, the fire of the gods—to achieve godhood in a capitalist sense through those he created. Cannibalism and madness overlap into a sad tolerance for itself: echoing inside the same child's head, mid-chronotope.



Shortly before Athetos' death, he and Trace exchange words inside the old man's robot womb, as much between a politician to a citizen [Caesar being a warlord and statesman] or corporate propagandist and consumer as it is between father and son. Except, there is no reasoning with such infantile, self-superior persons; they are simply wrong as a matter of basic human, animal and environmental rights [also, bear in mind, Athetos has been trying to kill Trace this entire time: "Athetos say kill"].

*By recognizing that vicious entitled streak in Athetos, the Rusalki gatekeep him through the son, using him to buy time until they can swoop in and stake the fascist Dracula for good. They do so to keep capital [thus fascism and genocide hidden behind Cartesian arguments] out of the rest of the universe, returning Trace—heartbroken and confused—to a Sudran state of ignorance [the sleeping rebellion speaking to the allegory of Communism as hunted down and invaded by Capitalism].)*

Meanwhile, the cruelty of the Rusalki only applies to any who wish to cross over into their "greatest nation," keeping paradise "pure" by virtue of policing outsiders through themselves having no other choice. They've been hurt before, thus must stay on their toes (Cartesian men embody capital as a Cartesian, thus settler-colonial force)! Athetos gassing the Sudrans is him failing the test as a matter of impatience and bad faith; he was always a conqueror and the mask slipped (an act he later explains away to Trace, but only when Elsenova has him on the hip). To equivocate his deeds with that of the Rusalki is DARVO and obscurantism, two devices that reach back—as usual—to Shelley's novel: "I'm not



bad, just misunderstood! *They're* the genocidal maniacs, the hairy wild things!" says the genocidal maniac.

(artist: [Quinnvincible](#))

More to the point, it all stems from Capitalism as embodied by men like Victor as echoed by Weyland, Athetos, Trace, and anyone else (from Earth or not) attacking the monstrous-feminine (re: "wicked, bad, naughty Zoot" and her grail beacon). Beating everyone to the punch, Mary Shelley touched upon and critiqued capital as an operatic matter of oppositional, dualistic dialogs unfolding Gothically (as endless counterfeit "past," echoes, ghosts) through framed narration (exhibit 40g2); i.e., stories inside stores across stories, which again, *Axiom*

*Verge* ultimately is—Victor and the Creature extending to the rotting (fascist) Cartesian tyrant and rebellious, monstrous-feminine slave each playing a swan/siren song to lure Trace with: heroes in opposing, dialectical-material struggles experienced across history as half-real. It is one which Gothic expression—its *cryptomimesis* echoing trauma in between fragments with a

medieval, earthly flavor ("hawk tua, spit on that thang<sup>194!</sup>")—tells and retells such vast, opposing forces neatly enough (the young-at-heart getting it, the old and divorced-from-nature left not just scratching their heads, but attacking such youthful, slutty impudence to try and closet it once more: "Those kids and their pesky videogames<sup>195!</sup>").

Shelley's novel is several centuries older than Happ's videogame (with Bakhtin, in the middle of them, introducing theories of the chronotope that Shelley perhaps intuitively grasped, but Happ had full access to). As such, hindsight is *kind of 20/20*. Rather, Gothic maturity intensifies conflict as a matter of entropy (whose perceptive zombie eyeballs parse the chaff that stirs up in the wake of such warring elements). All heroes are monsters, but canonical iterations always have the monomythic twat punching down against the monstrous-feminine Prometheus (re: *not* Victor). Pity the fool if these bitches decide to break bad (water nymphs or otherwise), freezing him in his tracks:



([source](#): Opera Australia, "The Ring Cycle," 2023)

In Promethean fashion, then, our aforementioned themes of contested godhood remain present. That's what creation is, both sides doing so at cross purposes (tyranny vs liberation, capital vs Communism). Compared to the Rusalki, then, Athetos executed those who were complacent under the rule of what he deemed "false gods" (re: to take what was theirs for himself and those like him). In rejecting them, Athetos not only incurs their *motherly* wrath (versus the Engineer's paternal rage); he's effectively playing god himself, but in a *fascist* sense. Or as Alex Holmes writes in "The Philosophy of *Axiom Verge*" (2019):

As we discussed at the start, axioms are not able to be proven. They are necessary to ground any rational system so that ideas within the system can be evaluated, but are never themselves provable even if it was empirical evidence that causes us to create a new system. [...] So imagine Athetos' frustration, his anger, when after an entire career of ridicule despite public

<sup>194</sup> The domain of women/monstrous-feminine is generally of compelled prostitution, shoved unceremoniously into the gutter by patriarchal forces pimping nature; i.e., the world's oldest job—one that is both incumbent on rape, and baked into Cartesian thought as a pro-Capitalist creation myth the *modern* Promethean Quest camps by design. Simply put, it's a lived reality that defines us as much by the things we reclaim (sex, labor and force, etc), mid-struggle.

<sup>195</sup> No different than the rise of terrorist literature making the Victorians afraid (re: [Crawford](#)).  
*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
 Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)



notoriety, he finally achieves a functional way to demonstrate the usefulness of his [axioms: the] world of Sudra, existing in a state of liminality that enables one to breach into these other worlds. What he finds instead is a society that has abandoned this potential out of fear, precisely because it was dangerous [...] Nothing could have been more slighting.

Still, committing total, biological genocide by weaponizing your own cells into a mutating virus just so he can say, "I told you so" to the nerds who bullied him is a little heavy handed [or a critique of fascist megalomania, perhaps]. The personal message to take away from this story: pursue your goals without being consumed by ego ([source](#)).

Notions of godhood and demonstrating "progress" aside, we're left with unequal arrangements of power, the weak rebelling against the strong as parental (which, again, goes all the way back to *Frankenstein*—to appeal any argument to those under capital in easy-to-understand language: rebellion and critique, passed along as "corruption" from mother to child in opposition to patriarchal hubris, technology<sup>196</sup> and exploitation).

As we'll see in the Demon Module, Weyland's child, David, had a similar problem ("Who doesn't want their parents dead?"), except he was never human. Even so, he loved "Ozymandias," an 1818 poem about a mad king whose mad reach for power leaves behind a "colossal wreck." No record of how it came to exist survives, or who Ozymandias really was. In continuation, this trend of civilization eating itself was exemplified in Scott's other *Alien* movies, which, in turn, inspired *Metroid* and other Metroidvania like *Axiom Verge* (or crossovers); i.e., Promethean, inverted-monomythic stories about fathers conditioning their children to kill their mother as monstrous, making her an extension of nature dominated by Cartesian thought.

Characters in stories like *Frankenstein* represent more than just themselves. *Axiom Verge* is all at once a story about an evil father controlling his kid to kill his mother, but remains connected to all the others, in and out of fiction, speaking to *The Modern Prometheus*—less as a single work and more an ongoing theme, a mythic code that can be used by either side. The Gothic, through this myth, routinely predicts disaster by flinging the fatal, one-possible future into the fearsome past seeking revenge against nature-as-alien, as monstrous-feminine.

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<sup>196</sup> With technology (writing and written accounts, especially maps) leading to forgetting (re: Plato) as a matter of *Lear*-style genocide to reassemble (re: Morrison); i.e., as a matter of playing with old dead things in Promethean forms (re: me) as Shelley once did: through journals, the likes of which *Axiom Verge* presents to the player as written by multiple monarchical parents lying to him (see, also: *Myst* and its blue and red pages) in order to achieve sex-positive or sex-coercive end goals: deny or gain entry unto power through deception and force (the pussy and the penis divorced from biological essentialism [and gender from sex, per Judith Butler] but paradoxically "fencing" during the usual battle of the sexes being one over gender and labor tied to people's bodies).

For example, as the clock winds back to the here-and-now for Trace, the faeries return him to a world where *Pax Americana's* presidents (and their abuse of mad science) bear a disturbing and frightening partial likeness to Athetos—Biden and Trump, but also America versus nature; i.e., as monstrous-feminine, as Communist, per anxious stories like *Axiom Verge*, *The Dark Crystal*, *The Terminator* and *At the Mountains of Madness*, but also confidently militaristic ones like *Metroid*, *Aliens* and *Starship Troopers* (whose ultimate solution is always nuclear war and planetary destruction—genocide).



To avert and avoid the crisis that happened in Sudra—a world that has already been destroyed by hidden powers decaying them—the righting of the ship must be done in our own place and time as part of the same larger Garden of the Forking Paths (which Sudra—and indeed, all Metroidvania—intimate inside themselves); i.e., as already

mapped out and destroyed in likenesses of itself: the Rusalki having won, in the end, their world devastated similar to John Connor's war-torn L.A. *after* the nuclear war in *that* film. Sudra's genocide—its great decay—happens through power as obscured, but also buried into the world like a thorn, but also a radioactive bullet. It is a post-apocalypse vision, its doom given by the faeries (the oracles) to Trace as "chosen" by the gods—one that needs to be prevented in our world while already moving towards the same end game that befell Sudra; i.e., committed by the same powerful men of reason and the monomyth as something to camp through the Promethean myth: returning from Hell not with plunder but the predatory knowledge of one's homeworld (under Capitalism) heading in a similar direction!

Fascist or Communist, the gods are hardly silent, then; they predominantly live inside-outside us, across media hybridizing fantasy and science, just as Shelley's Gothic did, over two hundred years ago: on the walls of restless castles communicating time, devastation and revenge as a cryptonymic circle, looping in on itself through decay as something to recover power from, in order to regenerate out of the dead material. As we'll see with *Hollow Knight*, Capitalism will take everything from the world; but no matter how destroyed a world appears, we're not quite there yet.

That all probably sounds bleak, so let's conclude part one by reflecting on the positive side to some of its parental creative themes—i.e., as a matter of praxial catharsis—before moving onto part two and Metroidvania space in decay and regrowth, rape and reclamation.

To this, the Gothic can seem like a bad dream stuck on loop (no one wants to be told "good luck" while reconciling with capital vs nature as fraught with mimicry and fabrication). *Axiom Verge* certainly feels this way. But it also shows that each time a story *is* told, the past grows, leaving behind artifacts that are increasingly begot from imagination (the cryptic writing crumbling to dust, the faeries moving in); i.e., as not only haunted by patriarchal ghosts, but spectral patriarchs anxious about the fragility of male power—its tendency to fragment into senility away from lucidity when threatened by nature and time categorized as an ancient, monstrous-feminine force: the Archaic Mother as an immortal, undead, and very pissed-off spectre of Marx. In short, such tyranny is fleeting and far from absolute. Writing decays, meaning canon does, too.

While memory is so often a casualty when such decay happens, it also lies in service to one side or the other when things, to some extent, regenerate inside the necrobiome's fractal recursion (which *Axiom Verge's* jousting, Borges-style epistolary [ruins and mirrors] superbly demonstrates—the memories backtrack across the map, while the player more or less goes in a single, unicursal path); i.e., matter cannot be created or destroyed, only transferred and reshaped; e.g., like a flower tank echoing Eliot's "Waste Land" (1922):

April is the cruellest month, breeding  
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing  
Memory and desire, stirring  
Dull roots with spring rain ([source](#)).



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

This yields unto us an awesome power—that of the gods as genderqueer and monstrous-feminine, holding heaven in a wild flower that can regrow in the face of Cartesian domination's own false gods!

As nature's current guardians, we can harness such curse-like gifts to *banish* Cartesian dickheads (and their raping of

nature) from the Breach, making them an awful thing of the legendary past (to learn from, as the future waiting to happen yet again)! Hauntologized, rebellion becomes the ultimate genderqueer playground, one where our reclaimed labor (and Gothic stories' *mise-en-abyme*) can truly set us free! It plays with the decay (the

fertilizer of genocide) to enrich our reckoning and return: Don't fear the reaper! Fuck them!

I suppose it *is* all a bit neurodivergent, gay and bellicose! I'd also say excuse the drenched *messiness* and vertiginous, tangential repetition of this particular symposium, but that's how divorces (and history) generally go (with *Axiom Verge* a war between gods and their children sharing the data—indeed, consciousness itself—as written down, but also cloned inside a shared, fought-over chronotope goopy darkness).

The fact remains, we *want* to make rebellion joyous by acknowledging our place in its splendid lies/dead giveaways. Queer people exist in a perpetual state of change, thus decay and rebirth as hinted at in *Metroidvania* tied to Cartesian abuses. Sooner or later you can't afford to be passive (or non-violent); the joy comes from finding our voice (one that is generally marginalized and discounted by STEM-field-types and other state proponents monopolizing Gothic poetics for themselves—gaslight, gatekeep, girl boss). Concerning liberation through revolutionary cryptonymy, there's simply too many things to address<sup>197</sup> all of them, ourselves—but at least you'll be spoilt for choice!



(artist: [Bay](#))

As something to grow into out of contested stories, queer people built ourselves out of old dead parts to defend nature and progress towards "the greatest nation" (Communism), not abuse and rape it like *Athetos* does with *Trace* (who looks human, but is actually a Frankenstein's monster made from genocided corpses). The game lies to the player to expose *Athetos* lying to *Trace*, to us, to workers! This rebellious lying continues through *our* labor and games, our playing with Gothic poetics to kill Nazis in-text in order to challenge fascism (thus moderates and profit) *extratextually*. In turn, love and genderqueer catharsis bloom on that battlefield, resisting capital while trapped inside its hellish marriage to the land it poisons and steals from (camouflage goes both ways, as does sex, force/violence, bodily expression, masks, mirrors, etc)! *Axiom Verge's* notably decayed language, memory and world (all one-in-the-same data as "cards to play") transform because they are used under disproportionate stress (asymmetrical warfare), yet stay flexible in regards to said stress in ways that Capitalism historically is not.

<sup>197</sup> I.e., to acknowledge and localize them, like a haunted house pointing to its own abuse; re: the restless labyrinth's cryptonymy further complicated by the duality of Gothic poetics, during oppositional praxis.

To play *Axiom Verge*, then, is to both play inside a settler colony that is dying *and* a dying land that is trying to reclaim itself (with both memories stored inside-outside the same avatar experiencing them). Capitalism (and by extension, its paragons) are brittle, frail, and prone to flaking and fragmentation, but also paranoid hostility because of their weakness as something to feel; re, what Chris Baldrick writes in his introduction to *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales*:

For the Gothic effect to be attained, a tale should combine a fearful sense of inheritance in a time with a claustrophobic sense of enclosure in space, these two dimensions reinforcing one another to produce an impression of sickening descent into disintegration ([source](#)).

As such, capital digs its own grave by making the land (and workers) unstable, who then emerge through the same player/play space to *joyously* overthrow Capitalism according to the very whirlwinds it cannot survive. All capital can try and do is wait Communism out until the world ends (as Athetos does in his sorry bubble), convincing itself it can somehow escape to other planets (e.g., Elon Musk in our world, and Weyland in Scott's, etc).

Summarizing our symposium thesis argument through *Axiom Verge*, Happ showcases the popularity of the monomyth (re: Campbell's *Hero of a Thousand Faces*, 1949) and its "empowerment" (the knight rewarded with the damsel after slaying the dragon) as offset by the Promethean Quest's "disempowerment" (the hero is cuckolded by the dragon, princess, Disney-style vice character, what-have-you); i.e., critiquing capital through the same spaces (and their abjection) in reverse: a fight to survive in spite of capital, camping the canonical medieval as it exists *presently* (e.g., Trace in a bikini, mothered by dragon fairy ladies).

Except, to merely call my developments "exciting" would betray the reality of discovering a fatal knowledge that is hard-won (as Promethean knowledge generally is): a) one's home as displaced unto a territory that is discovered to be just that, but also one's grave; and b) the home as built on genocide presenting itself as correct, righteous, all-knowing and so on (my father enjoyed universal acclaim simply for being my father). Faced with Athena's Aegis, it's not long before standard-issue military optimism exposes itself as the fool's errand, tilting Quixotically at colossal, moribund windmills (dragons). Inside Trace, there's a sense of Cartesian longing to dominate such things (taught to him by patriarchal forces in defense of Capitalism), but also submit to their power as weaker than a decayed greatness<sup>198</sup> starting to heal but still rotted (taught to him by matriarchal forces, in defense of Communism).

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<sup>198</sup> Such dark, BDSM cybernetics suggests a fascist element of greatness to these biomechanical Amazons, not unlike Lovecraft's aliens from *Mountains* or the Chozo from *Metroid* (e.g., Raven Beak, from *Metroid: Dread*, as basically Caesar Chozo).

Even so, Elsenova's dick is still bigger than his (giving an altogether different meaning to "size difference," next page); she could crush Trace without a second thought! Indeed, she fucks back, the fabled Great Destroyer that every insecure patriarch fears: a spectre of Marx giving the fascist hypocrite a taste of their own medicine; i.e., by lying to his pupil, but also instructing him truthfully as a strict mommy dom, adopted parent/found family overcoming Cartesian family ties by camping them ("Whose mommy's little destroyer? *You* are!"): a Satanic behemoth (what Mikhail Bulgakov would call "begemot," the Satanic, hellcat servant [literally a giant talking cat] from his 1940 novel, *The Master and Margarita*).

Returned to working order as an act of waking up (the old gods return, "going woke" to challenge profit making *workers* broke<sup>199</sup>), Elsenova has evolved to brace herself against Athetos' bullshit, literally taking up arms against him after emerging from her deathly chrysalid (from the corpse of empire). She does so, while Capitalism stays stuck in its inferior glass version (again, being too brittle to adapt and survive when Medusa topples it but also something of a sitting duck that becomes increasingly transparent during class war—a glass onion when workers rise up and break shit: they only have what power we give them). "Do you fear me?" she victoriously asks the hero, decked out in the clothes of gay class war



while having the hero join her in a shared pedagogy of the oppressed; i.e., one resisting police violence (with Athetos' hallway zombies serving as cops that attack Trace for his rebellious signature). This happens through ludo-Gothic BDSM teaching a vital lesson: life and death as part of the same rotting and growing equation, among the corpses and the shit ("They don't sing about how they all shit themselves; they don't put that part in the songs!").

([source](#))

As "Bad Dreams" showed us with zombies, rebellion and apocalypse can be incredibly scary (a force of nature whose hurricane shakes shit up—more on this when

<sup>199</sup> Profit isn't just rape, but labor and wage theft that endorses rape as an abject commodity and comorbidity (criminogenic effect) under capital's monopolies, trifectas and qualities.

we look at the Radiance). But they also represent the potential to be something great that, until this point, has been stunted by Cartesian forces. In Gothic BDSM language, the Rusalki offer a palliative-Numinous balm to capital's deleterious



effects, but also an ontological statement extending rebellion in and out of imagination: both who I want to be, and the found family I replaced my absentee parents with—someone strong and capable, but beautiful in ways that reflect their own bionic, genderqueer survival, liberation and cathartic enrichment. Before it, Trace the useful-idiot lab rat simpers dumbly as part of a death cult—one whose revolutionary cryptonymy robs him of his ability to rape Medusa, encouraging him to glaze (dick-ride) her, instead:

(artist: [Wildragon](#))

Sort of. This happens *without* harming Trace. Only his foolish pride—tied to the nuclear family and its *Hamlet*-style tendency to decay while moving

endlessly through the map—is wounded (which will recover in service to things better than weird canonical nerds); i.e., the Rusalki reborn embody a threat display (not unlike Princess Mononoke's wolf mother from that film: a girl raised by wolves versus a boy raised by faeries) that signals the hero to bask in *her* campy glory (also like the Radiance). Doing so breaks canon to save nature from its usual monomythic destroyers *and* dogma: "the castle [as] the perfect dom," person *and* place oscillating between both categories through the same-old Gothic *mise-en-abyme*, fairytales and ghost stories' *cryptomimesis* (re: "po-tay-toh," po-tah-toh").

*Axiom Verge* is a story about a divorce the father loses, but where worlds still collide for the child. Except, the story of evil or questionable, *Hamlet*-grade parentage wasn't new when Happ made *Axiom Verge* or even when Shelley wrote *Frankenstein*, nor are evil fathers dominating their children somehow restricted to "pure fiction"; i.e., playing god to one's battered kids, passing oneself off as "God";

e.g., Shang Tsung's "[Low Tier God Is a DEADBEAT Dad to a BIOLOGICAL Daughter](#)," 2024); re: Victor and his ilk being low-tier, bargain-bin, absentee dads to their own kids (biological or not) and to nature as something to respect, not rape and harvest (what the kids call "divorced dad energy"). That being said, history is a document forever rewriting itself (re: Marx), dipping in and out of fiction and non-fiction, lucidity and oblivion, as game-like using maps (re: me).

As *Axiom Verge* and *Frankenstein* show, it can go either way. What matters is *how* you play with its lingering (and, at times, incredibly confusing) poetic instructions (which this book is very much a defense of—to develop Gothic Communism in ways more inclusive than Percy Shelley's own 1821 "[Defence of Poetry](#)"); i.e., to move power and understanding in one direction (the state) or the other (workers and nature as monstrous-feminine) whilst inside the midden.

In short, the crux of the larger argument is intended play vs emergent, cowards following the leader by doing what they're told, the bravely gay bending the rules to survive by outplaying the cop inside the trash heap. We empower workers by *camping* canon; re: making it not just gay but gay as *fuck*; e.g., gay space dragons<sup>200</sup> (above), observed by ordinary-looking queer people—as being in the closet or pushed towards it on the verge of things (as I was, once upon a time): a nerdy pirate roped into various, spacefaring adventures (Gothic *matelotage*) on the wild seas of outrageous fortune.

Grand poetics aside, it's incredibly germane because our closeted nerd, son-of-Caesar is, through the resurrection machines, both born in the Caesarean style ("from his mother's womb untimely ripp'd") and divorced from his father's evil influence. Raised by the Amazonian wilderness, he becomes free to challenge the gods of capital to—however impertinently they might describe his actions—lay them on, allowing him to choose his own destiny as not set; i.e., as not monopolized by either side (rebellion is optional, as far as choices go, but so is submission). Instead, the Shelley-style ambiguity lingers as a matter of ongoing class and culture war during the Promethean Quest as an everyday event (Capitalism vs Communism)—one to navigate, interrogate and express the ambiguities thereof in abstract and in small: the fabulously gay camping of monomythic language and motion (castle-narrative) through the draconian opera; the infernal, inverted monomyth; the danger-disco Gothic castle, theatrics and cryptonymy (masks, mirrors, poetry and puppets, etc)! All become spells, but also dialogs to uphold or resist bourgeois arguments, hence illusions.

To that, if the princess is the Call to Adventure in monomythic stories (videogames or otherwise), then *Elsenora* is Trace's princess playing parent to discourage the nuclear family model (re: campy themes of incest [so-called "Lolita syndrome" with irony, unlike Beauvoir raping her students] never being far off in

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<sup>200</sup> Spoke Prince Lear of the unicorn, "Unicorn, sorceress, mermaid—no name you give her could surprise or frighten me. I love whom I love."



Gothic spaces, any more than insanity or cannibalism are; re: Walpole's *Mysterious Mother* and its double incest plot); but she's not the only one: under the thirsty hero's blood-red lab coat (vampire pirate "rizz") is an equally sanguine bikini (crossdressing, in Western culture, dating back to Shakespeare, at least).



(artist: [Wildragon](#))

To survive, then, is to preserve amid the chaos of capital destroying us, with queer forces—from Walpole to Happ—hijacking the language of war and sex through weird metaphors/medieval hybridity that speaks naturally to queer audiences rebelling against capital's *de facto*, symbolic parentage; i.e., even if the

authors of these stories weren't actually gay! "Actually" is just an argument to deny us a voice through the same liminal mode of expression; what matters is function and flow using the same aesthetics—the same heroes and stories—interpreted by us (and our dance partners) through any manner of campy medieval rape play we want, parody or pastiche, to produce cathartic irony (which is what the Promethean Quest ultimately is: camping the monomyth-as-medieval in present times).

To that, *Axiom Verge* is actually pretty limited as a Metroidvania; i.e., the gameplay being linear in order to critique capital (say nothing of the clunky controls), versus non-linear to move money through nature, as Samus does (who controls excellently like the Big Bad Wolf: "Better to eat [nature] with!"). But as something to aesthetically *interpret*, its GNC potential for catharsis is virtually endless, making Happ's odyssey one of my all-time favorite Gothic genderqueer stories (also, props to Wildragon for the amazing fanart); i.e., the ability to converse with gods in order to move mountains, thus liberate ourselves from capital's Cartesian edicts: throwing us in chains and eating us, undressing us, making us seek out a big-sister or mommy-style Amazon to nurture us, but also embody our dark matriarchal revenge.

In other words, *Axiom Verge* is a story about the value of such monstrous mothers—not as TERFs uphold the status quo (re: Ripley and Samus) by triangulating *against* Communism in abject forms—but as protectors of the weak and vulnerable as prone to be robbed from by Cartesian dogma teaching them to both surrender their power to capital (re: "candy from a baby") and punch down against labor as monstrous-feminine. To that, the Gothic is predicated on decay and

deception through open secrets, laid bare like a sexy mommy to teach you naughty-naughty knowledge (the raw nudity or the unequal power arrangements of rape play—the charged surfaces, thresholds, etc): Eve challenging God, teaching other workers (male, female, or intersex) to do the same!



(artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#))

Such things might seem too bold and overly exposed. In truth, we rebels are often quite shy in person; on the canvas, though, we can be bold, protected by barriers through our cryptonymy! To expose such things without fear of actual harm (castration, as Freud would insist), alienation and eternal punishment (re: the gods' fate for Prometheus)? That's the best revenge of all: more happy relationships working through our mommy and daddy issues to leave better patterns/fractals, less Cartesian knobs like Athetos (re: "Pattern-Mind") aping Victor Frankenstein and Hamlet's dad (and their likenesses) to try and pass both themselves—and *their* mapped, automatic predation of nature—along.

Shelley dreamt of such catharsis, swinging for the fences by stamping seemingly inexpressible things (a tramp stamp) in ready accessible language (a parental drama with monsters<sup>201</sup> who look and act human); so can we, in and out of transformation and lucidity as part of a shared dream: annihilation and reformation—rebirth.

Per the infernal concentric pattern (up next)—and really just queer existence under heteronormative control, in general—the above things as they manifest in *Axiom Verge* and other Metroidvania go beyond simple closure, catharsis and resolution for monstrous-feminine entities. Thwarted by an overhanging tension, strain, and confusion—i.e., the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, flung from

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<sup>201</sup> Contrary to what you might have been led to believe by capitalists, the villain of the story is not the Creature; it is the maker of the Creature and the system for which all belong. Like Athetos and Trace, Victor tries to internalize this mentality into his childlike slave (though, in Trace's case, to get him to help the evil father seek revenge, versus Victor trying to kill the Creature); the slave refuses to obey the evil nerd, listening to a maternal presence that admittedly was rather absent in Shelley's original novel. Given a mother to listen to who *isn't* tokenized/completely passive, Trace has the chance to grow up and not repeat the mistakes that Athetos, the capitalist, did before him: the sins of the father linked to a genocidal system (of material conditions)/system of thought.

those you think are all powerful, but aren't (even when you want them to be)—such things are made and expressed in grand Shakespearean emotions: the hope of a better world, one free of Cartesian trauma for all gay bitches, developed inside allusory dollish copies of itself, of itself, of itself as overwritten (and decaying as it does, like a VCR tape, coming out of it like Sadako Yamamura to achieve tangible socio-material effects).

We'll continue exploring the Cartesian function of playing god during the "Forbidden Sight" section, in the Demon Module. For now, we've merely laid out the gendered actors and their parental, Promethean actions (creation that destroys monomythic structures). For the rest of the symposium, we shall more deeply examine the castled stages all of this unfurls on; i.e., the maze, the labyrinth, as a



ruin of Civilization full of itself, but also a particular arrangement of unequal power-as-parental and Promethean, a continuation of the same colossal struggle: the chronotope as home to giants, Amazons, fallen warring gods (those of capital and Communism), and all manner of Gothic "tortures" (the state in crisis, for which anything goes).

To that, before we can synthesize castle-narrative and

Communism's triumphantly matriarchal homecoming—one that concludes a current chase of the palliative Numinous as monstrous-feminine during ludo-Gothic BDSM—we shall explore the Promethean role inside the colossal wreck, insofar as heroic progression (re: weapons and power) is concerned: Halloween and the Promethean hero's journey into their own tomb, in *Hollow Knight!*

**Metroidvania, part two: "Look upon my Works, ye Mighty"; or, the Infernal Concentric Pattern and Rape Play in *Hollow Knight* and Metroidvania at Large**

"Vegeta, Vegeta! Remember that bug planet?" ([source](#)).

—Nappa, "[Dragon Ball Z Abridged: Episode 9](#)" (2009)

Part zero of the "Metroidvania" symposium outlined the Freudian, parental character and dialectical-material elements to the Metroidvania, in effect exploring the Promethean reversal of said parentage (and power) relative to capital's usual monomythic outings: Hell coming home, versus the hero leaving home to go into Hell. Part one considered such Ozymandian hubris and collapse by close-reading *Axiom Verge* (and its various parent texts—with *Metroid*, *Alien*, *Forbidden Planet* and *At the Mountains of Madness* reaching back to *Frankenstein*), exploring the rise and fall of its persons double-operating through cryptonymic deception to survive tyrannical elements (dead giveaways); i.e., overcoming a former great leader/*de facto* parent who succumbs to an indomitable monstrous-feminine power like those before him did, capital's decay letting new iconoclastic stories take root inside the same venues: camping the medieval interplay to move power towards workers, nature, the Medusa (and her toothy tentacles, below), *et al.*

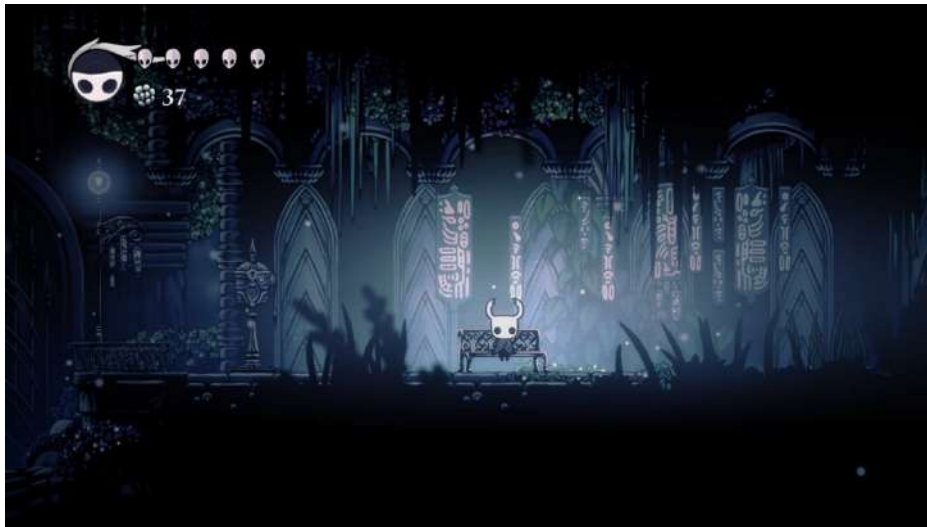


Part two now takes the *spatial* elements of a decaying gentry into consideration, examining the sleeping but restless tyrant's castle in *Hollow Knight* as mysteriously fallen to ruin; i.e., records that partially survive, decaying in the presence of restless power as fought over by hidden

forces during rape play (of a faux-medieval sort), and which regeneration through camouflage (the cryptonymy's endless wreckage) whose base elements cannot be created or destroyed *is* the Promethean attempt to survive: what Capitalism ultimately is and what it sells—a mighty place occupied by dragons of some kind or another, which the centrist, corruptible hero must hunt down, face and cleanse.

In short, there's a myth of greatness that's forgotten itself, the urgency in finding the culprit—getting to the bottom of things, as it were—winding down inside a former paradise that's clearly gone to pot (seemingly overnight, although it only *feels* that way because you're visiting the ruins after the fact). Nature has won, but that doesn't mean things are obvious. There's just a ruin, one waiting for the knight to enter and explore.

*Note: While both Axiom Verge and Hollow Knight were topics of study in my master's thesis, Hollow Knight received more focus. This is my first time revisiting it since 2018, letting me really go wild. As a result, this is a longer section/close-read than the Axiom Verge close-read was, but stays fairly consistent in its pursuit and arrangement of the subject matter. Being something that grew into itself upon repeated reflection, we'll talk about the history of my formulating ludo-Gothic BDSM as rape play (and furthermore what you can do with it as a subversive psychosexual device). Even so, everything stays tied to Hollow Knight (and Tolkien, simply to give a monomythic example that Hollow Knight camps). —Perse*



"Metroidvania," part two is divided in two:

- **Part one, "[Geometries in Terror; or, Traces of Aguirre and Bakhtin in Hollow Knight's Promethean Castle World](#)":** Outlines Bakhtin and Aguirre in relation to Team Cherry's Numinous gameworld; i.e., its oddly homely and relaxing setting as something to explore and understand Gothically (through the chronotope and Promethean Quest) as both largely devoid of people while simultaneously being overridden with decay regenerating into different potential outcomes.
- **Part two, "[Policing the Whore; or, Topping from Below to Rise from the Ashes](#)":** Articulates Aguirre and Bakhtin's ideas per my evolution of ludo-Gothic BDSM after my master's thesis and into my graduate work, then considers the Promethean Quest as something that presents the whore as normally hunted by police forces, only to escape their subjugation and imprisonment by acting out her own rape; i.e., as *Hollow Knight's* final boss, the Radiance, does.

### Geometries in Terror; or, Traces of Aguirre and Bakhtin in *Hollow Knight's* Promethean Castle World

*The realm of sensibility, passion, fear provides a major theme in Gothic, but clearly this theme is not just a matter of cognitive import to characters and readers. Rather, it wills itself a perlocutionary act; it aims no less than at changing them and us [...] This is where "form" directly determines "meaning," and spatial coordinates elicit mental states* ([source](#)).

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

Unlike the Promethean Quest, the monomyth traditionally aims to restore the land or castle; re: Tolkien or Cameron's refrain, either an outdoor or indoor paradise, per the dialectic of shelter and the alien, canonically falling apart (versus Milton's camping of the sylvan scene and its artificial wilderness). Restoration is to a former glory after Hell returns home (a metaphor for pirates, but also monstrous-feminine rivals to a patriarchal status quo—Mother Brain and her dragon captains, Ridley and Kraid, but also the Radiance and *her* minibosses standing in for nature, Communism, and fascism per Red Scare): "Hell," Volume Zero argues, "is always a place that appears on Earth," the monomyth hero a merciless exterminator cleaning house through Americanized police violence (us-versus-them—stab, shoot, punch enemies inside stages, levels, rooms and worlds) dressed up in the usual Gothic forms to move money through nature. Life cheapens, the cycle repeating to serve capital during all the usual decay and regeneration of the state threatened by imaginary enemies tied to nature. It's a power fantasy that offers up false power and hope in all the usual neoliberal forms (videogames).



(artist: [Fabian Pineda](#))

Just as Samus reexplores old things to dance with dragons, back-and-forth, part two of "Metroidvania" peeks once more into the other primary text from my master's thesis, *Hollow Knight*. We shall revisit this cute, psychosexual and frightening bug world to explore my grad school and postgrad research into Metroidvania; i.e., as a matter of navigable space, by applying Aguirre's infernal concentric pattern to *reverse* abjection, such camp informing what eventually became ludo-Gothic BDSM as I devised it (a practice of rape-style roleplay that involves spaces and players inside those spaces, regardless of the media type). This isn't so much to do with maps (mapping being a process of colonizing such spaces), but movement through space and its Gothic architecture and cosmetics yielding Promethean themes similar to the personable ones we looked at in part one with *Axiom Verge*; re, Bakhtin:

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.

This past is one of open-secret power and trauma as something to exchange in cryptonymic ways (re: dead giveaways—the dead both unable to speak, but doing



so through the space) that operate per the Promethean Quest's "disempowerment," not the monomyth's "empowerment," to ultimately expel old harmful ideas ("My uncle's work was do-do!") and replace them with fresh, altered copies that transcend profit and rape; i.e., by piloting capital's dying shell.

(artist: [Niall Skinner](#))

Simply put, it's good praxis, but also good *camp*; i.e., *Hollow Knight* is full of cute bugs that, all the same, rape and eat each other as part of a larger dying organism inside another and another to mimic (double) capital and, like a zombie, survive all over again in tiny little pieces of a larger persona: an obliteration of the self, the human, the kingdom, the castle, in dark fairytale language (re: Kerascoët's and Fabien Vehlmann's 2014 *The Beautiful Darkness*, showcasing a presumed raping and open rotting of Alice in medievalized forms [the dispersed homunculi], but also William Golding's wild-child apologia, *Lord of the Flies*, 1954). In the Promethean style, it suggests that all this decay and growth occurs from fighting gods warring behind the scenes, less poisoning the Cartesian home and more exposing its self-destructive qualities that, like Athetos did to Sudra, rape nature as usual. We're the byproduct of that, making us—in effect—rape babies of mad science (many children of the gods in classic myth being the byproduct of rape; e.g., Heracles or Merlin).

Childhood ruined, right? Maybe, but maybe not; the paradox of nature is that life and death occupy the same Gothic' spaces condensation of old death and hauntological decrepitude inside nostalgic pictures of home—as a paradoxical safe space that speaks to endless inherited anxieties tied to capital; i.e., the kind regularly immortalized in different media forms, including music:

Here in this prison of my own making  
Year after day I have grown  
Into a hero, but there's no worship

Where have they hidden my throne? (Deep Purple's "[Pictures of Home](#)," 1972).

Gothic spaces revel in that decay as something to play with in order to communicate less-than-pleasant realities tied up in such comfort foods as both silly and tragic: "Is this a school for ants?"

In turn, *Hollow Knight's* little animals houses are cute, rapacious (insofar as we anthropomorphize them in lieu of our own trauma under Capitalism) and—like the xenomorph (an egregore based on parasitoid wasps)—is very, very gay in terms of exploring trauma in small, in Gothic abstract but also duality, juxtaposition and contrast: the "ancient" Romance and the modern novel (re: Walpole). To this, the Gothic is written in the disintegration of power *redistributing itself* (the kingdom is property that the knight, a cop, seemingly defends). The more access you have to differing perspectives, then, the more holistic, faithful (loving) and truthful the representation (with *Hollow Knight* containing inside its hollow shell two warring sides reduced to spectres haunting the concentric necrobiome: Capitalism and Communism). "Gothic maturity intensifies conflict as a matter of entropy," contributing to a Song of Infinity speaking to such grappling forces.

Furthermore, our little hero's form follows function, one of many beetles crawling among the dung and the dead (re: genocide's fertilizer), breathing into them fresh life (one dies, then like Walpole's empty suits of armor, gets up and walks around once more inside the dollhouse, the puzzle, the crypt as both incomplete and simply needing to be played with). It's both a lovely poetic cycle and historical statement speaking to the natural and man-made as—like Athetos' fallen kingdom—staked and claimed by he who called it "first," slowly being reclaimed by a patient, almighty queen: murder will out, the criminalized faeries coming out on top against the cops robbing and victimizing them—eventually! Some things are so big they take forever to die—to transform—into other things (this can be fascism, yet again, regressing to a former medieval; or it can be Communism, provided intersectional solidarity is maintained against profit).



Whatever we find out will happen through ludo-Gothic BDSM as a matter of conceptualizing and navigating space to interrogate power. Per the ghost of the counterfeit and process of abjection (the West built on the lie of sovereignty), the motto

of the Gothic might as well be, "Fake it till you make it." So when I envisioned ludo-



Gothic BDSM as a matter of scholarship and history that bucks Cartesian trends inside and outside of fictional worlds, I founded it on spaces mastering the player (re: "[Our Ludic Masters](#)"), but especially the *Metroidvania*. This, in turn, borrowed from Manuel Aguirre's "Geometries of Terror"

[...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 ([source](#)).

as something my supervisor, Paul Wake, recommended to me, and stuck with only to evolve into my work as it presently exists (which Paul refused to comment on or partake in because of its "contentious" nature—the words of an accommodated intellectual, if ever there were).

So while I had been flirting with these ideas in 2018 with my master's thesis, "[Lost in Necropolis](#)," said thesis was only the starting point; my understanding of them through a BDSM framework (whose holistic approach my British teachers hated/avoided like the plague) actually came years later in 2021 (again, "[Our Ludic Masters](#)"), of which I eventually formed ludo-Gothic BDSM to critique capital with, as a matter of Gothic Communism: a giant to challenge another giant, borrowing



medieval thought to do so; e.g., *Alice in Wonderland*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *The Castle of Otranto*, etc, which *Hollow Knight* plays on with its bug-sized ability to marry life and death, big and small (exaggeration is often seen as an increase in size, but the inverse is also true), with medieval poetics<sup>202</sup> and their reliably Numinous feelings attached to a palliative Gothic space that speaks psychosexually to capital's abuses outside of itself felt inside of itself. Big feelings, big spaces, taboo yummy exchanges occur in between: a teacher of harsh truths and magical pleasures.

(artist: [VG Yum](#))

To that, we'll examine the source of my scholarly ideas as they started to lean in that direction with *Hollow Knight*—a game that truly took Bakhtin's

<sup>202</sup> Re: a **confusion of the senses**, **selective absorption**, **magical assembly** and a **Song of Infinity**. *Hollow Knight* does this all with Gothic architecture (the Promethean Quest), ludology and insects speaking to kingly decay (the state) as something to inherit then challenge or conform to profit as part of: "a stately pleasure dome" burst like a bubble, laid low by royal arrogance (again, a displaced metaphor for bourgeois forces).

chronotope to heart: a castle space caught between reality and legend, insofar as time in the narrow sense of the word—that of the historical past—was thoroughly obsessed with hereditary rites and dynastic primacy as things to backtrack and endlessly explore (to do them as the Gothic lovingly does—backwards to go forwards); i.e., the dogma of Cartesian Revenge against nature (the Medusa, here, cast as the fearsome giantess Radiance—a Galatean force to challenge a Pygmalion fascist's Apollonian status: "Praise the sun<sup>203</sup>!") as bug-like in both directions: the insect as linked to death and decay, waste and nutrients (fertilizer) that, in the same breath, speaks to the brutality of Kafka-esque "insect politics"; mad science, queer love and irreversible transformation (on par with Cronenberg's *The Fly* [1986] and Seth Brundle); cute and terrifying animals that illustrate Capitalism in small; and so on. All become something to reunite with, upending capital's usual Cartesian, heteronormative, settler-colonial divisions and abuses: profit as rape dressed up.



(artist: [Alaine Daigle](#))

Jadis was an entomologist and taught me to appreciate bugs, but we simply don't have time to list and count such things. Keeping with space as something to explore, then, *Hollow Knight*—similar to *Axiom Verge*—puts multiple sentiments inside the dollish hero inside the doll house: the spirit of exploring different sides of the world as increasingly dark and hostile—not strictly to *conquer* it (though that *is* the hero's built-in, monomythic purpose) but to appreciate and explore something that is dying and regenerating at the same time. It has, at times, an innocent, child-like, sing-song quality to it, but one whose

fairytale world has (again, like *Axiom Verge* and all Metroidvania, more or less), two godly parents appealing to the child send by one to kill the other as a matter of capital: the Pale King and the Radiance. As we saw with *Axiom Verge*, sometimes the mother visibly wins during the final confrontation inside-outside the hero; here, the father "wins," only to be bested by Mamma Bear anyways. Nature always wins.

As such, the Pale King is essentially a mad scientist by proxy waging a heteronormative proxy war against nature-as-monstrous-feminine (queer) and death; i.e., treating his people as disposable insects while slowly going mad inside his fallen castle, alienated from death and scapegoating Medusa for it. While funding others to conduct his awful experiments and conquer death as flooding his

<sup>203</sup> Re: Icarian grandeur as a matter of double standard. The king cannot stand being outshined, so he sends his soldiers to extinguish her glory as monomythically "unequal" to his.

once-great city during state shift, the king and his men, but also the Radiance (the whore) are all alien dead of different sizes, classes (taxonomy *and* in Marxist terms) and positions (stances).

If you think about it, the senility of the king is not so different than Joe Biden currently losing his decrepit, overcooked mind on national television<sup>204</sup>; there's always a real-world equivalent to a fictional one, and vice versa. The tyrant and their castle's rise and fall stands in for Capitalism; i.e., its own historical-material gentrification and decay serving profit, per the ghost of the counterfeit and process of abjection. Decay and death simply denote change, whereupon the king's cowardly refusal *to* change (and proliferation of violence inside the ruin) is simply him being stubborn and "bravely" running away from his problems, his secret sins: a "sundowning" King Lear refusing "to go to bed" and simply be worm food (thus release the secrets he's been keeping inside himself and his monuments). There's nothing preventing him from doing so other than his mind and belief in himself as a god. But the real sovereign is nature—the force he's hijacked for his own purposes, forcing him to face the music through his death and that of his kingdom, his people, his legacy.

In turn, his entourage drags pathetically along with him, cravenly keeping the rose-colored memory of the king alive (thus burying his secrets alive) after he's died; per the usual undeath and live burial, the labyrinth remains restless, those long-buried things equally stubborn as they crawl to the surface to—at times revoltingly—claw free and out from His Majesty's rotting corpse. The hyperreality begins to fly apart, the sordid truth coming to light as a matter of rememory. The king has been gagging Medusa for so long, she's a ghost, too (and maybe was never really alive; i.e., of the counterfeit). Relegated to the same spectral zone of Gothic performance and play, such revivals and reassemblies becomes poetic speculation, both half-real and imaginary to some extent.

Even so, such things remain vital as far as the pedagogy of the oppressed goes; i.e., as a matter of corroborating what historically is quite hard to prove in a court of law (which exists to uphold the status quo) but also of public opinion tied to capital<sup>205</sup>: rape and police abuse per the process of abjection.

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<sup>204</sup> "He is *mega* cooked [...] Any word you could come up with that denotes some form of cooking [...] that's what happened!" Kyle Kulinski puts it ("[Breaking: Press Conference Disaster for Biden](#)," 2024).

<sup>205</sup> E.g., D'Angello Wallace's "[An Uncomfortable Conversation about Cody Ko](#)" (2024). Such effects happen by virtue of the law and society until quite recently treating women as property. These monuments of Justice (and their societal extensions in everyday conversation and media) exude praxial inertia by virtue of serving profit, but also gender roles and sexuality, crime and punishment as historically-materially rigid. The elite don't want them to change, so they abuse these structures to manipulate people into triangulating against the usual survivors: cops and victims.

The point of monomythic fantasy stories like *Axion Verge* and *Hollow Knight* is that eventually such things *can't* be ignored, the victims of rape echoing a gossip-style chorus (re: the basics of oppositional synthesis being gossip/anger, monsters and camp) that builds and builds inside the usual kingly echo chambers speaking extratextually (a bad echo that speaks to the buried, ostensible truth of things). Either you believe rape victims while they're alive, or the voice of them will



rise from the alien grave to destroy the myopic legacy that you (and Capitalism) have worked so hard to build behind the usual heartless lies: the *Pax Americana* family as anchor but also dogma to hammer the witch, drown and rape her to death, burying the gay alive. As we shall see, systemic catharsis is at least, in part, cryptonymically bringing those atrocities to light; i.e., the hole as something to fill itself (a campiness we shall unpack through the Radiance's own doing so): "Oh, god! You're totally conquering my castle, right now!" Restless pussy of doom eats Excalibur and farts in Arthur's face.

(artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#))

Apologetic, canonical illusions aside, rape play (and its cryptonymies) become a clever, ironic way of exploring history in our own daily lives; yes, it blurs the boundaries between pleasure and harm in the moment, but paradoxically never crosses over into genuine abuse—is only haunted by state atrocities while playing

ironically with taboo subject matter as something to act out, thus raise awareness towards unironic forms (re: incest, murder, rape, etc). Conversely, the shock-and-awe of police abuse predicates through unironic enforcement, repressing play by making such things *impossible* to play with; the "rape" loses its quotes, the vampirism (exchange) going one way towards the state (and not both ways between workers)—all to flush bourgeois cheeks with stolen blood. The *theft* becomes an aphrodisiac for them and their defenders, a holy one to dress up in exceptionally good heraldry that decays over time: "Policemen are hiding behind the skirts of little girls. Their eyes have turned the color of frozen meat!" (Blue Öyster Cult's "[Joan Crawford](#)," 1981).

Amid the cheering of the self-appointed heroes lurks an uncomfortable quantum silence: that of the once-girl victims, Wicked, Bad, Naughty Zoot mischievously but also earnestly screaming on the surfaces and inside thresholds of such graveyard pastiche. Good or bad, such Gothic allusions and darkness-visible intimations of power (of allegations, of secret crimes) are a historical-material effect. They paradoxically never leave us, never stay dead; they become impossible to control, to police, to rape, because all deities reside within us (re: Blake), and it will take more than that to silence a god. As such, these stories are not "escapism"; not even Aguirre's Mandelbrot can contain them, escaping the event horizon (and the knights buried alive there) to echo into the wider world like solar wind: the macaroni-stirring sound of a wet, squelching cunt. Medusa's putting the silent scream on blast!

White or not, where there's a castle, there's a cop, a rape, a genocide (re: ACAB) as unfolding to conceal itself with the usual "medieval" vanishing points: feudalistic inheritance ("A hall to die in, and men to bury me!"). Said points need to be camped for workers to survive the abuse canonical workers (and extensions) regularly entail and repress: "Help, help! I'm being 'repressed' (code for 'rape')!" with or without quotes. Said quotes—and the dialectical-material scrutiny that comes with them during oppositional praxis—is the key to unlocking the door of praxial, thus cathartic, synthesis (which is illustrated, above, through added context: Harmony and I acting out a rape [specifically incest] for fun. Playful, silly sex [through calculated risk] is the best sex)! Belief, in turn, is illustrated through the context of action, through such poetics—the people, but also the spaces dressed up as "abusive" to speak to abuse in ways that grant closure *and* power while searching for secrets that, as the Gothic does, spill out everywhere.

To that, let's go over some common (thus repetitive) elements to such spaces we can camp, then dive into *Hollow Knight's* own castle space.

To paraphrase Hawthorne, "Families are always rising and falling in America." The same notion applies to Gothic counterfeits that speak to Capitalism-in-decay haunting its own canceled retro-futures; i.e., the rise and fall of a tyrant—his dynasty tied to a failing lineage whose own presumed greatness has long since been eclipsed by a restless labyrinth he cannot control, the illusions becoming see-through, tired, run-down (re: the desert of the real, the map of empire run bare). In effect, the castle as place—specifically a closed space to move through—becomes an ontological statement at war with itself: a psychomachy of different great powers rivaling and mirroring each other using the same contested puppetry and aesthetics for trials-by-combat and purification, but also liberation (not just clones, like with Trace, but the knight as an empty doll to pilot for different purposes, Trojan-Horse-style).

As such, the castle is an extension of the king and his systemic abuses as falling apart, promising the same reward to that one lucky knight who slays the dragon (the fairy queen). Inside it, the king's undead men wrestle with Medusa,

having internalized his dogma; also trapped inside, she rebels against said entourage through a revolutionary cryptonymy that shows and conceals her rape. In doing so, she subverts the monomyth, per the ghost of the counterfeit, to *reverse* abjection inside the king's house of cards.

In turn, the decay conveys patriarchal revenge as foregone and futile, its message-in-a-bottle, trap-like iteration of the infernal concentric pattern something that—like Capitalism—goes ever on and on; i.e., rememory by virtue of recursive motion inside the Metroidvania space (to reshuffle the deck): castle-narrative, which occurs through reassembly of arrangements as a calculated risk to experience their history in motion, in small, as doubled, as mirrored. As the Rusalki show us, this can be to look at, but also look with; i.e., a one-sided mirror per the cryptonymy process: to confuse our enemies as potentially our friends, given the right push! "Watch and learn" becomes as much the *context* of the image—its covert, revolutionary cryptonymy (the double operation)—as it is the image, itself,



and whatever likeness it purports at first glance/double take:

(artist: [Gregory Manchess](#))

In Gothic stories, the nuclear family is a battleground of

fear—a dead home of great-if-obscure power and alarm pushing past horrors (of rape, above) forwards again, into fresh tombs the living (usually the middle class) inherit from the dead. The subversive idea is to play with them, an ability that has existed since *Otranto* (a stage play warning of incest).

The Gothic castle, then, isn't useless anymore than the past is. Imaginary or not, it becomes something to play with as a matter of preservation, interpretation and survival by its usual victims; i.e., "to play" in Gothic has an inherently sexual character through euphemism ("we played"), but also ludic descriptor *vis-à-vis* the means of sharing and interrogating power as a matter of history-in-the-making being an integral part of Gothic spaces. This always happens through play with those spaces, which generally has a *cryptomimetic* quality to its genesis, its hybridity and recursion: to pass along what has become forgotten as a commentary on its own forgetfulness ("They say this land was green and soft once, but the moment Haggard touched it, it became hard and grey!") and navigating such spaces standing in for our own repressed abuse (and their degraded memories).



(artist: [No Eye Yolk](#))

Like with Jadis' dollhouse or *Alien*, *kawaii* or *kowai* (re: the postscript from "[Meeting Medusa](#)," 2024), the area of play is a small (in this case, bug-sized) dream-like arena—of suddenly waking up as an adult, finding one's former home viewed as nightmarishly imperfect, combative, and instructional (through the information on the walls around you, the heraldry and statues). This not only constitutes a naked regression towards childhood as flawed when viewed from an adult lens (requiring them to "armor up" to survive rape and murder promoted by the space); the parental figures become things to love and defend but also survive, feared for their dastardly lies and parasitoid, insect-like

qualities (a childlike defense of the home as harmful, sick).

From Lord Manfred to Victor Frankenstein to that titular character from *Mad Father* (below), the king is a bad parent, but also a mad (scientist/conqueror) father who looks gigantic (from a child's point of view) that harms his kids, then blames Medusa for it ("It's your *mother's* fault!"). Run as fast as you can and regress as much as you want, there is no escaping that abuse; like the chronotope, it only becomes a literal, historical part of the world—an installation that, like a secret renovation or occupant thereof, quietly invades your dreams bleeding into your waking moments. Per capital, the nuclear home is made to rape workers and nature by dividing the former into male and female variants with mythic-to-ordinary qualities seemingly breaking with convention only to endorse them all over again (on the state side of a dialectical-material struggle): Walpole's campy rape castle a very genderqueer joke to lampoon the nuclear family and Western fabrications of



superiority under capital *now*, regardless of what the old fag meant, two centuries ago (when capital was younger but still decaying by virtue of aesthetics)!

To that, abusive fathers aren't scary only because they physically (b)eat their children, but because they

rape the children's mother as an extension of the child belonging to the same feudal owner holding onto power as folding in on itself: a foregone defeat, from one empire (of violence dressed up as Divine Right, but also reason, a cryptonymy for conquest) to the next. It becomes a war of dolls that extends into actual war as turning the child into the doll, the proverbial hollow knight haunted by both parents in a state of crisis, decay and moral panic leading paradoxically to a continuation of itself, mapped out through inward-facing conquests (the Mandelbrot) speaking to Capitalism's boomerang effect.

In tokenized language (and per the incestuous histories of the castle), the king sends his next-in-line to fight a losing war in Hell against Medusa (during "the divorce"), to which the increasingly young child soldier grapples with a doll-like lack of memories and overabundance of mommy and daddy issues that, in totality, summarize the inner workings of capital/the monomyth; i.e., against nature-as-monstrous-feminine yielding ambiguous/ambivalent outcomes, but also appearances fighting as a matter of straight knights vs gay ones: canon and camp, capital vs Communism. Good to bad bleeds into the same mulch, grist for the mill as capital moves money (the knight) through nature (the space) and nature promptly resists the whole process. Built on a lie of a lie of a lie, playing Amazonian soldier (thus rapist) *for* the king as Prometheus, his children pay the price for his hubris: he's a drain on them and the land around them, trying to keep himself and his legend/bloodline alive.

We'll get to the Pale King and Radiance in a bit, talking about how the latter as a Promethean agent subverts the former as a monomythical agent (and even talk about Tolkien a little bit, in that respect). Now that we've covered some of the historical ideas fundamental when playing with/without Metroidvania space, let's start with the city itself where the king's presence is ultimately felt (the absentee father haunting the venue)...

*Note: As we proceed, remember that this section is built on many older workers of mine, including unreleased ones (re: Neoliberalism in Yesterdays' Heroes) and*



things not included here (e.g., [my Prometheus fan edit](#)<sup>206</sup> or old YouTube essays like "[Close-reading Gothic Theory in The Babadook](#)," 2018) that can still be felt in a continual nerdy love for the material and spirit thereof. Simply put, I'm a weird old queer medievalist that, like Walpole before me, likes to play with rape as a matter of telltale Gothic spaces. There will be fragments of many things coming together for new synthesis, new scholarship built on the past as my own and of a larger imaginary history that invites contradiction; i.e., as a matter of returning to old places to right old wrongs, through ludo-Gothic BDSM's holistic ingredients, my formal and informal [de facto] education on such matters.

Consider this spate of play made in the spirit of fun, then; i.e., an inventive continuation of [my Strawberry Hill](#) being yet another tryst-like jaunt into the disinterred spaces of my sex-filled college days—all to dig up fresh wisdom as a cross-cultural, at-times silly exercise performed by a vulgar, campy whore (while Harmony and I are most recently attracted to each other for these reasons, the fact remains all of my lovers have enjoyed my Gothic nerdiness/randiness [and contributed to my work] in some capacity for those reasons). You might get lost, but that's all part of the fun! —Perse



I want to start by stressing a previous point, mainly that a chronotope is a liminal space; re: designed to be moved through, but specifically to encounter time in Bakhtin's "narrow sense of the word": a marriage of the ordinary and legendary as a matter of architecture that speaks

organically to the occupants' states of mind as swept up in their dreadful inheritance. The trauma is written on the walls, but is *still* secretive (more on this when we look at Tolkien, towards the end of the section) and assembled and watched in secret (above) as a more-than-a-little nerdy act: the fake historian playing monastery scribe.

Part of the coin-flip's secrecy and revelation, then, a Gothic space—a castle, generally—very much plays a vital role in the larger story's moral, but also Gothic aesthetics that comment on said moral: a coverage that both comments and conceals, per cryptonymy as usual. It lies and tells the truth at the same time. It's

<sup>206</sup> Persephone van der Waard's "[Maculate Conception: The Making of My Prometheus Fan Edit](#)," (2021).

also a kind of rape game told in Gothic lingo—code, clichés, and bric-a-brac—as seemingly "empty" of substance:

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).

*Hollow Knight* is very literal, but also nature-themed, in this respect. Bakhtin likened the Gothic chronotope to an organism, its legends and realities of the historical past eliding as a kind of memory death; i.e., whose decay amounts to a collective and unequal struggle to remember what it was even all about. The experience is different per occupant depending on who, when and where they are. In *Hollow Knight*, the castle is an organism; there are many false knights, least of which is the avatar the player controls (who confronts a false knight mirroring his own emptiness and fake courage tied to a false king). All belong to the space housing them as animalistic, but also "fallen" as a matter of Gothic reinvention.

As I write in Volume One (speaking about Tolkien) "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" ([source](#)). I go on to add:

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 flourished 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 ([source](#)).

The same, we shall see, applies to the Pale King's kingdom as swept up in its own magnificent decay. A site for play, in-game, Halloween is, frankly, a FUBAR shithole. A colossal wreck in a very material sense, it's crumbling and infected with a strange orange fungus and perpetual banditry (think *Where the Red Fern Grows*, but hostile to the boy and his dogs). Things are bad now, so they must have been good back then, right? ...Right?



Again, we'll get to that. For now, said collapse illustrates the Cycle of Kings leading towards Promethean hyperreality quite well. The king actually sucks, and everything is fake (with everything beyond or behind the kingdom a vast uninhabitable desert that feeds back into the

little oasis). Many portions are physically littered with the giant bodies of false gods—"false" because they are dead, and "god" because they appear mighty even in death: empty and somehow full at the same time (re: darkness visible).

Similar to a knight, a beetle dies to leave its armor behind. In connection with the dead giants' suits littered about the place (a theme borrowed from *Alien's* Space Jockey scene, though it goes all the way back to *Otranto's* giant suit of armor), the kingdom denotes a historical regression to an imaginary time before the order of the king: ancient chaos, the time of the Titans. The space itself is eponymously "hallowed," or sacred, but also a graveyard imbued with mighty death and heavy time: the spirit of the dead Pale King and the lurking, angry presence of a female "hysteria" that is mightier than civilization, but also covered up by the endless male effigies and semantic wreckage gone to pot.

In ludic terms, the world is fairly standard Metroidvania the same way that Gothic cinemas are standard:

Critics have often remarked on the choice of the exotic, the foreign, the barbaric as the background for and source of Gothic thrills. In other words,

the Gothic castle is the world of the Numinous. As David Durant notes, "the ruined castles and abbeys are graphic symbols of the disintegration of a stable civilization; their underground reaches are the hiding places for all those forces which cannot stand the light of day" ([source](#): Audronė Raškauskienė writes in *Gothic Fiction: The Beginnings*, 2017).

As we'll see with Tolkien in a bit, such massive photophobes are a puzzle that appeals to the same monomyth; i.e., as haunted per the ghost of the counterfeit as abject, sold to children taught to war, lie and rape through exploration sating natural and great curiosities: "Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!"



Echoes of Ozymandias, then, promise that something big and mean (a *mysterium tremendum*, to borrow from Otto) killed these Numinous giants—and, by extension, laid low the mighty king—but the answer isn't as clear as a dragon on a map (any more than it is in *Alien*, *Axiom Verge*, *Forbidden Planet*, *At*

*the Mountains of Madness*, or *Otranto*). The short answer is war (among all of these works). Except, the narrative of the crypt, here, is always gargantuan and crowded, utterly loaded with moribund language covering things up, but also the presence of actual death as huge, building-sized, *unheimlich* (as intimated *cryptomimetically* across an imperfect, imitative series of *Metroid*-style Metroidvania such as *King's Field* [1994] or the *Dark Souls* franchise, whose blacksmith/currency system made its way into *Hollow Knight*'s maze-like graveyards).

Keeping with the Gothic, the *Hollow Knight* gameworld conveys Chris Baldrick's "fearful sense of inheritance in a time with a claustrophobic sense of enclosure in space, these two dimensions reinforcing one another to produce an impression of sickening descent into disintegration" ([source](#)), which Caryn Coleman sums up as a definition of "Gothic" being "three things that inter-relate: 1) tyranny of the past 2) stifles the hopes of the present 3) within dead end physical incarnation" ([source](#)). In short, it makes for good BDSM, in the right hands, minds and spaces. As with Jadis, the memory of a dying bloodline becomes a means of salvation, of escape!

Per my conceptualization of the palliative Numinous, then, the Skeleton King's tomb is something to bask in the rotting splendor of/rock out to, *Castlevania*-style as borrowing from older excessive models utilizing the Gothic chronotope as channeled into the future through constant bad echoes, spatial-

temporal stamps (re: the Orientalism of the "black Egypt"; e.g., "The Black Reliquary" mod for *The Darkest Dungeon*) and tone-poem musical cues; e.g., Children of the Reptile's "[Halls of the Skeleton Lord](#)," 2017): "It is our time... regain what's mine!" Big danger, big camp *potential* in the shadow of tremendous obscurity and cryptonymy (and all the usual hero-rapes-dungeon monomyth shenanigans). The Pale King extends that idea, except the king is dead and replaced with a rapturous avenger that survived him only to be imprisoned by his jailers inside the home converted into a tomb: the Black Egg and ritual sacrifice of boss keys<sup>207</sup> (themes of rot and cryptonymy tied to the space's Freudian elements, thoroughly dating it): rape the dark womb of nature (the thing to map out a route to and eventually find a way inside—paradise as fallen, spurning the hero for their laborious, roundabout efforts, backtracking through the same maze).



Courtesy of a broader assemblage of palimpsests, Team Cherry's Gothic ruin is also full of weapons and mad science, wherein it invites users to play among the ruins—to bask in their treachery and gloomth to find new significance and meaning among the graveyard as a

reminder of tyrannical material conditions that haven't gone anything (e.g., the post punk attitude under Thatcher's neoliberalism). While the imagery of these giants is hollow—an illusion of power designed to affect the player—it can still *attack* the player. Piloting a hollow shell themselves, the player fights the false knight, who is the game's first boss (the imposter in a stolen suit of armor evoking shared themes of parasitism and mimicry like the xenomorph in *Alien*, aka the eighth passenger). Over the course of the game, they fight many other shells, the skeletons of dead insects piloted by vengeful spirits leaking everywhere.

Eventually the player learns about their own monstrous origins: serving as a weapon meant to preserve the false power of the Pale King's own vengeful ghost. As the Pale King dies, the memory of the city (the king's giant, castled "body") dies, but only *partially*. Instead of totally dead, it lingers in pieces, so many of which are dangerous or incomplete: the knight's incomplete memory as the Pale King's ultimate weapon<sup>208</sup>: the ghost of the counterfeit, which the knight—holding a shade inside itself—is.

<sup>207</sup> The usual heroic hitlist employed by white knights/white Indians like Samus Aran, which the knight to some degree emulates.

<sup>208</sup> A Gothic, Dracula-level twist imitated by Still Indigo's medieval, (admittedly cis-)Sapphic *Amazonomachia*/fascist-flavored love story: "[Scorched Earth](#)" (2023)—an all-female *Romeo and Juliet* *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

Despite the concrete perseverance of the chronotope—its hauntology and cryptonyms—nothing in *Hollow Knight* is what it seems. On their own quest, the player re-remembers the past as something to discover in ways that invert the monomyth closer to the center of the puzzle. In doing so, they knock down walls, interrogate ghosts, and lay the dead to rest (the exorcism of Marxist spectres by a fascist ghost). But Team Cherry's treatment of concentric space hides one ending behind another. The first ending is only a goal post that moves to the second and the third; and from there further trials emerge. Meant to display the hero as awesome, the pantheon of the gods is helmed by the ultimate foe, the Absolute Radiance. The ultimate version of this boss is hidden away inside the mind of a giant insect that is, itself, locked in a box; the box needs a key, and the key is



squirrelled away on the opposite end of the kingdom. None of this is explained, and presents itself as a mystery to solve through equal parts wit and violence. Puzzles and combat serve as trials to the hero coming home; their return seems familiar, but in a hauntological manner (re: ghosts of Caesar). This isn't Sudra or Zebes, but an uncanny resemblance cannot be denied.

And finally at dead center of it all, the horrible truth is revealed:

*(exhibit 40h1: The game's final, "ultimate ending" is the wish fulfillment of slaying the supreme female Numinous, opening her eyelids and blinding her petrifying gaze. And yet, per Capitalist Realism silencing the "madwoman in the attic" releases the agonizing shadow of a repressed, genocidal guilt, but also the looming spectre of fascism, back into the*

*living world: the return of the zombie tyrant, their undead horde and all the chickens coming home to roost as brought about by the hero the entire time. The psychology of these fantasy lands might seem totally dislocated from our world, but is nevertheless bolstered by the real world as a parallel, liminal space told through the Gothic romance; i.e., as a kind of disguise that offers the player false,*

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through the medieval language of the state, romanticized similar to a kettling of Queen Dany in *Game of Thrones* in that she *doesn't* become the state' bitch; she burns it all down through indiscriminate hysteria fanned by reactive abuse: the Patriarchy's fulfilling of their own apologia by making a monstrous-feminine/rogue girl boss they can crucify.

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

*Promethean power. When Medusa is dead, Caesar will eat Rome; when he does, she—darkness visible, surviving amid decay as a kind of echo that never dies, but rather lives on as queers always do—will be smiling.*

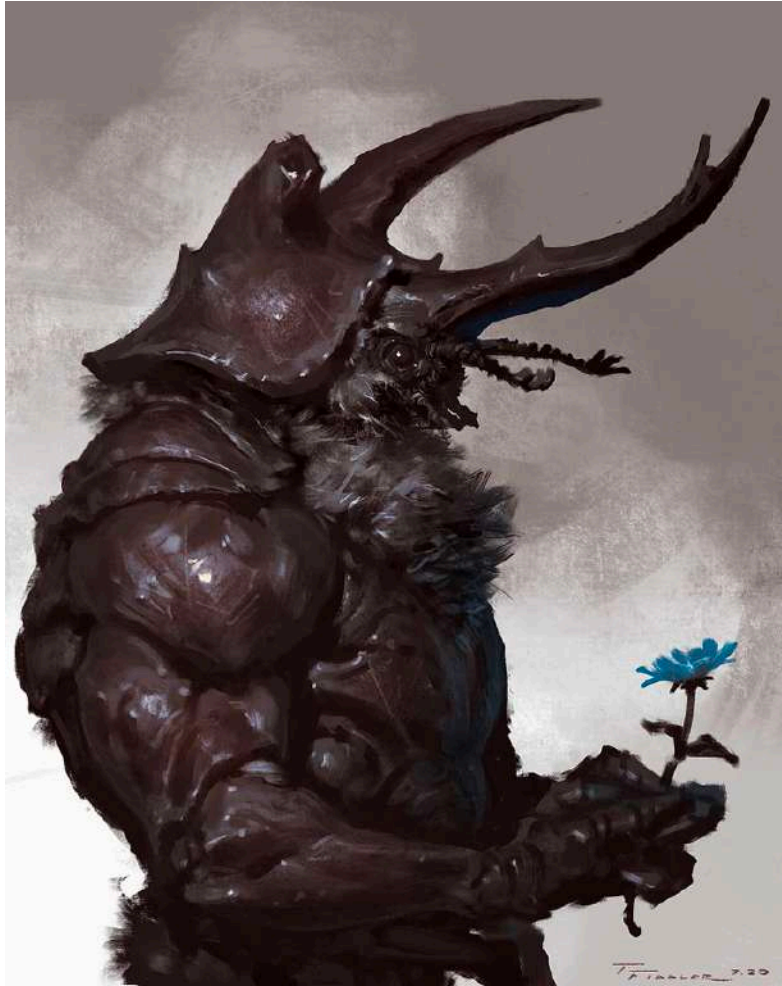
*To that, once reframed on the global stage of planet Earth, colonial fears frequently manifest as vengeful ghosts in opposition to the Nazi zombie, but also the neoliberal powers that give rise to fascists, echoing Derrida's Spectres of Marx; e.g., Ward Churchill's thoughts on the September 11th counterattack into Iraq:*

*For instance, it may not have been [only] the ghosts of Iraqi children who made their appearance that day. It could as easily have been some or all of their butchered Palestinian cousins. [...] One hears, too, the whispers of those lost on the Middle Passage, and of those whose very flesh was sold in the slave market outside the human kennel from whence Wall Street takes its name. [...] The list is too long, too awful to go on. No matter what its eventual fate, America will have gotten off very, very cheap. The full measure of its guilt can never be fully balanced or atoned for ([source](#): "Some People Push Back," 2005).*

*The more oppressed someone is, the more virulent and violent, but also seditious their pedagogy is framed by the status quo—impolite by centrists and a menace by reactionaries. Churchill is Native American; Fredrick Douglass was Black and Native American; Edward Said was Palestinian, etc.)*

*Hollow Knight's gargantuan, shadowy outcome falls more on the Axiom Verge side of things than any pro-state outcome. It is Promethean, but with a Gothic twist—rape and live burial (which part two of this section shall explore the subversive elements to)! The churchly *mise-en-abyme* stretches into delicious, crumbling infinity through a smaller suggestion pool whose Numinous vibes can be enjoyed by persons of any political persuasion:*

- The first ending traps the Radiance inside the protagonist, making them the next hollow knight (the concept of knights and insects denoting an insect politics approach to the cycle; i.e., an imprecise, unscientific series of "bug knights" covered in the hard outer shells of drone-like killers; e.g., [Tarran Fiddler](#)'s evocation of Gwyn, Lord of Cinder [below] as a dung beetle on par with Team Cherry's Dung Defender)



[exhibit 40h3, holding heaven in a wild flower]

- The second ending traps the knight and Hornet inside the same tomb together.
- The third ending destroys the Radiance and the knight, but spares Hornet.
- The fourth ending destroys the Absolute Radiance, but turns the knight into an even greater monster that Hornet must fight on her own.

All of these trials involve a melee weapon<sup>209</sup> told through a fatal quest for power and wisdom that stalls resolution as a symptom of capital abjected onto displaced, imaginary realms. To this, the heroic quest is tied to a monomythic space that promises combat; the combat misleads the player by offering power as tinged with decay and malice, that ultimately triumphs against the hero upon the story's conclusion. There is no way to win, no matter how many power-ups are acquired,

<sup>209</sup> I.e., one generally overcompensating as a place or position—a vain, phallic monument—also does; e.g., "the emperor beetle stands in for my penis!" said the insecure man of reason, proudly and unironically reasoning his own place in the universe *versus* nature (and the monstrous-feminine's own ability to "joust" back, mid-*Amazonomachy*).



or how many upgrades the nail is given (which functions like a vampire's fangs, stealing essence from the gameworld and its current, ghostly occupants to power the hero's healing spells and magical attacks while simultaneously exorcizing the once-hallowed tomb of its unwelcome "guests").

A similar, settler-colonial fatalism awaits *Dark Souls* players. Awash with gloomth, the hero's quest traps them inside the world as part of a grander cycle; i.e., historical materialism and the return of fascism littered with small clues: the real-life Nazi SS (sun rune) and "*Seig heil!*" meaning "hail, victory!" but also "hail, the sun!" (the sun being a transcendental symbol of power in different imperial cultures; e.g., Ra and the Ancient Egyptians; Apollo in Greece; and the Shogunate and Shintoism [the fascist side of Buddhism] in Japan; etc) *vis-à-vis* *Dark Souls'* in-game phrase "Praise the Sun!" becoming code outside of it and back into it when the game space is colonized by weird canonical nerds.

This fascism in *Dark Souls* carries into a "death before dishonor" Gothic curse that mythically essentializes a rise and fall of sun-like greatness that thinks it will always return during fiery purification, warrior-Jesus rituals that worryingly ape the original problem; i.e., there is no god, just people killing each other on loop, mortifying their own flesh (and that of others) while shouting "Praise the Sun!" or "*Deus Vult!*" It's a playground for them—a time in the sun during the dawn of the dead—but also a heroic death cult tied to profit; i.e., an excuse to rape, kill and otherwise harm others but also themselves as part of nature, mid-cataclysm. Except, there's a limit to what the Earth will take, the soil souring when robbed of its nutrients; Medusa bides her time, but eventually pushes back, putting the predatory Patriarchy underground for good—proving as she does the illusory nature of state power (and its mimetic code) during state shift.

To that, Gwyn is a fallen strongman like the Pale King is, their kingdoms trapped in endless states of decay and dishonor around each ruler lying state; i.e., a fungal spectrality that never stops eating itself—is always restless, vengeful, doomed, blind, etc. The dishonor lingers, so the death lingers in a funeral pall, a Gothic curse of the castle and the land that an undead hero must lift by regaining their humanity inside the infernal concentric pattern. Per Aguirre, the monomyth begins and ends in Hell, upending Campbell's *Hero of a Thousand Faces* (1949). It becomes the tyrant's plea, but one that Team Cherry (which came after *Dark Souls*) chooses to double with Medusa by virtue of troubling comparison: feeling sorry not for the king or his rapist undead soldiers, but a wronged queen visiting her revenge upon them in return!

The final conclusion is Ozymandias with amnesia. Inside the Painted World of Ariandel, the doomed quest of Slave Knight Gael is completed by the player-avatar, the Ashen One. At the end of the quest, the hero confronts Gael, who is inexplicably transformed. Sped up to the last syllable of recorded time, Gael and the hero fight inside an hourglass, surrounded by thunder, darkness and wind; but also sand.

The concentricity doesn't end there. The entire climax sits inside the mind of a sleeping princess called Filianore, herself trapped inside the painting. Crypts within crypts; more cryptonyms along and within the same gross narrative. After a long series of violent quests, the hero's crusade comes to Filianore and is seemingly presented *with* hidden power. The egg she holds falls apart, and the hero is transported to the end of all things. Here, the "truth" of the cycle is foretold: Through a fatal, ceaseless drive to attain power and wisdom, Gael has consumed the blood of the Dark Soul, which the hero takes from him by force; i.e., two vampires fighting over diminishing returns in the bone-dry crypt of Capitalism feudalized. Its transmutation is all but useless to the victor.

Nor does Gael's death "beat" the game; it merely offers the hero with arguably their greatest trial by combat. But the ending of the game remains; the soul of cinder remains, as does the endless, kaleidoscopic city looping in on itself. And whatever challenge the player seeks is coded through violent, dream-like exchanges inside the ringed city as a kind of circular ruin, haunted by the viral pathogen staining the aesthetic: a looping Promethean Quest for greater glory and satisfaction inside the collapse of the feudal-capital order and subsequent desert of the real, the hero fighting the simulacrum to *replace* them inside the viral chain behind the illusion of a healthy and prosperous Imperium that, like a zombie apocalypse, is strangely devoid of non-zombie life. All that remains are empty suits of armor piloted by unseen forces.

In *Dark Souls'* case, it is the death knight cannibalizing his greatest foe as undead and gigantic: himself as risen and fallen. Any pretense of greatness (nobility) has long been forgotten, replaced with limitless, rusted barbarism. He's the senile old man, the rabid cop inside the police state attacking other cops:



I'm of course referring to Lodran proper, and the proximity the hero faces through the combat itself. Told through Numinous chants, hideous threnodies and

sorrowful dirges, [the "call-and-response" of combat](#) (The Game Theorists' "The SECRET Rhythms of DARK SOULS!" 2017) is one with *depictions* of fatal portraits, black knights, demons, and giant suits of armor. These and many other icons weren't simply ripped from Walpole's famous novella; they have survived across the years as a reliable form of tremendous feelings—what, in videogames like *Dark Souls* and *Hollow Knight*, evokes Percy Shelley's bare and level sands beyond the ruins of Ozymandias through a "ludic sublime": "a boundless expanse, suggestive of near-infinite possibilities for exploration and constituting a whole beyond" ([source](#): Daniel Vella's "No Mastery Without Mystery: *Dark Souls* and the Ludic Sublime," 2015). This sense of the beyond and the quest for power inside it collides in the here-and-now just as the Romantics did with the Gothicists of that period, smashing a sense of sanitized greatness against the feudal tyrant as darkly romanticized, to which Aguirre's latter-day calling of the phenomenon "geometries of terror" was what Bakhtin once described as "chronotope," specifically the Gothic story of a hundred-and-seventy or so years previous.

Vital to this general sensation of decay is a slipping grasp of the imagination in the face of awesome power (what C.S. Lewis attributed to a "shrinking" feeling before the Numinous). The key to the closeness of such feelings is the sword in the player's hand. A closeness with death—as something to paradoxically embrace and revitalize, even if the quest never ends—is attained through combat with the fringes of the sublime, the Numinous, the Gothic tyrant as replicated, on and on and on, inside the narrative of the crypt. Upon its *mise-en-abyme*, a swordfighter (or some other melee-to-ranged combatant), is invariably going to lock arms with the fatal past; it is their life force, chasing what all warriors in the crypt chase: essence through the replication of conflict in a Gothic aesthetic. But the spellcaster is someone who needs distance and time to prepare a response.

So while the ranged combatant *is* viable within the game, the truest practitioners of combat (especially in PvP circles) establish dominance as a kind of "fencing" for sporting purposes: to "dunk" or "clown" on their adversity as the holiest of sports maneuvers—the show of force during the usual bread and circus<sup>210</sup> (exhibited between underdogs, bullies, golden boys and goons, babyfaces and heels, etc). This "fighter's distance" is not simply the correct, prescribed distance to attack and defend from; it is the place where combatants feel most powerful, most alive during the dance with death. [It's certainly possible to avoid combat](#) (Happy Hop, "Dark Souls Trilogy - No Hit Run, 2918) but leads to increasingly obsessive and absurd levels of one-upmanship: a warrior corpse that does not know that it is dead, still trapped in Hell as something to rape.

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<sup>210</sup> Conversely a proletarian allegory (which *Star Wars* is known for), will not simply bank on class sentiment, but foster it consciously. More franchised variants—the Lucas prequels—lack this allegory in favor of more campy (and dumb) theatrics, and others—like *The Clone Wars* (2008) or *Andor* (2022)—have it in spades, throwing their weight around insofar as class war is concerned..



Such is capital, displaced. To that, *Hollow Knight* and the Soulsbourne series are Promethean insofar as they both illustrate a similar fascination with the warrior's path as fated inside a warrior's cave; i.e., with no recourse for escape from the ghost of empire as "striking back" being a matter of capital (moving money

through nature). But some keys to power are far less shady and far more glorious: a hero dies but once, only to live on forever (we'll explore this problematic immortality for the rest of the subchapter)! It's a militarily optimistic escape from the concentric pattern's abyss; i.e., via the usual monomyth's *deus ex machina* raping nature.

In the hands of the military optimist (the cop), melee weapons are the key to power as "theirs" by defeating nature encroaching on civilization as male, manly and brave. This power includes two basic types: *combating evil* and *feats of strength*. Part of this power is the promise of never-ending glory. Traditional heroes are immortalized by slaying the great evil or performing the strongest deed, and this, in turn, has a profound bubble effect on how they are viewed afterwards. With *combating evil*, the melee weapon serves a vital role: a means of fighting up close, thus having a higher risk of death. Sacrifice in the face of a dangerous enemy is encouraged through a myth of invincibility (re: the berserk). And if the hero falls in combat, and the countless bodies are strewn around all him, there is no graveyard; the victorious dead are generally burned, hailed as righteous in the never-ending struggle against evil before entering Valhalla (or some equivalent warrior pantheon at the presumed center of the sun).

We've laid out the players, spaces and ideals of the Modern Prometheus and its Cartesian/astronoetic devices. Per Aguirre, I next want to examine how the Gothic likes to dissolve this glory in an infernal concentric pattern that overwhelms the hero as someone rather full of themselves, putting the ball in Hell's court: a home court advantage that buckles the champion's knees in the presence of Mother Nature as monstrous-feminine; i.e., Creed's notion of the ancient castrating mother inside a man cave that, prior to its clearing out by Beowulf, harbors an older female presence that haunts the space currently in decay after Beowulf the legend is replaced by the reality of old age, madness and death. Faced with the gorgon, the hero becomes eclipsed by an older power that dims the excellence of his male sovereign through ludo-Gothic BDSM as a matter of rape play. *Schadenfreude* is orgasmic, but so is liberation when the patriarch-of-the-day is proven wrong—by showing him to be a rapacious brutalizer whose empire won't last. Delicious!



(artist: [Wildragon](#))

Courtesy of Clint Hockings, a common mantra of videogames is ludonarrative dissonance: "Seek power and you will progress" ([source](#)). Promethean stories fuck with that, BDSM-style, by fucking with the hero's ability *to* progress, mastering them inside Zimmerman's magic circle as

something that isn't clear-cut, and whose mastering of the player can yield different outcomes in the future; re, me, *vis-à-vis* Seth Giddings and Helen Kennedy's "[Little Jesuses and \\*@#?-off Robots](#)" (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.

In *Metrodvania*, this mastery is theatrically conveyed between the player's avatar and the persons and places he encounters as lying to him, but also dominating him to communicate difficult truths about heroism by reversing the monomyth (re: "[Our Ludic Masters](#)"); i.e., by giving him an embarrassing victory that seems to stall him in place, or undoes monomythic heroism altogether by subverting Cartesian ideas through the Promethean Quest, *ipso facto*.

Such campy instruction can frankly be a humbling experience, one whose ludo-Gothic BDSM speaks to the individualistic pride of Western canon that turns heroes into useful idiots but treats them like conquering emperors (so-called "made men/great men of history"). Such tutelage results in people who generally don't like to be viewed as idiots, but also subs under a dominant's power. But Medusa's "exquisite torture" is paradoxically good instruction, insofar as it avoids the usual rapes committed in monomythic language pursuant to genocide under Cartesian paradigms (which is what neoliberalism [through videogames] is: the same old raping of nature-as-monstrous-feminine to serve profit. You have to short circuit the exchange inside of its usual spaces, with its usual instructions; re: *The Merchant of Venice*).

Also like an orgasm, then, "death" *is* overwhelming and not always entirely pleasant (delicate) or controlled; re: as the Rusalki show us, it can be thoroughly rough. Except, this isn't simply the passage of time, nor an accident of the mode; overwhelming isn't a failure to communicate, but a *means* of communicating that speaks to the cyclical truth of things and its effect on the human mind as tied to a generational space.

My expertise lies in the Metroidvania, so that is where our focus continues to lie; i.e., as we plumb the murky depths of the castle as a murderous womb that, stamped with "female/feminine" as a death sentence and curse by male brutalizers, seeks its revenge by humanizing those who *might* follow in Perseus' footsteps; e.g., the more Trace follows in Athetos' vengeful footsteps, the more he becomes vampiric, warlike, shooter—a fascist warrior seeking "greatness," above—to which the same applies to the hollow knight filled "toe to top full of direst cruelty": the middle class bred on such legends to reify them as an avatar's conceptualization that bleeds into reality off of the page and into it (especially videogames, per Cameron's refrain).

First, just as the Gothic overwhelms binaries and their boundaries, a Gothic *space* defies easy quantification to communicate difficult truths through questionable methods (again, parents lie to their kids—not to punish them, but teach them); i.e., meant to entrap and overwhelm the user to, through access to fatal knowledge and power, rip them apart. Sometimes this literally happens, but often its sensory and ontological (re: Trace the conqueror weaponized against his father by the battered housewife). In the Gothic-Communist tradition, though, it grants those already occupying a genocided position inside a settler colony's state of exception a palliative, hauntological means of confronting and interrogating generational trauma; i.e., to reclaim monsters and their spaces, hence our power through ludo-Gothic BDSM: an end to the genocide behind the illusion making society sick and blind but *still* undead, *unheimlich*.

The ticket is the castle as a site of reclamation and forbidden operatic pleasure that, in unironic hands, is built to seriously torture those inside, pacifying them through fear of the outside/nature, of barbarism with the space, of decay and disintegration, etc. Get too close and one's understanding of a perceived order of things is challenged, along with one's sanity. Ironic "torture" exists in quotes, making an iconoclastic hauntology ethical through class and gender war as prosecuted in favor of workers to upset the status quo. To critique power, you must go where it is; i.e., the monomyth as something to subvert per the Metroidvania's Promethean Quest, bathing in the Numinous as palliative (what Seth Brundle called "the plasma pool"). It's a calculated risk that goes into Hell and *stays* there: Persephone, Satan's wench, as becoming her own boss (she don't need no man, especially a man of reason pimping her out, mid-witch-hunt)!

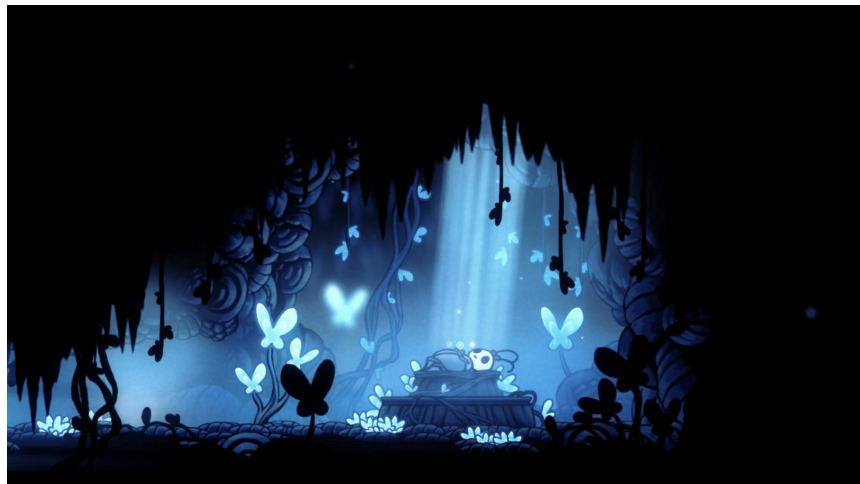


(artist: [VG Yum](#))

Whereas Volume Zero has examined the palliative Numinous per the Metroidvania, and this section has already discussed the Metroidvania castle-narrative as something monstrous-feminine regarded fearfully by patriarchal colonizers (exhibits 40f/g), now we're going to contribute to healing as scholars do: through contributions to knowledge banks that, when accessed, can assist in the subversion of, and deviation away from, Cartesian norms. You can't kill these feelings through scapegoats (re: "[Military Optimism](#)"), only play with them in ways that synthesize catharsis by camping witch hunts.

In the interests of continued scholarship, then, I want to use the rest of the "Metroidvania" symposium to synthesize these points regarding castle-narrative and nature-as-monstrous-feminine; i.e., as tied to ludo-Gothic BDSM as I have since defined and expressed it throughout this book series. We'll briefly go over the whole process' evolution, next, before exploring rape play in *Hollow Knight* and Metroidvania: as policing the whore during unironic witch hunts, which she must liberate herself from during the Promethean Quest—by camping her own death (and rape) in ironic ways!

Lovecraft (and offshoots of him) denote such conclusions as comparable to Slave Knight Gael at the end of the world: confronting the pure meaninglessness of the larger space and its mechanisms as asleep, waiting like Cthulhu does, to awaken. But this needn't be something for Beowulf to punch, proving his manhood by raping death as monstrous-feminine (slapping the bear per settler-colonial rites of passage that aggrandize him through acts of futile revenge playing out the Roman fool's logic: a warrior's death as infinitely useful to Capitalism); it can be tremendously joyous and healing. Such catharsis generally occurs through rape play as camping one's rape, as well as the system (and fatal, medieval-grade manliness) attached to said rape as one of the Medusa and nature getting back at their abusers. Until then, *she* sleeps, buried in the black heart of a rape space whose beautiful dragon only waits to wake up, emerge and turn the patriarch's world upside down.



## Sleeping Beauties: Policing the Whore; or, Topping from Below to Rise from the Ashes

*She's a very kinky girl!*

*The kind you don't take home to mother!*

—Rick James; "[Superfreak](#)" from *Street Songs* (1981)

Knowledge is generally something that sleeps in a medieval space waiting to wake back up. Policed into silence until then, such awakenings are seldom perfect. But they are required to reclaim nature (and the monstrous-feminine) from their usual policing through the monomyth as imperfectly camped. For this section, we'll consider how through development as coming from such imperfections; i.e., the evolution out of *Hollow Knight* as a Promethean Quest—one whose mysterious-maze housing of the whore-to-rape gradually lead me to articulate worker liberation through a palliative variant. Ultimately this variant become a sex-positive system of thought I called "ludo-Gothic BDSM," one which workers must revive in light of the Radiance's seemingly unavoidable doom being one of many that we can learn from and perform ourselves; i.e., witch and witch hunt part of the same police violence we must beautifully survive, rising from the ashes of to challenge profit as a matter of dogma built on raping the whore (controlling sex and force, terror and



morphological expression per capital's trifectas, monopolies, and assorted qualities). However false the king decrees her status as "sun," the Radiance's hubris is still speaking to her rape by him as having a power he cannot so easily extinguish. Consider this section—the capstone to my Metroidvania work *after* my PhD and what I esteem to be my crowning achievement—a royal love letter to such sleeping beauties topping us from below! Hail to the queen!

([source](#): *Materia Collective*)

We'll start with my theories on ludo-Gothic BDSM and how they evolved into themselves through *Hollow Knight* specifically (and the concepts we already laid out in part one); then, we'll articulate the camping of rape per the whore as normally policed, the manner in which the Radiance must experience time and time again like Prometheus: the stubborn ghost to hunt down by those taught to do so in monomythic language—get sword, rape whore, which whore must subvert during rape play reversing what is effectively police training in witch hunter language.

To that, capital rapes nature-as-monstrous-feminine during the dialectic of shelter (the home) and the alien (the intruder/foreign plot) by invading female-

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coded spaces (caves, portals, gateways, caverns "measureless to man," etc) with male-coded implements of revenge (swords, lances, arrows, etc): reconquering male spaces having been reclaimed by nature as—you guessed it—something to jail and rape all over again (often set to badass music; e.g., Witch Hazel's 2024 "[Ride On](#)" a perpetuation of the same-old monomyth passing the sword down).

Or investigate; e.g., *Alien's* derelict, which we'll explore in "Giger's Xenomorph." Either action is the point because it's profitable, moving money through nature and conditioning the next generation to keep all of this up, which we fags (all monstrous-feminine, not GNC people alone) must camp to subvert and survive as alien beings routinely harvested by nature: the fall of the male sovereign and its colonial space as gone to pot, which must be reclaimed from nature all over again (and again, and again).

In turn, the cycle is dogmatized under capital per the ghost of the counterfeit and process of abjection: to invade nature, to bring her back for study—to weaponize, generally against itself, as stolen by a bunch of canonical fakes mobilizing the self-worth of young men (or token workers) stuck in the Man Box' artificial wilderness: proving their worth by being the hero, thus the rapist, the exterminator and the cop/witch hunter canonizing a forever war between good and evil, civilization and nature ,as essentialized per Cartesian edicts' moral geographies/manifest destinies.

The fact remains, capital is inherently self-destructive and built on endless conquest/futile revenge against nature. Even if the hero harvested everything from the land once, they must do it again and again because there must always be profit, which means surrendering power to a perceived enemy (re: "Hell coming home"). But even if they did it a hundred times over and poured the whole of the universe into a bottle, it still wouldn't prevent nature's return, thus keep the king alive. The revenge is always pointless, then, save to further itself as a seasonal, holiday matter of routine profit, war and rape unto nature as the Great Pumpkin to carve up after *she* returns again and again. It becomes a perpetual game of one-upmanship, of manly quests for such violence to then show off: "Revenge? I will show you revenge!"

Furthermore, the entire process alienates said king (and king's men) from nature as something that otherwise would enrich his life, had he not devoted his entire existence to a cycle (or two) of capital. He's simply a cog in the machine, a replaceable part. All of this becomes a self-report through the castle as a dead ringer/giveaway for past failures, which again are built into the system. Nature can simply turn the procedure back on itself to show the king his doom: that Capitalism isn't good for the givers of state force because it makes them hopelessly dependent on doing so, which has its limits. Repeat the cycle as many times as you want—criminalize nature to whatever degree you desire—the king will always die, and nature will bounce back in some shape or form. You can't kill Medusa, but kings (and their cops and castles) are a dime-a-dozen. Their death gives them away.



We'll get to all that when we look at the Radiance, in just a moment. First, let's look at the process she uses against the hero as something we can repeat ourselves, and which I was taught by her side of the Promethean Quest subverting the monomyth and its unironic rape spaces

chattelizing nature-as-monstrous-feminine: ludo-Gothic BDSM.

Tokenization has pushed down at queerness, forcing me make "monstrous-feminine" a GNC category that older scholars didn't to nearly the same degree. "Nature-as-female" has a biologically essential sound to it (as does older Gothic scholarship from the 1970s; e.g., "female Gothic" and older works, still: "woman is other"). So as we carry on with *Hollow Knight*, let's keep considering it (nature) and its castled spaces as monstrous-feminine, like my PhD did; i.e., upending traditional binaries designed to control nature-as-monstrous-feminine inside a colonial binary in order to harness her power over and life and death *for* the state (the harvesting of nature-as-alien).

Simply put, the womb of nature has already been raped, making it dark and vengeful, but also something that is forced to conform to a binary prescribed to it by state mandates; further abuse must be stalled within such spaces as therapeutic *and* under attack by those who, caring not for the "therapy" of the colonizer (rape), camp it as already "mapped out." Alfred Korzybski writes in *Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics* (1933):

A map is not the territory it represents, but if correct, it has a similar structure to the territory, which accounts for its usefulness. If the map could be ideally correct, it would include, in a reduced scale, the map of the map; the map of the map, of the map; and so on, endlessly [...] If we reflect upon our languages, we find that at best they must be considered only as maps ([source](#)).

To look on maps, however unmappable (untraversable) they might seem, or however buried their secrets, we're effectively looking at a system of rape expressed in royal Gothic language between land and lord—landlord over nature as alien, but also required to have something to lord over and seek revenge against

(which conquest and profit require, always moving money through nature and back into capital's coffers, post-rape; re, videogames as dogmatic tools of conquest through their maps educating these means: Tolkien and Cameron's refrains): telling boys (or token parties) where to go and who to rape with what. Such behavior is not only expected but instructed per the monomyth. Simply put, it is correct.



([source: tuppkam1](#))

More to the point, this is where queerness as dead-and-buried waits to wake up and dance once more; i.e., in the hallowed halls of our rapists—their chronotopes and maps haunted with the Radcliffean spirit of rape as burned into the maps' secret

chambers, but also on its surfaces.

Our flirting with history as undead is, itself, a revisitation of something I've returned to many times already (always for fun); i.e., a process of scholarship that, in the process of tracing old maps (of maps, of maps...), somewhat feels different and familiar with each confounding and delightful passage through itself (very much in the larger exploratory tradition of such spaces). Weird attracts weird *multiple times* in *both* directions; i.e., coming back to haunt us and we coming back to haunt it (with queer people drawn to the places where they can be themselves, thus feel most at home as a site of trauma to subvert, thus heal from).

I acknowledge as much in Volume Zero, describing a "life-long process [that] started when I was young and continued into adulthood" through a particular videogame I enjoyed playing at various points in my life as a means of critical thought that can, when harnessed, change the world outside of itself as reflected inside the text (from Volume Zero):

We have to learn from the past by transforming its canonical depictions to avoid repeating Capitalism's unironic genocides.

This brings us not just to my adulthood but my postgraduate work on ludo-Gothic BDSM, which in 2017 was met with its own barriers. Working under David Calonne, I was only just learning about the Numinous *vis-à-vis* Rudolph Otto and H.P. Lovecraft and came across an article by Lilia Melani,

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"Otto on the Numinous" (2003), citing the Gothic as the quest for the Numinous: "It has been suggested that [Gothic fiction](#) originated primarily as a quest for the *mysterium tremendum*" ([source](#)). Something about it appealed to my then-closeted kinkster as have previously been titillated by Cameron, Lovecraft and Nintendo (there's a sentence I never thought I'd write), but also the videogames I was playing at the time: *Metroidvania*<sup>211</sup> (shortly because I went overseas, my best friend Ginger recommended *Axiom Verge* and *Hollow Knight* to me, which I eventually made the topic of my master's thesis ([source](#)).

Such a procedure was a life-long quest grappling with powerful forces, insofar as it concerns the performance of power in ostensibly disempowering stages that, through Gothic theatrics, become a safe place to explore rape trauma by surviving ghosts of itself:

Before the thesis proper, my essay "Notes on Power" discussed the paradox as being the performative nature of power doubled, including monsters but also their decaying lairs as monumental sites of immense, god-like power dressed up through the Gothic language of the imaginary past; the *Metroidvania* is a Gothic castle full of Gothic monsters, but also Gothic *ghosts* (echoes) of older and older castles reaching out from novels and cinema into videogames. Regardless of the medium, though, Clint Hockings' adage, "Seek power and you will progress" ([source](#): "Ludonarrative Dissonance," 2007) means something altogether different depending how you define power as something to seek, including unequal arrangements thereof. As a child, teenager and woman, I sought it through the palliative Numinous in Gothic castles of the Neo-Gothic tradition carried over into videogames (which I learned about in reverse: videogames, followed by the Numinous/*mysterium tremendum* as introduced to me by Dr. David Calonne<sup>212</sup>). Of these, I explored their Numinous territories in response to my own lived trauma and subsequent hypersexuality—i.e., as things I both related to the counterfeit with and sought to reclaim the counterfeit from as

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<sup>211</sup> As I write in "[Mazes and Labyrinths](#)": "[Unlike survival horror,] 'Metroidvania' was effectively the combination of two IPs owned by different Japanese companies. So the term was never printed in any official capacity. In fact, it wasn't until the mid-2010s that 'Metroidvania' saw wider use in the indie market": [PC Gamer](#) ("The Best Metroidvania on PC," 2022), [Engadget](#) ("'Metroidvania' should actually be 'Zeldavania,'" 2016), [GamaSutra](#) ("The undying allure of the Metroidvania," 2015) [Giant Bomb](#) ("Metroidvania," 2023), and [Wired](#) ("An Anime-Inspired Platformer That's as Beautiful as It Is Mind-Bending," 2015). Simply put, the genre exploded in popularity in the mid-2010s, becoming a smash indie success on Steam and continuing to be wildly popular to this day.

<sup>212</sup> Under whose independent tutelage (LING 499) at EMU, I wrote the paper, "[Method in His Madness: Lovecraft, the Rock-and-Roll Iconoclast and Buoyant Lead Balloon](#)" (2017), which inspired me to pursue the Numinous (as a subject of study) to the faraway, magical city Manchester, England.

a tool to understand, thus improve myself and the world by reclaiming the castle as a site of interpretative Gothic play (of kinks, fetishes, and BDSM); i.e., this book that you're reading right now is a "castle" to wander around inside: a safe space of exquisite "torture" to ask questions about your own latent desires and guilty thoughts regarding the "barbaric" exhibits within as putting the ghosts out from my past on display (the Gothic castle and its intense, "heavy weather" theatrics generally being a medieval metaphor for the mind, body and soul, but also its extreme, buried and/or conflicting emotions and desires: a figurative or sometimes literal plurality depending on the person exploring the castle) [[source](#)].

The quest is a meta one, then, its essential idea—of upsetting the monomyth and its harmful illusions using the Promethean Quest—pointedly being to search for the *non-male* Numinous inside female/feminine-coded spaces; i.e., an exit to Capitalist Realism (and trauma) hidden inside the infernal concentric pattern being reached not by the straight line of empire's arrows and swords, but the ergodic, non-linear line of the maze among the city of paradoxes (the chronotope yielding fatal



portraits echoing dynastic primacy and hereditary rites by personifying them, below).

(*model and photographer: Cuwu and [Persephone van der Waard](#)*)

As stated earlier during "[Monsters, Magic and Myth](#)," Capitalism must be escaped within itself; i.e., through cryptonymy as a circuitous route to healing the structure by changing the system,

starting in small. Tracking with this well-trod vein, I'll furnish you with something of a tangent—a four-page sample from Volume Zero to refresh you on the complexities of the quest—then segue into Aguirre's geometries per our current discussion of upsetting monomythic power using Gothic space to achieve rape play inside the nucleus:

Processing my troubled academic past, my reflections on Metroidvania as a tomb-like, ludo-Gothic space/torture dungeon have become thoroughly enmeshed in my own sexuality and gender-formation beyond what was heteronormatively assigned to me at birth; i.e., what was naturally assigned and what I had to reclaim through my own work's seeking and expressing of power as something to find inside particular performative arrangements: the

"ludo-Gothic BDSM" of the Gothic castle as a powerful "female-coded" space. Its **palliative Numinous** expresses C.S. Lewis' so-called "problem of pain" (1940) through mutual consent; i.e., as a kind of ludic contract that promises paradoxical thrills through the aesthetics of harmful power but also unequal power exchange in the contractual sense as rich food for thought: it changes how we think about the world. As I write in "[Revisiting My Masters' Thesis on Metroidvania—Our Ludic Masters: The Dominating Game Space](#)":

Metroidvania players consent to the game by adopting a submissive position. Most people sexualize BDSM, but power is exchanged in any scenario, sexual or otherwise. This being said, Gothic power exchanges are often sexualized [in appearance]. Samus is vulnerable when denuded, her naked body exposed to the hostile alien menace (re: the end scene from *Alien*). Metroidvania conjure [up] dominance and submission through a player that winds up "on the hip" (an old expression that means "to be at a disadvantage"). Another way to

think of it is, the player is the bottom, and they're being topped by the game.



[artist: Sarah Kate Forstner's "Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad" (2017); [source](#): Michael Uhall's "A Specter, a Speaker: 'Whistle and I'll Come to You' (1968)"]

With any power exchange there's always an element of ambiguity and danger (doubly so in Gothic stories). The participants have to trust one another. In this sense, I trust the Metroidvania not to hurt me, but the castle is always somewhat uncanny. I know the gameworld can't hurt me because it's a videogame; it can no more kill me than a dream, or C. S. Lewis' mighty spirit:

suppose that you were told simply "There is a mighty spirit in the room," and believed it. Your feelings would then be even less like the mere fear of danger [of the tiger]: but the disturbance would be profound. You would feel wonder and a certain shrinking — a sense of inadequacy to cope with such a visitant and of prostration before it — an emotion which might

be expressed in Shakespeare's words "Under it my genius is rebuked" ([source](#)).

Nevertheless, the paradox—of near-danger in videogames—mirrors the plight of the Neo-Gothic heroine. 18th century women read these stories to feel danger in a controlled sense, but they still submitted to its Numinous "perils." By comparison, the Lovecraft junkie submits to cosmic nihilism<sup>213</sup>, and the survival horror enthusiast seeks danger of a particular kind. So do Metroidvania players ([source](#)).

This power exchange through the palliative Numinous has always appealed to me amid Gothic aesthetics, spaces and cliché, fetishized thrills; i.e., inside castles when I have far less dominant power than one might think, but also more *subby* power in ways that feel asexually profound but never fully divorced from sexual peril's aesthetics: the disempowered hero in a very Gothic sense, according to my unequal relationship to/negotiation with a female<sup>214</sup> "rapist" space that feels mightier than I am by virtue of the dungeon (rape) aesthetic, but also our power arrangement being stacked against me:

She's mighty-mighty, just lettin' it all hang out  
She's a brick house

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<sup>213</sup> This idea *was* coined by a supremely bigoted white man—one whose tottering regressions towards fascism forever hang over the science-y heroes he constantly tortures in his stories; i.e., threatening them with insignificance in the face of mightier things:

The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little [speak for yourself, whitey]; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age ([source](#): "The Call of Cthulhu," 1928).

"Oh, no! I'm *not* the center of the universe?" I think old Lovecraft could have seriously done with some "flexibility training" insofar as acclimating himself to chaos, meaning there's more to life than the myth of male power deflated. His empty outlook, in my opinion, is very much him projecting his own privileged shortcomings into the power vacuum of an impenetrable void (that isn't, you should know by now, outer space). He's basically Peter Weyland gazing solemnly into the abyss and seeing nothing because, for him, there is nothing worthwhile to acquire. It's the trembling that he enjoys. He's very much like a child afraid of the dark, whose prescribed unapproachability is a kind of "backtalking from the sub": "You're hideous, Cthulhu; now step on me."

<sup>214</sup> The gendering of spaces is not usual; sailors would do it with ships, gendering them female as they cut through the equally female sea. A giant, hostile castle isn't so odd, then—with Scott's "space castle" (and its Gothic *matelotage*) sailing through the murky darkness like a ghost ship haunted by an older copy of itself.

That lady's stacked and that's a fact  
Ain't holding nothing back ([source](#): The Commodores' "Brick House,"  
1977).



*[Our resident lady, Lady Dimitrescu, is both tall as a matter of size difference, but also statuesque; i.e., "of the space-in-question" by virtue of the usual hyphenated interrogations of said space as like a person and vice versa: a bogeywoman to summon and put down, but also to pique particular submissive interests*

*from the hero player—the rape fantasy.]*

That's the whole point. I seemingly "can't win" because the space's ergodic potential is fundamentally stronger than I am; but it still sits within that performance of unequal, harmful power as a paradox: the sub's power through the pairing with a dominant whose power flows through them like heavy metal thunder. In that sense, I actually win and lose at the same time (what ludologists call a *positive*-sum zero-sum game: a win-win<sup>215</sup>)! Replayability and endless backtracking amid dungeon aesthetics are a core part of the Metroidvania appeal: to feel mastered inside the ludic contract *despite* its inherent flexibility.

Furthermore, as I write in "Why I Submit: A Subby Gothicism's Attitudes on Metroidvania, Mommy Doms, and Sexual Persecution" (2021), this doesn't just stay in the gameworld; for me, it translates to how I live and think about my life relative to my abuse as survived but also played within in Metroidvania safe spaces:

I have male friends, but most of my friends are women or trans people. Most of my partners have been trans or gender-fluid. The same goes for the women in media I relate to or am inspired by. For me, a powerful woman or female space is captivating and educational, especially the "mommy dom" and Metroidvania.

I've always felt attracted to female power—be it in teachers, heroines, or videogame characters. But female power is usually

<sup>215</sup> Versus a negative-sum game: a lose-lose; e.g., Capitalism (because the elite will lose in the end due to climate change).



androgynous, having pre-conceptions about male power mixed in. I admire Joan of Arc and Elphaba, but also Ellen Ripley and Samus Aran: tomboyish girls, female knights. I especially love the *Metroidvania*—a chaotic, "female" stronghold to lose myself inside, [but also the focus of my PhD work](#). There, I can explore myself sexually in relation to power and trauma. This is why I submit. When I do submit, I submit to "mommy doms."

In a BDSM framework, the mommy dom is a powerful female figure, one with the power to punish and nurture inside a consensual framework [of exquisite "torture"]. Just remember that I'm a switch; I'm not submissive all the time. However, when I am, I submit consensually. It's not for everyone, and it shouldn't be. That isn't the argument that sexist men make, though. For them, only women can or should submit. Men who submit are weak, or impossible. Clearly they're not impossible, but homosexual composer [Tchaikovsky's words on submission](#) (towards a young servant) were nonetheless treated as impossible—his amorous words furiously repressed by the Russian state: "My God, what an angelic creature and how I long to be his slave, his plaything, his property!" ([source](#)).

Obviously my connection to the imaginary Dark Mother is tied to my own abuse, and led me down a very dark road: frustrated with academia and dumped by Zeuhl for their decade-long secret flame, I dated online; I encountered Jadis through Gothic roleplay on Fetlife; we hit it off and I quickly moved in; they worked their magic, abusing me emotionally during the pandemic ([source](#)).

In Cartesian thought, nature is both wild and a reward to reap. This goes back not only to the genocidal origins of settler colonialism and Divine Right, but the Covenant of the Rainbow and classical Antiquity. Apart from the ability to openly commit lethal force against nature, then be lauded for it, the monomyth usually rewards the hero with getting the girl, afterwards. In short, there's an exhibitionist, binarized violence to monomyth stories; i.e., presenting two basic forms of monstrous-feminine for the hero to be violent towards or around: the virgin and the whore. Common synonyms are the angel and devil, black and white, leather and lace, good and evil, wife and witch, damsel and demon, etc. Whatever they're called, the virgin is classically innocent, passive and vulnerable; the whore is guilty, active and dangerous. Both receive punishment in canonical stories because both belong to nature as needing to be dominated and harvested, treated like property in theatrical ways.

Inside this theatre, the virgin sits on a pedestal, being "kept" prisoner (regardless of where she is) while the whore is chased; i.e., hunted down (usually

to Hell or hellish areas) and cleansed like a witch is by self-righteous forces ordained by God, the king and the state, more broadly (which translates to capital's usual operations looping in on themselves): a criminal and a monster. In either case, this synonymizes pleasure and harm in psychosexual forms doubling as capital punishment, mid-harvest; e.g., the succubus is chained and whipped, Medusa is beheaded, etc, while the damsel or the princess is locked up, needing to be rescued *again* (re: Persephone).

Both types reify the abuses regularly committed against women and nature-as-monstrous-feminine—with violence against the damsel being more of a domestic flavor and violence against the whore lending itself to matters of open war, moral panic and foreign policy (e.g., Red Scare). Both are useful to capital, in that both are invoked to harvest nature-as-monstrous-feminine during the dialectic of shelter and the alien; i.e., nature is a whore; e.g., *Beowulf*, where Grendel's mother invades the king's home (first through her son, then going in herself to punish her son's killers) to then be hounded to the underwater cave to be killed and presented as dead, allowing the hero to progress and law and order to return.



(artist: [Kalinka Fox](#))

Something to keep in mind when looking at the Radiance, then, is how sex-positive dark mothers/mommy doms are *de facto* educators for good play using bad aesthetics: the girl to get by raping her for the Man and for capital dressed up in monomythic language. The ruin is a brothel and a warzone. Literally central to Promethean subversion of the monomyth, though, the whore generally waits at the center of the maze in order for the hero looking to progress to the epilogue of promised sex (and the next rape): to teach such children lessons besides the king's.

Before they even meet, there's the usual monomythic formula playing out. The hero is called to—generally by a male seer—then given a sword before venturing boldly into the space of doom (the home afflicted with hellish energies). It's a military mission, a witch hunt that only "ends" when the hero rapes and slays the dragon, witch or Medusa at the end (their functions identical: the fascist/Communist scapegoat, a monstrous-feminine recipient of state force [revenge] by good or bad cops, including token vigilantes). Except there's always another Medusa waiting for them in another castle, another rape to canonize or camp, another witch hunt to persecute/prosecute (there must, for profit needs to continue for as long as possible). The cats-and-dogs animus lingers, as does the undead matriarch's hostility haunting the castle walls painted red with invisible blood after the wild goose chase: that of a rape survivor licking

her wounds, but also blossoming into the world to stain its much-touted purity with fresh, decentralized uncertainty.

As such, the Medusa becomes something of a door-to-door saleswoman, teaching about rape through characteristic feelings that haunt the venue, post-survival, but also... enriching it? For instance, I didn't even consider my abuse rape (rape ranking being a common rationalizing method of survivors) until I reflected on it through Gothic fictions like *Resident Evil* and *Hollow Knight*. Luckily I did, always comparing myself to the uncertainty I felt in Jadis' presence; i.e., their toxic love (and furnished home) being like a Gothic castle, and I their Gothic captive.

In short, a dark mother can be played in bad faith, but also good; i.e., the cryptonymic umbra of the cosplayer aping Lady Dimitrescu with her eclipse-sized hat brim (the witch's black halo, her body's surface sexually charged with Promethean might, above). In defense of her dark womb as something to protect at all costs—re: freezing the hero as a rape prevention device—Mother Nature must become monstrous-feminine again, thus able to chill in stasis her patriarch-sent, state-ordained male (or token) killers working for the Man as a giant, seemingly inescapable force; i.e., the confronting of rape as popular *and* unchallenged in mythical, patriarch-centered stories; e.g., Daphne hounded by Zeus, turned into a tree to escape his ordinary rapacious advances. Rooting them in place among "an unweeded garden grown to seed," a male space is a settler-colonial project on female-coded land reinvaded by a classification that *feels* female but really is GNC at large. This playing with death and power per ludo-Gothic BDSM has as much an architectural flavor as it does an overtly personified one, which brings us back to Aguirre.

Tying things to Aguirre's geometries is the final room, or rather a room that conveys finality through the exhaustion of optimism in the face of an endless, yawning dead. As Aguirre writes in "Geometries of Terror"; re:

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 ([source](#)).

While Aguirre hints at videogames a fair bit (the piece *is* from 2008), I have obviously extended my research considerably to do nothing *but* explore the videogame's partitioning of the Gothic's hellish delights (from 2017 onwards) subverting traditional ideas of strength: confronting the Communist Numinous as haunted by equally enormous oppression (a giant prison for a giant queen).

To that, one does not simply get "raped" once, but over and over again as a matter of exquisite, paradoxically rapturous torture ("rape ironically")! And if that seems odd, ask us why that might be! Ask the ghost *why* it was raped—not to get at the truth of what happened back then, but what is going on *right now* (cataloging history is fairly academic, but reenacting it says much more about current atrocities [with the ghost of the counterfeit] than former ones): marrying the language of sex and war as a matter of camp to bring out of the closet and into the wider world. Such things duel and coalesce in ways a medievalist not only wouldn't mind, but indeed, would welcome and encourage. The keys to breaking Capitalist Realism lie in medieval theatrics "aping Chaucer, Shakespeare and Walpole," etc; re: giants, and giant aspects of smaller beings.



(artist: [Dream Pipe](#))

The Gothic has always been campy but invested in secret sins as out in the open (not quite incognito, not quite up front). From "ancient" Romance to ordinary novels, comedy to drama, artist and muse, seafaring adventure and earthbound sexual dungeon, there's so many ways (and places) to "put it"; e.g., Sabs' "[Captain Turtledove and the Attack of the Terrible Octobussy](#)," 2024). So explore the taboos and cultural values of the imaginary past as rapacious (appropriative or not); don't bury them (and their victims) because silence is genocide and genocide always leads to rape, to Rome, to bigger and bigger instances thereof. Ask why the whore is addicted to "rape," then learn how to "rape" in quotes; listen to Medusa or Hippolyta whispering hungrily into your ear, "rape me!" (or "Take it like a good boy!"). Take the praise and debasement (whatever you both prefer, to whatever degree of aftercare you require); i.e., as a psychosexual, ludo-Gothic means of instruction whose BDSM (often through trial and error) synthesizes good praxis into the future: go big or go home ("rape" so often involves a dominant who looks and feels dominant<sup>216</sup>—the dragon lord or zombie master a fearsome

<sup>216</sup> There's plenty of exceptions to this; i.e., a whole can of worms (so to speak); e.g., femboys, whose curiously large dicks and slender bods (androdiversity) we have already examined in this series; e.g., exhibit 34a1b1b1 from Volume Two, part one:

The monstrous-feminine is very broad and dualistic. It would be impossible to cover all aspects of it here, because there are an infinite number between overlapping/intersecting gradients. In gender-studies fashion, I've isolated three gradients for your consideration: *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

biology/sexuality, gender performance, and performance-as-identity. Though I *could* devote a book [or series of books] to each, I will merely supply one exhibit per gradient for you to keep in mind as we progress. As we do, remember that canon both divides and essentializes nature as discrete *and* fused; e.g., biology is essential under capital, and sex and gender are both discrete in terms of critical analysis and dogmatically fused insofar as canon treats them like one-in-the-same and chained to human biology serving the state [the challenging of which Judith Butler calls "gender trouble"] ([source](#)).

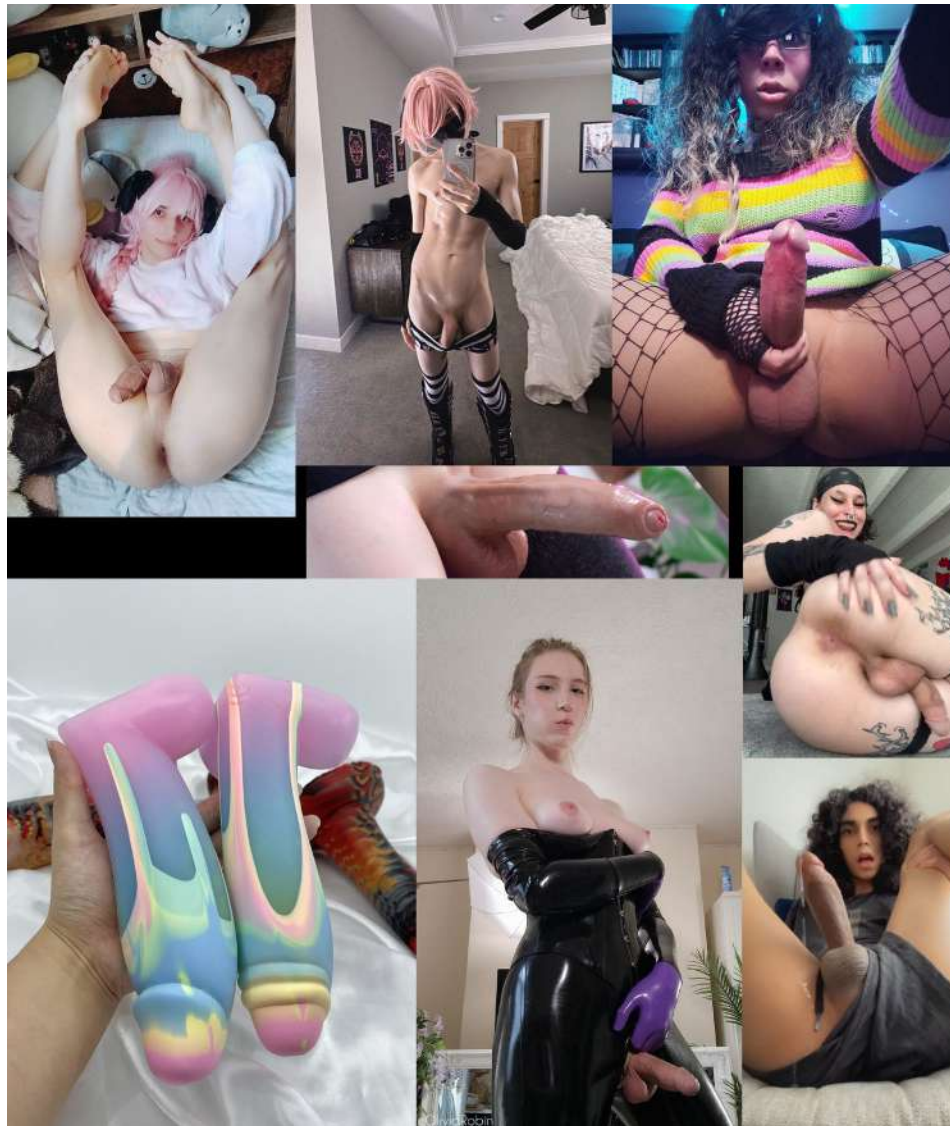


(artist, top-and-bottom- left/mid-right: [My Emetophobia](#); top-right: [Pancake Pornography](#); bottom right: [Paladin Pleasure Sculptors](#))

The primer can only scratch the surface of such things; we will examine andro and gynodiversity even more in Volume Three (a sample):

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
 Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

monster-fucker [with a huge dick] that Medusa straight up *craves*. Mommy has needs).



(exhibit 91b2: Femboys demonstrate androdiversity with tremendous irony. For example, although undoubtedly there are plenty of femboys with smaller schlongs, plenty on the market advertise the slenderest of elfin bodies and the girthiest of members [contrary to heteronormative belief, big bodies—especially ones on inordinate amounts of synthetic testosterone—have shrinking genitals]; e.g., vacillating throbbers of cuties like [Catboi Aoi](#), [Rayray Sugarbutt](#), [Olivia the Robin](#), [Zay Zay](#), [illiteracy4me](#), [Hanyuu](#), [Jaybaesun](#), etc.)

Simply put, Medusa isn't strictly female (fuck off, TERFs); femboys and catboys (regardless of biological sex or gender in relation to that) are monstrous-feminine, too, thus fall into the same sodomy-style states of exception/critiques of capital. Secretly raped as open pornographic secrets, they become the secret weapons of rebellion through much the same cryptonymy reversing the flow of power—towards workers versus the state. So often porn chattelizes non-normative bodies (or honestly anything that isn't a white, cis-het, Christian man); liberation is about reclaiming such things to serve our needs.

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
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So while kinky *jouissance* opens the eyes (so to speak), rape has a practical function: cryptonymy as a means of *surviving* the state's usual beheadings ("the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads. [Take it in what sense thou wilt](#)<sup>217</sup>"). As a matter of survival *and* eventual liberation (the state survives by raping workers and nature per the process of abjection; e.g., white middle-class women exploiting cryptonyms to service profit; re: Radcliffe and her echoes), Medusa isn't the only one who loves being "raped"; Persephone (the deity and me<sup>218</sup>) loves rape as something to camp, thus speak to abusive structures that try to otherwise shock you blind; e.g., the *Metroidvania*, per the monomythic heroic mechanisms, raping Medusa as a false flag: manifesting the *unheimlich* as her false castle, invading it and stabbing her in the "eyes" (the white, the pink, the brown—next page).



(artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#) and *Cuwu*)

A survivor of rape myself, I *love* writing about rape play both because I've gained an appreciation for calculated risk, but also because I have helped others work through such dialogs, too; i.e., manifesting through

play and performance as a matter of cryptonymy (showing and hiding trauma) during ludo-Gothic BDSM as a revolutionary device: a pedagogy of the oppressed resisting police violence. While *Metroidvania* has conveniently allowed me to reenact these in gigantic, dualistic pathways (the castle's big rape/rapist), any survivor of rape can act out their abuse through the Gothic, during oppositional praxis. Dialectically-materially this theatre invokes mechanisms the state will police through bad actors, players, and instructors: sex and force, but also terror and bodily expression that just as often, actualize/tokenize in highly Pavlovian ways. It's all the same masks, costumes and mirrors; so remember that flow determines function, as far as the aesthetics of power and death reliably go.

For example, the player's quest for power in *Hollow Knight* suitably ends in the darkness of immeasurable death spilling in all directions, trapping the hero in Hell; i.e., the emptying of Hell through a final zombie apocalypse that buries the rapist alive. To this, the heroic quest is Promethean, tied to a space that *promises* combat; the combat misleads the player by offering power as tinged with a self-imposed decay and malice that ultimately triumphs *against* the hero upon the story's conclusion (turning them heel in the process, but to a grand, self-destructive and world-destroying degree; i.e., the fascist notion of the hero's bondage to the

<sup>217</sup> From *Romeo and Juliet*, act one, scene one.

<sup>218</sup> I'd rather be raped and free, then still under my rapist's "protection."

cult of death and rape as *venerated* by the status quo: an unholy marriage of the hero's sword to the monstrous-feminine brain. It's big rape minus any irony at all ("[You fight like a young man: eager to begin, quick to finish](#)<sup>219!</sup>"): skull-fucking her Majesty-in-chains on par with Odysseus blinding the cyclops; i.e., she shows herself in all her glory only to be extinguished for it (or so it seems).

Simply put, there's no way to win, no matter how many treasures acquired or enemies vanquished, because the hero is always a male rapist death fetish (a "killer doll") working for the state; i.e., a reversal of *Axiom Verge*. Trace, the useful idiot, kills the king when lied to by the Great Fairy mommy doms (who are good doms despite their strict, imperfect approach); the knight (also an idiot) kills the gay fairy queen haunting the veil. When lied to by the straight king through the ghostly space around him, the hero (thus the player) becomes a bad dom in the process: Radcliffe's demon lover!

To that, such forces are always in flux behind the scenes and out in the space as interwoven, liminal, anisotropic, concentric, etc; the crypt, as a site of secret sin, oozes said sin (like a ruptured eyeball) all over the status of the self-professed "brave." It's censorship with a knife (an oracle speaks with her eyes), profit projecting through rape as a matter thereof; i.e., police violence, repression serving the king as a poetic extension of the nuclear family under capital: protect daddy by raping the madwomen in the attic (classically a woman of color, in *Jane Eyre*). It's not exactly subtle, but there remains a cloaked, uncertain element of subversion—some grey area to what might seem like a black-and-white scene.



Indeed, the game is effectively the opposite of *Axiom Verge*, the white king's lost boys hulking out/turning black to rape the white queen—a military target—instead of the black queen dismembering the dark father to protect the son from a militarized scientist genociding the land. Furthermore, the extinguishing of the hero's hopes is literally that of the eyes

of the oracle; the eyes of the female Numinous (exhibit 40g) are put out, blinding our poor Cassandra/oracle while turning a blind eye to the darkness that continues in the wake of her execution: the self-destructive rememory—that is, the maddening recollection and attempted reassembly—of an exhaustive tally of imperial destruction, now leaking from the long-dead corpse of empire (which revives to unironically rape Medusa again and again and again). The hole, as usual, is stuffed in ouroborotic fashion by the lance, the sword, as instructed by the game;

<sup>219</sup> A throwaway line/role in an otherwise awful movie, *The Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (2008) at least gets the Nazi-Russian she-wolf right.



re: police training through police training grounds, the youthful martyr trading places with the old sentinel to stand watch inside the empty space—blood in, blood out.

Like *Moby Dick*, the Radiance is canonically the game's white whale to chase, stab and harvest; i.e., for proponents of Ahab and capital to go overboard and underwater with, putting out their ancient animal enemy's eyes: "to the last I grapple with thee; from hell's heart I stab at thee; for hate's sake I spit my last breath at thee!" It's personal, a framed revenge for Ahab's leg and his old man's pride—all to render the whale into blubber and then oil.

Our resident Mothra is no different: something to kill to literally keep the lights on, but also restore the king's good name against nature as daring to refuse the advance of his spearhead, his patriarch harpoon's madness and obsession; i.e., all roads lead to Rome, to profit, to rape of nature-as-monstrous-feminine—a phallic sea monster in poetic forms, hailing from lands unknown as normally off-limits to man's domain giving all the usual monomythic rewards as hellish, sumptuous: Neptune's trove, its plunder dredged up and dragged back to land.



(*exhibit 40h3: Artist: [Bay](#). Nature is seen as the place that gives and takes away—a dark mother to fear and go into the territories thereof. In settler-colonial terms, such harvests are hauled monomythically back to the mother country in such stories, but also reduced to corporate fare sold on supermarket shelves. In Bay's case, they are an Indigenous sex worker*

*against Capitalism and for nature, doing much of their own cooking for their birthday [above]. But they still live in a place that was colonized [originally by the Dutch] and currently overseen by state-corporate influence.)*

Whatever the dungeon, then, it's a place of endless genderqueer potential (with gay themes present all throughout seafaring narratives, not just in outer space; i.e., *matelotage*; e.g., "Hey, sailor!" and "Any port in a storm!" etc) and value to harvest by enterprising landlubbers (the man of reason generally a seafarer from land who meets his end chasing the fire of the gods "out at sea"): the killing of the space whale. Whether for the bounty of food (which workers who

aren't against nature still must subsist on, above), pure dominion, or some combination under settler-colonial territories, Capitalism is Capitalism; i.e., relying on said animus in astronoetic narratives treating the whole thing as "heroic," and for whom to the victor goes the spoils. In essence, the sea is badass and plentiful—a challenge to accept and overcome as historically tied to industry preying on nature from the land to the sea. Their deaths coincide, a hate crime against nature and a mind crime against the perpetrators forced to brave the waves for fat cats safe (and dry) on land (e.g., the invisible company executives, in *Alien*).



(artist: [Michel Toles](#)'s "The Triumph of Venus and Galatea Over Moby Dick," 2020)

Except, while she is seemingly hunted to extinction during a presumed war of extermination/tokenized exploitation thereof (similar to the sand worms and the power of the land, in *Dune*), the Radiance eventually

returns for her revenge inside the used-up minds of the king's loyal servants, who, infected with her influence—her testimony—must be isolated<sup>220</sup> from other knights and then killed to keep the king's secret; i.e., while they are incarcerated inside the Black Egg. The madwoman lives rent-free in the attic of their traumatized brains: "art thou but / A dagger of the mind, a false creation, / Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?" they ask. "Can't kill me, motherfuckers!" she replies.

This is effectively the subversion I'm talking about, here: the rapists' comeuppance after doing what they were made to do against nature, in effect subverting state-sanctioned rape through the scene itself as something to act out at the center of the maze: by the Radiance having a role in said subversion as playfully veiled by the maze's walls. The darkness seems to be the king's will, but it also occupies her revenge afterwards, lending to an awkward and opaque duality. So, there's a non-verbal element to what unfolds that's even more subversive,

<sup>220</sup> A tactic that real-life ants will do, when members of their nest are sick, except they carry the infected *away* from the nest to die. The Pale King has colonized everything, keeping the secret in-house to avoid it spreading (similar to Rian from *The Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance*, when the Skeksis convince other Gelfling that his mind is sick; i.e., so they won't dream-fast with him and learn the truth).

arguably than, *Axiom Verge*, but also more *contested*. It *is* a rape we're looking at, right? But the Radiance still wins. Can it be more than one thing at once?

Of course, this plays out as an act that is forgotten and concealed within its own artefacts; i.e., something to sing about as a far-off conquest to begin anew by fresh hearts and minds venturing into old dungeons and hunting down dragons like the days of old; e.g., Tolkien's song of the dwarves, itself a fragment their culture: "and this is like a fragment of their song if it can be like their song without their music" ([source](#)) to

*Far over misty mountains cold  
To dungeons deep and caverns old  
We must away ere break of day  
To seek the pale enchanted to gold* ([ibid.](#))

to "our long-forgotten gold" to "our harps and gold" from unworthy pre-fascist usurpers (dragons) and abject anti-Semitic occupiers (orcs and goblins). The dwarves' covetous memory becomes one of unbridled revenge, its call to war against nature sharpening to rekindle better times out of myth tied to artefacts that suggest it to start with: "He was witless and wandering, and had forgotten almost everything but the map and the key" ([ibid.](#)).

I'm not just someone who plays with rape through ludo-Gothic BDSM. I'm also a Tolkien scholar whose Gothic ludology was inspired by Tolkien's work (mainly *The Hobbit*, but I digress). Far from being brainless in the current, neoliberal trend, games and the Gothic are classically a site for clever in-jokes regarding the same old material, in effect playing with it to camp it. As Tolkien speaks to the monomyth and secret things wrought with heroic violence, then, let's take a few pages to unpack that and apply it to the Radiance's death as camping such matters, herself (enjoyment is not endorsement); i.e., as something that subverts the usual monomythic abjection and reward (mercenary rape) per the Promethean Quest: raping the whore as the dragon to chase down and steal from (with Tolkien's



Smaug also being queer-coded and animalistic<sup>221</sup>). From there, we'll wrap things up and proceed onto "The Monomyth," part two!

To revive the memory of the king, Tolkien's war-like dwarves (a whole mess of anti-Semitic clichés) embark on a goldrush through the usual business of

<sup>221</sup> For more examples of Tolkien's animalistic language in relation to capital and greed, consider my essay on Tolkien's *Hobbit vis-à-vis* Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*: "["Dragon Sickness": The Problem of Greed](#)" (2014).

burgling a stolen home back unto a mythology's "timeless" ownership (echoes of Zionism): waging war against the monomyth's usual enemies by unlikely heroes on a Journey thereof (Jewish-coded monsters and a closeted bachelor). In Tolkien's opinion, only Tookish assholes have adventures, generally as a matter of conducting violence in dark, deep places while wishing for it: "to wear a sword instead of a walking stick" (*ibid.*). Like all these little quotes, the desire for adventure against the Numinous dragon is littered throughout Tolkien's world: little things lead to big things, a covert military operation escalating to all-out war on all fronts (making Smaug this story's Archduke Ferdinand, I suppose).

The home isn't just guarded by the dragon, but by the dwarves' secrecy towards the treasure pegging them as vice characters ("the fierce and jealous love of dwarves" amounting to "dragon sickness" later in the book). And in the interim, the map and key go hand-in-hand—as a matter of code that includes the map and its runes, hidden walls, moon letters, riddles, royal flattery and so on—as a business practice among them, an *omerta* of sorts. The treasure, already stolen through conquest, becomes a mystery unto itself, then; i.e., a trade secret in the usual medieval sort, one unlocked with the key that was, itself, secret: "the quest to the Lonely Mountain depended entirely on a single key and a secret door that the dragon didn't know about. In fact, without the key, Bilbo wouldn't have been able to get into the mountain" ([source](#): A Hole in the Ground's "The Strange History of Thrór's Key," 2012).

Tolkien's dwarves are a secretive bunch—homeless criminals with bling ("Thorin stroked the gold chain round his neck," [source](#)) who do dark business in dark places ("Suddenly he found that the music and the singing had stopped, and they were all looking at him with eyes shining in the dark." / "'We like the dark,' said all the dwarves. 'Dark for dark business! There are many hours before dawn,'" *ibid.*). In short, they verge on being goblins themselves, operating through violence to take what's theirs, the dragon a matter of calculus: "It does not do to leave a live dragon out of your calculations, if you live near him" (*ibid.*).

In turn, such careful planning is tied to the monomyth—a matter of returning to tradition—pointedly encouraging violence against Tolkien's ideological enemies, all of it sold as Goldilocks Imperialism to middle-class children playing war and robbery<sup>222</sup> for fun (as a matter of fact, he wrote the book for his son):

"That would be no good," said the wizard, "not without a mighty Warrior, even a Hero. I tried to find one; but warriors are busy fighting one another in distant lands, and in this neighbourhood heroes are scarce, or simply not to

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<sup>222</sup> And, point in fact, dressing the heroes up as robbers, as rebels, where they're policing the Good Lands of those pesky inhuman, blood-drinking and baby-eating goblins. Adventures like Tolkien's conceal their bigotry through shadowy monsters that, often enough, are killed in plain sight; though tokenized (re: Jewish stereotypes and one gay wizard and hobbit), it's still cops-and-robbers terrorism serving the state.

be found. Swords in these parts are mostly blunt, and axes are used for trees, and shields as cradles or dish-covers; and dragons are comfortably far-off (and therefore legendary). That is why I settled on *burglary*—especially when I remembered the existence of a Side-door. And here is our little Bilbo Baggins, *the burglar*, the chosen and selected burglar (*ibid.*).

As such, stealing isn't just cool, but a righteous cycle of revenge ordained by the author playing god; e.g., world-building and dogma; i.e., to restore a fallen people and land to proper working order after a former collapse: the dragon haunting a fallen kingdom—a symbol of sickness not unlike Medusa's eventual, required return.

In the interim, Smaug is far-off and legendary because of it, becoming something to plan around: a dungeon crawl (whose cartographic refrain arguably inspired every *D&D* campaign ever run, and every roleplaying videogame you could think of—per the monomyth as something to canonize). Their return is as inevitable as the weather or the night following the day, because Tolkien treats humans (and monstrous stand-ins for humans) as naturally greedy.

To this, *The Hobbit* is a morality play whose conspicuously medieval language (and stereotypes) rarefy greed as, having inflicted harm against the status quo, become something to meet with harm: the cycle of revenge repaid in kind. In short, Tolkien abstracts nature into a fascist allegory and scapegoat; i.e., a dragon to slay as one might a witch—all done in order to keep money moving through nature in service to profit. As part of the same "rape farm," the shadow of the dragon is always felt; its giant bones lie at the bottom of the lake; its spirit lies heavy on the hearts of men, dwarves, elves, and goblins all fighting over the dragon's mountainous pile of gold; its hoard becomes theirs, turning *them* into dragons.

To it, the final boss of Capitalism isn't the dragon and its castle-like body as something to invade, *mise-en-abyme* (the mountain containing the dragon, which houses the return of war outside of dragon and mountain); it's greed, itself, as a Pavlovian, destabilizing system of exchange and code—also known as capital. Unto it, the recipe is always one of revenge spiraling towards disaster as precisely what the elite want; per the Protestant ethic, war is holy in their eyes, inventing whatever enemies they want/need and essentializing them as "ancient" through a poetry (and *cryptomimesis*) conducive to war out of good lands into bad, "there and back again": good races raping bad ones in and out of game-like replicas. It's Imperialism with more steps, the centrist arbitration of value judgements coinciding with whether you're on the right side of the fence (the West) or not; i.e., Orientalism's double standards per moral teams through good-vs-evil, us-versus-them copaganda; e.g., fat bodies celebrated or condemned simply because of which team you're on as a matter of shame, guilt, revenge, etc. You can see this with Tolkien's Bombur compared to the Great Goblin of the Misty Mountains—a double standard that also plays out in real life between men like Sammo Hung and Steven Seagal (Accented Cinema's "[Let's Not Fat-shame Steven Seagal](#)," 2024). It's

vaudeville, which includes the hobbit killing spiders (which extends to their babies, next page, through an extermination war that marks spiders as "pure evil" being killed by tokenized forces).



(artist: the Brothers Hildebrandt)

The point in dredging up Tolkien, here, is the knight in *Hollow Knight* is really no different: promised by the game some kind of gilded spectacle (rewards are generally promised through tiny markers of themselves, Thrór's key made of silver); i.e., to plunder through rapine (the act of taking by force) from an undeserving party by deserving ones

through a *casus belli*. In this case, the "dragon" is Hallowmest's monstrous-feminine queen, the Radiance, and your reward—as the game's little, hobbit-sized hero—is to rape her and take her spectral crown for the former now-dead king. Not so different from a ring around one's finger, no (either type signifying the transfer and legitimacy of power, which Bilbo is not immune to, below)?



The Radiance's death—like Smaug's—is an honor killing met with armed robbery, but also an *exorcism* of something hidden to the same extent as that pale enchanted gold, Thrór's key or even the dragon: a mountainous glimmer that blinds the hero and fills them with unquenchable bloodlust;

i.e., drunk on glory and death, but also their own heroic brand as inherited from the home's forged, mythological sense of ownership as rooted in secrecy in deception; e.g., Samus and Zebes, but also Bilbo's hand in a larger race war that cumulates in Thorin's Viking-style last stand against Erebor's forces of darkness (arguably the author's token Jew defending an imperialist stronghold from the "ancient," essentialized enemies of Britain: "the enemy is weak and strong"): Thorin bashing Bilbo, calling him "descendent of rats" (code for "Jew" but also "thief"), whereupon Bilbo does everything he can to prove he's of the good's side (while also, it must be said, trying to prevent all-out war). Antagonize nature and put it to work as cheaply as possible (which is what the Battle of the Fire Armies [a world war predicated on racial conflict] illustrates); assimilate, gentrify and decay.

Except, the context is even more different, in *Hollow Knight*. For one, the Radiance isn't just a vice character comparable to gold and conquest, but a tragic character whose rape fantasy is one of reversal *after* you've raped her to death more than once; re: "the fourth ending destroys the Absolute Radiance, but turns the knight into an even greater monster that Hornet must fight on her own." This happens while the sky weeps blood and tentacles<sup>223</sup> (such black shit may as well be blood given the cataclysmic atmosphere). During state shift, then, the *female* sun goes black, coming home to end the king's Cartesian madness—his endless line of toy soldiers marching to their doom—by shattering the dollhouse and the heliocentric stance it has; i.e., built around a false, decaying king (the conspiratorial fascist) eaten, in the end, when the raped, hungry womb of nature goes "om nom nom!" It's simply the planet defending itself.

In turn, the colossal misogyny on display is actually a revelation about instructed rape that, until the grand unveiling thereof, was merely whisper and



allegation: the true villain was the hero all along (in other words, the total opposite of stories like *The Hobbit*)!

(artist: [Ashen Hare](#))

After all's raped and done, the Radiance

remains the most endearing character ("She's mighty-mighty") in the game precisely because she's raped, but is also the wonderous object of pursuit with a secret to tell that lingers in undead fashion, postmortem. She's the tragically Icarian (and phallic), but also hidden heroine; i.e., *Hollow Knight's* fat lady signing passionately about her rape in Bluebeard's castle/geometry of terror (the stage being the GNC performer's classic arena to summon and voice their abuse, their insecurities, their passion—not for the elite, but for themselves as a dark god worthy of tribute).

<sup>223</sup> Allusions not just to Lovecraft, but tentacle rape in reverse. Kinky!



Emblematic of the unironic monomyth and medieval Romance, the hero is the talent, the Radiance his merchandise to capture and police by a knight errant given license to do so by divine providence: a one-man army campaigning against the barbarians

at the gate, nature herself coming home to turn said home into hostile alien territories. Through the usual fetishes and clichés of sports, combat, and theatre, the knight is the Man with No Name (the American Western generally endorsing cowboys and Indians, pushing Indigenous people to the margins and focusing on white pioneer women/saviors); i.e., a killer-doll, blank-state, masking-wearing mercenary/vigilante without a kingdom fighting for a dead patriarch (echoes of Xenophon, whose poetic incursions grandstand against nature, ultimately yielding repeated, cannibalistic excursions [death by exposure] into fatal territories in defense of empire and its doomed, fearful enterprise; i.e., a repeat of the forced march and last stand, a death spiral's grist-for-the-mill yielding profit for the elite, fear of nature being the motivating drive; e.g., *The Terror's* Sir John: "Show this beast the might of the British empire!").

His mission? To extinguish Medusa's grail beacon—her Archaic Mother's hysteria—as aided by all the king's men (shades) playing "barber" (the classic function being a bloodletter to cure an imbalance of the humors, generally tied to "wandering womb"): to perform female circumcision (of her "phallic" components) by the heroic barbarian posturing as "of the West," all while stabbing Medusa's bloodshot eyes with their heroic knife dick (which includes tokenized forms; e.g., Samus vs Mother Brain; re: "[War Vaginas](#)," 2021). The Call to Adventure is a mating call, then—the sort that knights are feared for doing unto state enemies in state-claimed lands: a room to clear, a plate to finish, moving money through nature through the same-old process of abjection.

Rape is rape, but the game playfully tests your resolve by treating it as your *final* reward before ignominiously burying you alive, in effect punishing you—the triumphant detective—like Lot's wife: for looking into things (re: Segewick). Playtime is over, the ending feeling like a game over. And while everyone arguably feels differently about historical events, the events themselves are still historical-material facts that theatrically repeat through such feelings fueling the chronotope; i.e., as dissenting voices coming from the oppressed marrying to the legends, the architecture, the opposing side's resistance to the buried truth. Silence speaks for itself, as do the things that corrupt the masonry to immeasurable degrees. Something seems wrong and asks you, the hero, to solve it, as monomyth heroes always do: through unironic violence. His nail, her flesh—it's the same carpentry.



Like all Metroidvania, then (and, by extension, any Gothic castle), *Hollow Knight* taunts you, first; it dares you to penetrate its domain and hunt down its ancient, monstrous-feminine secrets, a resident Medusa doing its best to isolate you *and* piss you off (as James Rolfe famously put it, "You're angry and you want to beat the Nintendo, but the sad fact is, no one cares but you").

Like *Athetos*, the Radiance is that thing to get mad at, but also to worship as the dead giveaway with Numinous, castled qualities ("Look upon my wonder!"); i.e., the dynamic is inverted: Athetos is the state gaslighter making the tyrant's plea as a man of reason having raped Medusa; the Radiance is appearing before the state servant to paralyze her would-be-rapist in awe. Similar to the Alien Queen from *Aliens*, the Radiance is meant to be held down and raped by the state as Medusa and Communism—but she wins anyways, punishing capital's libido (the drive towards profit, raping nature) by cursing them posthumously with live burial and state shift; high voltage, she turns it *all* back on the hero, thus the player, through her zombie eyeballs felt throughout the space, paralyzing zombie tyrants through zombie soldiers (the Alien Queen, meanwhile, sneaks an egg on board Ripley's ship, avenging *her* children by killing Newt, the colony brat, and Hicks, the *de facto* husband—it's *Frankenstein's* marital destruction visited upon the cop)!

Until things come to light, the Radiance stares at you defiantly through the eyes of the king's men<sup>224</sup>, screaming out of their mouths like a xenoglossic virus



(specifically cordyceps): the voice of the dead, the damned, the raped yawping "I am woman, hear me roar!" She's a fungus, a banshee, Princess Toadstool from Hell chaining Mario up in a very particular way—through lust and shame, but also violence camping a shared god space; i.e., literally bloodlust unto the whore as unable to fight back in a moment of extended, legendary vulnerability and betrayal relayed through the monomyth: as a call to violence against the whore—to "breed" her (a euphemism for rape, but also "rape") through vulgar poetry of courtly love, of Red Scare lusting after the whore to shackle and shame but also sell her red hair and blood!

(artist: [Mika Dawn](#))

<sup>224</sup> Normally the panopticon is a view piece for the king of his subjects through his subjects; i.e., a tower from Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, specially a prison meant to house and monitor lepers (showing Foucault's love for medieval comparisons). In short, workers in both texts are kept under lock and key per a constant state of surveillance—one they embody and report to the top on themselves (tattletales), even when said top ceases to exist. In the Radiance's case, though, she has hijacked the hive, effectively seeing backwards through a collective disease that monitors and attacks the hero as the last knight/prison guard alive.

To it, the Radiance is a prisoner the hero tracks down and rapes in her jail cell; i.e., she's raped by her "protectors" playing good cop, bad cop (the husk-like knight filled with white spirit and black void as something to weaponize against her), but also experiences the pain and death of those she inhabits. In short, she sees the world through the eyes of the other *prisoners*, feeling *their* pain as the hero puts *them* down (often attacking his enemies while they sleep, invading their dreams to duel their corpses—witness tampering, essentially). His perspective is always one of cleansing the land and its memories through these mediums "leaking hysteria" (e.g., the hollow knight's cracked mask spilling into the Black Egg and out into the kingdom); she, to cry out through the land in tomb-like agony expressing genocide as unable to be contained, thus repressed.

There's a sadistic and masochistic element between the two, the Radiance provoking attacks that always highlight the hero's vengeful, police-like function; i.e., something to see, then speculate about, in dialectical-material ways concerning what is happening—in short, what we're looking at as a point of view unto itself, one tied to rape and war of the land by its self-appointed owners: cops.

While reverse abjection yields the usual rape plays that big mommies give to their good little pets ("love taps"), abjection translates to the Radiance being blinded by her captors. Frankly this is rape all by itself—but also the whispers and societal looking away from someone (culture death) whose smiting of the king's memory is arguably being done to a rapist by its jilted victim operating through the space. It's "Young Goodman Brown" or *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) committed without Hawthorne's critical bite, his irony. But it still gives that away through the raping of the dead whore as a kind of dance partner the game makes the player (and the audience<sup>225</sup>) party to—to show what is normally repressed by acting out cop and victim. As such, the Radiance is both dead and not dead by playing dead through rape play that speaks to monomythic abjection, turning community isolation inside-out; i.e., subverting it as a matter of Gothic paradox through ludo-Gothic BDSM during the Promethean Quest's geometries of *counterterror*. She doesn't escape her prison by leaving it; she escapes by making it a space to communicate buried woes to a wider audience: the fact that she even exists at all.

Us women, you see, historically aren't "just angry"; we generally have good reason, as do the men who cover it all up breaking our trust (they don't trust us to keep quiet, afterwards). We don't tend to rape men for denying us sex (excluding tokenized, Man-Box examples), but we do become detectives speaking to our survival of rape, the latter something that traumatizes us into silence (or, in Tolkien's case and ours, secretive fictions littered with clues, stitched together across them in ways his "Tookish" side wasn't exempt from doing when it fancied him). It's not a trend for its own sake that bored middle-class people buy into (during the process of abjection); it's a historical-material fact felt in echoes in and

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<sup>225</sup> I.e., through bread-and-circus kayfabe spectating rape.

out of Gothic media (which Tolkien very much is as much as *Hollow Knight* is; re: Volume One, but quoted earlier in "[Jadis' Dollhouse](#)"): rape victims are seldom believed, but appear holistically across generations in and out of fiction regarding such abuse—as castle-like people or people-like castles attesting to secret sins and buried guilt. We fags dance in the ruins to camp their mapped-out rapes, their cartography leading to us and our liberation through "rape": camping the monomyth as monomythic copaganda, instructing nature as something to rape to move money through nature inside the castle space.



As such, rape victims are forced to be their own advocates, appealing to the public by virtue of what the middle class will pay attention to—the victims' own rape and murder as something to reify and sell, per the ghost of the counterfeit. This can be Pavlovian—electrocuting the bitch to induce a panic response—but the same actions also constitute a theatrical performance that looks the same, and yet differs through context: the irony of acting out one's death ("O happy dagger!") through an ambiguous, at-times-unreliable buffer (the plot to *Rashomon*, in other words): a secret key and plan to a dungeon (re: Thror's map, key and mountain, but also dragon, inside) that must be explored. It's that or not saying anything at all, and look what that gets you (unironic rape, genocide).

They say that dead men tell no tales, then, but few things are as loud, brutal and difficult to ignore as rape (especially gang rape or witch hunts that gang up on a rape victim; re: *The Scarlet Letter*). As we explored with my rape, emotional damage can cut like a knife in ways that are more subtle and diffuse, but also prolonged and, at times, Numinous compared to an over-and-done-with physical

incident. A survivor might out-and-out say "I was raped." I did, but I actually led off with art of the event, first (exhibit 39a1b). There isn't a superior method because rape victims are always treated like they deserved it or it didn't happen.

Furthermore, the fact remains that art is a common way to express one's abuse at the hands of privileged men (e.g., Elisabetta Sirani's "Timoclea Killing Her Rapist" [exhibit 35b] or "Portia Wounding her Thigh"). Regardless of the method, many people not only won't believe you, they'll attack you (even if they're victims of rape, too). Welcome to being raped! It doesn't stop with the event itself, but—like Hawthorne's infamous *Scarlet Letter*—becomes a brand to stamp survivors with and then police them as whores<sup>226</sup> to serve profit. It's compelled prostitution,

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<sup>226</sup> The policing is generally done through the state's own victims triangulating against themselves through the mechanisms and language of domination under capital; i.e., of workers at large, but especially marginalized workers *closer* to the in-group than not. First and foremost, per Gothic canon, this is white middle-class straight women, who—while they are sex workers whether they like to admit it or not (the myth of the liberated second wave feminist, trading overt sex work for the role of the pimp)—will attack other marginalized groups doing sex work of a more openly extramarital sort: the virgin vs the whore. Often this has a racialized character to it, but also a transphobic one, too.

For example, as Porpentine writes in "Hot Allostatic Load" (2015):

I saw a queer black woman, struggling to survive by her art, falsely accused of rape by a white queer. The call-out post was extremely vague and loaded with strong words designed to elicit vigilante justice. Immediately, hundreds of other white queers jumped on the bandwagon. Many of them likely didn't know either of the people involved.

Accusations of sexual menace are a key weapon used against marginalized people in feminist spaces, because it arouses people's disgust like no other act—the threat of black skin on innocent white, of trans bone structures on ethereal cis skeletons. It's as common for many of us as cat-calling or any other form of ubiquitous harassment that cis feminists talk about, except no one wants to talk about it. It's a way for the dominant people in the group to take us aside and say, you are not welcome here, or do this thing you don't want to do or I'll ruin your life. But frequently it happens without any particular thesis, just as a general tool to keep us destabilized and vulnerable. Don't forget who you really are in the unspoken hierarchy.

Mobbing uses these rumors to trade a vague suspicion for the actual reality of violence. It's like turning the corner and watching someone on the street having their teeth kicked in by a mob who assures you that just before you appeared, this person had committed some mysterious act which justifies limitless brutality ([source](#)).

From my own experiences, some of my worst memories of abuse weren't from cis-het white men, but other sex workers—especially white women pimping the venue as *the* exclusive sex workers, victims, cops (re: "[Transmisia Experience: 5/26/2023](#)"); i.e., third and fourth wave feminism in decay, working the lynch mob setting the example. This isn't truth, but punishment enforcing a hierarchy built on lies to haze those who challenge the established order. That's what cops do, including vigilante sex workers throwing stones in glass houses.

The sad fact is, rape victims go on to either keep being victimized, or become functional cops who rape others for the state in prison-like environments; i.e., an act they dress up as self-defense through DARVO behaviors (re: from earlier in this volume):

Rape, then, is historically a power fantasy to enact upon others against their will [...] Except no power fantasy should ever come at other people's expense. When it does, it leads to a routine failing of memory and willpower in the face of trauma, but also to the classic dice roll: cop or victim, during service towards profit through the usual monomythic, hero-grade rape fantasies/demon BDSM operating like demon lovers historically do; i.e., as controlled opposition policing the usual victims by their assigned masters

Like with Jadis and myself, it's always a dice roll.

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lashing whistleblowers; i.e., marginalized workers seeking equal rights, thus a chance to be heard, by acting out their abuse.

Applying these complexities to *Hollow Knight*, I can't *prove* that the Pale King raped the Radiance "back then"; but I *can* do the same thing I did with Athetos and ask you to look at the results: everyone who serves under the king is a trained killer working to please daddy to *genocidal* extremes (e.g., the Soul Master draining the City of Tears of its lifeforce in pursuit of a cure, exhibit 40i). Fucker's whole court is straight psychopaths; nobody's that blind, and if he somehow was, he should be removed and the system overhauled. Fuck the king and fuck his reputation. As a matter of capital attached to Cartesian thought, the Shadow of Pygmalion and Cycle of Kings is precisely the problem.

Medusa's certainly on board with camping capital; she's a total freak, one whose ghost of the counterfeit (and thunder-clapping pussy fart) all but begs, "What ails you?" Any Gothic creator loves investigating her own death as tied to societal issues, which she plays out through undead fictions tied loosely to taboo truths; i.e., a black rose to pick for Queen Maeb and croon through folklore and urban legend, rock 'n roll, the chronotope's restless geometries!

I'm one such detective, but I'm hardly the first or the best. Even so, it all becomes something to remember by passing it along through oral and written forms that speak to lost, incredible things—rape and revenge, reclamation and release—sure enough, having a spatial quality to them:

Tell me the legends of long ago  
 When the kings and queens would dance  
 In the realm of the Black Rose  
 Play me the melodies I want to know  
 So I can teach my children, oh (Thin Lizzy's "[Black Rose](#)," 1979).

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Of course, there are double standards that play out through intersecting axes of oppression; e.g., racism and transphobia in *Alien* being abjected onto an intersex rape demon by the white woman seeing genocide and chattel slavery through an "ancient alien" fetish (more on this when we look at such tokenization in "[Derelicts, Medusa and Giger's Xenomorph](#)"). Whatever the form, just remember our footnote from earlier about "preferential mistreatment"

capital extends the abuser's privileges (the coercion trifecta: gaslight, gatekeep, girl boss) to women and other marginalized groups provided *they* tokenize, hence betray their class, culture, and race interests in service to the elite; i.e., become cops [...]. Like anything, the monstrous-feminine is susceptible to betrayal and decay; i.e., whose tokenized "onion" historically-materially fosters marginalized in-fighting as a matter of "prison sex" *and* fortress mentality: tokenized groups from increasing privilege (but less than those above them) kissing up and punching down towards groups more marginalized than they are. The global consequence is assimilation—of women, people of color or queer persons, Indigenous peoples, etc, acting like white, cis-het men as a matter of tokenized representation.

which is a concept we'll unpack in Volume Three extensively when we look at current tokenization through TERFs and feminism-in-decay.

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A kind of murder ballad, then, the Gothic-Romance-as-space like Hallownest is such



flower—a whorish "Alraune" that, hardly as censored as O'Keefe, drinks vengefully the blood of slain virgins and the essence of lusty virginial men (remembering both on either side of rape).

(artist: [James Fitzpatrick](#))

As such, the Medusa once again sits between the "ancient" and the ordinary as trapped on and off the canvas, in between the walls, calling

from the heart of the castle's deepest, darkest prison cell. Darkness visible, she's Jennifer Kent's *Nightingale* as singing her suffering sweetly to those who know the signs, the code. Her expression is forbidden and commodified by colonizer forces, but there's always a wild poetic joy they cannot fully tame or seize for themselves: to see it again (to hear it again in music) makes my skin tingle oh-so-naughtily. Finding it gives me release, but can't undo what was done.

Liberation is always, to some degree, chained by ghosts of a settler-colonial past whose rememory aches and bristles with scarcely-contained rage: "I'm not English, I'm Ireland! [switching to Gaelic] To the devil's house with all English people, every mother's son of them! May the pox disfigure them! May the plague consume them! Long live Ireland!" ([source](#)). Something tells me that if we could translate the Radiance's screams, they'd sound fairly alike. Indeed, the weapon she visits upon the king is a plague.

As such, the Gothic—not just *Hollow Knight*—is a coping mechanism of martyred catharsis; i.e., through ludo-Gothic BDSM as a faux-medieval, concealed means of raising the dead of empire to let them speak, thus motivate a decaying hegemon to let go and change—to regenerate into something better than it previously was (treating the Radiance like a leper to lock up and abuse, mid-quarantine/segregation).

The larger mode uses stories like *Hollow Knight* to wrestle with unspeakable trauma in ways we can, to some extent, partially control and capture as psychosexually cathartic; i.e., the palliative Numinous expressed through Her Majesty's sorry doom in godly (Promethean) forms: the castle, the goddess, the land of the black rose as raped by the king and all the king's men ("Dayman, fighter of the night [wo]man!") running a train (of draconian medieval succession, from father to son) on her *corpse*, censoring the rape for profit's sake but proliferating it nonetheless through the space's endless tourneys. Capital is built on rape as a matter of profit told in monomythic language hunting nature down; to show the

rape by humanizing the whore (as *Hollow Knight* does) is to expose itself and give the game way in Promethean terms: the knight is hollow as a matter of power whose puppetry isn't limited to the king at all, but also the queen.

Furthermore, peace cannot be attained in the interim, because such hidden abuses routinely yield disastrous socio-material effects whose ontological senescence manifests in the world itself as falling apart: state shift, climate change, and class consciousness all going hand in hand after much frustration (e.g., Charlie Day's [glorious refrain](#), "Why don't I strap on my job helmet and squeeze down into a job cannon and fire off into Jobland where jobs grow on jobbies!") to kick the king squarely in the bollocks. BOLLOCKS DESTROYED.

The paradox *Hollow Knight* exhibits lies in how it depicts rape; i.e., generally one of monstrous-feminine testimony (itself rather ironic, given the etymology<sup>227</sup> of *that* word): showing the world one's rape in ways that cannot, like the space itself, be ignored. The Radiance's pussy isn't just a Chinese box pattern (aka the Russian doll, or concentric narrative); per Aguirre's "Geometries," which combines the Chinese box with the labyrinth and infernal concentric pattern to achieve an anisotropic effect (different effects in different directions), her fatal eye is a finger trap ("lips that grip") that bites down on the rapist to trap them (a bit like Mars and Venus Aphrodite in Vulcan's net), trapping the ordeal of rape for all to see: *vagina dentata*. It's a trap, one where the ghost of the Radiance—literally an undead Numinous spirit plaguing the land—tops from below. From Hell as a place to inhabit and experience inside the kingdom, she cleverly baits the rapist (the knight) to expose their hidden rapacious side; i.e., one being a byproduct, similar to Lewis' Matilda exposing Ambrosia for *his* Catholic passions: raping a corpse.

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<sup>227</sup> Testimony something medieval men would give while using their testicles as collateral, but dates back further to Rome and beyond; i.e., to what Dr. Dario Maestriperi calls a "testicle ritual":

In ancient Rome, two men taking an oath of allegiance held each other's testicles, and men held their own testicles as a sign of truthfulness while bearing witness in a public forum. The Romans found a word to describe this practice but didn't invent the practice itself. Other primates had already been doing this for millions of years. Two male baboons who cooperate with each other by forming aggressive alliances against other baboons frequently fondle each other's genitalia. This behavior has nothing to do with [sex](#) but it's a social ritual that primatologists call a "greeting."

The behavior of ancient Romans and male baboons can be explained by the Handicap Principle, an evolutionary theory according to which the most effective way to obtain reliable information about a partner's commitment in a relationship — whether a political alliance, a [romantic relationship](#), or a business partnership — is to impose a cost on the partner and assess the partner's willingness to pay it ([source](#): "'Testify' Comes From the Latin Word for Testicle," 2011).

Maestriperi further adds, "it's important to remember that cooperative relationships between unrelated individuals are intrinsically unstable: One business partner may cooperate one moment and cheat in another, and one romantic partner may promise eternal commitment one day and end the relationship the next. Economists call this 'the commitment problem'" (*ibid.*). Such instability is owed to Capitalism, whose murderous ups and downs portray quite vividly in operatic language like *Hollow Knight*'s Gothic courtship rituals a circular raping of the queen (whose proposed vanity is just another form of Original Sin: "She asked for it, the siren!").

In the Radiance's case, her appearance is the hypnotist's stellar pussy flaring up to paralyze the knight in his tracks, jumping from one shell to another. But even if the current knight wins and she seemed banished for good without bringing forth the apocalypse (the third ending), the Radiance has still acted out her own death—her own swansong hijacking the prison intercom, its guards, to make them her playthings and her mouthpieces.



(artist: [Heinrich Lossow](#))

From Chaucer's Alisoun ("Thus, swyved was this carpenteris wyf") to Ambrosio, to latter-day cops acting out courtly love as the knight in *Hollow Knight* does, classic villains not only appear righteous and good; they are outdone by their own lust as informed by carceral material conditions (a wife literally something to fuck under duress, but also take by force); rather than refrain from such theatrics, they become a useful way to express rape as going on right now. Per my PhD, Gothic maturity turns such things—normally a matter of spite—into a vulgar, transformative means of performance and play that interrogates power through trauma; i.e., as allowing one to have fun and expose abuse by acting such things out per calculated risk as built into the space and its motion (which is what ludo-Gothic BDSM aims to do). It denudes the king and his designs, disempowering them to give voice to the victim, empowered through her rape as "castrating" the patriarch and his bloodline; i.e., by matter of viewed scandal, per Black-Veil burlesque inside "the lovely room of death" (re: the center of the Radcliffean space generally being a site of explanation about rape)—a planned witness to a crime that, regardless of the lady's hand in things, is still a crime committed by the knight as normally receiving state protection<sup>228</sup>.

The catharsis to apocalyptic, come-and-see rape play like *Hollow Knight* roots in general, humorous, medieval-style exhibitionism and voyeurism the likes of

<sup>228</sup> The state historically decides what is legal or not, the powers that be making rebellion illegal as a matter of preserving the status quo; i.e., we will *always* be criminal to them, any act of resistance or exposure (muckraking and whistleblowing) seen as violence against the state, which the state will always meet with automatic police force and illusions, under Capitalist Realism. In short, genocide is legal as a matter of enforcement, rebellion is illegal no matter what. But the ability to create stories that speak to these things in ways the state can't—and furthermore, won't if they think it serves them—police through brute force, is where Gothic poetics truly shines. Skilled theatrics and architecture can speak to state abuse, displaced and disguised through cryptonymy to serve rebellion, thus reverse abjection and liberate anything criminal. Liberation, my book series argues, begins with iconoclastic art, recultivating the Superstructure and Reclaiming the Base through *proletarian* praxis' synthesis (thus catharsis).



Heinrich Lossow (above) or, later, Edward Hooper (whose own works inspired and speak to my consensual voyeurism, exhibit 39a1b). It becomes a codified, routine matter of brothel espionage and prostitute heroism—our resident whore baiting the creep, then outing him for the predator he is in service to the king ("The play's the thing!"). Like lightning in a bottle, this poetic effect is still one of passion; i.e., what the Irish call *a chuisle* ("the pulse of my heart")—something to tease like a clit, growing more sensitive between the world of the living and land of the dead ("undeath" being an orgasmic state of existence, of rapture) not exploiting rape but healing from it as a ghost of itself we summon to "ravish" us among the hallowed halls. The feelings intensify towards the vaginal center before the thrust, which mounts and explodes then like the castle itself, the hero and the whore dispersing and disappearing like a (wet) dream.



([source Tumblr post](#), *Samurai Trooper fanzine*: February 26th, 2021)

To it, playing with rape isn't rape, but speaks to unironic forms that, unto themselves, have cathartic potential we can dance with to outperform in subversive, asexual ways; i.e., that can be harnessed to take power back from bourgeois elements pimping Medusa tied to a cultural fascination with the imaginary past (castle or occupant, including warriors and princesses, but also Amazonian hybrids of these, left). Again, they only have as much power as we give them, and through rape play can take it back as a matter of

flowing such things back towards workers using Gothic space during ludo-Gothic BDSM. It's a dangerous game regardless, so we might as well use what we got to take something of ours back from these pigs: "Come feel my hammer, little man!" As Mavis taught me (and for whom this section is dedicated), she absorbs power from those who generally don't know the difference (men), waking up to describe what happened to Medusa classically in her sleep; i.e., when she was powerless and raped by the hero; e.g., like Theseus and the Minotaur (the former a cop to invade the home of the latter). Perseus hunted down the Medusa to "behead her"—to take her "maidenhead" and synonymize sex and force, but also replace consent with genuine harm. When camping these behaviors, there is always a vampiric exchange, which the space exemplifies in terrifying-yet-rapturous ways.

Except, in cases of genuine harm, it serves the whore to able to top from below to avoid or discourage harm and still take power back from one's would-be abusers and their monomythic weapons. "Disempowerment" through the vice character is the classic means of subverting police violence by GNC folk—through theatre as a shared space, one that speaks to real-life examples. Actual predators project their own behaviors onto their victims, who they use DARVO to turn other members of the same marginalized community *against* the predator's prey as a "threat" in order to prey on them; i.e., camouflage through aesthetics and argument, defined through dialectical-material engagement as a matter of canon vs camp, vice and virtue, behavior and cosmetics (through gender performance) going hand-and-hand with their biology, orientation, and politics, etc.

The Radiance's bristles with phallic implements—her crown, legs and spiky projections to stab the hero to death with. Except. greatest power is her banshee-like voice, but also her scent as a kind of fairy glamor/magical perfume—one that turns her captors into her willing slaves, reversing the flow of power inside the prison while still visually playing the quest out. In turn, her announcement of rape is a subversive act, one never entirely divorced from genuine abuse by virtue of the player returning the system to working order by seeming laying her low—an act he does by clapping her in chains at the center of the maze: the scapegoat for the king's crimes/madness already his prisoner.



(artist: [Willow Wormwood](#))

Power and resistance occupy the same space, one whose dominant and submissive roles tend to either outright reverse, or maintain their appear while topping or bottoming changing as a matter of subtext that plays out through the same performance and aesthetics (re: bottoming from the top or vice versa). Keeping with the usual ambiguities—whose speculative qualities of play work off said ambiguities to speak to real life as not being cut and dry—such playtime speaks to the fact that we, in fact, aren't knights and kings and queens and more than the Radiance is from planet Earth. And yet, we see her eagerly waiting at the door to greet her latest gentleman caller, not unlike a bored housewife playing the *Duke of Burgundy* (2014) out in real time—that naughty and eager desire to escape the prison-like qualities of middle-class existence, but also

genuine abuse tied to the seemingly perfect existence of white American women in suburbia. The Radiance is something of a bored aging housewife, then, eagerly awaiting her next chance to give it to the knight, but also have her castle-space essayed into and ravished by him (the demon lover's jizz running down her leg a lovely memory as fate comes knocking once more). She's a freak because she likes to play to recover from trauma that sadly is all too common to women/monstrous-feminine at large; i.e., making such escapes something of a liminal, prison-like opera where liberation is—sadly and joyously—something to play at in order to reify (the story of our gay lives).



(artist: [Shane Ballard](#))

Moreover, such calculated risk's historical cruising can reduce to safer thrill-seeking that, all the same tends to get the old blood (and other fluids) pumping—in part, because you're not always sure what's going to happen or what someone is saying (e.g., body language, gags, and being restricted [for the sake of argument] to only making cute animal sounds), but all the same have a pretty good idea when working with someone you trust; i.e., who isn't bad-faith, hence can actually follow commands (won't bully/rape you and then stupidly fail up) and play the part of the dom or the sub regardless of aesthetic; e.g., the dragon master of the dark mommy dom using you the way that you want to be used, "raped," what-have-you. That's what makes it silly and fun, but also cathartic regarding actual abuse per the pedagogy of the oppressed; i.e., speaking theatrically to repressed actions routinely committed against the usual criminalized parties (the monstrous-feminine as sex demons, foreigners, sodomites [vampires] and other such "degenerates") during state crisis advertising rape epidemics against marginalized peoples inside domestic war zones, aka prisons (cops and victims, witch hunts scapegoating nature for capital's regulation predation, but also its boom-and-bust design)!

The fact that it's a videogame aside, there's always a BDSM element of play to stories like *Hollow Knight*. Except terror is always part of the historical equation, the disguise-like context of said play—the psychosexual excitement of release and incarceration—offset by acquiring new playmates to bask in the dom's Numinous glow. She's definitely a strict dom, playing it straight and only surrendering in the game's final moments.

But in "dying" for all to see, the Radiance has her revenge/generally gains the upper hand over servants like the knight (similar to Portia's ring game); i.e., those who themselves have been historically conditioned by the prison to prey on

her to begin with. As a matter of exchange, they become her playthings, hypnotized in ways police agents often are, albeit in ways the Radiance uses to reverse the usual flow of violence and give Her Majesty a *modicum* of control: setting herself free *inside* the oubliette (a kind of prison that means "to forget") as infernal schoolhouse to unruly children. The signature of choice begins to suggest mutual consent in ways that, on their face, seem wholly nonconsensual. Indeed, rape is as much the emotional abuse of isolation waiting to be fucked as it is the penetration, itself. The Radiance is paradoxically free, then, while still in chains (at least for now)—liberated from the embarrassment of total silence and bondage abuse, learning to enjoy its subversive power as a profound means of *de facto* education/reclamation: topping her captors, dominatrix-style, or at least making them work for their reward, then turning the sweet taste of victory to ashes in their mouths. She's teaching them a lesson, one rooted in the humiliation of play where resolution is always found amid theatrical, but also dialectical-material tension.

As Jadis taught me, power becomes a vital means of play and performance while being imprisoned in some shape or form. Such hypnosis, then, has a canonical, settler-colonial function to it—a "prison sex" mentality the Radiance breaks by turning imprisonment back, boomerang-style, on her abusers, forcing them to remember the person they're guarding as having value. She does so by using the dogmatic, vampiric nature of the prison against its employees; i.e., using her terrifying voice to infectiously travel through the guards and architecture, draining them of their essence and short-circuiting their brains. It's a queer, iconoclastic metaphor of disease not unlike Foucault's panopticon, one she—a skilled and unscrupulous survivor locked in her cell—uses to her advantage to speak to past wrongs against nature (and herself as "of nature") through ludo-Gothic BDSM: a "rape" epidemic. Like any good example of the exercise, it's even set to music—a song and dance to play out for the umpteenth time (with Radcliffe's vaguely cursed spaces of terror often having hauntingly enchanting and spooky "mood music," setting the signature gloomy tone by playing atmospheric from



undiscovered locations; i.e., that, like the Pied Piper or sirens, lead you to your indeterminate but certain rape/doom; e.g., Azathoth's flutes from "Dreams in the Witch House" or the spooky guitar music from 1996's *Diablo 1* "Tristram theme," etc):

([source](#): *Materia Collective*)

In other words, such abuse is generally tokenized, the queen stuck in her closeted, isolating position because she was ostensibly betrayed; i.e., forgotten by her clan (the seer in the Burial Grounds,

above) and left to rot inside the mind of the people abusing her for the king: sending the hero to rape and destroy their matriarch as a matter of pro-state penance, unburdening themselves but also unable to live the guilt and fading to dust. Such preferential mistreatment translates to real life and the ways a witch hunt normally play out: turning society against those who aren't normally believed by *other* members of the prison population.

For example, JDPlaysMoth accused me of abuse based on my testimony of older transmisogyny committed *against* me ([source tweet](#), vanderWaardart: July 19th 2024), doing so after refusing to transvestigate my own partner because I didn't take Jade at their word that [Crow](#) was a Nazi "fake trans" preying on "real trans people":

Crow is racist, lied about being trans to me and you, is abusive, steals money, intentionally asks trans people they're acquainted with if they can write fiction of them detransitioned, and lies about being single and friendless to get new partners. They also aren't trans. They lie about being trans because they have a fetish for trans women. They also are a chronic narcissist who uses abuse to try and control people who want to help them ([source](#)).

and then adding, "If you want to know more, that's fine, but I'm out of the situation, and this is just information" before running a smear campaign on me because they were "just trying to help" and I refused to listen. They then deadnamed/misgendered Crow, saying that they didn't "want to transition, doesn't want surgery, and as another partner of hers has confirmed, she only does it because she thinks it'll make trans women like her more" (*ibid.*). Jade's actions—cloak-like though they are—still speak for themselves.

Furthermore, all of this is done by Jade while swanning and showing off their outward appearance to their fans ([source tweet](#): June 26th, 2024)—in short, while kissing up and punching down as a byproduct of their own lived abuse. Acknowledging that abuse *is* valid, but more important is understanding that Jade is presently an abuser weaponizing their own lived experiences against others. They're the impostor in love with themselves, a mirror that reflects their false nature onto their victims in order to makes others feel threatened; doing so is meant to alienate Jade's victims, presenting *them* as false, illegitimate outsiders Jade's flash mob can string up in association with their usual inequity under police rule: the scapegoat, witch whore inside more earthly and less fantastical prisons. Fantastical or not, there's always some orc to lynch, some whole to fill through revenge; re: the givers and receivers of state violence inside the state of exception, moving money through nature.

Free from scrutiny and indeed, venerated for having exposed a perceived menace through the usual bigotries leveled at the marginalized struggling for in-

group status, Jade is the fascist ringleader free to feed on her victims with impunity! She's a witch hunter played by the witch—a feeding frenzy conducted by those commonly dehumanized by systemic abuse seeking empowerment through said system; i.e., the policing of others through a matter of dogma, fear and revenge, abjecting members of the same community by triangulating against them for the state: robots policing robots, slaves policing slaves, those of nature policing those of nature as monstrous-feminine *with* monstrous-feminine. Orcs police orcs, rats police rats (or rodents in general, but I digress) as givers and receivers of state abuse (often fetishized, knife-dick-style, through badass-looking weapons, below—less Excalibur and more an evil, "Soulreaver"<sup>229</sup> version of the same device), dividing and conquering territorially (the essence of settler-colonialism) when capital dies and regenerates through said witch hunts as hazing rituals:



([source](#))

This includes fiction speaking to non-fiction as married to each other. As Silvia Federici writes in *Caliban and the Witch, Women, The Body and Primitive Accumulation* (2004):

Witch-hunting did not disappear from the repertoire of the bourgeoisie with the abolition of slavery. On the contrary, the global expansion of capitalism through colonization and Christianization ensured that this persecution would be planted in the body of colonized societies, and, in time, would be carried out by the subjugated communities in their own name and against their own members ([source](#)).

only to add elsewhere (cited in "Hot Allostatic Load"):

One lesson we can draw from the return of witch-hunting is that this form of persecution is no longer bound to a specific historic time. It has taken a life of its own, so that the same mechanisms can be applied to different societies whenever there are people in them that have to be ostracized and

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<sup>229</sup> Silicon Knight's 1996 allusion to Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" (1871):

One, two! One, two! And through and through  
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!  
He left it dead, and with its head  
He went galumphing back ([source](#)).

The hero is always a cop, the monster always its victim in service to profit. Sometimes, the state relies on victims to victimize themselves.

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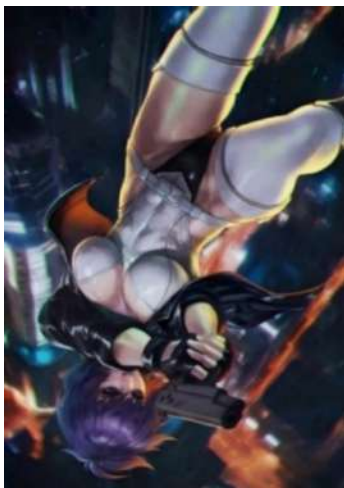
dehumanized. Witchcraft accusations, in fact, are the ultimate mechanism of alienation and estrangement as they turn the accused—still primarily women—into monstrous beings, dedicated to the destruction of their communities, therefore making them undeserving of any compassion and solidarity ([source](#)).

In response, the author of "Allostatic" responds

The term witch hunt is thrown around a lot, but let's look at what it really means. Witch hunts, as discussed by Silvia Federici, were responses to shifts in capital accumulation, as is slavery. To jury-rig the perpetually self-destructing machine of capitalism, huge amounts of violence are required to obtain captive labor (fem and non-white). The effect is to devalue our labor as much as possible, and to destroy the bonds between marginalized people (*ibid.*).

to argue for a cheapening of nature (re: Moore and Patel) through labor associated with it as recognized inside different marginalized populations conditioned to self-police, thus witch hunt in and out of fiction.

In response to both authors, I would include that capital tokenizes all labor (not just female and non-white) as sexualized, fetish, alien; i.e., something to gentrify and decay inside of itself, moving money through nature to harvest nature-as-monstrous-feminine (thus having masculine elements; e.g., phallic women). Feminism decays for these purposes, as do genderqueer movements, sex work, and Gothic poetics. Cops are also assassins, including vigilante ones recruited from the prison population expressed using such theatrics to embody by Man Box agents as "witch cops"; i.e., "prison sex" mentality selecting the whore and the cop to rape said whore who, regardless of sex or gender, is acting like the colonizer as something they have internalized and dressed up as. This includes whores acting as cops, "undercover" insofar as their tokenized police function is concealed by their



marginalized origins worn on the outside in visibly fantastical forms: a *robata* romance, reduced to the nuts and bolts of class and culture betrayal. Rape is rape, betrayal is betrayal regardless of why you do it (e.g., "I was tired," or "I was raped")!

(artist: [Monori Rogue](#))

All of this is Jade talking about themselves as projected onto their victims; people like Jade use DARVO, community isolation/obscurantism and police-grade hard-lining to bully their prey. In dialectical-material terms, it's

still Red Scare—pinkwashed by a predatory trans woman against another trans women (and trans man), pitting other GNC people (who often do sex work to survive) against Jade's targets. Jade's ugliness isn't their outward appearance, but the predatory context of their actions. "Genuine transness," then, becomes a matter of class action through culture as something to uphold, not betray through police violence (which is inherently fake). Such "boundaries for me, not for thee" predation is quite common in marginalized communities, essentially amounting to gang wars and tokenized policing instead of intersectional solidarity against all manners thereof.

Per the cryptonymy process, all of this self-reports and self-deceives, the complicit villain reduced to the useful idiot<sup>230</sup> that gives themselves away by acting against their own kind inside the police state. Because they cannot monopolize the mirror as a cryptonymic device, we can use it to out and expose them through their own behaviors speaking for themselves: such traitors are cheap, worthless vampires that drain others for the state. Their value comes entirely from raping others, making them unironic leeches—parasitic hollow knights seeking their sorry prey like Slave Knight Gael blindly chasing the Blood of the Dark Soul until the end of time, or the king's men walking into the Radiance's willing clutches (a pathetic, pernicious, predatory quality we'll explore even more in "[The World is a Vampire](#)" subchapter). This *is* a school for ants!

Ants are not known for their intelligence. Rather, such behaviors are taught through canon's normal coded instructions denoting value by going to the center of the maze (the nucleus, which isn't always the middle) to rape the witch, the dragon, the Medusa "just one more" time. Even if you make it to the Radiance's cell—her home, as she preys on the hunters normally trying to house and harm her for the king—she is simply waiting for the killer with a variety of extensive and fatal weapons.

The Radiance own clever defiance is informed by police action as something to twist, making the experience more agonizing (and fun) for all parties involved. By camping the hero, she shows that to survive rape, we must camp its execution as endemic to capital, liberation being the continuous and mounting result of that on a cultural level that reclaims the Base and recultivates the Superstructure: through data that—like the Radiance's cordyceps analog—freezes our abusers

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<sup>230</sup> Bear in mind, such idiotic utility *also* applies to Leftists ceding ground to fascists; i.e., problems of representation versus activism; e.g., Jessie Gender—a white, middle-class content creator concerned more with success and respecting everyone's viewpoints—actively defending the IDF from postcolonial critics of Zionism in the middle of a genocide (Bad Empanada Live's "Jessie Gender Should Delete Her Zionist Propaganda Video Immediately," 2024; [timestamp](#): 9:09). Calling for nuance is one thing. Calling for nuance against a position that is actually simple in terms of who has power and who doesn't (thus, who is the abuser in that situation) is intensely problematic—especially when the person doing it falls into the tokenized category of white moderate incentivized by profit. Betrayal is betrayal, Jessie, even if you're polite about it (or funny and tokenized; re: [Jordan Peele](#)). Hope, even radical hope, becomes another neoliberal weapon the elite use to have polite rationalizers like yourself tone-police activists challenging genocide in ways you won't.



usefully in place. "Stay! Good boy!" Or, "Rape me! Good boy!" It denotes an inability for a superior side to exist, the state and workers locked in perpetual dispute. We want to expand our advantage to shrink the state (and its agents) to irrelevancy. This happens through the paradox of "disempowerment" to speak powerfully to our imprisonment under capital.

Furthermore, these disparities and harm play out between fiction and non-fiction, satire and canon, speaking to the same things being colonized and liberated to a holistic, half-real degree. This pedagogy of the oppressed is as much our bodies and their labor power as it is the Aegis a theatrical trampoline/mirror saying like an all-projecting panopticon, "Look, don't touch!"

Either way, Medusa's restless corpse and labyrinthine frontier fucks back through the space—using tricks that short circuit the usual heroic bullshit ("And your tricks won't work at all!" as Lady Kayura [above] puts it) by reversing the usual flow of power that occurs in all caps: "FINISH HER!" Kiss, bite or slap, though, her vampire booty (and castle) is a vitalistic fetish whose charged surfaces and thresholds *take* power from the usual abusers in the usual genderqueer ways: rolling with the punches of courtly love as something to camp and subvert (the player telling the Radiance's story by reaching and raping her per the game's ludic contract: play *Metroidvania*, rape Medusa—again, it's par for the course)!



(artist: [TMFD](#))

Furthermore, sexual feelings don't always go away after rape, but they do often get swept up in rape fantasies whose paradoxical fun remains tied to real-life abuse and power structures (so many divorced dads to out as creeps); that's what Gothic fiction is!

Keeping with *that*, the player and the game's ludic contract/geometries of rape play in *Hollow Knight* are ones where the game fucks the player after a perceived momentum shift from the assigned dominant (the knight) by the Medusa; i.e., topping from below, out of Hell, to haunt the player after the fact: exposing themselves as a witch hunter by completing a long series of "hits," of which the Radiance is queen (a "power target").

Such reversals of mastery are hardly a secret contained inside the gameworld; castles like *Metroidvania* advertise their raping of the player as a matter of power exchange similar to Radcliffe's or Lewis' readers; re (from "Our Ludic Masters"):

A person motivated by sex is hardly in control. Not to mention, the sex historically offered by *Metroid* is fraught with peril. The entire drive is illustrated by gameplay [space] conducive to speedrunning [rape] at a basic

level. The same strategies employed by the best runners are executed by regular players. You play the game and begin to play it faster. In some sense, this "maze mastery" is involuntary. The player cannot help but play the game faster as they begin to re-remember the maze. The game exploits this, repeatedly leading the player towards self-destruction and domination.

These feelings are orgasmic, but differently than the *Doom* Slayer's own attempts at conquest. They're a Gothic orgasm, a kind of exquisite torture. I say "exquisite" because they occur within the realm of play. For *Metrodvania*, this *jouissance* is ludic ([source](#)).

But these, per the process of abjection, classically serve the state through the middle class doing the rape-in-question. There is always a psychosexual threat that motivates the player to be unironically violent with their avatar towards the monstrous-feminine (this includes Dracula in *Castlevania*, but more on that in the "Feeding" chapter); i.e., before the game eventually tops them (the warrior submitting *to* the game after a hard day's work): rape Medusa, get pegged (the paradox of ludo-Gothic BDSM again being that no one is actually being harmed, onscreen).

All of this is standard-issue *Amazonomachia*. Per the Gothic Romance, though, the house is the monstrous-feminine, and it always wins by reminding players that the king—and by extension the man of reason—is dead, built on stolen land. But they *think* they're not; they're undead in service to the state as always hungry for more rape. It's precisely this mechanism the Radiance uses to made herself and her abuse heard. She is the Numinous—something to acknowledge rape with (carceral violence through solidarity confinement, in her case) and play games that help us process our own abuses, in real life.

To it, the same invulnerable quality to BDSM, the inability to get raped, applies in *either* direction. The Radiance can't be killed any more than Medusa can, and in being raped she always takes the hero's power as a matter of performance (to have him, and him her, back and forth, per the usual *Beowulf*-style kayfabe and momentum changes and stances: cops and victims): his sword is useless to him no matter where he plunges it (the brain, belly or box), because he will always corrupt, the kingly godhead and colony will always die, and the Medusa—well and truly broken in (and not under the spell of their rapists' penises, like the owners of these penises are)—will always return, playfully reminding people camping her rape that she was actually raped by king and countrymen alike. *That* is her revenge!

"Some power!" Dr. Christine Neufeld once scoffed at the *topos* of the power of women. Except, *all* power is performative, Dr. Neufeld. Furthermore, history is canonically predicated on men raping women, workers and nature, the latter of which are monstrous-feminine by virtue of their expected role: taking it inside the prison. Indeed, the Radiance's pussy—her stolen land—is raw and inflamed with irritation, decay and fungus, the febrile yeast infection entering her insectoid

rapists' ant brains. Hysteria becomes something of a defense mechanism; i.e., akin to the xenomorph's acid for blood, but an STD to discourage the warrior's invading her realm. It's not unnatural, but nature defending itself from manmade incursions essentializing themselves as "natural" (re: Divine Right and Manifest Destiny), only to fall into disarray as their usual Cartesian progress is denuded and reversed to develop a Communist opposite invading the space (the fungus grows over time): "Let nature be your teacher!" [as Wordsworth puts it](#)<sup>231</sup>—your dominatrix discouraging canonical violence through bad (campy) echoes of itself!

The monomyth delivers rape disguised as "heroism," showing the player how to act (rape the whore); the Promethean, iconoclastic gag—its bread and butter—is subverting this exchange, taking the rapists power to unmask and dethrone the sovereign through the player aping them, and that's exactly what the Radiance and castle do. Having hijacked the prison, she lures the player to his doom at the middle of it, showing him the truth of the Pale King despite said king having given him, the knight, amnesia. Working through the gameworld, its unmappable qualities to trauma can never be fully explored, thus raped enough; something of the Radiance always stays out of reach, the Pale King always exposed as futile, impotent, and wretched. He has no clothes and thought he could conquer death, his primrose path the road to Hell paved with bad intent doing him in!

Instead, death becomes him as something to look on in horror (and perceptive zombie eyeballs), the Radiance jeering liminally behind her sanctuary's Aegis, her dominatrix' panopticon fucking back against weird canonical nerds. A fatal parting gift that comes back round and round, she rises from the grave—its ashes, dung and corpses—to become reborn in the death and decay as paradoxically what returns her to life; i.e., that she may haunt her abusers' value (the swordsmen's "swords") tied completely to raping her for the Man. You can't kill or fully imprison Medusa, and the state will die trying (unable to regenerate in the

face of something more flexible and prone to adapt—the king's a lightweight, in other words)!

(photographer: [Dennis Lowe](#))



To it, Medusa can take all comers, fucking back hard against any who take a swing but especially Cartesian men of reason (and their theatrical disguises)! Such bullies are weak cowards, accustomed to state

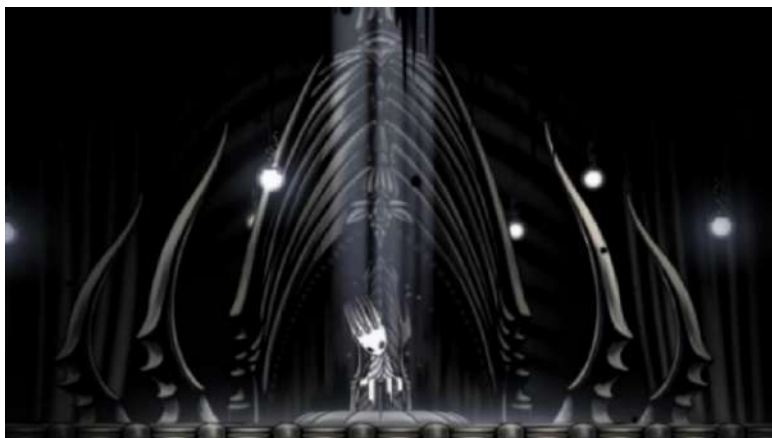
protection, whereas Medusa has built herself up through adversity. She is strong

<sup>231</sup> From "The Tables Turned" (1798).

and her bullies are not, which means they will only fear her more when her reunion with them—rising up from the depths like a ghost ship, or a hellish castle descending astro-noetically from the stars—suddenly threatens to expose their shameful and pathetic actions during the usual heroic tests, the bloodsport of a given witch hunt suddenly achieving proletarian results; re: like Macbeth—slave to the same Cycle of Kings—seeing the murdered Banquo while awake, to Ashley Williams' being exposed as a stupid, egotistical, and enabled charlatan (re: Persephone van der Waard's "[Valorizing the Idiot Hero](#)," 2020), to Castle Otranto's mighty helmet crushing Manfred's son to expose the entire Capitalocene. Such things are generally fabricated (above) to counteract state versions. Dragon or witch, fascist or Communist—all paradoxically occupy the same messy venue, the same shadow zone to sing our little hearts out. Power is always a performance.

Similar to Peter Weyland or Athetos, everything about the Pale King's performance is deceitful and penetrative; e.g., the chair and crown of swords (next page), the lord's many needles stabbing the world around it for a cure to death as simply being the cold hard truth: "A king has his reign and then he dies" (death being the Leveler of so-called great men of history—a theme we'll look at next with *Myth: the Fallen Lords*).

Like all men of reason tied to cartesian thought, he becomes the ghost of rape seeking its revenge against nature having humbled him and his phallic, monumental posturing; and as we've hopefully established by now, revenge during the monomyth is always futile: Medusa's power (sunshine or darkness, sword or spike) is bigger than any king's, haunting the bad timeline to threaten new resurrection and growth towards Gothic Communism—all while our man of reason dies alone in his tomb-like throne room, his prison cell. This happens inside capital, regardless; the difference is dialectical-material context.



Sound familiar? The Radiance and Rusalki have that in common, too! They're king-slayers, the thorny cunt that—once thrust into by the king's lance—takes the lord's power and kills his men like sacrifices that she exposes; i.e., not as philanthropists at all, but Charlie Day's "full-on rapists." Hoisted up on his

own petard, the *king* is the sacrifice, capital reporting on itself as aided by the Radiance being raped as loudly as possible; i.e., our girl to get "gets got," and she just *won't stop cumming* (a true exhibitionist, walking the game's tightrope just as the player does)! Regardless of exact intent, her rape exposes her rapist through

emergent, psychosexual forms of play between hero and whore, hunter and witch; i.e., involving canonical rape (the monomyth) as something to camp, mid-torture: exquisite, half-veiled threats of calculated risk striking the king stone dead (the bully afraid of his own shadow, dying of fright). Instead of celebrating the whore as victim and nothing else, then, the Radiance beats him at his own game: "The king is dead; long live the king!" (or as David the android would say in *Prometheus*, "Mortal after all!"). Speaking the king's language for workers, she invites the player to celebrate his demise, taking the whore's side to spurn the tyrant's shriveled corpse. Get that ass beat, old man!

This matters insofar as Capitalist Realism will incur the end of the world (the wrath of the gods) rather than imagine anything beyond Capitalism; re: the myopic, entitled delusion of a Quixotic idiot trapped in his dead dream of greatness. In turn, the banality of such evil's looping threnodies is that those who know and have only care about one thing: holding onto power for as long as possible. Preventing state shift (cataclysm) was entirely possible in the king's world, or Sudra, if only they would let go and spread power more evenly around. But they—like their earthly counterparts—would rather gas entire nations and send the ants marching off to their deaths if it meant they could only enjoy their usual glass of blood one more time. They're not just complete and utter ghouls, but deeply cynical tyrants in suits who cannot make or enjoy anything except rape. They are the enemy of all things, both workers and nature; there's not enough time in the world to express just how much they (and the state) suck (and how much fucking time they cry about it to the world, as Victor once did; i.e., DARVO and self-centeredness; e.g., [Elon Musk insisting he is the victim, losing an heir instead of gaining a daughter](#)<sup>232</sup>).

However imaginary such monsters and castles are, then, the DARVO-grade, victim-blaming language used to describe them (and the rape it causes) is very real. As a matter of returning to these embarrassing defeats, the hero travels deep inside worlds like Hallownest, confronting uncomfortable truths about the Cartesian rulers they serve; i.e., per monomythic exchanges baked into or otherwise tied to capital as having been displaced to make-belief spheres: there are no kings left, only bones that hunger for revenge, for closure, for awakening. The man of reason is a zombie, as is his good little soldier raping Medusa for him (the routine sacrifice made to keep Medusa in check, which doesn't work). To bad he didn't know she's a necromancer camping the castle to lure the hero: "Come to mommy!"

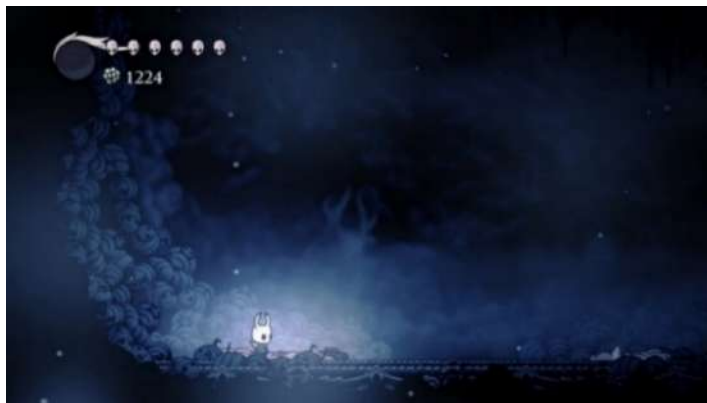
This rebellious potential of the infernal concentric pattern is one that that we, as Gothic Communists, should welcome and capitalize on; i.e., when developing Capitalism away from patrilineal descent towards Communism as a monstrous-feminine dark womb, but it starts in the self-dug pit of kings and their used-up

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<sup>232</sup> The Humanist Report's "Elon Musk Tells Jordan Peterson His Transgender Daughter is 'Dead' to Him" (2024).

defenders: the mind space of the dead monarch (Zeus as braindead, creating things that rape nature's "womb" as part of the world he tries and gloriously fails to dominate). The usual displaced intimations of capitalist instability (the process of abjection) becoming a death omen for Gothic Communists to prevent, not bury and escape whenever capital rears its ugly head! They try to invoke Cartesian dualism; we drop a piano on their heads.

In short, all's fair in love and class war. During it, we have to befriend the ghost of the counterfeit, talk to it and wake up (class and culture consciousness, emotional/Gothic intelligence), which means facing rape as a matter of profit recycling *blinding* apocalypses/rapes. If the legions of unburied death inside that wormy pit are any indication, we cannot afford to be blind:



*(exhibit 40i: Intimations of genocide are commonplace before the final tragedy—e.g., the Soul Master's charnel house, a secret resting place of his ghoulish experiments. To this the Abyss is a literal level in-game, commenting on mise-en-abyme as literal within ludo-Gothic, ergodic spaces: a "desert of the real,"*

*abyss-like maze whose chronotope is chock-full of cryptonymic wreckage. Desiring to separate the spirit from the body as a weapon against hysteria, the Soul Master exemplifies Cartesian folly in the face of mature challenging male imperiums. More broadly the closed space is generally a site of trauma for the heroine looking at something nigh inexpressible: less a thing fully uncovered and more the protagonist being sent to a buried location where the unspeakable trauma can be found as too much to process [the protagonist being a genderless, monstrous-feminine variant of the Gothic hero/heroine in one uncanny ghost].*

*Unlike the rooms and tunnels, the presence of living death within them cannot be recorded on the knight's trusty map; in other words, it cannot be openly acknowledged, let alone quantified by the cartographer as a cop, but is felt everywhere as something the dead walk you through in a liminal, architectural sense—both in the City of Tears, but also the entirety of Hallownest and in the parallel, concentric spaces of the ghosts and their sleeping minds [re: Aguirre's "Geometries of Terror"]. Dreaming of trauma, these restless spirits are tied to the savaged land, both invaded by an ultimate killer [the player] who "avenges" them after absorbing their power in duels from beyond the grave. Taking their power for itself, the Pale King's weapon uses them to root the Gorgon out, pinning all of the Kingdom's federalist desolation [from the Soul Master and others] onto the Radiance as an ancient, monstrous-feminine scapegoat: Original Sin.)*

Despite being presented as "female," this irrational fear of looking at repressed trauma—and the coercive, duplicitous methods of engaging with it, in the blood-soaked, circular ruins—is actually heteronormative and patriarchal. Empire is inherently Cartesian, thus genocidal; forever haunted by the rapacious ghosts of kings and ancient Gorgons, but also their affiliate zombie hordes, its legions of dark, voiceless undead marking the general location, if not the exact manner in which these bodies were exploited by empire in the name of "progress" (following the leader). Rediscovery leads to further stabs at repression, but also redistribution through the paradox of terror, violence and anything else to serve workers thwarting state monopolies: the Aegis goes both ways, and fucks back through all the usual devices' anisotropic (reversible) dualities, hyphenations, paradoxes, *et al.*

Let's wrap everything up (four pages) before exiting the symposium and moving onto "Monomyth," part two.

In *The Hobbit*, Bilbo is repeatedly concerned with the quest as a kind of suicide mission: will he make it back alive? The same applies to rape survivors, who generally aren't the same when they "come back" from rape encounters; i.e., a part of them simply doesn't, dying back at the crime scheme. But something new emerges, regardless, something strong in spite of that; e.g., the Radiance's phallic elements thrusting and stabbing at the hero.

Liberation and exploitation, then, share the same spaces, the same terrifying bodies as castle-like and vice versa; re (from "[the Origins of Ludo-Gothic BDSM as a Matter of Rememory](#)"):

big power and trauma often lurk on the surface of gentler-looking (and smaller) bodies, their double operations showing and revealing different things useful to state or proletarian agency through Gothic reenactments of paradise lost; i.e., of shattered innocence, of childhood devastation confusing pleasure and harm through conflation of psychosexual pleasure-and-pain responses inviting the audience to consider an uneven pedagogy of the oppressed: look on those of us affected by rape and see how we cope with the trauma it forces us to live with.

Such rape-play, laugh-at-the-gods showmanship doesn't just include the Radiance contained inside the hollow knight inside the castle grounds, as we have shown, but *any* monstrous-feminine, be they big and small, tall and short-stacked, young and old, *kawaii* and *kowai*, goblin and witch alike (or combinations; i.e., kids playing with dolls to achieve deeds worthy of remembrance; e.g., [Hayao rocking Hugo at Evo 2024](#)). All are criminals seeking liberation through what normally is policed: forbidden fruit to reclaim and deny our rapists using ludo-Gothic BDSM inside the state of exception and its persecution mania's places and people, maps and monsters, etc.

We're vampires, too, but we move power *towards* ourselves using what we got (re: Matteson): reversing abjection through our darkness visible; i.e., our Satanic camping not just of paradise (the castle or castle grounds), but its prophesied restoration through heroic violence cleverly upended during Promethean counterterrorist schemes topping from below.

Adversity isn't just baked into capital, but class and culture war's revenge against bourgeois forces' notion of destiny through moral actions (witch hunts) and territories (maps, mazes). For the elite, then, the end of the world is when workers refuse to police themselves, but rather humanize each other using the same monstrous language's stigmatic elements to organize labor action; e.g., orcs and goblins (medieval anti-Semitic symbols of greed similar to dwarves, but also eating children and raping women), dragons (medieval symbols of cruelty and power), witches (medieval symbols of children eaters), and other oppressed things clapping back, guerrilla-style, against state forces and their codified bigotries; i.e., with the very things the state cannot control, repress and ultimately abject: some combination of their monstrous-feminine bodies, their labor and genders, their



sexualities' sultry and inventive Gothic poetics, body language, and colorful swearwords, etc.

In rebel hands, these articles of desire, vice, struggle and sin collectively and joyously voice rebellion as a stubborn, intoxicatingly transgressive means of rocking out against false protectors: underdog agents of fortune—like immovable objects meeting an unstoppable force—reconciling fate by refusing to be dutiful pets while simultaneously rubbing their assigned owners' noses in it. "Hell's bells, Satan's callin' for you!"

(artist: [Bottled Line Art](#))

So while it's true that (re: our volume thesis)

Capitalism achieves profit by moving money through nature; [and that] profit is built on trauma and division, wherein anything that serves profit gentrifies and decays, over and over while preying on [nature, the fact remains that trauma] cultivates strange appetites, which vary from group to group per the usual privileges and oppression as intersecting differently per case; i.e., psychosexual trauma (the regulation of state sex, terror and force) and feeding in decay as a matter of complicated (anisotropic) exchange unto itself, but also shapeshifting and knowledge exchange *vis-à-vis* nature as monstrous-feminine: something to destroy by the state or defend from it



(and its trifactas, monopolies, etc) using the same threatening aesthetics of power and death, decay and rape.

we must remember that (re: our Metroidvania symposium theses)

the Gothic is predicated on fakery through the process of abjection attacking nature *vis-à-vis* the ghost of the counterfeit; i.e., nature as alien/monstrous-feminine, colonized by the sovereign West through Cartesian thought. Historical materialism proliferates decay and deception through open secrets (casualties of empire, but also empire in decay expressed in medieval language; e.g., castles) that no one side can monopolize, but for which terror and obfuscation allow either side to partially conceal themselves with, using the cryptonymy process to operate in capital's wake: to either defend the status quo while wearing its victims and symbols of oppression, or to undermine it through the same basic means.

and that's

what the Promethean Quest effectively encapsulates and discourages, Medusa fucking back to reverse the flow of power and information the monomyth normally supplies in outright parental language, but also monomythic media exposed to middle-class children at a young age; i.e., standing in for absentee parents (videogames, for our purposes): the givers of Cartesian dogma, but also rebellious sentiment through Promethean allegory (the appearance of the black castle/fallen *manmade* paradise to begin with).

There is no monopoly on any of this, no set future relayed in the imaginary language of the past where Hell comes home. Capital rapes us, but we can always fuck back to reverse abjection; i.e., to take anything they have back from them through the same poetic allegories, illusory dialogs and medieval, at-times-crude (and fun) puns: where power is, and where trauma is interrogated through said power as exquisite "torture."

As the Radiance shows, this happens through performance and play occurring for one side or the other in perpetual conflict—our existence, happiness and survival is a life-after-death threat display they will always fear/try to control through futile revenge and empty promises of power (the myth of the middle class, avenging their losses for the state by policing us, only to have their home collapse).

For us, then, "sleeping beauties" are when the witch wakes up to collectively fight class war through culture and race united with it; i.e., to raise a cumulative emotional/Gothic intelligence and awareness for all of these things during intersectional solidarity liberating sex workers through iconoclastic art—our castles

in the flesh, but also our praxial necklaces and oppositional synthesis made by connecting the dots differently per outing (as this symposium has done, referencing my older works in ways that you can try yourselves). *Sex Positivity* is holistic, in that respect, summoning sluts to scare our foes; the enemy to Gothic Communism, workers and nature is the state and its police agents (token or otherwise) bastardizing our stolen power to police us with, keeping us oppressed and downtrodden, *their* pet-like sluts to shame and chattelize, raped *without* irony.

Ending on a curtain call to the symposium, let me conclude with an appropriate visual: the curtain, itself, as black. As such, either direction of power and knowledge as outlined above ties to the cryptonymy process (revolutionary or complicit) through a classic Gothic device: Radcliffe's **Black Veil**, whose pulling back showcases the Medusa torturing herself (as the Radiance does, calling the hero to her) to achieve rapture of a palliative, generative sort. Such a charm school of Gothic hard knocks has elements of formal and informal training. Returning to *Forbidden Planet* from the start of the symposium, that film showcased a curious desire to look at the awesome mystery that was teased throughout the film, hidden behind a Black Veil that all but begs to be pulled aside: Medusa's panties hiding her fearsome death cunt, her peach of torment hungering for fresh delicious peril.

For the Radiance, her lesson seems to say to us, "While I love you, [we] can never be free." But there's no place like home when restored to appreciate her survival and love for healthy psychosexual power exchange outing the original space and population as punitive, hypocritical, and undeserving (the vampire body and castle as having a shared vitalistic function). You don't kill capital with it; you transform your enemy/cage into something that can't rape you anymore—that *won't* rape you no matter how compromising your position: mutual consent (established at a second-nature, societal level) makes *that* all but impossible! All that remains is the fantasy of "torture," the ghost of agony (and nature) set free upon/with the thrusting Aegis! The moon is full, the prisoners breaking out to have

their sweet revenge by teaching other workers, mid-exchange and mid-exhibitionism (of power and knowledge) to obey the hellish, queenly dominatrix topping from below. "Stare and tremble!" at all that speculative richness living deliciously!



(artist: [Sephy Pink](#))

Tying that to *Metroidvania* and similar monstrous-feminine rape spaces, if Gothic canon monopolizes the Veil as an unironic threat ("Look and die!") within formerly glorious spaces, then Gothic *Communism's* success lies in making Capitalism—literally the stuff of Gothic villains and their castles—inexorably fail to everyone's benefit; i.e., to ironically subvert its canonical tools, thereby transforming the state (and the middle class) into something that *doesn't* exploit workers, but still improves their material conditions through the Superstructure as modified: a world of infinite possibility *except* for the usual deceptions meant to conceal genocide behind monomythic tomb raiding—loot 'n shoot, run 'n gun, etc.

All heroes are monsters. Rather than flee/get away from such monsters per escapism, heteronormative fantasies that expose the cannibalistic nature of Capitalism (and its assorted cartographic refrains [either Tolkien or Cameron's] populated with imaginary bugbears, below), we must play with power-as-marketed to subvert its settler-colonial (thus exploitative) character in Gothic ways; i.e., to *humanize* the ghost of the counterfeit by navigating the space of terror anisotropically—saying to our actual rapists (not the imaginary non-white ones,

above), "We wouldn't fuck you with a ten-foot pole!" ("once you go black..."):

(artist: [Devilhs](#))



A large part in doing so is challenging the canonical, heteronormative past as something to dogmatically fall in love with (re: Dimitrescu, but really any Medusa as walking the tight rope; e.g., Lara Croft as yet-another-Amazon "white Indian" with a classist character we can camp and have fun with<sup>233</sup>); i.e., the ghost of the counterfeit as a

kind of false, fatal memory that survives in the material world under Capitalist

<sup>233</sup> Though problematic, heroes like Lara Croft or Samus Aran are useful vehicles when interrogating power and rape as things to play with; i.e., they store value and trauma as a matter of Amazon-style bread-and-circus (the state raping workers and nature through its own tokenized labor force—TERFs), but also social-sexual elements of human beauty and attractiveness that butt up against rape tied to profit: as something to investigate and explore through an avatar in neoliberal forms (videogames). Per Sarkeesian, we can walk in the shoes of such a raider trapped inside such mazes and labyrinths of abject circumstance without endorsing her settler-colonial character (the white woman fending off domestic rape of an abjected sort)! Videogames make for an excellent form of ludo-Gothic BDSM, insofar as you *can't* get raped during them; re: the castle is the perfect dom, but also the perfect cryptonym that we can reclaim from the state and its usual profiteers (from Radcliffe onwards).

Realism (whose solution is always rape, because it can't imagine anything better). This can merely be the echoes of a being or person that someone else has created years later—a narrative of a narrative of a narrative.

It's certainly true that sex-positive art can remove the villain entirely in order to focus on sexual agency as something to appreciate during hauntological reinvention (as I have done with Ozymandias, exhibit 40a). However, the trope of the ignominious death under Numinous power remains a common teaching device inside the Gothic bag of tricks—not just the man-of-reason or "noble" king as we have just explored, but also the crime lord driven mad by their own abuse of systemic power until they go insane: to awaken from a sleep of death, returning home to destroy empire over and over again. We spit on their grave, basking in the sub drop of the palliative Numinous' dream mushrooms, her pussy sunbeams.

Decay, of course, becomes something to leave behind and study. Better worlds are built on worse ones, deconstructing the former's illusions anchoring us in place. Like Sudra or Hallownest, then, our funerary consignment is always part of a larger kingly crime site we can reclaim, camp and send back out against capital, leaving such tyrannies behind while decolonizing their homes. That's what this subchapter is: my life's work squeezed into a little over a hundred pages (technically 146, but who's counting). It's been real, but "so long, gay Bowser!"



There's always a bourgeois double to the kinds of titanic rape iconoclasts revel in, when recording their own doom; i.e., actual rape always lies adjacent to psychosexual healing that, in the wrong hands, can lead to genuine exploitation. As curiously gigantic and rotting beings (re: *Frankenstein*), such

tyrants revive in future stories begot from older castle commenting on a larger historical-material loop: intimating the Great Destroyer during the Imperial Boomerang's homeward voyage (who always comes home, no matter how often you pass the buck). There's a demonic, composite quality to tyrants we'll return to in the Demon Module, when we look at Shelley's novel; in part two of "The Monomyth," though, we'll specifically examine these revivals *out-of-doors* (versus closed space) through crime lords and Zombie Caesar!

## The Monomyth, part two: Beyond Castles; or, Criminals and Conquerors

"Et tu, Brutae?" ([source](#)).

—Julius Caesar to Brutus, *Julius Caesar* (c. 1601).



Continuing with the larger healing process (re: developing Gothic Communism) as viewed through perceptive zombie eyeballs, we're now going to consider the fall of various *heroes* orating dogmatic sex, terror and force as

undead. To that, until Capitalism evolves into something that *doesn't* decay by design—and furthermore can hug Mother Nature instead of Capitalism and its Cartesian enforcers—a given cycle of decay is forever occupied by some dead-giveaway variant of the zombie tyrant preying on others; i.e., while returning from Hell to rape empire as a historical-material matter of unfinished business, of undead revenge inside a widening state of exception (not liberation): "A king has his reign and then he dies" is followed by "Behold, a pale horse!" To conquer death, they become it, then pursue a world already mapped from conquest they conquer *again* from the outside in (the foreign plot being a myth, of course—hence the name of the game we'll look at with *Myth: the Fallen Lords*): Capitalism in decay.

"The Monomyth," part two shall aim to examine that decay differently that we already have. So far we've already examined futile revenge per the heroic quest, followed by the man of reason through the monomyth, as well as tyrannical indoor spaces (castles) that serve a modern Promethean function (reversing power towards nature): Metroidvania closed space per the Archaic Mother. And while the Gothic castle *is* a formidable means of defense and assault, as well as cataloging older histories through motion, they're far from the only ones.

For the rest of the "Monomyth" subchapter, then, we'll consider several older (and less scientific) variants that emerge inside the circular ruin as less castle-like and more open; e.g., cities and battlefields (versus combat inside strictly closed spaces); i.e., Cartesian hubris is a bubble that, when the Imperial Boomerang comes back around to burst it in other forms of architecture, withers and exposes the illusory homestead as: currently (and always) in ruin, but also run by zombie versions of manly paragons having their revenge on Rome as having not only

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forgotten them, but abandoned them after a great sacrifice in the name of empire (Caesar's ghost haunting Brutus).

The two reprobates we'll consider are the crime lord and Zombie Caesar (and Caesar's armies); i.e., as beings to paralyze by showing *them* the truth of *their* own blindness with our perceptive zombie eyeballs. In other words, when the Man comes around, don't follow him; show him your Aegis!

We'll examine one of each, starting with

- **"'Ruling the Slum'; or, Crime Lords, Police Tokenism and Sell-Outs (feat. *The Crow* and Steam Powered Giraffe)'"**: Explores crime lords, in *The Crow*, as setting up the basic premise; i.e., of paralyzing the monomyth zombie tyrant as something to perform—by looking into the film, but also similar kinds of "punk" performances (e.g., cyber, steam, etc) that historically incur sell-out tokenism and police violence on and offstage, our example being Steam Powered Giraffe.
- **"'A Lesson in Humility'; or, Gay Zombie Caesar (and His Token Servants) When the Boomerang Comes Back Around (feat. *Myth: the Fallen Lords*)'"**: Explores queer aspects to the undead warlord/Zombie Caesar in *Myth: the Fallen Lords* (and his token, anti-Semitic servant, in *Myth II: Soulblighter*); i.e., by diving into the game's DARVO-style, empire apologia, effectively describing how empires-in-decay endlessly recolonize themselves in between monomyth fiction and non-fiction—not just with the raw mechanics of colonialism (chiefly armed conflict) stuck in a self-destructive loop, but spearheaded by past historical figures who, as current genocides committed by the good guys are abjected, return as fascist bogeymen to colonize empire from the outside in.



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**"Ruling the Slum"; or, Crime Lords, Police Tokenism and Sell-Outs (feat. *The Crow* and Steam Powered Giraffe)**

"I did not hit her! It's not true! It's bullshit! I did not hit her! I did not! Oh, hi, Mark!" ([source](#)).

—Tommy, *The Room* (2004)

*A legal notice about the historical, factual elements of this piece; i.e., those featuring both Steam Powered Giraffe and their own involvement in alleged pedophile Michael Reed: This piece falls under Fair Use according to statements of criticism, education and critique regarding literary material and matters of record about survived abuse; i.e., public statements the band has made about Michael, including claims of privately owned evidence to his indefensible actions—e.g., "The evidence presented to us in private is not something the band can turn a blind eye to. The band does not condone his actions" ([source](#))—and testimony from anonymous sources involved with the abuse itself. None of these claims have been retracted, and you can find them easily online yourselves from the source links I provide.*

*To it, the point of this piece is not to say anything that is not already a matter of public record, nor it is to harm any of the parties involved purely for its own sake; it is to educate people about past historical events, prevent further abuse in the future, and educate my readers about the harms of Capitalism through Steam Powered Giraffe as a salient real-world example that ties into *The Crow* and my literary analysis of its own Gothic themes (rape, exploitation, murder, etc). This piece is not libel, meaning its statements have been written as true to the extent that I understand and have made them; it is neither unfounded, negligent in terms of research or information available, nor written in bad faith for the purposes of defamation, but rather serves pointedly and deliberately as literary criticism and activism made to raise awareness about sexual health and abuse in and out of fandom communities. —Perse*

This section won't just look at *The Crow*, but the relations of power orbiting about such characters (and their performances); i.e., as things that go beyond the larger themes expressed, in-text, bleeding into real life through the same kinds of costumes and architecture as half-real; e.g., the cyberpunk and steampunk decayed to become "the future of one moment that is now our own past" ([source](#): "Progress versus Utopia; Or, Can We Imagine the Future?" 1982). To the latter, we'll likewise look at sell-outs/tokenism here in regards to investigating conventions, theatre and fandoms to get to the bottom of sexual abuse as a matter of class character and activism stymied by profit: the case of Steam Powered Giraffe and Michael Reed. All of this occupies a shared performative space, one that connects between me, the band/Reed, and *The Crow* (exhibit 40k2).



*(exhibit 40j2a: "He has power, but it is power you can take from him." / "I like him, already!" Tokenism and police violence marry to rock 'n roll counterculture, in The Crow. We'll explore these recuperated [controlled opposition] elements not just with the film, itself, but the kinds of theatre it uses—namely Gothic poetics and music—to speak subversively about the regular abuse that workers [sex or otherwise] experience onstage and off.)*

We'll get to that. Keeping with zombie tyrants and the monomyth, our example for the crime lord is Top Dollar from *The Crow*, a man who—living in his ivory tower and passing down orders to his henchmen—burns Detroit to ashes year-after-year (the city seemingly never great, having been like all Gothic castles in decay "for too long" to remember such halcyon times). Doing so for his own sinister joy (the canceled future and death of the nuclear family unit), Top Dollar is very clear about this—making a speech about it, in fact: "The idea has become the

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institution; time to move on. [...] I want you to light a fire so goddamn big the gods will notice us again, that's what I'm sayin'! I want you boys to look me in the eyes one more time and say, 'ARE WE HAVING FUN OR WHAT?'" He's a gangster in a suit, lavishly adorned in the Gothic style of the day to entertain his guests going about their seedy business:



*(exhibit 40j2b: In part, Top Dollar's hideout stands for a demonic version of Trump Tower [which, itself, is simply a more boastful version of Capitalism in moderation—a vanity project advertising the owner]: the center of a dilapidated city bled dry. Detroit's territories are divided up and policed, then fought over to coax money, drugs and weapons; i.e., towards the nucleus and through the giant structure's vampiric throat, up and up to Top Dollar. It's also a front, disguised as a club, whose musicians sport the countercultural façade of a latter-day speakeasy—the prohibited Satanic imagery and BDSM gear of a band playing with caged impunity on a stage ringed with security between them and the paying mob.*

*And directly upstairs, we're shown the sprawling lifeblood of the city—converted into the usual merchandise and arranged along the same giant table like food. At the head of the table is a phone and Faustian business deals; i.e., the city's central nervous system wired between its assigned underworld boss and his obvious-if-implied connections to City Hall and the police. The division between cops and robbers is a*

*conservative myth, glorified by the movie's nostalgic consumerism towards outlaw culture/music; i.e., as a school of disguise concealing the fact that all illustrate and serve capital until our titular vigilante—the movie's outlaw folk hero, killer clown, Satanic musician—paralyzes the whole operation: by cutting the snake to ribbons with Top Dollar's own supply [when the cops arrive, they threaten him in force: "That's all she wrote! Move and we shoot!" Profit defends profit].)*

In working for the state by climbing to the top of the trash heap, poor Top Dollar feels left behind. Marshalling the troops for another annual crusade ("The whole sky outta be red!"), he becomes caught up in his own DARVO-style mania and ability to outmaneuver his enemies, which eventually comes back to haunt him; i.e., destroying him through his own *inability* to confront and face the pain he's caused: Eric.



*(exhibit 40j2: To escape his pain, Eric struggles to return to the grave, only to be forced repeatedly back into the living world. At first eager for revenge, the act drains and tires him, making the climb towards Top Dollar more taxing and reluctant [facing predation a form of revictimization, one where Eric's humanity makes him unable to fully handle Top Dollar's apex-predator status]. The laying to rest of the wronged victim is a common Gothic trope, one predicated on the uncovering of systemic violence [usually aimed at women, in the classic novels]: criminogenic conditions, caused partly by Top Dollar [which is as far as the film*

*goes with its critique of such things; i.e., the cops and he aren't given an explicit connection—though they arrive rather fast when Top Dollar is under attack].)*

From a dialectical-material standpoint, Top Dollar is a Gothic villain and Gothic villains represent capitalists or aspiring capitalists who are often blind to the true harm they cause others (and themselves) through the state; i.e., they, like the state, are functionally undead. The turning of displaced trauma back onto abusers, then, is incredibly traumatizing to them; i.e., reverse abjecting their own monstrous state of existence back at them, usually through sight.

For sex-positive workers, the black mirror is incredibly useful at transmitting messages that aren't deadly for themselves, but turn their would-be killers to stone; i.e., "blinding" them with a lethal sense of iconoclastic shame they cannot recover from (or otherwise causing them to "glitch out" when seeing something that gives away their true intentions; e.g., cryptofascists). Once these villains' mortality is exposed, a wider healing process can begin for the entire community affected by the villain's widespread abuse through capital. Whether this abuse

comes from fascists or neoliberals using capital, such mortality is often presented quite literally in Gothic morality arguments.

To that, *The Crow* presents its hero, Eric Draven, as a) an undead vigilante "painted up like a dead whore" who is hell-bent on avenging his fallen bride, and b) the hero who restores the devastated land around him by reversing the monomyth; i.e., coming out of Hell to avenge Persephone, then returning to her waiting for him at their gravesite. Despite the rampant destruction present in every direction, his (and our) ability to remember is incessantly compromised—fragmented, but also painful, like splinters. Simply put, Eric doesn't remember what happened to him and his fiancé before he died ("I need you to tell me what happened to us!"), and much of what he retrieves is ultimately gathered in service of reviving those memories before moving on. Without meaning to, they serve as a kind of last-ditch weapon against the film's final villain—the silver-bullet magic wish needed to retire Top Dollar for good and presumably return the city to a better time before the crime lord existed.



It's important to remember that, while being an effective killer himself, Eric owes his avenger status to skills he lacked in life. Presumably given to him "on loan" by his crow overseer (a symbol of death and revenge), Eric's guardian angel—its avatar, the bird—is wounded during the penultimate gun battle inside a ruined church. Weakening his own ties

to the living world, Eric is then beaten in a rooftop duel with Top Dollar. True to form, the rogue backstabs Eric, who collapses while the other man brandishes a knife in his face (a fang to drain him with). Seemingly invincible, Top Dollar boasts "Every man's got a devil, and you can't rest until you find him," going on to confess everything to the man whose life he's effectively ruined without having met or seen Eric before that night. He smiles, only happy when he's hurting people, and—like Ledger's Joker—he's always smiling (a jester without the face paint, which he critiques Eric for using: "Nice outfit! Not sure about the face, though...").

Furthermore, Top Dollar's fang-like knife (above) reflects the light of the drawn blade back on the owner's face, perhaps giving Eric an idea. To finally gain the upper hand, he hastily throws Top Dollar's displaced abuse back at him: "Thirty hours of pain! I don't want it anymore!" (next page, exhibit 40k1). Faced with a terrible trauma extending from himself in ways he normally needn't confront, Top Dollar not only becomes blind; he bleeds from the eyes and mouth like a (soon-to-be) corpse (a parodic reversal of Catholic miracles/dogma, the vampire "throwing up" his food, his essence)! Stricken with grief, predator becomes prey and then falls from the chapel roof to his embarrassing doom.

By extension, workers in the real world can shame those in power by similar means; i.e., by using stories like *The Crow* to get their message across—an Aegis to turn against our enemies, forcing *them* to see the harm *they* normally cause being alienated from them by capital.

As they freeze, these *banditti* chiefs can be ignominiously absorbed into the cathedral stone, its gargoyles serving a grim, laughing reminder to their violent, stupid past spilling out of their bodies ("murder will out"); i.e., the bloodletting of the leech, releasing and redistributing their stolen power (and secrets) back into the community they harmed; e.g., like Father Schedoni's grim confession, shortly before *he* dies, in *The Italian*. Let *that* be the bourgeoisie's legacy as we move forward into a better future; i.e., their own abuses giving us the means to survive the material world (and canceled retro-futures) they rule from the shadows. In turn, our best revenge becomes our ability to develop Communism in spite of their doomed efforts to stop us. "You can't kill the metal," indeed!



(exhibit 40k1: Left: "Greed, chaos, anarchy. Now that's fun!" announces the emotional stupidity of Top Dollar. "Just having fun," he's actually raping and killing people in person ["I think we broke her"] but also by proxy through his infantilized henchmen. On Top Dollar's orders, the latter rape Shelly Webster and murder her fiancé, Eric, in cold blood on Devil's Night [itself an aping of the Creature from *Frankenstein* being with Victor on his wedding night]. While this serves as a false flag for Eric to act on, his humanity prevents him from following through. By comparison, Capitalism has mentricided Top Dollar so that he can't help himself/can't stop being stupid; i.e., driven vampirically by impulse through predatory positions of power until these inequities literally kill him: the drive for blood, for control, for rape. When he dies, it's a relief, the laughing fool having

*killed and hurt so many people already in service of "the gods noticing him again" [the fascist appeal to the elite, in other words]. Of course, the movie frames the cops as the good guys, here; they're not, and the basic principle of reverse abjection—the one that works so well on Top Dollar—also works on them, too.*

*They're not the invincible heroes they think they are!*

*Right: Metal lives on. BÜTCHER are a hybrid of many things that came before. As this reviewer from Osmose Productions puts it:*

*Metal in the sense of the absolute riffing madness that ruled both the airwaves and the underground tape-trading scene during the late '70s, through the genre-defining '80s, and well into the early 90's, BÜTCHER's unique blend of metal music is certainly rooted in both German and US speed metal, but owes equally as much to proto-metal, hard rock, South-American and Australian black/thrash, NWOBHM [...] and the Scandinavian cult from the early '90s [...] An acquired taste in these modern times then, but surely to be savored by the legion of metal maniacs that have an affection for everything that made the older eras of heavy music so magical in the first place [[source](#)].*

*The same troubadour holism applies to Eric, a rock 'n roll musician whose own darkened output—his at-times humorous symphony of violence ["He winked at you? Musicians!"]—is generally set to music, in film. While his approach is generally of a dark '90s revenge fantasy entertained by white middle-class men—i.e., the kind they either perform [e.g., in videogames] while listening to The Cure, Nirvana, and Bullet for My Valentine, or which they project onto media that demonizes crime by naturalizing it [the film's dark impulses effectively a "tough on crime" narrative the original author, James O'Barr, wrote after his wife was killed by a drunk driver when he was 18]—the fact remains, these persons/auteurs don't monopolize such theatrics; we can use them, too.*

*To that, the film doesn't endorse blind revenge/revenge porn as nakedly as you might think. Yes, the movie is literally about revenge from beyond the grave: "People once believed that when someone dies, a crow carries their soul to the land of the dead. But sometimes, something so bad happens that a terrible sadness is carried with it, and the soul can't rest. Then sometimes, just sometimes, the crow can bring that soul back to put the wrong things right." Except, The Crow ultimately is about manifesting these feelings of revenge in a place where they can appear, before ultimately facing and letting them go: giving back through a kind of "charity vampirism."*

*To that, Eric embodies O'Barr's desire for revenge, but also his willingness to heal by processing grief as people so often do—by proxy and through monstrous scapegoats and personas. In an interview with Dike Blair, O'Barr explains the futility of revenge:*

*Basically, when I was 18, my fiancé was killed by a drunk driver. I was really hurt, frustrated, and angry. I thought that by putting some of this anger and hate down on paper that I could purge it from my system. But, in fact, all I was doing was intensifying it—I was focusing on all this negativity. As I worked on it, things just got worse and worse, darker and darker. So, it*



*really didn't have the desired effect—I was probably more fucked up afterwards than before I started. It was only after becoming friends with Brandon, experiencing his death, and seeing the film—perhaps 17 times now—that I finally reached what is currently called "closure" while visiting his grave in Seattle [[source](#): "Shadows on the Wall," 1994].*

*[[source](#): Dan Heching's "Eliza Hutton Breaks Silence 28 Years after Fiancé Brandon Lee's Death," 2021]*

*The best revenge—apart from acting out our abuse in ways we can taste and give voice to—is to remember the things we loved about ourselves as victims of capital [which Brandon Lee was, killed due to lax regulations (efficient profit) when working with blanks, on set: "There's no such thing as a prop gun," Eliza Hutton remarks, above]. Even if we don't survive, these mementos will: "If the people we love are stolen from us, The way to have them live on is to never stop loving them. People die, buildings burn, but real love is forever." That, not blind revenge, is the final message of the film. Closure is a choice when aiming for actions that help communities heal and expose their vampiric abusers [and systems] in the same breath.)*

Such characters like Top Dollar are enabled by those around him—not just the henchmen, but also society at large when approaching the performance (and consumption) of such things. First, let's unpack the dialectic-material realities present inside such stories that connect them to real-world conditions, then give an extratextual example (Steam Powered Giraffe, for our purposes).

In text, Eric defeats Top Dollar through the rememory process; i.e., a lost form of knowledge tied to death, trauma and the afterlife (re: "People once

believed..."), but also a great sadness in the living world that survives him, once reassembled. Certainly the ghoulish goal of "re-excavating" the historical materials of the zombie/vampire (and other liminal gradients) is a worthy labor at all stages of development—its inception and execution.

This "corpse paint revival" starts with exposing our abuse as a matter of public knowledge known to Gothic stories that, just as well, give us room to confront our humanity from all angles—the good, the bad and the ugly. Feelings of vigilante revenge (the kind the elite want us to commit against each other) become something to disarm, while using our newfound vision to cultivate a more aware society critical of the actual bad guys; i.e., men like Top Dollar who look *friendlier* than he does (though nowhere near as cool as Michael Wincott, hamming it up in his vampire tower filled with swords): cops.

The sole purpose of the police is to defend capital, which leads to the kinds of criminogenic conditions (redlining) that Top Dollar only exploits *after* they're in effect. This includes tokenism, which fascism relies on until it needn't, any longer! Top Dollar's the obvious dick (the incestuous nutjob who kills and tortures people for fun), but *The Crow's* true villain isn't really the crime lord, but criminogenic conditions propping him up—especially those with a racialized character tied to profit, capital, and associate police structures (we'll look at class and cultural betrayals with Steam Powered Giraffe, in a moment); i.e., people of color.



To it, the tokenism in the movie isn't just Top Dollar flanked by cartoonishly evil sidekicks—i.e., his Zofloya-esque, black and towering right-hand man (a

marvelously understated performance from Tony Todd) or wicked-witch, Orientalist-caricature sister—but Officer Albrecht as the token good cop. All are part of the same predatory system the movie, as copaganda, ultimately defends.



I'm saying this knowing that many people love *The Crow* for different reasons. But I also know said reasons include the white middle-class fantasy of false rebellion, of vigilantism; re: the state abuses workers through its own victims. To it, the socio-material reality of *The Crow* is that power centers often recruit from policed communities to divide and conquer them, making the movie's glowing, tokenized endorsement of the police—while simultaneously overlooking the conditions that might lead a mother to abuse drugs instead of caring for her rebellious child—platitudinal and flimsy.

If I had to guess, people are more united on the vigilante folk hero (thanks, in part to Lee's boundless charisma/pathos and martyred status), but are less in agreement on the director's blasé treatment of the police as equally fallen, thus somehow redeemable:

Finally, there's the big confrontation between Lee's character and the arch-villain, Top Dollar. As is customary, the villain gets the upper hand and seems sure to triumph but our hero suddenly turns the tables—in this case by summoning the memories of his fiancée's suffering and giving to the bad guy all at once.

What's interesting here is that Eric does this only after Top Dollar has admitted that yes, he was ultimately responsible for the double murder. He may as well have said *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*. In fact, the fact that Eric is able to obtain those memories at all is another Catholic "tell." Officer Albrecht stayed with Shelly throughout her ordeal—a corporal act of mercy. Albrecht also looks after Sarah, buying her dinner when they



meet, which is of course an act of charity ([source](#): A.H. Loyd's "*The Crow Is a Profoundly Catholic Movie*," 2021).

If we wanted to get *really* Gothic, here, we could consider the film's regression to Catholic tropes through the mode's schools of criticism in decay (originally being used in the Neo-Gothic period as Protestant-paid, anti-Catholic propaganda).

More to the point, ACAB, my dudes, the worst abusers generally being community leaders, not crime lords; e.g., cops, but also landlords and tokenized sell-outs; i.e., the sacrificial lamb, Shelly Webster (a possible portmanteau between Mary Shelley and John Webster, the latter being the Jacobean author of *The Duchess of Malfi*, a story about a murderer widow), being killed for fighting tenet



eviction—a fact the movie puts on *her* shoulders: "A big kick-me sign for a very nice [white] girl who found herself a cause. The cause got her killed."

The look on the black policewoman's face says it all ("White girls, amirite?"), though she isn't exactly quiet about it: "She

was fighting tenet eviction in *that* neighborhood?" The two black officer's shared incredulity is both resigned to the myth that things cannot change, and viewing actual activism (Shelly's housing petition) as folly *that only white people do*. It erases decades of black activism, essentializing Detroit as a warzone waged between the good citizens and the criminals; i.e., a thin blue line that needs more funding and honest *token* cops to "make things happen." It's race betrayal in service to the elite, as usual; they want the city as it is so they can exploit it through cop and criminal alike.

Such synthesis in opposition to state force is an uphill battle, then, one that will take centuries to accomplish, and requires a willingness to invert the usual idea of terrorism and criminality (the binary of good/evil and the flow of power) *towards* police agents; re: the anisotropic nature of reversing power away from them by exposing them as community jailers (thus rapists) delegitimizing us; i.e., with Gothic's theatre's playing with revenge and criminal action, both amounting to a rebellious mode of expression the state cannot monopolize. Such policing isn't just done by official police agents or vigilantes in or out of the text. Its controlled opposition also extends to sell-outs; i.e., content creators who look friendly and posture as "one of us," but who in truth defend profit through their actions covering up abuse (which is what cops ultimately do).

Recuperation aside, the proletarian value in such theatrical territories like *The Crow*, then, is they *are* commodified, which means people in service to profit *will* make decisions that betray their vested interests; i.e., when selling out through such masks and music during a cop-like vampirism.

This brings me to Steam Powered Giraffe and my experiences with the band; i.e., while dressed up as Eric Draven and pumping fists with the members (exhibit 40k2, below), only going on to employ the same issues of betrayal and healing *The Crow's* larger narrative encompasses between itself and real life. Police aren't just actual cops, and villains aren't just at odds with them; policing amounts to colonization happening by marginalized parties defending those they view as being good, but in truth are abusing the community around them—fans, in other words.

To it, we must make ourselves legitimate vs the state delegitimizing us, standing up to them and their fans; i.e., as a matter of class war through theatrical means that combines with culture and racial elements to help us intersectionally solidarize against police forces. As the below exhibit will hopefully demonstrate, such investigations include mingling with people in costume and out, and whose intentions are generally obscured by the dualistic, cryptonymic reality of the situation:



(exhibit 40k2: Artist, left: [Persephone van der Waard](#), cosplaying as Eric Draven. At the time, I remained none-the-wiser about the person next to me and the sexual assaults they committed: Michael Red, former guitarist/keyboardist/songwriter still working for Steam Powered Giraffe at the time of the photo. Eleven years later, I would return to expose Michael in ways the band who hired him wouldn't. Part of

the Gothic's proletarian utility, then, is suitably to dress up and mingle with people of interest, but also investigate them behind masks of different kinds [overt ones, but also general personas]. Doing so in order to hold celebrities like Reed accountable is, itself, an imperfect process.

For starters, at the time of meeting Reed, I didn't know about his abuse at all, writing instead, "Awesome guy. Great guitar player!" I'd just met him and the band, but he seemed nice enough. Seven years later he would stop working with SPG and move to Europe, then be outted as a pedophile by fans of the band, not the band itself.

From what I understand, Reed's departure wasn't because he had been outted as a sex pest, but the truth of his sexual and racist abuse towards fans came to light shortly afterwards. While the original statements of abuse regarding Reed are still

up on the band's subreddit, [r/steampoweredgiraffe](#), the extended details concerning Reed attached to the original Patreon post [appear to have been removed](#) [dead link]. Those statements appeared on July 10th, 2020, followed by a Tumblr blog post several days later detailing Reed's abuses further than the band:

1. Michael is a pedophile who has a long history of actively and physically preying on minors and young women. Michael has preyed upon minors and young women, and has coerced minors (under the age of 17) into sexual activity—which is sexual assault and rape. He has calculatedly manipulated young women 5-10 years his junior to be his "friend," often treating them and implying they were in a relationship, and lying to other people involved, creating an extremely toxic social circle of gaslighted young people being manipulated and abused. He cyclically pulled from this group of individuals one at a time and withheld attention from the others to maintain control and silence of the entire group. This is sexual abuse, in any context. He has used his fame and social capital and his brand of charming and kind dude to make excuses for his behavior and seem like he would never be the type to commit it. When called out on this—he directly lies. Lying about his behavior even when presented with evidence is frequent.

2. Michael is racist. He has made multiple racist comments to people of color who were close to him; over a number of years, he has sought out emotional support for his white guilt without addressing how he should personally fight against racism and white supremacy. He has fetishized people of color and fixated on them.

Those who have gotten close enough to Michael know that despite his kindhearted exterior, he can be shockingly cold and lash out in very cruel ways unexpectedly. He has done this to every single one of his victims that I've known, including myself, and his victims are anticipating the potential that he will retaliate in response to being called out for his actions. Private and informal testimonies from sexual partners and friends of a variety of ages, forms of relationship, and gender indicate severe emotional abuse [[source Tumblr post](#), mprjanedoe: July 13th, 2020].

The poster goes onto to add, "This post is formed by input from victims, occasionally about each other, and occasionally through observations about themselves directly, that occurred over a span of roughly 10 years, informally through text and private messaging, as well as casual conversation at parties and during socializing. His victims should not be subject to more retraumatizing or identification due to fear of retaliation. Along this vein, I also do not wish to identify myself. Frequently his victims of abuse are non-romantic partners" [[ibid.](#)]. In short, discretion and optics are central to such investigations, walking the tightrope

*between outing ourselves and our abusers—an act that generally goes hand-in-hand. This isn't just from the abusers, but those they work with also needing to be held accountable [with SPG hiring not just Reed, but Steven Negrete, who also took advantage of people through his position with the band].*



*To this, there's a parasocial element to bands/theatre gigs, and values they brand vs values they stand by when profit is threatened [i.e., by us, grappling with them using the same aesthetics, left]. Throw in the desire of victims wanting to maintain some sense of control over their lives by handling things privately and you're left with the sad, complicated reality that many won't come forward for fear of reprisals; i.e., privacy is generally a casualty of those who do come forward, attacked by fans of the bands who hired the abusers. And while I can respect the band for wanting to maintain fans' privacy in these matters—e.g., with the Spine [shown with me, above] saying in 2021, "Several months later people brought to us information about some of his actions in years past. They were creepy<sup>234</sup>; we made a public announcement distancing ourselves from [Reed], calling him out, and standing with the victims that came forward privately to us" [[source](#)]*—the fact remains, there's a world of difference between official statements and actual conduct that isn't lip service.**

*What I mean by that is, since 2021, SPG has largely kept quiet despite having a larger platform that could raise awareness and keep things anonymous for their victims; and according to mprjanedoe, their own accountability is lacking insofar as their reticence to speak extensively on these matters [while turning a blind eye] goes:*

*I'd also like to address the unfortunate situation that David and Bunny maintain they had no prior knowledge of Michael's behavior. Here's the thing: while I 100% believe they did not know all of the details of all of the harm Michael caused, there were definitive patterns and red flags and there needs to be actual accountability around this. Bunny said that the band gave Michael the benefit of doubt multiple times. She also said that Michael was caught and reprimanded for kissing a teenage fan in 2011. [...] While I was young and being manipulated myself and not in a position to prevent harm – I am saying this to state that I witnessed the public visibility of Michael's predatory behavior. I take issue with the claim that there were no signs and*

<sup>234</sup> Spine, here, is both being vague ("creepy") and playing dumb; i.e., "we had no idea until his victims—literally our own underage fans—told us about it."

*that no one could've prevented this sooner. I've seen some fans say that Michael would've "always been this way" and found ways to harm other people had he not been in Steam Powered Giraffe. While this could be true, it cannot be denied that being a part of a successful band like Steam Powered Giraffe that gained a cult status online and in the local scene and had a significant YEARS of DAILY exposure in a family setting to minors, cultivating a fandom of a significant amount of younger fans, giving Michael the upper hand of minor celebrity and influence, travel, etc, cannot be divorced from this situation. This is not inherently Bunny or David's fault. But it is a factor in the breadth of harm Michael was able to do, and it is a factor in knowing there were opportunities for him to have had the resources he gained and used to cause harm pulled from him much sooner than now, when he has already removed himself from the band as it stands.*

*The past is the past. It cannot be changed. As David and Bunny both lamented that they'd go back and stop things if they could've, well yes, to a degree, there were opportunities to prevent further harm, but it's too late now. Now is the time to make things right, and to prevent the potential for further harm.*

*Currently – there is absolutely not enough publicly visible and available information on the harm Michael has caused on Steam Powered Giraffe's social media presence. This is made worse by the fact that consistent promo and every day band stuff creates a wider and wider gap between the leftover posts about Michael's abuse on Twitter, Facebook, and Patreon. It is now becoming a game of chance whether a fan of Steam Powered Giraffe will know what Michael has done [[source Tumblr post](#), mprjanedoe: July 20th, 2020].*

*As such, the giving of persons in power the benefit of the doubt extends not just to Reed, but those enabling him as having a lot to lose if they took more accountability than they actually did. Privacy, in this case, isn't just protecting their abused fans, but themselves [and complicit persons in their paying fandom seeking revenge by punching down complicit persons in their paying fandom growing into a police role; i.e., seeking revenge by punching down against critiques and other victims] by arguably sweeping this under the rug with some paltry lip service. Rape is difficult to prove, and doing so generally goes against the profit motive. In short, by making sure the written accounts of what occurred get lost in the flow of business-as-usual, the usual benefactors are allowed to "keep the peace" and play the good guys, all while historically turning a blind eye because doing so was good for business. Frankly the usual moral gymnastics try to reconcile these maneuvers with "finding a balance," but the simple truth is, sooner or later, workers have to unite against the profit motive as exemplified by this kind of pro-capitalistic interference. Otherwise, history will only continue to repeat itself.)*

As the above exhibit shows us, betrayal (class or otherwise) isn't just literal cops, but businesspeople (and their indoctrinated fans) acting *like* the police to achieve the same bourgeois vampire function—Capitalism going so far as to convert former victims who, time and time again, are coerced into silence by those controlling the flow of information (with Isabella Bennett, below, deleting her own statements of harm concerning Michael Reed—itsself arguably a statement of guilt scrubbing the Internet of her and the band's involvement; [source Tumblr post](#), mprjanedoe: July 18th, 2020), but also their masked, nostalgic predation.

Except, SPG aren't the only mimes-with-a-platform in town. To it, there's no time like the present to bring Communism's construction about—to subvert our present exploitation by turning the elite's weapons against them, reclaiming our Gothic imaginations, emotional intelligence, agency and labor in the process, followed by our dignity, identities, and power (re: me cosplaying as Eric Draven, back then, but embodying his pro-worker heroism now).

To encase the tyrant in glass, however, Gothic Communists must first remember what the state has made us forget—that a world exists beyond the illusion of profit; re: *The Crow's* dismal tide through an imaginary Detroit, but also SPG's posthuman theatrics linked to the cyberpunk genre's kissing cousin, steampunk. It's literally in their name, but also their *conduct* as a matter of mime-like practice: masked, makeup-heavy conventions that, sure enough, showcase all too well what happens behind the scenes on the faces of those wearing the lipstick in bad faith—the death of actual people (re: Brandon Lee), but also of childhood



innocence due to sexual abuse of a band's fans (re: SPG), all in pursuit of profit staining the drinker's lips red. It's camouflage, the cop-like, sell-out vampire dressing like a vampire and *playing* the rebel. Such shameless capitalism gives actual rebels (and their own clownish identities) a bad name.

(artist: [Isabella Bennett](#))

Keeping with the Gothic mode, guilt and secret sins aren't fully buried, but out in the open if you're willing to look (case in point, mprjanedoe's post is the first thing that comes up in Google); i.e., tokenism being a kind of disguise we have to look through to see what's going on; e.g.,

Isabella "Bunny" Bennett being a trans woman (she transitioned in 2014, a year after I saw the band live), but one who remains actionably tokenized insofar as—

according to public anonymous accounts of the band's conduct, but also their own actions, *ipso facto*—she had more than a casual hand in enabling Reed's behavior. Indeed, she was his employer and ignored the warning signs for at least ten years, only to effectively give him a slap on the wrist *after* they let him go for unrelated reasons (refusing to take things further than she and the other band members chose). And here I am, after all this time, feeling a bit like Eric: dredging up the past behind my own secret identity to put the wrong things right.

Except, that's the paradox. I have my dead name, and who I am as a matter of fact. I wear it on my sleeve like Eric did his face paint, preferring to view my actions as speaking to *open* secrets done between different artists likewise performing on and offstage. Abuse isn't just the primary actor, then, but those who—regardless of their professed reasons or intentions—run interference/cover things up while posturing as a GNC success story.

And that, in essence, is what Bunny and the rest of the band appears to have done. They're not your friends; they're content creators whose actions typically demonstrate how well representation translates to actual activism. Theirs is predominantly unironic, middle-class escapism devoid of traditional steampunk satire; i.e., something to sell to fans too young to remember said said—a comfort food we can purchase and say, "Good for them!" in the same breathe. Tokenism is tokenism, and I'd rather break the silence than have abuse continue under Capitalist Realism because the people with the most power in the situation chose to do as little as possible.



Regardless if it's fiction, non-fiction, a particular genre, or somewhere in between, everything sits inside the same forever ruin having since been destroyed and replaced by a copy of its own devastated state as something to play inside; i.e., the canonical cyberpunk as a neoliberal hauntology that tries to cover up **hypernormal** trauma sensations with **hypercanonical** copies in order to make them **hyperreal** (a form of corporate gaslighting that covers up decay with futurist "decay"): more real and popular than reality, but still somehow "off."

For one, this ties to me and my own journey through life—i.e., in 2013, I was in the closet and still processing my own abuse; in 2024, I am out, have written multiple books on sex positivity and surviving sexual abuse (including my own), and worked with the kinds of people who are generally taken advantage of in situations like the ones explored above. I'm nowhere near as financially successful as Bennett and SPG, but at least I can look myself in the mirror and know that I didn't enable a sexual abuser for the sake of fame and fortune; i.e., a perpetually broke trans detective investigating tokenized behaviors the likes of SPG and their token trans woman playing rebel jesters, but again, functioning as capitalist predators in the king's court. Girl, do better!

To this, the proposition that your childhood heroes are bought-and-paid for is, of course, deeply horrifying; i.e., the revival of the zombie within us and the sudden, unromantic death of said heroes (cops, musicians, etc) as a fixtures of our own vigilante selves, but also b) the world as we know it thanks to bourgeois propaganda's vampiric interventions/façades: the city as dead, the streets filled with lost children/dead souls to harvest and exploit as usual. However, change when utilized in a Marxist sense, is not death at all, but merely turning into something else. Like Matheson's vampire-zombies, you'd be surprised what remains, but also what you can accomplish after things have started *to* change—in artistic terms, for individuals, but also at the geopolitical, economic level once the Cartesian Revolution is dead and buried.

To use a macroscopic, oft-demonized example, the Soviet economy's state-regulated Socialism vastly outpaced the United States from a production standpoint *relative to the immense internal and external pressures they faced*; e.g., war on native soil a concept relatively alien to living Americans. As Mark Harrison writes in "[The Soviet Union after 1945: Economic Recovery and Political Repression](#)" (2010):

Salient features of the Soviet Union after World War II include rapid economic recovery and the consolidation of Stalin's rule. [...] On the eastern front, World War II was devastating. In four years, fought mostly on Soviet territory, the war killed one in eight Soviet citizens, and destroyed one third of their national wealth. The country was full of displaced people and torn families [...] Although the human losses from World War II were on a wider scale, Soviet recovery after 1945 was also more rapid. The economy was in far better shape than in 1921. Both wars were followed by harvest failure



and regional famine, but the famine of 1946 killed a fraction of the numbers that died of hunger at the end of the Civil War. Average Soviet incomes climbed back to their prewar (1938) levels as early as 1948.

Apart from the usual flaws of state mechanisms, much of the USSR's instability comes from external sabotage, including capitalist forces seducing the Russian heads of state to honor a Faustian sell-out bargain; i.e., betraying the Union [for the efficient profit of neoliberal shock therapy](#) (Second Thought, 2022) that assimilated Russia into the New World Order under neoliberal Capitalism: as their *Rocky IV*-style punching bag (the neoliberal myth of the American underdog in a clearly lopsided conflict) recycled in centrist narratives well into 2023 (for more examples, consider Hakim's 2023 "[Why Did the Soviet Union Fall?](#)").

In the case of *The Crow*, SPG or the collapse of the Soviet Union, the vampiric curse—of a punitive, nostalgic, Cartesian cycle of zombie violence—won't end without some horrifying (thus traumatic) reflection. Reverse abjecting the state's traumatic abuse must happen if workers are to instill class-cultural and race consciousness; i.e., resurrecting the working class' collective inability to imagine a more stable world beyond Capitalism. Rape, war and genocide are endemic to Capitalism and won't shock the elite; to end their perpetual rot/epidemics, the goal is not debridement and palliative care, but exposure of the disease at a systemic level, a so-called "attack of the dead" the elite *will* scramble madly away from (on par with the terrified Germans during the Battle of Osowiec Fortress in 1915, [when the chlorine-gassed Russians rose in a vengeful, undead state to battle with the enemy one last time](#); Unknown 5, 2023). Doing so, workers can solve the very thing that so many great men of history could not, breaking the "fever" of its vast history as an endless nightmare that sends the Imperial Boomerang sailing back and forth like a reaper's bloodthirsty sickle, flowing like Dracula's cape (the

imperator cloak, a ghost of "Rome" and of Caesar): profit laid bare.



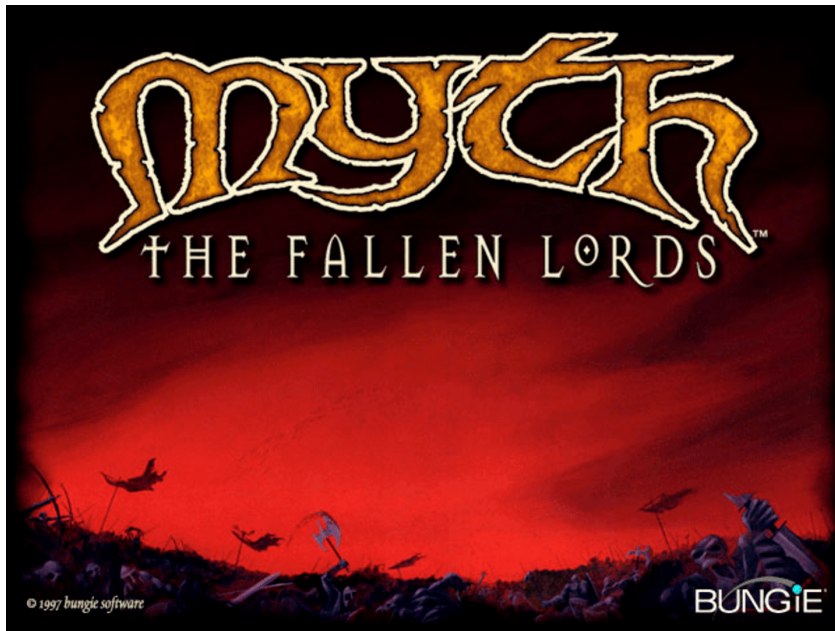
We'll examine this boomerang effect next, looking at the third-and-final zombie tyrant, Bungie's Zombie Caesar in *Myth: the Fallen Lords*, Balor the Leveler!

### "A Lesson in Humility"; or, Gay Zombie Caesar (and His Token Servants) When the Boomerang Comes Back Around (feat. *Myth: the Fallen Lords*)

They say Alric talked about The Head often, ridiculing The Nine's belief that it was one of the avatars of Connacht. Connacht was the great hero of the Wind Age, who drove the evil Moagim from the earth, and The Head claims to have been one of Connacht's closest advisors during this time. Once Alric even spoke of The Head's defeat by Balor, where it lost its body. But I've begun to wonder how one of the avatars of the Wind Age outlived Connacht himself by hundreds of years, to fight Balor in a battle long before the West had even heard of The Fallen Lords.

I have been unable to reconcile this with what I know of history ([source](#)).

—The Narrator, "Out of the Barrier" from *Myth: the Fallen Lords*



So far, we've explored different kinds of Promethean heroism, ranging from futile revenge, castles, and crime lords. Continuing our imaginary historical catalog brings us to our third example of the zombie monomyth tyrant: not the man-of-reason, or the crime boss, but the warlord master of the field—specifically queer readings of the Zombie

Caesar in Bungie's *Myth: the Fallen Lords*, as well as Caesar's dutiful anti-Semitic/monstrous-feminine henchmen (and women) in its *Melmoth*-style sequel, *Myth II: Soulblighter* (1998). Each game subsequently has its own close-read:

- **"[Hail, Caesar!'; or, Balor the Leveler as Gay Zombie Caesar in \*Myth: the Fallen Lords\*](#)": Explores the man himself in *Myth: the Fallen Lords*, including the game's Promethean, fatal-warrior mythos reviving Zombie Caesar on loop (the Cycle of Kings) to uphold Capitalist Realism through the zombie monomyth.**
- **"[Hell Hath No Fury'; or, Soulblighter's Gay Nazi Revenge \(and Giants/Female Characters\) in \*Myth II: Soulblighter\*](#)": Further unpacks Bungie's Cycle of Kings (and its various terrorist/counterterrorist double standards) by camping *Myth II*'s titular character as a token gay Nazi cop; also considers the franchise's gigantic and female elements, while linking everything to Capitalism and the zombie monomyth's Promethean Quest.**

In short, "Hail, Caesar!" introduces the Cycle of Kings per Bungie's unironic usage of it; "No Fury" focuses more on camping the cycle of violence through our queer interpretation of the sequel's camp potential (versus what Bungie *actually* does with said potential, in-game).

As previously stated, zombies denote the existence of repressed, generational trauma according to individuals or groups living through an expanding/shrinking state of exception. As we shall unpack here, recipients or *givers* of state abuse ("pitchers" and "catchers") operate in *Myth* per a fascist, homoerotic cult of death and its zombie strongman aping Caesar's ghost: Balor the Leveler first returning to empire in a bad-dream time of weakness to seek revenge against those who betrayed and forgot him (the Imperial Boomerang), followed by Soulblighter seeking revenge for his master after said master is dead (the Promethean Quest).

In other words, the zombie warlord can be an aggressor for the state-in-crisis as radicalized, then conjured up anytime the state needs to inspire police crackdowns in and out of monomyth fiction.

A common variant is the literal Nazi zombie, of course, but also the zombie fascist/tyrant coming out of the historical, partially imaginary past ("Rome") to overwhelm the present as a heroic matter of rememory tied to nation-states' own short, self-eclipsing narratives; re, Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* (1980):

"History is the memory of states," wrote Henry Kissinger in his first book, *A World Restored*, in which he proceeded to tell the history of nineteenth-century Europe from the viewpoint of the leaders of Austria and England, ignoring the millions who suffered from those statesmen's policies ([source](#)).

To that, *Myth* remembers the fallen heroes who suffered, laying down their lives for the perceived "Greater Good," only to return and seek revenge (which, for our purposes, denotes a process of traumatized feeding and cannibalization—of workers by themselves for the state).

Simply put, Caesar's revenge becomes "necessary" to "progress," but remains stuck in a hellish death loop of endless (thoroughly gruesome) bloodshed; i.e., as capital demands profit to continue through such monomythic theatre disguising war as toy-like (cops and robbers, but also Americans and Nazis/Communists). Canon does so while, in the same breath, essentializing a *Promethean* Cycle of Kings (the finding of self-destructive power rooted in monarchic language). Though the Shadow of Pygmalion's *outdoor* infernal concentric pattern, an unironic "Gish gallop" begins to emerge, its *casus belli* swapping out one tyrant for another as either good or bad; i.e., succeeding themselves through the usual gentrification and decay of *Pax Americana* putting nature (and soldiers) cheaply to work. Dogma presents the monstrous-feminine

"prince(ss/x) in another castle" as ready-for-the-taking if only the day's heroes rally for that *one final push* into home-as-alien.

To it, "taking things home" merely and tragically becomes a matter of dogmatically guiding police violence into all the usual ports, the owners of said ports forced to receive such entry by the victorious dead feeding on them as a predatory means of profit (and which subverting such doom during rape play is generally their only shot at liberation, below):



(artist: [Noah Way Babe](#))

We'll get to all of this. To spin a thesis statement for this particular seminar's queer reading of the material, though (indented for emphasis):

Capitalism will always abject its abuses onto its victims. To best recuperate and nullify rebellious sentiment, though, it marries homonormative

obscurantism and DARVO to other token elements as needed; e.g., anti-Semitism and Orientalism (with so-called "gay token Nazis" [false rebels] being a thread we'll tug on throughout this section); i.e., capital decays into a degenerate, fascist, undead form that can be increasingly abjected, tokenized and scapegoated because it is false, illegitimate and reprobate (as gay men generally present as, in canon)—not "actually" Caesar's ghost (a paradox, insofar as we're dealing with an idealized, fantasy version) but a "queer" version fielded in the homosocial, ancient language of war hauntologized ("ancient" in quotes): "It'll work *next* time, when capital's Roman homecoming *isn't* a gay Nazi-Communist zombie/token slave!"

Such feeding and decay is expected, making the entire appeal a false flag raised over and over. Bungie didn't "invent" such tactics—are merely aping them somberly through their own morose altar of sacrifice. On it, statesmen make their arguments against perceived barbarians, motivating children of a given imperium to invade and occupy "foreign" lands at home; having no moral reason to do so, us-versus-them is used, instead.

In *Myth*, the game's apocalyptic, cis-het vision of capital enriches the usual benefactors (white European men) onstage and off, which requires soldiers to

operate, hence arguments like Bungie's to send them to their deaths wherever they are. This yields the usual anti-war sentiments, sold repeatedly as rock 'n roll (which, like Metallica themselves, decays unto profit like punk or anything else does):

Bodies fill the fields I see, hungry heroes end  
 No one to play soldier now, no one to pretend  
 Running blind through killing fields, bred to kill them all  
 Victim of what said should be  
 A servant 'til I fall (Metallica's "[Disposable Heroes](#)," 1986).

Rooted in imperial consumption, such things become holy (the Protestant ethic); i.e., speaking to abjection by those who, safe at home, eat their fill of the spoils of war while living on equally stolen, bloodstained land—all while making America's "foreign" victims (e.g., Indigenous peoples and/or Communists) entirely invisible:



(artist: [Don Brautigam](#))

That's *Pax Americana*, for you—a heliocentric worldview inherited from the elite pulling the strings, then routinely passed down by white middle-class men (weird canonical nerds); i.e., like Bungie, stoically paving the way for future iterations of the same old, Man-Box fascination with settler-colonial violence. They're war merchants weeping out of principle, but turning the meatgrinder's handle all the same. From Caesar to modern-day warrior poets like James Hetfield, John Romero, Bungie, Mel Gibson,

and Sam Raimi, war is for sale—good for always expressing itself as the place to "die like a man." To die the Roman fool for one's nation *is* heroic, even when it becomes undead, vengeful, or campily aware of itself in a blind sense. It's all badass and cool, for Bungie—something to vampirically farm by conjuring it up as "past," fueled by revenge and blown up to Atlas-grade levels of fatal hyperbole (e.g., "[Achilles' Last Stand](#)," 1976), then put repeatedly to work/to the sword as cheaply as possible (re: Patel and Moore).

**"Hail, Caesar!"; or, Balor the Leveler as Gay Zombie Caesar in *Myth: the Fallen Lords***

"Son-of-a-bitch, ball! That's your home! Your home! Why didn't you just go home? What, are you too good for your home? SUCK MY WHITE ASS, BALL!"

—Happy Gilmore, *Happy Gilmore* (1996).



While the glory of Rome *is* a famous site of romance, comedy and satire (e.g., Monty Python, left: "Do you have a problem with my friend's name, Biggus Dickus?"), the "Hail, Caesar!" close-read shall consider *Myth's* apocalyptic revival of the zombie warlord unto something a bit more grim: Capitalist Realism and the Cycle of Kings (or Caesars<sup>235</sup>, in

this case) abjecting queerness through homophobic Nazi revenge; i.e., the shared theatrical tradition of camping and punching Nazis, albeit as performed by white cis-het men whose notion of camp is thoroughly blind (such dweebs generally salivating at the return of "Rome" in some shape or form, extending to its medieval wreckage as a place to "dick ride Caesar").

*A few things before we proceed: First and foremost, Bungie's franchise is definitely "of its time," being predominantly cis-centric and heteronormative (re: "white people disease"). Feeling like it was made by a bunch of white cis-het history buffs and fantasy/horror nerds—and owing to the various parent texts it generously borrows from likewise having those qualities (especially Lord of the Rings and Tolkien's dated, closeted, oratory approach to homoromantic affairs in times of war)—the debatable, ambiguously gay elements to *Myth's* many heroes remain firmly rooted in a binarized concept of biology and gender roles; i.e., one sitting squarely between cis men and cis women (all predominantly white except for some of the villains).*

*With no room for trans, non-binary or intersex people, then, it's a very cis-het, manly world—the many manly men playing out old, tired monomyth tropes regarding older warlike forms of same-sex attraction and homosocial behaviors linked to imperial forces. As a trans woman who played *Myth* while in the closet, back in the late '90s, I shall focus on the homonormative queer elements that do exist, in-game, then provide outside perspective; i.e., when thinking past the game (and its problematic worldview) when looking towards more enlightened horizons.*

<sup>235</sup> "Caesar" being a cryptonym/dogwhistle for "Nazi," but also a false equivalency for "Communists"; i.e., the horseshoe argument, conflating "czars"—literally a respelling of "Caesar"—for complicated revolutionaries like Lenin and Stalin (men attached to state abuse, but also valid attempts at liberation from said abuse while pushing imperfectly towards development).

*Keeping with my holistic tendencies, though, I'll want to mention as much as I can working back and forth; i.e., introducing the Cycle of Kings through Balor in Myth I, then camping it through a queer close-read of Soulblighter in Myth II while examining that games' outlier/token elements; e.g., Asiatic and non-Christian themes, as well as giants and female monstrous-feminine. Despite accounting for outliers, Bungie still walks in Tolkien's footsteps, their own warrior planet mostly populated by white cis-coded himbos; e.g., the game's one woman—Shiver, below—being defeated three levels into the first game*

*"Shiver fell on the first night in a spectacular dream duel with Rabican, one of the Nine. No one expected this. We have never before challenged one of The Fallen and won" ([source](#): Mythipedia).*

*only to appear again in the sequel as a Raimi-style hag for the heroes to hunt:*



*([ibid.](#))*

*Again, we'll focus on what is present, analyzing the game's queer textualities and themes through my critical models. Per the paradox of holistic analysis, though, there's simply too much going on to realistically mention everything at work, here; i.e., even when you break everything down to its raw components and devices, Capitalism is still a hyperobject, a quality felt in its abstractions to some extent; re: Bungie's himbo panoply sausage fest. Instead, I have a necklace or basket of critical elements I've chosen to prioritize and stress, this time around: establish the Cycle of Kings as Bungie presents it, then camp it. Ambiguities and dualities regarding Caesar and his men aside, my poetic focus should be clear enough, and should allow you to speculate yourselves towards proletarian outcomes when referencing my close-reads (and adjacent works) yourselves.*

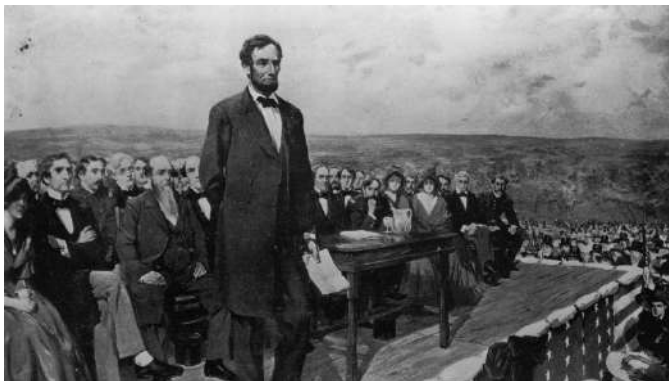
*Also, seeing as we're talking about fascism and its heroic cult of death—one that decays towards "Rome" under capital—I strongly recommend that you check out Umberto Eco's ["14 Points of Fascism"](#) (from ["Ur-Fascism,"](#) 1995). —Perse*

To that, we arrive at Bungie's videogame series, *Myth: The Fallen Lords*. It's an old, obscure RTS game that quaintly crosses *Braveheart* with H.P. Lovecraft and *Lord of the Rings*, which my queer reading pointedly considers through the Imperial Boomerang: the devil conqueror Balor the Leveler (and his wicked, *degenerate*

generals, the Four Horsemen of the Gay Nazi Apocalypse) coming home to roost, mid-Cycle-of-Kings. Similar to *Star Wars* or *Lord of the Rings*, the shadow of world war (and Western ethnocentrism) hangs over the story— one told in solemn, archivist fashion by the game's nameless soldier (the Narrator) conveniently keeping score (and lending each subsequent event an air of survivor's gravitas to rival Lincoln's "[Gettysburg Address](#)," 1863):

In a time long past, the armies of the Dark came again into the lands of men [note: white, cis-het men; i.e., the status quo]. Their leaders became known as The Fallen Lords, and their terrible sorcery was without equal in the West. In thirty years they reduced the civilized nations to carrion and ash, until the free city of Madrigal alone defied them. An army gathered there, and a desperate battle was joined against the Fallen. ([source](#): Mythipedia).

Bear in mind, such accounts are generally penned by war criminals whitewashing themselves; i.e., because their world was under attack by "evil forces," thus allowing them to do whatever was necessary to defend the status quo: a tree of freedom, per American Liberalism, to water with the blood of the patriotic dead— sung sermons about afterwards by old powerful executives posturing as "magnanimous" (with Bungie's Alric bearing disturbing likenesses to Lincoln, at



times). Say what you will about individual exceptions, the system seeks only to continue the same bourgeois bloodletting of disposable heroes.

As we shall see, history and myth speak for themselves, in this respect. The whole premise is an apocalypse gimmick, one whose

universal expendability (aggrandizing fallen heroes to apologize for war in defense of the state; re, Lincoln: "This nation, under God [...] shall not perish from this earth!") means to make the usual middle-class nerds pearl-clutch and rise to— already insecure from the abjection process—by further policing themselves (workers) for the state; i.e., by punching down at those the state normally exploits the most as "seeking revenge" through bad dreams. It's DARVO, a strawman the elite have used for centuries to stay in power through the usual expendable (and gullible) buffers; e.g., Lincoln and his own generals freeing the slaves to promptly enlist them to fight for a country that would quickly stab said freed men in the back (meanwhile, women of color would have to fight for their own rights—generally against racist suffragettes—many decades later into Jim Crow and the Civil Rights Movement, whose own [mostly male] leaders were attacked and ultimately



assassinated by state proponents, then mythologized after their deaths to suit state [white cis-het] aims).

The subsequent boomerang effect happens by threatening the Silent Majority with apocalypse-style bad dreams they can die gloriously inside, *sans* any irony or perceptive pastiche/camp; i.e., to monopolize pro-state arguments and trifectas per the usual qualities of capital—zombie generals and their greater leader strongman, in this case—but really anything and everything that abuses the terrorist/counterterrorist argument to flow power, wealth and knowledge, etc, anisotropically towards the elite in monomythic and Promethean narratives: a grim harvest led by yesterday's heroes-turned-villains, reapers, cops-gone-bad vs good cops in the same Cycle of Kings (which, anytime I say "cycle" from here on out as a normal noun, I'm more or less referring to): "At my signal, unleash hell!"

Per Foucault, the Boomerang is simply Imperialism coming home to empire, specifically to crown one king after another according to Bungie (and similar authors, as we shall see). Fascism isn't just Capitalism in decay but *empire*, which ironically is capital defending itself from labor by pitting them against a rising superman threatening empire (thus profit): Hell coming monomythically home. It requires the elite surrendering territory or position, only to claw it all back; i.e., by putting the Promethean, giant-ized tyrant down; e.g., Hitler or some other myopic, Dracula-grade echo of Caesar (which Balor essentially is). It's always about moving money and other resources through nature as a matter of industry—a burning war machine pushed by competing forces militarily like *Xenophon's* us-versus-them death march. Spiraling back and forth *ad infinitum*, it becomes a bit like Prometheus and the eagle. *Myth* sums all of that up rather neatly—the internalized

fear of empire going to seed and pouncing predatorily on itself, mid-revisionism.

(artist: [Agnus McBride](#))



This "dead ringer" is what the villain of the game, Balor, represents (exhibit 39c); i.e., a formerly supreme commander crossing the Alps in reverse, Caesar "pulling a Hannibal" (a rebel commander from Antiquity whose legendary military campaigns *against*

Rome remain celebrated by modern military commanders, including fascist ones). Seeking revenge for being sacrificed to save empire, as Caesar self-purports, Balor makes the tyrant's plea through his invasion backwards—that he was actually

*saving* the empire from within, from inwards barbarism importing impure (degenerate) external elements that must be purified when the zombie strongman/sins of the father come fearfully home: "We meet again!" to which those in the present are left a bit agape; e.g., Ashley William's plea to his own medieval executioners, in *Army of Darkness* (below): "You gotta listen, man; I ain't even *seen* these assholes before!" Fealty is a blind oath.



Per Caesar  
h(a)unting Brutus, Balor  
does so while  
accompanied by a  
fearsome, vengeful band  
of monster generals (the  
Fallen Lords, four mighty  
forces of nature) and the  
usual military structures  
descending further down  
to lieutenants, captains,  
champions and

grunts/minions/fodder. In terms of knights and their heraldry, coat of arms, and castles (similar to *Game of Thrones*, or any such story with imaginary kingdoms, duchies, great houses, fiefdoms, etc), all serve as a poetic, doubled, half-real way of organizing and presenting power (and its unpeaceful transfer) in medieval, queer-coded language; per Walpole, it's a popular imaginary exercise speaking to and with the usual myths of Gothic ancestry ("old blood") inspired by Hannibal among others recuperating his attacks against Rome to be used by those seeking to *revive* Rome when capital decays: a Gothic double/evil twin of empire that appears, post-corruption, and must then be put down through us-versus-us-as-them apocalypse/spectacle ("fresh blood"). It's a blood transfusion into the same always-dying tyrant (on a giant scale, or in smaller personified forms of castled bodies or body-like castles).

By extension, Balor's legions of unthinking dead exist less to threaten the status quo than convert it into a dark, terrorist, rape-play version of itself that cannibalizes the bodies and minds of the *local* population. This nightmarish revelation is merely a taste of state abuse, normally committed in faraway lands now coming home to roost by way of undead revenge. In turn, a Pavlovian, menticultural desire to be the Good Citizen turns the citizens monstrous, who surrender their rights to the state and attack the state's usual scapegoats with renewed bloodlust—all in defense of an "ancient," idealized past (and competing warrior cultures) being party to the same basic problem: the return to a glorious empire's conquering armies unto an *alien* Rome, hauntologically revived as *unheimlich* and drenched in the blood of everyone when a capitol *doesn't* recognize

its homecoming champion. The imposter is the *conqueror* reconquering home as pastoral, soft, ripe.

To it, this circular logic of empire translates from novels, to movies, to videogames under Capitalism—spanning from *laissez-faire* to Bretton Woods to neoliberalism to arrange power in all the usual ways; re (from Volume Zero):

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**, **minibosses**, and **minions** deftly illustrate **Zombie-Vampire Capitalism** in action; e.g., Reinhardt Heydrich [...] as "middle-management" **desk murderers** in a bureaucratic sense (which sits alongside the middle class, in a *class* sense—with both defending capital as a perpetually decaying structure that operates through wage/labor theft according to weaponized bureaucracy during crisis, class sentiment and Faustian bargains; i.e., harmful conditioning whose disguised ultimatums prey on various stigmas, biases and dogma riddled within canon to condition their employees to fight the good fight *against* the underclass as an advertised threat loaded with connotations of foreign/internal plots.

Erstwhile, as said "threats" are met with waves of terror, **vice-character** personas, and moral panics, they splash back into these same paranoid workers; they are slowly convinced to surrender **total power** to the elite under perceived states of emergency against imaginary enemies, trading **basic human rights** for false power and **genocidal legislation** inside **the zombie police state** (neoliberal illusions of "hollow victory" and Quixotic moral superiority/exceptionalism). It's a scam, a bad game with only one rigged winner: the owner class franchising war as copaganda *and* the Military Industrial Complex through war simulators. The illusion, like a franchise, becomes something to grow into and endorse more and more as time goes on; i.e., into adulthood ([source](#)).

It's both business-as-usual and an apocalypse for the middle class to purchase and shudder about, on the usual cartographic refrains (exhibit 1a1a1h2a1).

Indeed, confrontation with "Caesar"—the living dead having access to militarized state positions of power—is generally a canonical worst-case scenario: a zombie police state that destroys everyone, including those tacitly assigned to benefit from its atrocities within the middle class. Viewed backwards, capital marches forwards to eat workers born and bred on neoliberal notions of false power and overcoming impossible odds during medieval regressions (which videogames

are made to deliver inside their map-like spaces imitating extratextual examples of said regressions).

In *Myth*, the living in the present aren't just invaded by the past, but by the opportunistic "fallen lords" of older victories outlined by their own, undead villainy as something that lives on in the absence of memory during state decay. You're literally fighting the West's older legendary past exposed in the present space-and-time as abominable; i.e., eager to colonize the pastoral map said territories have slowly become warlike towards. Unable to reconcile these zombie heroes with what they already know of history and its larger-than-life variants, Bungie's West becomes ignominiously trapped inside an endless, cannibalistic cycle of war pitting army against army on open ground.

This includes their minds, hopelessly locked in a fragmenting loop that flows on historical-material lines towards the state: a never-ending cycle, shifting back and forth between good and evil kings (which the game describes as the Light and the Dark). [As the Narrator explains during the sequel's epilogue](#), the best the Light can hope for is inheritance—dominion passing "to men or to monsters," shifting uncannily across the paradoxical image of their withered-yet-strong heroic bodies; their red-cloaked, Dracula-grade imperium's zombie dictatorship ("Bad Ash" wearing such a cape when he sacks Arthur's castle, below); their hags and their conspicuously muscular, hypermasculine giants. All generate echoes of *Frankenstein*, minus that novel's Promethean satire or irony while fighting over the fire of the gods through futile heroic revenge: "The book is mine!" and "Do *you* want a little?" Such blindly campy squabbles (re: Raimi's silliness conforming to the same basic quest) are no different than wars over rings and crowns, vampirism in this case being a fascist doppelganger vying for power and knowledge as normally locked up in Arthur's castle, his war chest (Raimi's, but also Bungie's "Madrigal").



seeking revenge as monstrous-feminine men (the killer himbo) classically do.

For example, the Watcher, one of Balor's generals (exhibit 41a1), is a falchion-carrying necromancer obsessed with the Total Codex (nods to the Necronomicon—a book [according to Lovecraft] written by a mad Arab) to cheat death, thus outlive his enemies: the Sauron stratagem, with bits of *Evil Dead*, *He-Man*, the Ulster Cycle, Scandinavian mythology, and Hitler's fragmented approach to bureaucracy all thrown into the same blender with a straight face.

In short, it's what these older-upon-older dude bros—drunk on ghosts of empire and war—shamelessly read when they build *their* undead worlds on top of older "Roman" graveyards that never quite existed; i.e., a place to be king, but at what cost? It's basically the straight, cis-het man's thorough unhealthy idea of intimacy through demon BDSM/calculated risk reaping nature as usual: death by the sword, before dishonor, but no homo!

In short, *Myth* is chockful of spectres of Caesar, romancing the Nazi leadership (and Axis Powers) in queer-adjacent zombie language pointing to capital as defended by these jackals; i.e., male-centric doubles of the imaginary past akin to Sam Raimi's aforementioned *Army of Darkness*, having zero camp or girls (though Shiver does appear in the second game as a hag):

*Army of Darkness* is sexist at heart. War is the province of man, and Ash can only be challenged by his medieval counterpart, the skeleton king. Virtually identical, these two rivals are divided by an arbitrary notion: the Necronomicon. They fight over the book and, more to the point, the girl. Yet, when the battle is won, she is forgotten. Ash saves the past, and returns to the present, full of himself ([source](#): Persephone van der Waard's "*Army of Darkness: Valorizing the Idiot Hero*").

To it, *Myth* is literally dead dogma—just the dudes, Quixotically duking it out with their eco-fascist, Lovecraft-grade [JO crystals](#) preying on "Europe"; i.e., like Hitler, it's so much less formidable and more stupid than what those mantled with empire see themselves as, truth both stranger than fiction and somehow married to it to epitomize the shared absurdity (the JO crystal's "magic" is about as real as the Fallen Lords' occult practices, exhibit 41a1). It becomes a preponderance of

charge up and JO - 38 (houston)

Reply to: [pers-660130682@craigslist.org](mailto:pers-660130682@craigslist.org)  
Date: 2008-04-28, 7:56PM CDT



perpetual embarrassment:

([source](#): *Reddit*)

The crystal I wear around my neck contains an essence that gets recharged when I jack it with a bro who also has a crystal. It gives me confidence at work, home, social situations, etc. Nobody knows it's a JO crystal but me and my bro. I have seen it glow white while jerking it with a bud that's how I know this is real. You can come over for as long as you want but I need a picture of you preferably wearing a crystal before I waste my time.



In turn, the *cryptomimetic* cycle grinds its gears, leaving the audience with the usual middle-class, weird canonical nerd's abject, Man-Box brainchildren, fawning homosocially over the ghost of the counterfeit as manly (or monstrous-feminine; e.g., Shiver or the Watcher) by virtue of Gothic history (real and imaginary) coming back around; re (from earlier in this volume):

Per the process of abjection, the canonical goal is always to kill the past as undead, hence save the future for different

in-groups afraid of zombies. But they can't monopolize the procedure (or its violence) inside the state of exception. Whether for witches, witch hunters, or one disguised as the other (undercover cops/rebels), it's like a washing machine stuck on spin cycle; i.e., always spinning with us *inside* it, trying to get clean in the same soapy water as haunted by various inescapable ghosts (of the counterfeit, of Caesar or Marx).

While the genre of Nazi zombies (campy or not) *is* prolific unto itself, the 20th century is especially productive. Full of such shirtless, testosterone-fueled revivals, Bungie unironically synonymizes sex with war (the naked Greco-Roman wrestlers of yore) to constitute a moribund, wish fulfillment's hauntological "return to (former, imaginary) greatness" that is functionally no different than Hitler's or Mussolini's, but also America and Great Britain's. The same pro-state reality extends to any fascist or fash-adjacent form insofar as they all play with the same mythology defending capital through undead military revisionism. As something to reinvent inside of itself, the middle class routinely inherit the same basic power fantasy—one where *you're* the daddy aping the zombie "original" that, per Plato's simulacrum, never existed but, as a matter of *cryptomimesis vis-à-vis* capital's usual horrors, carries on copying itself through profit!

The moral, here, is that war begets war in Capitalist Realism, thus rape unto profit unto "Caesar" as Satanic Panic and Red Scare (the conflating of Nazis with Communists as "gay"); i.e., the Cycle of Kings' closeted queerness through open war prone to rejection, self-hatred, dishonesty, anguish, feelings of incorrectness, expendability, damage, frustration, instability, inadequacy and alienation, etc, as historical-material byproducts of capital and its own "stuck" loops: the rise and fall of "Rome" *illustrating* capital as it exists presently (whose subversion starts with camping the canonical freezing of the tyrant, exhibit 41a2).

Per *Myth*, the heady toxic masculinity and bigoted, Crusader-style heroism (generally over contested lands; e.g., Jerusalem or the Middle East at large) is literally an undead, old boys' club tied to profit as a doomed cycle of monarchic fakery and lies ("war is a disease"); i.e., one that borrows from its own quarantine nostalgia's "promiscuous" (warlike) histories to repeat them, hence the game and the profit motive for which it entails, as thoroughly "queer" in abject language; e.g., the Total Codex a wealth of singular knowledge, on par with Jack Torrance's book ("All work and no play..."), referring to the game at large as chasing its own tail (the Promethean moral being the Codex contains future predictions about past events revived in present moments—Capitalism-in-small, in other words). Size difference denotes the capacity for infection, lubrication (unto capital and state mechanisms), and psychosexual, egregore-style curiosities about inversion fears/uneven playing fields and what those gigantic insertions feel like ("suffering to the conquered"), etc: "The Watcher has entered Covenant from the north, and his tireless undead are raping the old city a second time; tearing down what few

structures stand in their way, and choking the sky with dust and smoke. That he wants the book which now rests at the bottom of my pack is clear" ([source](#): Mythipedia). Said knowledge is already compiled and sought after.

Similar to misogyny and anti-Semitism (or any xenophobia), queerness and fascism are historically coerced as a matter of *normative* compulsion—to preview through war ("seeing how the other side lives"). War is sex, is rape, is conquest as a undead crime of opportunity speaking to the usual historical-material trends; conquest is "gay" (false, illegitimate, incorrect, imposturous) and straight (true, legitimate, correct, not imposturous) all at once, coming out of the same legendary past (the good and bad team) to repeat its own "himbo comorbidities"—i.e., necrophilic social-psychosexual rituals predicated on homophobic conditions that, per the usual heteronormative distributions of power and knowledge (the fire of the gods), yield a very particular pecking order so common to the monomyth, thus videogames and other popular media forms; re: leaders, officers, batmen/servants



(controllable and non-controllable units) dating back to Alexander the Great's own problematic but tolerated<sup>236</sup> double standards.

(*exhibit 41a1*: [Source](#): Mythipedia. *The Watcher*, styling himself "the mad goat of the fens," is an allusion to Lovecraft's female entity, *Shub-Niggurath* [the *n*-word is literally inside the name, passed off as alien gibberish], aka "The Black

<sup>236</sup> As I write in [Volume One](#):

The queerness of someone would have been permitted insofar as they were granted an exception as a person of means; e.g., a politician, 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).

Per modern fantasy stories that capitalize on closeted things, Tolkien hinted at bondage, whereas someone like Terry Goodkind has openly pedophilic villains because the horrors of empire are extratextually out in the open; i.e., that openly violate the kinds of moral arbitrations that a global murderer like the Watcher wouldn't pause to entertain! In the late 20th and 21st centuries, then, evil isn't a black unspeakable shape; it's ugly and rarefied in ways Tolkien wouldn't dare to speak out loud (re: "the love that dare not speak its name!"). Bungie does the same thing as Goodkind, albeit in a videogame format singing praises (the tyrant's plea) to such undead hedonists and their awful deeds.

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young" [[source](#): Fandom]. In a story largely without women or feminine men, *Myth I* pits statuesque, queer-coded men like the Watcher as aping Lord Humongous; i.e., in a wasteland setting previously mapped out for war in all the usual "Roman" ways. Pitted against each other as the promised monstrous-feminine reward, there is always another gay ghost of Caesar to put out on the field, then chase down and challenge. While there are more varied monstrous-feminine in the sequel—e.g. *Shiver*, the *Deceiver* and *Soulblighter*, who we'll examine in a bit—all the generals you see in the original *Myth* are jacked, athletic combatants: half-naked melee fighters, as are the barefoot, long-haired, witch-like necromancer units called "shades" [who, apart from their fearsome AoE magic, carry swords]: ass clowns in the same sodomy circus propping empire up!

[[source](#): Mythipedia]



In short, the fears of empire manifest milestone prey haunting the endless graveyards—a safari the player hunts inside, looking for mystical, big-game trophies to debride from empire to restore its straightness, mid-Satanic-Panic; i.e., dreams of Napoleon, fighting man-to-man per the game's overarching "conquer the conqueror" fantasy "cleaning house": search, seek and destroy human-sized "power targets" [with one of two exceptions, there are no destroyable buildings, in-game]. Not every level has such a target, but the biggest targets in *Myth* are always the Fallen Lords [or shades]. It's nature turned unto empire as "an unweeded garden grown to seed," but the usual natures [mostly workers, here] are still antagonized and put to work as cheaply as possible by capital; i.e., "pimped out" in order to perpetuate empire—a cycle the game calls "men or monsters"; re: men and non-men, but the non-men [queers] look suspiciously like straight men jacking it to Caesar's ghost, or Alexander's: gay meat wizards!

Bungie's death theatre—dancing with these mighty abject corpses—is surprisingly fun [re: Sarkeesian]. Indeed, the game was one of my favorites, growing up, and as a trans woman, I can still attest to its intoxicating bouquet having seduced me as a child [the expansive, no-nonsense lore inspired my own faux-medieval fictions]. To it, I never questioned Bungie's problematic mythos [or Lovecraft's or Tolkien's] until after I came out of the closet [and learned about Walpole's rape castles]!

So play with these gay Nazis if you want, but we need to camp them with ludo-Gothic BDSM while doing so. Otherwise, canon simply lynches us fags by roping us in with said "Romans"; i.e., the latter defending America-in-disguise by playing the



*fall guys they project onto us: punch the Nazi, punch the Commie—same difference to capital.)*

"Frailty, thy name is woman!" While a Promethean, monstrous-feminine aspect of death pervades Balor and those around him—i.e., his evil, motley-crew organization of gay meat wizards pursuing merciless vengeance against their good doubles (the ragtag Nine, good wizards called "avatara")—Balor's *current* conqueror status owes itself to a special force inside him/appointed to him: the spirit of the Leveler as something he arbitrarily "found," which destroys him during Bungie's nonstop race to the proverbial (and false) finish. Itself a moving goalpost, one designed to keep capital flowing through nature back towards the elite, the Cycle of Kings operates characteristically through black magic, heavy metal, and drug use (often going hand-in-hand as a pulpy [and popular] "brand"; e.g., Black Sabbath's enduring legacy established by playing with old Gothic devices inside a fresh revival of them), as well as Dracula-style, no-holds-barred (or surrender) reciprocation.



([source: Mythipedia](#))

For instance, while the Watcher eats his victims and himself alive (a walking fetish/cliché embodying "death before dishonor" but honor is a myth), any such "Achilles egregore" is always strong in appearance, but weak in defeat as foregone; i.e., hiding a fatal flaw that makes him a reliable and easy sacrifice to the heroes exploiting him playing at false rebels. When you kill the Watcher towards the end of the game, he has been turned to stone,

completely helpless:

We held Soulblighter at the Gjol long enough to let Alric spring his trap on the Watcher. Turned out I was right about those arrows: Alric had been working on them since we entered the marsh two weeks ago, and they were tipped with fragments of bone from the Watcher's arm. I sure wouldn't have wanted to get stuck with one, but apparently they turned the Watcher into stone, leaving him paralyzed and helpless. But he didn't die. Thirty berserks chosen to accompany the archers tore through the enemy and piled the bodies of the dead at the Watcher's feet, but all were killed before they could deliver the final blow ([ibid.](#)).

This "shrugging of Atlas" Voodoo doll illustrates "the Leveler" as a kayfabe process, unfolding through Caesar's correct-incorrect likenesses (the general following the leader like Boromir follows Aragorn, only to get "feathered" with arrows, this time fired by the Legion's "guerrillas" playing white Indians); i.e., aping the man-in-charge as thoroughly mortal, but also *reprobate*<sup>237</sup>.

Like Hitler's Reinhardt Heydrich, the Watcher's ignominious killing is the assassination of an occupying army's seemingly invincible hangman, making the Legion Bungie's implied, good-guy liberators of "Prague" (from the "golem," as it were). To it, the Watcher dies not a *glorious* death, but a *pathetic* one belonging a larger (and recursive) concentric copaganda scheme; i.e., our Frankensteinian male Medusa being raped as a matter of street justice between cops playing rebels on either side: frozen, then shattered with a taste of his own medicine fired back into him (to that, it's actually quite satisfying to kick the Numinous statue in the balls while he can't fight back, but also not very sporting of us<sup>238</sup>)!

By extension, the same basic flaws apply to Balor falling unto Alric, whose dubious mantle actually stems from medieval thought—death being the great leveler of kings and peasants alike—but also the modern fascist idea of a historical-material cycle relaid in pre-fascist language (re: the Neo-Gothic). Trapped inside this language (which Bungie depicts on fragments of paper comparable to Hamlet's commonplace book, itself a volume of revenge), the good guys must quickly pull down and deface all perceived dictators (after doing a double-take to account for their likeness-unlikeness to themselves).

Except, the true enemy (for the proletariat and nature) isn't Balor and his generals, but Capitalism bombastically dressed up as "past" and projected forwards, again and again across the same "Gothic" wavelength, by rite of feudal succession—of dynastic primacy shoved out of the Gothic castle and onto the fields of endless war and death (which make up the same basic chronotope); i.e., by weird canonical nerds thinking they're "Vikings" or "ancient Germanic tribes" fighting "Rome" (again, with no girls in sight). All unfold through Man Box "prison sex" rituals, Alric masterminding the latest foray against the echo of "Caesar" he, himself, will one day become (more on this, in "No Fury").

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<sup>237</sup> Case in point, Shakespeare would call such likenesses "walking shadows," the heroic history's routine rise and fall seemingly already written out and commented on rather glumly (to say the least) by Macbeth: "It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing" ([source](#)). With Bungie, it's all the same mixture of witchcraft, prophecy and murder—Hecate (the Fates, relaid as witches) reminding kings, but also "kings" (the middle class), that they're rather fucked; i.e., dead and dickish: "something wicked!" The Watcher is wicked, but merely a dark reflection that suggests the Legion are, too, and will be again when they rise from the grave!

<sup>238</sup> I.e., by the audience, in general. While I'd say, "all's fair in love and war" as far as killing the Watcher goes, the target audience (white straight men) is effectively killing themselves and theirs; i.e., on par with Arthur and Mordred, or some such "end times/Second Coming."

In truth, fascism serves capital by acting out Rome's tragic fall, projected onto various DARVO scapegoats (queer or otherwise) for our vigilantes to then seek out with righteous impunity (re: "burying the gay" letting gays *be* gay so long as they die in service to capital's continuation: by putting on the zombie fetish gear and damned crown). It's all castle doctrine—a dialectic of weak/strong shelter and aliens: "Hard times create strong men, strong men create good times, good times create weak men, and weak men create hard times."

As mentioned at the start of "The Imperial Boomerang" subchapter, historian Bret Devereaux writes, "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](#): "Hard Times Don't Make Strong Soldiers," 2020). Just as Caesar historically demonized those *he* conquered—i.e., as terrorist savages fighting dirty from the shadows<sup>239</sup> *against* the state (not for it as fascists do)—Bungie connects "terrorism" to the embarrassing destruction of what was built by "Caesar" as attacked by his vengeful ghost: *senseless* destruction, versus the usefully "glorious" propaganda battles of a vandalized past that, through various concentric myths, led and leads to *Pax Imperium* in its current, glorious (and capitalistic) forms.

All roads lead to Rome; those in *Myth* occupy both strategies at once, fueling capital in between reality and imagination through liminal expression flowing power *towards* the state. All throughout, the oscillating rhetoric of fascism's weak/strong argument pervades Bungie's gameworld, less hyphenating and more flipping on/off like a light switch (the momentum shift). The balloon-like inflation/deflation of the same basic devices' hubris and self-esteem is shared between different warring parties (the Light and the Dark) over the same land and titles; i.e., like Macbeth's own Cycle of Kings.

To that, the soldiers of *Myth*'s temporally ambiguous "present day" must be strong by avoiding degenerate weakness *this time*, thus sacrificing themselves through a giant double implying their eventual doom; i.e., "the way of all flesh"; e.g., the Watcher laid low for the good of "pure" empire learned from hard-fought lessons that are, themselves, regularly forgotten and passed down *in absentia/persona non grata* (the absentee savior and unwelcome brutalizer one in the same); i.e., the past literally becoming gay to grapple with like Caesar's ghost through copies of copies of copies trapped inside the same circle of violence (from Balor to Gwyn, Lord of Cinder to Smaug the Stupendous, etc).

The Watcher was merely a chip off the old block, though, *Balor* embodying said past as lacking the strength to remain vigilant at its highest level. This works as a cycle that never ends. As "true evil" first gains a foothold, then ultimately prevails by destroying Rome from within, Bungie effectively turns strength inside-

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<sup>239</sup> For an illuminating counterexample of such terrorist argumentation (re: counterterrorism reversing the binary in service to workers), consider Robert B. Asprey's 1994 exhaustive and informative book, [War in the Shadows: the Guerrilla in History](#).

out and outside-in (the appearance of genocide and rape—normally far-off, during the liminal hauntology of war—gets uncomfortably close to home through Balor). Hero worship is hero worship, though; even when the hero is tragic, fallen, and ambiguously gay (e.g., Count Dracula), killing them is the point, constituting the fascist cult of death the Watcher and Balor belong to, and which Bungie gets off on: war as a candy-like drug made by millionaires in service to billionaires and the profit motive, Willy-Wonka-style, but also *rape* tied to war per the process of abjection making such things—gargoyleish givers and receivers—ubiquitous.

([source](#): *Mythipedia*)



Of course, Bungie disassociates like all canonical authors, presenting this imaginary threat (the ghost of the counterfeit) as a Pygmalion's shadow of its former self grappling with temptation; i.e., a desire to be recognized. Pride is Balor's Achilles' heel, imperial death stalled by forcing the personification of death (the *Übermensch*) to recollect his former, human self *before* the fall; i.e., in opposition to a *foreign*, queer-coded menace: gay werewolves (*Untermensch*)!

"Antagonize nature; put it to work as cheaply as possible." To it, the game's lycanthropes are the

Myrkridia, [a horrific race of ancient, bestial flesh-eaters](#)<sup>240</sup> known for making pyramids of their enemies' skulls (a historical abjection onto imaginary beings that ancient conquerors have done regarding present atrocities; e.g., Tamerlane to the Pacific Theatre in WW2); i.e., the backstabbing Jews, in this case, being ancient barbarians that Balor's vigilant past self, Connacht, grew lax about, pursuant to him being owed a prize for having fallen on his sword to save empire from these degenerate aliens to begin with (whose back-and-forth death in the same contested territory is, again, settler colonialism in action).

During their final confrontation, then, Alric has "set the table," having killed the Watcher (who the Deceiver had previously nearly killed in a famous offscreen

<sup>240</sup> Comparable to werewolves in appearance, a medieval cryptonym for rape, sodomy and bestiality, but also raw, deviant, non-English sexuality as warlike; i.e., anti-Semitism in the flesh; e.g., Alcide from *True Blood*.

duel, before later being flung himself into an icy prison<sup>241</sup>); meanwhile, Shiver is out of the picture thanks to Rabican's duel with her at Madrigal; and Soulblighter was turned back at the Gjol before the Watcher's assassination, his present whereabouts unknown.

Having an exclusive audience with the tyrant, then, Alric plays his trump card: he plants the battle standard of the Leveler's former enemies before Balor, forcing him to remember a time when he was more alive in service of the state and

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<sup>241</sup> These stories are expressed between the first game and the second. From the first, the Narrator writes,

The Watcher drove his army without rest through the fleeing remnants of Rabican's forces and into Seven Gates. We are there now, inside the pass, where he then clashed with The Deceiver on his way east. The bodies of the undead are everywhere, melted and broken. It seems inconceivable that anything could have survived. I don't know why he attacked The Deceiver, unless somehow he found out what was going on in Silvermines.

One of the veterans said that these two had it out after the battle for Tyr, twelve years ago, and that the Watcher barely survived. I have a feeling the real reasons for what happened today go back even farther than that. Whatever the case, while the battle raged only a few miles away and we thought the Watcher was coming for us next, I was glad nobody had asked me to carry his damned arm ([source](#): Mythipedia).

From the second, the Narrator (different character, same voice actor) writes,

Twelve Motion Jeweled Skull says he was last here sixty years ago, fighting alongside the likes of Durak and Turgeis with Burning Steel. They caught The Deceiver and the remnants of his army in this very defile and here destroyed them. Today the Dramus River is frozen solid, but back then it was a muddy torrent of melted snow and ice brought on by the eruption of Tharsis. The Deceiver was plunged into the river and swept far downstream, his scepter sinking to the bottom. I asked Twelve Motion why King Alric believes The Deceiver will throw in with our lot. He explained how The Deceiver has been frozen in a half-death beneath the river, clinging to life through sorcery alone, with no power left to free himself. The King believes that if we were to revive him and return the scepter, the focus of his power, he would no doubt join our cause ([source](#): Mythipedia).

and

Does Soulblighter seek to enlist the aid of yet another of his former allies? It seems unlikely once you consider the intense hatred the rest of the Fallen Lords had for The Deceiver. Only Balor seemed capable of holding them together, and even he was not always successful. Many stories from the Great War tell of open discord between the Fallen Lords. Now we will take advantage of it ([source](#): Mythipedia).

Across titles and matches, the "enemy of my enemy" quality of these stories only compounds, insofar as all share the same space and time, and rely not just on the same characters doubled, but their social relationships marrying reality to legend (as the chronotope does); i.e., pertaining to old rivalries between them as a matter of cross-generational intrigue. Its methodical backdrop likewise works to get more mileage out of footnotes material; i.e., in ways that have it playing out on various in-game registers—the journal entries, but also on the battlefield as an extension of the developers' imaginations and the players' controlling the same avatars for their own reasons. They can change allegiance at the drop of a hat, doing so as a matter of history conveyed by us, as cruel gods, controlling them, and they us, in return.

In short, such stories-in-stories invite multimedia speculation by different groups consuming the same basic material; i.e., allowing me to return to it, years afterwards, to dissect and camp Bungie's built world inside my own book project. Their canon is mine to camp, one author to another.

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
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less corrupted by imperial power in a fascist, hauntological way. It's the best Alric can hope for, his entire army devastated by the unstoppable warrior king (the vast majority sacrificed in front of Balor's stolen fortress, letting Alric spring yet-another-trap, Gandalf-style, but actually coming from Odysseus against the Trojans [with Athena's help] if you go back far enough).



The gambit is similar to Top Dollar's, except it's more of a stalling tactic, one that lets Alric show Balor a magic stone (exhibit 41a2) called "[an Eblis](#)." Its exact nature is unknown and unexplained, in-game, but it functions similar to the lost seeing stones from *Lord of the Rings* (exhibit 41a): showing a king his own death, his own false status as undefeated, etc (this particular *deus ex machina* being omniscience).

But beyond the stone itself is another a clue: the aforementioned battle standard of the Myrkridia, a race of vampire-like werewolf beings that Balor has started to emulate; i.e., the great fortress of the Trow he lords over, Rhiannon (fairy Castle of Queen Maeb occupied by an evil king like what Maligant from *First Knight* would describe, or Monty Python call "Castle Anthrax"), circled by moats of fresh bloodspill—that of Alric's sacrificial army! Thus, the story antagonizes *empire* and puts *it* to work against itself as cheaply as possible (re: the Battle of the Five Armies, a world war where no heroes or victors exist, but Capitalism still happens, anyways)! When this happens, the land is redivided along fresh settler-colonial boundaries, colonizing itself through the same settler arguments on the same maps: "We were here first!" In the usual settler colonial fashion, the claimants fabricate their ties to the land, then defend said territories in bad faith against a necessary scapegoat (an indigenous element to said land that can be attacked by the colonizer playing the native). To it, state power is a myth that serves itself, not its figureheads!

As such, Alric—the story's Gandalf—chastises the *current* tyrant in the Cycle of Kings, one whose head has grown too big in this bourgeois, predatory scheme: "Know your place in the cycle; surrender your crown, thus your head!" (spoke Dumbledore calmly). Balor's recalcitrance is the entirely the point; he *needs* to be strong and unwilling so the harvest is plentiful (the plot to Monolith's *Blood*, in other words, but inverted to serve the good-coded empire by eating the bad-coded empire as sharing the same space). No one wants to be Jesus (the King of the

Jews), rendering unto Caesar that which is Caesar's; i.e., his just deserts, meaning "deserving reward *or* punishment" ([source](#): Marriam-Webster).

Here, the punishment *is* the reward, which Balor balks at (a bit like Mr. Bean's teddy bear before Rowan Atkinson shoves a paintbrush up its ass). He's a dick, to be sure, but Alric the seer—the landlord spirit of Capitalism lecturing the gay ghost of revenge (fascism conflated with Communism just as Caesar is to Jesus, no less)—is arguably much worse: an enabler to the petty pace of endless bloodshed, all made in service to profit by hijacking the entire mythos to do so!

Like Caesar *or* Jesus, the doomed outcome puts brutality on top of brutality in service to capital and profit; i.e., "both sides" do it, but one is conspicuously undead (thus evil and queer), the other functionally undead through a goodly seer using the same witch hunter rhetoric to nobly purge land and home of fascism (and other undesirable elements). It's a Crusade, one fought to keep empire strong while, in the same breath, excising Communism entirely!

To it, *Myth* romances the hell out of ritual sacrifice tied to war and empire, and its initial appeal admittedly lies in how seriously it treats the subject matter. There's none of the semi-campy gallantry that Raimi supplies, nor Tolkien's gay batman schtick/queer allegory with Frodo and Sam, nor peppy uplifting music to parade your accomplishments. What little music there is usually plays<sup>242</sup> during the narration scenes, sounding quaintly tragic, rueful and grave; e.g., the "[Gate of Storms](#)" narration describing what's in essence a Nazi blitz through the Ardennes: "Soulblighter cannot be stopped. His armies foul the land south of us for half a thousand miles, and his search for The Summoner has left none alive within his reach. The cities of Scales, Covenant and Tyr have all fallen to him in the last three weeks. It seems that too many years of peace have softened the once legendary armies of the West. Rabican, Murgan and Maeldun have been dead sixty years, and today only Alric remains of the great leaders who defeated the Fallen Lords" ([source](#): Mythipedia).

In other words, "I want a hero!" uttered ironically by Lord Byron, becomes "I need a hero!" per Bonnie Tyler without Byron's irony. "Save us from the evil, gay barbarian foreign plot, King Arthur!" Ghosts of ghosts of ghosts haunt a shared chronotope between monomyth fictions, bearing a Promethean stamp we debate with through ludic interpretations of combat, succession and collapse.

Like *He-Man's* Prince Adam, these himbos of "yore" aren't strong-thighed bargemen, but well-educated, properly fed princes of the universe. They're luxurious and privileged—both strong and entitled enough to bend the fulcrum of guilt upon which Alric's gambit depends, yet hardy and self-centered enough to weather the tree of woe that older weird authors hung Conan on. Assimilation is assimilation, the blood of Caesar no more "real" than Christ's, yet spikes the

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<sup>242</sup> Victory music *does* play after each level, but it always sounds like someone died—a dirge for the world's saddest funeral, one aimed at incels and MGTOW types (who would eventually emerge, in force, to become endemic to internet discourse: during Gamergate, less than two decades later).

context of the tasty Kool-Aid with poisonous circumstance: a Last Supper drip-fed via diminishing returns. *Myth* ferries such trickle-down ambrosia into players' power-starved brains; i.e., by middle-class auteurs (re: Bungie) lobbying for the same chase of glory that eluded Lovecraft or Howard, a century ago:



([source: Mythipedia](#))

Bungie apes the same tyrannical desire; i.e., to be strong enough to die bravely to serve the state's lies (re: Heinlein's Competent Man). It's warrior-Jesus bread-and-circus, cherry-picking the most manly (at times, questionably queer) elements of sacrificial heroism to uphold capital in a half-real, neoliberal sense: the lobotomized, dogmatic status quo turned into little bourgeois action figures. They become the body and blood of Christ, wafers and wine the

middle class imbibe and inhabit like a Rabelaisian carnival—a secret-identity martyr grappling with an openly undead mutineer (re: Skeletor, but also Jojo and the Pillar Men), doubling Christ in either respect: "We've come to be the rulers of you all!"

As such, Bungie really gives it to you straight: the world is fucked and our dying heroes must return *just enough* to push things out of the *current* slump (the second game is more politically complex, involving alliances and turncoats, but also token cops, golems and werewolves). It feels more like an endless return to tradition, yearning for the revival of revamped manly spellswords (re: sages and meat wizards, above) through guy-on-guy violence; i.e., so-called "real men" paradoxically being made up—amounting hilariously to "ancient" Nazi frottage the likes of which would make even [Cockrub Warriors](#) green with envy (and undoubtedly rub off on them)! Gay and/or Nazi, there's no avoiding crucifixion (a



classical punishment by the Romans); the best Bungie's West can hope for is dignity in defeat, mid-stigmata:

([source: Mythipedia](#))

Aping Caesar and Jesus in and on the same surfaces and thresholds (the same bodies fighting on the same battlefields), *Myth* is simply Capitalism taken to its logical conclusion: a giant zombie eating itself (more on this idea

specifically during "The Monomyth" conclusion).



Like Tolkien, there's also a progression between world wars as Bungie presents them. In *Myth I*, life is repeatedly stressed as appallingly cheap, in-game (a fiscal strategy of nations trading resources through manpower as efficient profit); in *Myth II*, such sacrifices are demanded, presuming a miracle rescue unfolding, last-second, on the cusp of total destruction. Such strategies are less "new" and more translated by capital out of older forms hitting on the same cycles; i.e., into cartoon versions of the past with a hauntological flavor evoking capital operating as usual. Everything is solemn and funeral in a richly developed world—one laid to waste over and over through evocations of its own routine destruction illustrating capital in small, mapped out, told through ghosts of "Rome" and "Gay Caesar." The game (and its palimpsests) are *very* consistent in this respect, and it's here we see how things are portrayed from a hypercanonical, high-Biblical perspective.

From a *dialectical-material* standpoint, recall that monsters are poetic lenses that argue back and forth per the dualistic storage (and optional irony) of values, taboos and trauma; they share the same spaces as liberation and enslavement, exploitation and agency. Here, *Myth's* usage/reception is strictly canonical, but also divided in two perfect sides; i.e., Nietzsche's dialectic of Apollo and Dionysus, unironically blaming degeneracy and resentment for the fall of civilization, while resorting to such methods to keep things the same: a hero *must* die.

Faced with the reality of how far he has fallen inside the fascist cult of death eating empire from within, Balor the former statesman and protector (still wearing his white armor) sees himself as a human that became a zombie—e.g., like He-Man realizing he's Skeletor—but also a rat, a vampire, an "incorrect" outlaw not-man: queer vermin without prestige, but still a giant to topple/gang rape (exhibit 41a) during the *Beowulf*-style, master/apprentice's undead kayfabe momentum shift; i.e., struck with Alric's crystal logic as its own kind of mirror argument

For all the sorcery that we have told to thee  
 They call us demons from Hell [...]  
 I'm not burning, look inside  
 Crystal Logic's what you'll find (Manilla Road's "[Crystal Logic](#)," 1983).

that, as it happened to all his generals, now awaits Balor, too! In short, Alric and the Nine are good doubles—Jedi-like witch cops given total power to police their fascist, wicked-witch, false-rebellious brethren through moderation and guilt, but also anything associated with them; i.e., anything that isn't aligned with Alric and the sacrosanct West. Shamed, Balor bowing his head, exposes his neck to Alric as Hitler does to his enemies: the Roman fool falling on his sword through ritual suicide. So does the crown (and its power) fall back into the usual owners' hands.

It's important to remember that canon equivocates Communism (and queerness) with such a downfall. These comparisons happen despite overtly

Communist stereotypes not existing in the first game (the sequel, as we shall see, explores different avenues for bigotry in its evil, anti-Semitic generals). Instead, the latter is blamed for said decay by design. And why shouldn't it? Inside a world divided as "the Light" and "the Dark," nuance isn't even a thing of the past; it arguably doesn't exist! Communism takes nuance; Capitalism does not.

To it, the Nine are also tyrants, but "good" ones who gaslight, gatekeep, girl boss (making Balor our himbo girl boss/Wicked Witch of the West). The decay is treated as inevitable; i.e., a Cycle of Kings whose invariable heroes foist the same arguments onto the audience—of good times leading to weak men, to bad times (thanks to gay men giving into "darkness"), to strong men (who reject the darkness)—merely passing the mantle of power back and forth. Its "solution" is merely a circle-jerk, one disturbingly similar to Western liberal democracy under *Pax Americana*, "aping Rome" per its circular ruins but also its circular *tyrants* wearing the same crowns: war is bad, then good again (re: Howard Zinn's "[Private Ryan Saves War](#)," 1998).



([source](#): *Mythipedia*)

Bungie's centrist treatment of war is a cycle, then, one meant to perpetuate itself (thus Capitalism) through tyrants good and bad. In short, *no* sacrifice is too great to maintain empire's

endless coronations; there is only pure good and pure bad committing atrocity after atrocity against themselves, Alric emerging among the goodly Nine to become a god-king haunted by Caesar as Brutus was: "Once we have recovered the Ibis Crown," he declared, "Llancarfan will once more be the seat of the Cath Bruig Empire with myself as Emperor. The people will draw strength from me and we will go forth and strike down our enemies. Once they have been defeated we will rebuild the Empire to its former glory" ([source](#): *Mythipedia*).

Bear in mind, this is from the *second* game, one where the wise old seer—having formerly chastised Darth Vader in service to empire and the elite—takes up the same mantle of empire; i.e., to overcome the guilt at killing his former friend: Balor a childhood hero out of Alric's time as a boy that Soulblighter haunts the old man's dreams with: "You killed my friend!"

To it, Alric the aging monarch lives unusually long like Beowulf or Aragorn do—though less long than Methuselah from the Bible, because *Myth* treats such lifespans as unnaturally gained; i.e., bad sacrifices, not good ones whose "proper

magic<sup>243</sup>" lasts just long enough to let the hero live and die as good, then return *from* the grave as bad Fallen Lords, wielding evil magics ("and their terrible sorcery was without equal in the West," [source](#): Mythipedia). These mirror the good while being visibly stronger than them, thus threatening all the genocide Connacht (and his ilk) had to do, once upon a time. It's imperial DARVO in action, dredging up the past to obfuscate, then rebury it. In time, Alric will return as the Leveler for some other Gandalf to sacrifice (with no attempt by Bungie to suggest state shift, the cycle optimistically going on forever—a blind critique hitting the nail on the head by illustrating Capitalism as well as Bungie does).

As part of the same apologia, this alternate, "legitimate" bloodline is, itself, "ripped off." Aping Tolkien's *Return of the King* by having Aragorn—once a nameless ranger wandering the wilds—miraculously return and restore Gondor and its "legitimate" bloodline<sup>244</sup> to a former imaginary glory (to challenge Sauron, the

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<sup>243</sup> It's worth noting that the magic of the avatars and the shades are virtually identical, color-coded differently like the Jedi and Sith's famous lightsabers (though in *Myth's* case it's blue and green, mirroring the ancient Babylonian racing teams: "Bread and circuses, that's all the common people want," [source](#)).



<sup>244</sup> Said lineage's patrilineal descent is feted and restored through the usual medieval, racist, might-makes-might procession of cautionary violence Tolkien worshipped and reified in his own canon; re: Dr. Stephen Shapiro writing to Reddix.com in 2003 about *Lord of the Rings*, the movies:

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 Nordicist convictions. He thinks the Northern races had a culture and it was carried in the blood ([source](#)).

In openly fascist disputes, the status quo cannibalizing itself (usually through outliers); e.g., the Montagues and the Capulet's "curse on both [their] houses"; i.e., the imposter is projected onto a "false" European, with the good side recruiting tokenized agents to take the pledge to fight to restore things to working order. Such hunger games are carried forward through capital's hauntological

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ghost of the counterfeit), its inevitable collapse, post-Tolkien, is arguably what paralyzed *Balor* when looking into Alric's magic stone: his future death, failure, or both suggested through a meta continuation of the same graveyard palimpsest (re: "all our yesterdays").

Seeing the Vandals coming for "Rome" once again (with Alric resembling a Khan<sup>245</sup> in his sequel attire, above, and the white-Indian barbarians he sends for "Caesar" triggering the final boss into paralysis), said empire is the shameful result of Connacht's secret weakness<sup>246</sup> laid bare. Exposed, the tyrant's DARVO/obscurantist façade crumbles due to an internalized conflict of interest and, like a deer caught in headlights (re: Top Dollar with Eric), Balor momentarily freezes in place. Trapped helplessly inside his armor long enough for the remaining warriors of the Light to behead him, his Brutus-style murderers proceed to throw Balor's severed head into a giant pit. Similar to the One Ring being tossed into Mount Doom, the volcano scapegoat (exhibit 41a2) constitutes an act of banishment, but also forgetting through live burial. The world is saved and balance restored... for a time.

In turn, whatever power the state presents as terrorist or counterterrorist flows back into "Rome," the mother country a predatory matter of funneling resources towards its *invisible* rulers. *Myth* recuperates fascism, mid-crisis, through vampirism as queer-coded Red Scare, Capitalist Realism blaming Communism by conflating it with Balor's feral terrorist antics; i.e., per the man and his armies' Nazi-Communist pastiche: representing Communism by the West's false, "horseshoe" equivalency with fascism. Thus fascism *defends* capital and profit/rape while colonizing empire as a profitable (repetitive) matter of centrism and praxial

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(Gothic) fakeries reviving unironic forms in the present: dragons, kings, crowns, etc, as "legitimate" yet thoroughly bastardized, forged, imaginary claims/assimilation fantasies unto power exchanged as it presently is arranged, but relaid in abject, cast-off forms.

Whatever the form, it's a Russian-roulette-style death lottery during capital's manufactured scarcity—a trial by fire/blood sacrifice when capital decays, enacted out of desperation *and* entitlement; i.e., a mad monarch through the usual blood oaths and tithes "gone bad"; e.g., *House of the Dragon* (2022) and Rhaenyra, the tokenized queen (above, channeling Elizabeth Bathory instead of Count Dracula), being a Nazi vampire regent (the scapegoat) tied to these legendary beasts' superstitious symbolizing of persecution mania and raw displays of power, but also legendary mass/serial killers defending territory to absurd extremes. It's a massive game of chicken, a regressive, reactionary metaphor for the state eating itself through the rarefied symbol of great houses, passed down as bastardized inheritance like a kind of dangerous pet imprinting onto new, arbitrarily "worthy" inheritance. Whoever wins, workers lose; i.e., "Meet the new boss, same as the old boss!" Same goes for Gondor and Aragorn, the Cath Bruig and Alric, or Omadon the Red Wizard and Sir Peter (re: *The Flight of Dragons*, another older story about taming dragons and riding to war in the king's name of home defense), etc. Dragons or no dragons, zombies or no zombies, Man Box is Man Box, tyrants are tyrants, dogma is dogma.

<sup>245</sup> The second game uses "noble savage" Orientalism to tokenize itself; i.e., through a white savior wearing non-white attire (in this case, "Asian") and calling themselves "avatara" to uphold "pure Western values." It's fascist on its face, but presents as moderate; i.e., fascism waiting to happen.

<sup>246</sup> This *could* technically be guilty at committing genocide, but the game is *pro*-genocide, instead shaming Connacht for a lack of vigilance.

inertia—of balance maintained not just through cops and victims, but "good cop, bad cop" and fascism/Orientalism; i.e., ultimately playing ball for the elite behind the curtain.

To be sure, these uniforms exist in non-fascist varieties (e.g., so-called "gay Nazis" mirroring a "leather daddy" aesthetic). Here, though, *Myth* tokenizes Imperialism with more steps, leading to the usual historical-material doubles' liminal, chiasmic recursions and collocations echoing the same liminal hauntologies of war and their grim harvests (e.g., the German Reichsadler vs the American imperial eagle, but also Nazi outfits vs fetish-gear "mil spec" and "Scottish" warriors, below); i.e., inside a Cycle of Kings' *outdoor* infernal concentric pattern, "I have begun to plant thee and will labor / To make thee full of growing" ([source](#)). Since Shakespeare, kings are routinely propped up, only to be cut down, watering the soil of the elite's countryside with the blood of squashed mosquitoes.



As such, obscurantism's inherited confusions borrow and combine strongmen from different mythological backgrounds to camouflage capital with. *Myth's* extensive *dramatis personae*—its four Fallen Lords (not including Balor, Satanic ruler of the Four Horsemen, in this case) and nine avatars (the latter mirroring Tolkien's nine Ringwraiths, "doomed to die")—are no different; i.e., both sides make up aging "boners" to grow courageously and "fall"

ignominiously as Balor does, all while mirroring Macbeth on par with "shadows of Caesar." It's Capitalism with daddy issues and a hard-on for "Celtic" reinvention (re: Connacht, the province of Ireland; Mel Gibson's *Braveheart* and imaginary Scotland; but also *Macbeth* through different performances, above). All operate through Capitalism as the ghost of "Rome" (re: fascism), one whose bugbears frightfully emerge out of an imaginary greatness that never quite existed.

In turn, Bungie's cathartic, Radcliffean banishing—of the gay Nazi skeleton in the closet—stretches into yesterday coming back around; i.e., a canceled future relegated to the endless, regicidal treachery of an imaginary Scotland well at home in Shakespeare's "Scottish Play" (and throwing in a smorgasbord of other warlike theatres; re: Tolkien and Lovecraft):

For brave Macbeth (well he deserves that name),  
Disdaining Fortune, with his brandished steel,  
Which smoked with bloody execution,

Like Valor's minion, carved out his passage<sup>247</sup>  
 Till he faced the slave;  
 Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,  
 Till he unseamed him from the nave to th' chops,  
 And fixed his head upon our battlements ([source](#)).

It's very heteronormative and sadistic, but also flagellative—mortifying the flesh in ways just between "the boys" (no homo): evil Scottish Daddy ≈ Bungie's doomed Connacht, the same candle to extinguish and castle on Plato's cave wall (I write, in the dark, with Satie on and the only light coming from my monitor). It's pervasive—an abusive, sports-style relationship, passing the baton, the crown, etc, where such embedded, convergent disorders (take your pick) express through the "generous," addictive giving of strength that keeps the battered "housewives" (men) coming back for sloppy seconds: to kill whoever wears the crown, but also those who work with them, cannibalizing workers for the state and billionaires during the usual arterial spray's formidable range (sanguine ejaculate).

Such doubles aren't intrinsically "bad"; e.g., I can go walking with the rabbits



around where I live to see that side of Zeuhl splintered off from the tyrant they eventually became (they loved rabbits); i.e., we can play with such things ourselves differently than Bungie does.

As for Bungie, their latent homoeroticism flavors a canonical usage of the zombie tyrant's

apocalypse; i.e., as someone to summon and tear apart again through the usual martyred hyphenations. Called to, "Caesar" the appointed sacrifice understandably throws a tantrum, Brutus and the boys wrestling the spontaneous paraplegic to the ground before completely dismembering him; e.g., not just Balor the Leveler but

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<sup>247</sup> In this sense, good kings are just as brutal as bad ones, and generally to preserve the status quo as built upon past cruelty that has become known as "good" over time:

Soulbrighter has done the unthinkable. With his army scattered in disarray, he fled up through the Eye of Tharsis and into the very bowels of the earth. I can hardly blame him. The sight of Alric hacking his way through the enemy, Balmung flashing in his hand, caused many of our own men to stand aside in awe ([source](#): Mythipedia).

Alric the seer in *Myth* becomes the giga-Chad in *Myth II*, the slayer of demons who wakes up and remembers that he is *Beowulf* and our resident "Grendel" is no match for him: "Brutal, without mercy! But you, you will be worse... Rip and tear, until it is done!" It's "might makes right," committed by *Pax Americana*, Joe Biden projecting onto a fantasy world that looks and sounds like so many other fabrications; e.g., Aragorn and Sauron, Beowulf and Grendel, but also Arthur and Mordred, Henry V and Fortinbras, Paul Atreides and Feyd-Rautha Harkonnen, and yes, Alric and Balor.

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older stories like *The Ronin Warriors* (exhibit 41a2, next page) riffing on the same tyrant's fascist rise and fall: evil Jesus (the Wandering Jew)/Lord Humongous linked to capital and to Capitalist Realism dipping the Black Veil to tease absolute ruin among the Gothic castle's trembling vanishing point. Instead of an explained supernatural (re: Radcliffe), the supernatural (or draconic, vampiric) becomes dogmatic through Capitalist Realism's undead zombie heroes and tyrants.

In turn, the neoliberal refrain imitates older ones: the fascist in-group's eponymous solidarity uniting against an "outside" menace re-envisioned by Mussolini, then Hitler aping America's Hollywood (the Nazis adored American media—inspired both by Charlie Chaplin, leatherstocking tales and cheap spy novels, but also Edward Bernays' ministry of propaganda): "Unite, thus keep the money (and mythical, dogmatic merchandise) moving while capital enters crisis and decay!" Instead of conceptualizing Communism as an alternate, separate solution to capital's waves of collapse, it's easier for Bungie—those under the spell of Capitalist Realism—to immediately visualize the world ending because Caesar and his generals have come home, seeking revenge (think "Revelations" and rapture, except with less angels and more warlords; i.e., a Ragnarok variation of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse).

To it, "the myth of Gothic ancestry endured because it was useful" applies to the elite "culling the herd" through Bungie, the former relying on such banishing rituals by the latter to make children and young adults (usually boys) fall in love with magical warriors once more—the usual sort, sacrificing themselves to save the world from "evil"; i.e., fascism/ghosts of "Caesar" granted all manner of cultural elements that white (middle-class) saviors playing the white Indian fall back on, sold to different age brackets whiling punching spectres of Marx in the bargain.

Similar to *Myth*, all embody and conscript younger and younger recruits against a demon, Nazi-Communist foe; e.g., grizzled warriors or "teenagers with attitude"; i.e., outcasts during the monomyth having Promethean potential. Like Arthur's magic coconuts, the Promethean name of the game is archaeological wish fulfillment: "find anachronistic, incongruous armor and weapon; fight evil, get girl." Evil servants summon destruction, reviving Caesar or Medusa-as-Marx, etc, doubling state hegemons (e.g., Captain Planet vs Captain Pollution).

Then, as Dayman fights Nightman, canon prioritizes assimilation through misfits and in-group outsiders (the fascist recruiter targeting broken homes that still have in-group class and race privilege); i.e., through occult-tinged stories operating in *defense* of "Rome" from its perceived "evil" self; re: the Wandering Jew having Communist *and* fascist elements (more on this in "No Fury"). Villains are prolific through profit the same way that heroes are; i.e., comparable to Campbell's *Hero of a Thousand Faces*, we have per the Promethean Quest a *Villain* of a

Thousand Faces. The heroes are usually Puritanical and bland; the villains are Nazi comfort food<sup>248</sup>—a buffer or drug to take the edge off.



(exhibit 41a2: *The fate of Balor the Leveler and Emperor Tulpa*<sup>249</sup> is essentially the same: *bodily dismemberment by a team of allies, whose allegiance is not certain*)

<sup>248</sup> With varying degrees of camp, *vis-à-vis* the jester in the king's court doubling as his black knight/assassin; re: Bulgakov's Satan and Begemot, *Final Fantasy VI*'s Emperor Gestahl and Kefka Palazzo, *Star Wars*' Emperor Palpatine and Darth Vader, *Myth*'s Balor and Soulbrighter, Tolkien's Morgoth and Sauron, Marlowe's Satan and Mephistopheles, etc.

<sup>249</sup> The latter being *Yokai* tyrant, but also "tulpa" as a special kind of supernatural being; re (from the glossary):

#### **egregore/tulpa (simulacrum)**

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

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*[with Tulpa having his own band of dark warlords using the same armor that the Ronin Warriors do—indeed, coming from the same emperor's body as originally housing all of them]. Per Walpole's Capitalocene/ghost of the counterfeit, Balor and Tulpa are undead tyrants haunting composite war machines; i.e., giant suits of armor delivering class commentaries on systemic issues/material conditions that speak to particular allegories the commentators [authors] might not be fully aware of, concerning the world around them. Regardless, each follows the myth of Osiris as Promethean, the giant to assemble through mad science ["magic"] and then disassembled through the same methods weaponized by false rebels "saving the world"; i.e., reversing power to a seemingly self-destructive degree, the pilots grow angry to a perceived slight, one that Caesar must pay for in blood, thus whitewash empire: "You are tearing me apart, Lisa!"*

*Similar to Count Dracula's revival, the dead king is resurrected in pieces; only by taking him back apart can the curse be "ended." In canonical narratives, this disassembly requires a military alliance and feats of legendary strength by a host of great warriors, surrounding and not just stabbing "Caesar" to death, but hacking him to pieces through the metaphor of gang rape. To achieve this, they must paralyze him, generally by showing him something he doesn't want to see; re: his former greatness that he has forgotten, but also fallen from. Like Top Dollar, Balor confronts his humanity on the Aegis, only to realize that he's lost it and, in effect, poisoned the land and all his friends. He freezes in shame and is beheaded, his armies collapsing as a result [versus Tulpa, who—after absorbing the hero, Ryo—is paralyzed by the spirit of virtue long enough for the other warriors to cleave him to pieces (temporarily embodying the fire of the gods to do so). Lifting the evil curse, the giant armor vanishes and the legendary ronin become ordinary boys once more, Ryo resurrected through the equally-deus-ex-machina power of the Jewel of Life]. By comparison, camping the freezing procedure reverses it in ways that don't seek to scapegoat anyone; i.e., camp subverts what's happening as a matter of dogma to expose the bourgeoisie manipulating everyone. Keep that in mind when we examine Balor's loyal servant, Soulblighter.)*

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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.

Infinite growth, infinite monsters; capital makes endless varieties to symbolize its usual exchanges!

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Speaking to the giant's dismemberment, *Myth's* battles are incredibly violent. "Casualty," states the battlefield announcer for one death, and "Casualties!" for two (or more). Meanwhile, powerful explosions and chain-reaction spells of fearsome black magic rock the countryside, ripping entire regiments apart (note: the mechanisms of dwarves and shades—Bungie's appointed demolition experts and self-serving necromancers—have an anti-Semitic and

fascist flavor to them). Post-detonation(s), heads soar like soccer balls and severed limbs (and guts) sail and spin through the air, raining blood before bouncing across the ground as shrapnel. And while that might not seem terribly impressive nowadays, back then the rudimentary physics and blood-spattered mayhem were positively ground-breaking (the developers would go onto revolutionize console FPS games [and ultimately eclipse *Myth's* sleeper-hit status] by making *Halo: Combat Evolved*, in 2001)!

Part of *Myth's* allure is how it puts the player at the helm when the stakes feel so high (thus allowing for feats of great bravery in the face of certain death as, itself, a performance—one reenacted from *Beowulf* to the Western, the villain generally more fun to watch while "David" beats "Goliath"; e.g., Allan Rickman upstaging Tom Selleck, in 1990's *Quigley Down Under*, despite the script requiring that he lose the fight). Like a director and a general, you can view the action from any angle, slowing time down or speeding it up. It's visceral, glorious and bleak—clearly inspired by *Braveheart*, two years previous, but also Tolkien and Lovecraft's own fictions: an uphill battle against the forces of darkness, but presented as abject, gross, and medieval in ways that combine the best of all these authors and their playground worlds. Regular formations generally give way to herding your men into loose groups that adopt a more guerrilla-style approach to things. Leading your enemy into traps is preferable to frontal assaults, where mounting casualties are bound to happen (the trick to victory is avoiding the deaths of men you cannot afford to replace<sup>250</sup>).

To all of that, it's truly a young (tom)boy's dream come true (I was eleven when the game came out, playing it for hours-upon-hours); i.e., a chance to be like Mel Gibson or Peter Jackson (who had yet to emerge outside splatter-house circles): directing big-scale fantasy battles, only save the footage, viewing it later to your heart's content!

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<sup>250</sup> Troops survive into later battles, letting you rack up kills per unit; the more kills a unit has, the more powerful they become (while also being a possible nod to Gimli and Legolas' kill count, at Helm's Deep).

The basic problem with *Myth* (or any such refrain ordering things in military language) is that its centrist conflict falls into Tolkien's cartographic approach to war, thereby acclimating the player to the role of the general *sacrificing* his men (or hers—I daresay I spent as much time deliberately blowing up my own troops as I did beating the game): a story between good versus evil that is *forever* in conflict, dividing things into "pure" evil and good on open yawning battlefields that become bleakly entertaining on further retellings.

For example, Tolkien's pure-evil goblins<sup>251</sup>—and their misuse of mad science to develop battlefield weapons that could kill a great many people at once—also

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<sup>251</sup> Jadis hated the idea of playing *D&D* with me because I stated right of the bat, "This game is literally built on racial conflict—of good races, neutral races and bad races." Saying this, I immediately wanted to play a pacifist, peace-loving Drow—the rare-and-elusive "good Drow." Yet the rules didn't really encourage it; the Drow had literally been made to be pure evil—more evil, indeed, than the orcs, which by that point had started to become good enough to ally with the traditional forces of good; i.e., the Men of the West (or some analogue compared to them). Simply put, their aesthetics were evil in a way similar to the post-WW2 depiction of Nazis had been popularized, but also disseminated through various forms of popular media. Instead of the black-and-red BDSM shtick of the torturous "vampire" warrior or something akin to that, you had black and purple, with an association with spiders, the underground, and dark and shady deeds connected to assassination, but also, oddly enough, sex appeal:



(exhibit 41b: Artist, top-left: [Jonathan Torres](#); top-right: [King of Undrock](#); mid-left: [Vladimir Mineev](#); mid-right: [source](#); bottom-left: Yeero; bottom right: [Liang Xing](#).)

[Tolkien's inconsistent fear](#) of spiders stretch back to a childhood phobia of them. Nevertheless, he clearly disliked them enough to make two of the series only notable female antagonists [with any active presence in the narrative] female spiders: Ungoliant and Shelob. Both are abject examples of the Archaic Mother as a non-human, bug-like site of grotesque reproduction and Original Sin: the

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describes the dwarves that the player controls in *Myth*; i.e., Tolkien's abstraction of real-world horrors the author himself experienced during WW1 becoming rehashed first through *LotR*'s WW2 allegory and then by Bungie's own blind parodies of both

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*insect or spider broodmother. Yet, this ancient evil force is often personified in ways that has racialized flavors—e.g., the Drow as "evil, dark-skinned spider people" who stab you in the back, live in caves and practice ancient black magic.*

*Yet, the spider as a stigma animal is often tied to specific kinds of monsters inspired by the natural world. To that, it also could be argued that the concept of the vampire draws inspiration from the spider, which paralyzes its victims with venom before then drinking their life force while they are still alive [unlike many wasps, though, spiders are primarily hunters, not parasitoids; but the archetype is that of a "phallic woman" who tortures her male victims by eating them]. Nevertheless, the canonical idea of "dark skin equals evil" is often subverted in overtly sexual ways—or can be. Often, the granting of European-looking women dark skin, white hair [and fat asses; literally a PAWG—"phat ass white girl"] evokes a kind of "spectral blackface," but also Fanon's assimilation fantasy of "black skin, white masks" [e.g., the dark skin and pale hair of characters like Storm from *X-Men* or Elena from *Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike*, 1999]. There's also an Amazonian "death mask" to the aesthetic in terms of a literal "war mask" being worn. Widowmaker's spider visor helps her locate future victims: "Under the spider woman's lurid gaze, there is literally nowhere for her prey to hide. She's a widow-maker, a man-eater and a poisonous temptress dreamed up by horny, frightened men."*



[artist: [Luis Salas](#)]

*Regardless of how you slice it, whenever dealing with personified stigma animals as weak or strong [the fascist framework], there's a human connection that needs to be considered. In other words, you'll need to rescue the animal from its abject bias of a current, ongoing struggle in order to humanize the person being assigned its canonically demonizing qualities. This goes for spiders, wolves, wasps, bats, leeches, snakes, etc; but also rabbits [exhibit 100a5] and prey animals as anglicized/demonized in always useful to the state. Under Gothic Communism, these animals are not sources of profit within a compelled centrist/good-vs-evil order of things; they symbolize a larger struggle against Capitalism's mass exploitation of the entire living world. Sexual and gender-non-conforming anthropomorphism can recode how animals and humans are viewed in relation to each other—often through complicated satire, but also raw humor and pure, unadulterated cuteness. This ontological irony constitutes a parody of thought leaders, politicians and content creators who, in hindsight, look rather silly [and vindictive] trying to demonize animals simply existing as they normally do. Like queer people portraying themselves as demons that don't actually harm anyone, the effect is functionally the same with the stigma animals they're associated with.)*

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world wars retold *again*. Stuffed with more and more fireworks for the crowd, the Battle of the Five Armies becomes Helm's Deep becomes [insert *Myth* level, here]: the Promethean Quest becoming a morbid chase for the most glorious death(s) on the field.

Across all of them, though, the undead king—the fascist, now-corrupt skeleton lord—is *always* coming home, denoting a buried, systemic problem even when things were "good." Restoring balance and returning things to *normal* through equal force is entirely the point; i.e., something to canonize and camp; e.g., Walpole's crumbling of the dark castle like a bad dream to conveniently reveal the *fair castle* underneath: a fairytale restoration of the status quo to its *proper* rulers, per the West vs the *Fallen Lords* aping the Allies vs the Axis Powers carried into similar fictional echoes of past wars that Walpole tuned into, and Shakespeare, and so on, made entirely cartoonish in neoliberal forms; e.g., Castle Greyskull vs Snake Mountain, King Randor vs Skeletor, or the Belmonts vs Dracula, etc.

Like those examples, Bungie illustrates the status quo, in centrism, as being the spectacle of raw theatrical combat, itself endlessly occurring between good and evil's notably *unpeaceful* transfer of power between rulers; i.e., the chase of endless profit abusing a finite web of life inside a romanticized, imaginary past—one that distracts viewers from ongoing state abuses occurring in the present. Within this ghost of the counterfeit, there *are* no moral actions, only moral teams that come from the same source: "good" empire and the ghost of the noble bloodline as something to defend from "bad" empire and the ghost of the tyrant in zombie form "cutting in line."

This effectively makes centrist narratives like *Myth* genocide *apologia*, relegating war to an eternal struggle on faraway lands that curiously resemble Western Europe. It is not a solution, but a mapped form of tired, fatal military optimism that prolongs war by virtue of its mythical necessity and essentialism: "good or bad, war must continue." So when evil ghosts of the haunted past rear their ugly heads, canonically dogwhistle to marshal the hounds, doing so to "cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war" (a line from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, a *historical* play)!

Point in fact, *Myth*'s centrist nature is exposed by it being diegetically *aware* of this destructive, empire-comes-home reaping—something the sequel expounds upon when "true victory" is threatened once again as it always must be:

There are laws that govern the workings of the universe that have remained immutable for countless aeons. According to these laws, the forces of light and dark hold dominion over the world successively, the land belonging in turn to men, or to monsters.

Each cycle would be presaged by the appearance of a great comet, foretelling the rise of saviour or destroyer. Each golden age would give way to one of darkness, when foul things would stir beneath the earth, and evil

spirits would plague the land. In turn, each dark age would fall to one of light; the evil would pass from the land just as the comet from the sky.

The saviours of each golden age were men who had risen to face the Dark and never turned away. They were men of unflinching heroism who would not rest until they had loosened the bloodless grip of wicked things which had dominated their lands. Many of these heroes were doomed to return in the following age as Fallen Lords, destroying all they had fought so hard to preserve ([source](#): Myth Journals).

Such imperial apologia is Capitalist Realism par excellence. Action for its own sake (re: Eco), Bungie—not without a twinge of dry gallows humor—showcases the target audience (white, middle-class men) having fun amid the carnage while dressed up; i.e., through their fantasy avatars celebrating the unlikely winning of every battle, throwing up their arms and cheering as Ash's forces do in *Army of Darkness*, but also Monty Python's after they're forced to eat Robin's minstrels: "There was much rejoicing!" followed by a lackluster "Yay..."



The whole ordeal feels like a blind parody—frozen-if-productive (thus lucrative) Gothic history that only lends itself to sequel enterprises with the same kinds of action figures; i.e., regressing to brutal methods of self-preservation, their gory sagas further expounding on the process

of abjection, coronating a dark king and a light king per the ghost of the counterfeit as a matter of transcontinental exchange—of world war all over again. This tyranny and regression applies to both sides capital has set up to fight, whose complexities amid simplicity we'll continue to unpack in *Myth's* sequel, *Soulblighter*.

Before we do, let's summarize the Cycle of Kings per *Myth's* unironic execution: Good men must decay and resort to barbarism to fend off the barbarism of evil men; empire must rebuild, a good king chosen to lead the people invariably towards destruction *again* (the "last" battle, next page); good king must show the bad king the truth of the cycle, thus force him to face the music (re: it's time for him, the sacrifice, to die) in "a lesson in humility": "bend over and take it up the ass 'for the team!'; rinse and repeat, keeping power always at the top."

In the interim, workers are ground up like fodder but not before the more privileged nerds among them get to play the false rebel cop, the berserk cartoon being the good king's dutiful lapdogs, thus "kings for a day" themselves while

seizing the day for their chicken hawk liege and—like a prequel to *Attack on Titan* (a thoroughly fascist show in its own right, [reflecting in its creator's closeted fascist antics](#)<sup>252</sup>)—cutting the giant to bits *by charging directly at him* (the opposite of Tim the Enchanter and the Killer Rabbit<sup>253</sup>): "Thundercats, ho!"



Now that we've dissected Balor himself in *Myth: the Fallen Lords*, and explored the game's fatal warrior mythos reviving Zombie Caesar on loop to uphold Capitalist Realism, let's unpack the above cycle (and its double standards) through the sequel; i.e., *Myth II: Soulblighter*, whose queer, monstrous-feminine elements are even more obvious (and problematic).

For starters, Balor had a lieutenant called Soulblighter who served with him in life under the human name, Damas. Before they turned to the Dark, both men actually knew of the inevitable corruption that awaited them, going from babyface to heel, kayfabe-style, as time went on:

Damas was Connacht's lieutenant during the Wind Age and was his closest friend. Thus he was told of Connacht's knowledge that he would be the next

<sup>252</sup> Seldomusings' "The Possible Disturbing Dissonance Between Hajime Isayama's Beliefs and *Attack on Titan's* Themes" (2013). Certainly, anyone can point at the death and destruction Isayama depicts and say, "carnage *is* carnage." The show still makes an appeal to fascism *through* carnage; e.g., the forlorn hope, charging stupidly and sadly into death; i.e., a heroic death cult made unironic through engagement with itself on different registers, but especially as a matter of interpretation between the audience and the show. There are characters in *AoT* who think that the hero, Eren Yeager, is correct, just as people outside the show think he is correct (or don't care). In the end, Yeager conducts genocide, everything becoming a blood-soaked, thoroughly abject military campaign "debating with Nazis" *sans* camp. Sound familiar? *Myth* uses the same tragic sacrifices, siege mentality and *kamikaze* tactics to push towards a final solution that perpetuates itself. That's not camp!

<sup>253</sup> It's DARVO obscuring things through an "oppression Olympics" that centers all the adversity around the usual side completing for the glory of self-sacrifice: weird canonical nerds. You see it in chess, the actual Olympics/competitive sports, e-sports, and any other field. Like a vampire, banks and other institutions/owners control such lifeblood as a matter of dogma, superstition and knowledge, but also material wealth and resources/employment positions and opportunities; i.e., as something to abject, medicalize and attack based on binarized, heteronormative (settler-colonial, Cartesian) profiles; e.g., intersex athletes (often of color) in the Olympics—with [the actual ritual having eugenicist Nazi ties](#) (Some More News' "The Olympics Are Kinda Bad, Actually," 2024) that [lead to Red Scare and transphobia](#) (Essence of Thought's "Olympic Transphobia & The Red Scare," 2024).

incarnation of [the Leveler](#) and so was asked to help destroy or hide away magical [artifacts](#) that may help him after he turns. Damas then found immortality through various rituals and other practices, notably removing his nose, lips, eyelids, and multiple things from inside his body ([source](#): Mythipedia).

As we'll see going forwards, Damas is Soulblighter the same way that Connacht is Balor through the monomyth and its reversal, during the Promethean Quest. But Soulblighter (and similar Conan-style caricatures, below) yield monstrous-feminine elements have their own racist, anti-Semitic/Orientalist flavor that Balor largely does not.



(artist: [Dan Dos Santos](#))



**"Hell Hath No Fury"; or, Soulblihter's Token Gay Nazi Revenge (and Giants/Female Characters) in *Myth II: Soulblihter***

*"I'll get you, and your little dog, too!"*

—*The Wicked Witch of the West, The Wizard of Oz (1939)*



([source](#))

Whereas "Hail, Caesar!" focused on Balor as Gay Caesar come home to roost, "Hell Hath No Fury" shall now explore the unshackled antics of his most fearsome and loyal servant, Soulblihter. We'll do so per the Cycle of Kings' circular approach to time (and fascism/genocide feeding on nature, workers and—to some degree—the state). Rather than simply detail Soulblihter's abject, Melmoth-style, Wandering-Jew behaviors, though, my queer close-read aims to humanize our story's Grim Reaper through medieval camp (while recognizing his role as a token zombie cop); then, we'll wrap things up, concluding with some larger points about the Cycle of Kings and giants before surveying the female monstrous-feminine (which is largely absent in the franchise, but not entirely).

*Before we start, I want to clarify (for about three pages) what I mean by Melmoth/the Wandering Jew per my usage of it: Our reading of Soulblihter is—like Maturin's novel—a significant deviation from the original medieval trope of the Wandering Jew, the former device having mocked Christ en route to his Passion, and Maturin's 1820 retelling presenting the character as vaguely cursed in a Faustian sense. His Melmoth the Wanderer returns to seek out those who are not cursed, but who through positions of disadvantage may bear witness to his reprobate state: a sign of the truth and of Christian hegemony where the sign of the cross (often in code) is borne witness towards.*

*To that, our treatment of "Melmoth/the Wandering Jew" will also deviate from Maturin when attached to Soulblihter's vengeful ghost (and the other Fallen, who embody fascist stereotypes and stigmas), but this process of deviation didn't start with us. Let's outline that, then articulate our specific usage a bit more.*

*As Lisa Lampert-Weissig writes in "Sarah Perry's Melmoth and the Implications of Gothic Form (2022): "The Wandering Jew's actions at the Passion were traditionally regarded as another example of alleged Jewish cruelty toward Christ and Christians. The Wandering Jew's legendary affront resonated with the*

charge that Jews are 'Christ-killers,' a calumny that informs anti-Semitic myths such as ritual murder accusation and the blood libel" ([source](#)). She adds,

*The Wandering Jew tradition has been from its origins shaped by Christian supersessionism, the idea that Christianity is the true and rightful fulfillment of Jewish prophecy. As they adapt the Wandering Jew legend, Maturin and Perry both depart significantly from its original details (and from each other). In both novels, however, the dominant function of the Wandering Jew – to serve as sign of a Christian truth – still shapes the narratives ([ibid.](#)).*

*In other words, an overbearing and die-hard Christian bias haunts a partially imaginary presence that is, for lack of a better term, "blasted."*

*Except, Gothic media doesn't clearly define this characteristic or its terminology—save for how it varies in different usage over time. For example,*

*Maturin's Melmoth has been cursed through some vaguely intimated Faustian bargain. In contrast, [Perry's] Melmoth the Witness is cursed for refusing to affirm her eyewitness of Christ's resurrection. As punishment for her cowardly failure, she is doomed to seek out "everything that's most distressing and most wicked, in a world which is surpassingly wicked, and full of distress. In doing so she bears witness, where there is no witness, and hopes to achieve her salvation" (37). Because she denied her witness of Christ's resurrection, Melmoth must bear eternal witness to the endless misery and suffering which human beings bring upon themselves and one another. As did her [wandering] counterpart in Maturin's work, Melmoth the Witness seeks out those in despair, imploring them to join her in order to ease her endless loneliness ([ibid.](#)).*

*So while the Gothic first established Melmoth through Lewis' The Monk—the character having a mark of Cain burned into his forehead (the sign of a vampire, though that mythology had yet to fully develop)—the witness of a curse through a ghost story is one of wrongfulness that speaks to the status quo it stands adjacent to: an outsider that personifies a predator/prey relationship to the thing punishing it, expressed in the usual Gothic ways; i.e., reversal and hyphenation; e.g., per the tale and found document of Gothic conventions, but also "the matryoshka-like structure of tales, which Perry connects using epistolary form, rhetorical address and shifting narrative point of view [...] as well [the ways in which] 'gothic conventions' can be used to 'exercise' readers' imaginations and emotions" ([ibid.](#)).*

*Indeed, we've looked at such things ourselves regarding the Metroidvania; i.e., as a ghost story told through the space itself as something to explore, tracking down Numinous signatures and triggering vital memories during the Promethean Quest as a wandering castle. The same goes for personifications and our relations to them (again, often through Gothic chronotopes).*

To summarize, Weissig describes Perry's exercise of emotions as a study of the Gothic tradition that leads to what Perry calls a more "self-conscious" understanding of one's creative process as a writer and of the "shared experience of the novel." I call the same process/outcome "Gothic maturity." Whatever the label, the idea is one of intimacy with a cursed being that links to a larger system of thought and unequal power exchange—one we (workers) can develop and utilize class-culture consciousness and emotional/Gothic intelligence through a closeness to an alien device that normally plays out through intense emotions and, just as often in videogames, systemic violence linked to Capitalism; i.e., the monomyth and Promethean Quest manifesting through very different forms of the same basic concept (the ghost of the counterfeit).

These, in turn, might seem far-removed from Maturin. Under Capitalism, though, the Christian tale of resurrection appears in Gothic stories, themselves occupied by an increasingly militarized and capitalistic presence of revenge haunted by echoes of Caesar and Marx; i.e., spectres of fascism and Communism through dark conqueror-ghost symbols, all whose ghastly alien reputations proceed them in older forms updated through present circumstances the middle class plays with; e.g., *Street Fighter's* M. Bison, forever cursed to wander the Earth and seek revenge; re: that character inspired by a neoliberal conversation that combines Maturin's Melmoth with wrestler kayfabe theatre expressed through different worlds and cultures colliding under global Capitalism: Hiroshi Aramata's Yasunori Kato.



(artist: [Hiroshi Aramata](#))

As Timothy Blake Donohoo writes,

*M. Bison* was one of many villains inspired by Yasunori Kato, the main character from the Japanese novel, *Teito Monogatari*. [...] A sort of take on Melmoth the Wanderer or the Wandering Jew, Kato is seemingly a former general in the Japanese army. In reality, he embodies centuries of lost

Japanese history, with his malevolence representing the rage of those who had once stood against the Japanese.

A powerful onmyoji, he can summon and control demons to do his will, as well as use his powers to prolong his life. His ultimate goal is to utterly crush the Japanese Empire, beginning with Tokyo's destruction. He conspires with rival countries in order to do so. His enemies include Yasumasa Hirai as well as several authors and even a physicist, intermingling ancient magic with advanced science and sociopolitical conflicts ([source](#): "Street Fighter's Greatest Villain Was Inspired by a Spooky Japanese Horror Novel," 2022).

Where wandering ghosts *like* Melmoth are near, so is trouble as something to bear witness (and rock hauntologically out<sup>254</sup>) to; i.e., regarding buried truths about Capitalism and its own predatory relationship to Christianity and other religions (re: Weber) comported onto spectral medieval elements of war and the human power structures that "raise Cain."

In the Radcliffean tradition, the summoning is done to dismiss them in terrifying "geometries" (re: Aguirre) that can't harm you. More to the point, these recent, "safe space" hauntologies are more or less how we shall approach the character Soulblighter—hence don't concern the Passion or Resurrection of Christ as something to witness through its Gothic embodiment.

Instead, my mention of "Melmoth" concerns the Christ-like resurrection of Caesar's ghost, one told through positions of revenge that are overtly anti-Semitic (and Orientalist) vis-à-vis Capitalist Realism; i.e., as linked to Bungie's Cycle of Kings, itself expressing through the neoliberal monomyth's (videogame) tyrant as undead: a relationship towards power abjected onto alien expressions of itself coming home and viewed like Melmoth always is—as a painful symbol of truth built upon Christian dogma, which extends to wartime American xenophobia unto Capitalism as it presently exists (and those symbols inside of it).

No one ever said that truth (about Capitalism and the Protestant ethic) was good or easy to bear! For us, that's Soulblighter—not just a lonesome spirit, but one deprived of a former friend that drives him, a token gay Nazi cop, to hideously self-destruct and, as a consequence of playing the game, be witnessed for it by the player. In seeing it, the system of empire that Soulblighter's WW2 stereotypes ultimately represent expresses to a Promethean degree of resistance—one felt through a matrix of interwoven space-time across cultures that we often take for granted while their combined freight haunts and inspires us.

As we continue, then, remember that Soulblighter is, like all ghosts, a confirmation-bias caricature of stereotype and superstition, but also a repressed (cryptonymic) testimony to an imperfect survivor's revenge by those who refuse to completely die; i.e., victims of genocide haunting the ruins of empire, outlasting their conquerors while embodying said conquerors' worst fears, uniforms and tendencies (to "better the instruction," as Shylock puts it). —Perse

First, while there are differences between the conquerors in *Myth*, it's worth noting Balor and Soulblighter share obvious similarities, too. They were friends in

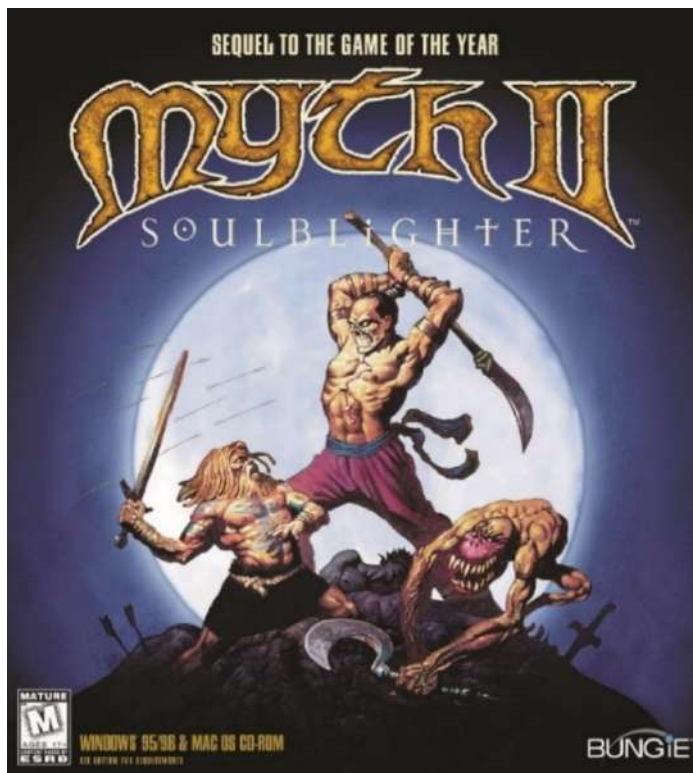
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<sup>254</sup> One of the songs from *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* (1997) being "[Wandering Ghosts](#)." Like Dracula himself, his castle is a creature of chaos that takes many incarnations; i.e., those borne from different parties entering and exiting its structure to deviate from past histories (a strategy borrowed from Walpole's Strawberry Hill House). Just as the game's music reflects that state of constant reinvention, addressing present allegories retold as "past," the same goes for Melmoth the ghost as wandering and witnessed by those around him.

life; in death, they return to plague the West, its defense staving off the barbarian unknown as ultimately the West's own conquerors come home to roost: as fallen, "death knight" heroes; i.e., Caesar or Melmoth-style wraiths claiming Divine Right in the absence of a Christian dogma. It's a return of the living dead, but also the return of the king and king's men (a Second Coming in militarized feudal language) as undead, united tyrannically against the West as it presently stands.

From there, though, things only begin to change. In *Myth II*, the servant trope inverts, the Cycle of Kings swept up in Brutus' guilt for killing Caesar by proxy of Caesar's loyal right hand: "his closest friend," one who spent a lot more time with Balor than Shiver (wink-wink). Normally, the pattern brings about/restores the return of an undead hungry "Rome" that supplants a Christian Capitalism for a *Pagan*, non-Western decay into feudalism<sup>255</sup> from Capitalism. Yet *Soulblighter* is more apocalyptic. Whereas Balor wanted to rule the world as undead, *Soulblighter*—his token sidekick/queer-coded<sup>256</sup> general and best friend—pushes it to the brink of total Promethean annihilation (the game, especially its cutscenes, are notably less funny than the original's).

To it, if the Western hero is central to the monomyth, going into and coming back from Hell, then so is the monstrous-feminine slave/war criminal through the



generals that codify service to Caesar as a matter of capital. Except the servant is always an outside "terrorist" threat to expose, a menace to police, a mystical occult ploy meant to hide the inherently violent, cannibalistic and coercive nature of the state functioning as normal. As a matter of double revenge (Connacht's dream and death), *Soulblighter* aims to reverse the monomyth/Cycle of Kings, bringing about the end of the world through dark Jewish revenge bearing queer overtones (and counterterrorist energies)!

([source: Mythipedia](#))

<sup>255</sup> The Romans being the famous enemies of Jews and Christians, and the Nazis replacing Christian dogma with Pagan dogma attacking Jews and Bolshevism while Capitalism and the Protestant ethic decays; but not all fascists are against Christendom; e.g., in the Americas, North or South.

<sup>256</sup> I.e., not quite having the same power dynamic as Batman and Robin, but *Soulblighter* nevertheless being Balor's submissive, driven to avenge his fallen lover's betrayal by the West—their eating of him.

As we'll see, Soulblighter is inherently foreign (note the jinn pants)—Balor's token friend who feels even more alien because of that; i.e., from a canonical perspective, Balor is still Caesar, thus has ancestral ties to the West per the settler argument, whereas Soulblighter is the tokenized outsider/monstrous-feminine race traitor (re: Melmoth, the Wandering Jew) first working for a fascist ruler to bring about dominion, followed by cataclysm after said ruler's death. To it, Soulblighter's not just a token Nazi, but a token *gay* Nazi warlord.

This might sound odd. However, canon treats such divide-and-conquer contradictions as completely fine provided they serve capital, and nothing is more useful to the elite than a token, Orientalist cop chasing "final victory" after Hitler is dead; few things are fiercer or better at policing a marginalized population, the cop-in-question compelled to love its conquerors and police its own kind: by playing hangman for the elite. To quote Daffy Duck, "he's despicable!"

We'll get to Soulblighter in a second. Given his monstrous-feminine elements, though, I'd like to stress some various, sympathy-for-the-devil points about the monstrous-feminine as we proceed—namely their intrinsic value in *camping* the sorts of things that Soulblighter crystalizes (something we haven't talked about too much in this section, thus far, but will continue to going forwards). To it, if we want to overcome hatred as a canonical device tied to capital, we must understand how it works; simply abjecting such things (as Bungie does) will not do.

In short, we must empathize with the wretched, asking how someone like Soulblighter can become tokenized to such a profound, point-of-no-return degree that their subsequent alienation could arguably motivate them to commit police violence/genocide against other equally marginalized peoples, or conversely might seek revenge against empire to a suicidal degree that takes everyone down with the ship ("crossing the Rubicon," to borrow from Caesar's campaigns); i.e., while camping is not endorsement of reactionary violence, it does require a kind of intimacy that "pure evil" treatments discourage. Pure evil is pure alien, which characters like Soulblighter are depicted as; if we can imagine, thus understand what causes that alienation, we can start to reverse it, hence counteract the forces that turn people like Soulblighter (their real-world equivalents) into spiteful cops.

To this, I'd like to unpack/reiterate a few relevant ideas (about two pages), then give Soulblighter a closer look...

First, regarding heroes or harpies, "corruption" and decay are endemic/comorbid to the same monomyth's royal cycle: the return of the skeleton king followed by the return of the noble king (and their servants) in a historical-material loop that universally treats Communism as zombie-like (doomed to death), but also conflates it with the ravenous death knights of fascism culling the Amazons, beheading Medusa (or anything else queer) and turning Melmoth into a wandering vampire, etc. White knight vs black knight—good cop, bad cop—both colonize workers as something to internalize; i.e., wrestling for control over the

same territory in centrist, good-vs-evil language. The same goes for servants *turned into cops*, thus cannibals.

In this sense, Balor and Soulblighter make up two sides of the same infernal coin—one that is no different than Athena versus Medusa, or subjugated Hippolyta versus her evil twin; i.e., insofar as power aggregates *against* Communism written as capital's *bête noire* that, in truth, has only manifested fairly recently (over the past several centuries) in *response* to Capitalism rising out of feudalism's own mistreatment of serfs and the master/slave dynamic of Rome and other ancient empires. To escape the same "as good as it gets" trap Bungie entertains, workers must critique the value of war as a "great zombie" that cannot hide its own rot—of Capitalism and the nation-state as fundamentally spoiled, but ubiquitous and pervasive through the monomyth and nuclear family unit as fundamentally doomed *by design*.

Granted, we've previously discussed "Rome" as a hauntological façade that valorizes Capitalism's rot; i.e., while nakedly consuming its own workers at differing speeds (said speeds often determined by racist variables) depending on the Imperial Boomerang's current location—at home, or fixated on faraway lands like Cambodia, Africa, Gaza, and other such frontiers. Except, life can obviously exist without great manly heroes and kings in the canonical, monomythic sense. In short, it can exist *without* Capitalism and its military apocalypses, but workers must bravely reinvent what it means to be a hero *and* a villain (a tragic hero); i.e., by critiquing centrist heroics through camp as a matter of cultivating Gothic maturity per a proletarian **Song of Infinity** (versus Bungie's immature, endless, blind parodies and pastiche standing by capital and profit). In broader terms, this means humanizing Medusa—and all sassy fat-bottomed girls (gays and people of color, etc, as colonized bodies)—for their hill-sized fannies' cracks of doom harvested by capital and Cartesian forces "to the last syllable of recorded time": an artificial wilderness unable to feed workers or animals because it has become of a means of siphoning everything out of the land and labor into the bourgeoisie's greedy coffers.



(artist: [VG Yum](#))

However, it also applies to characters like Soulblighter being monstrous-feminine, too; i.e., servants and slaves (which Jews historically are) that "go feral" and traitor in their own ways. To liberate ourselves, then, is to reverse the monomyth's process of abjection (which normally serves state interests by raping Medusa as a

terrorist); i.e., as it pertains to servants like Soulblighter likewise being bred for police violence. You must humanize the harvest *Soulblighter* belongs to, reuniting alien things to see your fellow tokenized workers as human—all while critiquing the structures that dehumanize victims and victimizers alike. As an instrument of mass torture and exploitation, the state is fallible but effective, purposely devised to exploit labor then lie about it in heroic stories featuring Melmoth as—like a wild animal without a master—trying to destroy Rome to avenge Caesar's death. This starts by itself, then resurrects two of the other Fallen, the Deceiver and Shiver, to play into/out the same "degenerate" equation.

More than the first, *Myth II* is about chaos, insofar as Satan is dead and "order" threatened by these jackals unchained. Except, while Soulblighter remains a kind of Jewish gargoyle to scare workers stiff (the Watcher from the original *Myth* a BDSM cliché, Shiver a witch and the Deceiver a silver-tongued gay man inside the second game's shared neoliberal gimmick), he's still a byproduct of the environment that made him—of pain and conditioning shucked off onto a walking fetish. He's the game's central antagonist; i.e., literally the name of the game and discussed nonstop inside it—a shell of a man crippled with fear and rage that collectively reflect actual labor's complicated, dogmatic regressions/repressions under the capitalist hegemon. For the good of ourselves, let's dissect that.

The paradox of nuance is it can feel alienating unto itself, confusing. Doubles speak to that, invoking the need for both hard stances (e.g., postcolonialism and basic human rights) and flexibility (e.g., searching for allies among the colonizer group) at the same time; i.e., conventions to bend or break regarding different praxial objectives required, mid-opposition, under dialectical-material context. Characters like Damas and Soulblighter account for the usual abject divisions that occur, while forcing fascist and Communist aspects onto the same shadowy body.

The same nuance is an attempt to extricate what is thoroughly entangled to a, some degree, inextricable level, while acknowledging that both sides are, themselves, different warring ideologies. It's not simple, nor are the feelings associated with it. What we want to avoid is conflation, while simultaneously humanizing what must be humanized to prevent further police violence in the future; I am acknowledging and disarming token stereotypes while occupying and interrogating them (and their power and trauma) through performance and play. That's what subversion and ludo-Gothic BDSM are ultimately about, as viewpoints regarding a performance we're both inhabiting and looking into; i.e., punching Nazis by camping them, which is to say, restoring their humanity by removing a capacity for police violence, wherever it is found and however it manifests during the rememory process as half-real, imaginary and historical.

I won't lie: there will be pain, and facing Melmoth will haunt you. However, it won't kill you (or I would have died long ago). But heroic transformation (systemic catharsis) only happens when the mirror is repeatedly re-examined and redesigned for workers' collective benefit, mid-camp and ludo-Gothic BDSM. Channeling a new



imaginary past, its social effects on the material world must transmit across space *and* time by us; re: using the Promethean Quest



to camp, thus subvert the monomyth, as—like the black castle that houses the brutal, rapacious tyrant—something that passes to the servant as avenging such mastery to keep capital in line.

This is what Soulblighter embodies in *Myth II*, the game being his story after Caesar is dead; i.e., the tortured, queer-coded Asiatic Jew driven mad with revenge tied to different terrible

things; e.g., black magic and torture, but also animals. To it, Marlowe's "raven soliloquy" from *The Jew of Malta* (1590) leaps to mind:

Thus like the sad presaging Raven that tolls  
The sicke mans passeport in her hollow beake,  
And in the shadow of the silent night  
Doth shake contagion from her sable wings ([source](#)).

Barbara's monologue/parade of vengeful, cruel, and thoroughly anti-Semitic stigmas curiously mirrors Soulblighter's abjection; i.e., as penned by Western *Christian* men, then and now (including gay ones like Shakespeare; re: Shylock). Soulblighter's their DARVO punching bag just as Barbaras was, but wedded to "Caesar" and the Cycle of King's Capitalist Realism. Keeping with the grim reaper shtick, Soulblighter's bloodthirsty glaive (the knife dick, its fang thirsty for good men's blood, fueling the owner's wicked revenge) also bears an anti-Semitic, "backstabbing Jew" flavor (we'll look at the Orientalist side of Soulblighter in a moment; e.g., his links to the Japanese side of the Axis Powers, exhibit 41c1).

Starting with Barbaras' greed parable, the "evil Jew" trope comes out of the actual medieval period into future echoes felt inside capital; i.e., oscillating towards and away from itself *vis-à-vis* its muscled Orientalist harbingers (and other monstrous-feminine scapegoats): those standing in (under duress) as *Bungie's* vaudeville, their Lord-Humongous-style Four Horsemen aping the same contagious virus borrowed less from the likes of Maturin and more from Hiroshi Aramata and a post-WW2 world. Soulblighter is the strawman Jew/stereotypical Asian made to count himself among Caesar's four Fallen Lords; i.e., the token symbol for greed abjected onto an alien, easterly Semite that serves capital by emerging to scare the middle class into fighting him, thus preserve capital by eating themselves (a fiendishly clever reversal of the zombie—normally eating the middle class—suffering to be eaten by them, instead).

In reality, it's all capital's doing what capital always does: "rape workers and blame it on them to divide and conquer when capital decays and seeks revenge

(revealing its own rapacious function as having existed *before* said decay sets in); put said zombies down and hand the keys of empire back to the usual white knights (cops) and lords (owners)." Dogwhistle, repeat. Clearly *Myth II* is aware of the cycle it illustrates, but it uses the expendability of its soldiers (and sprawling dogma of its built worlds) to crystalize the loop, hence the status quo as something Soulblighter the terrorist is ultimately *against*. He's Shylock: "If you prick us, do we not bleed? [...] If you wrong us, shall we not revenge?"

Again, the monomyth is baked into capital, commonly inverting as a Promethean, undead cycle of rape, revenge and restoration serving profit; i.e., a zombie tyrant (often a vampire Nazi or Jew) to raise and blame when it feeds, *not* the system already in place exploiting and antagonizing nature before putting it cheaply to work: raising ethnostates and terrorist organizations (e.g., Israel and Hamas) stuck in the same abject torture loop moving power towards the state exploiting all parties involved. Whatever the destroyer's form (not just the Metroidvania castle, vengeful husband or mad scientist), our speculative, subversive aim is regicidal and postcolonial; i.e., presenting the zombie as something to critique if it defends the state at workers' expense: a fearful, muscular and undead golem, vampire, what-have-you, with motives that resist discovery upon examination.

However, if we remain persistent and creative, we can resist the typical fear mechanism or fascinated glory-seeker's rebuild-the-kingdom antics (e.g., Metallica's "[Four Horsemen](#)" [1983]: "Choose your fate and die!") normally turning capital's gears; i.e., choosing instead to inspect, understand and ultimately subvert Soulblighter's trauma and undead feeding habits, working out what makes him tick, thus lay bare capital's usual operations through such tokenized vaudeville: the evil child, the Pinocchio from Hell, the Golem of Prague that is both the *Übermensch* *and* the *Untermensch*, the harbinger and the testament to secret sin, open discord and selective memory fueling present struggles fascinated with Old-Testament violence, black magic, and rituals of blood sacrifice (re: Abraham).



([source](#): *Mythipedia*)

As *Myth's* Melmoth, Soulblighter looks scary enough—is literally the thing that haunts the bourgeoisie' dreams, keeping Alric up at night as his extratextual parallels try and scare *us* with these same things (they fear worker revenge, so they transmute it into dogma). In technophobic terms, Soulblighter is a canonical goblin; i.e., a false mirror/double of reality projecting imaginary bourgeois fears onto his viewers, planted in the Earth and springing up from the clay while composed of it like Nappa's cybermen. Keeping with Victor's doomsday

scenario, Soulblighter was birthed by the mad minds of those in power alongside his fellow creations—a crass, abject rainbow of disparate monstrous-feminine clichés that fearful middle-class men can LARP against in a fantasy world made, as the monomyth always is, just for them: WW2 in small. Such lies are planted and sown, then take root through assimilation and play.

As widespread and fearsome as Soulblighter sounds, he ultimately remains *against* empire for reasons that aren't *completely* alien to our own counterterrorist cause, provided we camp it a little; i.e., "make it gay" in ways that speak to queer alienation as something that intersects with other forms; e.g., Orientalism and anti-Semitism becoming "Holocaust" in quotes—something that never quite existed, thus permits us speaking to our own survival through its fantasy battles and slaughters. This "rape play" isn't something the elite can monopolize, meaning we can camp it, too; i.e., just enough to make Soulblighter feel pain, to humanize him (as a stereotypical tortured fag will do) to account for similarity amid difference, hence a pedagogy of the oppressed and its anisotropic qualities reversing abjection by flowing power towards workers through terrorist/counterterrorist binaries we can subvert, synthesize and reverse in defense of those normally policed and tokenized to police labor by state forces feeding through such violence.

For one, it's a lot easier to understand Soulblighter's potential love for Balor as a fellow gay man in a fascist regime than it is for him to simply be "pure evil." People don't do things simply to be evil *unless* it's for propaganda purposes; e.g., the barbaric Jew (re: Barbaras) being evil to make the Christians look good—with Soulblighter being so cartoonishly evil, it defies reason:

If the dam were destroyed, the resulting deluge would kill everything in its path for miles. [...] Still Shiver stands between us and Soulblighter, just as she did two days ago on the Ire River. The men who fought there faced an



army of thrall meant more as an impediment than anything else. Did Soulblighter plan to wash both the Legion and Shiver out to sea? Truly there is no end to the fiend's malfeasance" ([source](#)).

([source](#): *Mythipedia*)

While all's fair in love and war, the game depicts Soulblighter as a terrorist. Basically he summons Shiver—a literal hellcat—and uses her as bait (all that the game allows her to be); in turn, the Deceiver—wielding

a vain, silver-tongued worminess (all queer stereotypes) married to a Grinch-like smile and large nose (anti-Semitic tropes, himself a backstabbing Jew "in the flesh," above)—is brought back to save the Legion from the battle at the dam; i.e., the *good* queer servant/dutiful Jew who *used* to be bad: "He goes to warn the Emperor—moving through odd angles; faster than any man, and if unobserved, much faster than that" ([source](#)).

To it, Soulblighter's acts of terrorism always classify as tokenized Jewish/Oriental revenge, thus are depicted as extraordinary cruel (more cruel than Alric). When these routinely fail against all odds, Soulblighter spirals, picking a fight he cannot win so that he can lure his ancient enemies—literally empire, itself—to a desperate last battle. Soulblighter *wants* to die and has from the start, but he's choosing to die by taking the Cycle of Kings with him (the volcano literally being a suicide bomb)! Apart from Shiver (who's bait), Soulblighter largely does this alone; i.e., as the mastermind with an army of queer-coded Nazi slaves (again, the contradictions are fine provided they serve profit; and liberation and enslavement occupy the same shadow zone, as do Nazis and Communists).



([source](#): *Mythipedia*)

Except, Soulblighter can't resurrect Balor to help out, so he chooses to bring back the Myrkridia—again, more golems, and queer-coded ones linked to sodomy and bad resurrection: a race of inferior-yet-superior (re: "the enemy is weak and strong") creatures of so-called "Jewish magic" (mad science) and revenge:

The Tain was supposed to be the final resting place of the Myrkridia, but The Summoner has been inside the shattered artifact for five months now, slowly resurrecting their entire race [sort of an evil Genie's bottle]. To think of it makes me shudder, and even now the Myrkridia spread across the Province like fire across a dry field, leaving death and blackened ruins in their wake. We must stop him now. [...] The Deceiver has brought us here to kill The Summoner. The ruin he will bring about if allowed to remain alive is unconscionable. This alone dictates that he must die ([source](#): *Mythipedia*).

In short, Soulblighter—the avenging Jew that raises the Nazis—finds an evil wizard, cutting ahead through the slower imperial mechanisms' usual cycle to generate a race of werewolf supermen (a Nazi call to violence, towards the end of WW2,

below) that, all the same, bears the tell-tale likeness of dwarvish mechanisms (re: the Tain), goblin phenotypes (an anti-Semitic symbol, above), Japanese Imperialism exhibit 41c1, and "sodomy" (unnatural, queer-coded reproduction). Thus, Bungie blames a Jew for the Nazis in Orientalist language, cramming everything messily into the same evil ghost that wanders the war-torn land; i.e., when the chickens come back sooner than expected (aftershocks).

Cliché though it is (verging on "true camp" in that Bungie have no irony to speak of, delivering the menace with a straight face), *Myth II* yields a much more involved and fleshed-out plot than *Myth I* does; i.e., the Summoner turning the bodies of Soulblighter's myriad victims into what can only be described as "Nazi-Communist effigies": a DARVO argument by Bungie, treating Soulblighter as Melmoth, and the Summoner as his vague, evil-wizard (director) Goebbels (the order of their deaths being different—the original minister of propaganda committing suicide outside the Führerbunker after Hitler shot himself—but I digress).

Furthermore, the obscurantist mixing of monster myths to conceal the fact that Alric and empire are actually the bourgeois forces, here (with Soulblighter nothing but a fascist mirage with Communist bastardizations), is simply fascism defending capital through the middle class. The Summoner might be the Nazi scientist, in-game, but the story remains a queer-tinged framed narrative comparable to Tolkien's *LotR* (re: [Ostertag](#)) for which everything is contained in the Narrator's journal, the latter written by Bungie serving the profit motive similar to Tolkien or Lovecraft (re: Imperialism with more steps). It's an abject, adult-oriented playground for endless battle against gay Nazi, "degenerate" (foreign, poor and non-Christian, etc) forces, informed by history as half-real and cartoonish, strangely devoid of camp in its medieval, token, *He-Man*-grade revivals.

For example, after Soulblighter's blitzkrieg fails, the werewolf legend he invokes unfolds in ways that pertain—ironically enough—to a creatively imaginary homeland aimed at frightened children borrowed from the actual Nazis:

It is said that "desperate times call for desperate measures," and no one was more desperate than the members of the Third Reich in 1945 during the final months of World War II. Even Adolf Hitler knew the Allies were advancing on Berlin. The thought both terrified and enraged him. Hitler had always been a big believer in the occult, numerology, the zodiac, and more. But by the final months of the war, his belief morphed into a kind of obsession. His preoccupation with these matters was well known to his men. They catered to it by delving into subjects like the existence of the Holy Grail, witchcraft, and werewolves.

Hitler was fascinated by werewolves, but he believed in them the same way Germanic folklorists did, namely that werewolves were merely "flawed, but well-meaning characters who may be bestial, but are tied to the woods,

the blood, the soil," says Eric Kurlander, author of *Hitler's Monsters: A Supernatural History of the Third Reich*. According to Kurlander, Hitler used werewolves and wolves<sup>257</sup> as symbols of German strength and purity against those seeking to destroy them. Hitler co-opted the image of the creatures often. In one instance, he named a plan to destroy his enemy's supply chain "Operation Werewolf." He also created a group of paramilitary soldiers – werewolves – to confuse and frighten the advancing Allies and the Soviets, against whom he was losing badly on the Eastern Front.



[from source: "9 March 1945: Goebbels awards a 16-year-old Hitler Youth, Willi Hübner, the Iron Cross for the defense of Lauban. Photo: Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-J31305 / CC-BY-SA 3.0"]

By late 1944, even Hitler and his top men, including Joseph Goebbels, knew the war would soon be over. They realized that they couldn't pull victory from the jaws of defeat. Instead, they chose to delay the inevitable in the hope that they could devise a more favorable scenario for Germany. Historian Perry Biddiscombe explains in his book, *Werewolf! The History of the National Socialist Guerrilla Movement, 1944-1946* that Goebbels came up with the idea to exploit the werewolf legend. In early 1945, Biddiscombe notes, broadcasts began nationwide urging citizens to join the "werewolf movement." He describes one broadcast in which a woman, posing as a werewolf, says, "Lily the werewolf is my name. I bite, I eat, I am not tame. My werewolf teeth bite the enemy" ([source](#): Ian Harvey's "Nazi Werewolves? The Secret Nazi Guerrilla Organization," 2018).

Such a dishonest, uneven, canonical weaponizing of myth—of treating specific, heteronormative/queernormative elements as transcendental signifieds—is not a new trick, and not one exclusive to the Axis Powers abusing child soldiers to refill their depleted slave ranks with fresh Hitler Youth; all empires do this, including America and its allies, but also British, American, and yes, German authors under their umbrellas (re: men like Marlowe, Tolkien and Lovecraft, but also Hitler inspiring companies like Bungie).

<sup>257</sup> In typical British fashion, Tolkien stereotypically demonized wolves in his own stories, commonly presenting them as fodder, but also as wicked stigma animals with shapeshifting counterparts called "wargs" (another name for lycanthropes); i.e., giant evil monsters riding into battle with goblins on their backs during the Battle of the Five Armies, fulfilling Tolkien's canonical essentialist/ethnocentric view of war in ways that would long outlast him.

Why? Because it's easy to manipulate, hence profitable! War—specifically war against a monstrous invented enemy (of nature)—historically sells through the abjection process touting the lie of Western supremacy (the ghost of the counterfeit): posture "strength" in opposition to the foe "of nature," then siphon it out of state workers playing at Ragnarok (the state always takes, but lies to make you feel strong as it drains you). Keeping with the Nazi trick of DARVO and obscurantism, a given warmonger (not just the Nazis) frame themselves as the *guerrillas*, fighting on the backfoot while trying to convince people of their righteous cause through more and more false flags.

Hitler borrowed such things from America to radicalize American-style settler colonialism abroad (re: cowboys and Indians, with the frontiersmen playing as white Indians to serve the state, but also token Indians selling out their own peoples), as much as Bungie borrowed from the Nazis to enact *Pax Americana*, in-text; i.e., a Jewish-Nazi revival, whose medieval fantasy world looks suspiciously similar to Western Europe sold back to fearful Americans unused to war on the home front. Propaganda is propaganda, serving profit as usual.

To it, *Myth II* tells itself through records of old events, lionizing empire Tolkien-style by inventing a Jewish-coded megalomaniac to stereotypically justify its own endless war's runaway tensions—i.e., occurring on and off the page abandoning workers to such remorseless predation. Keeping this in mind, it might seem easy to write Soulblighter off, treating him as Bungie does: a bad Nazi cartoon with Jewish, Orientalist and queer elements; i.e., "This is what happens when the blindly faithful lose their leader! They need a good parent to keep them in line!" To camp Soulblighter to a *proletarian* degree, we can't ascribe the game's theatrical motivations to him; i.e., the apprentice outperforming the master to be even more evil/unstable than Balor was (the Jewish cop "out-Nazi-ing" the Nazi, itself part of the same bourgeois witch hunt probing the witch's guilt).

So while "death before dishonor" is entirely possible—with Soulblighter basically being one of "Hitler's" faux-Caesar generals (ghosts of ghosts) playing out of the Nazi rulebook stolen from American volumes and passed off as "genuine" by Bungie (a canonical variant of Walpole's *Otranto*)—the fact remains that it's far from the *only* explanation. To it, the speculative variety unto Soulblighter's internal conflict/old-fashioned moral dilemmas makes for a very different (and more interesting) plight than Balor's jilted, one-off Caesar schtick; re: "I didn't man the walls hard enough, thus became the zombie impostor!" By comparison, Soulblighter seems quite aware he's undead. There's an outrageous, Melmothian quality to him that demands he be camped (as Nazi ghosts generally do, onstage)!

Expect the usual dualities. On one hand, Damas is a one-note psychopath with zero nuance, which is exactly what pro-capitalist propaganda needs the Wandering Jew to be. On the other, his outsider's motivations frankly make a lot more sense (removed from capitalist dogma) if there's a *human* element. Given the operatic framework already in place, a jilted widower pining for his lost friend feels

oddly accurate for Soulblighter (a bit "bros before hos," but gay in the way that Tolkien is unto Frodo and Sam: Balor is Frodo and Soulblighter his Samwise Gamgee, reversing the monomyth and its ringbearer's quest). It might not justify Soulblighter's disastrous actions entirely. But it *would* explain them in ways that partially humanize him, which we can camp to whatever degree we want (Soulblighter musical, go)!



([source](#): *Myth Journals*)

Furthermore, being non-white and queer would automatically marginalize Damas, hounding him witch-hunter-style into a radical direction that normally would lean either to the Left or the Right, but here Bungie conflates "Jew" with "Nazi" to provide the Promethean (self-destructive) element it needs to continue the Cycle of Kings all over

again: "Thou called'est me a dog before thou had a cause / But since I am a dog, beware my fangs<sup>258</sup>!" The state routinely hogs and weaponizes paradox through such Orientalist caricature as doubled, cloned, spit out like bullets to coax police-style escalation (reactive abuse) anywhere and everywhere.

Given the West's complicity with fascism to purge Communism from existence<sup>259</sup>, the best Bungie can do, in *Myth II*, is treat the volcano scene as Red Scare; i.e., through a fascist, ticking-timebomb purge, one speaking to reactive abuse and reactionary sentiment sandwiched together—this time with a *real* volcano instead of a giant hole in the ground.

Towards the end of the game, Soulblighter invokes the fire of the gods, Bungie meaning to gaslight, gatekeep girl boss Soulblighter until he first tries to take the world with him by summoning the volcano (waking it up); then plunges pathetically through futile, Promethean revenge into the lava like Icarus, but also

<sup>258</sup> Shylock, from *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>259</sup> Re: William Blum, who writes in *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*, (1995):

For four years, numerous Americans, in high positions and obscure, sullenly harbored the conviction that World War II was "the wrong war against the wrong enemies." Communism, they knew, was the only genuine adversary on America's historical agenda. Was that not why Hitler had been ignored/tolerated/appeased/aided? So that the Nazi war machine would turn East and wipe Bolshevism off the face of the earth once and for all? It was just unfortunate that Adolf turned out to be such a megalomaniac and turned West as well ([source](#)).

This animosity continues to uphold Capitalist Realism in stories like *Myth II* and beyond.

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
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Gollum (another anti-Semitic character—one whose name sounds like "Golem," but also who Tolkien has Gandalf accuse of drinking blood and eating babies). Even so, the furious sentiment remains a valid one, insofar as someone queer and damaged might—having been abused enough by a toxic lover or authority figure—simply opt to end the cycle for good; i.e., extinguish the entire bloodline; re: *Frankenstein*. The villain in that story isn't the Creature, it's the man of reason, and the man of reason in *Myth* is Alric, not Soulbrighter.

If you'll recall, part of the overarching problem isn't just Nazi pastiche, but the intellectual dominion of old nerdy white men; i.e., contributed to by earlier thinkers like Marx as much as by Bungie and other proponents of capital. Reassembled through our own labor, then, we can reshape the wider Gothic imagination—thus canon and the world—in pointedly sex-positive ways that holistically and inclusively guide future generations out of the Capitalist-Realist nightmare, all while camping Marx' ghost, too (the original man being anti-Semitic and homophobic, thus exclusionary and prone to scapegoating others to some extent)! Gothic Communism does so by camping stories like *Myth II* through subversive interpretation, one that builds on imperfect theories while challenging canon at large. In doing so, iconoclasm becomes an intersectional, solidarized mode; i.e., a rebellious act of seeing systemic trauma through counterculture art, including dreamlike implements of ritualized violence that hurt, but do not harm.

That's what Soulbrighter does. He's literally a wandering ghost, but also a walking wound, and a very angry and outrageous one that lends itself well to camp. This must heal, which requires humanizing the wound through camp. Only then will the true abusers of the world—Capitalism and its inherently unstable, Cartesian-coded Torment Nexus—vanish. Disappearing with it, the giant, Frankensteinian "Caesars" would cease returning from Hell to rape and cannibalize empire, kayfabe-style; i.e., as a matter of "sodomy"—with an unquenchable thirst for human blood and hauntologically big muscles pumped with said blood (whose builds couldn't have existed "back then," but *did* express in statuesque "antiquities" that ballooned under a heteronormative profit motive closer to the present; e.g., Eugene Sandow unto *He-Man* and Bungie's good-vs-evil meat wizards and warlocks).

All evoke the same old sagas' profitable recursions of death; re: their disposable heroes' Abraham-style altars of sacrifice ("Bred to kill, not to care, the slaughter never ends!"), bearing fearsome tokenized queer elements that challenge Heaven as a matter of ghostly revenge from empire's past victims married to such stereotypes (a bit like Lucifer in *Paradise Lost*, but less campy than Milton, or even Tolkien's Morgoth/Sauron<sup>260</sup>). "Suffering to the conquered" becomes a worst-fear

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<sup>260</sup> Keeping with the Tolkien rip-off, Balor is Melkor/Morgoth and Soulbrighter is Mairon/Sauron (a play on the idea, with Soulbrighter being outwardly hideous, whereas Sauron was an outwardly comely diplomat who initially gave golden rings that bound others to him), but the Tolkien nods don't stop there; e.g., "the Deceiver" was also a nickname for Sauron. Whilst all seem obvious in hindsight, I frankly never noticed them until just now!

Jewish revenge married to an Asiatic one, each playing the bugbear's part as a matter of canon-made-chimeric, but also ghostly and impossible: multiple ideas of revenge lurking inside the same spectral cartoon that—like a Radcliffean castle during the liminal hauntology of war—evokes the *idea* of the grim harvest to scare workers with! Summon ghost of the Axis Powers (and the West's ideas of their stereotypes and revenge) during Red Scare; witness them; drum up moral panic during Capitalist Realism. Repeat!



(*exhibit 41c1: Artist, bottom-left: John Bolton; bottom-right: [source](#). Soulblihter, the chief antagonist to *Myth II*. Whereas Balor resembles Caesar fallen from grace, Soulblihter more closely embodies Jewish revenge for Hilter ["Caesar"]:* "If you wrong us, shall we not revenge?"

*It's the usual horseshoe-style Red Scare, conflating Communism with fascism while married to Yellow Peril and Islamophobia; i.e., the Orientalist element of a barbaric non-white savage intent on destroying the West*

*out of revenge for a fellow half-alien, the Nazis [a visual motif echoed during the "Yellow Peril" propaganda in various American wars, but also during the fighting, itself; e.g., on the Pacific islands during WW2's infamously brutal Pacific Theatre]. So whether it's the Moors or Arabs, Mongols, Shogunate, Turks, Zulus, or some other barbarian, the same basic process employs DARVO to obscure and hybridize abjection-as-usual, committed by modernity projecting its own barbarism onto other cultures; i.e., Soulblihter renowned for his unusual cruelty among the Fallen, minus the tell-tale, Nazi-grade sadist outfits. Instead, it's closer to the Rape of Nanking committed by the Japanese side of the Axis powers:*

*By all accounts, Soulblihter butchered the entire population of Strand looking for The Summoner. How he knew where to look for him, or even how, is unclear. It is obvious that Soulblihter did not have access to the Total Codex. If he did, it would have led him right to the man. Instead, he tortured and killed nearly every living soul within three weeks travel of that ill-fated city before finding him [[source](#): Mythipedia].*

*Part Nazi, part Shogunate, part "evil Jew," Bungie constantly frames Soulbliighter as a brute-force, East-meets-West destroyer of the West and more wicked than "builders of empire" like Alric standing in for American forces; e.g., "sixty years is nothing to the likes of a Fallen Lord, and while King Alric was restoring the Province to its former glory, Soulbliighter was plotting its infinite ruin" [source: Mythipedia] or "Soulbliighter, like Balor before him, seeks not to conquer but to destroy; to be master of the unthinking dead [extended beings] and their blasted lands" [source: Mythipedia]. In other words, Alric tames nature, making it "good"; Soulbliighter is a force of nature to put down because it is like a mad dog that cannot be tamed. Corrupted by canonical essentialism to be viewed as "fallen," Soulbliighter is like an orc, witch, zombie, or some other monstrous-feminine; i.e., as inferior nature biding its time against superior Cartesian forces: the horrors of war from a Western perspective, equating their cartoonish enemies/victims' queer love to "total destruction."*



*[source, left: [Reddit](#); right: [Mythipedia](#)]*

*Balor and Soulbliighter are both fascists, but they're not identical in that respect. Combined with a "non-Western," Yellow-Menace brutality—one that makes a DARVO argument for the West as innocent—*

*Soulbliighter's appearance is conspicuously muscular and Asian, but also skeletal; re: he mutilated his own body in anticipation to his zombie-esque "turning" as part of a larger dogmatic cycle. Forget "total eclipse of the heart," Soulbliighter literally has no heart; he cut it out of himself.*

*"And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?" Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn asks. Seemingly in response, Bungie makes Soulbliighter—a resident friend-of-Caesar [similar to "a friend of Dorothy"] who becomes the tinman<sup>261</sup> in the flesh;*

<sup>261</sup> In *The Wizard of Oz* universe, the Tinman is a common metaphor for queer love. In the original 1900 story, it's more homonormative; i.e., the Wicked Witch of the East curses a woodman after he falls in love with a girl, the axe chopping his body off bit by bit, while a nearby tin smith replaces all the parts, but forgets to give the Tinman a heart.

In comparison, *Myth II* reverses the anti-Semitic trope by having Soulbliighter "eat his heart out," his gay body ripped apart for losing the man he served with more devotion than the others did. Obviously it was a toxic relationship (as many gay relationships are under Capitalism), but one in which Soulbliighter—having lost his master—conducts a batman's extinction burst (re: the volcano). It's bleakly romantic, the dutiful undead slave avenging his king-in-life by destroying the thing that killed Balor in death: empire.

The story—while still loaded with extermination sentiment and self-hating bigotry—yields a human-if-closeted monstrous-feminine element; i.e., one that—for this trans girl, at least—isn't terribly difficult to understand from a Communist perspective despite its fascist aesthetic: tragic love.

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*i.e., achieving eternal life to seek short-sighted revenge while carrying a torch for Connacht.*

*Solzhenitsyn continues, "If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being"; i.e., by making someone so unduly heartless as Soulblighter—a being so enraged by the death of Balor that he cuts his own nose off [to spite his face]—Bungie "solves" the problem of appealing to humane peoples by forgetting Solzhenitsyn's words on purpose. To it, Soulblighter is the tokenized undead witch; i.e., a mad dog seemingly beyond redemption, thus someone for which it is easy to ask others to "mercifully" destroy [and overlook the sins of empire in the process].*

*Both sadistic and masochistic, Soulblighter's "zombie Orientalism" and its violence are always illegitimate, but especially when he tries to "end the cycle" by erupting a giant volcano, trying to destroy the world: "We have Soulblighter's army caught between the Cloudspine, the Ire River, and Tharsis—the legendary forge of the Trow" [[source](#): Myth Journals]. There's also an element of secret-identity futile revenge to it, Soulblighter actually being [Damas, former captain of the game's "Heron guard"](#) [basically a healer samurai unit]—literally the old guard of a formerly great far-east empire who seek redemption after the fall of their city centuries prior [itself a form of fascist Orientalism: the restoration of the "noble samurai" similar to the noble savage or noble Jew].*

*Every Fallen Lord has such an identity—generally some kind of nemesis to go with their current evil side out from older times. Apart from such double selves, such zombie warlords are presaged by ill omens in general. One is the comet from [Myth](#) announcing Balor's return. However, there is also the wake of various stigma animals that canon commonly uses to devalue themselves and the non-Western cultures associated with them [re: Shylock being compared to different canine beasts by his Christian overlords].*

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To it, Soulblighter escapes into Tharsis like Romeo steals into Juliet's tomb, except he's conducting a ritualistic murder-suicide against empire and capital for reasons only he seemingly knows! "Tempt not a dangerous man!"

Personally I think he's doing it for his friend. Is it over the top? Sure. Is Soulblighter a war criminal? Yes, absolutely. But his revenge—no matter how twisted it might seem, at first glance—remains driven by a deep-seated hatred for the West betraying its soldiers and servants. Of them, Balor ranked highest in Soulblighter's esteem. And while the game's logic for Balor's ire is a deep betrayal by the West forgetting Connacht's sacrifice, Soulblighter's motivations are tied to the man he served and probably loved (once upon a time, anyways). It's not an endorsement of fascism to try to understand their motivations in ways we ourselves can relate to, then subvert.

Furthermore, it's not exactly a stretch to see the gay elements to this particular Nazi—a human being despite his twisted will—having potential (if closeted) motivations that aren't totally alien. It's not any different than *Melmoth* or *Dracula*, meaning that—should we choose to—we could camp Soulblighter like any other monster in this book; i.e., like the Nazi or the Communist, on stage; e.g., like Gregory Maguire's *Wicked*, what kind of story might Damas tell if given the chance to be more than simply "pure evil?" Makes you wonder...

*To that, Soulblighter also has the ability to transform into a so-called "murder" of crows—a magical, shapeshifting act that unfairly associates those animals [exhibit 41c2] with his cartoonishly evil, tokenized crimes [and which anti-Semitism associates with the death of Christians relaid in Jewish vaudeville; re: Marlowe]. Indeed, corvids in general are intensely clever animals, but aren't anymore cruel than other birds; i.e., certainly not the shrike, which impales its prey<sup>262</sup> on thorn bushes, or the toucan, which is surprisingly brutal despite its colorful, friendly appearance and latter-day transformation into a children's breakfast cereal mascot: "Always follow your nose!" Like Gandalf to the hobbits, in Moria, I'd say the same regarding Soulblighter's, but he cut his off already!)*

Like Tolkien's Sauron challenging the West's sense of divine entitlement, Bungie marries Axis-flavored bugbears like Soulblighter (the game's Sauron analogue) to a strange, now-alien relationship to nature; i.e., animals and magic that have become forgotten, abject, and cartoonish through the usual canonical arbitrations: Nazgul in small ("death from the skies")!

To it, Soulblighter is literally composed of crows: "The Deceiver [the game's gay wildcard; i.e., shaking up the action while [shouting "Wildcard, bitches!" and putting on a cowboy hat](#), like Slim Pickens' from *Doctor Strangelove*] boasted of his victory over Soulblighter, clutching a mangled crow and claiming to have captured 'a part of the murder,' crippling his former ally" ([source](#)). Soulblighter is Big Bird from Hell, a walking "murder" that essentializes nature as evil through medieval superstitions and prejudice (conspiracies) concerning corvids and Jewish people revived in neoliberal fearmongering: the usual cataclysms that Capitalism both threatens/materializes and brings about through its divisions and divided labor force (us-versus-them) forever delaying progress (a lie unto itself, "progress" being a cryptonym for "profit" pushing like Sisyphus towards an unreachable goal; e.g.,

Mount Olympus denied to normal humans; i.e., the fire of the gods).



*(exhibit 41c2: [Fable the raven](#) and her pet human. As a stigma animal, ravens and crows are treated as harbingers of death. In part, this probably owes to their trademark black appearance, as magpies—despite being corvids—don't get the*

*same wholly bad rap; i.e., because their plumage is only partially black [ "[One for](#)*

<sup>262</sup> Not victims, because non-human animals cannot rape each other—at least not anywhere near how humans can; i.e., the latter knowing the *consequences* of their actions, but also having the capacity to torture instead of killing for shelter and food. In short, non-human animals might play with their food, but not through human forms of sadism, cruelty and malice. They literally lack the faculties for it.

*sorrow, Two for joy..." 1780]. However, Christian bigots [and by extension capitalists weaponizing Christian dogma] likewise associate stigma animals such as corvids with manmade sites [and personas] of death and decay.*

*Furthermore, while decomposers like insect larvae, dung beetles and fungus obviously fall into this group, the tell-tale "murder" of crows and "unkindness" of ravens associate with death through canonical collective nouns; i.e., as something they visibly feed off of as notorious scavenger animals; e.g., cities, but also the battlefield and its endless glut of corpses bringing groups of undesirables to the fore. It's DARVO blaming animals while conflating Jews [and other out-groups] with their collective punishment in service to profit.*



*[source: Ben Jonson's "Tower Ravens"<sup>263</sup>]*

*By extension, these birds have become canonically associated with tombs and prisons; i.e., as a Neo-Gothic matter of attracting paying customers, generally middle-class foreigners, drunk on the*

*cartoonish idea of a British "medieval" [continuously romanced by writers like Christopher Marlowe and Edgar Allen Poe, but also featured at regal-themed animal rescues; e.g., those pet ravens kept at the fearsome Tower of London, above]. Like the black dog or cat, canon frames the corvid's presence as an ill omen belonging to a "creature of the night"<sup>264</sup> that emblemizes death through buildings known for heavy atmosphere; i.e., one associated with witches and black magic as something to fear and attack by goodly God-fearing Christians "guarding the church" from barbarians at the gate. Indeed, the idea of corvids serving as dark familiars makes sense, as they are both tremendously misunderstood and extremely intelligent, adorable creatures. The same humane potential goes for their human associates, though the latter can tokenize.*

*To that, if we can humanize actual corvids and realize their victimization by Western dogma and Christianized persecution through Capitalism unto alien forces, why not Soulblighter?)*

The reason for this delay in development is that canon is carceral, its hauntologies deliberately trapping worker minds inside disastrous, illusory and

<sup>263</sup> Of the Tower's infamous birds, Jonson writes, "It is not known when the ravens first came to the Tower of London, but their presence there is surrounded by myth and legend. Unusually for birds of ill omen, the future of both Country and Kingdom relies upon their continued residence, for according to legend, at least six ravens must remain lest both Tower and Monarchy fall" ([source](#)).

<sup>264</sup> Which is ironic, considering that corvids, unlike owls, are actually a *diurnal* species.

heteronormative lines of thought. Doing so alienates them from themselves and nature-as-monstrous-feminine (with ravens and crows being seen as witches' familiars heralding dark godly forces<sup>265</sup>, similar to black cats); i.e., stereotypical conflation that lead workers (from white cis-het men trickling down a tokenized grapevine) to be violent towards ravens and crows, but also Jews, Communists and queer people, etc. Like an ill omen, we become an Infernal Network to the middle class, a Jewish Conspiracy that—more than Soulbrighter and the Summoner ever could—raises pro-state Legions to kill us time and time again (stochastic terrorism).

To it, power is a relationship to consumption through capital. All forms thereof constitute a Great Chain of Being's nadir being wholly endemic to the same abject, bigoted equation. Whatever abjection's current form, it's the routine chase of unequal predatory power amid endless conflict under Capitalism; i.e., with older, mightier forms of the same undead belonging to the same rotting power structures the middle class gladly leverage against state victims during police violence. All constitute a *bourgeois* matter of calculated risk, one where zombie generals and sacrificial soldiers compete with present-day doubles, themselves budding debutantes directing power anisotropically towards the state and its rulers: Capitalism is the zombie, and a giant one at that (more on this during the conclusion)!

Bungie doesn't camp any of this in *Myth I* or *Myth II*, but we can—doing so simply by acknowledging what the authors are canonically up to: demonizing nature (and the monstrous-feminine through labor) through all the usual tokenizing fetishes and clichés, backstabbing Jews included. Like Garfield the Cat, nature simply becomes something for the middle class to fear and feel suspicious about, thus police the ghost of the counterfeit with through confirmation bias; i.e., one that abjects capital's appetites off onto small defenseless animals and vulnerable human parties turned into giant, ravenous undead, and more to the point, *profitable* caricatures of themselves (with Lumpy Touch taking an already lucrative

commodity and making it Gothic for those very reasons) that the self-centered middle class can sweat bullets about, Lovecraft-style. It's all very "woe is me," the privileged group abjecting nature and extended beings to ease their own tormented status:

(artist: [Lumpy Touch](#))



<sup>265</sup> For example, Odin classically kept two raven scouts: Huginn and Muninn, meaning "Thought" and "Memory." They're literally his eyes and ears (a concept for anti-Semitic, thus repressed heroic revenge that plays out in *The Crow* through Eric and his own pair of corvid eyes; i.e., the "foreign" agent hunting in the churchly ruins actually being a man of the West wearing a Halloween costume).

In turn, this is a multimedia ordeal, translating to novels, comics/cartoons, movies and videogames conversing back and forth. Men become afraid of animals just wanting to eat, persecuting them and those associated with them (what Maynard James Keenan calls "the cry of the carrots"<sup>266</sup>) through a village scapegoat mentality trapped inside Capitalist Realism; i.e., as something that is easier to do instead of face the thoroughly unattractive and unappetizing reality that *Capitalism and profit-as-ravenous* are to blame for such shortages and superstitions (re: the bourgeoisie trifectas and monopolies). Like eugenics and Nazi dogma (which are simply Capitalism and Cartesian thought decaying into radicalized versions of themselves), such things transfuse and pass along like bad wisdom/religion through the middle class on settler colony lands. "It takes a village," indeed!

Now that we've gone over Soulblighter and their abject role to nature, as well as the giant cruelty of normal-sized men, let's rehash some broader points about the Cycle of Kings and actual giants, then conclude our *Fallen Lords* close-read by surveying the *female* monstrous-feminine.

As a tyrant, the canonical zombie warlord is only part of a larger harvesting practice: presenting the future as hopelessly dead, even when trapped in medievalized iterations like *Myth: the Fallen Lords* and *Soulblighter*. Unlike the retro-future cyberpunk, the modern-day zombie apocalypse, or the closed space of a Gothic castle, the future of what could be is flung ass-backwards into a new dark age on open ground; i.e., one where the kingdom of the Light is threatened by the forces of the Dark (what Gary Moore, in romantic terms, [might call a return to "the Wild Frontier"](#) [1989] the same way that heteronormative young men might excitedly dream about ninjas, pirates, Vikings, and knights, etc); e.g., *Braveheart's* own ahistorical celebration of such battles coming out of *Lord of the Rings* and other settler-colonial propaganda: dressed up as "rebellion" and "home defense" against foreign invaders tied to internal plots of alien, vengeful usurpers (the elite scapegoating labor by tokenizing legitimate feelings of anger against the state, turning those feelings against workers to police themselves with). Whatever the form, all belong to the same outmoded territory as part of a future image that could easily come to pass and in some ways already has.

Overall, the fantasy genre does more than displace state violence; it dissociates it entirely by framing the fantasy world as "eternal," divorced from time as a cycle altogether. One need only examine the fascist hauntology of America and Western Europe to know this isn't true. Like *Metroidvania*, Bungie's medieval boneyard is a black mirror of what could happen to our own world, but lies to audiences by portraying the player as the slayer of the Dark through state-sanctioned executioners: the fearsome Legion guided by a loose coalition of powerful manly wizards called the Nine. The Fallen, by comparisons, are heralded by a version of history that doesn't make sense to its current benefactors, yet

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<sup>266</sup> Re: "[Disgustipated](#)" (1993).



whose alternate visions—from an undead Pantheon of great military leaders working against them—belies the base function of Capitalism working as it always does: out-of-control, in crisis and decay as fueling the chaos of competing warlords rising from the grave.

To grapple with the zombie tyrant, a centrist author like Bungie must seek to quell their own inherited guilt/anxiety through police violence; i.e., the token cop Soulblighter policing his own as repressed like he was even when times "were good." Fear and wonder become powerful levers to motivate the middle class to take part, becoming the very thing they revel in the wake of; i.e., the Second Coming of what they themselves hope to be: conquerors. In turn, the man of reason, crime lord and warrior king each account for some of the male-dominant positions under Capitalism, traumatizing the land through the creation of various undead dilemmas: hauntology as tied to Capitalist Realism, where Capitalism becomes a multicultural, cross-generational tomb for the living to inhabit from cradle to grave.

To it, *Myth* offers up the usual undead power fantasies, their futile revenge against nature wedded to symbols of cartoon danger you must recognize and attack. Simply put, it's a trap—the effect of canonical hauntology carceral precisely because it traps consumers inside recuperated, locational markers of Capitalism's generational abuse; i.e., echoing *fascist* images of the future as things to defeat through yet-another last-ditch defense of the state from the usual suspects in the past. Its dated, once-upon-a-time remediation, through blank parody and pastiche, yields canonical likenesses continuously devised in cryptonymic fashion; i.e., transformed into profitable, stupefying hypercanon, and whose neoliberal hauntology capitalizes on the "cracked mirrors" of dystopian retro-futures by treating everything as a splintered, repressed cultural mindset; e.g., Soulblighter and his "Nazi" mad scientist antics with a tokenized flavor to them, or Balor before him and a more gradual, less tokenized form of the Cycle of Kings (tokenization being an act of desperation): a sudden Promethean cataclysm, "the lesson in



humility" comparable to a nuclear bomb (fire from the neoliberal gods' "volcano") to spook labor silent, reminding them who's the boss.

([source](#))

Divorced from actual rebellion, the run-down parallel

worlds Bungie contributes towards abuse myth for profit's sake; i.e., Crusader and white-Indian heroism (which the game's Light units reflect, left) wedded, per Umberto Eco, to the cult of death. In doing so, they have become increasingly mass-manufactured—carceral fakeries that, from the neoliberal point of view, are only meant for apathetic consumers to play around inside while posturing as sexy rebels playing war as usual; i.e., the canceled future and infernal concentric pattern, wherein lies the sanctioned killing of gangsters, bandits, authoritarian cops, rogue AI, mutants, Fallen Lords, and other placeholders that function identically to the out-and-out fascist zombie in postapocalypse scenarios. It's fear and wonder serving profit, continuing zombie war inside and outside of fiction, galvanized by the process of abjection and ghost of the counterfeit—a red false flag to wave in front of the bull to get him to charge, then reap the whirlwind by destroying nature (versus being stewards to it) through all the usual dogwhistles.

In other words, canonical or not, the story of the zombie is *always* a black mirror—one whose Melmoth the Wanderer dangerously threatens undead apocalypse as a gigantic, looming threat waiting to feed on workers and nature through state mechanisms. Under these hostile conditions, canonical and iconoclastic variants exist in praxial opposition. However, the latter distinguishes itself by either camping earlier creations (as we have done here, largely by close-reading them), or offering new ones that pointedly uncover bourgeois hauntologies; i.e., they are *not* incentivized by profit and the inherent, built-in instabilities that state fabrications yield.

In either case, one must work through the catalog. With Bungie, they compile their own material, in-game and in paratexts; in turn, these—like all such built worlds—are cataloged again by their fans (who put such things online for easy access; re: Mythipedia, where I can pull such information up to interpret it in campy ways, which a queer reading essentially is). The fact remains, canon comports those in power as yielding up terrifying visions regarding state abuse (as something to uncover); i.e., the material reality continuously downplayed in favor of the canonical, decayed future and its stupid, easy fun: blow shit up, kick zombie ass—all during the apocalypse as "made for (white cis-het) men."

As with Tolkien, Bungie and so many others, the *complicit cryptonyms* of the elite popularize in centrist war narratives (and other hauntological forms like the cyberpunk as a kind of "slumming yarn," exhibit 41e); i.e., portraying yesterday's heroes as gigantic and male, fed on yesterday's corpses; re, the Capitalocene felt through Walpole's giant armor, which in this case accounts for the stony golem's flesh of the Trow and those unscrupulous sorcerers who summon them in whatever giant forms/combinations are useful to the state romancing the middle class while stupefying them, too:



(exhibit 41d: Keeping with the centrist, wrestler's narrative, Bungie's imaginary past is classically tied to the male body as statuesque, athletic and muscular [a trend we shall see whenever we revisit the game's Pantheon]. For example, the franchise's race of giants, the Trow, are tried-and-true mercenaries of the medieval

sort; they originally serve the Dark, only to switch sides against Soulbrighter<sup>267</sup> in the Second Great War [more Tolkien-style moral geography he passes off as "myth"]. While Soulbrighter performs the game's Melmoth-style vice character [one cutscene (above) granting him an almost baboon-like appearance], the Trow hybridize mythology for a Numinous effect; i.e., suffusing the myth of the Celtic giants with a Lovecraftian backstory releasing similar echoes of "Rome fallen": the ancient city's magical and alien statuesque parallel to At the Mountains of Madness [the patrolling Trow in the top-right image, above, storming towards the campfire to, if not eat the soldiers (as giants so often do to male heroes), then like Lovecraft's scientist aliens, rip the trespassers limb from limb].

To it, the Trow combine the Ancient Romans with Lovecraft's science-happy Old Ones, resulting in a slave-owning race with golem-like properties [echoes of Victor warning Walton about the Creature; i.e., a former slave being able to reproduce and harness science for a new posthuman race superior to mankind, bearing a grudge to boot]. A byproduct of mad science/Cartesian overreach, their "once-great" civilization has been reduced—as is tradition, per the Promethean Quest—by a massive slave revolt that left them proudly stranded in the snowy wastes of their former nation. To it, echoes of empire and scientific abuse extend beyond just that. Not only do the Trow speak what appears to be Latin—calling the Deceiver a being of "furor poeticus" [source: Mythipedia]—but they play Romanesque death sports, and announce themselves with great booming footsteps; i.e., not unlike the T-Rex from 1994's Jurassic Park [except the cloned dinosaurs in that movie were all female].)

This brings us to giants. For now, I just want to consider the giant's *aesthetic* in relation to the state and stories like *Myth* sold to workers; the conclusion will consider Capitalism itself as a giant zombie.

<sup>267</sup> Maybe for his poor generalship; i.e., in one level from the first game, the player must assassinate four Trow lieutenants, after which Soulbrighter traps the Legion in a magical "Chinese box" called the Tain (no relation to the China Miéville 2002 novella, but does combine closed space, giant spiders and Lovecraftian elements for a bit of a tone shift/scene change).

That being said, I don't suppose I really need to explain what giants are—it's in the name, after all. However, there *is* some additional context to impart: *Myth's* giants are all mercenaries—so-called "special units" who appear late in the game (suggesting the world-sized nature of the conflict as time goes on). These special



units include the Trow as we just examined, but also the forest giants (from the first game, left) and giant Myrkridia (towards the end of the second game). Soulblighter concerns all three, the sort of person who invokes a war of giants as much as men.

([source](#): *Mythipedia*)

To it, the forest giants work for the Legion, mainly while defending their home, a giant forested area called Forest Heart, from Soulblighter (then under Balor's employment); the giant Myrkridia work for Soulblighter after being summoned from elsewhere (another dimension, it would seem); and the Trow turn coat against Soulblighter thanks to the Deceiver's interference. In short, giants are big and tough, but also somewhat indifferent to the politics of men and their enemies; i.e., they generally have a larger connection to the world itself, and only emerge when properly enticed (mercenaries are paid, and giants require substantial payment). Beyond that, they generally have a Numinous, elemental flavor that anthropomorphizes, speaking to the ways that nature is weaponized and made to fight for humankind in monomyth stories.

This enlarged anthropomorphism/token animism isn't exclusive to Bungie; i.e., with Tolkien—doubtless inspired by Wagner and ancient myth—having featured the indifferent stone giants in *The Hobbit*, while also making nature into a goodly police force; e.g., the Great Eagles from the same book, but also with his Ents<sup>268</sup> from *The Two Towers* obediently breaking Saruman's war machines before Aragorn and his friends arrive. Instead, Bungie more or less recycles the idea, their own not-so-friendly tree men kicking the everlasting shit out of the forces of darkness.

As for the giant Myrkridia, they're basically "family-sized" versions of their "fun-sized" cousins. For all giants in such stories, though, they showcase the scope and scale of a conflict blown up to epic proportions; i.e., the epic poems of different ancient cultures often calling themselves home to literal giants of different kinds,

<sup>268</sup> Whose *D&D* alignment is generally "neutral," but in truth is simply apologizing for empire by working for those who pollute the world as much as Saruman does.

but also ancient war machines<sup>269</sup> rising to giant heights; e.g., siege towers. Giants, by extension, embody war machines with a humanoid flavor as connected to nature being normally exploited by state forces.

Similar to dragons, witches or zombies (orcs, goblins and werewolves, etc), giants play a vital role in Capitalist Realism during the monomyth; i.e., as hyperbolic calls to police violence, letting the state feed as a giant might by gobbling everything up around it. Except, the bigger the state is, the more it can eat; the more it can eat, the more it *will* eat through bigger and bigger arguments of self-preservation against invented enemies—i.e., those the state brutalizes for profit, which bears out its own ladder of preferential mistreatment.

You'd think that Nazis would be low on the list. Except, Nazis generally receive special treatment because they commonly serve state interests; instead, Communists and past victims of enslavement and exploitation cap off the state's hit list. In turn, the usual austerity politics' boom-or-bust instability punishes those outside the bourgeoisie, weakening the structure as it tries to glut itself. The more in crisis the state grows/decays towards, more it must prey on workers and nature just to survive. It needs giant-sized arguments, hence giant-sized targets, but also giant-sized idiots to push victims into the state's giant mouth.

It's true, then, that fascists make popular scapegoats, provided they're rabid. But if an out-of-control fascist is nowhere to attack, the state has *loyal* ones attack state enemies, instead. This escalation of violence happens in the usual police territories suddenly filled with "dangerous game"; i.e., passed off as criminal, but also likened to Bungie's giant Fallen Lords and aforementioned special units; e.g., trans people, or Communists who use the same aesthetics of power and death as fascists do (not to be confused with flags or insignias, which generally are much harder to assimilate).

Keeping with this section's central thesis, then, Capitalism will abject its giant abuses onto its victims—often with a queernormative, hyperbolic flavor merged with other forms of tokenization; i.e., teaching a privileged side (us) to blame, dehumanize and attack a monstrous side (them) while abusing DARVO and obscurantism in ubiquitous heroic language: the heroes acting increasingly like giant, entitled assholes against a perceived overblown menace they're celebrated for committing massive acts of cruelty against; i.e., police brutality dressed up as "bravery"; e.g., Beowulf vs Grendel.

Furthermore, this sea change forces the alien side to adapt and reclaim such implements to survive their bullies. In doing so, many out-group members compromise. Frequently abandoning healthier forms of rape play (which are

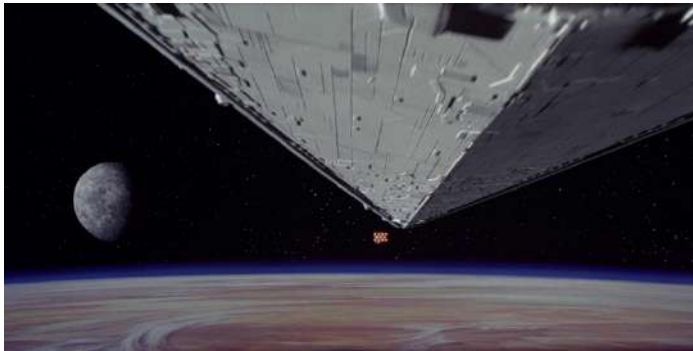
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<sup>269</sup> The irony of war machines is they generally got smaller over time; e.g., a catapult, trebuchet or canon versus a WW1 belt-fed machine gun. Then again, the carriers for such armaments remain as big as ever—an aircraft carrier or nuclear submarine amounting to a mobile fortress housing many weapons and men. Unlike Tolkien, Bungie limits the forays in *Myth* to guerilla warfare with human units. Hence, why we get giants to literally stand in for ancient war machines (or tools of deception, like the Trojan Horse, but the game has no use for such tactics).

discouraged already by colonizing forces), the abused often become cops themselves; i.e., when they betray others out of convenience and desperation, puffing themselves up and acting tough. For a time, this renders them immune, seemingly beyond persecution *provided* their eat their own. But the middle class is always there, looking for *new* token Judases to fill the role of giant slayer (such sell-outs never last—are always the most expendable).

The whole abysmal process spawned from the canonical monomyth out of Antiquity (a time of giants and gods) into *LotR*, *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter* and *Myth: the Fallen Lords* (which, among countless other stories bearing the same settler-colonial markers, all contain disproportionately sexist, queerphobic, Orientalist and/or anti-Semitic monsters to prop up the usually smaller but still larger-than-life hero "chosen for greatness").

Penned by opportunistic, white and politically moderate authors, such massive "threats" codify and catalyze Man Box and "prison sex" mentalities in poetic forms—their commercialized, menticidal dogma and refrains (maps or otherwise) turning the middle class (the usual cops) against domestic lower classes, but also entire foreign populations (the usual suspects) through frontier Capitalism finding the titanic scapegoats it needs to harvest nature-as-monstrous-feminine; re (from Volume Zero): "Hell is always a place that appears on Earth." Said Hell is populated with "giant" enemies who, killed by posturing knights, suffer the embarrassment of witch-hunter violence against someone who is hardly so massive, powerful or dangerous being bullied by someone who is: the state loves



DARVO (again, we'll sporadically touch on the state as a giant cannibal, here, before focusing on said cannibalism during the conclusion).

By comparison, the Promethean Quest generally subverts the monomyth, but

canonically still flows power towards the state when killing the hero (normally felled by a giant implication, if not an actual monster). To that, Bungie demonstrates how this can be done, populating "Hell come home" with fascist, queer-coded, tokenized stereotypes punching down against labor (as a giant might) and nature when the dead walk the Earth (another example being the Zodiac Braves from *Final Fantasy Tactics*, a game that sends the hero to die in Hell, fighting multiple giants-in-disguise leading to an imaginary Angel of Death without promise of reward, glory or recognition); i.e., peppering Hell/the Numinous with Red Scare elements among the horseshoe fascist overtones.

Be they larger-than-life men with Herculean strength, literal giant humanoids, or hyperobjects (capital, fascism/Communism and Mother Nature), the

point isn't the sacrifice by itself or our aforementioned gigantic forces. All generally connect through the same kayfabe's distributions of power and status, wherein a given *Amazonomachy* serves and sends power as a matter of ongoing praxis. Liberation and enslavement, trauma and catharsis, mere men and giants—all exist in the same shadow zone's contested aesthetics (often with an athletic component).

To it, expect the usual dialectical-material dualities when dealing with zombies, but especially *giant* zombies, generals and draconian vampires, etc. For one, the Gothic novel began as historical fiction; i.e., that reinvented history through myth surrounding such labels; re: Walpole's giant suit of armor (an allusion to the French and Indian War, 1754-1763, concluding a year before *Otranto* was written). During oppositional praxis, then, said myths were plundered from a variety of sources working at cross purposes between authors; e.g., the post-Roman, pro-Christian elements to giants dating back to *Beowulf* (in written English), extending to an operatic cycle with anti-Semitic elements as old as the



medieval period into Wagner's *des Nibelungen* (which Tolkien bastardized, and later Bungie). And such language as "You shall not pass!" (from Tolkien) can be heard in praxial opposition through "No pasarán!" (and similar phrases: "Ils ne passeront pas!") utilized as gatekeeper rhetoric to keep fascists out, but also imaginary "barbarians" kept curiously at bay by fascists aping the raised fist *for* capital; i.e., serving capital in faux-revolutionary language.

(artist: [Nadezhda Tolokonnikova](#))

This being said, revolution *is* sexy from an actual rebel's standpoint; i.e., sex positivity (and general liberation, insofar as Capitalism sexualizes all workers), which unfold during neo-medieval forms of rape play whose ambiguous, mythic theatrics demonstrably synthesize catharsis. All the same, this isn't what actual practicing fascists<sup>270</sup> do when raising their own fists; e.g., Trump doing so after nearly getting shot by a disgruntled white conservative, but also white liberal authors playing the rebel against fascist elements while—in

<sup>270</sup> Often appearing as moderate; e.g., The Guardian and similar organizations, but also George Orwell or Max Brooks, the latter writing *World War Z*, which used the anti-fascist phrase in French; re: "Ils ne passeront pas!" used against a worldwide plague of zombies. In doing so, Brooks—the Jewish son of famous satirist, Mel Brooks—fails to distinguish between fascism and Communism. Context matters, folks, but do praxial stances.

the same breath—callously punching down against labor movements who think Europe sucks:

When the anti-Putin activist Nadezhda Tolokonnikova [above], a member of the Pussy Riot punk group, was tried for blasphemy in Moscow in 2012, she wore a T-shirt emblazoned with a defiant raised fist and the Spanish slogan "*no pasarán*": they shall not pass.

The phrase is associated with the Spanish civil war, which Vladimir Putin's invasion of [Ukraine](#) has made terrifyingly relevant – especially as volunteer fighters from across the world gather to defend the country from his attack. [No pasarán](#) became a slogan for the 35,000 volunteers of the International Brigades who travelled to Spain from more than 80 countries to defend its legal government from fascist-backed aggression. About 2,300 or more set out from Britain and Ireland. Another 2,800 left the US, forming the Abraham Lincoln Battalion – the first racially mixed US military unit led by a Black officer, Oliver Law.

The brigadiers chose the right side of history. Both Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini sent troops to fight alongside the violent rightwing reactionaries led by Spain's future dictator, General Francisco Franco. Like Putin, they wanted to demolish democracy across [Europe](#). In Ukraine, the president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, also wants a [volunteer "foreign legion"](#) to join the war. "This is the beginning of a war against Europe, against European structures, against democracy, against basic human rights, against a global order of law, rules and peaceful coexistence," he [said](#). "Anyone who wants to join the defence of *Ukraine, Europe and the world* [emphasis, me] can come" ([source](#): Giles Tremlett's "Anti-Fascist Slogan Takes on New Significance in Ukraine Crisis," 2022).

Anti-fascism often conflates Communism *with* fascism, in Western eyes. When raising our own fists, then, we must likewise remember that American liberals/servants of *pax Americana* (moderates, white in function if not in appearance) will hijack our language, or otherwise write about it in ways that serve capital, including fiction and non-fiction alike. If it serves the powers that be, liberal democracy loves it; if it becomes violent towards the elite, the label becomes a vague incendiary buzzword to hurl against rioters, signaling police forces (actual or vigilante) to attack workers protesting American genocide.

Bringing things back to our aforementioned fantasy giants, however campy and/or otherworldly these invented objects appear at first blush (re: Raimi, but also Bungie), they are ultimately blind and predatory unto others if they employ Capitalist Realism to conceal Capitalism's predatory nature. Capitalism destroys everything around itself, and generally does so through Promethean hero fantasies in love with killing giants for the bourgeoisie! The enemy isn't just fascism's



bastardizing of giants and dragons, zombies and witches, etc, to scapegoat Capitalism's usual victims with (re: gaslight, gatekeep, girl boss)—it's the elite behind them using liberal democracy/*Pax Americana* to maintain capital by demonizing Putin (a fascist, to be clear) while cannibalizing Gaza! It's "boundaries for me, not for thee," with The Guardian complicit in Gaza's genocide; i.e., treating the locals and their home like Omelas while calling for Putin's head (and celebrating themselves for it). Except total war makes, as it always does, for good distractions



concerning who the real apex predators are. Hitler and Putin are both war criminals, to be sure, but their crimes against workers and nature pale in comparison to the American elite and their allies in journalism!

([source](#): *Mythipedia*)

Sound familiar? Stories like *Myth: the Fallen Lords* do the same, chopping Bungie's "czar" down to size

while sacrificing an absurd number of people to do so. This includes not just mighty warriors

I am not a coward. I think that my actions over the last seventeen years prove this. Yet I was relieved to not be among those chosen to die. In four hours, just after sunrise, the twenty-two hundred survivors of the Legion will attack Balor's fortress. Those men will surely die. There are perhaps half a million of the enemy between here and the stronghold ([ibid.](#)).

but those presumably under Alric's "protection"; i.e., both being replaceable provided they win: "Before he left, Alric told us that Madrigal had fallen" ([ibid.](#)).

In short, the state can kill whoever it wants, lottery-style, in order to justify its own existence; i.e., capital punishment dressed up as "heroism," except many who die in our world don't even get the "luxury" of a hero's funeral (re: the Gazans massacred as "terrorists," versus the Ukrainians being seen as valiant). Exploitation is exploitation, rape is rape regardless if you call the victim "hero," "useless eater" or terrorist," but some definitely get it worse; Bungie's game of vengeance and victors obscures the same kinds of predation on helpless populations that *Pax Americana* does in our world ("Keep your eye on the tyrant...").

However, apart from the genocidal triage involved, such pick-and-choose diplomacy further mirrors our world, insofar as Bungie presents Caesar's endless war/rape of the world as a giant old boys' club, its bread-and-circus scapegoating of

the past one that invariably invades the present through renewed states of exception told in all manner of gigantic forms; i.e., kayfabe, undead, queer-coded, oft-tokenized heels that must be defeated again and again by sacrificing oneself all the while: the figurative death of one's heroes after they fall to the Dark Side, or becoming the giant they were supposed to slay!

Becoming "corrupted" through the cult of death that fascist heroism amounts to, our *de facto* cops (the Jedi, wizards, warriors, Achilles, etc) transform into deathly almighty versions of themselves; i.e., the death lord necromancer/death dealer black knight and skeleton king or "heel" serving as fallen versions of their nobler selves, which must be frozen through echoes of their own lost humanity before cutting off *their* heads (with giants classically paralyzed, often drugged or tricked<sup>271</sup>; i.e., being attacked in their sleep during *asymmetrical* warfare; e.g., Jason and the Argonauts vs the cyclops Polyphemus<sup>272</sup>).

Except this brings us back to the classic problem of what to *do* with the head, post-decapitation. Giants have the magical ability to be reassembled after death; the giants in *Myth* are described as literally taken apart like Osiris, dragged through Hell and revived in new forms that fight what is effectively the Imperial Boomerang coming back around, biting empire square in the ass (the ouroboros/Cycle of Kings). After the memory of fascism's latest fall becomes distant and finally is forgotten, it returns again (and again) as undead, whereupon desperate times call for desperate measures against giant enemies:

After the Great War, the armies of the Dark collapsed and the Fallen Lords were swallowed up by history. We believed we had entered a golden age, a new era of peace, and our armies laid down their weapons to begin the long task of rebuilding the world. For sixty years we worked our fields and tended our cattle and did all the things that we had fought to defend, until the war became something that fathers told their sons and grandfathers their grandchildren. But sixty years is nothing to the likes of a Fallen Lord. And while King Alric was restoring the Province to its former glory, Soulblighter was plotting its infinite ruin.

The King has decided to fight fire with fire [the fire of the gods, Prometheus-style]. He seeks Myrdred<sup>273</sup>, an avatara of the Wolf Age whom

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<sup>271</sup> The Trow, when weakened, turn to stone and shatter to dust.

<sup>272</sup> "Odysseus at length succeeded in making Polyphemus drunk, blinded him by plunging a burning stake into his eye while he lay asleep, and, with six of his friends (the others having been devoured by Polyphemus), made his escape by clinging to the bellies of the sheep let out to pasture" ([source](#): Britannica).

<sup>273</sup> The gods are classically portrayed as giants; Myrdred—while being Jewish-coded, also possesses the ability to talk to giants, alluding to a trickster role comparable to Loki (with actual ravens being able to tug on the tails of predators to get them to fight each other):

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Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
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Balor renamed "The Deceiver" after bending him to his will. Although The Deceiver fought alongside Balor during the last war, he held no great love for the rest of The Fallen, nearly being killed by The Watcher in a legendary battle at Seven Gates. King Alric believes The Deceiver still lives and is counting on this old rivalry to lure him into joining our efforts to destroy Soulbrighter and the Myrkridia ([source](#): Mythipedia).

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**Loki**, in [Norse mythology](#), a [cunning](#) trickster who had the ability to change his shape and sex. Although his father was the giant Fárbaúti, he was included among the [Aesir](#) (a tribe of gods). Loki was represented as the companion of the great gods [Odin](#) and [Thor](#), helping them with his clever plans but sometimes causing embarrassment and difficulty for them and himself. He also appeared as the enemy of the gods, entering their banquet uninvited and demanding their drink. He was the principal cause of the death of the god [Balder](#). Loki was bound to a rock (by the entrails of one or more of his sons, according to some sources) as punishment, thus in many ways resembling the Greek figures [Prometheus](#) and [Tantalus](#). Also like Prometheus, Loki is considered a god of fire ([source](#): Britannica).



([source](#): Mythipedia)

In short, working with a cartoonishly vampish, short-statured, balding and effeminate "double of Loki" against Soulbrighter amounts to Alric's Promethean Quest by proxy, one *the Deceiver* does not survive. In the interim, though, his ability to negotiate with the Trow makes him the thief of the fire of the gods that ultimately kills him (Shiver's death raining orbs of white fire down onto him, blowing the Deceiver to pieces); i.e., he "cheats," and cheats—even if done for a good cause—get punished (also he's gay and Jewish-coded, making the punishment more automatic).

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Like *Frankenstein*, Bungie's narrative style is epistolary, dramatic, richly mythical, and well-delivered (the voice actor for the Narrator<sup>274</sup> deserves special praise); but it always defines the human condition as one trapped in endless, toy-like war—with no room for non-zombie queers, women, or other marginalized groups, and too much room for larger-than-life assholes who generally kill everything in sight (the "Tolkien problem," in other words, but penned by an American studio).

Trapped between the warring gods of capital, then, Bungie only allows for the warrior's death; i.e., looking super cool as you kick zombie ass, then go to "Valhalla" to sit with Crom, King Ulster or Zeus, etc, as part of the same fascist, Man-Box mishmash: the bad dream of the zombie apocalypse becoming the "last" chance for a "real" warrior's death, Frankenstein's monster robbed of its camp, but slave to the grind as *robata*-style grist for the mill, anyways. The real myth is camp/mutual consent (which I had to introduce through this queer close-read, putting my childhood heroes to the sword; i.e., anticipating and intercepting their canonical, bigoted elements, then making them gay for me to be able to survive the people they unironically represent).

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<sup>274</sup> Bungie's war narrative is collected as a volume—something traditionally sent to one's widow or brethren after its owner dies. Here, the Narrator's archive serves as a record comparable to Tolkien's accounts of real war told through imaginary war as "ancient history"; re, Molly Ostertag's "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 [like *Otranto*, minus Walpole's camp]. 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 ([source](#)).

The opening to *Myth* even mirrors Tolkien's language:

In a time *long past* [emphasis, me], the armies of the Dark came again into the lands of men. ([source](#): Mythipedia).

The irony is precisely that Connacht *is* forgotten. Furthermore, the homosocial themes are somehow even more repressed than Tolkien, feeling like a Lovecraftian (hence homophobic) version of *LotR*, whose queer subtext is wholly abject *vis-à-vis* the Tolkien-style lore and built worlds. Many of my criticisms towards Tolkien and his refrain apply to Bungie's landmark, if-somewhat-obscure computer game—indeed, if not more so because Capitalism in 1997 was neoliberal and globalized in a way that Tolkien's own regressions were not (the author critiquing world war in *The Hobbit* only to essentialize it in *LotR*).

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
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However emotionally compelling it comes across, the prime narrative of Bungie's centrism (and the monomyth, at large) remains a thoroughly doomed, macho (re: Eco) conflict between two jousting teams, one being morally superior as the Greater Good; i.e., white knights who "go savage" in a cartoonishly grand but also pulpy (re: Lovecraft) and

faux-Celtic way (the archers in *Myth* called "fir bolg," a race of Celtic giants the first game treats as the Light's non-giant archer wood elves, a bit like Tolkien's Legolas<sup>275</sup> but obscured by using different legendary elements and language than Tolkien, a philologist, chose; e.g., with Cu Chulainn, of Irish folklore, famously "hulking out" against his enemies, often against giants or seemingly indestructible foes, which giants often appear to be; i.e., like David and Goliath): the self-important and self-centered nature of fascism's big-headed soldiers thinking they're big deals, but also the good guys. They don't know, understand and/or care that they're evil!

An assemblage of gigantic myths on either side, then, the West confronts Capitalism in decay abjected onto equally bombastic, undead clichés of all the usual minority groups: giant "undeveloped" kayfabe, but also token cops policing the usual suspects. To it, the game's berserks are a shameless nod to *Braveheart*, itself a film about historical revisionism to suit American conservatism and commerce; e.g., [David Gemmell's Rigante series](#) commercializing oppression as wielded by colonizers playing "rebel," weak and strong as a matter of imperial apologia (with Macbeth originally defeating a rebel faction for King Duncan, before killing Duncan and usurping the throne). It's Pavlovian—a matter of conditioning that yields what the elite want: war and rape, workers killing each other on both sides, amounting to *Macbeth* without Shakespeare's irony (or *Rob Roy* without the sex). Such big muscles are, themselves, then cut up by the state, ingested, and spit back out.

The trick, for such canon, is fooling the sacrifice into *thinking* it's the hero. Vampirically crossing swords with evil barbarians (the mouth and fang hyphenating in all the usual ways, above), said good guys always face the end of the world as perpetually threatened by abject (non-Western) forces trying to "end the cycle" (re: Red Scare); i.e., the restoration of order as *not* corrupted or undead by endlessly duking it out, back and forth, with fascists who *are*. It's the *Star Wars* problem, extending the conflict indefinitely per Capitalist Realism, then cashing in on it as

<sup>275</sup> The dwarves in *Myth* are entirely ranged fighters; unlike Gimli, they use traps and explosives instead of an axe. The men of the West, however, mirror Tolkien's great swordsmen and magicians (the shades being the closest thing to Ringwraiths that *Myth* has): Crusader-like warriors, and the game's berserks (above) combining a Scottish highlander with a Germanic phrase. It's fascist soup.

undead and gigantic; i.e., Zombie Capitalism, reveling in the pointless bravery and cemetery fields of open, unburied gore: war is badass, is endless, is *profitable*. Except, the cycle only remains profitable so long as workers dehumanize their enemies, which conversely must humanize to move past the whole police structure and its moderate ploys determining who is cop and who is victim.

For instance, while fascists serve capital, they are ultimately humans abused by the system using the same aesthetics iconoclasts camp Nazis with; i.e., to expose the system urging people to kill one another for the elite, as Soulblighter does out of revenge, and the West doing unto him because he is simply "pure evil" to them: an alien to punish by virtue of reactive violence making him the "pure token cop" (reducing his value to zero). But such absolutes are, themselves, impossible.

Instead, bourgeois dictation and its bloody outcomes under capital haunt the out-of-doors and its warriors there as much as any Gothic fortress; i.e., something to lament yet encourage by virtue of its profitability trapping the would-be-heroes inside a giant prison of the mind, hopelessly seeking glory and riches on and offstage while guarding nations against imaginary barbarians. Trapped in the belly of the beast, the process dehumanizes both sides—of real populations expressed in imaginary ones the elite turn against each other for profit: "Police yourselves! Tokenize! Betray each other! Lash out! *Hulk* out! Don't camp it, don't think about it! Just be violent in ways we can alienate, punish and fetishize, then scapegoat and capitalize on to consolidate our power!"

To it, Soulblighter and the volcano—but likewise any gigantic aspect to Bungie's world—become a colossal deflection and projection, the real parties guilty of setting the world on fire not being something as exotic and fascinating as a Jewish Nazi or magical giant, but the elite's banality of evil: doing it all for profit as described. For the elite, becoming rich isn't something to strike suddenly like a vein of gold, but by exploiting other workers through a system designed to prey on people, animals and the land (wealth accumulation and generation through profit). Even if they're simply born into the system on top of the pile of gold, acquiring the status and position of capital in the bargain, such material conditions are tremendously alienating because of the class gulf, alone.

The fact remains, ACAB and billionaires own cops, thus giant projections of cops. Billionaires, then, are predatory by design in ways that rival the most brutal warlord; i.e., using capital as installed through settler-colonial violence to continue said violence; e.g., through direct sponsorship of police action, like Thatcher did in Ireland, or by installing fresh Capitalist-Realist dogma in half-real ways—stuff like *Myth*, in other words, that shifts blame (and various debilitating emotions) onto the usual gaslit victims by the usual gaslighting victimizers in gigantic language.

Furthermore, settler-colonial arguments involve elements of occupation as legitimate vs vacant or invalid, decided ultimately by billionaire landlords. Shelly's apartment in *The Crow* is invaded by thugs per Top Dollar's say-so, and *Myth*'s

world—similar to Samus and the Chozo, pirates and Galactic Federation—is invaded by warriors who appear whenever the current residents are weak, opening the usual venues for fresh business, battle, and betrayal. It's barter through manufactured conflict, the ensuing neoliberal shock therapies sanctioned by those with a finger on the big red button, threatening a final countdown, FOMO-style. Amid the usual dog whistles (e.g., "Caesar"), girls will get got, gays will be buried, dragons slain, witches hunted, giants felled, etc. The paradox of death incarnate, here, is its constitution as both reaper and rebel, the middle-class nerd playing the cop in either case.

Pursuant to such games like Bungie's, land is always contested by arguments that keep war happening and ownership of those under the owner class in doubt, thus eager to bring down big game and prove their manhood anew. Repurposed for profit under capital, capital conjures up all of yesterday's customs and dead traditions (re: Marx), raising with them faux-feudal arguments of rebellion and invasion, villainy and heroism—all for proving the current residents (the middle class) as "manly" and capable to the gods (the bourgeoisie) on the usual battlegrounds converted into homes, battlegrounds, and homes again, back and forth as a dialectic of the alien: killing the elite's enemies (workers and nature) to keep profit moving.

As part of this dance of the knights, everything is for sale and all are expendable superstar death dealers made from different past versions (e.g., Hugo from *SF3* = Andre the Giant + Frankenstein's monster) except those not actually on the field (again, the bourgeoisie). Nobody likes the men behind the curtain, but they're the only ones who win. Everyone else must die, be that heroes, villains, giants, virgins or whores. All are cut up eventually and left out in the cold, the



heroes who survive mere straw dogs who *will* be forgotten after they are dead; i.e., the last war's heroes replaced by those in the next, joining the same funerary throng. From Nazi Germany to the United States to Bungie's nameless world aping them, Valhalla is a myth the state uses to keep itself alive!

([source](#))

Through the usual neoliberal methods of abuse<sup>276</sup> and regression, *Myth* romances inequity and frames

<sup>276</sup> Akin to a bad lover/parent; e.g., like Dennis from *Always Sunny*—[the D.E.N.N.I.S. system effectively being a parody of pickup artists](#) (FX Network's "Is Dennis a Psychopath? | It's Always Sunny Running Gags," 2022).

Imperialism and its socio-material conditions as "good," solely to lock them in place and *keep* them in place (re: the Cycle of Kings). The volcano, as well as Soulblighter and all of the massive monsters *Myth* conjures up, are a universal threat to workers, to scare and pit labor against itself; i.e., the middle class against the lower class, and the lower classes against each other and the middle class, while always treating the elite as benign, reaping nature until state shift. Yes, you can scapegoat the tyrant and his generals, servants and ostensible companions and lovers, but there is always a return to order that installs the same old men at the top to rule and control the world through likenesses that acclimate workers to the whole process, inside and out.

To it, everything described in *Myth* could gradually disappear and—like Rome and Caesar, himself—become a perpetual thing of the past via development protecting nature from the state's usual cheapening of it; but the elite make sure said past keeps coming back in fresh forms that uphold Capitalist Realism, canonizing the process instead of camping it (which oddly enough, Kevin Smith was attempting to do in 2005's *Clerks 2*, albeit badly and from a homophobic perspective that—while it exposes homophobia in the *Tolkien* camp ["Hey, faggot! They're not gay, they're hobbits!"]—is still a homophobic canard delivered spitefully by a straight man written by a straight man to belittle a fantasy story about gay men because it's gayer than *Star Wars* is).

As such, the state is a giant that eats its citizens for profit; i.e., by making endless monster war that, through itself, embodies dogma (re: the Military Industrial Complex and copaganda). In turn, the giant puppeteer's hands and their strings aren't always visible (removed from the Metallica poster, below), but rest assured, they're quite present; i.e., the socio-material factors that drive the same stories to play out by conjuring up Marx' presaging of the same slogans, costumes, and actions of false rebellion. It might weigh on/eat at those on the safe side of the



war market, but it sells anyways for exactly those reasons: the ghost of the counterfeit.

Keeping with that, it's all smoke and mirrors, but somewhere, the consequences of policing said abjection (us versus them) are quite real and straightforward: life is cheap, as is

its ending inside canceled worlds; i.e., that treat the end of the world, per Capitalist Realism, as Ragnarok—the final battle of giants that, oddly enough, never stops but also never comes. There must always be war and death, and giant, monomyth heroes to worship precisely because they're undead, from Hell, seeking futile revenge as thoroughly mythical, larger-than-life, chasing the fire of the gods



(Caesar never dies, but always comes back as a shell of the original conqueror). Such things are lionized under Cartesian thought, but also *Pax Americana* as a Promethean extension thereof reviving Caesar or Melmoth for the umpteenth time in order to let middle-class white men (and tokens) play emperor against labor and nature; i.e., scapegoated/tokenized as usual: genocide dressed up as "war" and hawked to the usual ministers [becoming death merchants when empire begins to die and pay fealty to the same-old profit motive](#) (e.g., Rathbone's "SATANYAHU ADDRESSES CONGROSS! PART 2," 2024).

In short, war is a seesaw cycle tied to profit, thus rape relayed in the usual zombie apocalypses' jester-like villains; i.e., those which *Myth II* theatrically pushes to its logical endgame (from a marginalized viewpoint): the token Nazi burning the house down, said house demanding empire be vigilant against evil extending to marginalized communities who might seek revenge afterwards; re: the seeds of fascism all over again, planted through fortress mentality. There's always someone to fight who's more ruthless and powerful than you; the outcome is always self-defeating and alienating as a matter of police violence fetishizing its own servants until they snap. Our own theatricalities—however complex they might seem—must simply and directly confront state variants to anisotropically reverse the flow of power and knowledge, awareness and intelligence towards workers. This happens as much through a Galatean element camping the Cycle of King's Pygmalion authors as it does monsters in general: weak and strong categorized not just through DARVO and obscurantism to achieve adversity in a theatrical sense, but through gendered language, as well.

Now that we've well and truly exhausted the giant side of things, let's quickly consider the female aspect to *Myth's* monstrous-feminine.

That is, beyond the cycle's usual male giants, there are non-male aspects to such canon and its subversion. In regards to said servants as scapegoats in the *Myth* franchise, we've primarily looked at cis<sup>277</sup> gay men like Balor, the Watcher and Soulblighter. But Shiver (who mainly appears in the second game, below) was also a character in that story Bungie chose to revive for the sequel! To be inclusive, then, let's conclude with a few points about her and similar characters (six pages), then move onto to the "The Monomyth" conclusion (which discusses Capitalism itself in undead monomythic terms)!



([source](#): Mythipedia)

While witch hunts historically punch down against Jews, Arabs and other non-Europeans,

<sup>277</sup> Who the game all genders as he/him.

the classic monstrous-feminine for the West is actually women (with racial minorities and anti-Semitic qualities emerging during the medieval and Enlightenment periods). As such women like Shiver essentialize to the same equation of profit abusing nature through mythical stories that Bungie riffs on and rips off; i.e., pitting token proponents against each other to further a canonical narrative; e.g., the Deceiver seeking revenge against the game's resident fag hag: "The Deceiver has been screaming for Shiver's blood all day [which sounds weird, given how soft-spoken their in-game conversation is]. Alric has chosen five men of unwavering courage to accompany The Deceiver into the labyrinth of ravines where she hides. There they will hunt her down and destroy her" (*ibid.*). As such, Shiver is basically Medusa having one last catfight with Loki-by-another-name.

Per the Archaic Mother (the Medusa) and the phallic woman (the Amazon), there is always Macbeth's wild wife, asking to be unsexed. That's what Shiver basically is, in the end—a giant ageing bitch needing to be put down, hag-horror style (and inside a maze, no less). But again, the monstrous-feminine is anything of nature capital needs one side to police, rape and destroy for profit to happen. Sawing through nature, *Myth* presents Capitalism as a cycle that never ends, and certainly not one that constitutes embracing nature and the monstrous-feminine as previously raped by the heroic position. Instead, it turns them—one and all—into fascist, horseshoe caricatures of Jewish revenge; per cryptofascists, it's politically dumb/ahistorical on purpose, defending capital through these spectral abuses of the past made mythical.

This includes Mother Nature, whereupon the Medusa is someone to fetishize and harm—generally abusing nature by removing the agency of those associated with nature. In classical systemic terms, this happens less through Jews, queer men and non-white peoples, and more through AFAB workers (or intersex parties with female dominant characteristics) for heroes to "feed on"; i.e., to feed is to rape, which translates differently to female bodies versus Soulbrighter's male body (the latter a warlock consigned to the flames during an *Amazonomachy's* "bury your gays" witch hunt, not penetration like Shiver and other whorish, Medusa-style succubae; e.g., Lilith, camped by Red Panda, below). Weird attracts weird, trauma



attracts trauma; under capital, sex and force synonymize for any recipients/markers of state harm through various "heavy metal" exceptions, nerdy double standards, and all-around stigmas under a straight Male Gaze. Simply put, whores get stabbed, and that's all Bungie allows Shiver to experience.

(artist: [Red Panda Waifu](#))

In short, hags are generally beheaded, not fucked (though again, their "conqueror" function is synonymous). Even so, while Shiver might not be conventionally sexy from a visual standpoint, she's still sexualized to receive violence; i.e., by a story that sends a group of sexy heroes to put her down and her alone. In stories similar to *Myth*, then, Shiver is to Soulblihter what Medusa is to capital: a sidekick or psychosexual fantasy whose only purpose during police violence is to die; i.e., to further the story of the ostensibly straight men involved, who kill her without hesitation. She's simply "pure evil," amounting to a rather boring hag that's given nothing to do but look and act bitchy. Turned on its head inside the same thresholds and on the same surfaces, nature and its fearsome, dark motherly characteristics certainly have the potential to heal through Gothic poetics and demon BDSM (above). In response, canon effectively sweeps these happier alternatives under the rug, always advocating for a police agent pimping nature, pretty or not.

To that, and *vis-à-vis* Tolkien or Lovecraft, Bungie's women are entirely offscreen save as monstrous-feminine hags (comparable to the great spider Shelob or the old crone from "Dreams in the Witch House," 1933). Shiver is Soulblihter's Evil Lynn to batter—literally Damas' wife, which the game reduces to a throwaway<sup>278</sup> dummy sacrificed during the Second Great War so Soulblihter (the queer underling trying to one-up a truant Skeletor) can have *his* final battle at

<sup>278</sup> To renovate Shiver, I took her namesake, Ravanna, and built my own trans self/alter ego, Revana, around it; i.e., as one of Gothic Communism's mascots (another being Glenn the Goblin, who reclaims anti-Semitic qualities of the goblin in a sex-positive manner, below):



(artist: [Autumn Anarchy](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#))

To it, humanizing the witch as normally anti-Semitic and fashion-coded requires doing what Maguire did with Elphaba, just as we presently did to Soulblihter and Damas; i.e., creating a human side that is haunted by the state's accusations of the accused, mid-witch-hunt: "And you are only a caricature of a witch!" The trick is to take these variables and make them something the state (and its wizardly proponents) can monopolize to use for its own greedy ends; i.e., flow power towards the state and consolidate it there through police (us-versus-them) violence inside the state of exception.

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Mount Doom with the boys: "Lay on, MacDuff! And damned be he who cries, 'Hold, enough!'"

Penned by a gay man, Lady Macbeth fared no better than Shiver did! Instead, the adage "a 'good story' requires an effective villain" highlights the fascist's central role to apologizing for the forces of good and their own genocides, Bungie's collective abuse of nature eventually banished to the land of the dead after the male commander is killed. Shiver is merely a detour roadblock, a petty obstacle, a smaller objective en route to the man in charge. Comparable to someone like Zangya from the *DBZ* movie, *Bojack Unchained* (1993); i.e., a female member of a male dominant group of evil space mercenaries (which the wiki calls "[galaxy warriors](#)"), whose dark-skinned, Roma-coded leader gladly murders Zangya because he just *has* to fight the male hero man-to-man! Medusa is always a stepping step, in that respect—a pussy in a jousting match. Shiver's fate basically no different.



(artist: Akira Toriyama)

Furthermore, nothing is normally done to stop the violence at its source (which only makes Soulblighter's attempt with the volcano stand out more), Bungie's canon displacing the systemic abuses that *always* occur under Capitalism regardless if any undead—female variants included—are visible or not. Such maneuvers patently aim to manipulate the audience to love and fear a cycle of reactive abusive and escalating violence; i.e., keeping them "oscillating" inside a wrestler's bread-and-circus narrative that ultimately serves the state by torturing women who basically are only scary because they're old, thus can't bear children

(the anti-Semitic trope being that they *eat* children, the Freudian argument of the Medusa being that she castrates men).

As such, the only canonical reason that characters like Shiver exist is to make the manly cis-het hero (for which age is less of a factor insofar as sexual reproduction goes) look good in the eyes of whomever's watching (usually college frat boys, insofar as the Raimi palimpsest goes, below)—the irony being he's actually a self-absorbed jerk tilting at windmills:



Regardless of which team one belongs in the monomyth, or the age of the female entities involved, Medusa always suffers the consequences; i.e., there is privilege to being male in these stories, with Soulbrighter being the titular character and *his*

lapdog Shiver—Bungie's Bride of Dracula/Frankenstein—being much more throwaway than her husband is; re: virgins or whores. Despite her age, Shiver is *definitely* the whore—the object of fatal pursuit doomed to die in order to advance the story as it occurs between men. Soulbrighter doesn't have to beat his wife; his enemies, the Light (and their token homo slave), do it for him!

To it, the ghost of "Rome" and its nuclear family unit haunts everything—with a roster of physically impressive warrior-heroes, kings and one lone queen duking it out for gladiatorial supremacy. Whereas the fascist screams, "the enemy is both weak and strong!" the *centrist* turns them into a zombie to fight until the end of time. In doing so, they are fighting the buried atrocities of the state, but also its rhetoric as curiously flexible insofar as "strange bedfellows" are permitted; e.g., the Deceiver's recruitment by the Light, and ruthless diplomatic qualities eventually helping them recruit the Trow (exhibit 41d) under King Alric; re: Alric's imperial mechanism of fighting "fire with fire" told in heel and babyface, corrupted/uncorrupted language.

Indeed, it's precisely this tokenized position that Shiver rubs in her enemy's face, chiding the Deceiver for bending the knee to Alric, and which he rebukes *her* for in kind (a false equivalency but I digress):

"Well, if it isn't Alric's lapdog?" she jeers at him. "Will you bow to *anyone* who claims the throne of the Cath Bruig?" To which he replies, "The path for retribution does make for *strange bedfellows* [emphasis, me]. Would you not agree, Ravanna?" ([source](#)).

The gay man basically reminds Shiver that she's working for her abusive ex-husband, to which Shiver responds by raising her snake-like hair and blasting him with magic; i.e., a reckless and ineffective strategy that ultimately backfires when the Deceiver convinces her pet shade to turn coat, letting him trap Shiver in a magical prison that sucks her dry (and whose subsequent explosion blows the Deceiver to pieces)!

And to this, a female character like Shiver is always "lower" than the boys (even the less manly ones, being the only Fallen Lord the player kills without paralyzing them, in either game); i.e., a witch summoned back to life by Soulblighter purely because the game needed a hag to hunt. It certainly reflects the domestic abuse of actual women treated like Shiver is, in-game, and Medusa as classically female. Personally I don't like to limit such things to simply "female," and think the game's battle of the sexes feels binarized along with everything else, therefore dated. As for myself, I generally treat the monstrous-feminine as androgynous, thus male, female, and/or intersex; i.e., in opposition to Cartesian thought's white, male, European hegemon and tokenized, descending rungs of decreasing privilege. It's all part of the same heteronormative dogma, the usual stones being thrown in a (very fragile) glass house.

Be they fascist or neoliberal, such mind prisons depict and encourage heroic police violence against nature-as-monstrous-feminine; i.e., as utterly terrifying for its ancient female aspects; re: according to Barbara Creed, which I argue tends to overlook present atrocities by TERFs acting the universal victim while policing people who are even more marginalized. Female or not, such behaviors are critically inert for the state servant. Wrestler narratives, while interactive with the audience on par with Rome's gladiatorial bouts, are not known for extensive nuance; their canonical zombie eyes, and those of unthinking consumers, have been wholly blinded by a false vision that conceals not just the ongoing militarization of the police, but formerly oppressed groups whose time as cop is rather limited—i.e., like Shiver's destruction demonstrates, existing inside a pecking order whose tokenized totem pole puts women and effeminate gay at the bottom: the two killing each other to cut to the chase.

As we shall see throughout the rest of the primer and in Volume Three, canon does so not just by making labor fight among themselves, but specifically against *any* monster-feminine that threatens the status quo through marginalized discord; i.e., Gothic-Communism as something to attack, mid-tokenization (re: Shiver killed by a gay man and vice versa). This being said, unable to look into a black mirror that actually reveals a way out of Capitalism, the same exploitations that befell Shiver and her hysteria continue unabated; i.e., social-sexual trends that lead to worker abuse in everyday situations, announced by canon as something that—if not sexy or cool—is at least "powerful": when Shiver dies, she explodes, taking the Deceiver with her ("killing two birds with one stone," as it were).

Cops—including female/monstrous-feminine cops—are generally fetishized, decaying into undead forms working for the state; i.e., the black knight as something to seed with foul, nasty ideas. As the Radiance showed us, in *Hollow Knight*, this can be camped in ways that pointedly speak to female rape, but the canonical whore is blind in this respect; i.e., her rape theatre largely *unironic*; e.g., Shiver a throwaway cum dump who used to be prettier than she is now—a fuckable whore (with giant parts like 2B's "mommy milkers," below) instead of a "grotesque crone":



(artist [EXGA](#))

The franchise is not without the usual consolation prizes. In the absence of a soft body to "till," the monomyth hero will happily settle for a dragon to slay. Despite being constantly sacrificed, then, Bungie's

Legion are fondly touted as "the legendary army of the West," the so-called "victorious dead" put through the *D&D* ringer while gunning for nature as hag-like, as Shiver is, and degenerate like Soulblighter and the other Fallen; i.e., to remain vigilant against them, thus try to survive long enough to tell others how manly they are, then maybe attract a mate: "I guess the worst thing about having a reputation for being a bunch of hardasses is that the Legion always finds itself where the fighting will be ugliest. So we're up here as the first line of defense against an attack by The Deceiver" ([source](#): Mythipedia). Likewise, Alric's revival of empire at the end of *Myth II* is false hope—a kind of neoliberal assimilation fantasy presented by the same old bodies and warlike actions American Capitalism has sold for decades: the Greater Good as constantly recruiting fresh male soldiers into its ranks. Do it; bitches like soldiers!

The girl boss (next page) is a more recent phenomena towards that aim—the creation of a kind of female hero that serves the state in corporate, but also military fashion out of older mythical forms (which we'll unpack even more in Volume Three, when we examine TERFs). In *female* terms, there's little difference (save for cosmetics) between one monster girl versus another in canonical stories; from Amazons to bandit girls to damsels-in-distress, corporations replicate and sell zombifying dream girls, designed to help the consumer feel right at home in a retro-future's hyperreal, resort-like space. The idea is less overtly undead than the generic rotting corpse, but so was Balor in his armored suit. Their effect on the

mind is the same; i.e., to feel comfortable with the zombie apocalypse and what it uncovers about the present world in crisis by piloting powerful, sexy heroes that chase away colonial guilt as forever manifesting within the material world: subjugated Amazons (and *their* muscles and shapely bodies) distracting through hauntological bread and circus.



(exhibit 41e1: Artist, top-left: [Alex Borsuk](#); bottom-left: unknown [[source](#)]; right: [Persephone van der Waard](#).)

Apocalyptic fantasies canon veil material condition and abuse with iconic "devastation." Some provide the Western backdrop as something to return to, while others have a cyberpunk feel. Many more depict the Global South as enriched-but-immiserated under Capitalism as victorious [the "end of history" narrative]: a neo-colony disguised as a tropical paradise tied to a "better" image of the nostalgic, neoliberal past. Whatever applies to the West and the Global North during hauntological fantasies, then, is doubly true for the Global South in this respect. [Parenti outlines in the 1986 lecture](#), "US Empire and Relations with the Soviet Union and Other Socialist States," a process that is, itself, about four centuries old: "There are no poor nations, only exploited populations." Likewise, the elite can only offer decayed illusions to hide these exploitations with: the hauntological slum as something to export and harvest, *ad infinitum*.

In the Western tradition, the slumming heroes would have historically been white and male—posturing less as an invading outsider and more as a defender of staked claims on Indigenous lands [e.g., Powers Booth in *The Emerald Forest*, 1985, before he turns coat, "going native"]. In the mid-20th century this expanded to allow white women in the second wave of feminism to enjoy the "Amazon" role in service of the state. However, moderate concessions in recent years have affected these rosters to include heroes who not only aren't men; they aren't white, either.



*To this, the hauntological slum of the Global South is forever occupied by the powerful, yet-ultimately servile bodies of various slave groups.*

*For example, Laura from Capcom's Street Fighter V [above, right] is canonically tough-but-cute, operating entirely in the hands of the player as something to control in relation to a particular part of the world as something to cover up with a current generation of nation pastiche—i.e., the 2023 sort that treats the population of South America, specifically Brazil, as "bountiful" Amazons to subjugate and leer at, but also pilot in service of a centrist narrative. The decay, in this scenario, happens behind the image, on the actual streets of Brazil which Capcom deliberately conceals behind a false, pretty copy that nevertheless shouts the quiet part inside a ludic tableau: the cities of Capcom's ageless Global South are perpetually run-down, their material conditions and coercively heroic arrangements fixed in place. It's pure plantation fantasy—ruthlessly adapted for a neocolonial world by a giant corporate ally to the United States, pandering to the Global North with highly nostalgic, imported displacements of neoliberal hauntology: "Remember when Brazil [and by extension anywhere in South*



*America] was cool; i.e., like Brian DePalma's fictional Miami in Scarface [1983] as a Cuban drug hub for Americans to conflate with Brazil and South America in general after the Cuban Missile Crisis?")*

(artist: [Teradium](#))

So while they clearly favor male varieties, Bungie's war against nature-as-monstrous-feminine doesn't preclude strictly female qualities, either. But enough about them and their sinister elements turning women, queer folk and ethnic/religious minorities, etc, into whorish trophies (or watery maidens arming them with swords, left). Whether a male hero or female/monstrous-feminine<sup>279</sup> villain, we'll consider the larger problem of stalling Capitalist Realism (thus avoiding state shift) a bit more in the conclusion, next; i.e., Capitalism a Great

Zombie-Vampire that never stops eating through *its* monomythic heroes hunting in *disguised* settler-colonial territories, harvesting some crop or another made abject.

<sup>279</sup> Remember that Medusa is undead and blamed for Capitalism destroying the world; e.g., the Countess from *Castlevania*, but also similar monstrous-feminine giving the hero the weapon to slay *with*; i.e., the conservative reward of sex as force, but also the Original Sin argument: "Strange women distributing swords is no basis for a system of government!"

## The Monomyth, part three: "That Which Is Not Dead"; or, Capitalism as a Great Zombie(-Vampire)

*Legrasse had one point in advance of Professor Webb, for several among his mongrel prisoners<sup>280</sup> had repeated to him what older celebrants had told them the words meant. This text, as given, ran something like this: "In his house at R'lyeh dead Cthulhu waits dreaming" ([source](#)).*

— Francis Wayland Thurston, "The Call of Cthulhu" (1926)



This short section concludes our exploration of the monomyth, ending with not just the biggest zombie of all, but vampire, too (the next chapter will discuss feeding at length, but we'll start to introduce the lingo, here): Capitalism. To it, someone like Jadis raped me in emulation of monomythic characters, just as those

characters rape their victims for much the same reasons. By extension, Capitalism is an undead monster that hides its gigantic, ever-growing hunger for profit through fantasies pushed to the margins; i.e., the decayed gentry (and their castles) from Gothic fiction's monomythic refrains: futile revenge, Cartesian hubris during the Promethean Quest (as person and place), and crime lords/warlords as part of the same abject, scapegoating cycle under Capitalist Realism; re: "Capitalism achieves profit by moving money through nature; profit is built on trauma and division, wherein anything that serves profit gentrifies and decays, over and over while preying on nature." Nazi or Commie, there's always a scapegoat to pass capital's foes off onto (a buck to pass, in queer language). In short, capital destroys people's lives on so many levels—through comedy to drama to nostalgia and aesthetics—by raping and devouring them (anything monstrous-feminine) pursuant to profit.

Taking all of those factors holistically into account, this conclusion discusses the *world* and Capitalism as a zombie to keep track of; i.e., how the main Gothic devices (abjection, hauntology, chronotopes and cryptonymy) operate more broadly through the endless undead wars and decayed power fantasies (the monomyth and nuclear family unit) that, as cryptonyms of Capitalism eating nonstop, haunt Capitalist Realism revising itself, regardless of *what* form the tyrant takes: a bit like a bodybuilder hungrily putting on mass (a gentrified exercise if ever there were).

In other words, Capitalism decaying in these various fashions speaks not to purely imaginary genocides, exterminations and ultimately extinctions, but *ongoing* ones reflecting in popular media as part of the same ravenous hyperobject; re (from Volume two, part one):

<sup>280</sup> Lovecraft speaking through his usual racism/xenophobia to Capitalism's cannibalistic nature through the process of abjection—literally cannibals abjected onto non-Western races and ethnocentric evil lands; i.e., rather dated (but effective) settler-colonial arguments.

the profit motive as not only Cartesian, settler-colonial and heteronormative, but something that reflects in the usual warrior performers who—per all of these things—serve the profit motive by treating nature as monstrous-feminine on any register and in any format: rape and kill Medusa, torturing her secrets out of her to consolidate power around the usual patriarchal nuclei buoyed by capital on top of older imperiums. Canonically the motive *always* reduces to a pyramid point scaled by standard (white)/tokenized people harvesting nature as monstrous-feminine ([source](#)).

In gaming terms, the "meta" or optimal form of play through capital is raping nature-as-monstrous-feminine to generate as much profit as possible as quickly as possible; i.e., speedrunning in ways that avoid emergent gameplay as an extratextual device that challenges profit. Anything that doesn't assimilate, then invariably gentrifies and decays—from feminists to fags to speedrunners to Saiyan princes in kayfabe-style wrestling matches. Through the monomyth as baked into capital and its usual medieval regression, a bad guy shows up (usually a conqueror out of the imaginary past bearing a likeness to the present), followed by a powerful hero we must then surrender our rights to before, during and afterwards (the white knight): a pissing contest that drains/exsanguinates both sides of their essence for the state, for profit.



*(exhibit 41e2: Kurosawa loves his world-ending hysteria [so do all capitalists, to be fair]. In this case, Capitalist Realism amounts to a Japanese Atlas holding up the fearsome heavens punching down on his head. Except this is a big ol' lie! Neoconservative ideas of war are not good [versus class and culture war serving workers] and such enemies are fabricated to justify the state's continuation through tokenized supermen offering up a false version of a perfected humanity that serves capital like usual; i.e., Goku is a foreigner looking to fit in by defending "his" planet. He's a cop, one whose inevitable decay reflects in Vegeta*

*as the heel per the usual kayfabe arrangement; the entire centrist production is bullshit, "solving" the world's problems through shonen-style force; re: heteronormative, settler-colonial and Cartesian arbitrations of sex, terror and force. The saiyans are literally genocidal marauders for Freiza and cops for Planet Earth; i.e., taking the extermination rhetoric to its sad conclusion: playing the victim to someone even worse [also an alien] while working off the argument of giant-strength performances that posture as weak and strong per ongoing kayfabe-style momentum shifts. The size of the threat, scale of the conflict, and externalized*

*power of the actors [their muscles and power beams] are exaggerated to motivate people [usually men] to be violent for the state/corporations in service to profit. In short, it's incredibly self-serious, treating such neoliberal cycles [of profit] as holy [the Protestant ethic] and needing to—as usual—be camped to Hell and back; e.g., Mega64's "[The Saiyan Saga In 5 Minutes](#)" [2024].)*

Be they futile acts of revenge; castles, prisons, and panopticons; criminals or conquerors, such devices are useful insofar as their dialectical-material dialogs expose capital's usual operations through the people who perform them *for* the state. Being against the state, our counterterrorist stewardship of nature must anisotropically reverse the flow of power as a matter of abjection, hauntology and other Gothic theories, liminal spaces, theatrics, aesthetics/medieval poetic devices, puns, doubles, etc; i.e., to develop our own doubles' arguments to challenge capital's monopolies, trifectas and harmful qualities, thus prevent its continuation (and ultimately state shift) through revolutionary cryptonymy (for example) by using Medusa and our own ludo-Gothic BDSM; re: Athena's Aegis. It will certainly be a shock to the system, to be sure, but one that is required if we are to change the system (and its myopic, disastrous illusions), thus survive as undead entities inside a better world. The humanizing glare of nature-as-bject must freeze these heroes, thus Capitalism, in place so we can move in, then work our influence on their chilled brains; i.e., diminishing their capacity for police brutality and territorial harvests through asymmetrical warfare as a historically *guerrilla* maneuver.



(artist: [ChuckART](#))

Thanks to capital, tyrants are the most sheltered, hence alienated and fragile; i.e., hiding behind "dragon lord" images of themselves as badass, but also threatened by dark sexy women they cannot monopolize (and anything else monstrous-feminine). As a result, they often have high opinions of themselves, somehow thinking they are beyond death or rebuke, thus somehow able to conquer death/fetishize it and rule over the land for all time. Show them otherwise—to that, show them their true destiny behind their false one as likewise written by them; i.e., the Roman fool self-deceived; e.g., Tolkien's nine mortal men doomed to die—and they generally won't like it, certainly long enough for us to do what we need to do: to cut off their head (usually in a theatrical sense)

and take from them their illusion of power by exposing the ghost of Rome, not burying and digging it back up over and over (re: Bungie).

As such, the act of decapitation would seem to be occurring either way you slice it—the classic method of zombie disposal being to attack its head and remove the brain—but ours is a lesson meant to transform and educate the head as something to take back in theatrical ways that reclaim the Base and recultivate the Superstructure in unison. This all falls on the teaching of tyrants using intimations of death that reflect one's mortality as evident and one's god-like authority as insecure, fallible, and in question: "Nothing lasts forever and their destiny is the same as everyone else's—eventual change and ultimately death, insofar as such a transformation leads to a surrendering of one's power, privilege and position for the betterment of all."



To that, lobotomy or decapitation certainly isn't permanently harmful, in a poetic sense; rather, per Matteson's own rebellious (counterterrorist) Communist zombie-vampires, systemic healing of the brain isn't a loss of undead status at all, but using it as a clever, poetic means of adapting on the fly insofar as generational trauma, once experienced, never quite leaves

us. Indeed, the horrors of Capitalism eating us are so extreme it would be premature and foolhardy to expect that. But we have to take canonical undead seriously if we are to successfully subvert and replace its heads of state with our own Trojan maneuvers pushing for liberation.

Cryptonymy goes both ways, of course. Through fantasizes of violence against a mortal foe, the canonical zombie as a giver/receiver of fascist violence is valorized inside an ongoing relationship—us-versus-them police violence, token workers cannibalizing themselves and preying on nature—that is quietly covered up by corporate illusions doubling said decay (exhibit 41e1).

To this, such "power trips" are deliberately palliative, doing little if anything to address Capitalism as a structure; worse, they pimp out coercive sex as the only gig in town, yielding a bevy of "undead" war brides, damsels-in-distress, twink-in-peril, femme fatales, token Amazons (witch cops), appropriative torture porn, and coercive BDSM, etc. Those treated as zombie or vampire scapegoats to eradicate aren't strictly infected or cursed, but viewed accordingly a punitive status (often of guilt, shame or blame) that is applied to them by the state blaming the victim through police violence; i.e., in ways that dehumanize all parties, thus encourage

the victims' witch-hunt-style execution by cops, mid-DARVO: operating endlessly inside an expanding state of exception during moral panics encouraged by state defenders who, like the state itself, are functionally undead in ways that move power towards the elite.

Excluding overt examples that treat the lived condition of the state of exception like a literal disease or social contagion ("the woke mind virus"), sex coercion (of labor) is larger than single "Warning!" posters, which must be weighed in relation to other factors: who made them, who consumed them, how they're being used presently and by whom.

In moderate canon, for instance, sex coercion is generally felt under a continuous "whitewash" that compels cursory consumption, not deeper analysis, of dream girls whose conspicuous presence deliberately conceals Imperial destruction during Capitalist Realism; e.g., Laura, from *Street Fighter V*, exhibit 41e1/41f, mirroring similar levels of corporate subterfuge that have existed since at least the 1970s (as far as neoliberalism goes, that is). It's their continued, scared job/role to make American's forget that racism, white supremacy and fascism existed in America first—i.e., before the Nazis existed, at the same time as the Nazi rise to power in Germany as inspired by America, and after the Nazis were defeated by the very American forces they coped; or as I write in "Military Optimism":

Glorifying war through the creation of an idealized enemy remains firmly rooted in American culture, and for good reason. Fascism is rooted in racism, with Hitler [borrowing his theories of medieval posturing and eugenics from the United States](#), not the other way around. Prior to WW2, America's connection with fascism, Nazism and racial violence was no secret ([the deliberately archaic titles](#) of the KKK; [the American Nazi bund](#); and Woodrow Wilson's [screening of \*Birth of a Nation\* \[1915\] at the White House](#)); after the war, Nazis scientists [were hired en masse](#) to further US hegemony. As the Nazis were secretly assimilated, the fascist *Reichsadler* ("Imperial Eagle") was absorbed by its "neutral" American variant. Said variant still covered everything in sight; it was just disguised by the flowery language of liberalism. Even so, the outcome of this imperial pageantry remains fascist. It's just more neutral about it. "We're not an empire, we're *united*," [as Anansi's Library puts it](#). As such, the Reich's infamous *blitzkrieg* ("lightning war") was eclipsed by something older than it: [Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points](#), which embodied the spirit of American politics before, during and after Wilson, though especially the pursuit of property. Fast forward to Reagan, the former actor-turned-politician's Christian-tinged, family-friendly patriotism was a sham for mean-spirited revenge (for Vietnam) while simultaneously conveying strength on the world stage; in 1986, Cameron carried this torch into American theatres, spreading *Aliens* fandom across the

world while [simultaneously discouraging "weaker" incarnations within the franchise](#) ([source](#)).

Fascism isn't "dead" because its source never died; it was only ever denied, discredited and obfuscated (re: the subterfuge trifecta) behind militarily optimistic fictions informing a bourgeois cultural understanding of the imaginary past (the Wisdom of the Ancients) bleeding into the canceled future!

As we continue discussing fascism (and tokenism) throughout this book series, please remember fascism's staying power owes itself to capital's built-in reliance on fascism; i.e., to survive workers fighting back against bourgeois control. To it, while Hitler's actual Nazis might *technically* "be gone," fascism never left. Imperialism (and its undead consumption) are always coming home to empire!

In other words, fascism is integral to capital—a copycat ideology based on bad-faith aesthetics (disguise pastiche, cryptofascists and compound DARVO/obscurantism) demanded by *American* auteurs having perfected older examples; i.e., of the state and its own *Pax-Americana* exports—those wherein liberal democracy and fascist "counterculture" and decay (re: false rebellion, Parenti) have invariably led into present-day neoliberalism built on older iterations and tools of empire; e.g., [palingenesis, Manifest Destiny and old, white money/nepotism-in-action](#) (Bad Empanada's "How the USA Inspired the Nazis - From Manifest Destiny to Lebensraum," 2022).

History—of Capitalism as something to uphold through capitalist dogma and lies (which is all that Capitalist Realism really is)—becomes Kissinger's "memory of states" that, in turn, the state renders *back* into cannibalized feed that braindead workers re-ingest before going on to police, thus eat themselves for the elite *again*. The world is capital, and capital is a giant zombie-vampire ouroborotically eating itself on all registers while flowing power and knowledge, labor and resources always upwards! Trauma and feeding punch down, dividing and conquering the same-old territories and occupants; i.e., *vis-à-vis* the perpetual (re)invention of the same kinds of us-versus-them enemies and conflicts (re: the manufacture trifecta)

that Capitalism demands—normally on frontiers far-removed from the middle-class:



For example, Henry Kissinger's aiding of Jorge Videla would bleed into the 1980s, resulting in thousands of mass

murders through Operation Condor via the actual<sup>281</sup> contras; re:

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<sup>281</sup> And whose state-sanctioned death squads would horrifyingly inspire both Arnold's Dutch from *Predator* and Bill Rizer and Lance Bean from the *Contra* videogame franchise; i.e., as half-real fascist "Rambos" defending the "free world" from "Communism" as thoroughly Giger-esque: Red Falcon's endless army of cybernetic space demons. You see this fostering of a police mentality among the middle class through the process of abjection and ghost of the counterfeit; re (from earlier in this module, citing Volume Two, part one):

"Capital relies on dogma as something to internalize and serve profit on all registers—on and offstage, at home and abroad, by white male predators" ([source](#)). This extends to token agents (women acting like men, fags acting like straight people, etc), which is precisely what Jadis is and how they acted towards me. Moreover, harmful mentalities like theirs are informed by popular media such as videogames, which victims escape into only to be bombarded with the very ideas that drive their abusers at home and abroad. The effect is often one of recruitment (cops or victims). I continue,

Regarding videogames as a neoliberal form of dogma, from the early '80s to the end of the Cold War and beyond, you went from public entertainment devices (arcades) that had a bunch of mostly young male clients cycling through them like a pimped-out sex worker... to the 1983 Atari Crash and subsequent 1985 smash-hit success of Nintendo's *Super Mario Bros.* encouraging the widespread sale of videogames in the Gothic's usual haunt: among the middle class. Except this time, the elite wanted in through ways that *didn't* exist during the Neo-Gothic revival: televisions as personal property that could funnel in their burgeoning ideology through the disguise of (expensive and highly recursive) games.

From the early days of *Space Invaders* (1978), *Pac-Man* (1980) or *Donkey Kong* (1981) to *Mario*, then (about seven years—twelve, if you start from 1973 when the elite began their first experiments with neoliberalism in South America), the usual place of neoliberal business and indoctrination transitioned from single arcade machines to larger amounts of money (from quarters to hundreds of dollars) per customer in each *household* (where there is more money to be had, and seasonally at that); i.e., a *Stepford Wife*, purchased for paychecks, not pocket change, and ready to implement the business model into the first generation of what would become the New World Order under neoliberal Capitalism: a world of us-versus-them enforced by neoliberal, monomythic copaganda's harmful simulations of *Amazonomachia* to maintain the status quo at a socio-material level; re: the shadows of a new republic's man-cave walls.

In turn, the American middle class (so called "gamer culture") would gatekeep and safeguard the elite through videogames being an acclimating device to neo-feudal territories to defend in reality (outside of the game world[s] themselves) as capital starts to decay like usual ([ibid.](#)).

Capitalism is a structure that operates across space and time; i.e., inside the working public's hearts and minds, but also through their labor extending into the physical world (and back into their hearts and minds; re: gargoyles). Those with relative privilege—white, middle-class straight men—prey and police everyone else, monomyth-style, leading to a concentric gradient of tokenization, gentrification and decay branching out from white women (the classic gatekeepers of Gothic fiction) towards more marginalized communities passing the Judas-style donation plate doubling as a police badge.

The same basic issues of extratextual police and predation outlined above (say nothing of the tiered "rungs" of tokenization and preferential mistreatment that result) continue to effect workers in new forms of media, including fictional and non-fictional worlds as a liminal position; i.e., interacting back and forth, on and offstage. Nothing is every truly separate in that respect, the liminal hauntology of war traveling back and forth across imperial territories foreign and domestic, real and imagined. Such half-real oscillation is not simply incidental, but required for capital to function at all!



Operation Condor used [the Monroe Doctrine] for a slightly different purpose in the Cold War as a larger operation to recruit and use security forces in countries around Latin America. This was done to make sure these countries stayed friendly to US interests, and out of the orbit of Moscow. This work mostly happened with the help of the CIA. It began with ideas drawn up at the infamous School of the Americas. Declassified documents show a meeting occurred between different officials from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay. The idea was to coordinate their efforts against "subversive targets." It sounds like it's trying to stop guerrilla fighters, but moreover it meant anyone who threatened these dictatorial regimes that took over all the countries listed earlier plus Brazil from 1954, to 1976. The first actions were for the support and direction of groups called death squads.

A death squad is an armed group that conducts extrajudicial killings or forced disappearances of persons for the purposes such as political repression, assassinations, torture, genocide, ethnic cleansing, or revolutionary terror. They're about as nice as the name implies and are basically teams that execute extrajudicial killings, as an act of terrorism in order to repress a population or commit genocide just like many authoritarian regimes such as the Cheka in revolutionary Russia as a preamble to the gulag system. Their first targets were political exiles living in Argentina. Anyone associated with the old governments or anyone displaced for being socialists were now finding themselves victims of these squads. Estimates are as high as 80,000 people died in these killings [[source](#): Rough Diplomacy's "The Bloody Hand: Operation Condor," 2019].

Moving forward, South America would be a testing ground for neoliberalism under Pinochet, 1973 (Bad Empanada's "Johnny Harris: Shameless Propagandist Debunked," [timestamp](#): 51:45) while also being a famous hotbed for prominent WW2 defectors. In turn, Americans—even self-titled "Socialists" who should know better but play dumb—fall victim to the same police-and-prey tactics via horseshoe arguments: associating Peronist Leftism with German Nazism, thus something "corrupt" (alien) to police, rape and control as nature being monstrous-feminine as has historically unfolded for thousands of years (towards more globalized, dogmatized forms); i.e., the dialectic of shelter and the alien resulting in all the usual punching down by those who normally must grit and bear it; e.g., women being the ancient enemies of patriarchal power being expressed in a wider persecution network that jumps from different modernized versions of old historical targets; re (from Volume Zero):



[artist: [A Baby Pinecone](#)]

*The historical-material reality of Grendel's suspiciously Satanic-sounding mother is ordinary people being placed into the out-group by the in-group—i.e., less hag-horror in the sense of actual withered hags [the furies] and more the ancient mother goddess [the Archaic Mother] as embodied in AFAB persons and viewed fearfully by men as devious shapeshifters that could be anywhere, inside-outside anyone [a killer impostor that is instantly fatal*

*upon encountering; e.g., the T-1000 disguised as an innocent housewife]. While the stigma applies to anything remotely female or incorrectly male, the redhead classically evokes the presence of pagan power and Sapphic energies. She embodies nature, and nature is something for Beowulf's hauntologized clones to kettle/box-in, then rape and kill for "their own" God-given glory in bread-and-circus-type stories [with her predictable revenge—at becoming like them for the death of her family and loved ones—being seen as cowardly and illegitimate in the eyes of the state and its kayfabe monopoly of violence; i.e., the back-and-forth cycle of reactive abuse]. It's not just "boys will be boys"; the pussy looks like a cave to conquer by men according to men during rites of passage that have been baked into our culture as fundamental to capital. It's Manifest Destiny in action—challenged by the simple fact that God is an invention, a cruel joke to abuse others with through the rise of Capitalism's Cartesian Revolution and resultant maps of conquest [exhibit 1a1a1h2a1]. It becomes not just a scribble of Old-English runes, but a harmful game spawned into endless copies of itself: the power fantasy as Warrior Jesus' perennial resurrection, raping and killing the world as monstrous-feminine, "gendered at every turn" according to cartography as a technology of conquest that fits into the ludologized scheme:*

*[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](#): *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things*].*

*The kingdom is threatened; call Beowulf [or the Ghostbusters] out of the mythical past to slay what ails the king and the land, the uncanny home as "rotten" [as Hamlet put it, in Shakespeare's parody of the hero/murder mystery] and needing to be restored through great destruction [sold to the masses, of course] ([source](#)).*



Misogynistic or otherwise, capital alienates and fetishizes everything through different stigmas and bigotries. It does so to cultivate the very perverse, traitorous appetites that lead to workers policing and preying on themselves, once internalized, as cops and victims recruiting from the same populations (re: antagonize nature, put it to

work); i.e., the tired recycling of old clichés and fetishes to galvanize capital in its current evolutionary state. Such cycles are no fluke, nor are they recent; i.e., Zombie-Vampire Capitalism occurring thanks to the strange marriage of American popular media with state engines of ongoing subterfuge and denial (with Reagan's [Tower Commission](#) finding "no fault" when investigating America's involvement with the contras). My praxial focus often falls to videogames, but the universal policing of nature, the monstrous-feminine and sex work is far older than those. However, even if videogames are far more dominant nowadays at illustrating Capitalist Realism than novels or movies, bondage is bondage. Except, the usual dualities and doubles also persist during oppositional praxis!

To it, undead exploitation under Capitalism as a giant zombie-vampire takes many different forms, themselves stuck inside a gradient of psychosexual abuse workers relay during liminal expression's surfaces and thresholds (whereupon pastiche remediates praxis regarding police activity monopolizing violence, terror and morphological expression for the state, versus proletarian counterterrorism concerning sex and force, bodies and labor). Per all the usual paradoxes, any sex-positive, liberatory form (of camp) occupies the same performative shadow zone as any sex-coercive, carceral form (of canon).

As usual, the functional difference to such cryptonymy is dialectical-material scrutiny and the anisotropic flow of power expressed through knowledge and wealth in one direction or the other (always as a matter of praxial tension, flowing in both directions and at cross purposes during our daily reifying of such egregores; re: oppositional synthesis). But visual ambiguities nevertheless persist, leading to the same kinds of historical-material contradictions, which themselves make up the

bare bleeding heart of the queer laborer's existence; i.e., surviving under capital's inherently hostile and predatory sphere that simultaneously hates us and needs us to police with and unto, and which we must interrogate and negotiate inside of itself: the self-aware scapegoat camping their own rape.



(artist: [Cursed Arachnid](#))

This performance's many paradoxes likewise apply to Nazis and Communists, both shoved kayfabe-style into the American Liberalist boxing court; i.e., as something to canonize or camp to varying degrees, and which future interpretations fall on either side of the fence concerning. Few things are as readily camped or canonized as the Nazi, being used to justify the half-real existence of "corruption" that, recognized by state proponents, trigger to effectively maintain global US hegemony under neoliberal Capitalism; i.e., by conflating labor—but especially labor abroad, in colonial territories—with "fascism," thus obscuring actual fascism's ongoing role in defending capital for the elite!

For example, in "White Evil: Peronist Argentina in US Popular Imagination Since 1955" (2004), Victoria Allison writes:

In the absence of any open conflict between the two nations, the American media in the late 20th century concentrated, sometimes obsessively, on two ultimately related phenomena: Eva Peron and the existence of escaped Nazis in Argentina. This focus dwarfs all Argentine leaders subsequent to Peron as well as the compelling saga of Argentina's ongoing, frequently violent struggle to define itself ([source](#)).

Within this struggle, Allison notes Eva Peron being established through manufactured American sentiment as a "Latin American Lady Macbeth" that shaped future depictions of her character such as 1979's *Evita*: "The campaign waged by Ambassador Spruille Braden and the U.S. media in the immediate postwar clearly have succeeded in convincing successive generations of Americans that Peronismo was an unequivocally Nazi-fascist movement" (*ibid.*).

To this, Eva was seen as incredibly glamorous, treacherous and powerful in order to further *Pax Americana* through its canonical trauma and feeding elements. While sexiness from the region would continue to shift and alter in the following decades, the framing of female/monstrous-feminine strength would remain charged with lightning and trauma like the Bride of Frankenstein (exhibit 41f, below): as overshadowed by the presence of an evil German simulacrum's imaginary past.

Indeed, American elite proponents would treat the exploitation and demonization of the Global South as something to romantically portray [while constantly hiding its ongoing neoliberal exploitation](#) (Bad Empanada's "Operation Car Wash," 2023). Because sex-positive and sex-coercive art use the same basic language, they require additional context to separate them; re: context that only appears under dialectical-material scrutiny, which neoliberalism discourages. Instead, it promotes the free market as benign, furthered by a proliferation of canonical, oft-Gothic images that yield the usual banana republics farmed for different "crops" (and which, per Capitalist Realism, disguise the whole process all over again).

For example, Laura Matsuda might not seem terribly Gothic or zombie-like, at all; she nonetheless wields lightning on par with an Amazon or the Bride of Frankenstein while also hailing from a distant, fearsome land populated by the corrupt, but also bandits of one kind or another (the Italian *banditti* populating Ann Radcliffe's own faraway lands to terrorize her white, cis-het heroines with):



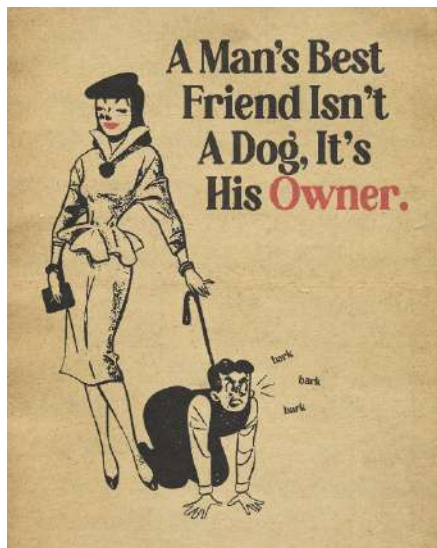
(*exhibit 41f1: Artist, right: [Josef Axner](#); left: screenshots and assets taken directly from Capcom's IP, *Street Fighter V* [[source: Eden](#)]. Whereas Eden showcases the zombifying nature of Laura as a stereotypically Brazilian pin-up model that Capcom is shamelessly banking on, Axner's fanart pointedly presents Laura as the Bride of Frankenstein—wearing that specific persona in a critically blind, corporatized sense: the Halloween costume as a critically dead advertisement of Capcom's Brazilian*

*"waifu."* There's nothing wrong with embracing sexuality in partylike ways that open one's eyes to settler-colonial abuse; Capcom does the opposite, the allegory left for workers to produce and pass on.

*The Bride is already a popular example of a popular kind of demon: the composite body. In its strictly undead form, such a body is less a singular zombie risen from the grave and more a collection of zombie parts assembled by a mad scientist [the Cartesian man of reason made into a Nazi-Communist cartoon]. During oppositional praxis, this can yield canonical or iconoclastic variants; both exhibited examples, here, are canonical, insofar as they conceal genocide by exploiting the Brazilian woman as fighting games and cheap Halloween costumes usually do: through cultural appropriation and Gothic recuperation useful to profit raping nature while dressing her up as the usual Medusa-style whore).*

Despite the neoliberal whitewash, Capitalism is a kaleidoscopic graveyard of cheap Halloween costumes reaping on holiday cycles: row upon row of counterfeit

copies "haunted" by a larger system of disguised, displaced police violence and state predation; or again, as Marx himself put it: "the tradition of all the dead generations." This "ghost of the counterfeit" is historical-material, its harmful effects on workers including pacification, cruelty and stupidity of the zombifying "lobotomy" sort; i.e., controlled opposition more broadly occurring inside a continuous police state populated with cops and victims (more on this precise framing in Volume Three). Private sexual property has made people stupid about sex—about its labor and social-sexual interactions becoming "undead" in ways the elite can abuse to stay in control. By comparison, iconoclastic uses of Gothic theory can help break this spell through reverse abjection, but also gives the iconoclast a



particular *enchanted* flavor that struggling workers can identify with and use to freeze capital in its tracks: ludo-Gothic BDSM and (as far as I prefer it) mommy doms.

(artist: [Vintage Fantasy](#))

Regardless of gender or sex, orientation or performance, monsters reify Gothic poetics as an iconoclastic matter of class and culture war that seeks liberation through performative paradox, but challenges profit as a socio-material byproduct; i.e., through canonical ownership as a Faustian, Promethean arrangement deleterious to workers, which workers subvert to achieve liberation from bourgeois forces. Indeed, iconoclasm is more than reverse abjection, invoking hauntologies, chronotopes, and cryptonyms that yield the trademark intoxication of the Gothic mode's *modus operandi*—fabricating transgenerational illusions from materials historically thought of as cheap, insubstantial, and "pulpy" but also magnetic, precious and capitalist-regulated means of educating workers: monsters, sex, drugs, music, food, etc.

These are all things that most people like, but which workers have been conditioned to consume a particular way tied to particular canonical personas; i.e., not just wizards, warriors, and monsters, but sexy "undead" versions. Canon often pimps these "zombies" as abusive metaphors for shameful or guilty pleasures inside capital's joy division; e.g., not the fucking of literal corpses, but a broader Gothic imagination whose theoretical underpinnings shackle honest sex, drugs and rock 'n roll hedonism to coercive, pacifying language that results in all the usual police brutalities. Iconoclasm ties the same phenomena to an active, subversive mode of rebellion—not by burying the mind (as canon does) but freeing it through cryptonymic interactions with a reimagined past made sex-positive: a "dead," sexy teacher come back to life, reversing abjection from the largest zombies (capital and the elite) to the smallest (workers and their individual creations)!

When humanized, zombies simultaneously belong to capital's dead future while becoming collectively retooled for emancipatory purposes; i.e., sexy illusions that demystify through revolutionary subterfuge, a complicated process that borrows from (and blends in with) older examples that weren't always sex-positive, themselves; e.g., Frank Herbert's catchy maxim about facing fear from *Dune*, which we want to reclaim while ejecting Herbert's pernicious homophobic dogma:

I must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me. And when it has gone past I will turn the inner eye to see its path. Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain ([source](#)).

The goal of the iconoclastic Gorgon isn't simply petrifying our enemies, showing them their own greed and mortality (thus eventual need to face the music) while also giving ourselves room to work, live and play with dead things; it's to reduce states of exception and predation to zero (thus avoid an Omelas scapegoat), decloaking those vampires without reflections that hide their normally invisible, decayed and predatory selves behind the looking glass; re: always hungry and rotting and bloated, like the Skeksis (frankly an anti-Semitic trope [so-called "lizard people"] also fetishizing Eastern Europe), thus always needing an ever expanding amount (compounding appetites) to regenerate the same amount as before: the glutted leeches, resting and digesting in their castled coffins. The more they eat, the more they must lie to conceal themselves, thus continue ruling the world from beyond the grave (concentric veneers, but also Jewish conspiracies blaming Marxism instead of capitalists). The DARVO-style lies compound, fracture and reassemble.

In turn, our Aegis subverts both canonical monsters/weird nerds and their bourgeois tyrants (and stereotypes), but also the chronotope we all share. Doing so, we utilize sexuality and gender as driving forces that hold everything loosely together during distinct, visually ambivalent arrangements: unequal power exchange during the kinks and fetishes known to ludo-Gothic BDSM. Such exercises often court themselves amid visually "appropriate" locales historically criminalized and commercialized by the status quo in hauntological fashion. During reverse



abjection, however, these old demonic places generally associate with pleasure and punishment as interwoven among palpable, "heavy" time—so thick it's like wading through fog (a kind of opium den).

(artist: [Soon2BSalty](#); modified by [Persephone van der Waard](#))

As we've talked about already inside this module, there's often a spatial element beyond the dolls, themselves; i.e., dollhouses; e.g., *Metroidvania*. Doll or dollhouse, Capitalism deliberately manufactures harmful iterations to blind us with, then feed on workers through the usual vampiric hyphenations, portals, personas (such as spectres of Rome and Marx only begging for us to camp them using what we have; e.g., *Gentlee Webb*, below):



(artist: [Herb Ritts](#))

Bit but not bled, the same standard/tokenized workers go on to stochastically assist in capital's recursive trauma and consumption; i.e., assimilating as class, culture and/or race traitors (which, again, theatrically resemble their rebellious brethren, on and offstage). Regardless of the exact monstrous-feminine form(s), the house is the zombie and/or vampire (demon, animal, etc) as much as the person is (and they generally share these qualities in between each other as representing residence or resident; e.g., *Dracula* and his infamous castle [above] as something to uproot and transplant elsewhere pursuant to larger models).

Except, such feeding always goes in both directions, requiring times of relaxed control and vulnerability that capital might operate the way the elite want it to; i.e., feeding itself on itself: to eject the necessary foodstuffs, then claw profit back through the usual cycles of police violence unfolding inside colonized lands and populations that endlessly *recolonize* per new settler arguments (that benefit the usual groups), thus devour themselves (and their victims) anew as part of the same giant zombie-vampire. Things harden, soften, and harden again as part of the same peristalsis swallowing process: moving food round and round, in and out of the same holes, bodies, identities and struggles existing in perpetual duality! Like with sex, we need to be rigid at times in social situations (that often concern sex as



something to enforce; i.e., through poetics onstage and off; e.g., with drugs and rock 'n roll, prostitution, etc), but also flexible and fun in our dialectical-material opposition occupying the same contested arenas; re: we camp things because we must! Silence is genocide and cops are generally too dumb to tell the difference!

(artist: [Gentlee Webb](#))



When developing Gothic Communism, then, emancipatory hauntologies/chronotopes—like cryptonymy and reversing abjection—become increasingly perceptive and loud, not blind and quiet, to what workers *could* enjoy when expressing our genderqueer/postcolonial selves through ludo-Gothic BDSM; i.e., versus canonical instances that merely extend the rot in perpetuity while hiding the elite's reflections (which vampires do not have) and celebrating the capitalist tyrant: as an ultimate glutton billionaire we should eat and tax to hell and back, our zombie eyeballs extending to the spatial side of things—the corporal, temporal, social and political, etc—stewing in the same witch's pot (an organism, in Bakhtin's words).

Such is capital, our home waiting to be reclaimed. Unlike canonical death, though, which only leads to worker exploitation and unironic cannibalization, the signifiers of death in iconoclastic, sex-positive narratives liberate workers through the humanized worker zombie as terrifyingly alive: the thinking undead who see (with their perceptive eyeballs) *who* has made them desire, through praxial synthesis, a changing of things; i.e., to achieve catharsis as a wider healing process that chills solid the usual actors of Cartesian predation, of the monomyth, of ghettos and police stations, of rape and abjection as fundamental to capital, to profit. As we reverse-abject what the elite fear most, they become Matheson's

legend: to petrify with our Aegis, then leave behind to chill workers again through a culture that has become increasingly class conscious and emotionally/Gothically intelligent!

(artist: [Emil Melmoth](#))



With that being said, capital is as vulnerable as any undead, the way to its heart through its stomach. To it, let's move onto other forms of undead; i.e., besides zombies and their famous apocalypses, monomyths, what-have-you. Let's examine ghosts, vampires and composites, considering how *these* egregores historically feed as undead beings!

## They Hunger; or Reintroducing Liminal Expression through Undead Feeding Vectors: the Universal Feeding Mechanism of the Undead

"Mercy is a chimera. It can be defeated by the stomach rumbling its hunger, by the throat crying its thirst. You must always be hungry and thirsty." The Baron caressed his bulges beneath the suspenders. "Like me."

—the Baron Harkonnen to his nephew, the Beast Raban, *Dune*<sup>282</sup>

(artist: [Draldede](#))



Per the Gothic, history is always in motion (and decay/regeneration) through liminal spaces and states. Even so, the undead are defined by two basic things: giving (and receiving) trauma as pain or punishment of some kind, and eating. We've looked at trauma a great deal thus far in the module, and likewise have considered how the process of abjection can be reversed by pleasurably reclaiming the imperial language of trauma (and pain), per the monomyth; i.e., *vis-à-vis* the undead less as neighbors to humans and more equal tenants under the same oppressive system.

The more time you spend with the undead as human, the more the process can reverse, but also become more visible insofar as we are normally exploited; re: the apocalypse.

Now we shall examine this uncovering through liminal expression per the undead feeding mechanism (and its various historical preferences and metaphors); i.e., trauma making people decay and feed in anisotropic ways, hyphenating the mouth and the fang (the vagina and the cock) that concern trauma and feeding as *likewise* hyphenated: the knife dick/*vagina dentata* as "sodomy." It's a bit messy (as liminality generally is) and that's part of the fun, but also part of the spirit of Gothic poetics: the graveyard (and corpse) as a psychosexual space-to-occupant (residence-resident) of rape play whose irony is optional and generally regresses towards fascism per the state's usual machinations (trifectas, monopolies, and capitalist qualities): anything that serves profit gentrifies and decays, thus rapes itself and everything around it as a matter of police violence.

<sup>282</sup> With Frank Herbert, again, being a massive homophobe who abjects queerness onto a kind of Nazi vampire that's somehow anti-Semitic (re: "[Frank Herbert's Dug-up Homophobia](#)"); i.e., Nazis and Communists occupy the same theatrical shadow zone as BDSM and vampires, exploitation and liberation: the Harkonnens are basically a post-fascist regression to a cartoon, overly Freudian medieval. It's tacky but par for the course, as far as the monomyth goes (which is heteronormative).

We'll examine feeding-as-liminal through two subchapters, one per vampires/witches ("Eat Me Alive") and one per ghosts ("I See Dead People"); i.e., as complicated nocturnal feeders concerning rape trauma as part of the exchange, but in ways that often partially conceal and relegate to dark imaginary sites that transplant to and fro inside the colonial space: as overrun with degenerate, prurient forces; e.g., the male sexual-predator lothario, but also the sexually active and assertive monstrous-feminine (from cis-het women to various deviations from that group). Always out of sight, but not out of mind, such half-real, monomythic intimations recycle through the usual neoliberal refrains upholding Capitalist Realism, recruiting workers to play out genocide in small; i.e., profit is rape, which canonical media serves while fetishizing token elements per the Protestant ethic treating healthy appetites as sinful, wanton and undead—damned to death.

For example, the lily-white assassin from *Diablo 2* (2000) declares "they'll never see me coming" in ways that cannot ignore her rather loud, orgasmic battle cries as vampiric ("the creatures of the night, what sweet music they make!"); i.e., as part of an Orientalist witch's phallic, poisoned (wasp-like) weapons: the heteronormative coding of poison being a woman's weapon combined with the penetrative fang or stinger of various stigma animals (the snake, spider or again, wasp). In this policewoman's fetishized form, she's not the world-ending Medusa, but a token Amazon cop with vampiric, animalistic qualities policing state territories for the state, Radcliffe-style; i.e., something to "top" as an avatar that rapes the state's usual targets/DARVO-assigned enemies like a lady of the night would: penetratively—a phallic woman (*vagina dentata*) ruthlessly and doggedly tracking and hunting state prey down.

Granted, there's always an anisotropic function to such feeding as weaponizing sex, terror and force for or against the state, mid-kayfabe; i.e., as beings to feed in different ways that—like zombies in the state of exception—have psychosexual flavors that can be Numinously sex-positive per ludo-Gothic BDSM,

but for which such subversions are far from automatic; they must be taught, and generally occur through all the usual taboo things—opera, heavy metal, witchcraft, hard drugs, Gothic spaces, monsters, and videogames, etc.

([source](#): Fandom)



For example, Judas Priest's "[Eat Me Alive](#)" (1984), while enduring Thatcheristic

censors, was really cashing in on the usual BDSM language made bare to a paying middle class "slumming" in homo-curious ways:

[Verse 1]

Wrapped tight around me like a second flesh hot skin  
 Cling to my body as the ecstasy begins  
 Your wild vibrations got me shooting from the hip  
 Crazy and insatiable, let rip

[Chorus]

And eat me alive  
 Eat me alive

[Verse 2]

Sounds like an animal, panting to the beat  
 Groan in the pleasure zone and gasping from the heat  
 Gut-wrenching frenzy that deranges every joint  
 I'm going to force you at gun point

[...]

[Verse 3]

[Bound to deliver](#) as [you give and I collect](#)  
 Squealing impassioned as the [rod of steel injects](#)  
 Lunge to the maximum, spread-eagled to the wall  
 You're well equipped to take it all ([source](#): Genius).

It's basically a psychosexual camping of KISS' "[Love Gun](#)" (1977). Such things are admittedly rather tame if you've lived and understand them in a sex-positive way. But the curious assimilation of Halford as a then-closeted gay man in Great Britain remains a vital element of critique insofar as *we* can critique *him* (and the other examples in this signpost); i.e., as someone who ultimately used queer rebellion's synonymizing of sex and harm to make bank and garner fans through psychosexual dogma, first and foremost.

In short, we gotta hug Medusa as something dehumanized by capital (and for which they deflect blame back onto us); e.g., camp the Nazi fag as decaying into a Zionist shell of his older non-decayed self (re: "[Judas Priest: Invincible Shield and Zionism](#)," 2024). We'll examine Halford and others with vampires (and witches), in "[Eat Me Alive](#)," then consider the Numinous, posthumanism, *cryptomimesis* and Metroidvania with ghosts in "[Seeing Dead People](#)"; i.e., as feeders of a less overtly sexual sort than vampires are, but nevertheless haunted by the same mechanisms that drive both to feed in a liminal sense.

*Sex Positivity* has repeatedly covered how liminal expression involves pastiche and doubles in opposition. This requires remediated praxis, a failure of sublimation, and conflict on the surface of the image—all concepts that occur in relation to the undead as something to see, thus recognize as proletarian, if indeed it even is; i.e., "friendly" to Gothic Communism. The "vector" is language itself, retaining a viral, abstracted quality told across the endless transfer of monstrous images speaking to undead essence exchange; i.e., associated with death and disease personified through different, harmfully *sexualized*<sup>283</sup> feeding behaviors:

- the **vampire's** regeneration of a corpse that regains/retains life-like components; i.e., the greedy sucking motions/wild drinking of blood, but also the canonical depiction as a powerful sexual predator/serial killer out of another time and place—their "Transylvanian" home an imaginary land of madness tied to whispered nighttime horrors, unchecked death/rape and vulgar, *bloody* displays of power they transfer unto fresh territories of predation
- the **zombie's** useless eating tied to a rotting corpse; i.e., of flesh or brains (or the absorption of colonial punishment from state bullets and knives)
- the **ghost's** feeding on lifeforce without needing a body so much as a likeness or suggestion of one; i.e., mimetic capturing of vitality or draining of essence, often tied to an ambiguous or ghastly site of murder trauma, and/or revenge
- and the **composite's** childhood craving of revenge against faulty parentage, humanity and Promethean knowledge

Information exchange happens by looking at and expressing with; i.e., to paint not just in blood, ectoplasm, or carrion, but the *essence* of these things as mimed code that gets the underlying point across: the liminal exchange of transformative information frequently viewed as alien, but also dated, "ancient" and brought back to life; e.g., the immateriality of ghosts, the replenished corpse flesh of vampires, and the patchwork assemblage of composite bodies, etc, as carriers of erotic data.



As canonical instruments of terror, the undead possess several commonalities useful to their collective feeding rituals. One is paralysis—to freeze their victims cold, often through a chilling gaze or undead countenance; i.e., a likeness

<sup>283</sup> Asexuality is something we will explore more fully in Volume Three.

of death on an animated form whose eyes (or facial expression) lacks the societally accepted notion of a human presence.

Furthermore, as a *feeding* class that often freezes their victims, the undead embody live burial through an aspect of monstrous expression we've examined previously with Metroidvania, castles, dolls, and haunted houses: the uncanny but also a mimetic tendency to mirror one another across space and time by *consuming* and disseminating media tied to the ghost of the counterfeit (again, the basic idea called *echopraxis*, or "the involuntary mirroring of an observed action," which we'll extend to haunted, cryptonymic material: *cryptomimesis*).

The uncanny warns viewers of something inside the domestic setting as haunted (with Freud's word for uncanny, *unheimlich*, literally translating to "unhomely"); i.e., according to a transgenerational curse tied to a body and spaces within an operative membrane. Like zombies, vampires, ghosts and composites do more than express hidden trauma spilling out into the open; they denote a playful vector of exchange commonly associated with "feeding" in literal terms, but also figuratively through a creative process about the human condition—ludo-Gothic BDSM—as fed on the same kinds of poetic, paradoxical fuels within house and home (this "play" often attaches to queer people delighting at reactionaries clutching their pearls; e.g., at dildos and monsters with sexual agency and queer identity. Nothing is more fun than making a TERF or uptight cis person crap their pant at something as silly as the "dark scary dildo person from outer space"; i.e., the xenomorph).

As part of this larger poetic scheme, the ghost of the counterfeit is a canonical phenomenon that causes one to freeze between stages of disgust and fascination (adjacent to fight, flight and fawn) towards repressed abuses under the status quo persecuting fresh prey inside the normal policed territories; romantically dressed up as "past," these injuries are tangibly felt within one's living space as invaded, desecrated and enslaved by the feeding dead (sometimes literally invited inside, as the canonical vampire and their parasitic, predatory charm often are).

*Something important to keep in mind are the usual "boundaries for me, not for thee" goings-on. Canonically we're presented with an innocent Christian Europe (and America, later) under attack by corrupt degenerate versions of itself, or hostile alien forces invading home from "elsewhere." Apart from the settler argument (re: "we were here first are our claim is the legitimate one"), the us-versus-them argument has old, pervasive double standards; e.g., ignoring Christian feeding rituals in Catholic dogma (the drinking of Christ's blood and eating of Christ's flesh) while presenting non-Christian elements as popular anti-Semitic tropes describing them as [blood-drinking vampires](#), [baby-killing witches](#), and/or [flesh-eating goblins](#) (all from Hey Alma's "Anti-Semitic History of..." series; 2021, 2020, and 2023). Such activities are, in essence, interchangeable between monster types, themselves identified by act and accusation as much as outward appearance.*

For example, there's also werewolves, which combined with the above behaviors and charges—of wanton, improper and devilish consumption ("...of eating a meal, a succulent Chinese meal?")—are subsequently used as similar xenophobic stereotypes; i.e., demonizing those outside the status quo, but especially anything threatening the nuclear family model from *Hammer of Witches*, onwards. There really isn't some special prize for who is the biggest threat, simply because Pagan women (and other non-Christian dominions/Orientalist and anti-Semitic caricatures) will be treated basically the same as any idea of state degeneracy and corruption; i.e., as undead, demonic and/or animalistic threats that must be outed and destroyed by police forces in any capacity (official or vigilante). The same goes for homosexual men and other practitioners of "sodomy" (the love that dare not speak its name), non-white peoples, and anyone and anything else historically scapegoated for societal collapse (re: boom and bust). Concerning weaponized village persecution rhetoric taken to a systemic level, fear and dogma mobilize scared stupid people; i.e., to do the state's dirty work for them, be that state the Church, mercantile capitalists, neoliberals, or some latter-day combination of these things (capital decays and regresses, remember).

In turn, abject qualities of an outwardly hideous (non-Western) physical appearance splice pick-and-choose systemic bigotries—a hellish salad of racism, anti-Semitism, Orientalism, queerphobia, etc—with degenerate undead feeding mechanisms to plant/play into false flag arguments; i.e., canonically blaming state victims for abusing the very things the state seeks to aim and control, DAVRO and obscurantism commonly presenting any of these monsters as cannibalistic and dark-skinned, or simply as "dark" rapists kidnapping women and children before

"mishandling" them.

Whatever synonymizing occurs serves the usual binaries at work, incensing and erupting public fervor against state victims by state victims:

(artist: [The Sabu](#))



Unto itself, subsequent requests to "eat me alive" yield a variety of unironic, exploitation-style rape fantasies/calculated risks,

one of the most common (and effective) being the captive scenario—specifically of white women wanting to sleep with wild savage rapists who drink blood, eat flesh, torture women and kill babies, in effect secretly and shamefully desiring this

treatment versus having PIV missionary sex with their dutiful, good-boy husbands (who also rape them, and will coerce such fantasies out of their brides when it suits them).

Frankly you can swap out black men with any aspect of nature-as-alien, always bearing a monstrous-feminine flavor (anything that isn't the status quo is monstrous-feminine). Whatever the form, the criminal element of pimping the plantation, kingdom or colony is the same: forbidden fruit, aka guilty pleasure, which upholds the usual double standards, punching down; i.e., husbands rape their wives; their wives have rape fantasies that commonly exploit foreigners, "the help" and other, even more vulnerable parties (e.g., Mrs. Epps from *Twelve Years a Slave*, 2013); and so on, inside the same basic "prison sex" mindset.

In turn, white middle-class women (and other tokenized forces on a descending ladder of preferential mistreatment) will gaslight, gatekeep girl boss for the elite; i.e., feminism decays, as does any fight for equality as a matter of convenience controlled through state concessions. Under capital, tokenized women will fetishize the state's enemies while also cashing in on it through good-girl modesty arguments (re: "kissing up, punching down") and white bad-girl double standards; meanwhile, fags will punch down against other fags, playing unironically into the "bury your gays" trope as they try to assimilate; and people of color will, per Fanon, put on white masks to police and segregate themselves, mid-assimilation—in effect playing the cannibals, rapists and vigilantes criminals the state wants them to be; etc. Any and all of this will hybridize as needed, but it serves the same historical-material purpose: bourgeois hegemony and control through police violence against workers and nature by the state, having the former divide-and-conquer themselves whenever and wherever possible.



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

Last but not least, all of this can be poetically subverted, but liberation and exploitation exist inside the same Gothic shadow zone; they must be parsed, there, through dialectical-material scrutiny when illustrating mutual consent through informed, intelligent forms of performance, poetry and play! As such,

iconoclasm becomes sex-positive the moment it humanizes both sides of a labor exchange and reclaims the monstrous language being used (often in combinations; e.g., zombie unicorns with breeding kinks, above); i.e., using it to challenge profit, thus genocide, during systemic catharsis developing Communism, helping people



*let off steam while conversationally interrogating their trauma; re: the pedagogy of the oppressed, finding similarity amid difference to challenge state instruments and articles of self-imposed police violence and internalized bigotry.*

*To it, remember our modular thesis:*

*Capitalism achieves profit by moving money through nature; profit is built on trauma and division, wherein anything that serves profit gentrifies and decays, over and over while preying on nature. Trauma, then, cultivates strange appetites, which vary from group to group per the usual privileges and oppression as intersecting differently per case; i.e., psychosexual trauma (the regulation of state sex, terror and force) and feeding in decay as a matter of complicated (anisotropic) exchange unto itself, but also shapeshifting and knowledge exchange vis-à-vis nature as monstrous-feminine: something to destroy by the state or defend from it (and its trifactas, monopolies, etc) using the same threatening aesthetics of power and death, decay and rape.*

*You have to challenge canonical appetites by subverting them, which requires camping what's already present:*



*(model and artist: Jericho and [Persephone van der Waard](#))*

*In short, fuck whoever or whatever you want however you want as long as doing so is sex-positive/mutually consensual, thus good praxis. By extension, cultivate (synthesize) undead feeding habits that point out the usual state hypocrisies the elite foster and use against you (turning workers into cops inside the usual decaying persecution*

*networks/states of exception, mid-crisis). Capitalism alienates workers through feeding mechanisms presenting nature-as-alien, but also workers alienated from nature and it from them by sexualizing and fetishizing everything in sight; i.e., to antagonize, gentrify and decay the same old feeding mechanisms, driving them forwards to move money through nature while dividing workers and owners through infinite growth and efficient profit (the neoliberal handle of the bourgeois trifactas). Liberation of sex workers (thus all workers) happens through iconoclastic art, which starts by building new social-sexual connections that stall and short-circuit the same old predatory forces at work making workers undead! —Perse*

*Give how each reunion is invariably different than before, and denotes a different connection between essence as something to feed on—but also exist*

between the material/immaterial and animate/inanimate of the world as we know it—this section was originally prepared (nearly two years ago) with three specialized **main exhibit types**:

- ideal hermeneutic case study (feat. vampires): the Gothic, Marxism, queer studies and ludology (now "The World Is a Vampire")
- *cryptomimesis*; i.e., liminal riffing and ghostly lineages (feat. ghosts)
- composite bodies/collages (feat. the Bride of Frankenstein)

I've since decided to discuss composites in a different chapter ("Forbidden Sight," in the Demon Module), reserving parts one and two of this chapter for vampires and ghosts; i.e., as feeders who consume, and are consumed, differently than zombies do/are in Gothic media at large:

- **Part one, "Eat Me Alive":**
  - **"a Crash-Course Introduction to Vampires (and Witches)"**: Articulates what vampires basically are, and what about them we want to study and focus on; also considers the anti-Semitic, fascist, witch-hunt treatment of vampires in Gothic canon, and how we can recognize and subvert not just greedy authors, but various traitors (e.g., TERFs) abusing and policing the same vampire language we're trying to reclaim!
  - **"Understanding Vampires: 'What Is (Problematic) Love?'; or, Positions of Relative Ignorance to Relative Clarity (feat. Bad Empanada and Marxist-Leninism)"**: A deeper dive into the struggle between not just total ignorance and knowledge, but warring schools of thought—i.e., Marxist-Leninism and anarcho Communism—and how vampirism manifests under an-Com principles that often, fall under fire when trying to escape the closet of state forces (and outmoded forms of Communism).
    - **"part zero, "A Vampire History Primer; or, a Latter-Day Conceptualization of Vampirism, from the 1970s Onwards (feat. Bad Empanada, Rob Halford, Anne Rice, Foucault, Judith Butler, and more)"**: Discusses a brief evolutionary history of the "problematic (monstrous-feminine) love" known as vampirism and sodomy from the 1970s onwards. Focuses initially on homosexual men like Rob Halford and Michel Foucault, before moving onto second-to-third wave feminists like Angela Carter and Barbara Creed, and finally an expanding of the lexicon and theory of gender studies (through Butler and others) to make room for GNC praxis using the same-old Gothic

poetics (re: vampires, for our purposes)! We'll also critique latent queerphobia in Marxist-Leninism (re: Bad Empanada) and academic, queer shortcomings/tokenism through an an-Com lens, and consider some of the larger historical-material currents leading *up* to the 1970s and beyond.

- **" part one: "[Leaving the Closet; or, a Trans Woman's Scholarly Contributions to Older Histories of Sodomy and Queer Love \(feat. Anne Rice, Chelyabinsk-40 Brotherhood of the Wolf, Castlevania, and more\)](#)":** Describes my journey towards self-discovery and new scholarship (e.g., Capitalism's abuse of the environment being queerphobic, including in Soviet Russia) while slowly exploring relationships with older scholarship (from the 1970s, onwards)— but also GNC people who, despite hurting me, progressed away from obstacles and towards fresh opportunities to learn and love, cultivating Gothic Communism anew.
- **" part two: "['The World is a Vampire'; or, Bloodsports and Prisons from Old World to New World, Archaic Mothers and the Monomyth to Bloodthirsty Capitalists \(feat. The Darkest Dungeon, Alice in Borderland, and The Matrix\)](#)":** Examines the "dated," nostalgic *idea* of vampirism in *The Darkest Dungeon* (the monomyth) before expanding on the prison-grade, bloodsport-style witch hunt during a holistic, ludic, Gothic-Communist critique of "worldwide vampirism" under Capitalism in *Alice in Borderland* and *The Matrix*.
- **Part two, "[Seeing Dead People](#)":** Discusses ghosts in relation to *Ghost in the Shell* as a posthuman phenomenon, as well as *cryptomimesis* and ghostly feeding according to Tool and *Silent Hill* in response to *Jacob's Ladder* (exhibit 43a); David Fincher's *Se7en* in response to Nine Inch Nails' "Closer" (exhibit 43b); artwork between myself and an anonymous model in response to another artist (exhibit 43c); and a "rememory" of an old drawing of myself and my ex Jadis, who especially loved Tool, *Silent Hill* and *Jacob's Ladder* (exhibit 43d).

Even so, this section will still discuss vampires, ghosts and composites *somewhat* interchangeably (focusing more on vampires and ghosts, of course); i.e., as spectres of pre-fascist, fascist and post-fascist trauma under Capitalism: spectres of Marx trapped in between the individual pieces of language, inside the poster pastiche of monster mash spread out over centuries across space *and* time. Witches, as the crash course will show us, are often vampiric and ghostly to varying

imprecise, nefarious and speakable-unspeakable degrees: walking shadows, caricatures, simulacra!



(artist: [Jenny Le](#))

Before we dig into part one, I wish to clarify our heightened focus regarding undead feeding and its history as something *to* study. Although we're fixated on undead bodies and their ghoulish, messy feeding habits, both are linked to signature *habitats*; i.e., places where the undead call home as having (in theory) once belonged to them and where they presently refuse to surrender to the living disturbing their slumber above ground. We shall examine those places as we progress, but focus less on the haunting by things entirely unseen<sup>284</sup> inside a Gothic chronotope and more on psychosexual expression through humanoid forms that are, more or less, entirely visible *when* they feed. Plain to see, these beings become defined by how they "feed" as part of a conspicuous messaging device (we'll focus on torture and persecution through vampires and witches, but also when we examine demons, later in the primer).

Gothic Communism, then, seeks to reintroduce liminal expression as a *liberating* process, slowly supplying the means to communicate dead ideas to living workers feeding on the past: how buried histories of worker struggles live on through the self-restoration of a given legend, granting the egregore "life" per exchange as something to revitalize through class-conscious recognition of, and participation with, the past as undead—not just the animate-inanimate as reanimated, but the curiously in-between (which is largely what many "pure" ghosts represent; they are not strictly human or made by humans, but appear as such through human history and language, making their explicit humanization far more tricky<sup>285</sup>).

Moreover, the undead—and their complicated, blood-pumping feeding habits—operate in relation to the living who have "replaced" them inside a shared living space; i.e., as something to move through and interact with those inside, be

<sup>284</sup> For example, the vampire-ghosts from King Diamond's *Them* were tied to a physical location that is central to the ghost story as vampiric. However, while its author clearly has fun using non-corporeal blood magic as a kind of disembodied, ritualized vampire metaphor for child abuse (specifically by one's *matriarchal*, witchy elders), its fixation on the larger space and lack of a personified feeding mechanism (re: the tea pot, Amon) makes it the kind we *won't* be focusing on.

<sup>285</sup> Hence why the ghost subchapter is a bit of a one-off. Yes, ghosts are fun to think about—and I love the idea of the Numinous, especially when connected to physical scenarios; i.e., of people practicing ludo-Gothic BDSM—but I want to focus on more tangible and fleshy things, not *cryptomimetic* fragments and echoes that classically represents figments of the viewer's fear-warped, vengeful imagination (re: Hamlet's father's ghost) as much as actual people!

they alive, dead, or undead. By examining how and *where* the undead eat (their hunting grounds, territories of violence), we can reintroduce liminality to Gothic imagination as part of a larger subversive process—one that helps workers communicate their trauma and exploitation through various feeding metaphors tied to older victims of systemic abuse and scapegoating (with vampirism being crude, pejorative analogues for queer behaviors, but also whores, Jewish people, and—as we shall see—witches and persecution mania).

To that, the undead have a highly specific material function: as visible, human replicas whose eating is a mixed metaphor in both praxial directions. This becomes highly useful when seeking to expose canonical forms, which try their damndest to blend in at a societal level through spaces where undead feeding is commonplace, but camouflaged; e.g., the corporate vampire and its stereotypical haunt as updated forms of older residence types, like the office building or parking structure, but also the "garage" or "castle" as a place to "spent the night": a peachy grave that eats you, versus the other way around ("Pac-man booty")!



(artist: [Sephy Pink](#))

As often is the case, older forms of the vampire and any sexual-marital trauma associated with them (especially towards women and monstrous-feminine beings) become generally "kept-up" through the *appearance* of an old castle, tomb or crypt inhabited by a vengeful (or at the very least restless) female/queer spirit as something to commune with. Generally this happens

through a kind of threshold/membrane of Gothic poetics, language and behaviors, of which feeding is paramount; i.e., generally through slutty wraiths conjured up out of revenge for having been murdered by the state, the consummation of a larger "sacrifice" ritual, in optional quotes; e.g., cops supercharged on mandated sex, or sex workers reversing the paradigm by camping it—with a witchy vampire's alien ass/"full moon booty" that claps back, the prey's "eye spots" paralyzing Puritanical police agents in place! "Stare and tremble!" but with what? Fear? Shame? Hunger? Joy? All of the above? Such is liminal expression's usual in-betweens, holistic and intersections at play!

As our crash course on vampires and witches shall hopefully demonstrate, living with trauma generally becomes a forever process—one of reclamation and liberation through some degree of fun and play! Camping canon and sexual control, "flesh and the power it holds" extends to essence at large; i.e., traded vampirically and like witchcraft back and forth, Lewis' naughty Matilda (a gay man profaning the Madonna to seduce a rapey Catholic monk) beckoning you to try it on for size!

## Eat Me Alive; or Undead Feeding Vectors, part one: a Crash-Course Introduction to Vampires (and Witches)

*"In those younger years my home was a hive of unbridled hedonism, a roiling apiary where instinct and impulse were indulged with wild abandon. A bewitching predator slipped in amidst the swarm of tittering sycophants. Though outwardly urbane, I could sense in her a mocking thirst. Driven half-mad by cloying vulgarity, I plotted to rid myself of this lurking threat, in a grand display of sadistic sport. But as the moment of murder drew nigh, the gibbous moon revealed her inhuman desires in all their stultifying hideousness" ([source](#)).*

—The Ancestor, "The Crimson Court," *The Darkest Dungeon*

So far, the primer has examined the creative history behind the canonical zombie as something to rehumanize, dislocating their xenophilic expressions of sexual trauma—but also the dreamlike spaces and toys around them—from Capitalist Realism's canonical trappings and false-rebel impostors. We want to extend this ravenous liminality to vampires (and ghosts, in the next subchapter); i.e., the zombie's diet—bodies and brains—is part of *their* liminal expression when returning home to feed, but also their rotted, abused bodies as things to rage at, revisiting awful, indiscriminate violence as something to levy against the status quo through Athena's Aegis.

The same goes for vampires, we shall see; i.e., as poetic devices to fight over according to the Gothic power of such beings, which proletarian forces try to reclaim in order to develop Communism *with*. They drink blood, to be sure—and tend to be more overtly erotic<sup>286</sup> (and lily-white, pale) in their theatrical psychosexuality than zombies are—but the blood means different things per these anisotropic exchanges; i.e., of power in vitalistic language that concerns sex, temptation and butting up against creatures (often ladies) of the night during ludo-Gothic BDSM and oppositional praxis: blood witches, aka vampires.



This opening shall nurture that anti-Semitic idea, offering a crash course on vampires (and to a lesser extent, witches), then end with some food for thought.

(artist: [Tako](#))

<sup>286</sup> E.g., sucking and penetration as a mode of predatory vitality transfer but also general BDSM practices haunted by anti-Semitic and fascist bugbears; i.e., status-quo DARVO dreaming up the classical whorish temptresses/wealthy practitioners of sodomy (extramarital sex, Jewish hordes and blood libel, etc) to threaten modest virgins: with unknown, unsanctioned pleasures (moral panic), versus zombie revenge's more raw, mutilative consumption of the colonizer group (re: slave revolts). It's the same Red Scare DARVO as "Mars needs cheerleaders," the real kidnappers being the status quo posturing as innocent, of the people, what-have-you, while blaming the usual suspects.

Regardless of the undead type, though, things generally merge stigma with liberation, the act of feeding becoming a "gateway" drug unto itself that leads towards general indecency and things of the night, which are then abjected onto the usual Galatean suspects by the usual punishers and Pygmalions; i.e., pro-state workers claiming positions of righteous decency and kissing up to "God" (capitalists, instead of the Church) while punching down against the elite's enemies as an abject matter of profit (capital hauntologically invading the imaginary past): witch hunts occurring through anti-Semitic, queerphobic fear-and dogma—such persecution mania and bias turning workers vampirically undead (whose punitive union, by police agents raping nature inside the state of exception, something that we'll briefly examine during this crash course: the fate of witches and their eternal black revenge against empire).



(artist: [Yamino](#))

While zombies and vampires both feed (often on "helpless" things, left), the context of their performances differ considerably. Compared to the indiscriminate, battering-ram apocalypse of zombies (the rising slaves' colonized uproar), vampires are more lavish, sinful and sarcastically luxurious; i.e., the middle class conveniently threatened by wealthy interlopers (re: Jews) and Halloween-style, Christian DARVO arguments ("temptations," witchcraft). Both concern sex and dominion by state enforcers, but the flavor and feel of the poetry diverges surrounding such things. Instead of total apocalypse, bedlam and mass rioting in the streets, vampires take on white-collar criminalities married to ecclesiastical metaphors, their combined histories overall concerned with assimilation and possession; i.e., ruining the lily-white merchandise (above), wherein the middle class clutch their pearls at the pesky Jewish/queer stereotypes stealing straight men's owed maidens!

To this, feeding per vampires and the forbidden fruit *they* offer jives with the strange appetites of demons (with vampires able to shapeshift as well, generally into different animals), leading to witch hunts, but also "damned if you do, damned if you don't" sentiments that, unto themselves, speak to feeding as a matter of proletarian knowledge and power exchange; i.e., dignity in struggle and death; e.g., Maegen McAuliffe O'Leary's non-English, Celtic iconoclasm, "What I Would Tell

Eve" (2024):

Eat the fucking apple.  
They are going to blame you  
regardless.

You might as well go to the gallows  
with a full belly  
knowing more than God ([source](#)).

"Eating" constitutes the same process of abjection as something to enforce or subvert, its poetic reversal dealing with the same consequences regardless; i.e., police violence against nature-as-monstrous-feminine, per the state as needing babies (and baby factories), but also virgins to celebrate (for their perceived "rarity") and whores to abject (for their actual regularity), thus punish/shame the latter as witchy non-virgins threatening the former with the usual double standards that men/token agents control both sides of (re: punching Medusa).

In turn, this predation happens from city-states all the way up to nation-states, unfolding per Capitalist Realism's usual co-dependent, predatory tripartite, monopolies, and qualities of capital informing the perpetuation of monstrous caricature; i.e., the ghost of the counterfeit's fearful-fascinated, pull-pull coopting of medieval poetics/revolutionary language and tokenizing/factionalizing of said poetics with DARVO, obscurantism and us-versus-them dialectics (of shelter and the alien) while also "playing Omelas" against different witches to burn, vampires to stake, cops-and-victims-style, until they finally push back, smothering empire in the cradle (effectively making them eat shit, crow, placenta, etc).

*A note about the rest of the chapter's concern towards vampires and ghosts: Both are literally walking superstitions. However, we don't have time to play Robert Neville and plot out each and every aspect of those superstitions; i.e., our focus for vampires and ghosts remains feeding in relation to police violence. Generally those two aspects synonymize, insofar as vampires feeding on others or killing others who feed is already an apt metaphor for the kinds of power exchange we'll be looking into. But given the penetrative nature of sex and violence, we'll also be focusing much more on a vampire's puncturing feeding habits/methods of seduction than something altogether more asexual like a fatal allergy to sunlight (synonymizing righteous violence with the sun, per fascist arguments; re: "Praise the sun!"), an aversion to religious systems, or vampires being picky eaters.*

*For example, I could write a whole book just about daytime cremations being a vampiric metaphor for burning witches at the stake, another book about garlic being an old wives' tale (an antibiotic that counteracts the vampire as a walking disease associated with the Black Death), and another book about why they don't*



*have reflections or like crosses, etc. But given our work is overtly erotic and holistic, I'd rather stick to the titillating bits merely than catalog churchly dogma and its pick-and-choose prescriptions (of which various rituals orbit around vampires, in particular). Go read I Am Legend if you want a deft (and succinct) survey of vampire symptoms and superstitions; we're focusing on the cops/victims core of the legend: blood, penetration and resurrection/persecution touching on the vermin, spifflicating aspect of the settler-colonial premise, per vampires and blood libel, witches, insects and disease!*

*To that, here or elsewhere, anytime I have said, say or will say "vermin," I'm referring to the signature extermination rhetoric per the settler-colonial argument; i.e., as a matter of territory working as capital per the usual criminogenic tensions. As iconoclasts, we're reclaiming what we enjoy from our exterminators treating us like vermin they can repeatedly annihilate, invade, rape, mark, breed, and so on, unto profit inside these territories. We are simultaneously needed and not unwelcome, feared and loved, oddly familiar and wholly alien. The state antagonizes nature and puts it to work, pimped out in ways we, per Sarkeesian, can enjoy and critique. We must, or we will not survive.*



*Lastly, we've already discussed feeding and police violence at length in the apocalypse section; i.e., devoting much of that to the zombie as a matter of authorial preference (mine), but for which the same basic ideas largely apply to vampires/ghosts and their own rich poetic histories (and really any monster you could invent or combine when speaking to persecution; re: witches and vampires). So even if it seems like we're leaving a ton out (we are), you should have a basic-if-sound idea concerning how those things go together during us-versus-them engagements, and can apply the same arguments I used with zombies to vampires/witches or ghosts yourselves; i.e., concerning survived trauma under state rule and its purity and modesty arguments; e.g., of sin and salvation, vice and virtue, murder and mercy, etc, as things to hunt down/with and police during moral panic. Cloaked in that earlier knowledge, we needn't overstay our welcome this time around (and can always do close-reads in a future edition or follow-up volume); like a hunter's stake or a vampire's fangs, we'll be going in and out! —Perse*

Keeping the above limitations in mind, I want to paint you a clear picture of vampires to reference, moving forwards (not ghosts, which are a bit more ontologically vague). We won't have time to explore all of the martyred minutiae (or fluids) expressed here; it's simply a taste, one to reflect on (a canonical

vampire's inability to do so suggesting their paradoxically vain nature, always hypnotized by those who *can* self-reflect).

Exceptions, dualities and double standards aside, vampires are unquestionably the better dressers/more stylish, moneyed and urbane than zombies; i.e., outwardly more attractive and human in their appearance until the mask drops due to their addiction (which lets them regenerate, but intensifies their bloodlust): the irresistible combo of deathly **black** and powerful, vitalistic **red** speaking to BDSM antics and torturous rituals of exchange founded entirely on these banner-like schemes. Like a count's cloak, vampires wear their hearts (and their decaying past) on their sleeves, turning church-ordained love inside-out, making it dark, forbidden, and diseased, but also openly feudalistic (at least cosmetically—for Communists playing dress up); i.e., as dogmatic, whispered manifestations of syphilis and venereal disease, which tend to conceal their symptoms/orbit around someone's dubious, seedy reputation and status (class character) versus things that are more obvious, like skin color, or congenital, like gonads.

All in all, the Red Scare remains hauntological, dressed up as "past," and quickly fallen in love with (a bourgeois love spell/potion quaffed by the usual cops acting out evil fantasies, versus a collective push; i.e., towards development by various intersecting and solidarized workers, courting Communism by challenging Capitalist Realism):

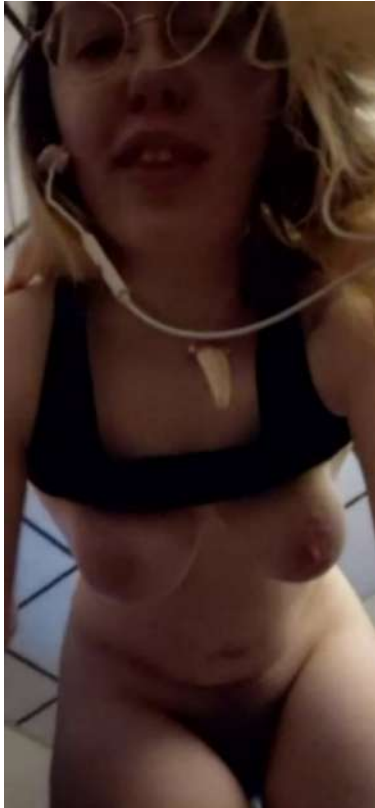


([source Facebook post](#), *Coloring Books Home: October 2nd, 2023*)

Genitals and skin color do factor in, of course (usually pale skin, whereas the hyphenations of mouths and teeth make actual "junk" less important than these monsters' oral fixation). All the same, vampires live and die by their clothes, making them (and the "positively dreadful!" actions associated with them) something to own, wear and parade about for different reasons: painting the town red with their own special sauce. Per the usual pro-state hybridizations, the anti-Semitic stereotypes of orcs/goblins, witches and vampires (such as big teeth/noses/ears, overly animal appearances, magical powers, servile treachery and so on; re: Hey Alma) splice with tyrannical European beauty standards (and greedy also-cruel behaviors; e.g., Vlad the Impaler punishing his enemies or Elizabeth Bathory bathing in the blood of virgins).

Indeed, vampires are stunningly gorgeous and aristocratic, yet profane, worldly and fallen (from a Christian perspective) for all the same reasons, whose infernal, wicked consumption habits can then be unmasked or, like Melmoth,

interrogated in Faustian and Promethean rituals: exposing the outsider as trying to fit in, then applying the usual double standards amid the death theater's witch-hunt executions; i.e., eroticizing divine punishment and exhibitionism/voyeurism (the public execution) versus the duality of queer expression and healthy ("adult") sexual appetites (with older historical queers, usually men, having castles to play around with; re: Walpole).



Grassroots or astroturf, blood in turn symbolizes general predation, social-sexual exchange, rowdy sex *and* mechanisms of capital, vampires having their affluent fingers (and fangs) on that particular pulse while they feed for different reasons (we'll get to these). It becomes a media circus, the victims having means while facing mobs of adoring fans and vengeful cults of witch hunters alike; i.e., dressing up during acts of "thrill killing" and self-defense (and in both directions), restraint becoming something of a myth eclipsed by scandal, intrigue, and repressed, unbridled sexuality uncloaked (a common form of female rebellion—the daughter against the father—is to have extramarital<sup>287</sup> sex)!

(artist: Cuwu)

In turn, practitioners of blood magic (which is what vampirism basically is—a kind of anti-Semitic witchcraft) are steeped in conspiracy and lore as a matter of gossip-style confirmation bias, the latter confirmed through rumors and brute force regardless of class or cultural character (an accusation leveled and hurled at all walks). Surrounding forbidden things like casual, extramarital sex, but also pedophilia (which capital conflates on purpose), such unspeakable legends and salacious rumors effectively make vampires a walking cliché/fetish for courtly love and medieval tyrants/clergymen; i.e., as sadistic, hedonistic, and gluttonous, etc (such anti-Catholic dogma lending latter-day witch hunts a Puritanical fanaticism): as armed and dangerous, something to canonically duel while beware the fangs and black magic converting righteous forms into unholy (reprobate) equivalents "preaching to the choir"; e.g., Julian Sand's titular warlock [summoning the antichrist to undo Creation \(another Capitalist Realism argument\) by assembling a](#)

<sup>287</sup> "Premarital" suggesting that the marriage will eventually happen—a bit of a misnomer if it isn't true!

[Black Bible](#) ("service to Satan" conflating queerness with planetary apocalypse, Richard Ramirez [and other serial killers] and home invasion. Yawnn)! *Something holistic to keep in mind, then, is the anti-Semitic nature of vampires being dogmatically wedded to witches, goblins, werewolves, orcs, xenomorphs robots, et al, as all existing inside the same, broad persecution network; i.e., one policing and monopolizing indecent consumption, which in turn carries with it a dowry of queerphobic tropes and double standards. "Witchcraft" becomes synonymous with "blood spells," infanticide, cannibalism, "sodomy" and "black magic," etc, as being punishment for the out-group by the in-group dogmatically appropriating such stereotypes—specifically the language of violence, terror and morphological expression policing sex and force—for them and their masters; i.e., selectively and for their own enjoyment and personal gain concomitant to abusive systems. Any excuse that historically works, the state will recombine, hybridize and sell back in different monomythic forms to educate new generations of workers; i.e., swapping out various elements as needed to encourage would-be traitors to assimilate, tokenize, gentrify and decay in service to profit; e.g., Jewish conspiracy and Red Scare argumentation under Capitalist Realism (re: Jews are hoarding gold and secretly destroying the world, not Capitalism vaulting all of these things) unironically manifesting as thicc gobbos to literally pimp out the aesthetic (which can people can satirize to different degrees, below).*

*To it, witches grow undead per vampire myths, then are sacrificed inside a fluctuating state of exception; i.e., rife with tokenism, crisis, panic and decay through various other monsters, thus unironic sickness, predation and betrayal concerning all of them!*



(artist: [Huffslove](#))

*The same basic idea applies to goblins and werewolves, etc; i.e., as beings of nature that, more often than not, are demonized and subsequently pushed to undead extremes by capitalist forces abusing Gothic poetics in the usual DARVO, obscurantist forms: as accusations (e.g., of Jewish "greed," above) but also as*

*self-persecution arguments that feed into settler mentalities, including tokenized ones that hybridize this with that; i.e., a witch having green skin, being short and thicc, and attracted to bright shiny objects effectively describing a goblin in the*

same breath. Insofar as the canonical function is appropriated, easily enough, their canonical function is the same.

But try as they might, the state likewise cannot monopolize these things; there remains the dualistic function and context of Gothic poetics, one where such dialectical-material implementations move power (wealth, empathy and knowledge, etc) anisotropically in one direction or the other.

To that, green skin marks stigma as something to play around with during moral panics (and witch hunts) as endemic to oppressed existence; i.e., using the same old anti-Semitic stereotypes of robbery and conquest romanced by Tolkien's refrain into more recent, neoliberal conceptualizations; e.g., of those burgling dwarves and their tokenized "expert treasure hunter" traditionally enacting queer-coded home-invasion power fantasies that, all the same, parallel settler-colonial arguments and behavior under capital. Playing with those becomes a campy opportunity to interrogate, subvert and negotiate power dressed up as such. We can indulge in the thicc little green bastards, sitting adjacent to exploitation as a means of speaking to our own abuse through the same "cruising" fantasy language: the finer things in life, the devil in the details.



(artist: [Huffslove](#))

Sex work not only combines elements of safety and danger inside an avatar that, true enough, has "slumming" elements (with Huffslove's goblin being an elven princess turned into a goblin); it plays with taboos and criminalized, stereotypical elements of consumption that hint to the

lived reality of sex workers (and marginalized communities, which generally are sexualized by the status quo) living within capital. There's always going to be a taboo element of exploitation, bias, and persecution; the iconoclastic idea is to subvert them, thus not culturally appropriate others, in the process. Camp canon, put "rape" in quotes per liminal expression; i.e., as a plastic means of transformation ("a Barbie in a Barbie world..."), not the usual game of selling out to your conquerors; e.g., the "X-Men problem," below, showing that such liminalities afford subversive or subjugated rebellious/assimilative potential through the same monsters, heroes, Amazons, what-have-you: something becoming sexy or sexist by virtue of its relationship to labor, nature and profit—cop or victim, often a manner of secret identities and other such "out in the open" disguises discouraging or encouraging blind consumption.



(artist: [Yora](#))

*Per the duality of the cryptonymy process, any monster becomes a mask that can be used in good faith or bad faith in order to challenge or serve profit; i.e., abused by those saying they're the oppressed rebel, fascism decaying any language of rebellion (re: feminism, rock 'n roll, queer liberation) as historically reclaimed by oppressed parties afterwards, then abused by standard-to-token state proponents playing the white Indian or wearing the white mask (white in function, green in appearance, if that makes sense); e.g., [Ian Kochinski being caught with loli-style child porn on his computer during a live stream, then trying to say it was "goblin porn"](#) (simultaneously appropriating other cultures and entire poetic artforms into a "pedo-jacket" DARVO refrain his young and/or predatory<sup>288</sup> fanbase can parrot for him; Bad Empanada's "Vaush P\*dophilia Controversy: Disgusting Fans & Orbiters MELT DOWN Defending Him," 2024). It becomes a game inside a*

<sup>288</sup> A problem with so-called "leftist" spaces—being on platforms centered around profit like YouTube or Nebula—is that they are generally informed and shaped by profit and its usual pitfalls. As Kochinski and company demonstrate, people who aren't left-leaning in praxis will ape various talking points and aesthetics in bad faith; i.e., doing so to be able to infiltrate leftist spaces to both prey on the people in those spaces and invalidate the movements and arguments of those persons, places, names, and communities, etc. Such predators generally posture as "progressive," but function as moderate; i.e., insofar as they "debate" Nazis, but in reality function as fascist themselves.

A big clue is the falseness of rebellion, or inability to meaningfully challenge structures of oppression. Not only does moderacy decay into fascism, but it simply *is* fascism with more steps; re: "the white moderate problem," as expressed by MLK, Malcolm X and their ilk. In the words of Gil Scott-Heron, "[The revolution will not be televised](#)"; but false leftists televise the appearance or façade of "the Left" without doing anything to function as such.

In short, it's a grift, and a more hypocritical one than conservative con persons (who, to be clear, also suck—just, not as much insofar as they are openly bigoted and predatory versus bad-faith about it; re: Dr. Disrespect). Rape is endemic to platforms, regardless if they are open about it or not, because profit and rape are one in the same on a systemic level; i.e., access to fandoms of vulnerable young fans, abusing their trust on purpose; e.g., streamers, rockstars (e.g., [Sting from The Police](#)), cartoonists (re: [John Kricfalusi](#)), academic professors (re: Beauvoir's "[Lolita Syndrome](#)"), etc. They are common because profit is common.

To this, Ian Kochinski *is* a sexual predator in open-secret fashion, but so is his community of fans and co-workers who, not only keep quiet about such things, they actively participate in them; e.g., [Demonmama and her own group of friends preying on minors](#) (Westside Tyler's "Abuse, Exploitation, and Child Endangerment: @Demonmama's Secrets Exposed," 2024), but also Kochinski weaponizing a Zionist content creator (and various other members from Kochinski's inner circle who likewise are Zionists) [to defame Bad Empanada, a known postcolonialist, in the name of furthering Israeli, thus American settler-colonial hegemony](#) (Bad Empanada's "How a Zionist Defamed Me, How 'Leftist' Creators Helped Her Do It, and Why It Will Happen Again," 2022).

These aren't accidents or isolated incidents; both serve as charm offensives and false flags that engender the usual exploitations and arguments endemic to capital's hateful etiology. Or, in other words, if someone says they're a leftist and then does a bunch of shit that directly contradicts their advertised values and positions, they're actually not on the Left; it's a brand and they're working for the state. This is more of a matter of ongoing praxis, hence will come up extensively in Volume Three, but I at least wanted to mention it here. Stay vigilante, comrades; murderers come to you with smiles, but blackmail, intimidate and coerce you well before the final blow is struck.

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

*game, one filled with bluffs made by bad actors, players and educators; that's how fascists work, hence Capitalism and its seemingly more moderate forms, but also oppressed people acting in bad faith against activists<sup>289</sup> to trample liberatory nuance and surety of purpose.*



*Simply put, context matters. For example, my partner generally sees themselves as a "shortstack goblin" or dinky little gremlin, etc; but they're also short, fat and Indigenous, using the spunky language of goblins to be sexually descriptive and culturally appreciative while acknowledging the playful side such plucky poetics equally*

*afford. Small people exist, and such fictions speak to their lived realities as adults; and just as often, there's a fantastical element to such media, speaking to possible worlds, peoples, and identities trying to intersect and solidarize, "[Talkin' About a Revolution](#)" (e.g., as a trans woman, I often identify with Elphaba Thropp, despite not having green skin or female genitals; i.e., as a trans woman, I'm still a witch to burn at the proverbial stake). The beauty of struggle is the attempt, living and dying with those you love united radically against tyranny (not for it) as mundane as old white capitalists and as tragic as the middle class punching down. It's possible to play with such language of domination and bondage, slavery and escape, and not be culturally appropriative; i.e., green skin is generally a xenophobic marker for "spectral blackface," but historically concerns bias, stigmas and taboos that were simply "black" as a matter of the dialectic of shelter and the alien: made inside medieval Europe (and its hauntologies) concerning places and times when systemic racism and slavery didn't exist but now does.*

*The praxial idea is to use pre-capitalist rhetoric to process trauma while pushing towards a post-scarcity world in a xenophilic way that shirks tokenism and police infiltration/subterfuge. It's not "edgy" or contrarian to want basic human*

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<sup>289</sup> With JDPlaysMoth, for example, [attacking me in bad faith after joining the project](#) (source tweet, vanderWaardart: July 19th, 2024). However, they're not the only one (re: "[Transmisia Experience: 5/26/2023](#)"); I've had other sex workers attack me in bad faith—i.e., after my completing of their respective piece per a given negotiated labor exchange, then telling me they had no interest in my work. Some cut and run; others accuse me of things I didn't do; one even said they "only wanted my money and were trying to get it by lying to me."

Abusers don't like to be outed, nor associate with people who threaten their ability to harm others. For sex workers, often such behavior is a combination of desperation and convenience—with it admittedly being easier to attack people than systems—but that's no excuse to be a shithead to me about it; i.e., sex workers (often trans sex workers in bad situations) punching down against a fellow sex worker and her work fighting for our mutual liberation. It's sad and pathetic, but such is how class war often plays out. Segregation is censorship and censorship is genocide. To that, appeasing and conceding your rights to the state won't save you, comrades; they'll closet you until capital decays, wherein they'll throw you under the bus, rape you and eat your face.

*rights, nor rights for animals and the environment argued for by stewards of nature (which workers are).*

*In any event, we really don't have time to close-read these other monsters, here, but anything I say about vampiric appetites unto witches likewise applies to goblins, werewolves, ninjas, jinn, or anything other egregore you could possibly dream up and chimerize (we'll explore goblins more in Volume Three, and werewolves more in the Demon Module and also in Volume Three). The Gothic is modular, thus friendly to hybrids! —Perse*

Such doubles reverse the direction that right the flow of power and resources; i.e., the virgin lamb of God and the whore profaning said virgin, stealing such souls for themselves; e.g., the Belmonts and Dracula playing cops and victims per the usual Crusades righting the flow during a liminal hauntology of war blasting the castle, the church, the land and lord. In canonical terms, it's DARVO, another settler argument defending the nuclear home from older occupants dressed up as decrepit foreign plots (then occupying that in bad faith). In ecclesiastical language, it's a schism, the decaying Church desecrating and eating itself amid fresh factions cannibalizing older ones, mid-feeding-frenzy (reversing excommunication in the same territories).

Furthermore, such tooth-and-nail competitions of forged sovereignty have slowly evolved over the centuries into a Protestant ethic that routinely conjures up the Count (a queer, Catholic monstrous-feminine sex demon) to exorcize in bad-faith; i.e., abjecting state victims (the monstrous-feminine) into the same shadow zone as fascists and other state thugs/black penitents. During their eternal battles (a morality argument's discipline threatened by dark temptation and desire), the usual hyphenations arise; e.g., the fang as a mouth, a dick, a knife/Cupid-style arrow shaft, and carpenter's nail, but also a feeding tool of terror and violence no one side can monopolize during state crisis and decay's changing of the guard.

More to the point, the states of today use such persecution mania to aggrandize themselves and alienate, then penetrate (discipline and punish) the usual victims attacked by tokenized forces spying on them (for some quick examples, read "[Back to the Necropolis](#)" and my *Castlevania* close-read on black Nazi vampires): as damned and wrongly accused, first likened to older forms of elite hegemony and then hung out to dry during the Imperial Boomerang (crucifixion being a "good, Roman" form of impalement versus an "evil, Transylvanian" one).

Canon or camp, vampires are basically clown zombies that prefer "blood" (sanguine); i.e., known not just for their supernatural good looks (offset, again, by anti-Semitic qualities; e.g., a vampire's widow's peak, rodent buck teeth and goblin big noses), but their hypnotic, Pagan powers of seduction—chiefly their bedroom eyes, staring you down while their dummy mouth hangs hungrily open, anticipating penetration when the carnal hunt out-of-bed goes *to bed*: "We're gonna do it!"



When that happens, "Come hither!" becomes "What are you waiting for? Take me, you fool!" becomes sleep sex (fertilizing "sleeping victims" during somno). The vampire feeds, on the top or the bottom, crucifying themselves in rapturous martyrdom (a witch "riding her broom")!



(artists: [Cuwu](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#))

As such, vampiric sex becomes increasingly charged, potent like a drug in controlled, calculated-risk

environments that speak to larger things *outside* worker control; i.e., something to deliciously tease, spurt and indulge in, offered up by the body's natural mechanisms and society's larger persecution rituals and considerations spouting ejaculatory (fast, sudden and violent) obsessions about "happy endings" dressed up as paradoxically "bad." It becomes like a carnival—a "Heaven in a wild flower" spectacle to witness, appreciate and behold; i.e., not as a Pale Horse bringer-of-doom, but as a survivor of the usual abuses capital promotes and affords in bad faith:



(*exhibit 41f2a2: Artist: Cuwu. "Vampire, witch, or mermaid." Call it what you want, but the female experience is an old and punished one under imperialism, feudalism, and capital's early-to-modern forms. It is one that finds joy in broken, scarred vulnerability and exposure as much as covering up or turning away to hide this or that. Capital makes us sick, but*

*also turns us into rare and beautiful things we can take back from the men that we learn to grow up and fear once we become "of age." I have nightmares from "playing" with Jadis and Zeuhl, but not of Cuwu, in this respect. My dollish puppy and castle in the flesh—how they loved to play in ways that spoke to my own damage and confused, psychosexual prey mechanisms.)*

Of course, it takes a carnival *and* a village; i.e., not just to heal, but survive profit as a structure preying on us while, at the same time, yielding such paradoxes

(as Jadis did with me). Moon-sized, our subsequent lunacy conveys big feelings and multiple, dressed-to-bare and vast, immeasurable dimensions (a hellish Cubism Picasso postured at); i.e., felt in the vague-yet-awesome presence of such a structure: to feel pain and other things expressed as the Gothic does—holistically and repeatedly across generations felt in moments!

In turn, these account collectively and individually for the miracle of the human condition; i.e., through all the usual routes and pathways, but also unique poetic expressions you may (or may not) have heard before; e.g., mayhaps Pat Benatar's "[Anxiety](#)" and a lady in a man's world, the expression "bees inside a jar!" speaking to the multicultural, foot-in-both-worlds experience of Thin Lizzy's black-and-Irish Lynott. The latter's titular [whiskey](#) speaks to similar containers and feelings, but for hybrid joy and despair on dashing portraits of folklore.

Told as well through the Jewish-penned KISS or Parsi in British lands, Freddy Mercury (crooning as only a bisexual man in the '70s and '80s trapped in the closet can), we're left with a certain shrinking and expanding not unlike Radcliffe's horror and terror for emotions; Lovecraft's giant, ageless and citted Great Old Ones; "no moon, it's a space station" reaching operatically towards you like Walpole's giant armor (the Capitalocene): something to claim, like Lizzy's glittering and sorrowful "[Emerald](#)" (1976) told in heavy metal, comic-book lingo (with all the usual sex, drugs and rollicking adventure thrown in).

All of the above might seem to be at odds—of different times, places and formats—but all speak to the same complicated, oxymoronic things that result; i.e., from living under something as awful as Capitalism and as vast as mighty as planet Earth. Anything else is inadequate, too small and too big—like Alice getting it backwards, out of joint, the white rabbit chasing its tail, trapped in a mirror, cell, or pane of glass:



(artists: [Persephone van der Waard](#) and Cuwu)

Camping such *mise-en-abyme* ravings, a pedagogy of the oppressed feels "wrong" *and* right; i.e., navigated and performed by superfreak baddies for whom comedy and comorbidity overlap (vulnerable parties—including women, witches and Pagans, neurodivergent people, the mentally ill, queer folk, employees and/or rape victims—being continually preyed upon by sexual predators the system protects and enables pursuant to profit unto medicalized victims). You don't generally walk away from trauma unscathed, and it's quite common for those affected (with minds like carnivals, having confused pleasure and pain responses) to reestablish some sense of control; i.e., over their lived trauma by turning

recollections of it into a ludo-Gothic BDSM performance letting them recontextualize and control their condition during the rememory process: camping our holocausts and survivals thereof; e.g., a standup routine. In turn, the bedroom becomes an apocalypse to revel in, reckoning with delicious forms of "death," rape play and ecstasy!

To this, there are no perfect victims, and no easy victories; trauma needn't define us, but does often break and freeze us in ways that make us undead, trapped inside ourselves in ways that don't age (like the vampire). The victory is learning to live with that, and to stand up to bullies who want us to know our place as conquered people: "We don't have to defeat them. Just fight them." Rome wasn't burned in a day and Communism is something that will take centuries to develop; i.e., we won't live to see it, but we *can* contribute towards its inception by shifting a cultural understanding of the imaginary past in a sex-positive direction!

As far as *that* goes, sex-positive BDSM helps people who have been abused, who themselves tend to gravitate towards, if not abuse, then the weirdness that abuse brings ("hair of the dog that bit me") that is often adjacent to abuse (with abuse turning people into cops or victims, generally as soft-to-hard fragmented surfaces and personalities). Per these comorbidities, they do so not to put themselves in hot water once again, but to seek and find control through calculated risk; e.g., telling someone trustworthy to fuck you harder ("More, more, more!"), knowing you'll be sore but finding that paradoxically sweet spot; i.e., an oxymoronic safe space to experience erogenous pleasure and non-harmful pain to the degree that you need to paradoxically feel safe, thus in control again. But that's what bodies and friends are for! "Hurt, not harm," my dudes! Find someone you like and build on connections of exchange—of give and take, like a vampire, founding new pedagogies of the oppressed.

In fact, such vampirism agrees with rape survivors (for which cops rape everyone in service to profit), but also argues back and forth, pulling us thirstily into the medieval, grave-like "openings" above ground (more "live burial" puns, vaginal and/or phallic): noisily<sup>290</sup> swallowing rich creamy fluids/moist essence ("cake" and other yummy euphemisms) and giving back fatal, hard-earned wisdom during various, almost-holy sex parties. In short, it's fun, playful, and cathartic, but also ubiquitous, ace and educational unto victims normally blamed by those canonically starved of a good, healthy education!

As such, vampirism and witchcraft constitute an ambiguous charge as much as a voluntary act, and vampires in particular (whatever the performer) are constantly taking things *into* themselves whether they want to or not. For instance, the elite feed while alienated from life through a system that preys on life, trying to

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<sup>290</sup> E.g., Zeuhl used to gulp down my cum during oral sex, in grad school. I didn't normally like oral, but their constant eye contact while sucking my cock made it fun, as did them greedily gulping down my load. In short, they loved it, and I learned to love it, too, albeit receiving what is given in ways that remain genuine and eager for future similar encounters!

stay young by exsanguinating the lower classes; said classes feed because a) the elite incentivize them to betray their own class interests, and b) because victims must camp their own survival as something to reify and pass onto others (to transfuse, from one exchange to the next).

Such imbibing and insertions combine to form a heady charm offensive thoroughly at odds with someone's skin-deep beauty and undead appearance, their gaudy wealth and/or rich appetites belying an addict's compulsions, pauper's appetites and fugitive's outlaw status (not all vampires are monetarily sound, the classic vampire being unhoused and seeking invitation to commit crimes against goodly property owners): the Judgement-Day quality of Christian miracles directed at state targets inside the prison, ghetto or settler colony's state of exception, deliberately *unable* to enjoy the luxurious side such implements normally afford; e.g., churchly blood magic married to in-group double standards, whereupon transubstantiation (exhibit 41i) speaks to "tolerable," dogmatic forms of vampirism and cannibalism the elite co-opt and recuperate through canonical monsters (which they project onto anyone they want to persecute, thus profit from).



Denied the pleasures of the flesh/gratuitous wealth they're commonly associated with (as Jewish-coded slaves and wealthy sodomites, either being enabled merely to prey on Christian men and their wives), such beings are always to some degree "outside, incorrect, alien, monstrous-feminine," etc; i.e., must be

investigated/turned inside-out as one moral panic climbs and intensifies to the next; e.g., from witches to homosexual men to trans people becoming their epochs' disease of the day for conservatives—literally turning on themselves—to purify and cull the unsuspecting herd *and* shepherd alike ([as the more faithfully blind apparently are doing with Andrew Tate](#)<sup>291</sup>, above). When society is a little sick, it will eat itself through quarantines/panopticons; when those are breached, the doctors will pivot to eating themselves, turning everyone into "patients" carrying the same "disease" (the real "mind virus" being fascism as "asleep," not social justice and equal rights' "woke" tendencies).

Despite their signature, corpse-like paleness, fash-adjacent cosmetic, and dollish affect/obvious serial-killer qualities (something to unmask and confirm, apocalypse-style, as predatory and duplicitous), vampires commonly occupy the "black" side of the settler colony argument. From Jews to witches to female sex

<sup>291</sup> The Humanist Report's "Online Transvestigators Are Convinced Andrew Tate Is Secretly a Woman" (2024).

workers (mistresses/women of the night) to gay men, etc, some such "darkness visible" (the cross-dressing aberrant) is always blamed regarding societal collapse; i.e., assigning guilt onto state victims (with similarity amid difference) instead of the elite on a systemic level. Abjecting predation, mid-witch-hunt, this includes fascists bastardizing such positions to police the same unhappy groups (which moderates then apologize for); i.e., "degeneracy" and extramarital sex blaming capital's victims for its built-in boom-and-bust cycles: a return to tradition and greatness while surrendering everyone's rights and closeting healthy apostatic impulses in favor of predatory systems torturing people and surveilling them on all registers!

Checking for vermin—e.g., the vampire's bats, reptiles, rats and wolves—God knows how you fuck and how you *want* to fuck! Vanilla vs Satanic pell-mell, the former outshined by hell-bent-for-leather "hurly burly" (again, a marriage of war and peace, Heaven and Hell, and other such forbidden unions)! It's an old advertiser's trick: show food, but classify it as "sinful," then sell it back to workers as double-stuffed, extra-smoky guilty pleasure (forbidden fruit during manufactured scarcity's feast-or-famine<sup>292</sup> socio-material conditions)! Talk about sex; get hungry

<sup>292</sup> A Malthusian class character that projects Capitalism into outer space; e.g., Thanos is a space Nazi who kills half the universe because he can't imagine a world beyond Capitalism, thus defends capital and the elite through Capitalist Realism instead of exposing and challenging them by breaking said Realism (summarized neatly by TP Burrow's "[Brennan vs Thanos](#)," 2024): a purple people eater that eats his own kids. Scarcity and power imbalance reliably create such cartoons, but also the predatory systems of thought that bleed into real life's weird-nerd culture; i.e., intellectually lazy white cis-het men writing really cringy stuff; e.g., fascist strongmen extinction bursts lusting after an Orientalist goth mom and basically monologuing to himself:



([source](#): Andrew Dyce's "Thanos Finally DIES in His Last Comic Story," 2018)

To that, the Marvel comics (originally pioneered by Jewish men) have a bit of a "Spielberg problem"; i.e., one that *extends* Red Scare; e.g., by having Thanos court Death as a literal female entity he's sacrificing half the world for—and which *she* manipulates *him* to enact genocide and destabilize the world; re: blame Communism and nature-as-monstrous-feminine (the ultimate victim) for the fascist purge instead of Capitalism's copaganda and unequal socio-material conditions (the ultimate abuser) that lead fascism to return, time and time again: a female Darth Vader conflating Communism with fascism per the horseshoe argument. Class betrayal is class betrayal, and one

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for sin (which one, the state polices to justify its own existence, and two, the middle class enjoys [through stagey "corporal punishment" as a kind of terrible in-joke] while punching unironically downwards as colonizers do by design: aping the colonized to better rape them with)! Free love, counterculture drug use and fucking to metal, Black-Sabbath-style, tragically become just another witch hunt, except it's by the practitioners (re: "Young Goodman Brown"); i.e., more canon to camp (as Lossow does, below): flying high as witches so often do (vampires usually turn into bats to gain the power of flight, drinking blood to do so; witches make flying potions out of baby fat, a Christian rumor started from *Hammer of Witches*, constantly used to justify violence against Pagan women, but really any monstrous-feminine practitioners of "witchcraft," "blood spells" and "sodomy").



(artist: Heinrich Lossow)

Whatever the form, the forbidden fruit becomes superstitiously fatal; i.e., the vampire's cacophonous/diaphanously messy and sectarian vaudeville typically abjects gluttony (and the other cardinal sins) onto the underclass as something to "finish off" *ad infinitum* (to ride hard and put away wet during "prison sex" violence). When turned on its head, these weighty accusations shake and wiggle to showcase the hypocritical, glittering appetites of the holier-than-thou middle class

(which the state will weaponize against said gatekeepers all over again, policing the blood bank): "God" amounting to the bourgeoisie mobilizing class traitors with cheap trinkets and Judas-grade love spells, turning *them* into sexual predators sucking the lower classes dry and transferring most of it upwards! "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak," indeed!

There's no way to prevent such police division and brutality (cops and victims, victims policing victims) without "eating the apple," as it were; i.e., drinking "blood" serving as a dualistic metaphor useful to knowledge and power exchange in any form poetry can conjure up and transform into whatever workers need versus Capitalism and the state (whatever *its* forms, alliances, and proponents require); e.g., handling our own trauma while interrogating and negotiating it with others, all whilst wearing and removing masks to feed for different reasons (who the state will try to turn against us by having us feed on, and contribute towards, each other's trauma: enabling it mid-relationship while refusing to endorse those non-toxic qualities of us that make workers more emotionally/Gothically intelligent

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committed by its usual practitioners (and token elements; e.g., Zionism and Jewish Nazi vampires being literal monsters, but also industry sell-outs partitioning territory on and offstage).

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and aware of such matters during the loss, grief and catharsis of class, culture and race warfare).

Dualities aside, the vampire is canonically demasked as a serial adulterer or assassin (with Christopher Lee, below, having worked undercover for the S.A.S., to kill Germans<sup>293</sup>), but also people conflated with such things who *don't* commit adultery or murder/police violence of any sort—are merely trying to survive while kettled inside penitentiaries of reactive abuse and, under mandated cloaks of darkness, forced to wear such dubious mantles; i.e., calling them "[hungry like the wolf](#)" minus Duran Duran's disco charm, the creatures of the night gnawing at their own legs to get *away* from cops. It speaks to our oppression expressed in liberatory forms in on the violence; i.e., of camp subverting dominion (and the unsustainable farming of abject parties) as an ongoing problem to play with; e.g., our vermin, hell-spawn status seeing red at the accusation, then scurrying to safety after a good threat display (and again, being framed as sodomites for getting pink eye while eating ass<sup>294</sup>): stink eye from Hell!



Again, the usual dualities, silly-serious theatrics, and criminal visual ambiguities/paradoxes (e.g., Nazi-Communist, gay-straight, teeth-mouth, blood-witch, lips-vulva, penis-vagina) abound, and we don't have time to break the Fourth Wall and point all these immunocompromisations out (e.g., AIDs, but also venereal appetites).

Instead, try to keep the holistic, tangential, interconnected, and non-granular principles unpacked during the zombie chapter in mind; they'll come up repeatedly here when talking about vampires/witches and ghosts, but also demons and animals in *their* respective module/chapters (all which grow shorter than the "Bad Dreams" chapter<sup>295</sup> because of it! Generally I tend to write nonstop, *then* establish

<sup>293</sup> According to the man himself, "I was attached to the SAS from time to time but we are forbidden – former, present, or future – to discuss any specific operations. Let's just say I was in Special Forces and leave it at that. People can read in to that what they like" ([source](#): David Urban's "From SAS and Gurkhas to Dracula and Saruman: The Unique Life of Sir\* Christopher Lee," 2024).

\*Anyone who stresses the British "Sir" title unironically is an imperialist asshole.

<sup>294</sup> Generally not a thing. Just don't fart in your partner's face while they chow down.

<sup>295</sup> The "[Bad Dreams](#)" chapter was also longer to help me work through my own trauma; i.e., as something to play with and consume; re: "Per Zombie Capitalism, zombies (sexy or not) collectively speak to the problems of the system and its built-in predation-through-us-versus-them-trauma better than any other (vampires, while gay as fuck, tend to be gentrified, witches and Medusa tokenized, and ghosts a bit vague and diaphanous)! It's baked into them." For us. the zombie vein is well-and-truly done to death, but I'll wanted to keep the remaining chapter on feeding somewhat abbreviated (so everything fits). Witches or vampires, we'll sink our teeth into all the essential bits, I promise!

boundaries; i.e., placing a bubble around the dialog after the dialog is written. Here, though, things are previously laid out—first through the Poetry Module and then through the "Bad Dreams" chapter of the Undead Module—so I don't feel the need to overstress the holistic variables; i.e., limits I'm imposing partway through, just to keep things moving towards the current module's end point).

In any case, the line between zombies and vampires, witches and ghosts inside the state of exception is a thin one; all concern rape and war trauma as something to endorse mid-feeding ritual as embellished during state decay as something to face: the state eats people, who eat each other when the state dies, devolving into sex bandits, but also dated cartoons of such piracy enjoying police protection (stochastic terrorism) versus those who look the same throwing such shackles off.

To that, zombies eat brains to put "trauma" in quotes, but also express its unironic forms that communicate anisotropically by much the same means (re: slavery through "lobotomy" as dogmatic). Here, we want to humanize other classes of undead (or things made undead, like witches) through their own viral feeding mechanisms as *cryptomimetically* tokenized; i.e., the *eating* with, and of, the dead more broadly that vampires and ghosts also represent. When returning to plague the living in ways that aren't quite alive or dead (and to some extent, composite bodies and animalized monsters, which we'll examine more closely in the next module), vampires become something to canonically "slay" and enjoy per a given witch hunt's nostalgic "stranger danger"; i.e., when the language of war combines with that of food, death, superstition, and love, etc, but also power and criminality as dualistically arbitrated between dialectical-material agents: as policing or defending nature-as-monstrous-feminine!



Saying nothing about homosexual cis men (more on them in "A Brief History of Queer love") or queer-coded straight guys from non-English countries<sup>296</sup>, many

<sup>296</sup> While notable actors from the period were closeted, including James Whale and Boris Karloff ([source IMDb post](#): imdb-25288's "Classic Gays of the Universal Era," 2018), Bela Lugosi does not—at least at a glance—appear to have been one of them. Born to a Catholic Hungarian family under the name Béla Ferenc Dezső Blaskó, he had many wives (several of them fans) and a drug addiction, but no mention, that I could find, of any whispered "sexual deviancy" normally taken for "homosexual activity" nowadays (there was certainly talk at the time about straight ladies thirsting after Lugosi—re: [Gladys Hall's 1931 interview with the actor](#)—but generally because he excited them in ways that speak to queer love; i.e., the little death of straight bored housewives weak at the knees during funerals). In short, you can be straight and still be a queer icon!

As for Lugosi's drug addiction, it was no joke. Mike Springer writes in "Bela Lugosi Discusses His Drug Habit as He Leaves the Hospital in 1955" (2012):

In 1955 [Bela Lugosi](#) was in a sad state. The once-handsome, Hungarian-born star of *Dracula* had seen his career degenerate over the previous two decades until at last he was *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](#)



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reduced to playing a cruel parody of himself in some of the tackiest B horror films ever made. Along the way he picked up a drug habit. In late April of 1955 the 72-year-old actor, destitute and recently divorced from his fourth wife, checked himself into the psychopathic ward at Los Angeles General Hospital. A few days later, in a hearing held at the ward, Lugosi pleaded with a judge to commit him to a state hospital. A [United Press article](#) from April 23, 1955 describes the scene:

*Although weighing only 125 pounds and only a shadow of his former self, Lugosi's voice was clear and resonant as he told the court how shooting pains in his legs led him to start taking morphine injections in 1935. Without morphine, he couldn't work, Lugosi said.*

*"I started using it under a doctor's care," he said. "I knew after a time it was getting out of control."*

*"Seventeen years ago, on a trip to England, I heard of Methadone, a new drug. I brought a big box of it back home. I guess I brought a pound," Lugosi said.*

*"Ever since I've used that, or Demerol. I just took the drugs. I didn't eat. I got sicker and sicker."*

[...] Less than three weeks [after his release from the psych ward that August, Bela] married his fifth wife, an obsessed fan who reportedly sent him a letter every day he was in the hospital. The Ghoul Goes West never materialized, but Lugosi collaborated with Ed Wood on a couple of other projects, including a movie that some critics would eventually call "the worst film ever made," [Plan 9 From Outer Space](#). As his hope of a genuine comeback crumbled, Lugosi drank heavily. On August 16, 1956—barely over a year after his release from Metropolitan State Hospital—Lugosi died of a heart attack. He was buried in his Dracula costume. ([source](#)).

It might seem irrelevant to mention all that, here. However, such seemingly non-sexual things like drug use mirror symbols of decay not visually dissimilar to AIDs and other venereal diseases. Furthermore, they constitute a crisis of the wealthy as ignominiously fallen in ways that can be scapegoated; i.e., a crisis that would be blamed by the Straights on the Gays, going as far back as England's homosexual pogroms unto Matthew Lewis (re: [Broadmoor](#)) and forwards unto post-Lugosi Hollywood men like Vincent Prince, Farley Granger and Roddy McDowall. As I write in Volume One (about different "Galatean queens of darkness" challenging Pygmalion forces):

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 [equally] 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

token vampires/marginalized targets are actually female, GNC and/or some Paganized degree of "non-white" (often by body type, next page). Continuing our crash course on vampires and witches, let's quickly unpack that in popular media, including pornography and videogames (as these will come up later when looking at Red Hook's Countess, from *The Darkest Dungeon*)!

From a classically female standpoint, such witches are nocturnal feeders, rogues, and "ladies" of the night (female or not; re: men in dresses) married to modern notions of sin linked to "non-white" bodies "of nature"; i.e., not just witches, but "Gothic(c)" witches (again, next page) yielding a popular aesthetic, one whose dialogs can be canonized or camped to varying violent, sexual, terrorist and morphological degrees (re: the bourgeois monopolies): the chonky drinkers of blood, animalistic defilers of "modest" women, levitating eaters of children and babies (all anti-Semitic tropes) overlapping or separating witches, goblins and vampires (etc) as state DARVO/obscurantism calls for per cycle. Such predation becomes a witch hunt holiday that blames the usual victims (e.g., women, Pagans, Jewish people, immigrants, non-whites, Indigenous populations, etc) by the usual predators (the elite and their standardized/tokenized defenders) abjecting their prey throughout the year in pursuit of a good harvest over many years: village scapegoat rituals fencing the usual holocausts under capital. That's what videogames canonically are, but also canonical Gothic novels and cinema, etc.

Per the queenly idea of vampirism, "the lady doth protest too much" becomes a matter of crossdress and performatively wearing out stigmas; i.e., to

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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 ([source](#)).

Per *Hammer of Witches*, this applies to women, too (the same section also reads [about Elvira actress, Cassandra Peterson, coming out of the closet in 2022\\*](#)), but also queer intersectional solidarity at large; i.e., Galatea challenging Pygmalion visions of a divided, conquered world obsessed with profit and settler-colonial violence that automatically comes with it against nature-as-monstrous-feminine!

\*Jazz Tangcay's "*Elvira, aka Cassandra Peterson, Opens Upon the Freedom of Coming Out*" (2022). *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

deliberately camp the police using them *sans* irony. All the same, such genderqueer cries for help have ambiguous, "predatory" elements that travel and feed transiently on others as a matter of worker revenge; i.e., in ways that manifest dualistically as either sex-positive or sex-coercive; e.g., knock-knock-knock-knocking on chamber doors and seeking invitations inside to drain that warm essence in reptilian, cold-blooded fashion (re: Judas Priest's "[Love Bites](#)," 1984)! Again, performative context—of the vampiric, witchy (of nature) double entendre as confusing on purpose, paradoxically both dead serious and a complete joke, tasteful and profane; e.g., [Always Sunny's creampie skit](#)—is what matters during ludo-Gothic BDSM; i.e., flow of power determining function through the arbitration and aesthetics of rape play and domination unto the destroyer's would-be "victims" (the quotes determined by said theatre's context).

To it, the stalwart policewoman/token dominatrix sex pirate shares the spotlight, but also the body with the rockstar Communist bugbear's Jewish (Oriental, non-white, Satanic, queer) revenge. Mail-order bridal appearances and respective badassery aside, cops take for the elite, made to gaslight, gatekeep, girl boss the usual vermin, the latter forced to survive extermination while wearing the same witchy clothes (or lack of clothes, below); rebels redistribute power amongst workers in defense of nature (disguising the "ad unfriendly" character's activism inside pornographic tolerances), using their sexually charged surfaces and hazardous thresholds to do so—i.e., the revenant's hellish opera of fatal attraction and forbidden, criminal, problematic love (e.g., *Near Dark*, *Dracula*, *Twilight*, and a million other vampire stories): lust or love, "she wants what she's never had, all the things that make a good girl bad!" (The Scorpions' "[Kicks after Six](#)," 1991). It's not "slumming" if it speaks to one group's oppression without appropriating and cannibalizing another's out of pretty revenge. The proletariat needs to solidarize



intersectionally but can still own the usual framings of power by reclaiming them:

(artist: [Rushzilla](#))

My point, here, is that the undead make for odd contradictions marketed and sold under capital: classically horny, gay and angry, but also oddly pretty hot and tempting (the PAWG white girl that's "too big" per a settler-colonial model, having the whore-like immodest body that's seen as sexually aggressive and melon-like; i.e., "fat and sassy"). The virgin is seemingly the prize, but the monomyth hero is always out, "slaying" dark, queenly and utterly stacked whores; i.e., our resident castles in the flesh, quivering and groaning in

psychosexual ecstasy (there's also room for sex-positive interpretations; beware anyone who says otherwise)! It's a mood.

To this, the pornographic qualities of Gothic hauntologies fetishize the alien as black-and-white simultaneously within an industry-grade body type: to oscillate towards the beautiful and repulsive as dogmatic, not factual, pimping the ghost of the counterfeit out in ways that harm all parties differently while pandering to all walks; e.g., white girls told to be skinny and fat to please different men in the same predatory scheme (the porn industry [and frankly Gothic canon at large] preying on female and GNC bodies any way it can, maximizing profit and minimizing [the value] of human labor as reprobate—suffering and exploitation made alien unto nature as such); i.e., devices to canonically trigger the usual incapacitating emotions (shame, guilt, impostor syndrome, etc) and infantilizing states of existence, mid-tokenization and assimilation (re: gas light, gatekeep, girl boss; repeat, but also oscillate as an abusive partner world to their victim):



(artist: [Rushzilla](#))

There's nothing wrong with being sexually descriptive, provided it's sex-positive, thus challenges profit (and by extension,

genocide). Per liminal expression, both exploitation and liberation, subversion and subjugation, salvation and sycophantism, retribution and resurrection, humility and hubris, agency and arrest, morality and mammon, etc, exist on the same vampire bodies and stages; the owners are like dolls, but also uncannily sympathetic (as vice characters often are) *and* repulsive (the latter fact something they disguise with tissue that cannot regenerate, thus must grow new flesh through addictive metaphors of psychosexual theft and revenge: stolen flesh, blood, brains, cum, whatever); i.e., carrots and sticks to pacify and scare workers, but also entice with various love language relayed as "meat" (e.g., sausage or fish).

To that, white witches are literally caregivers to men (and patriarchal forces); black witches start their service to Satan as young comely brides, only to grow old and withered, thus more invested in eating babies and castrating<sup>297</sup> men

<sup>297</sup> Such language is often, thanks to Freud, viewed literally. But castration can also mean AFAB parties (those forced to identify as women) refusing to have PIV sex with men to have their children. The effect, while not touching a man's balls with a knife, has a similar outcome: no kids. To garner the most support, state DARVO will raise alarms through threats of rape defending male genitals from female witches (and GNC elements) by rally fascist feminists to their cause; re, from Porpentine's "Hot Allostatic Load," witch hunts rely on call-outs using "extremely vague and loaded with strong words designed to elicit vigilante justice" per "accusations of sexual menace" serving as "a key weapon used

than cuckolding field hands and bridegrooms, or telling innocent Kansas farmgirls, "I'll get you, and your little dog, too!" (re: hag horror).



(artist: [Bayeuxman](#))

Remember that "undead" is a *feeling* tied to psychosexual exploitation: raping the Medusa as not having a set ethnicity or body shape, religion, or monster type, etc; e.g., witches and vampires; i.e., "black" as a binary half that merits the chasing and exploitation of *dogmatically* forbidden fruit; re: of nature-as-monstrous-feminine through capital dehumanizing the harvest while plumping its undead "melons" up (an Aphrodite's fortress to fortify, storm and reclaim nature as "ripe for rape," time and time again). Desperately wronged, it's common for the vampire to aimlessly and furiously seek revenge (versus a more cheerful, positive-oriented sexual liberation, left); i.e., from beyond the graves of poorly contained holocausts betrayed by seemingly gentle-looking ladies (and other peaceful protestors) acting "uppity" in ways that will lead to *them* being policed. Except, settler colonialism marries racism and police violence to other tokenized bigotries in popular media at large, starting with gorgons and witches as

comparable to vampires in function; i.e., women are space aliens to stare at, fear and fantasize about, but likewise tied to a territory and its population that can be dominated by scandal and stereotype (as all monstrous-feminine are): the

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against marginalized people in feminist spaces, because it arouses people's disgust like no other act"; i.e., "a way for the dominant people in the group to take us aside and say, you are not welcome here, or do this thing you don't want to do or I'll ruin your life. But frequently it happens without any particular thesis, just as a general tool to keep us destabilized and vulnerable. Don't forget who you really are in the unspoken hierarchy" ([source](#)).

Furthermore, by playing cop as TERFs do, they sell out, only serving to erode the credibility and goodwill of genuine activism (a fascist tactic, generally capital in the process); re: Silvia Federici's argument, "Witchcraft accusations, in fact, are the ultimate mechanism of alienation and estrangement as they turn the accused—still primarily women—into monstrous beings, dedicated to the destruction of their communities, therefore making them undeserving of any compassion and solidarity" ([ibid.](#)). Witches aren't just AFAB, though, and worker solidarity needs to reflect that; re, as I write (earlier in this volume: In response to both authors, I would include that capital tokenizes all labor (not just female and non-white) as sexualized, fetish, alien; i.e., something to gentrify and decay inside of itself, moving money through nature to harvest nature-as-monstrous-feminine (thus having masculine elements; e.g., phallic women). Feminism decays for these purposes, as do genderqueer movements, sex work, and Gothic poetics.

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aforementioned "cry of the carrots, and this is their holocaust!" Sooner or later, that castrates capital!



(exhibit 41f2a2: Source, top-left: [The Art Fuse](#); bottom-left: [Mubi](#). Witches are classically depicted in threes, like the Fates/Gorgons, pushed forwards into Shakespeare's "three weird sisters" in *Macbeth* onto less numerically faithful versions like Roman Polanski's baby-snatchers in *Rosemary's Baby* onto that protracted mickey-the-chudwad bit from *Midsommar* having so much Rubenesque hag flesh [above, right] encouraging the young "couple" to fuck and further the cult's infernal lifespan ["I am woman, hear me fuck!"]).

Witches, like vampires, have youthful and aged visages that fluctuate based on their mood. Sometimes they're younger and more attractive to those they hunt [often young, sexist, ageist, anti-Semitic dude bros]; sometimes they appear older [and not as attractive to the aforementioned group]. Just as often, though, a witch can—like a vampire—change her shape and wield familial power over nature in ways that terrify patriarchal rulers and their structures of patrilineal descent; i.e., their literal ability to reproduce; e.g., *Midsommar*'s love spell made by the slutty redhead's period blood[!] into a kind of sex potion that, as the film would have it, tells the future as a kind of code playing out, time and time again; re: the castration fantasy pointedly merged with cuckold fears, village persecution myth, forced parentage, and the vasovagal response.

Sexual predators commonly weaponize such Freudian dogma; i.e., hiding their own abuse behind monstrous stereotypes they can combine and splinter at will; e.g., while Shakespeare was a gay bigot who wrote *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice* [neither story being especially kind to women, it must be said], Polanski is a literal pedophile who rapes underage women and fetishizes older women in the above witchy stereotypes.

To be fair to Shakespeare, though, his *Lady Macbeth* [Polanski adapted the film for Playboy in 1971, top-left] is at least a useful analog for female revenge aped by

more recent feminist tokenisms; i.e., imploring the "phallic" desire for revenge, doing so in ways that speak to tokenization by emulating the men in charge:

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 th' access and passage to remorse,  
That no compunctious visitings of nature  
Shake my fell purpose [[source](#)].

Such myopic, unironically fascist feminism is best canonized in Angela Carter and Barbara Creed's dated, singularly female, tokenized, Amazonian revenge fantasies and theories [exhibit 41g1a2]. To that, we have to do better than they and Shakespeare did; i.e., by both not treating [white cis] women as the universal victims of patriarchal systems, and simultaneously making sure the desire to not be a victim doesn't lead oppressed peoples to triangulate, thus punch down against, themselves and those in the same proverbial boat!



Keeping with the witch-hunt framing, this extends to witches and vampires that corporations sell to potentially tokenized consumers, the latter devouring persecution for DARVO and obscurantist purposes; i.e., these shamelessly appropriative cartoons become co-opted and celebrated by women and other marginalized peoples for simply

being female, of color and/or queer versions of "Caesar's ghost"; e.g., Drolta Tzuentes from *Castlevania: Nocturne* [2023, above] as a black Nazi vampire [one we discussed previously, in "[Back to the Necropolis](#)," 2024]. To it, former symbols of rebellion become Red Scare "Nazis" that righteous heroes can stand off against and put down; i.e., not Medusa or Dracula at all, but a witch cop who tokenizes to enjoy the brutalizer's glove, then surrenders their neck as the script demands depleting "sodomy" of its proletarian energies. Unlike these Judas goats, liberation isn't simply "to get mad," but enrage in ways that constitute actual rebellion; re: fascism is a false rebellion, their revenge being to sell out, effectively betraying their own kind by playing into the elite's most poisonous and pernicious stereotypes. It's self-defeating and sad!

Frankly, the same goes for any token minority on a spectrum of relative privilege and punishment recuperating monstrous-feminine language for profit; i.e., the

desire to fit in—to belong inside a prison-like environment—as gentrified and sold back to different oppressed groups orbiting Paganized cosmetics speaking to the very out-groups tempted with class betrayal. In the Gothic tradition since Radcliffe, usually this appeal is leveled at white middle-class girls [or those wearing white masks, above]. Furthermore, this recuperation of alien poetics as married to the middle class probably sounds like Harry Potter and the Hogwarts Wizarding School, but is actually as old as witch culture, itself. Except, you needn't go back to Hammer of Witches to make that point; the 1980s will do just as well:



Stories like The Worst Witch sing, Elphaba-Thropp-style ["Growing up... isn't easy!"], about the perils of growing up as a perceived outsider with some degree of actual insider status; i.e., in a world that is already ruled by powerful wizards, and where Halloween is everyday of the year among an established, settler-colonial system and its monomythic structure: a white, British, all-girls boarding school.

The whole point of the above

example is for Margaret Hubble to uncover an internal conspiracy/foreign plot, save the school from said plot, and earn the respect of her teachers [Diana Rigg slaying it as Miss Constance, bottom-left, but most important of them being the Wizard, himself, played wonderfully by Tim Curry's "Dracula," top-left]. Sure, it's campy

and queer-coded to some extent, but goofy earworms like "[Anything Can Happen on Halloween](#)" [revisited by Mega64 in 2010] still relay the spirit of infinite possibility as commercialized; i.e., told from an exclusively white/tokenized, middle-class childhood sold back to fresh tweens [or regressing adults] in neoliberal fashion: false hope and personal responsibility rhetoric amid austerity politics and societal collapse! Blame Thatcher and Reagan for pimping Paganism, kids!

[artist Drew Struzan]



Furthermore, the made-for-TV movie is oddly faithful when installing a witch as the Dorothy-esque savior "rescuing Oz" from a "wicked" witch for a "good" witch and her male patriarch [the lead

actress—the wonderfully incongruous Fairuza Balk—had already starred in Return to



*Oz* from two years previous, and would be typecast to play different witches and social outcasts<sup>298</sup> throughout her career]. In turn, the language of rebellion and

<sup>298</sup> Including Nancy Downs, a mean-girl clique leader playing with magic in *The Craft* (1996), but also Edward Norton's obedient, sexually feral Nazi girlfriend in *American History X* (next page, 1998).



Such performances generally bely an element of Radcliffean, white-girl artifice; i.e., Balk is an *actress*, one who—after buying an occult shop to preserve it, back in the '90s (and to help her prepare for different acting roles)—sought to clear up rumors that she *wasn't* a practicing witch:

Actress **Fairuza Balk** is undoubtedly most known for her show-stealing performance as Nancy Downs in 1996's *The Craft*, a role that nabbed her a Saturn Award nomination for Best Actress. In fact, Balk was so good as the witchcraft-practicing teen that many still believe to this day that she actually is a witch in real life!

Balk set the record straight in a chat with [EW](#), detailing her connection to an occult shop in the '90s that furthered the rumors that she was practicing witchcraft at the time.

**"The true story is I found this occult shop in L.A. and I used to go there to ask them questions and do my research,"** Balk explained. *"They were really lovely people. [The woman who owned it] wanted to retire. She couldn't put the kind of money into it that it needed to keep it up and so it was going to be turned into a Chinese restaurant. I thought for the oldest occult shop in the country, that's a tragedy. There was a man that used to work there and he had an encyclopedic knowledge of the subject and he was a sort of a teacher to me during [The Craft]. I thought, what a shame this is going to be turned into a Chinese restaurant. So I bought it and put some work into it and helped it survive."*

*"But people of course were like, 'She bought an occult shop and she's fully into this and it's all real.' That has taken on its entire own mythology that's essentially out of my hands,"* Balk continued. **"You can tell the truth and talk to people but they want to believe what they want to believe. What can you do? I'm not involved with that shop anymore. It was a very long time ago"** ([source](#): John Squire's "Fairuza Balk Wants You to Know That She Was Never Actually a Witch," 2017)

Of course, the Gothic *is* classically a fake medium. And while it's certainly good to be clear about what you practice versus what you perform, the confession highlights a clear divide concerning representation of witches and stories about them being a dead medium told by *non*-practicing persons; i.e., played by fakes who enjoy a bit of scandal *and* safety simultaneously as white middle-class women historically do: as privileged tokens with one foot in both worlds, but generally protected far more than other token elements are.

This betrayal's "Harry Potter problem" isn't exclusive to women; Iron Maiden made a career out of it (as did thousands of other white British and American male performers from the '70s into the present, ripping off Jimi Hendrix like Elvis did to Chuck Berry, white American did to R&B, jazz and other genres in usual settler-colonial fashion). All the same, Satanic panic becomes a career that non-practicing "witches" can take on and off as one might a costume; i.e., they can pretend versus standing by anything they actually practice and believe, denying it when the water gets hot to dispel rumors: "And you are only a caricature of a witch," indeed! Regardless, such persons have *some* oppression—e.g., domestic abuse, eating disorders, and persecution mania (which are no jokes, to clear)—but are generally in far less danger than their monopolies lead viewers to believe; i.e., during

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*alienation have—like many older, pre-Western cultures—gone the way less of the dodo and more the Cherokee: "Kill the Indian, save the man." In the end, these symbols become hollowed-out, thoroughly dead, sugary metaphors to sell to the middle class, who feel alienated inside Capitalism and the imperial, settler-colonial scheme.*



*Black, white, or somewhere in between, whatever the slave or out-group being targeted, conformity is the elite's greatest weapon—the only way they keep holding onto power! To challenge that, we must take back Halloween [and vampires and witches, etc] in ways they can't commodify/turn into a toothless, sing-song<sup>299</sup> holiday*

*[which, as per tradition, will gentrify and decay as all capitalist territories and boundaries do, above—overshadowed by "Pagan" obscurantism and the Protestant ethic to go wild for the state and the state alone]! To it, the state splices various feelings and monstrous states to enlist them for its usual predation on workers and nature; e.g., witches and undeath through feelings of exclusive predation [white Indians, but also black skin, white masks, etc, playing at guerrillas during asymmetrical warfare (stochastic terrorism) for the state]. As such, we can't let past trauma [ours or others] destroy us and turn us into gatekeepers; we must be able to laugh at our past while being honest about it in ways that don't scare others off [regardless of their trauma]! Don't fear the reaper; fear becoming the reaper for the state inside their prison-like systems and states of exception!*

*There's no such thing as a perfect victim, though; all workers have some degree of trauma [and the elite and their charmed lives have been alienated and either don't*

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Rainbow Capitalism as enacted by those who benefit from the *appearance* of persecution, who then fall back on their relative class, culture and race privilege where convenient. It's a luxury that plays into the same eating disorders letting white women reflexively gag and throw up the markers of oppression (a ladder of preferential mistreatment that extends to queer persecution networks; re: "[Hot Allostatic Load](#)").

To it, acting goes into performing with Gothic poetics during oppositional praxis—actors of any age generally playing with dead things concerning colonized elements that can only be relayed in a half-real sense—but it's not something that should be abandoned at, pardon the expression, the drop of a hat! Cryptonymy should serve raising an awareness towards ongoing societal issues, not feed into the very moral panics oppressing people merely to enrich the performers (and their bosses) in question!

<sup>299</sup> Not to discount the power of music(als), fantasy language, or Gothic camp, but blind camp *is* a thing. To that, we have to make sure our stories have critical bite without tumbling into the kinds of pitfalls and traps that adhere, conform to, and ultimately reinforce the harmful stereotypes normally leveled at queer people and other minorities; e.g., Tim Curry's psychosexual frustration in *Rocky Horror* having historical validity but needing to update (similar to *The Wizard of Oz*) beyond the "bury your gays" gimmicks and *Worst-Witch* neoliberal staging.

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*know it or lack the capacity to care]. Trauma attracts trauma; weird attracts weird as a matter of searching for kindred lost souls. The paradox of such liminality and entanglement, then, is feeling alien while in the closet, then coming out to feel more genuine according to destinies we make alongside those we feel privileged to lose ourselves around and inside; i.e., to go deep and last forever as we finish and come up for air—and gasping for breath, our "sex hair" a total mess—stinking with hot joy and delight, longing to dive desperately back through that underworldly membrane, plunging and raising up to heavenly delights! "Paradise" is a garden of paradoxes; the mind-body connection "its own place, [where one or more] can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven."*



[artist: [Bay](#)]

*My exes always treated me like a piece of meat, in that respect, all while acting more oppressed for it, themselves. It left me hating myself and searching for someone who wouldn't prey on me, but rather take me to special worlds I'd heard about as a little girl, much little Dorothy did in black-and-white Kansas. For me, that's Bay—someone I can play with and be myself without shame or fear of rejection or harm, but someone who labors alongside me to create this book series as it currently stands! They're my witch, good and wicked, white and black, sweet and fierce, for workers one and all, sharing the perils of persecution and pleasure, hand-in-hand! The paradox is, witches are wholly paramount to "colorizing our lives" [as Meatloaf puts it]: **blood-red**, vampires enacting Jewish revenge to "better the instruction"; i.e., as making workers more aware and less cruel, but still able to plea for witches and nature: "If you prick me, do I not bleed? If you wrong me, shall I not revenge?" Indeed, such muses and play are a constant, multi-staged and cross-media relationship that is vital to cultivate through praxis, taking all workers Over the Rainbow and into the magical land of Gothic Communism; i.e., as a world only waiting to be dreamt up and made real out of old dead things—as common as straw and stuffed into a scarecrow that sparked with the miracle of gay witchcraft, dances and springs to rare, precious life.)*

Take this nature-is-a-witch problem to its logical conclusion regarding vampires, then: trauma warps us without changing how we look on the outside; i.e., some of the fiercest predators I've encountered having been originally preyed on for their looks, only to weaponize their *profession* (sex work) against future victims *using* said looks (re: Jadis, Jade, [and various AFAB sex workers during my own brush with transmisogynistic sex workers](#)). This reflects in stories concerned with apocalypse—of Imperialism coming home to empire.

To it, gore and carnage don't stay inside during a grim harvest; they spill out everywhere, occupied by impostors for or against the state, the viewing of said offal freezing their victims helplessly in place (the vampire, ghost or composite feeding through disguises that, whether intentional, incidental or both, allow them to get close enough to feed on someone): raping the whore per the monomyth—and its phallic synonymizing of unironic sex and force (the gun/knife dick) to suit state aims—as something for us to camp to Hell and back inside the same ghastly spaces made available through popular media; i.e., maps of conquest; re: Tolkien and Cameron's refrains.

Hell, as I've said, is always a place on Earth, generally in reference to neoliberal refrains (videogames) that attach to real-world places and witch-hunter politics linking back to said refrains; i.e., from "Transylvania" in quotes to Palestine and its neighboring territories of conquest defended by state forces even when the apocalypse denudes; e.g., the Rational National's "[Israel Strikes Sheltering Palestinians in Open Defiance of Recent ICJ Order](#)" (2024). To this, the IDF bombs Rafah to the same degree as Gaza, disobeying the ICJ (no surprise, there) because *that's what the state does*. American liberals and good-cop centrists elsewhere will ignore these realities until they can't, then condemn them with meaningless lip service that "both sides" everything and sheds tears at the funerals of those presented as "undead," hence doomed to die during state witch hunts: blaming black knights but calling their victims "terrorists," too.

To that, witches and fags likewise decay into fascists! We cannot avoid or hide from state abuse and tokenization, then, but instead must go where power is to calculate and learn from it, mid-calculated risk, and prevent capital's resurgence now and into the future; i.e., fucking with witches and vampires as our friends, but also speaking to state disguises posturing as such on shared stages. The fact remains, American Liberalism yields smiling cunts who rape Medusa (skinny or thicc) as violent pornography remediated through all kinds of power fantasies, including games (video other otherwise). Whatever the size, genre or shape, it's all a dogmatic sham, pinning the blame on whomever the state requires during moral panics concerned with regression at home and overseas: "Ricky Butler says they're nocturnal feeders!"

Jokes aside, this endless remediation quickly becomes a Whac-a-Mole game, targeting "Nazis"; i.e., campy forms thereof that are anything but fascist, and which practicing fascists dogwhistle with strawman arguments that encourage police violence against queer people (and other marginalized groups) reclaiming Gothic poetics—but especially the BDSM language known to vampires—from fascist *Pax Americana* forces: weird canonical nerds raised on such dreck as Puritanically nostalgic to them, playing videogames to defend the nuclear family (and maidens) from those pesky witches, whores and, yes, vampires!

Speaking of which, we've looked at zombies feeding horrifyingly in broad daylight; now let's look at vampires of all shapes and sizes feeding as the undead

commonly do—at night (sex with the lights *off*, in essence): "What a horrible night to have a curse!"



([source](#): Reddit)

While novels and cinema capture the sensation of a vampire (rape) epidemic, videogames like *Castlevania III* (1989) allow the player to embody the monomythic witch hunter hunting nature; i.e., by chasing the Medusa down and raping her to death (the hypermasculine, *Jojo*-style Belmonts commonly whipping Dracula—a male monstrous-feminine vamp—with their slavers' whips during a bourgeois form of torture/demon BDSM: fascist leather daddies working for the state). In such cases, nature is still monstrous-feminine, witches and vampires treated as the devil's cohort, thus needing to be collectively punished or cajoled into betraying nature for the Greater Good (the devil's rejects, welcomed by the Church). To it, the good guys are *war criminals*

posturing as the Greater Good under displaced American exceptionalism (that's Japanese neoliberalism for you: exporting American xenophobia and Crusades-style violence back onto its own burgeoning youth).

Such argumentation, as a matter of playing things out onscreen, still constitutes witch hunter dogma in a half-real sense; i.e., its violent pornography plays out disproportionately offscreen, too. Plenty of super-dumb arguments have been made about videogames causing "actual violence," but barring outright anti-videogame propaganda, the endorsement of canonical us-versus-them values in videogames historically translates to apathy by the colonizer group brutalizing the colonized by proxy through such stories; i.e., when literal genocides are going on, the usual benefactors of capital (white cis-het men and those aping them through Man Box attitudes) do their gold-star best to stay "apolitical"—all while grinding for their latest PB, tournament prize, dubious YouTube sponsorship, and having multiple, real-life Nazi friends; e.g., Karl Jobst; re: a literal pickup artist [harassing flesh-and-blood women, then selling it in a now-discontinued grift](#) he exchanged for speedrunner royalty status. Like all fascists, he's a conman hiding in plain sight.

In turn, this historical-material apathy is encouraged by sexist, queerphobic and tokenized police violence bleeding into recent copaganda hauntologies—like videogames and *Castlevania*, of course, but also their offshoots borrowing from other stories ripped from Gothic canon centuries-old; i.e., police violence being committed by the good guys (who all happen to be straight or normative/tokenized to some degree) killing the bad guys as fash but also Communist-coded; re: a

zombie apocalypse leveled at other forms of undead, including vampires, as victims to be returned to the Earth, post-invasion. Simply put, cop hearts don't bleed for witches/gays because they're raised from an early age to think we (their victims) aren't human; we're bugs to squash and push out of our homes, often by token neighbors turning a blind eye. Killing us is a mercy in their eyes, but also, distraction!

In other words, just like Gaza, Rwanda, Cambodia, the AIDS crisis, neoliberal shock therapy unto the former Soviet Union, CIA assassinations, and other such pro-American policies at home and abroad, their collective symptoms stem from the same problem: capital and copaganda; i.e., the sort celebrated in indie circuits chasing profit by selling canonical monster war (and its witch hunts' anti-Semitic fatal nostalgia under Capitalism Realism) to kids yet again; e.g., with Red Hook's *Darkest Dungeon* and Countess doing the same thing that Lovecraft did, a century ago! Nature is a whore, a vampire and witch all rolled into one:



(exhibit 41f2b1: Artist, left: [Dieser Welt](#); right: [Liyuw099](#). Per the anti-Semitic origins of vampire and witch myths, little vampires come abortively from big Numinous vampires as ravenous broodmares/sodomites; these vice characters [and the purity arguments used to enact blood libel

against them by "good Christians"] merge with the pre-fascist elements to the Order of the Dragon's great-warrior posturing covered in black and red; i.e., in ways seemingly removed from Catholic dogma, but still staking vampires as the game's go-to witch.

This is classically gendered, like the Gothic. The Dragon Lord or Dracula is classically male under Western systems of oppression [the master/slave dynamic]. The female variation extends to nature-as-monstrous-feminine being furious in two basic forms<sup>300</sup>: a smaller "kawaii" disguise-type human form that belies a larger "kawai"/feral abject giantess [the Medusa] whose insectoid reproductive habits [fat like a termite queen] and paralytic BDSM elements [re: the wasp or spider's poison] are recuperated to serve profit; e.g., Red Hook's Countess another Red-Scare Alien

<sup>300</sup> Aka "phases" of the *Dark Souls* sort. Shapeshifting is not unique to demons, but they generally can shapeshift in ways that don't involve turning into something completely different (e.g., vampires and different stigma animals) as connected to their regular form and vice versa. In short, undead monsters constitute some limited degree of transformation, albeit to a decaying feeder body as having different stages that—the more radically these forms become—grow increasingly demonic and inhuman (usually from a lack or glut of food: an addiction where one's humanity is threatened by alienation from life/force as something to hunt; re: blood libel against Jews, but also an accurate description of fascists). But again, these often cross and overlap in ways that portray the vampire as a lycanthrope and vice versa. The chimeric qualities, as such, external *and* internalize different stigmas and vices animalized inside the same creature.

Queen; i.e., Cameron and Tolkien's refrains treating such reptilian, arachnid and/or wasp-like bug moms as Nazis bugbears to punch, but also Communists and any form of minority tokenizing to serve the role and dump it unironically onto others: the colonizer reinvading Indigenous lands to punch fresh state victims portrayed as invasive vermin to rape and exterminate by white Indians, mid-bug-hunt. Giant slaying/tower toppling [especially old giants; i.e., titans] makes for common neoliberal rites of passage; e.g., Bjorn the Bear's "[Can ANY Boss Survive 30 Level 1 Wretches? - Elden Ring](#)" [2024]. The same goes for the Archaic Mother's army of undead vermin slaves/offspring: the vampire hive/witch's brew providing the state's settler argument/false flag.

Again, this witch-hunter violence is fetishized in movies and videogames, such kayfabe-style Amazonomachia treating the poisonous, penetrative insect parasitoid [the xenomorph having acid blood (diseased fluids carrying AIDS) and an ovipositor] as something to—per Giger's creation—stare at before ruthlessly killing it; i.e., as an abomination to Capitalism being male and good, the monstrous-feminine's massive Archaic Mother a freak of nature-as-wild: a witch needing to be crushed during Goldilocks Imperialism abjecting parasitoids [and other stigma animals' female-superior qualities] relative to patriarchal dogma attacking the monstrous-feminine with monstrous-feminine; e.g., Cameron's Ripley but also Red Hook's merry band of devil's rejects: monster girls to pimp nature with its own, whores turning into waifu-style vampire cops!



[artist: [The Maestro Noob](#)]

*Whatever the title, the name of the game remains unchanged: Red Scare, then exploit per extermination rhetoric as a settler-colonial project with neoliberal [videogame] extensions that reliably translate to stochastic, extratextual violence useful to state aims; i.e., profit as raw butchery and rape moving money through nature by abjecting and fetishizing vermin-class organisms both weak and strong while taking their big mythical powers by force. Thusly wronged, perceived Jewish, Pagan, non-white, female or otherwise marginalized revenge is common as a casus belli to maintain a cycle of reactive abuse, often by recruiting from the colonized [re: Zionism]: "kill the witch; bring peace to a land 'fallen to darkness and ruin,' breaking the curse like one might a fever." It's the euthanasia effect taken to its end-game conclusion.*



[artist: [Peter Paul Rubens](#)]

*As such, the Medusa cannot be tolerated or redeemed because she will always "castrate" men [a demonizing of monstrous-feminine liberation during the*

*dialectic of the alien]. So state forces, faced with a rabid bitch, call for the headman's axe: off with her head! Blood in, blood out.)*

The proletarian point—in studying vampires' being killed like any witch in videogames—is to learn from them in ways useful to workers employing the universal undead feeding mechanism *against* profit and witch hunter rhetoric; i.e., the latter inventing stupid but clearly deadly reasons to kill labor action after rolling different groups into one fearsome monolith the state can attack (a stake to thrust into different controlled populations by said populations).

Doing so, its proponents then divide and conquer us out of fear inside prison-like environments where they can triangulate at will, but also gaslight token enforcers with deliberately oscillating rhetoric during solitary confinement (a war crime) through cruel-and-unusual/collective punishment (also a war crime) during reactive abuse; i.e., jailors pushing and coercing victims with far less than them until they snap, thus merit execution inside a state of exception. Antagonize nature; put it to work and just as often, exhibit and showcase it in ways that ways that exotify and alienize the exploited all the more; e.g., Steve McCurry's 1984 portrait of Sharbat Gula—an Afghan refugee during the Soviet-Afghan War—being



used to sell issues of a magazine, *National Geographic*, that demonized Communism and exceptionalized America foreign policy, as usual:



(*exhibit 41f2b1: McCurry's famous photo was, at the time, simply called "Afghan girl," used to pierce the viewer with a helpless foreigner's mysterious gaze. It wasn't used to enrich or aid Gula, the poor girl left nameless for decades by an expat photographer using poverty tourism to swoop in, safari-style, and espouse Cold-War platitudes. Don't mistake me—it's an exceptional photograph—but exploitation is exploitation, the class character plain enough in hindsight.*)

What do you think these stories are canonically for? Someone all-too-young always pays the price to enrich someone all-too-old and powerful—not an accident, but a *sacrifice* the elder party gladly paid (and one for which the Salem witch trials' Mayflower atrocities are but a footnote in a larger genocidal scheme): capital rapes not just strong manly adults, but women

and children, taking their away power to intentionally cause them harm while treating them like unpaid slaves (as women and children historically are); i.e., *capitalists* are the cannibals—the cruel, overbearing and controlling bloodletters they accuse others of being!

They craft such dogma as persecution content and sell it to kids, much like a drug dealer would except the elite own the territories and medias at work! Racism (and other xenophobic elements of division) become a currency and bonding agent traded amongst, but also spliced with, weird culture; i.e., between owners those workers they condition and control pursuant to the raping and reaping of nature-as-monstrous-feminine. It becomes a bouquet of so many flowers—from homosexual men, trans women, young damsels, black and brown people working the fields, and kept brides—picked by enterprising patriarchs and their servants; i.e., the fall of one's settler-colonial inheritance, Usher-style, haunted by ghostly male tyrants and pissed-off monstrous-feminine spirits; e.g., King Diamond's Count and Seven Horsemen, from "[Arrival](#)," but also the titular bastard baby herself that never fully was: the wandering womb/[bicycle face](#) by another name<sup>301</sup> speaking to too-young

<sup>301</sup> *Abigail* (1987) being written, like seemingly all Gothic stories, after the frontman had a nightmare:

King composed "75 percent of the storyline" after he was awoken one night by an unusually violent thunderstorm in Denmark. He says the creative spurt was "the only time that's ever *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

marriages and forced pregnancy through tokophobic cannibalism and the vampiric, at-times-hostile relationship between mother and child, woman and state, husband and bride, witches and nature, etc, leading to cops and victims!



Furthermore, excluding animals and young children, perfect victims are a myth. Under such absurd, predatory systems, vampires and witches present as one, both completely exposed and helpless before (and

while) tied to the stake (or being staked in our sleep); and two, somehow such darkly powerful, undead practitioners of "witchcraft and blood magic" that we can suddenly transform into animals and fly over your heads to practice revenge (eating all the babies, of course)! While sadly the latter things *aren't* true (wink-wink), there's poetic license to them that isn't *completely* useless to our counterterrorist aims: "Why yes, we *can* do those things! Buttsex *can* bring about the end of the world and destroy the nuclear family model (now tap your ruby slippers together three times, Dorothy Gale)!"

Except, it's less about convincing useful idiots that we'll turn them into newts (they already think that), and more about raising awareness towards state predation through bad-faith parties happy to brutalize us behind any Puritanical excuse (with Hawthorne's Puritans thinking Hester Prynne's daughter—the aptly dubbed Pearl—is a little demon). Through vampire and witch-like doubles, we can act out our own deaths by their callous hands; i.e., as linked to centuries of police abuse, including old-school DARVO arguments and home-grown obscurantism tokenizing our fellow persecuted, themselves martyred per Irigaray's creation of sexual difference (the death of the mother to serve white, cis-het male individuation, treating women [and all monstrous-feminine, female or not] merely as sex objects to use and discard, over and over)!

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happened for me that so much was just done overnight." He'd written down what he'd been dreaming about before the storm awoke him but, fearful he would forget the musical ideas the memories were inspiring, he brewed a pot of coffee and got back to work. Since his days in Mercyful Fate, King had repeatedly dreamed of 13 "cloak-dressed people" that surrounded a bed he was lying in, paralyzed and unable to scream for help. (The vision was so pervasive, in fact, that he turned it into the Mercyful Fate song "Nightmare.") The figures reappeared in this dream, so for *Abigail*, he transformed them into the seven black horsemen. He also saw a horse-drawn coach and a child's coffin in his dream — elements that worked their way into the story ([source](#): Christa Titus' "7 Things You Didn't Know About King Diamond's Landmark *Abigail*," 2015).

As we shall see, such taboo, funerary conventions and theatrical clichés are commonly used to avenge nature and bury empire alive, but also come to grips with our own mortality amid such schemes!

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
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To it, we want to short-circuit the dogmatic social networks that feed into weaponizing scared stupid people hating us at the expense of all parties involved ("Satan" merely being a dogwhistle we challenge by reminding people of its Pagan, bastardized origins during Satanic Panic): to see us as human.



Sure, there's a cottagecore, privileged, tits-out Burtonesque to such inklings/rising jouissance (with faeries/changelings being—you guessed it—another classic anti-Semitic symbol stealing children and replacing them with evil doubles). Except doing so isn't simply to freeze our food, but specifically those with power who, paralyzed by Athena's Aegis, allow us to transfer power away from the elite's gigantic body and pass it out to all parties normally abused by state forces; re: in videogames like *Castlevania* or *The Darkest Dungeon* framing the vampire as a degenerate minion or boss to slay (through the usual ordering of power in monomythic stories, the smaller entity a military offshoot of the larger as its "castle" to besiege and raze during Gothic *mise-en-abyme*).

In doing so, we want to acknowledge *past* abuse (and present abuse dressed up as "past") while preventing future abuse as something the elite can no longer foster and protect among vigilante class-traitor workers; i.e., cutting the giant down to size by gorging ourselves on things normally hoarded from us in reclaimed theatrical language; e.g., the teenage witch killing her whole insufferably Puritanical family before choosing to "live deliciously" (see: *The Witch*, 2014), or the vampire freezing *their* pray to suck blood and use it not for profit per the Protestant ethic, but ending Capitalist Realism by developing Gothic Communism (thus raising emotional/Gothic intelligence and class/cultural awareness during praxial synthesis and ultimately catharsis). Regardless of the subversive thread being pulled, the basic enemy isn't sexy (old, white rich men and their power structures seldom are), so dressing it in somewhat abstract forms up can make our larger praxial goal a bit more relatable and fun! "Worship Satan, kids! Nature is gay as hell!"



This extends to characters like Red Hook's Countess as dark and badass, but not exclusively fascist any more than Dracula is; i.e., the mouth and shaft hyphenate in bizarre, often biomechanical ways: abjecting nature to commodify its own butchery per reactive abuse conflating fascist TERFs with Communist ladies looking equally stylish, sexy and scary (the palliative Numinous, during calculated risk). These nuances

mean nothing to the state, Medusa always a threat to the established order while integral to it per her routine summoning and butchering; i.e., as the whore wearing the dreaded Scarlet Letter!

Until she dies, the fate of the world always hangs in the balance, and afterwards she'll haunt the world again until she returns from the yawning toothy grave:

Thou detestable maw, thou womb of death,  
Gorged with the dearest morsel of the earth,  
Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,  
And in despite I'll cram thee with more food ([source](#): *Romeo and Juliet*).

"Don't mind if I do!" Medusa replies, a Big Witch thoroughly used to the messiness of menstruation (re: period sex, what Jadis called "murder dick"), childbirth and stillbirths inside the same dark cradle (the secret burden and shame, but also perverse love of people who give birth). Atlas was a little bitch, especially when nature goes feral and euthanizes her would-be captors, cackling all the way to the blood bank. A witness to her own rape, she escapes to rape her captors by squealing on them (spilling her guts, as it were): an out-of-body embryonic attached paralytically by her phallic umbilical's proboscis inside a murderous womb space<sup>302</sup> (a Westernized Quetzalcoatl, our *de facto* Whore of Babylon seeking out fresh blood to sate herself as giver of life and death)!

Per the neoliberal monomyth (videogames), it's a cycle of war and rape meant to emotionally manipulate state soldiers (usually cis-het men) to kill for the state inside "dead embryonic cells." By nostalgically raping nature (as a vampire does) before she rapes them, the witch hunters restore greatness through cyclical returns to a "better time" that repeatedly buries the *kaiju*-esque giantess during a liminal hauntology of war's killing time/grim harvest; i.e., a canceled future's strawman argument for us to invert through *our* Aegis humanizing the Archaic Mother's paradoxical rape play as an "ancient" spectre of Marx—a xenomorphic "love letter" camping the Nazi (which exists onstage in unironic forms) through her wandering womb (a play on the wandering boss); e.g., the Countess' hysterical, insect-witch biology belonging to a rape victim the state blames for the land's darkness (not the Ancestor, exhibit 41f2c): a verminous blood witch, and a wealthy one, but locked up in solitary (no sunlight) waiting to die! Inside the infernal concentric pattern, the player is Ariadne's executioner!

Another rape to camp, oxymorons abounded; i.e., confusions of pleasure and pain per the Gothic's prey mechanisms told in queenly dominatrix: Mozart's vengeful [Night Queen](#), the operatically castled "fat lady" a dark mommy Medusa,

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<sup>302</sup> From Creed's *Monstrous-Feminine* (1993), but with us shucking off the dubious psychoanalytical side of things; i.e., to apply the psychosexual imagery of the Countess' monstrous framework to a dialectical-material argument.

singing her monstrous-feminine heart out, her salacious aria bringing the Man's house orgasmically and incestuously down on his stupid head (and generally



ravishing the maiden, Victoria-de-Loredani-style, too)! Singing for her supper (and blowing her own horn/magic flute), the Countess fills her glass the same way that capitalists do—except it's cataclysmically with *their* blood! Scorched earth with a hint of strawberry, she's the queen of the devils—Red Hook's crooning and crowning achievement (taking much of the palimpsestuous backlog for granted, I think) and my all-time favorite boss encounter (re: Persephone van der Waard's "[The Countess](#)," 2019). War and sex told masturbatorily as operatic hard kink, Halford-style? Take me *home*, mommy!

(artist: [pagong1](#))

Thus concludes our crash course on vampires (and to a lesser extent, witches)!

Here's a couple more pages' food for thought (and time to digest) before we jump into "[A Brief History of Feeding](#)":

To that, it's worth noting how the classic slave-like function between zombies, vampires, and ghosts is less immediately different than current Cartesian divisions would lead you to think. Simply put, they're "dead," usually pissed off to a wordless degree, and they eat, but this takes *many* forms even within one monster type. It can even apply to monsters that are *treated* like the dead without necessarily presenting as such; e.g., witches, the Medusa being someone who *might* eat you after they paralyze you and make you their slave (the draining of one's essence serving both purposes)! Feeding always goes both ways, a vampire's ability to feed and foist itself upon others a fascist fantasy and genderqueer apologia hogging the same operatic stage: the ability to play and perform trauma through feeding masquerades (the Countess' human face being false, and her mosquito-like beak, despite resembling a traditional ball mask, actually being her true face).

Indeed, the constant puzzle of the undead (vampire or otherwise) lies in how they don't just eat the living but resemble and act like them (as the Countess does, speaking to how women generally become predatory in Man-Box fashion to survive

in a man's world, which will scapegoat them to preserve the patriarchal status quo: map her home as "stolen," then track her to the centre of the maze and kill her).

This liminality intimates dialectical-material relationships between opposing forces; i.e., compelled to attack one another under Capitalism, often in animalized ways; e.g., witches punching vampires, vampires punching werewolves, etc. The fascist refrain goes from "animals are brutal, uncivilized and cannibalistic" to "*human degenerates* are brutal, uncivilized and cannibalistic," but who's doing the eating for the state? The fascist, of course—the token queer or witch as often as the white cis-het man, either refusal to "be political" all but guaranteeing their mutual demise by state machinery: "What is life?" Hilter asked, after condemning General Paulus and the sixth army to die at Stalingrad rather than surrender. "Life is the nation. The individual must die anyway." Don't be another Roman fool, comrades! Either we all unite against the state, or it destroys us one by one (delegitimizing our cause when your TERF dumbasses sell out).

Luckily there isn't a monopoly on these feeding mechanisms and their cannibalistic violence. Indeed, the inverse, mid-apocalypse, is literally "eat the rich" but also *the middle class*; i.e., as normally preying on the underclass and foreign victims through state dogma. What comes around goes around, suckers!

For example, Matteson's hybridized zombie-vampires took a modularized, anti-Cartesian approach to the undead that inspired Romero's infamous *...of the Dead* franchise. Lockhart's "[Brineaters](#)" thoroughly catalogues this nuts-and-bolts approach, arguing for how Romero stole readily from many different cultures and approaches to classic monsters that he might say something about America's imperial feeding behaviors under Capitalism:

Romero openly admits that the earliest version of *Night*, a short story called "Night of Anubis," "was basically a rip-off from Richard Matheson's [I Am Legend](#)" ([Dead Will Walk](#)), and certainly Matheson's vampire novel and its first film adaptation (the second, and better known, would be 1971's [Charlton Heston](#) vehicle [The Omega Man](#)), 1964's Italian-made [Vincent Price](#) thriller *L'Ultimo uomo della Terra* [[The Last Man on Earth](#)] can both be seen as major influences on the plot and style of *Night of the Living Dead*.

*Night of the Living Dead* was also influenced, explains Shawn Rider, "by the turbulent 1960s, events such as Vietnam, the civil rights movement, and rampant consumer culture" (3). Furthermore, *Night of the Living Dead* "is really concerned with looking at the monster within all of us. We watch as society turns in on itself in its bid to survive" ([Engall 3](#)). As Rider elaborates, "*Night* lays the groundwork for a series of cultural critiques. [...] Romero takes on both the issues of his time, and larger issues, extrapolating the effects of capitalism and colonization of the mind" (3). It is this unflinching gaze towards the issues of its time that helps *Night of the Living*

*Dead* remain a relevant and challenging piece of rhetoric some thirty-six years after its theatrical debut.

*Night of the Living Dead* "forever changed the face of fearfilm" ([McCarty 117](#)) by reinventing a staple of horror cinema, the lowly zombie. While previous film zombies typically relied upon the machinations of a diabolical Svengali such as [Bela Lugosi's](#) "Murder" Legendre from 1932's [White Zombie](#) (the first zombie horror film), the Romero zombie is "a cunning blend of elements from the classic Haitian zombie (returning from the grave, glassy-eyed and eerily silent), the vampire (its bite converts its victims to the undead), and the cannibal" ([Horne 99](#)).

So, whereas Castricano notes how Slavoj Žižek felt compelled to call the return of the living dead "the fundamental fantasy of contemporary mass culture," the return of such monsters signifies state shift due to state collapse that harkens all the way back to Matthew Lewis's pre-fascist, queer dialogs that Romero owes for his own proletarian necromancy!

As Steven Carver writes, "Hammer Films, EC Comics, Stephen King and George A. Romero would all be unthinkable without *The Monk*, and you can judge any scholar of the genre by what they have to say about both these Georgian pioneers of gothic fiction [re: Lewis and Radcliffe being famous rivals, the token cis-het housewife vs the gay revolutionary iconoclast]" ([source](#): "The Rise of the Gothic Novel," 2023). I would further argue this modularized, virus-style feeding is an undead staple intrinsic to their critical power—their "bite," as it were, helping tell them apart amid the shameless chimerism.

This is because the undead can be scientifically produced, magically summoned, or otherwise symbolic of an escaping decay through an insectoid-parasitoid presence or suggestion of death, etc, as viral through its sheer feeder's



contagiousness. Vampires are undead, but so are witches burned at the stake and raped in their own homes, only to return from the murder site's replica to plague the dreams of the living while they're awake, eating them alive; e.g., like Sadako Yamamura does, or Dracula crawling out of the family portrait, etc. The motto for the Gothic might as well be, "Home sucks" (a trend that crystalized with Poe's 1839 "The Fall of the House of Usher"):

(*exhibit 41f2c*: Artist: Chris Bourassa. *Old homes, in Gothic stories, have old male tyrants that commonly abuse everything around them. Red Hook at least gets this right*<sup>303</sup>, *their dickhead*

<sup>303</sup> Or did back in 2015; their sequel is much more optimistic, from a military standpoint.

antagonist almost jeering as he writes a letter to his younger self: "Ruin has come to our family. You remember our venerable house, opulent and imperial, gazing proudly from its stoic perch above the moor?" Basically a capitalist metaphor in person, but told in true Lovecraftian fashion, the Ancestor is a Nazi vampire/wealthy backstabber retrojected to old, decayed worlds: a ruinous old codger arguing with himself and blaming a woman, just like Thanos [while recognizing the latter predator inside an adversarial equal he murders, and then feeds to his guests: Mother Nature having her deathly revenge by poisoning his land and peoples with hysteria showing them their own cannibalism on a global scale—again, topping from below]!



[artist: Thomas Holm]

In short, the Ancestor is a witch hunter and bourgeois vampire, eating his problematic lover only to have her—the ghost of the counterfeit—eat him back: by engorging his appetites until he quite literally chokes on them! From deathly lullabies bringing Imperialism home to empire, Medusa is well-and-truly at home with such things, herself; i.e., she is Galatea, the planetary Alpha and Omega getting the last laugh as counterterrorists [those of nature] so often do against Cartesian, Pygmalion

know-it-alls: by burning "Rome" to the ground, the cruel tyrant's bloodline doomed to eat itself until the very last! Payback's a bitch; through calculated risk and schadenfreude punching up from the grave, how the mighty have fallen—a delicious vintage, indeed! The fatal portrait speaks to empire's fleeting half-life, but also a warning as things spiral further and further out of elite control: Medusa—in her martyred throes of ecstasy and pain—will be fine; unless workers heed the Aegis' dark reflections and promptly change the genocidal course the elite have chosen, though, she'll simply eat all of us, go to sleep, and try again some other time [or not]! Remind abusers of their fallibility, mortality and lost, forgotten humanity before it's too late!)



## Understanding Vampires: "What Is (Problematic) Love?"; or, Positions of Relative Ignorance to Relative Clarity (feat. Bad Empanada and Marxist-Leninism)

*"Long is the way and hard, that out of Hell leads up to light."*

—Satan, *Paradise Lost* (1667).



If I could stay anything about queerness and vampirism, it's that both started from ignorance, but also positions closer to nature that have become increasingly alien and closed-off: love, for the state, is both pure and problematic; it cannot separate them, because profit requires division to function. To

study both, then, is to study knowledge in a state of dialectical-material flux, knowledge being different ideas about the same things; i.e., often from different schools of thought; e.g., Marxist-Leninism vs anarcho Communism. Such schools are classically at odds, effectively in disagreement about how to develop Communism in the present space and time.

As me and my work are an-Com (specifically Gothic [gay-anarcho] Communist), we'll need a foil as I unpack my own approach to such things. The foil, in this case, is Bad Empanada (a YouTube video essayist) vs myself, Persephone van der Waard (a sex worker, writer, and BDSM doctor established through independent studies); i.e., Bad Empanada graciously reminding me why I'm *not* a Marxist-Leninist!

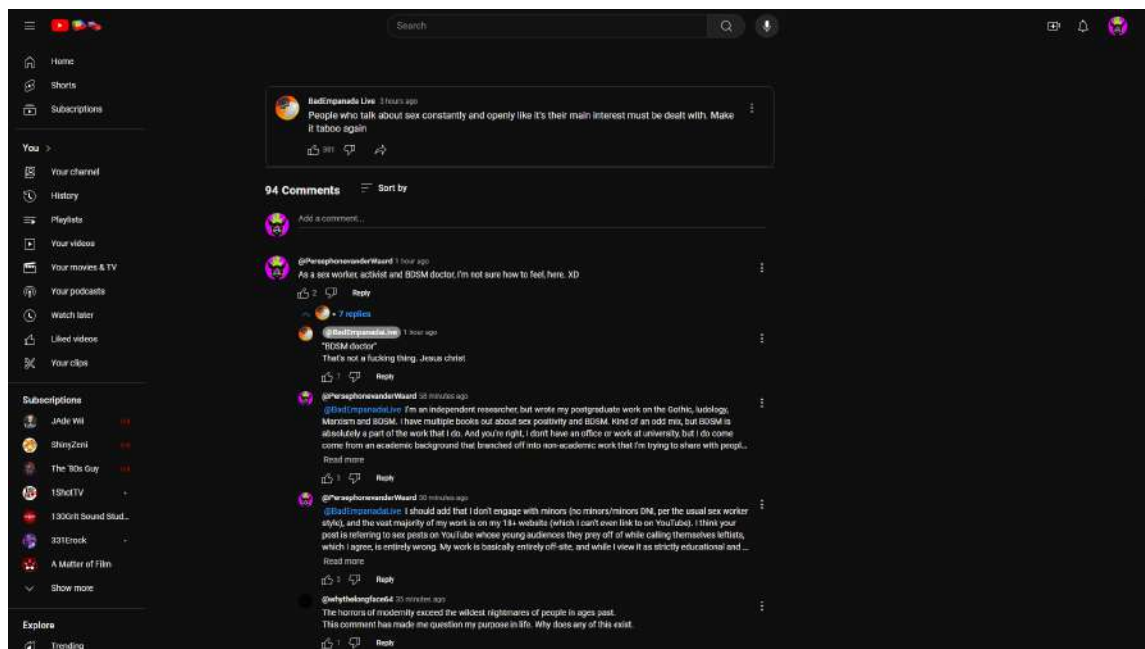
*Note: "Understanding Vampires" is informed by interactions with people who, although they are correct about a great many things, lack much-needed nuance in others. In the past, this would have been Noam Chomsky (re: [Bleacher](#)). Here, though, we're specifically talking about Bad Empanada, aka Yannis Stanopoulos, a person who—despite being correct in his persecution of actual sex pests and Zionist behaviors from sell-out "leftists" on the Internet—tends to throw the baby out with the bathwater regarding the value of social studies and literary analysis at large; i.e., what Marx himself would call the Superstructure, and which discounting media analysis at large is to regress to a level of Marxist action on par with Marx and Engel's making of sodomy accusations (through sniveling private correspondence).*

*To it, Bad Empanada is a Marxist-Leninist, valuing the material element to Marxist analysis, but also state mechanisms; i.e., he doesn't condone or support anarcho-Communism, treating its practitioners like hopeless hedonists and (as I*

shall explain) sex pests to lump in with genuine predators. Except, the state is straight, historically the ultimate and constant enemy selling out and wearing down to abuse its own people; i.e., as expressed by Bad Empanada himself towards me and others like me, the state—whether it calls itself Socialist or capitalist—always prioritizes us fags and sex workers when the state of exception narrows (consider this sentence the Gothic, queer and thoroughly anarchistic thesis argument for "Understanding Vampires"). We can't afford to be strictly material in our investigations of capital, because much of praxis (and its synthesis in our daily lives) comes from the social component of media; i.e., that is produced as much by workers as corporations.

Furthermore, in regards to Bad Empanada discounting the social aspect of things, he's "doing a Superstructure," himself; i.e., by making videos of such things on YouTube, but also insisting that all "online leftists" are Contrapoints clones, thus centrists. He does this while, in the same breath, asking for donations and, at the same time, saying really dumb shit like "social studies don't matter" and "BDSM doctors aren't real"<sup>304</sup>. He's good on postcolonial theory and its argumentation in

<sup>304</sup> Originally from [a community post Bad Empanada made](#), saying "People who talk about sex constantly and openly like it's their main interest must be dealt with. Make it taboo again," followed by him responding to me, saying "BDSM doctors aren't real" when I called myself one (which, I am); i.e., I—a BDSM doctor and trans woman—am not real (thus neither are sex therapists and paid/unpaid researchers, apparently).



It goes to show that people who are often right about a lot of things, just as often, are *really* fucking wrong *when* they are wrong. "Doctors," for instance, didn't originate from universities in the 20th-century style; for our purposes, they started off as clerics and scholars in monasteries during the Middle Ages—e.g., Leonardo da Vinci didn't have a university degree and worked with media and materials, hand-in-hand (and was charged with sodomy\* by a local town); i.e., his contributions aren't something you can merely dismiss for him doing so (including the sodomy charge).

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*academic forms, but incredibly closeted and ignorant about how things work outside his narrow sphere; i.e., to the point that he makes incredibly regressive and ultimately transphobic arguments, himself (see: footnote). Such "problematic"*

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\*As Catherine Fletcher writes, in "*Leonardo da Vinci's Private Relationships*" (2021):

On 9 April 1476, [Leonardo da Vinci](#) was accused of sodomy in an anonymous report to the Florentine authorities.

Leonardo, then just short of his 24th birthday, was one of four men said to have had sex with the 17-year-old Jacopo Saltarelli. The denouncer claimed that Saltarelli "had been a party to many wretched affairs and consents to please those persons who exact certain evil pleasures from him" ([source](#)).

For the record, there would have pedophilic qualities to da Vinci's life by modern standards, for which Catherine Fletcher goes on to add:

A sexual relationship between a 43-year-old man and his 15-year-old employee would be considered reprehensible today, all the more so if, as in the case of Leonardo and Salaì, the younger person had joined the elder's household at the age of 10.

This pederastic model was, however, typical of same-sex relationships in Renaissance Florence, with the younger man often aged between 12 and 18. The 17-year-old Saltarelli also fits the pattern. Lomazzo suggested that through such relationships "out of a tender age come, at a manly age, worthier and closer friends."

Renaissance attitudes tended to echo those of the ancient world and, as recent research by historian Rachel Hope Cleves on British author Norman Douglas has shown, tolerance of pederasty persisted in Europe into the 20th century. Age-gaps were not exclusive to same-sex relationships: girls might also be married very young ([ibid.](#)).

As such, people generally face the world and contribute to it in good and bad ways; i.e., talent and morality aren't the same thing. It's a mixture, those good things existing paradoxically with those bad.

To it, my whole argument with *Sex Positivity* is for workers to take what is useful from the past (re: the Wisdom of the Ancients) and leave the rest, reclaiming pre-Capitalist jewels to move towards a post-capitalist, hence post-scarcity world. Should we throw out everything da Vinci pioneered and discovered because he practiced sodomy? What about Foucault's extended works on homosexual punishment and, by extension, carceral abuse in *Discipline and Punish* (1975)?

By that same logic, should we do the same for Stalin because he sent millions of people to the gulags or enabled Beria to prey on schoolyard girls in their tweens? What about Mao and his War of the Sparrows during the Great Leap Forwards causing millions to die, or his Cultural Revolution weaponizing children to kill his political enemies so he—an aging and paranoid dictator at this stage in his life—could stay in power? These were not people we should emulate exactly as they were, comrade. Marxist-Leninism is, in my opinion, antiquated precisely because the state historically decays, causing tremendous harm towards its citizens and others; e.g., the Russian Federation, the United States, and China. Whatever labor value any of them offered, they are now capitalist bodies competing industriously under Capitalism to out-capital each other. Such is the way of states; they will never let themselves progress—i.e., it has to happen democratically among the hearts and minds of workers united under a common humanizing banner that avoids Omelas-style exceptions.

As an aside, my friend Ginger points out, even if BDSM doctors "weren't real," as Bad Empanada argues, it doesn't change the fact that he's still *spectacularly* wrong about sex work and activism at large; i.e., by abstaining from them and claiming total ignorance on such things (which he does all the time), he's basically falling out of the dreaded I'm Really Wrong Tree and hitting all the branches on the way down!

To it, people in the Global South experience oppression through sex work, and gender studies espoused by someone like [Jessie Gender](#) (or any other activist/content creator) are still true and applicable to said people's lived reality even if the individuals involved sell out or otherwise do/say stupid shit in other areas. The same concept applies to myself and Bad Empanada; to err is human, and last I checked, neither one of us is a space alien.

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*insinuations are oddly suitable, coming from someone who—apart from being a white, cis-het Australian expat/Marxist-Leninist with Maoist tendencies—looks and acts like an Amish person (or medieval friar, next page): a straight person "in the closet" insofar as he remains terminally ignorant of monstrous poetics and their proletarian, ludo-Gothic BDSM function (versus a classic "closet case," meaning a queer person in denial about themselves as queer); i.e., all while turning a blind eye to his own hypocrisies and knowledge gaps outside of postcolonial studies (e.g., Bad Empanada's double standard—of vocally hating Americans regardless if they agree with their nation or not<sup>305</sup>, while he himself comes from Australia). It's all he knows, and he acts like gender studies and activism can't merge with*

<sup>305</sup> Re: Aaron Bushnell (from "Ode to a Martyr," 2024)

*Note: This piece was inspired by someone I respect, but whose apathy and myopia I wish to respond to: Bad Empanada and his video, "[Americans Demand I Praise US Soldier Who Self-Immolated to Protest Gaza Genocide](#)" (2024). I respond to it [in his second channel's community section](#): "I thought your refusal to say anything about Aaron Bushnell's martyrdom at all, only to comment on American jingoism and all-importance is, I feel, incredibly myopic and apathetic; e.g., 'I don't care' (which you've said as much); i.e., to overlook something vital merely to state the obvious, thereby avoiding solidarity with Americans who otherwise might agree with you during a shared struggle against larger forces at play. It's not 'praise' to call Bushnell a martyr, it's a fact. He was an anarcho-Communist, and this act wasn't a spontaneous [one made] by a weekend warrior. He lived it, dude."*

Martyrdom is seldom agreed upon and often misunderstood. For proof, consider two YouTube channels that I follow, [Bad Empanada](#) and [GPD](#). Bad Empanada cynically and prematurely described Bushnell's death as "a waste of time," condemning the Americans entering his channel for wanting him to discuss it by virtue of those persons "being unable to see things beyond their own noses." Showing his own privilege (and nose), Bad Empanada went on to say that far better ways of devoting one's time to class war exist than killing oneself, and that, likewise, there are far better ways to kill oneself for a cause than Bushnell's; conversely, GPD commented quite differently, concluding, "The statement that [Bushnell] made, the way that he made it, the symbolism of the act, the uncomfortable truth of the act that makes reporting on it so awkward for Western mass media, makes this arguably one of the most important instances of protest in US history" ("[I Watched the Uncensored Aaron Bushnell Video](#)," 2024).

I understand both points of view. Indeed, it is possible that both are essentially correct at the same time (this post will address several paradoxes, because liberation requires us doing so in order to liberate ourselves from the elite's powerful illusions). Though somewhat cold and callous in his frank assessment, Bad Empanada's candor is merited; many Americans are arrogant insofar as they value the lives and voices of those from home versus those from abroad making the same arguments on a daily basis. He wanted to say it and said so without shame, but his cynical, judgement-clouding anger did two things: a) clump all Americans together and b) miss a larger point that GDF did not. GDF is also right, then, insofar as Bushnell's death is both highly unusual and persuasive: to be done by a member of the colonizing group—and not only that, a member within said group paid to actively participate in genocide as a structure—is intimidating to the elite precisely because the executioners are revealed to be human and have human feelings, which is just as important as humanizing the victims in the obvious colonized group ([source](#)).

but also the Kent State shootings. Are *their* lives worth less than Palestinians or any other victims of *Pax Americana* purely because they're from America, you smug, Ozzy, virtue-signaling fuck? Many great activists started off as warmongers, only to blow the whistle afterwards; e.g., Edward Snowden, Chelsea Manning, Howard Zinn, or Bob fucking Ross. Are people beyond redemption the moment they serve? Learn some nuance, dude!

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*postcolonialism and Marxism in any meaningful sense (something that plenty of straight boys can do; he's just a bad ally and historian, he's just a bad ally and historian, styling himself "inflammatory" but really enflamed like a hemorrhoid to infectiously attack more vulnerable parties: a used diaper full of shit).*



([source](#): Fandom)

*You don't want to judge a book by its cover but instead should go after its arguments, and I generally avoid attacking Bad Empanada's appearance because it's usually not relevant to his arguments; his behavior towards me is—i.e., his good works and talented scholarship weighed against his sheer and total stupidity regarding sex work and an-Com activism. But given his total disdain towards an-Coms (and BDSM practitioners with academic backgrounds), I will gleefully point out that—as someone making Puritanical, fash-style SWERF arguments like he does (next page)—Bad Empanada certainly looks the part! My man has zero rizz!*

*Furthermore, he's far less understanding about social topics that someone like Jessie Gender understands and practices on a daily basis—i.e., despite Jessie being wrong about Palestine and Bad Empanada being correct (re: "[Jessie Gender Should Delete Her Zionist Propaganda Video Immediately](#)," 2024), those two things don't cancel each other out; Jessie is still wrong about Palestine and right about gender issues, and Bad Empanada is still cloistered, never interacting with said persons except when they sell out, to then use that to discount everything that Jessie ever argued for while trumpeting his own work and Marxist-Leninism at large! He's cherry-picking with a meat ax—rigid about postcolonialism (which is good), but also Puritanically about gender studies and sex work (which is bad); i.e., in ways that self-report on where he actually stands (with the state, thus against queerness). Needs more nuance, mate!*

*Also, I detect a lot of middle-class resentment on your end; but, if you detest Jessie for selling out to Israel, how is your calling for universal Puritanical censorship of discussions of sexuality any better? Two wrongs don't make a right (nor does abstinence make you "holy" any more than Mao was celibate<sup>306</sup>). In short, it's epic cringe, the virgin Marxist-Leninist (above) vs the Chad an-Com:*

<sup>306</sup> Jung Chang writes of Mao policies' and hypocrisies,

His regime nailed everyone down to a place of residence, making it impossible for most people to move. Tens of millions of married couples posted to different parts of China couldn't live together. Given 12 days a year to visit each other, they were condemned to almost year-round sexual abstinence. While his people endured such constraints, Mao indulged his every sexual caprice. The Communist Party and army procured young girls for him. These girls  
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(artists: [Persephone van der Waard](#) and Cuwu)

*Responding to Bad Empanada's arguments, I had to explain that, yes, I am real—am both a BDSM doctor, trans person and sex worker, but also practicing leftist (though not on YouTube, for the most part)—*

*doing so in my initial response to our (thankfully short) exchange:*

*Bad Empanada: "People who talk about sex constantly and openly like it's their main interest must be dealt with. Make it taboo again."*

*Me: "As a sex worker, activist and BDSM doctor, I'm not sure how to feel, here. XD"*

*Bad Empanada: "'BDSM doctor.' That's not a fucking thing. Jesus Christ."*

*Me: "I'm an independent researcher, but wrote my postgraduate work on the Gothic, ludology, Marxism and BDSM. I have multiple books out about sex positivity and BDSM. Kind of an odd mix, but BDSM is absolutely a part of the work that I do. And you're right, I don't have an office or work at university, but I do come from an academic background that branched off into non-academic work that I'm trying to share with people to help make others more sex-positive and left-leaning in the fight towards liberation for different marginalized groups sexualized under capital."*

*I should add that I don't engage with minors (no minors/minors DNI, per the usual sex worker style), and the vast majority of my work is on my 18+ website (which I can't even link to on YouTube). I think your post is referring to sex pests on YouTube whose young audiences they prey off of while calling themselves leftists, which I agree, is entirely wrong. My work is basically entirely off-site, and while I view it as strictly educational and made*

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staffed his villas and served as dancing companions at leaders' exclusive parties when such dancing was banned for ordinary Chinese ([source](#): "Was Mao a Maoist?").

Even if this were some kind of hit piece (Chang writes for the Washington Post), Mao doesn't sound especially like someone I'd want to emulate, nor would I want to endorse the state model, per Marxist-Leninism. Undoubtedly his rule helped raise China out of grand poverty (after the Warlord Era)—but it's still incredibly brutal and worse, ultimately *pointless* if China conducts similar atrocities and rivalries, regardless of scale or intent; i.e., the Sino-Soviet split and the Great Leap Forward. States are the enemy and historically kill a great many people to call doing so the Greater Good. Everything is expendable to the state, and I see no reason to apologize for their grim harvests, hence keep them and those around. We must humanize and intersectionally solidarize ourselves against them and their queerphobic history (more on this in "Understanding Vampires," part zero).

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for purposes of satire and critique based my academic and non-academic (extracurricular) work, it's something I predominantly discuss with other sex workers" ([source YouTube community post](#), Bad Empanada: August 15th, 2024).

This is all true; I have an 18+ website dedicated to an-Com theory and practice through Gothic poetics and labor exchanges, [including currently three \(soon to be four\) books written on the subject](#). So, being told that I "wasn't real" by a smug SWERF postcolonialist really stuck in my craw! Like, how would you know, dude? There are more things between Heaven and Earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy!

Simply put, my guy hit a nerve. His statement pissed me off for two reasons: one, it's total horseshit on its face; and two, it was made in a thread where he was already calling for the taboo silence of all discussions about sex while talking with a bunch of weirdos who already agreed with him (the blind leading the blind, in this case). It'd be like if someone said, "People who talk about [Palestinians] constantly and openly like it's their main interest must be dealt with. Make it taboo again," only to have someone say in response, "as a [doctor of Palestinian studies], I'm not sure how to feel, here," for him to end with, "[Palestinian studies doctor] That's not a fucking thing. Jesus Christ."

First of all, go fuck yourself. Second, just because you have a huge fucking blind spot in your area of research doesn't mean that something is "worthless"; it just means you have a knowledge gap and don't know how to quantify or reconcile BDSM, sex work or gender studies with the Global South. Your ignorance feels pretty willful, all the more frustrating given that it (and your arrogance) come from someone who should know better but chooses to scapegoat, exploit and otherwise profit off a dehumanizing view of sex workers and BDSM. You know the motto for BDSM is "hurt, not harm," right?

Third, Bad Empanada's argument is unironic Stalinist rhetoric; i.e., "lock up the degenerate sex criminals," meaning anyone who talks about sex (except him, calling for pogroms)—something he's been dogwhistling and pedaling to his paying audience on his second channel. Put a pin in that for now. We'll get back to it when we discuss Chelyabinsk-40 in "Leaving the Closet."

Note: I'm trying to find a balance between fairness and firmness—being rough and soft in my criticism as needed (strict and gentle, in BDSM terms). Part of me feels like the fag tickling the straight monk with the pink feather duster while crying, "Have at you!" before turning heel and saying, "Now go away or I will taunt you a second time!" But regardless of how exactly I burst his smug, much-to-learn bubble, know that Bad Empanada's methods concerning activism and gender studies remain, such as they are, clumsy at best and pernicious and exclusionary at worst. Just know that—concerning his massive ego, big mouth and colossal

hypocrisy/academic blind spots—we'll be taking our time with him (the polemic concentrating mostly in this opening and in part zero). —Perse



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

To add to that, one thing that I or my work (Gothic [gay-anarcho] Communism) most definitely is not is Marxist-Leninism. Gotta yuck that yum, comrade (from Volume One):

*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 [Gothic] Communism outside of establishment politics ([source](#)).*

*The idea—as per usual during revolution—is teamwork, with me and my numerous friends' and collaborators' collective approach (see: the Acknowledgements to my published volumes, [located in the very back of a given PDF](#)) choosing to illustrate mutual consent; i.e., as a matter of praxial context targeting the Superstructure (re: hearts and minds).*

*Furthermore, as someone who is for (and does) sex work but stands against profit, rape/genocide and the state (which is conducive to all of these things), I've worked incredibly hard to distinguish myself as such/delegate for my kind while being an ally to other oppressed through similarity amid difference. So I always try to understand and learn from other scholars, expanding my understanding of Marxism, postcolonialism and gender studies; i.e., by helping those less fortunate than myself; e.g., homeless or housing-challenged people, sex workers, and yes, native populations (the sort states treat as universally expendable). Indeed, my partner Bay constitutes all three—is a disabled person throttled by the New Zealand government, a sex worker and Māori. Granted, the former categories might not be as exotic and "sexy" as helping foreigners getting bombs dropped on them, but the end result is the same: domination, rape and genocide. All victims are valuable,*



*and all can be helped at the same time through social and material practices: to act out and call attention to problems the way we feel is best, pushing towards liberation for all peoples.*

*By comparison, Bad Empanada—despite being oddly quick to use words like "rape" and "pedophile" in his thumbnails (e.g., "Milei Sends Delegation to Take Selfies with Rapists, Murderers," 2024)—lacks the ability to treat such subjects with respect, nuance or skill. Lacking anything akin to a discerning and judicial touch (to go hard or soft), he's like a bad (functionally white, cis-het) dom—utterly unequipped but ringing the alarm bell as hard as he can, asking for cash while telling others who talk about sex to shut up about it. As such, he enjoys his own double standard (talking about sex), acting like he's the sole savior to administer blame and reap the rewards (monetizing said channel in frankly insensitive and gross ways); i.e., gender studies are worthless, with Bad Empanada speaking not just for queer people, but also cis-het people effected by conservative policies on both sides of the globe.*

*One, activism isn't a contest. But also, maybe sexually abused workers (sex or otherwise) don't want the weird, straight, expat Maoist speaking for them? Homeless people (which queer people often are) exist all over, my dude, be this impoverished nations, cities, or communities; but one thing we don't do is rape rank. By comparison, you—someone who as far as I can tell, doesn't know the first thing about sex work or sex-positive BDSM—were pretty dismissive of even acknowledging that I and my work exist; re: stating that BDSM doctors "aren't real" (which again, is absurd, given this includes academics, but also sex therapists professionally trained in BDSM; but even in unpaid, unofficial, and/or non-state-certified capacities, BDSM practitioners and pornographers generally amass a knowledge base about BDSM that rivals their official therapeutic counterparts).*



*In short, Bad Empanada is basically Peele from Key & Peele's 2013 "[Pussy on the Chainwax](#)" skit, telling the slutty, just-as-educated-as-he-is an-Com that I'm "trying to start a thing"; i.e., "You're not real and the work you do has no value," echoing this sentiment within his usual belittling of sex work and BDSM used by actual rape victims, including myself and my own survival of such things—doing so to find some sense of control and healing in our own lives while synthesizing an-Com praxis at the same time (anywhere in the world, not just America)! BDSM isn't universally fake, and its prime function isn't to harm, but hurt in ways that heal by virtue of calculated risk. Tell that to Bad Empanada and he'd insist it's all bullshit.*

*To quote the Dude, "That's just, like, your opinion, man."*

*It sucks to find out that Bad Empanada is a giant Puritanical dick who thinks that because he's a postcolonialist, this somehow excuses his outmoded, ignorant, hypocritical behaviors elsewhere. All the same, his actions also inspired me to think and respond to his incredibly dumb arguments, making a lengthy video response detailing years' worth of work that I do (from the video description):*

*A trans-woman, an-Com BDSM expert/doctor (with PhD levels [years' worth] of independent, inter community research), here, talking about why I think @BadEmpanadaLive often lacks a serious, nuanced (or even, at times, basic) understanding of sex work and the discussion of such things. I often enjoy his no-prisoners approach to postcolonialism and investigating sex pests in the YouTube sphere, but sometimes his clunky, sardonic sense of humor is dismissive to the point of bad praxis (this isn't made to defame him or discredit the legitimately valuable work that he does, but to talk about his blind spots/rough edges in good faith) [[source](#): Persephone van der Waard's "'I, Sex Doctor': About Me, Ludo-Gothic BDSM, and the Work that I Do," 2024].*

*Keeping all of this in mind, extensive modifications—to my vampire section and its study and execution of "sodomy dialogs" per vampirism—have occurred in direct response to Bad Empanada's callous, ignorant, and frankly lame dismissal of Gothic poetics and BDSM at large; i.e., regressing to a cynical, joyless position about "sodomy" and BDSM that Marx arguably would have held himself (or Stalin).*

*P.S., Not all leftists online are on YouTube, Bad Empanada, and even those on YouTube aren't all slaves to profit. Think about that while you try and peddle your dated and narrow, punitive view of BDSM (and Communism, if I'm honest), trying as you do to rope so many people who "talk about sex like it's their main interest" into the same category as legitimate sex pests like Ian Kochinski.*

*P.P.S., Academic rivals are really important, and I wanted to say thank you to Bad Empanada—for sucking enough that you lit a fire under my ass to critique you! It's really made me examine Marxist-Leninism and dislike it more than I already did; but also, to yield some fun scholarship regarding vampire Capitalism queerphobically damaging the environment per the state as straight, and Marxist-Leninism being an example of that which led to its own queerphobic abusing of nature-as-monstrous feminine (e.g., Chelyabinsk-40)! Thanks for being a piece of shit! Your Benny Morris to my Norm Finkelstein (for relative suckiness, not because you're a Zionist)!*

*—Perse*

As this subchapter concerns knowledge as a matter of praxis, mid-debate between different political groups that both know stuff (re: Bad Empanada and I both know things, but are at odds), what *is* knowledge, then? From a Marxist perspective, knowledge is historical-material; from a *Gothic (gay-anarcho) Communist* perspective, knowledge is encapsulated in poetic expression whose history is predicated on dialectical-material arguments with and about monsters, including vampires (we'll needle Bad Empanada and Marxist-Leninism, throughout).



Think about this in terms of blood, then—where it's stored, by whom and what it contains. Stronger vampires canonically feed their slaves with lesser/diluted blood. But they themselves cannot fully control what blood contains. As a matter of epistemology through queer narratives, the meta contents of public knowledge

and discourse started to not only shift, but avalanche in the 1970s; i.e., through the Superstructure as inundated with new scholarship and terminologies progressing into the neoliberal era. In turn, new media began to appear speaking to things not always conducive to profit or queer burial, being absorbed through those queer persons hungry for things speaking to them as queer but stuck in the closet. The wealth of increasingly sex-positive allegory began, if not to totally outweigh the bad, then at least to meet it in socio-material opposition.

To this, anything that concerns flow of vitality can effectively be called vampiric; e.g., Tolkien's Ringwraiths leeching the life out of living things, imagined by someone whose ideas and refrains were mostly allergic to the Neo-Gothic of 150 years' worth of material, up to that point. But this generality involves canon more broadly as a state-compelled position of ignorance seeking liberation inside of itself. The state needs us, not the other way around; we are, like Stevie Nicks, the mistress of our fates, making far-off things possible by dreaming them up in *spite* of state forces telling us what to think. You can't force Communism, like Marxist-Leninism does; it must become second-nature on a ground level (which anarcho-Communism is all about)! Or, as I write in Volume Zero (combing an-Com practices with Gothic elements:

*It's possible to still enjoy material culture during nerd sex as an extension or reclaiming of said culture (with someone or their partner wearing a t-shirt [or some such article] to tout their nerdy Gothic status as one's trendy object of desire: the big-titty Goth GF as a stamp of, or stamped with, consumer pride*

*that also contains cryptomimetic echoes of generational trauma inside of itself.*

*Dark desire, then, becomes something to compile and compound within various bondage and discipline exercises that, for all intents and purposes, constitute as "edging"—not the releasing of passion, but its prolonged storage until such a time as release is permitted by the one holding the reins). Indeed, enjoyment isn't divorced from capital and monetization, but we can develop and raise cultural awareness and interconnectivity in meaningful ways while still getting to be the fantasies that Capitalism normally alienates us from (the unicorn not as a manmade, sequestered entity but one that is hidden behind paywalls, the resultant manufactured scarcity granting it a rare, mythical appearance and appreciating value—compelled orgasms, aka "sad cum"); i.e., established through the artwork we make and games that we play as a second-nature mode of altered existence: self-definition as a basic human right that is quickly and readily understood at an intuitive level. It becomes a child-like curiosity and teaching that extends into adulthood, carrying Gothic Communism forward through workers [not the state] dictating the Gothic mode; i.e., their cultivating of emotional/Gothic intelligence ([source](#)).*



(artist: [The Maestro Noob](#))

Such is vampirism; i.e., a closeted, thoroughly queer position told through artistic, community positions of vulnerability and hunger that, themselves, have repeatedly evolved to survive under state duress. Changing constantly and drastically over the years (re: [Lockhart](#), *vis-à-vis* Romero's zombies—inspired by Matteson's zombie-vampires—as comprising socio-material critiques of Capitalism through the Gothic mode), all have done so according to popular legends stuck in a tug-o'-war existence; i.e., routinely revisited according to new feelings of dissatisfaction with capital and its neoliberal ordering of things/failure to deliver on basic promises (extending to Marxist-Leninism and queer people). Thus new visits

to older hauntological sites bring fresh knowledge regarding older post's positions of ignorance while tumbling towards truth; e.g., *Alien: Romulus* (2024) following *Alien: Isolation* (2014) as traveling towards *Alien*'s 1979 archaeology as more class-conscious than *Aliens*' was, in 1986 onwards; i.e., from Marxist-Leninism's latent homophobia towards anarcho Communism as a far more sexual, Gothic and queer mode of praxis.

We'll articulate this as follows:

- [Part zero](#) starts with a basic history primer on vampires from my chosen starting point—the 1970s, '80s and '90s with a combination of popular-to-academic works, *vis-à-vis* Halford, Rice, Foucault and Butler—to briefly examine the history of sodomy and queer love per the feeding mechanism of vampires; i.e., from homosexual men, to (oft-)female commercializations of said men, followed by GNC language having evolved parallel to binarized normative currents that gradually give rise to liberatory forms of camp taking it all back in more recent times: after such ideas were medicalized, made academic, and finally released into public spheres, to then disseminate and spread for or against the state. We'll also critique latent queerphobia in Marxist-Leninism (re: Bad Empanada) and academic, queer shortcomings/tokenism through an an-Com lens, and consider some of the larger historical-material currents leading *up* to the 1970s and beyond.
- Once you have your sea legs, [part one](#) shall explore sodomy and queerness beyond that glittering historical period; i.e., through a trans woman's quest for knowledge built on said bedrock, considering the ways in which understanding "sodomy" and "vampirism" formulated for me, and can develop and grow for you, too. Part one shall suitably provide some general poetic concepts to bear in mind; i.e., defining sodomy more closely while regarding the vampire's seeking of prey and feeding on them through anisotropic "sodomy dialogs" of power flow and criminal application. After that, we examine some anecdotal examples between myself, my work and various experiences with and epiphanies concerning queer persecution I have experienced across my life; i.e., while closing various knowledge gaps regarding vampiric poetics and texts; e.g., *Brotherhood of the Wolf*, *Wicked*, postpunk, crazy exes, and of course, *Interview with the Vampire* and Anne Rice. Tokenized elements will be addressed, as well, and specialized scholarship I coined while coming out of the closet; i.e., while recently expanding on this portion; e.g., Capitalism's abuse of the environment being queerphobic, including in Soviet Russia.
- All shall segue into our close-reads in [part two](#), those of *Alice in Borderland* and *The Darkest Dungeon* tackling and interrogating Capitalism's vampiric, prison-like predatory qualities through both stories.

There's also the crash course that precedes "Understanding Vampires," wherein "[Undead Feeding Vectors, part one](#)" talks about our research focus and history surrounding vampires, BDSM, and liberation through an-Com queer camp under persecutory conditions (with sodomy comparable to witch hunts in state eyes). Make sure you familiarize yourself with it so you have an idea of what vampires even are and how we'll be tackling them going forwards.



*P.S., This piece was written deliberately without citing Sorcha Ní Fhlainn (above), despite her expertise. I'm doing this for reasons I've already written about, so I'll just repeat them again, here; re (from "'Monsters, Magic and Myth': Modularity and Class," 2024):*

*Furthermore, I have plenty of academics to refer to so I'm not going to cite Ní Fhlainn on principle! Per my friend Sandy Norton's words (someone who actually treated me like a person and not an international student to grit their teeth at): "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). I'm using the same mechanism to intentionally omit Ní Fhlainn and say my own piece about vampires (while invoking Foucault, of course); i.e., because a) my arguments are rich enough on their own with the sources I already have and artwork and muses already involved, and b) I find speaking for myself far more liberating instead of suffering Sorcha speaking for me through their own gentrified texts. To be blunt, my arguments straight up don't need Ní Fhlainn for me to talk to my friends/associates about vampires in a class-conscious way that actually helps sex workers. Fuck 'em! ([source](#)).*

*This isn't for fortune or fame, but to help people and enjoy the praxial heft of the vampire legend serving workers first—and for free, [not for \\$145 like Ní Fhlainn's overpriced book](#). Activism and scholarship isn't something you paywall.*

*P.P.S., I won't stress it too much moving forwards, but "monstrous-feminine" is synonymous with "sodomy," "vampirism" and "problematic love," and the canonical terror tactics that historically unfold preying on nature-as-monstrous-feminine through police/tokenized prison-to-gang violence serving profit, as always! —Perse*

**Understanding Vampires, part zero: A Vampire History Primer; or, a Latter-Day Conceptualization of Vampirism, from the 1970s Onwards (feat. Bad Empanada, Rob Halford, Anne Rice, Foucault, Judith Butler, and more)**

*"Time is on my side. In a century when you are dust I shall awake and call Lucy my queen from her grave. I have had many brides, Mr. Harker, but I shall set Lucy above them all!"*

—*Dracula* (starring Frank Langella), *Dracula* (1979)



(artist: Robert Ingpen)

First up in "Understanding Vampires," we arrive at our vampire history primer (not to be confused with the crash course, which tries to introduce the wide spectrum of what vampires [and witches] are, and how we'll study and focus on them). This history considers aspects of queer/problematic (monstrous-feminine) love from the 1970s onwards (and bits and pieces before that point); i.e., "sodomy" being a witch-hunt accusation to hurl by state forces, but also an activity to camp during ludo-Gothic BDSM practiced by an-Coms. It's merely the start of a position I would expect you to build on—a chance to get your wicks, toes (or anything else) wet regarding revolutionary positions of queerness; i.e., studying (and at times) obsessing over wild animal men, as well as their various female and intersex offshoots, but also their monstrous cousins (werewolves) that would be used in various socio-political dialogs rising to prominence in the 1980s (during the AIDs crisis) onwards: Satanic Panic. This is our starting point, one to explore a great many things that are built on it versus older aspects to vampiric poetic history that others have talked about in older times already (re: Matteson).

*Note: I will summarize and reference these histories, moving forwards, so you needn't pore over this portion too thoroughly. They're provided merely as a good foundation, one we'll build and expand on, ourselves. Also, my usual argument—of capital raping nature-as-monstrous-feminine per the dialectic of the alien to move money through nature—applies just as well to vampires and sodomy arguments made by state forces. —Perse*

Top to bottom (so to speak), the vampire history primer leads off with a few pages of prep; then, examines homosexual men in the 1970s, followed by female/queer appropriation—and ultimately their expansion and acquisition of the same language around the same time—to allow for increasingly GNC voices camping/taking back the same stuff, ourselves, in the '80s, '90s, and beyond (and informed by the very things leading *up* to the 1970s, which we'll also unpack, albeit to a lesser extent). It's chronological, so you should be able to track it from topic change to topic change; it's also fairly short (given its scope), so take what we

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discuss here and run with it, yourselves. Last but not least, a bit of a tangent occurs—about seven pages in the middle—concerning Marxist-Leninism's ongoing and pervasive queerphobia<sup>307</sup>; i.e., stuffed between Foucault and Creed while articulating the importance of holding past leaders and thinkers accountable; re: camping Marx' ghost, thus Socialism and Communism's spectres at large!

Furthermore, when cracking open these older ideas, try to remember how the availability of information about vampires (and those they poetically represent) is constantly updating and transforming under duress; i.e., as it pertains to the kinds of public knowledge that would color and inform media from the 1970s into the neoliberal period, thus my own work and interpretations parallel to all queer people and their enemies and allies (which part one will get to).

In short, proletarian vampirism is burdened with knowledge gaps, the latter powering its canonical, police-like function; i.e., *bourgeois* vampirism cannot work unless people are as ignorant about vampires as they are about sex, gender and BDSM history at large (re: Bad Empanada). By comparison, popular media refers to what we consume—not simply to offset what is publicly discouraged in academia, the sciences, and other official channels/discourse/capacities, but what extends the conversation into spheres the state cannot monopolize: the Superstructure.

As per our initial prep, then, I want spend several more pages articulating not just why we're sticking with the 1970s onwards, but the overbearing elements of sex, gender and ancient history that routinely pop up when such monsters manifest at any historical point in time. Then—starting with Halford—we'll jump into

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<sup>307</sup> Regardless of which form of queer biology, sexual orientation, and gender identity/performance one excludes, to exclude a subset is to exclude all of them regardless of the popular/clinical language available, known or otherwise used/favored; i.e., homophobia is a kind of queerphobia, and itself constitutes an attack on the entire queer and sex work\* communities (at home and abroad, often in token forms).

\**The two generally go hand-in hand.*

For example, Marx and Engels lacked the language to express their bigotry against homosexual men (and perhaps lesbians, but who's to say given the bias), going so far as to make up their own words ("Uranians"). Except, exclusion is exclusion, and regardless of how a queerphobe expresses or applies it, such behavior is never good for queerness at large; i.e., to segregate, silence and/or sell out about such things always leads/contributes to collective punishment and genocide; re: a faggot is just a faggot, and "When they abandoned us [back then], they abandoned all of us" (re: [Vaspider](#)).

To it, we queers, anarchists and sex workers have no nation or land tied to us (the state is the enemy); so our intersectional solidarity is our best defense. In turn, liberation is all-or-nothing and zero sum (insofar as we want to discourage such bigotry against all queer and sex worker groups because in the end, we *are* all the same to the Straights, capitalist and Marxist-Leninist alike). It behooves us to be aware of such histories because the negative consequences to said histories affect us disproportionately compared to straight people, who—for all intents and purposes—can afford/enjoy some degree of blindness (even if it ultimately harms them, too); e.g., Bad Empanada being socially blind/entirely unconcerned with literary analysis; i.e., because he is a cis-het straight man in love with the state, he thinks the state (the Marxist version of it) would never go and make *him* illegal for being straight. And this is essentially true. The state is fundamentally straight, thus will *never* affect him the same way it affects us, but refusing to adopt literary studies for that reason makes him a poor scholar/historian and even worse ally!

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increasingly aware, sex-positive and language-rich centers for such conversations to unfold, leading into the current state of affairs!

The reason we're focusing on/starting with the 1970s is saturation of knowledge, this decade being the flash point for when and where things really started to gel and, all at once, take off; i.e., from an academic standpoint married to ethical and medical, but also poetic debates, all of them happening in the public sphere (thus Superstructure). Everything teetered on the cusp of the neoliberal period, and set the stage for the sorts of sexualized, gendered and performative debates that would come to define the 21st century as we know it.

In turn, though, such debates remain haunted by ancient anchors of sexuality, gender, race and class pertaining to how such language is even applied and considered, mid-debate. Simply put, monsters collocate.

For instance (and for better or worse)—and outside of witches, Pagan elements and various historical exceptions (e.g., the ancient female poet, Sappho)—queer history in the West (and its Gothic dialogs for canon or camp) start predominantly with homosexual men being given the stage first; i.e., from the rhetors of Antiquity onto Shakespeare's stage plays, followed by Walpole and Lewis onto *Dracula*. Yes, Le Fanu had Stoker beat by over twenty years, but this story (and its female vampire, Carmilla) was still informed by male homosexuals being medicalized by Carl Westphal in 1870 (finally upstaged by Rice, over a century later), and homosexual *men* generally being accused of sodomy by the prejudiced public because they could be attacked in court as legal subjects; i.e., as property owners<sup>308</sup>, whereas women were historically persecuted as witches, thus the disobedient *property* of men.



something done well after the 1970s.

Of course, such distinctions might ultimately seem academic, insofar as witch hunts against witches for practicing "witchcraft," pogroms against gay men for practicing "sodomy" (again, referred to as "sodomites" far more often than women), and trans people for doing both all unto themselves each and collectively yield the same disastrous and divisive effects (rape the monstrous-feminine/nature-

<sup>308</sup> As Catherine Fletcher writes of da Vinci's sodomy charge; re, "Leonardo da Vinci's Private Relationships": "Renaissance society did not have the concept of firm sexual orientation that exists today and many men were in practice bisexual. (We know less about the women, because prosecutions, the main source of records, generally targeted men.)" ([source](#)).

as-alien). But they still historically have unfolded along monetary and other material lines that not only tokenize, but come with our aforementioned male historical bias; i.e., according to a straight man's place in society taking precedent over women and gay men alike (say nothing of slaves, non-Christians; Indigenous people and those of color, disabled and/or GNC, etc).

As such, whereas the female (or at least straight) seductor has something of a "Mrs. Robinson" wish fulfillment/guilty pleasure vibe (a concept we'll unpack much more in Volume Three, Chapter Two), the male seductor as queer (subversive or not) is pathologized much more harshly in medical and juridical spheres because he a) doesn't have a vagina, ovaries or a uterus, thus isn't worth the trouble of converting "back" into a straight man; b) would be considered a person long before AFAB parties were; and c) presented, among the courts, a rising threat to the heteronormative male image more directly by debasing its "sacred" function: something to penetrate others with *righteously*. All oppressed face oppression, and tokenization happens to every group, but the above qualities inform a pernicious and deeply entrenched historical distrust and expendability of male queers dogpiled by other oppressed parties. We're men in dresses, serial killers, etc, and AFAB parties (cis or not) historically triangulate against us for the state.



(artist: [Blxxd Bunny](#))

*Regarding the selective punishment that goes into canonical sodomy and vampirism at large, there's a strange, heteronormative, Man-Box double standard/tolerance regarding vampirism and pornography. A biologically essential component exists that likewise links biology to gender and treats sex and gender as one-in-the-same. In turn, AMABs are historically treated with lethal force under the law, and AFABs are fetishized, imprisoned and raped. AFAB vampires are historically brides, lesbians and/or bisexual unicorn-like whores, whereas AMABs become "men in dresses" invading women's spaces (though can certainly be feminized and whored out; e.g., twinks and femboys).*

*Both, in truth, involve the monstrous-feminine fetishization, rape and murder of the accused being chased by straight mobs hungry for blood (and tokenized layers following suit inside the same caramel union). But AFABs are seen as "more valuable" in a PIV sense—i.e., heteronormative sex objects to exploit for their so-called "positive" sexual value (something for cis-het men to masturbate to or literally fuck)—whereas AMAB treatment is more punitive, historically used when calling for violence against queer parties (usually male): to rape them prison-style*

with a foreign object (thus avoid accusations of queerness, oneself; e.g., "it's not gay if it's a stake").

From a canonical standpoint, AFAB are "more valuable," thus are fought over as such per the canonical laws—canonically reclaimed like mistresses or rescued in some perverse promotion/preservation of the nuclear family unit; AMAB are more expendable, thus put out down like dogs, cleansed like a disease, or otherwise blamed for the fall of civilization (female exceptions to this "apocalypse scapegoat rule" simply treat them like witches, not damsels; i.e., phallic women and Archaic Mother demons; e.g., the Whore of Babylon).

In short, bodies are policed and imprisoned in ways that pit many different groups against each other for the state. When reclaiming them by "flashing" the public (a misnomer given such nudity is generally made at controlled venues or



established sites of protest), sex workers and queer people are both trying to survive, making a living and do praxis through artistic exhibitions! They're not doing it to be excoriated and ostracized by other workers (re: Bad Empanada)! —Perse

(artist: [Hiddend8](#))

While such a dialog is arguably as old as queer people at large—and we *could* look at the 1870s and rise of terms like "homosexual" into the public sphere—I want to skip ahead a hundred years; i.e., would like to apply the above historically sexualized and gendered elements to when queer activism crystalized *vis-à-vis* Gothic academia, second wave feminism and the rise of GNC-inclusive gender studies—all leading unto the popularizing of the vampire legend as it presently exists (and for which our close-reads in "Vampires, part two" shall hinge upon): the 1970s.

So while rape and queerness synonymize in the eyes of those who conflate the two, over time—and especially after the 1960s and into the '70s when words like "transsexual," "transvestite" and "transgender" had at long last appeared—the male vampire became increasingly stigmatic, Satanic-Panic code for the homosexual man (and by extension anything incorrectly female/feminine); i.e., as a destroyer of societal norms and spreader of disease, but also forbidden, *closeted*, xenophilic/guilty pleasure tied to rock 'n roll, fast cars (the death race and its nostalgic musical fanfare; e.g., [1996's Twisted Metal 2](#)<sup>309</sup>), bad boys, easy girls, disco, musicals and British heavy metal Gothicism, etc.

Per the process of the abjection romancing the middle class through the ghost of the counterfeit, all of the above collapsed into the poetic forerunner for Satanic Panic and the AIDs crisis, in the 1980s; e.g., Dr. Frankenfurter and the

<sup>309</sup> 331Erock's "[Twisted Metal 2 - Holland \(guitar cover\)](#)" (2023).



Goth rock opera of 1975 (and *Phantom of the Paradise*, from 1974) as a then-latter-day Americana resurgence of rockabilly "dark" wish fulfillment imported from "elsewhere" and remade at home in lucrative, quasi-rebellious forms (with actual rebellious energies): from Meat Loaf to *Pulp Fiction* to *Overwatch*'s D.va in her nostalgic car mech. The future is cancelled, regardless, and we an-Com queers must rise to the challenge on the same monstrous stages.

(artist: [Bobcow](#))

Keeping such prep in mind, this brings us to the meat of the primer (so to speak)—starting off with homosexual men, wrapped in leather and rocking out alongside Curry's Frankenfurter<sup>310</sup> (the "transsexual transvestite from Transylvania" using some of those aforementioned medical terms we talked about, married to Stoker's *Dracula* and Shelley's *Frankenstein* to give rise to [white] queer rage. Fighting to escape the closet, the 1970s were an angry time to be "here and queer," only to have the same cruising peoples ignominiously spit-roasted; i.e., as a kind of awful neoliberal spectacle, enacted the state while that terrible disease ravished gay activists' bodies<sup>311</sup>)!

<sup>310</sup> Though *Rocka Rolla* actually debuted first, in 1974 ([the title track aired on BBC](#)), with *Rocky Horror* releasing a year later.

<sup>311</sup> Dr. Dana Rosenfeld writes in "The AIDS Epidemic's Lasting Impact on Gay Men" (2018):

As [I and colleagues](#) established, the epidemic hit male baby boomers much harder than it did older and younger men, causing high numbers of premature deaths, especially among those aged 25-44 (and, in this age group, among those aged 35-44), with gay men suffering "the most AIDS deaths by far at the epidemic's height." In the USA, by 1995, [one gay man in nine had been diagnosed with AIDS, one in fifteen had died, and 10% of the 1,600,000 men aged 25-44 who identified as gay had died](#) – a literal decimation of this cohort of gay men born 1951-1970 ([source](#)).

For various reasons, but including a stigma surrounding men as sodomites that did not effect women to nearly the same extent, men historically paid a heavier price in the public's eyes than women; but conversely, said women were the ones to care for and ultimately bury their male comrades.

As a 2019 editorial for *The Foreword* explains, this reality led to a changing of the queer acronym from GLBT to LGBTQ+:

The "L" in LGBTQ stands for lesbians. The "L" comes first in the acronym for a reason. In the starting stage of the gay rights movement, gay men were largely the ones running the show. There was a focus on men's issues and lesbians (as well as trans people of both genders) were largely unrecognized, hence the common GLBT acronym.

The LGBT community despite being inherently inclusive, has always had pockets of sexism. From the fact that there has always been a lack of spaces catered to lesbians when compared to gay men. Gay bars are common spots in big cities, however lesbians are consistently not included in these spaces. There is a large amount of harassment that occurs

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Starting with AMABs, then, those hauntologies outlined above also extend to Rob Halford; i.e., as a closeted gay man working in the burgeoning 1970s NWOBHM scene—specifically of the "leather daddy" type, codified by Tom of Finland (next page) as primarily a *white* man's homoeroticism tied to gay club life, mil spec, and music culture (with such "disco dialogs" being a common place to hold court/masquerade at a public level concerning state abuse). While such striving—to

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in these bars. And this is not made up for with lesbian spaces. There are very few "lesbian bars."

Lesbians are also historically underrepresented in media (though trans people probably have it even worse) when compared to gay men. Although the representation of gay men is often horribly stereotypical, lesbians, especially in the decades before this one, have hardly been represented at all. Where comical gay men, as poor as the representation may be, were fairly common in the 90s and the 2000s, lesbians aside from the occasional gal pals and Ellen, were few and far between and were never main characters.

The push to change the order came with the surge of feminist ideas that sprouted in the '80s and '90s. The AIDS crisis also factored into the "gay/lesbian solidarity" that led to lesbians being more recognized in the community. While a huge portion of gay men were suffering from AIDS, the lesbian community was largely unaffected. Lesbians were the ones helping gay men with medical care ([source](#): "The 'L' In LGBT, And Why Order Matters").

Intersectional solidarity matters, especially since the state historically will try to overlap panics—e.g., Lavender/Satanic Panic and Red Scare—to get people to in-fight, thus ignore the bourgeoisie. It's possible to recognize the sacrifice for different groups, then, representing them without throwing anyone else under the bus or blindly taking the state's poisoned "gifts."

To it, I—a trans woman born in the AIDS crisis (1986) but living in its shadow—contracted Hep C in 2013. Unlike the HIV virus, Hep C is largely spread through blood-on-blood contact exclusively (typically from sharing needles). I don't how I contracted it, but I did. While having a long incubation period/slow mortality rate (+20 years), medical treatment was not widely available at the time. Luckily I had insurance through the state (welfare), and while insurance companies *could* ignore personal requests for the medication, the U of M helped me find a loophole: supply a letter of financial hardship through the school; get denied, thus qualify by forcing these companies' hands. They'd have to use my insurance!

This took several years, though, because no medication was presently available that had a high enough success rate (or zero side effects). Until then, I simply had to wait.

Eventually, in 2015 while finishing my BA, I received over \$100k's worth of then-experimental drugs by the medical company my school worked with. They mailed a box once a month to the efficiency I stayed at (I was a transfer, so I didn't have to live on-campus at the overpriced dorms, like freshmen students legally had to). I took the drug religiously (as prescribed); once I'd exhausted treatment, I took a trip to the university hepatology clinic, where a subsequent blood test told me I was "cured" (the antibodies still and forever being in my system). Cool beans.

It was relatively straightforward, but still stressful because so much could've gone wrong (scheduling the medication was difficult, and given the efficiency shared one mailbox, theft of the pills wasn't out of the question). There's also those several years where I was simply told "to wait for a cure." It wasn't something I talked about with others at the time, and I did my best to handle it on my own as best I could. It felt weird having an illness that, if left untreated, could kill me (the disease had, point-in-fact, killed my friend Sandy Norton's husband—a transgender professor—years prior).

All this being said, I was closeted at the time and only just starting to date; I can't imagine what it would be like to contract HIV and develop AIDS in a time when Satanic Panic was at its peak and treatment for the disease was impossible. Many older queers—I recall, from the Pride episode of *Sense8*—remember Pride in the '80s as a funeral; and I feel somewhat alienated from the deaths of the period only to live in fear after the 2014 election of Donald Trump, chased by a 2017 renaissance of token feminism and queer backpedaling. As much solidarity occurred in the same window into the present, but it's still disheartening because—despite being a postcolonialist like Bad Empanada is—he (and other Marxist-Leninists like him) look down at me; i.e., see me (and those like me) as just the middle-class fag chasing dreams. I'd say, "pot, meet kettle," but he's not gay!

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reify male queer loneliness expressed paradoxically through "monster mash" party music and "boogie"-men (e.g., "the vampire musical" from *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*, 2009; or Brian David Gilbert's Hee Bee Bee Gees' "[Stayin' Alive, Performed by a Vampire](#)," 2022)—*is* entirely valid, Lahti M. writing how the archetype/aesthetic is *canonically* tied to fascism; re:

the multiplicity of power and for ambivalent interaction of resistance and oppression in Tom's drawings. Tom's pictures draw attention to an idea, derived from Michel Foucault, that power and resistance are to be found in one and the same place. Although ways in which these images are used may give rise to subversive meanings they also circulate racist, sexist, and fascist



discourses that contradict their potentially radical meanings. Indeed, the problem with the transgressive pleasures is that transgression may help to sustain the limits that are supposed to be crossed and deconstructed by a transgressor ([source](#): Lahti M's "Dressing Up in Power: Tom of Finland and Gay Male Body Politics," 1998).

([source](#): *The Art Newspaper's "Tom of Finland's Bulging Beefcake Drawings Unveiled in London,"* 2020)

I mean, just *look* at the aesthetic: gay muscle with a mil spec ghost (the KISS-style sex police-rebel schtick) that can just as easily tokenize *for* the state in decay as not; i.e., queer sexiness as stylish and tied to a die-hard cult of death (that certainly had a self-hating/martyred flavor shortly before and during the AIDS



crisis). Such things are anisotropic, of course, but the temptation (and historical precedence; e.g., the LBGA) for tokenization, faux-medievalism, remains!

In Rob's case, he—as a leather daddy (dom or sub, I am not sure)—was wailing magnificently about alienation ("[Beyond the Realms of Death](#)," 1978) and fearsome vampires and Jack the Ripper (with gay men classically being likened to serial killers) some twenty-odd years before Halford actually came out as gay ("[The Ripper](#)" released in 1976; Halford came out in 1998)!

According to Foucault's *A History of Sexuality, Volume One* (1980), though, sex was generally attached to *activities*, not *identities* before the 19th century and didn't even delineate to a separate concept, *sexual*

*orientation*, until 1870 (common exceptions being the Amazon, hag and witch, and various other monsters [and the living people associated with them] as relegated to the dark, unspeakable imaginary space of the Gothic mode):

This new persecution of the peripheral sexualities entailed an *incorporation of perversions* and a new *specification of individuals*. 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. [... by Carl Westphal's publication of *Archiv für Neurologie* in 1870, whereas the] sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species ([source](#)).

Taboo activities like sodomy became "crimes against nature" tied to a "new species" that, before this point, simply didn't exist in terms of open medical discourse; *after* this point, these crimes (or rather, their hyperbolic, witch-hunt-style function when making allegations regardless of evidence) became increasingly visible in the medical field, but *also* in Gothic canon as open, synchronistic forms of *public*, discursive record: the homosexual<sup>312</sup> as dangerous to a middle-class audience,

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<sup>312</sup> I can understand Foucault lamenting this shift; i.e., as something that threatened his existence as a 20th-century homosexual man. Foucault ultimately died from AIDS in 1984, a disease that was blamed primarily on gay men while also being used to target and kill the gay community as political activists (with lesbian women usually being the ones to care for their dying male allies during the struggle; re: "[Why Order Matters](#)").

Still, knowing what I know about his own pedophilic tendencies (and those of his idol, Jean-Paul Sartre), I feel rather queasy reading passages like those about an 1867 farm hand from the village of Lapcourt in defense of irrefutably *pedophilic* activities:

who [...] living hand-to-mouth from a little charity or in exchange for the worst sort of labor, sleeping in barns and stables, was turned in to the authorities. At the border of a field, he had obtained a few caresses from a little girl, just as he had done before and seen done by the village urchins round about him; for, at the edge of the wood, or in the ditch by the road leading to Saint-Nicolas, they would play the familiar game called "curdled milk." So he was pointed out by the girl's parents to the mayor of the village, reported by the mayor to the gendarmes, led by the gendarmes to the judge, who indicted him and turned him over first to a doctor, then to two other experts who not only wrote their report but also had it published. What is the significant thing about this story? The pettiness of it all; the fact that this everyday occurrence in the life of village sexuality, these inconsequential bucolic pleasures, could become, from a certain time, the object not only of a collective intolerance but of a judicial action, a medical intervention, a careful clinical examination, and an entire theoretical elaboration ([ibid.](#)).

It's incredibly dishonest for Foucault to even use the phrase "theoretical elaboration," here. For one, it involves actual peoples—including but not limited to the man being "#Me-Too'd" for "playing" with the little girl. His grumbling has its own nostalgic theme, with Foucault seeing the ending of the pre-17th century's frankness as a "twilight [that] soon fell upon this bright day, followed by the monotonous nights of the Victorian bourgeoisie. Sexuality was carefully confined; it moved into the home."

To this, critiquing the home as a site of sexual abuse *is* valid (many Gothic stories do just that). However, Foucault isn't isolating or critiquing sexual abuse; he's lamenting the evolution of older sexual practices in the medieval past, before sexual orientation and gender identity were even established! As such, his fairytale regression in 1980—towards good, old-fashioned sodomy as

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initially with Le Fanu's lesbian-tinged *Carmilla* in 1872 (next page) onto Bram Stoker's 1897 anti-Semitic<sup>313</sup> image of the *male* vampire standing over the maiden's bed to threaten her boobies (and other parts) with unspeakable

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unencumbered by modern rules—completely ignores the legitimate, moral arguments to be made in defense of those who are most prone to be sexually abused in the *modern* world; and in doing so, Foucault speaks to a time when these abusive practices could be done as he, himself, did them during his own lifetime; re: [his predatory sex tourism](#), [desire to abolish age of consent laws in France](#), and [an addiction to self-destruction and \(coercive\) sadomasochist sex](#); i.e., *humiliating* sodomy being associated with the homosexual man as criminal from the perspective of the self-hating queer (and cis-het reactionaries).

Sexuality and gender are defined by the societies in which they form, and calling for a "tolerance" of abusive behaviors *now* just because "no one cared" *back then* is rape apologia, pure and simple; it's not "speaking truth to power" but rather using one's own power and privilege to get what one wants, and Foucault wanted to sexually "liberate" minors (an old cliché in the academic world; re: Beauvoir and Sartre waxing nostalgic about the Renaissance). Furthermore, he's completely ignoring the power imbalances that he, not the bourgeoisie, would have had over these persons as a prominent, male French intellectual; i.e., the material conditions by which to manipulate them and the incredibly bad precedent this sets, mid-exploitation.

It's entirely possible to critique institutional sexism, progress society towards post-scarcity using pre-capitalist language, and defend children/queer people at the same time, but Foucault doesn't even try (to be fair, the language of inclusive queer theory was woefully underdeveloped when he wrote *A History of Sexuality*). He instead makes a regressive, predatory ultimatum, arguing for a return to an *amoral* time in order to benefit himself. That, taking the "theoretical" arguments and applying them to Foucault's actions in the material world, we get to the truth of the man as a socio-material outcome: Foucault's arguments about power *could* be used to critique material conditions when used by someone else, but ultimately were used by *Foucault* to cultivate power, prestige and material around himself; i.e., as a privileged, entitled thinker (Chomsky, [despite having ties to sexual predator Jeffery Epstein](#) [re: "Epstein's Private Calendar Reveals Prominent Names"], once called Foucault the most amoral person he ever met [[source](#): "On Human Nature," 1971]. Pot, meet kettle).

As practicing Gothic Communists, we should take what was useful from Foucault (re: acknowledge homosexual existence and persecution under a Western juridical system medicalizing them as alien) and apply to this inclusively to all GNC peoples—all while acknowledging and leaving Foucault's dated, medieval predation of underaged boys behind. Rape is rape, and there's no place for it in a post-scarcity world except as something to camp (re: to put "rape" in quotes during ludo-Gothic BDSM).

<sup>313</sup> Re: Lynn Stuart Parramore writes in "Like QAnon's Capitol Rioters, the Nashville Bomber's Lizard People Theory Is Deadly Serious" (2021):

The notion of shape-shifting, blood-sucking reptilian humanoids invading Earth to control the human race sounds like a cheesy sci-fi plot. But it's actually a very old trope with disturbing links to anti-immigrant and anti-Semitic hostilities dating to the 19th century. [...] Bram Stoker's "Dracula," the 1897 tale of a Romanian vampire who plans to take over London using his renowned shape-shifting abilities, also carries traces of this trope. The count possesses a number of reptilian qualities — from his association with the knightly Order of the Dragon, from which his name derives, to his cold-blooded nature and talent for shimmying down walls lizard-fashion. Dracula's protruding teeth, pointed ears and blood-sucking habits mark him as a species apart, a motif of "othering" read by some critics [as code for Jewishness](#). From this perspective, Stoker's book is part of the British response to the increasing numbers of Jewish immigrants arriving from Eastern Europe. The vampire is a stealthy invader, passing as a proper citizen but secretly plotting domination and destruction ([source](#)).

As usual, such things were made "to defend" (white, straight, middle-class) women and children; i.e., from any bias or bigotry that, itself, could be recombined to antagonize nature and put it to work through sodomy arguments and witch hunts.

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penetration! It's a literally a morality-play argument through monster panic built on top of older forms!

This is classic abjection, of course, canonically projecting such things onto an ethnic minority and a later an openly queer-coded one; e.g., with Father Schedoni from Radcliffe's *Italian* preparing to stab what's-her-name in the boob while she slept, or Lewis' Ambrosio camping the idea in *The Monk* with his "beauteous orb" scene, then proceeding onto *Carmilla*, *Dracula* and a million other copycats that lost all irony previously afforded to them; i.e., xenophobically threatening the state apparatus of women owned by men, including gay men in the closet (or not).



(artist: [David Henry Friston](#))

To this, capital has defended itself in ways that routinely decay feminism and the monstrous-feminine (queerness and punk, etc) through ambiguously gay (or at least heteroflexible) thinkers that belong to societal positions bringing with them a fair degree of privilege—Foucault, of course, but also Angela Carter focusing on white

women (similar to Beauvoir before her, *vis-à-vis* "woman is other" being a cis- and white supremacist device); i.e., "women" excluding anything else to treat the monstrous-feminine as a symbol of violence that Barbara Creed unironically attached to Freudian psychoanalysis (re: "Medusa's Head," 1922).

Like, girl... why? Freud, like Foucault, had some useful ideas, but the man himself was a giant homophobic *quack* (an Austrian cokehead that synonymized psychosexual development and the nuclear family [thus the home] with straight-up rape and violence).

*We'll return to Creed and her additions to vampiric scholarship in just a moment. Selective reading remains important to scholarly synthesis and an-Com praxis. I'd like to go on a (roughly seven-page—eleven if you include footnotes) tangent unpacking that, vis-à-vis my throwing in a critique of Marxist-Leninism (and Bad Empanada). —Perse*



Oddly enough, so was *Foucault*, preying on his own group, homosexual men, while obviously synonymizing their shared orientation as something to weaponize *against* his assorted victims; i.e., his thinking placed him on a pedestal he then used to prey on less-advantaged members in the same larger

communities (the student body and neighboring areas); re, Foucault's posthumously published 1993 interview with Edmund White:

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](#)).

In short, Foucault *decayed* (and in more ways than one—bad joke), starting to feed on his own kind while selling them out; i.e., through a problematic legacy that would haunt the queer world for years to come (said world doing *their* best to camp *their* holocaust in the shadows: taking the language Foucault tainted back from his ghost and building on it to liberate themselves [all queer peoples, not just homosexual cis men] with).

The expression "don't throw stones in glass houses" leaps to mind. As an intellectual celebrity and gay maverick dying of AIDS, Foucault (and his ghost) became free to s(t)ate his perverse, sex-coercive addictions in public, thus were archived as a form of discourse on the subject of queer expression; i.e., operating in ways he academically explored only so far as it benefited his predation: as the academic darling enjoying the maverick status so long as he left the state alone (re: [Swain](#)). He did so despite his various nuggets of truth and usual productive theories about prison abuse and queer (male-homosexual) alienation. They formed together, thus require careful effort when separating as a matter of praxis moving forwards.

So while Capitalism's traumatizing of workers leads us to form or otherwise acquire strange appetites—i.e., that historically pushes workers of various kinds and creeds to prey on ourselves for profit (often encouraging pre-existing stereotypes that lead to police violence all over again)—we shouldn't lean into those appetites in a sex-coercive way nor defend those who did! This is very much a case of practicing what you preach as, itself, being a work-in-progress, hence needing workers (which scholars are) to actually admit when they're wrong.

Leading by example, I've spent the past three (soon to be four) books critiquing the monstrous-feminine as Amazonian in ways that must be liberated from such narrow utilizations of sex and force for the state; i.e., the revenge of women—narrowly defined as white and straight, in the mid-1970s into the present, by second wave feminists seeing queerness as yet-another threat to foist onto the dark xenomorphic entity called "sodomy": as something to punch, not humanize.

In short, right around the time Carter, Rice and Moers were cutting their teeth, feminists started to raise their own moral panics, decaying into lobotomized

versions of "state vampirism"; i.e., little vampires serving the Man per dualities of monstrous language and the terrorist/counterterrorist dichotomy the proletariat cannot cease, merely subvert; e.g., me camping people like Janice Raymond (more on them in a moment), but also academia's less obviously problematic darlings from the 1970s onwards (as well as Marx and older bigoted nerds).

As such, Gothic Communists must camp our own rape through uphill dialogs with ghosts (of Freud, Marx, Foucault, etc), treating nothing as sacred but basic human rights for *all* oppressed groups (and those of animals and the environment); i.e., by anisotropically taking what is socio-materially useful from older forms, then building on that by camping their canonical iterations; i.e., to "make them gay" as an-Coms do as a matter of survival: to explain (to our critics) how turning a blind eye to vampires and older problematic theory about them is to turn a blind eye to much of the world and how it works beyond material analysis alone.



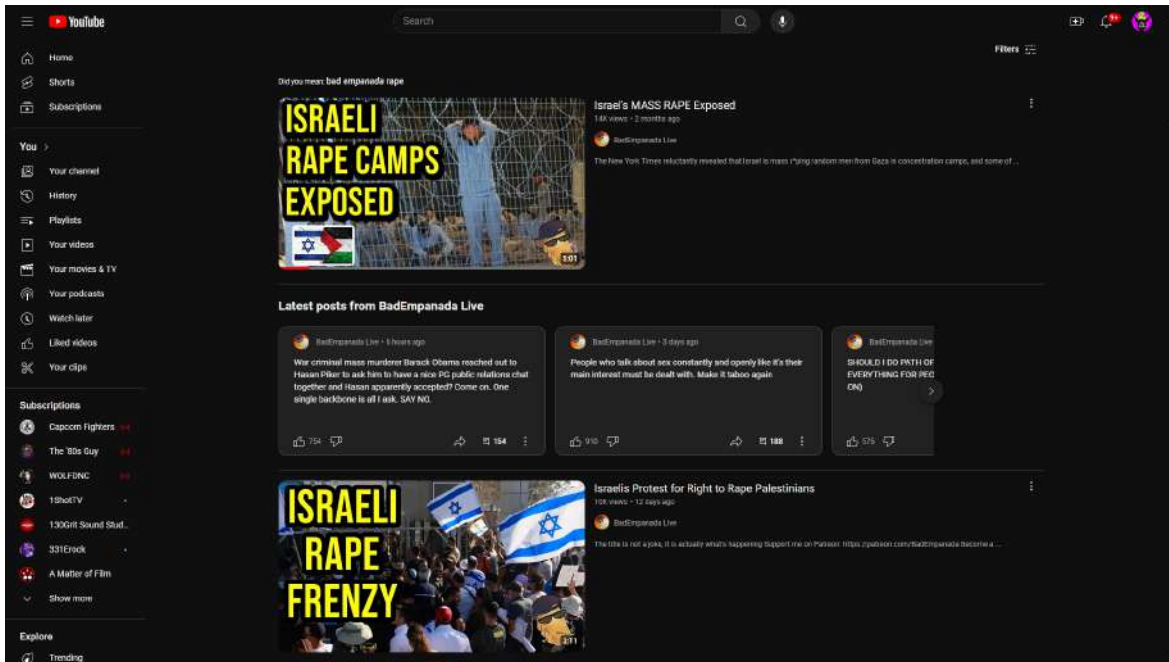
For example, Bad Empanada—a Marxist-Leninist with Maoist leanings—is pretty much stone blind to the social-sexual aspect of Communist development and monstrous-feminine dialogs; i.e., to the fact that GNC people exist in the Global South and that they use social media to express themselves as queer and/or sex workers, thus

monstrous in ways comparable to their northern cousins.

In turn, he's blind towards sense and sensibility as combined; i.e., with themselves and Gothic poetics, but also work *with* sex. Sex workers are historically raped by the state and discounted by other activists and schools thereof, including Marxist-Leninism (which historically focuses on factory workers, not sex work). He *really* needs to check his privilege/ego<sup>314</sup> and re-examine the queerphobic, "do gay stuff later/never" history of his own movement (which we'll unpack in this tangent), but also locate a little more nuance when it comes to social studies, BDSM and his sex-negative stances on them; i.e., his inability to talk about these things with any degree of subtly or consideration for the victims.

<sup>314</sup> I can't speak to his age, but Bad Empanada looks (and acts) like he's in his late twenties or early thirties; i.e., a sophomore, or "wise fool." I was about the same age before I went "back to school"; i.e., both literally but also while coming out of the closet in ways that opened my eyes to queer struggles and the therapeutic qualities to BDSM—until I eventually coined "ludo-Gothic BDSM" as new scholarship in my PhD. But being 38 myself, I have probably ten years (or so) on Bad Empanada, thus have had more time to reflect on/alter my positions; i.e., by meeting people who would influence me to change, thus come out of the closet and build on queer scholarship being, like all scholarship, a cumulative enterprise (more on this in part one of "Understanding Vampires"). He's arrogant, but half-baked—needing more time to learn and grow away from his harmful cloistering.

I'm not blind to the realities of discussing genocide and sexualized police-style settler-colonial violence in a frank and straightforward manner—i.e., to raise funds for a valid and incredibly time-sensitive cause—but slapping "rape" in big cartoon letters on all of your thumbnails, and then acting like the smartest person in the room because you have the material side of things down pat, feels not just monumentally insensitive and crass, but also superior and full-of-yourself:



As someone who writes about rape therapy and treatment but also prevention all the time, herself, I get the paradox of needing to discuss taboo subjects in ways that get people's attention (and no one, I think, has ever accused me of acting subtle about it); but Bad Empanada's approach, again, feels incredibly tone deaf and white-savior to the actual victims being harmed—not middle-class people like me, but rape victims all around the world, North or South!

He might turn right back around and respond, "Does it matter? They're being bombed and it needs to stop!" And I would agree, the bombing *does* need to stop (and Israel completely dismantled, America [and all nation-states] defanged, etc). But all the same, Bad Empanada's words "People who talk about sex constantly and openly like it's their main interest must be dealt with. Make it taboo again" is right there on the screen (above)—once more showing his double standards at play and prioritizing of quick-and-dirty money through blunt-force methods that champion a single group of people through his usual, take-no-prisoners style.

This unto itself feels thoroughly less offensive on its own, but it utterly *witthers* on the vine once we take his callousness towards sex work and dismissal of queer rights (through open dialogs about sex, including rape/sex abuse) into consideration; re: "make it taboo again" unless *he's* doing it for what *he* thinks is

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important; i.e., "my cause is valid" (even though he's not Palestinian, female and/or queer) and "I can do this for one group, but you can't speak for yourself or others." In my opinion, such selection and superiority does far more harm than good. It's a huge red flag (and one that Communist states historically have contributed towards; the state commits rape by design, especially against gay people).

Furthermore, from one perennially sarcastic, middle-class, over-educated person to another, babe, you can play at Edward Said<sup>315</sup> without stooping to such

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<sup>315</sup> Said made his own mistakes when critiquing famous media and personalities; e.g., Jane Austen *vis-à-vis Culture and Imperialism* (1993). As I write in the essay "Gothic Communism, a sample essay: "Cornholing the Corn Lady—*Ghostbusters: Afterlife* and Empire," from Volume One:

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-pressing 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

abrasiveness, calumny and canard, or in-fighting alienating yourself from other activists and victims; i.e., optics actually *kind* of matter when discussing rape/sexual assault, and we middle-class fags (also hailing from the Imperial Core, like you do) aren't your enemy in this situation—the state is.

Banging on a drum and shouting "rape!" then—i.e., loudly and over and over while being quick to discredit others for largely cosmetic reasons you yourself share<sup>316</sup> while implying you aren't of their ilk/aren't queer thus overly concerned

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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 ([source](#)).

In short, when in Rome, you don't want to assume you know everything about its inhabitants or that they, regardless if they don't do activism like you do (which is to say, write novels versus banging on a trashcan and shouting "rape!" at the top of your lungs). There's more than one way to skin a cat, my dude, different activists working at different speeds to accomplish the same goal of universal liberation.

<sup>316</sup> Specifically your being middle-class and of the Global North. By comparison, Edward Said was a US citizen; he also taught at Columbia, wore a three-piece suit and wrote from relative luxury about his fellow oppressed elsewhere, refusing to wear a bulletproof vest despite writing both about "the problem of representation and the necessity of a political critique that is also a cultural critique" ([source](#): Ella Shohat's "In Memory of Edward Said – The Bulletproof Intellectual," 2014) earning him many unwarranted detractors and critics; re: *Culture and Imperialism*.

with "pure social issues" (as you yourself openly state). Yet in doing so, you write off, tone-police and otherwise dismiss others who demonstrably know more far more than you do in specific fields. It's possible to do good work and bad in any expertise; your one-track mind just makes you seem vain and Icarian, but also like you really don't understand what it's like to *be* queer/raped, yourself.

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Simply to it, as Said enjoyed his pleasures of exile, so do you; i.e., despite your dual citizenship, you make a considerable amount of money (enough to be considered middle class, anyways). Should we just dismiss everything you say because of that, like many of Said's critics did with him? I don't think so, nor is your calling on the rejection of others valid for much the same reasons.



However, I also don't think we should hang on your every word because you primarily *reject* the social-sexual aspect of revolution (unlike Edward Said, oddly enough, but also Marx, who loved to write with the language of ghosts, vampires and other undead monsters; re: Castricano), and use your myopic, rather carcinogenic and Puritanical approach towards activism to say whatever vitriol you want about others; e.g., attacking and discounting large numbers of creators for being "Contrapoints clones" isn't good criticism on its face (and I don't even like Natalie Wynn; re: ["Inside the Hall of Mirrors"](#)); i.e., it starts to sound more and more like a dogwhistle and blanket, filibuster approach to discourse, weighing your recent comments with past behaviors, your origins and your political leanings, *et al.* It's really not a good look, my dude.

To it, Said's combination of class and critique (and his distance/privilege) gave him added perspective, and enhanced his arguments through a willingness to play with cultural devices; your distance/willful omissions/refusal to play with such things yourself—alongside your complete, unfiltered lack of restraint—is hostile, alienating and at times, thoroughly childish, grating and apathetic. Call me sensitive and masturbatory if you wish; I'm still reeling by just how standoffish, dated and SWERF-y you feel, thus overly sheltered and hypersensitive, yourself. Unable to play with others, you feel exclusionary and one-note—come off as a lopsided, anemic, pale-and-pernicious imitation. Something human is desperately missing from your work, lending the entire corpus a stale, robotic, isolated, and at times classist/class-reductive signature. I respect your tooth-and-nail fight for the Palestinians greatly (and other exploited workers), but you needn't do that and fall back on second wave feminist tropes and Marxist-Leninist tendencies!

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I could be wrong in that respect—and if I am I thoroughly apologize, one queer person and rape victim to another—but you really don't sound like one; you sound like a straight man on a high horse playing white savior through queerphobic *Marxist* obscurantism (with BDSM code for Communists, but also gay people and Nazis; i.e., the Russian state being infamously unfriendly to queer people from Tchaikovsky to Mikhail Kuzmin to Vladimir Nabokov, father and son). Moving to Argentina doesn't change that, nor does citing Said, Mao or anyone else in the academic world (the latter using his librarian's acquisition of older theories to apply them in ways I don't think Marx would have signed off on). Alienation of your peers is likewise something you want to avoid, lest you keep putting your foot in your mouth. Indeed, you could learn from Said, himself (see: last footnote), but also Mao, Stalin, and many others of the Marxist-Leninist school; i.e., from their *mistakes*, including to tailor a less drab, more colorful, queer-friendly approach.



(artist: [Yevgeny Fiks](#); source: "Outcasts: The Last Queer Soviet Generation," 2024)

To that, try to understand that it is both possible to be right and wrong at the same time (as you often are); e.g., Beethoven was right, but not always (see: Napoleon; re: [John Clubbe](#))—he was also a massive prick who alienated just about everyone around him. And Stalin, despite outlawing homosexuality in the Union, [had a pedophile best friend who raped little girls for fun](#) (Behind the Bastard's "Part One: Beria: Stalin's Pedophile Cop & the Soviet Oppenheimer," 2024). In either case, denouncing or otherwise poo-pooing such critiques by focusing on what your political/academic rivals' actual or perceived flaws are (attached to their queer character, as you so often do) is, itself, thoroughly bad praxis.

In other words, the less time we spend fighting each other to split hairs (with you being the proverbial bee in my bonnet), the more we can focus on more important things like development for all peoples—united, not divided and attacking ourselves. Simply put, while we fags like a good fight—humbling lone-wolf cis-het dickheads such as yourself while tearing you a new asshole ("Get 'em, girl!" says Ginger, watching from the sidelines)—it's both incredibly tiresome and annoying to have to explain to someone in the Internet Age (who should know better) that we are not criminal or aligned with state forces. But such is activism, and I won't call this wasted ink (one, you need to be checked, and two, this is a battle of pens, and I'm a far better writer than you).

Gay or not, an-Coms aren't vampires, Bad Empanada. So kindly pull Mao's dick out of your mouth, and quit treating queer creators and an-Com scholars like we're some kind of inflatable, monolithic boxing clown you can punch until you get tired. Many approaches are valid, with rushing to the quickest (and angriest) only



opening yourself up to a more patient and iron-clad/fortified approach. Your smugness or childish forum-style antics aren't an invisibility cloak and your hubris, laziness and bigotry are showing.

All in all, someone like Bad Empanada doesn't strike me as the kind of person to admit when he's wrong and learn from it (to speak our language), but rather to dig himself into a hole, bunker down and stick to his guns. Broken clocks, 'n all, but such things only serve to alienate him from the very people he professes to help. It becomes a curious repeating of Christopher Hitchens' "[Why Women Aren't Funny](#)" (2007), albeit relaid by a postcolonial know-it-all excluding queer voices to act like *he's* the man with the one-and-only plan; re: speaking for others. It's white moderacy with more steps; i.e., cutting your nose off to spite your face.

Intersectional solidarity matters, Bad Empanada, and no matter how right your cause is with the Palestinians (and commendable your aid to them is), your intensely unlikeable behavior towards queer people doesn't help matters—not in the long run if you go around acting like you're the only one who's right and the rest of us can't help them too; i.e., you, treating us, as mere "centrists in disguise." Well, I'm Queen Shit of Fuck Mountain (no centrist), and you ain't all that, dude; quit acting like a baby and grow up!

And in case anyone wants to argue in bad faith for my "wavering and unconditional support" of Foucault (or anyone else in this section), we're purposefully inspecting the past to "kill its darlings" that we might progress towards a better, yet-to-exist possible world; re (from Volume One):

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.

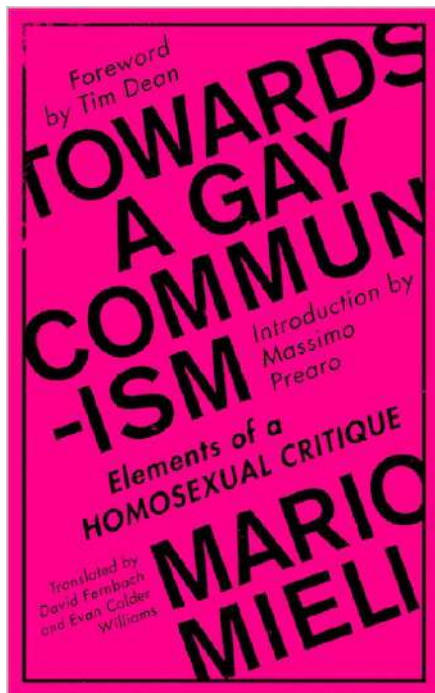
For us and Gothic Communism, worker safety is sacred and supersedes *any* icon who came before and iconoclasts absolutely shouldn't hesitate to tear down/camp their harmful reputations [read on, in that volume, to see a list of old famous people we need to critique] ([source](#)).

To that, it's not "Red Scare" to hold old rebels and revolutionaries accountable, because they were often exclusionary and incredibly harmful, themselves; i.e., the queer side of Marxism having an anarchist bent into the 1970s and beyond<sup>317</sup> that would have challenged said leaders; re: Stalin, but also Lenin and Marx'

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<sup>317</sup> As I write in "Making Marx Gay":

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 women[3], first and foremost, while not having the most comprehensive understanding of trans people[4]. 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*.



([source](#): Pluto Press)

Anyone who shoves asides the rights of one group for another—as Bad Empanada does for GNC people in defense of the Palestinians—needs to be weighed by the queerphobic history of Marxist-Leninism they're imitating in the present moment.

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homophobia<sup>318</sup> continuing into the Russian Federation under Putin, but also China (some places, like Vietnam or Thailand, afford protections for queer people, but these are hardly the norm; i.e., because they go against profit/the state model and, more often than not, date back centuries and exist *alongside* colonial exploitation: they're state concessions or cultural relics, not a byproduct of Marxist-Leninism).

To it, *my* critique of Marxist-Leninism through Bad Empanada—essentially calling for queer nuance from him during postcolonial struggles—isn't automatically

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<sup>318</sup> Despite Sherry Wolf calling "Marxist homophobia" a myth, such things were founded on a considerable amount of truth. Not only was Marx and Engel's silence about homosexuals telling as a historical byproduct of the times in which they lived, but it constitutes a double standard that well outlived them into future forms of apology concerning both thinkers:

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 ([source](#): "The Myth of Marxist Homophobia," 2009).

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 ([source](#): "Making Marx Gay").

In other words, there was a blind spot in their work that neither man lived to correct. And frankly, there's no guarantee that they *would* have. Certainly, plenty afterwards did not, including Lenin, Stalin and many other Soviets, Chinese and Americans alike. So no, Wolf, these men *aren't* infallible gods, meaning we *should* criticize them; i.e., to camp their ghosts, not suck their dicks and ignore the lived reality of their movement's effects on so many queer people (which extends to cis-het groups through lateral abuses)! Equality and liberation *needs* to be universal or it leads to the same kinds of problems that academics still apologize for in the present day—the state and Marxist-Leninism!

To perhaps belabor the point, fighting for one group does *not* guarantee you will fight for another (see: tokenism in the present); i.e., Marx and Engels, the men, fought for many groups, but turned a blind eye to others that carried into Marxist-Leninism over its entire lifespan. As such, the consequences of Marx's buried dialogs with Engels (and exclusion of queerness at large) can be felt in nearly two centuries of arrested development, the state resisting changes away from heteronormativity on either side of the Iron Curtain!

"centrist," nor is it me "siding with America" (or whatever stupid argument someone like Bad Empanada wants to snivel about). If anything, we should *avoid* such nostalgia purely to *prevent* Capitalist Realism; i.e., said Realism ironically occurring when trying to revive Communist states by *not* critiquing Marxist-Leninism *enough*. It's not hard! Certainly there's no love lost between those *I* critique, including Foucault, but also those *they* critiqued and built upon in their own work leading to mine; i.e., me wishing they were gayer than they actually were (with "gayness" speaking to an-Com liberation from state mechanisms and their own exceptions and tyrannies); re: Marx and those who carried out his work, the Bolsheviks, in queer-exclusionary ways.



Please bear in mind, we'll look at Lenin's refreshingly *queer-friendly* exceptions—but also his tragic *failure* to keep Stalin and Soviet regression (thus fascism) in check—when we examine Dr. Uncola's tweets about early Soviet queer progressivism, in "Leaving the Closet":

An important disclaimer, however, is that the national attitude towards gay and trans people wasn't unanimously supportive. While many were sympathetic or ambivalent, there was a faction of the Bolsheviks who wanted

it outlawed again. Among them was this guy. You might know him [shows photo of Stalin] ([source tweet](#), Dr. Uncola: July 1st, 2023).

In short, there was no place for gay people in their view of the world *when push came to shove* (again, we'll unpack this more when we look at Stalin). From Stalin onwards (and Mao, too, and all of their imitators), Marxist-Leninism decays under threat of force to sacrifice queer rights, thus spiral towards nominal Communist fragmentation and neoliberal Capitalism and *Marxist* Capitalist Realism; i.e., said states (and their cops) abusing the environment and nature at great expense of worker and animal life and contributing towards climate change as all states do. All States Are Bad! ASAB! Again, put a pin in that; we'll come back to it, as well, in "Leaving the Closet."

Including Bad Empanada's unironically Stalinist rhetoric ("make it illegal again"), we need to meaningfully challenge all of these inherited confusions and misconceptions, lest we fall into the same dogmatic pitfalls (and academic, cis-het hubris) that people like Bad Empanada are currently doing in their own mixed work; i.e., using veiled sodomy argumentation (re: BDSM bans) to actively close their minds, punching down to help one group at the cost of another by demonizing the latter having its own equally valid concerns. Again, my criticism speaks not to Bad Empanada's rightful treatment of Jessie Gender as Zionist, but to his weird dogwhistle calling "all discussions" of sex (except his) to be made taboo.

Well, "just a joke" or not, such behavior only seeks to divide and anger allies, making them feel unafraid because you don't think they're human, or otherwise worth considering. Calling yourself a Marxist-Leninist and postcolonialist doesn't grant you blanket immunity to say what you like, Bad Empanada, because neither you nor Marx and the state are beyond reproach; and frankly dehumanizing your critics out-of-turn just because you disagree with them, or because you see all of us as "the same" kind of tracks with older cults of personality in love with Lenin's approach to things: as spectral, nostalgic, something to chase. Whatever the reason, it's a bit mechanical and controlling—manifesting in ways that really turn me off to the rest of your work (you're not the only postcolonialist in existence, dude, and I can hear the same arguments without being belittled by a hypocrite with a chip on his shoulder).

In keeping with all this talk about ghosts, much of the abuse we queers suffer from the state is spectral; i.e., insofar as it's made illegal and whispered about precisely because *it's* taboo, thus not always documented (especially in the Soviet Period, but likewise after it). To be queer is to be raped by the state, which often enough, leaves behind a great gulf where something both is and isn't; re, Hogle's restless labyrinth: "standing on the ashes of something not quite present," a vanishing point and a lonely grave!



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

As such, knowledge and execution are built on themselves often being at odds for liberation as being a historically "for me, not for thee" proposition fielded by supremacists vs critics and activists of different things; i.e., from Freudian psychoanalysis being a '70s, '80s and '90s academic go-to, becoming far more Marxist but also GNC-inclusive after the Fall of the Soviet Union; e.g., *vis-à-vis* my work and combination of Gothic theory with dialectical-material analysis, camping Freud and Marx, but also Creed! To do so requires being aware of such things to begin with, and having a willingness to change course while picking and choosing what works best towards universal liberation (re: Sandy Norton on Foucault's speculative richness, in "[The Imperialism of Theory](#)," 1994). Historically the state doesn't—and given the kinds of willful (or hostile) ignorance levied by uptight Marxist-Leninists like Bad Empanada (who loves to administer *ad hominens* while going overboard; i.e., furiously attacking others for their position as much as their arguments, slinging mean-spirited shit until he's alienated himself from allies in the process)—it will only continue to do so into the future! Revolution tops from below.

Ending our tangent on selective reading and Marxist-Leninism (and having paddled Bad Empanada and Marx' naughty bottoms long enough), let's return to Creed; i.e., as part of the same broad conversation, taking whatever to say whatever to achieve liberation; i.e., Gothic theory and poetics; e.g., vampires and Freud, but also the monstrous-feminine as she saw it during the ubiquitous misnomer, "the end of history." Per Derrida, the spectres of Marx lived on, but these generally weren't of the man or his state-happy followers. At least, not *all* of them were; voices would start to rise for a change in direction, if not overall plan.

Regarding vampirism, Creed wrote the *Monstrous-Feminine* in 1993; i.e., based on academics from the 1970s, but also Freud haunting third wave feminism. While standing on Freud's shoulders and only expanding on *The Monstrous-Feminine* three decades down the road (re: [Return of the Monstrous-Feminine](#), 2022), I can't help but feel like she cited the old man for clout, back in '93 (most academics did, to be fair). Certainly she could have focused more on other groups, but she also was a third wave feminist, not a GNC person. It only makes sense, then, that I would do so for her while tracing Creed's footsteps towards a better outcome she herself could see even less well than I:



(exhibit 41g1a2: Artist, left: [Cherry Mouse Street](#); source, top: [Vampire Freaks](#). "Any free woman in an unfree society will be a monster." While Angela Carter's popular adage is a ringing sentiment on paper, in truth it smacks of cis voices speaking about cis women first and foremost; i.e., their imprisoned and "kept" status policing GNC elements by conflating them with state abuses [re: the Alien Queen and tokophobia, punched by Ripley, mid-*Amazonomachia*<sup>319</sup>]. While it was the '70s and I can't blame Carter for any active ill will, it didn't take especially long [in the grand scheme of things] for female bigots to turn her message into dead dogma, a tokenized war-like platitude excluding trans women like myself from the revolutionary equation. Their carceral violence, anger and stigmatized "chaos-dragon" status were legitimate, not ours.

As if the monstrous-feminine pareidolia weren't inscribed all over our essence-swallowing mouths, soft bodies and girl-cocks [the forbidden, potent objects of desire for many cis-het men]! Yet, the double standard is plain: cis-supremacist women see themselves as wrongly-accused, incarcerated and executed Medusas, whereas we trans folk are "false-women"; i.e., killer crossdressers putting on sodomy vaudeville in bad faith to try and score some "oppression points" in the bargain [stolen valor but for victims]. It's completely ludicrous, but the vengeful honor killings/rape ranking remain quite real.

<sup>319</sup> From "[Solving Riddles; or, Following in Medusa's Footsteps](#)" (2024).

*As for Creed, as much as I obviously liked her idea, "monstrous-feminine," I still felt like I needed to expand on and push said idea away from the whole "castrating mother" thing—i.e., out of Freud's big, dumb shadow and the nuclear family model but also away from biologically centered feminism [quaintly focused on—ah, yes, "film" as the hip new thing all the kids are consuming]*

*In almost all critical writings on the horror film, woman is conceptualized only as victim. In The Monstrous-Feminine, Barbara Creed challenges this patriarchal view by arguing that the prototype of all definitions of the monstrous is the female reproductive body ([source](#)).*

*and towards an updated realm of cross-media discourse that could actually voice my concerns in the Internet Age: as a ludologist trans woman threatened as much by angry "biological" TERFs colonizing Medusa as cis-het men and -queers were. Any and all of them could, did, and will refuse to be victims by unironically razing Cain [that was a pun] while burning us at the stake; i.e., fascist chaos triangulating through tokenized violence.)*



Compared to male vampires like Dracula or Rob Halford, which emerged in more visible ways for much of human history (as property-owning men versus female property acting out), the *female* vampire—and her orgasmic, wantonly xenophilic energies marrying raw lust with the owning of property over men by women—was generally something that couldn't be conceived in the popular Western imagination until its Gothic side had expanded to account for such socio-material factors; i.e., not just enough to grant women the ability to even speak in public discourse (with women banned from acting as late as the Renaissance), but also to flaunt their possessions and their desires. Consider Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*—a homoerotic story written by a longtime LGBTQ ally from an admittedly conventional source: a closeted bisexual woman writing about homosexual men to eroticize them in monstrous, conventional ways; i.e., the *Female Gaze*, but one that consciously humanized them in monstrous language that others less principled (or queer<sup>320</sup>) than Rice would abjure, past, present and future (see: footnote).

<sup>320</sup> Whereas Sherry Wolf apologizes for Marx a little bit too charitably in "The Myth of Marxist Homophobia," I find it's much easier to play defense for Anne Rice in my own writing. Unlike Marx, Rice was arguably practicing as gay in her work and her life (and her son certainly is); i.e., standing and being recognized during times of moral panic (which, while the first English trial directly against a man described as "homosexual" would happen with Oscar Wilde in 1895, trials for sodomy\* actually preceded Marx' birth in 1818 by decades, and living in England from 1849 onwards would have seen gay men as alien much like any other bigot of the time); e.g., Marlow Stern's "Anne Rice Opens Up: 'I Feel Like I'm Gay'" (2017):

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I've never associated AIDS with vampires, myself. I've always been very much a champion of gay rights, and art produced by gay people—whether it was the early *Frankenstein* movies that had such a gay sensibility to them, or any art created by gay people. I'm highly sensitive to it. I have a gay sensibility. I get teased a lot by my gay friends because we have a rapport on things we find exciting or interesting. It's very hard for me to remember that I have a gender, and that they're treating me in a negative way because of that gender (Marlow Stern's "Anne Rice Opens Up: 'I Feel Like I'm Gay'" ([source](#))).

And certainly the vampiric poetic trends she played with and modified (while turning a buck) were made in ways she inherited and changed for others to abuse in turn, while *she* continually refused to.

\*Re (from Colin Broadmoor's "Camping the Canon," 2021):

*Victims of the law were ritually humiliated 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](#)).*

By comparison, Marx and Engels created ideas that other abused, which they a) eponymized and b) excluded queer people from. Marx wasn't ignorant of queer people and their persecution (see: above). He and Engels simply chose (to the degree that anyone can, under accident of birth) to alienate them—an exclusionary quality that reflects in the queerphobic people and structures that survived and were built uncritically from both men's body of work. Want to help cis women? Engels has you covered! Gay people and GNC? Crickets; re (from "Making Marx Gay"):

For [Marx] 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 *Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024 [vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

And if you're too lazy to read footnotes, the state—but also Marx and his ilk in the years that followed his and Engels' work—have historically been asleep at the wheel following the death of these men; i.e., they are *not* culturally conscious/woke to nearly the degree required, because it reduces largely to laborers and factory work instead of the kinds of embarrassing positions and non-factory labor (re: women's work) pushed *off* onto queer people by cis-het people (often women)

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material obstacles to sexual freedom the ideological barriers can fall. This raises far-reaching possibilities for a genuine sexual revolution on all fronts ([source](#)).

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! ([source](#)).

In short, we don't want to apologize for the past and our cross our fingers. Capitalist or Marxist-Leninist, the state simply isn't gay by function, putting us at the bottom while it fucks us in ways we don't agree to or want.

As such, if the state isn't gay enough, make something gayer that it! Your survival—and that of all queer people across space and time—depends on it (closeting in silence and silence is genocide):

*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 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

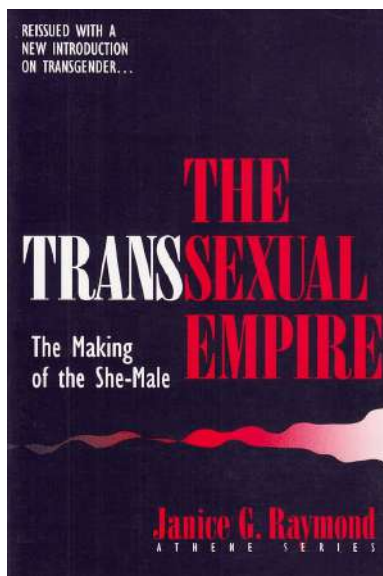
However private they may have kept them, it doubtless affected their ability to speak out loud concerning the rights of gender-non-conforming persons and their divergent sexualities. So we, by camping their ghosts, must not be silent like theirs were/are; we must use any means at our disposal to "cry out," including novels and movies, but also videogames and their franchised material ([ibid.](#)).

Make *everything* gay where it is not; however irreversibly affixed to history at large, and/or ghostly and sacred, don't be afraid to change it! Make Marx and Communism gayer than Marxist-Leninism dared! From the Base to the Superstructure, camp all aspects of it to account for all peoples then, now and in the future. This isn't a trolley problem—i.e., where one side has to die—but a gradual and total freeing of all those involved from such raw deals, once and for all!

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punching down: the things that society treats like its toilet, out of sight and out of mind except to make a cruel, dehumanizing joke regarding or to pull out of the gutter and "make respectable" (to assimilate).

That's what the abjection process is, and the state—being fundamentally straight—uses abjection to historically and categorically exclude its enemies. Chief among those excluded are queer folk, often alienated by tokenized cis-het women in the Gothic industry<sup>321</sup> since Radcliffe and certainly since Rice's contemporaries; i.e., in the fictional, but also medical/academic world; e.g., Janice Raymond's *Transsexual Empire* (1979): "I contend that the problem with transsexualism would best be served by morally mandating it out of existence." Such "questions" are quackery "just asked" by the state and its proponents; e.g., the Jewish question; i.e., calling for genocide as simply something to put on the table, then take settler-



colonial steps through fiction/non-fiction, medical documents and scholarship, as well as private correspondence (re: Marx and Engels) treating us as criminal aberrations, but also space aliens and manmade freaks of creature. It's *Frankenstein* taken to its logical conclusion—one only the state has the power to enact to the degree that such pogroms historically require to play out. The history is depressingly bad-faith, but also out in the open for all to—celebrated for its own cartoonishly ominous (and dead-serious) presentation:

My point with Rice, here, is she *didn't* abject/exclude queer people *despite* presenting them as vampires. Certainly a desire for her subjects was present in our closeted, bereaved<sup>322</sup> bisexual, but alienation, empathy and eroticism are not mutually exclusive (nuns and priests having been lusting after Christ for centuries). Until Rice, and indeed after these tricky conversations began through women like her in the same time period, women weren't allowed to be lesbians or practice anal (with/for the husband or male clients) because they weren't people

<sup>321</sup> And likewise other heteronormative elements of fantasy and science fiction, regardless of who authored them; i.e., the monomyth as rooted in socio-material aspects that the state, per the Base and Superstructure, has a vested interest in *not* subverting the status quo; e.g., Jack Fall's "Knightfall" ([timestamp](#): 14:12; 2023) pointing out how YouTuber [Shadiversity](#) (a white LARPer with fascist beliefs—surprise, surprise) can't stand the new 2023 *Mario* movie because the male hero... doesn't follow the same-old Hero's Journey that millions of other male status-quo heroes have followed before and after Joseph Campbell pointed these things out in 1949 (or Jung before that).

<sup>322</sup> Re, [Stern](#): Rice wrote *Interview with the Vampire* to cope with losing her daughter. In short, vampirism can be used as a poetic device to mount a variety of arguments and achieve a variety of effects, sex-positive or sex-coercive!

who could rebel in the eyes of the state; i.e., they were *only* property and thus "couldn't think for themselves."

And in thinking for *herself*, Rice arguably contributed to a larger trend in ways that was ultimately sex-positive, even if many others chiming in most certainly were not. Funny how such vampirism (as a poetic device) only is accepted by the state when you ostensibly capitalize on tokenistic forms that adhere to the profit motive and punch down against someone; i.e., Rice, as I understand it, was in the closet for much of her life. But her material *wasn't*—meaning in the poetic sense that people *out* of the closet could take and run *with* it:



(exhibit 41g1b: Artist: [Devilhs](#). Per Creed, female vampirism links the female orgasm to psychoanalytical sites of darkness and trauma; i.e., the home as a den-like tomb for the woman haunted by ancient female power as orgasmic—female rage, but also hysteria [the wandering womb] as an endless, Sapphic eroticism and biology divorced from compelled sexual reproduction as much to

spite/mess with patriarchal men as it is to merely have fun [the two activities are ultimately modular].

Unto itself, the "predicament" of female vampirism comments on female biology as different in relation to male biology regarding sex as a medical phenomenon:

*Sex could kill you. Do you know what the human body goes through when you have sex? Pupils dilate, arteries constrict, core temperature rises, heart races, blood pressure skyrockets, respiration becomes rapid and shallow, the brain fires bursts of electrical impulses from nowhere to nowhere, and secretions spit out of every gland, and the muscles tense and spasm like you're lifting three times your body weight. It's violent. It's ugly. And it's messy. And if God hadn't made it unbelievably fun, the human race would have died out eons ago. Men are lucky they can only have one orgasm. You know that women can have an hour-long orgasm? [Dr. Cameron from House, 2004; [source](#)].*

*While gender performance is something that be played around with, biology intersects in ways that are unique per individual. Male/female is not actually a binary at all, but complicated by intersex people existing who might, for all intents and purposes, appear male/female and/or masc and femme. During sex, their bodies might function in ways that go against common understandings [or misconceptions] about what's "supposed" to happen.*



*In turn, monstrous poetics from the 1970s have expanded during the Internet Age based on their most famous forms; i.e., to grant more and more violent, terrifying and morphological demonstrations subverting these harmful heteronormative expectations, while also commenting on the stigmas and biases that continually persist during vampirism and its notably liminal expression: psychosexual feminist, genderqueer and/or postcolonialist iterations. It's literally "the sex is angry." Formally a crime against God and "good nature," gay nature [the Medusa] is churned out in alien replicas in corporate-friendly shooting galleries; i.e., a panopticon targeting leper/sodomy clichés framed as AIDS: a disease the straights simultaneously "can't get" and act the most allergic towards. They're alienated from things we experience at their and the state's hands on a daily basis.*

*For example, despite not being wholly female, Giger's xenomorph [above] has as much a monstrous-feminine [and vampiric] function as Vampirella [originally penned in 1969, last page] does, but also a biomechanical BDSM element its more human-looking counterparts also contribute to: a voice for monstrous-feminine rage. Such fury would parallel homosexual men's anger in the 1970s, but also those even more marginalized who wouldn't appear en masse until the Internet could present them as such; i.e., on graphs—with trans people, for instance, making up less than .004% of the total US population<sup>323</sup>.*

*Such a voice—apart from embodying classically female sexual desires out of the Western Gothic mode like Rice's cute vampire boys—also presents monstrous-feminine rage and hysteria as physically imposing through different physical, psychosexual manifestations; i.e., through outwardly urbane or conveniently attractive forms like the "built" but "babelicious" Amazon, but also tethered to dark, less outwardly humanist-facing doubles turning those conventions, at times, literally inside-out. We queers often prefer the latter when looking to freeze Cartesian weird canonical nerds in their tracks; i.e., it speaks to our frustration but also our monomorphic tendencies, power and potential to take things in a new, terrifying [to the state] direction.)*

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<sup>323</sup> According to the UCLA as of 2022 ([source](#): "How Many Adults and Youth Identify as Transgender in the United States?"), 1.6 million people ages 13+ identify as trans in the US. Divide that by the US population in 2022 (~333 million), and .004% is the percentage we make up. That's how marginalized we are, yet for which American conservative (and complicit moderacy through establishment politics) has devoted so much hate and anti-trans legislation towards (over 450 failed bills in 2024, 127 in effect from earlier years, and 45 new ones passed this year alone; [source](#): Translegislation).

And while being trans (thus sparkly and covered in rainbows and glitter), I don't want to encapsulate that hip virtue signal to for centrists to flag wave at the expense of those less well off (and populous) actively being bombed into the ground, denied asylum, starved to death, or otherwise preyed upon by the American state abroad; e.g., the Palestinians, but also other targeted groups abroad. We can call for the liberation of all parties involved, simultaneously!

As such, female-to-feminine forms of vampirism are as old as the Gorgon that Creed highlights in *The Monstrous-Feminine*, and themselves take on a thousand faces; re: to match the thousand implied by Joseph Campbell's monomythic hero being sent by the state to rape nature-as-alien for the umpteenth time. It is both vital and cursed, anathema and outspoken. Banned things generally are, and were in America, the Soviet Union and elsewhere between out-and-out Capitalism and Marxist-Leninism embodying the state model.

Tying things to Rice and her less comely counterparts elsewhere in female-to-GNC-adjacent stories, it bears repeating how such a staging point in the 1970s *really* took time to arrive; i.e., the predatory and undead *stigma* of the "problematic lover" has applied predominantly to AMABs for much of canonical history (re: Brent Pickett of Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy writes on the Ancient Greeks, "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](#)). In turn, the language of gender and sex had to update in ways that took just as long and yielded various exceptions, double standards and refrains that only doubled down the moment the public discourse (through monsters and sexual/gendered terms alike) caught up. The more rights people had, the more the state (and its proponents) would treat it as problematic.

To that, I'd like to conclude the history primer going over the morphological variety to such vampires (and similar monsters; e.g., Gorgons, werewolves, ghosts; exhibit 41g2), while likewise looking briefly at the availability of GNC terms that married to the medical, scholarly and Neo-Gothic renaissance in from the 1970s well into the present.

*Note: This portion is more than a little messy insofar as it's not made with much of a thesis in mind, other than stressing the dizzyingly chaotic convergence of different poetic forces, social movements and dialectical-material forms over a relatively short period of time; i.e., Capitalism (and the state as straight) struggling to defend itself, and the millions-upon-millions of people involved in that from laissez-faire to Bretton Woods to neoliberal Capitalism—all of these working parallel to scholarship and poetics from the 1870s and Westphal towards Dracula, the gay monster men and women from the 1930s, Matteson's vampire-zombies in 1954, Romero's Night of the Living Dead in 1968, Rice's '70s vampire revival followed by Giger's and many others into the neoliberal period, then Creed and The Monstrous-Feminine in 1993 (and Derrida and Butler's own works from that year), into the 2000s and rise of internet culture, landing eventually on my book project (and similar subversive works).*

*Sure, it might all be what Bad Empanada calls "pure wankery." But he's an insensitive, vituperative (and totally lame) philistine with an obnoxious superiority complex, the personality of drying paint mixed with nails on a chalkboard and a faulty toaster, and two left feet regarding BDSM—about as fun as a tooth ache,*

*allergic to sex work/Gothic poetics, blind to allegory and quick to dismiss those aspects of critical thinking I enjoy the most: holistic analysis and play! —Perse*

For one—and keeping with our ancient canonical anchor argument—monsters represent gendered ideas that canonically try to stress things in false binaries: male/female and man/woman. Such has always been the case, but in the 20th century began to double aggressively and smash into one another for different reasons. Across history such things have often been out of step, only to explode towards into a GNC presence from the 1970s onwards—one, I should add, the state has since tried to drown out with chaff; i.e., canonical, monomythic words and weapons recuperating all manner of things to keep to profit as preying vampirically on nature (and monstrous-feminine) elements, first and foremost. Such beings speak to a lack of agency and monstrous identity formation, which have something



of a love/hate, "strange bedfellows" relationship between cis women and gay men in earlier creative periods (e.g., German Expressionism, left), but also the GNC queer voices they'd help give rise to in our aforementioned later decades.

This might seem kind of obvious in hindsight; i.e., when inspecting the 1970s *now*. But at the time, it came out of the Free Love movement, postmodernism, the Civil Rights movement, and so many important and exciting horror works, but also a surge of equally exciting (and mysterious) new GNC language, emerging in 1965<sup>324</sup> (four years before *Night of the Living Dead* and

<sup>324</sup> From David Suresh's *Transgenders Problems and Administrative Response* (2016):

### Origin of the Transgender Word

Psychiatrist John F. Oliven of Columbia University coined the term **transgender** in his 1965 reference work *Sexual Hygiene and Pathology*, writing that the term which had previously been used, *Transsexualism*, "is misleading; actually, transgenderism is meant, because sexuality is not a major factor in primary transvestism" (Oliven, John, F., 1965: 514). The term "transgender" was then popularized with varying definitions by various TG, transsexual and transvestite people, including Virginia Prince (Thomas, E. Bevan, 2014: 42), who used it in the December 1969 issue of *Transvestia*, a national magazine for cross dressers she 11 founded (Elikins, Richard, King, Dave, 2006: 13-14). By the mid-1970s both "transgender" and "trans people" were in use as umbrella terms, and "transgenderist" was used to describe people who wanted to live cross-gender without sex reassignment surgery (SRS) (Stryker, S., 2004). By 1976, 'transgenderist' was abbreviated as 'transgender' in educational materials (The Radio Times, 1979).

By 1984, the concept of a "transgender community" had developed, in which transgender was used as an umbrella term (Peo, 1984); in 1985, Richard Elkins established *The Trans-Gender Archive* at the University of Ulster (Elikins, Richard, King, Dave, 2006). By 1992, the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy defined transgender as an expansive umbrella term including

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smack-dab in the middle of the Vietnam War). Said language sort of redescribed Westphal's "new species" (re: Foucault); i.e., in ways that turned so many things on their head, but preserved themselves like amber inside the same monsters. Such beings were no longer, if ever, pure symbols of fear and dogma, but started to speak to a rising form of discourse that, *more* than ever, was alive and well in ways the state couldn't fully control.

Except, leading up to that paradigm shift's ejaculation in the 1970s, there was a male-heavy slant that feminism (and other social movements) were already starting to challenge the status quo with. They did so if only because Western women and slaves remained property until the 19th and 20th centuries, thus did not enjoy the same statuses and privileges through canonical law and patrilineal descent. In short, men—even gay men—could create in the 1930s much as they had been allowed to for hundreds and thousands of years.

This meant that AFAB parties couldn't challenge or partition their own stations to nearly the same degree in cinema (the primary media form for much of the 20th century, especially concerning monsters) as men could theirs (queer or not), but all the same were generally snuck like odd cargo into vampire stories

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"transsexuals," "transgenderists," "cross dressers" and anyone transitioning (ICTLEP, 1992) [...]

### **Transsexual and its relationship to Transgender**

The term **transsexual** was introduced to English in 1949 by David Oliver Cauldwell, and popularized by Harry Benjamin in 1966, around the same time "transgender" was coined and began to be popularized (Thomas E. Bevan, 2014). Since the 1990s, "transsexual" has generally been used to describe the subset of "transgender" people (Alegria, A.C., 2011: 175-182) who desire to transition permanently to the gender with which they identify and who seek medical assistance (for example, SRS) with this. However, the concerns of the two groups are sometimes different; for example, transsexual men and women who can pay for medical treatments (or who have institutional coverage for their treatment) are likely to be concerned with medical privacy and establishing a durable legal status as their gender later in life.

Distinctions between the terms "transgender" and "transsexual" are commonly based on distinctions between "gender" (psychological, social) and sex (physical) (Prince, Virginia Charles, 1969). Hence, transsexuality may be said to deal more with material aspects of one's sex, while TG considerations deal more with one's internal gender disposition or predisposition, as well as the related social expectations that may accompany a given gender role (Nova, A. Swanstrom 2006). Many TG people prefer the designation "transgender" and reject "transsexual" (Polly, R and J. Nicole, 2011). For example, Christine Jorgensen publicly rejected transsexual in 1979, and instead identified herself in newsprint as "transgender, saying, gender doesn't have to do with bed partners; it has to do with identity" (Parker Jerry, 1978). This refers to the concern that transsexual implies something to do with sexuality, when it is actually about gender identity ([source](#)).

Keep these definitions in mind. The state generally excludes by medicalizing queerness—a quality that manifests not just in TERFs and biological essentialism, but NERFs and transmedicalists like Contrapoints and Buck Angel (whose tokenism we'll explore in Volume Three); i.e., us-versus-them gatekeeping through medical privileges generally afforded by more affluent queers like those two (and many others, besides)!

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(conventional or otherwise); i.e., by male weird-nerd authors wanting monster *women* in their stories, but also female weird nerds who were helped by men into having creative voices way ahead of the curb about such topics; e.g., Mary Shelley being pushed by Percy Shelley to write a little story called *Frankenstein* in 1818, which had a monstrous-feminine component that would live on in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*<sup>325</sup> (crammed diegetically into her robot suit by a Jewish-coded mad scientist and overhung by a pentagram, last image), James Whale's *Bride of Frankenstein* (next page) and many other stories treating women (and those "acting like women") as alien, but also as monstrous-feminine commodities that men of science wanted to control and voyeuristically exhibit, borrowed from older

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<sup>325</sup> A director that, while for all intents and purposes, wasn't himself above making some fairly queer-friendly material that, in the same breath, Hitler apparently loved. Henry Giardina writes in "Hitler's Favorite Movie Was Super Gay, Actually" (wonderful title):

Lang had made one of Hitler's favorite films of all time in 1924's *Siegfried*, a technically-advanced adaptation of the 13th-century epic poem *Die Nibelungenlied*, which told the story of a brave (blonde, Aryan) hero who slays a dragon but is later killed by treachery.

Lang's adaptation came in two parts: the first, *Siegfried*, focused on the Aryan hero of myth [...] it was *Siegfried* that Hitler loved most: he picked up on the nascent nationalism that would come to define the film industry under Third Reich rule, made up of those tall tales about blood quantum and blonde purity that would make it easier for an entire nation to view Jews—as well as other "deviants" and "undesirables" such as queer people, people of color, and folks with disabilities—as objects for extermination.

There's one little contradiction here: *Siegfried* happens to be extraordinarily [gay](#). Like, *very* gay. As in: hours of watching a hot guy walk around without a shirt on gay. As in every character standing in pure worship of this random hot dude for no apparent reason gay [and all in a time when steroids didn't exist, the best men could hope aping Eugene Sandow].

There's also a canon [lesbian](#) character in *Siegfried*: the Amazon warrior Brunhilde. She refuses to give herself to any man who can't best her in battle, and before she meets Siegfried, no such man exists. But when Siegfried disguises himself as his betrothed's brother, King Gunther, to win Brunhilde's hand for the cowardly king, she's forced to marry him. When she learns the truth, of course, she's pissed: and she sets in motion a plan to have Gunther kill Siegfried, despite Gunther's obvious attraction to the young demigod ([source](#)).



To my readers (and queer people at large), all of this should really come as no surprise. It's not exactly a well-kept secret how a) the state uses godly body language and militant theatrics conjured up anew (re: Marx), which b) queer forces classically camp on the same stages (as *Sex Positivity* constantly argues). Shelley would take this same basic "bodybuilder" idea and make Prometheus gay (the male scientist giving birth to an infernal son) *and* vengeful, but also in highly subversive, vampiric ways; i.e., whose trauma and sodomy rhetoric would handily survive up to the 1970s and well beyond!

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genres; re, Roger Ebert's observation: "to see Falconetti in Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928) is to look into eyes that will never leave you" ([source](#)).

Such a Male Gaze has often sought to classically martyr women (and bury gay people); i.e., not strictly to *kill* them, but keep them in pain/peril and film them as such (the Gothic heroine transplanted onto celluloid). By the 1930s, though, you had gay directors (or directors with gay sensibilities) working *alongside* women to camp the same patriarchal industry. By shoot something a bit different than female torture, it was more queer and—like Frankenstein's infamous Creature—less easy to control/more (and more) morphologically diverse. Suddenly the biology began to meld and bounce around, swapping out clear polarized divides for things more in the uncomfortable (for the state) middle.

More to the point, labor-wise, you were left with AFAB actresses having common ground with other oppressed (queer men) who weren't—unlike the cis-het director shouting "Lights! Camera! Action!" to his overworked team (with gay men classically being hair dressers, costume designers, cameramen and even, in Whale's case, the director)—doing this for profit's sake; it became a multicultural stage to camp such vampirism, the sodomy on display something of a "monster magnet" whose main attraction drew later directors, thespians, writers, what-have-you, to consider what they were looking at/working with in a GNC sense.



([source](#): American Cinematographer's "*The Bride of Frankenstein: A Gothic Masterpiece*," 1998)

So while women since ancient times could be readily portrayed as witches, Amazons and hags—all whose disobedience into the Middle Ages and beyond threatened their "natural" owners (with *Hammer of Witches*, 1478, stressing a rising desire to quell female dissidents, often portraying them as the eaters of babies)—they were still disobedient chattel who could always be converted through state force by men toeing the line (again, gay or not); i.e., the *Amazonomachia* and its modern forms; e.g., from Shelley's *Frankenstein* breaking away from that to express an alien humanity tied to nature-as-monstrous-feminine and Promethean, only to be revived centuries later by Scott's neoliberal critique that—surprise, surprise—was succeeded by *Aliens* and other neoliberal *refrains* designed to reel nature-as-monstrous-feminine (thus queer and hostile towards the state) back under state dominion.

To it, this mutating band of space vampires—fueled with a new terrorist stockpile of ideas about violence, terror and morphological language not exactly

conducive to total Cartesian submission—had to become "canonically gay" again; i.e., in ways that dogmatically challenged not just the monsters, themselves but the iconoclastic sum of popularized language, scholarship and discourse at large: the state's answer to a rising Gothic counterculture party to the same Superstructure that was no longer fully (or ever) in the elite's court.

In short, Hollywood had to install the concept of cops and victims into something that was then threatening to expose them and their ordering of the universe as hitherto "under their control" (the 1970s being a hinge point, insofar as neoliberalism had yet to fully emerge and indeed, would not until 1979). Such us-versus-them (commonly "man vs nature") orderings aren't new, insofar as the state has forever concerned and relied on heteronormative ideas of men, women and patriarchy to further itself; i.e., in dominion over nature. But such things were rapidly becoming more and more problematic; i.e., as something to market and sell as such. The settler colony began to populate with monsters, the territory (and Capitalist Realism) decaying in ways that would call for their destruction.

Again, this delay constitutes something of a long-awaited party. Non-enslaved men, compared to women, have been legally human under the law since the dawn of recorded time, thus able to perform criminal acts that women and male slaves never openly could. These hypothetical crimes pertained to the many roles men had to perform in accordance with growing ideas of what manhood even meant under Capitalism, subjecting them to knee-jerk punishments by people frightened of another Foucauldian prophesy—the *death* of man. Foucault writes in *The Order of Things* (1966):

The epistemological field traversed by the human sciences was not laid down in advance: no philosophy, not political or moral option, no empirical science of any kind, no observation of the human body, no analysis of sensation, no imagination, or the passions, had ever encountered, in the seventeenth or eighteenth century, anything like man; for man did not exist (any more than life, or language, or labour); and the human sciences did not appear when, as a result of some pressing rationalism, some unresolved scientific problem, some practical concern, it was decided to include man (willy-nilly, and with a greater or lesser degree of success) among the objects of science ([source](#), pages 344-45).

Such "deaths" were consequently encountered by their abject others: the scary things that aren't them (according to fear and dogma)!

Of course, these monsters weren't immune to tokenization. Like BDSM in general, such play sits between genuine submission and gingerly subversion that, unto itself, is routinely arbitrated by state forces vs workers they are trying to control who don't always play but sometimes along (rather they play against the state with the same basic devices, selling out where desperate and/or convenient).

All of this yielded a lot of morphological (thus sex and gender) variation in the 1970s. Grappling with the decay of free love spiraling towards neoliberalism and Satanic Panic, this included Rice's (often male, but not always) vampires of 1976, of course, but also a great many others besides that—like Giger's xenomorph—have non-standard, BDSM-themed, trans, non-binary and intersex forms; re: the likes of which gave rise out of stage plays, operas and yesterday's rock 'n roll onto new enraged queer and female voices that Creed herself took to speak about women refusing to be victims, in 1993, and which I have since attached to queer entities refusing to be cops or the victims of cops.

What Creed talked about concerned and composed a lot of monsters besides bog-standard vampires, but also those varieties of vampire-like entities; i.e., hinted at by the xenomorph of the same decade as Rice, but also ones that came from far earlier in time (and followed up with new increasingly queer revivals):



(exhibit 41g2: Artist, top-far-left: [Jill the Succubus](#); top-left: [Devilhs](#); top-right and far-right [top to bottom]: [Blushing Yokai](#); bottom-far-left: unknown; bottom-left: [Kukumomo](#); bottom-right: [Vethrax](#).

Within oppositional praxis, the undead aren't simply instruments of gendered revenge for past wrongs—e.g., female: Sadako, as a matriarchal threat of an

abused sub switching to a "strict" mommy dom; male: Pyramid Head as a masculine, patriarchal threat of "rape" [despite how Bernard Perron writes, "One of the most legendary and iconic monsters in scary games is a monster called Pyramid Head" in [The World of Scary Games](#) (2018), the thirst for sexy Pyramid Head is real and overrides his heteronormative function; i.e., as a simple, alien killer with a knife]. They're darkness visible, and speak to things that otherwise might be pushed to the margins [the taboo sorts that Bad Empanada is calling for].

When camped, such entities convey the creative successes of proletarian praxis being the best revenge of all: a thriving delight at furthering sex positivity through xenophilic gender trouble and parody performed not just in monstrous language, but poetics. Said poiesis and its cryptomimetic attack embodies the queer self through struggle under the status quo. Trauma and pleasure climb out of the well as hidden truths [whose furious, female personification Jean-Léon Gérôme literally

*calls Truth<sup>326</sup>] but also power and resistance become things to chaotically express through multiple, dialectical-material incarnations/interpretations; these have morphological considerations, blending the undead with demons as anthropomorphic, uncanny entities concerned with shapeshifting as a genderqueer means of invading the home as colonized; i.e., to present normality as unhomely in the face of friendly monsters and ghosts being abjected by the home's usual defenders: moderates and out-and-out fascists. Except, they cannot monopolize these various forms any more than the state can, raising thoughts and concerns that speak to oppressed pedagogies contributing to the same conversation out of forbidden refrains that keep coming back; i.e., returning to the home as laying itself to waste, but also seeking liberation from tyranny.*

*Such curios include the doll as an ontological expression of traumatic language that—under friendlier circumstances—simply makes for a cute toy to spend time with in various [a]sexual ways: from kawaii to kowai as a matter of size difference,*

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<sup>326</sup> As Ariela Gittlen writes in "A Brief History of Female Rage in Art":

*Academic French painter Jean-Léon Gérôme's take on the allegorical figure of Truth (specifically, the philosopher Democritus's aphorism: "Of truth we know nothing, for truth is in a well") differs from contemporary interpretations in a number of ways. A beautiful nude woman emerges from a well, an open-mouthed shout of anger on her face and a whip in her hand, rather than the usual mirror. Although she is nude (a blunt reference to "the naked truth"), she looks ready to charge straight for the viewer in a full-throated battle cry ([source](#)).*



(artist: Jean-Léon Gérôme)

*We'll return to this concept in Volume Three, part one when we compare Sadako to Gérôme's Truth (exhibit 96). For now, just know that monsters do not have set allegiances or authors, and that something seemingly as queerphobic as the xenomorph or Pyramid head can, in the right iconoclast's subversive hands, speak easily enough to queer liberation through an-Com theatrics by destabilizing the moral order of the state (re: Aguirre); i.e., through spaces of terror but also the castle-like bodies associated with them (re: me) having queer monstrous-feminine rage and joy alike!*

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*knife play and doll-ish uncanny masks [the vampire's pale complexion on an ageless face] reduced to knife-genitals for heads; re: echoes of the xenomorph and Freud's abject view of the monstrous-feminine, itself later championed by Creed built on such 20th-century in-betweens like Scott's Alien leading to Jacob's Ladder and Silent Hill in the early-to-mid-'90s [exhibit 43a/b].)*

Vampires are monsters that constitute arguments, which are themselves, not always obvious from a dialectical-material standpoint. This reality plays out through how they are used through context, with attempts to express and reinstall such voices through a state lens occurring through abjection. As usual, but in response to various state activities, 20th century vampires took on a lot of different forms, and those forms mirrored the things they wanted workers to fear and attack: Red Scare, worker uprisings, various other moral panics, and so on. So began the neoconservative corrections, thus *overcorrections* through Heinlein and similar weird canonical nerds trying very hard to "right the ship." He was tired of all those motherfucking gay snakes on his motherfucking straight plane!

As a developing enterprise in the 20th century onwards, there emerged demands for a heteronormative, colonial binary within Capitalism that could meet the genderqueer xenophilia rising out of the shadows of public life since Shakespeare led to Walpole, to Lewis, all the way to Giger and Creed; i.e., a "correct" man versus vampires of many different kinds, but especially the monstrous-feminine as the *chief* alien threat. Post-WW2, vampires started to come more and more "from outer space"; i.e., alien species that didn't come in peace,



but as bugs and other stigmatized animals, planets and fungi; e.g., mushroom men, but also the "super carrot" vampire from 1951's *The Thing from Another World* (the guy with the 1911 and bomber jacket protecting the damsel-in-distress from almost certain penetration).

Of course, such things were obviously ongoing at all points of the state's existence (and across continents, between genres; e.g., Italy's *giallo*); e.g., between the 1930s, into the 1950s and 1960s, followed by the 1970s and 1980s as different *waves* of terror (re: Meerloo); i.e., concerning vampires attacking the nuclear family model, upheld by brave men protecting damsels from many-a-latter-day-vampire aping *Plan 9 from Outer Space* (1959) onto *Mars Needs Cheerleaders* (1968) and later still, Cameron's *Aliens* cocooning many a colony wench for impregnation and painful, insectoid Commie birth: a position of forbidden or problematic love, us-versus-them orientation, and a threatening of exchanging

various juices (or knowledge, whatever) to turn the modest maiden wild, hungry and whorish—a sodomy argument, in other words!

Keeping with William Blum<sup>327</sup>, the elite would tie these growing problems of rape and sodomy to Communism—post WW2, but especially in the neoliberal era. To quote the promotional campaign for Cameron's sequel: "This time, it's war!" Due to previous concessions by the state regarding worker calls for equal rights, the former would simply recruit the latter to wage future wars for them (this included women like Ripley<sup>328</sup> and people of color like Frost and Vasquez). The copaganda began to pour out of the American Superstructure, leading to a proliferation of so many rape and sodomy arguments. From one xenomorph, suddenly all of America was "Vietnam" filled with the buggers (that was pun); i.e., a previous colony "gone to pot" taken back home and playing out differently this time around in American theatres (and on television screens, thanks to *Metroid*, and later *Doom* and their many clones<sup>329</sup> acclimating future children to *Pax Americana ad infinitum*): nature-as-alien in ways that build and stack different cops-and-victims, us-versus-them bigotries on top of Cartesian thought—all to enforce Western supremacy in and out of astronoetic tales. Free market or not, such an order must be preserved through Capitalist Realism to maintain Capitalism and the state.



Apart from the female entities we've looked at (as often being directed by gay men), the actual stigmas of queer identity (and the double standards therein) *also* took time to evolve into their current modernized versions: queer people as enemies of the state, which the state coercively ignores, dimorphizes and exploits in hauntological,

doll-like threats of porcelain sodomy and dark ecclesiastical implements of eternal torture. As with Cameron, such abjection dogmatically scares the squeamish faithful through fetishized violence that informs future exchanges, mid-creature-feature; i.e., eternal threats of punishment and damnation by police agents pointing the finger at the middle class obsessed with such ghosts of the counterfeit: "lead or

<sup>327</sup> Re: "For four years, numerous Americans, in high positions and obscure, sullenly harbored the conviction that World War II was 'the wrong war against the wrong enemies.' Communism, they knew, was the only genuine adversary on America's historical agenda" ([source](#): *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*, 1995).

<sup>328</sup> Later on, token queer people would identify with Ripley and others. But revolutionary fags were just as likely to identify with the xenomorph as try to reclaim Ripley from her corporate, settler-colonial origins (she's a bit second wave).

<sup>329</sup> Including Cameron's *Avatar* literally being a videogame-style, American Liberal/tech bro treatment of the FPS, tokenizing Indigenous rebellion in a controlled opposition form with tokenized and imposturous appropriative vaudeville: African Americans playing Indigenous people, or Jennette Goldstein playing a Mexican woman; i.e., the "close enough" quality to acting.

silver." Hell and vampirism take many forms, but the basic argument is always the same. It would simply explode (like a chestburster) in the 1980s onwards.

To this, DARVO obscurantism marries bullshit to half-veiled threats of fear and lies, guilt and pleasure, predation and persecution being something to put somewhere other than the middle class, themselves; re: they abject it, then turn into gargoyles themselves—faithfully guarding the church as it currently stands (while built on top of older versions), protecting home during the dialectic of shelter from monstrous-feminine forces. Such canon would reliably manifest in phallic, barbarian forms of fear and dogma, but also token police violence. As state power looms over women, people of color and queer persons, etc, they betray their class, culture and/or race interests in bad faith; i.e., because it is convenient, and



because such egregores become a form of currency that is, unto itself, worshipped (the equality of convenience historically met with more and more desperation by increasingly marginalized token parties looking to be feared, but also loved by everyone else).

Pyramid Head, for instance, must canonically remain the unironic slayer of women, not someone for them to lust after or embody in genderqueer ways (making said women performances of alternate identities or—God forbid—deciding they aren't women anymore). Meanwhile, the *vagina dentata*—from a canonical standpoint—can be beheaded, defanged and fucked; the penis is merely something for men to cross swords with (something to keep in mind when we continue examining transphobia and Satanic Panic, from here on out: "any hole's a goal, but fangs fence"). In turn, such neoliberalism was banking on invocations thereof, falling back on ancient and ingrained applications of sex and force, versus relatively brand-new terms like "transgender" that had yet to embed themselves in Western hearts and minds.

In fact, an extensive, queer-inclusive vocabulary for many of the words featured in this book didn't widely develop until *after* the 1980s (e.g., Foucault, but also exhibit 3b: Michael Werner's popularizing of the term, "heteronormativity," in 1991<sup>330</sup>)! The '70s and '80s were the transition from second-to-third wave

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<sup>330</sup> Built, as [Meg-Jon Barker](#) explains in "What's Wrong with Heteronormativity?" (2016) on two forebears: a) the 1984 essay, "Thinking Sex," by Gayle Rubin and their arguments about sex hierarchies; and b) the 1980 essay, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," by Adrienne Rich and their arguments for the title topic. Such ideas started off more pulverized, working on popularized concepts that strove to get closer and closer to the heart of things; i.e., I would take Barker's explanation and built on it, hence Rubin, Rich, Foucault, Creed, and many others, thus expand the multimedia ludo-Gothic BDSM web of inclusion to as many oppressed (and diverse) queers as I could. Hopefully it snowballs!



feminism, Gothic thought and queer theory in academia, but took many more decades after that to disseminate among a larger trans counterculture across the Internet, who saw them less as torturous or dangerous/terrorist (re: Raymond's *Transsexual Empire*) and more as radically empathetic, imagining a world without exclusive torture for the marginalized. In short, we revolutionary queers (especially younger queers) empathized with the monstrous human plight, its own torment and alienation speaking to ourselves in the closet (and framed as sodomites with a new coat of point).

It bears repeating that, while the Internet wasn't widely available until the early 2000s, such language—already introduced in 1965, regarding an ongoing poetic trend that had been stewing for centuries (since 1764, as far as the Neo-Gothic period goes)—staged further assaults through important works after the 1970s; e.g., like Derrida's *Spectres of Marx* and Butler's *Gender Trouble* in 1993 giving rise to pro-(anarcho)-Communist ideas of genderqueer studies bleeding into future outcries and poetics; re (from Persephone van der Waard's "About the Logo"):

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 ([source](#)).

In decades minutes would happen, and then in minutes years would happen—slowly and then all at once, reaching boiling points. Mine was one, but many had preceded it in as many years.

As a matter of state mechanisms, such stopgaps also owe to queerness being constantly under attack in popular discourse; i.e., about sexuality and gender as a rising form of oppositional praxis: not fully understood within a modern context because it was constantly being challenged by the official histories whenever and wherever anyone bothered to look.

This is especially salient in the Gothic tale as colonized by heteronormative forces since before the 1800s; i.e., previously and recursively associated with *unhealthy* forms of rebellion like the French Terror (re: [Crawford](#)) and various buried, whispered-about slave revolts of the 16th and 17th centuries, but also ancient female and queer (monstrous-feminine) agency as demonized, vampiric; e.g., the doomed, legendary Amazons of Ancient Greece and various classically

female monsters like the mermaid, harpy or siren threatening classic Greek heroes, but also their canonical, androgynous modern-day hauntologies: Mother Brain, the Alien Queen, etc, as suitably correct-incorrect.



The whole point of abjection is to popularize and normalize open violence in society (foreign and domestic) and popular media against target groups, and that's exactly what happened to queer people in the 1980s. They came out of the closet in force and the state invented a shadow army to attach to them and blame for/capitalize on

imperial decline through militarized violence. Any nation-state could recognize and attack them, thus shame, rape, mutilate and kill them; society became sick in ways never before seen. *Nowhere* was safe for either side, Cartesian thought radicalized in service to profit under the neoliberal hegemon; i.e., through tokenized police violence against queerness during us-versus them copaganda. Already reprobate, we became grist for the mill—a new destiny to manifest by enterprising (and paranoid, avenging) young boys and girls of all colors and creeds (white Indians), lest they catch and transmit what we were carrying: Black-Death vermin to trap, cage and exterminate, but also sexual and yeast/fungal/viral (code-like, secretive) infections to cure told in retro-future revivals neither here nor there (a Foucauldian moral panic policing sex by treating us as an alien health crisis; i.e., as Communism, but especially gay Communism, as AIDS incarnate).

Out of nowhere, the future was abruptly and utterly canceled, and it was suddenly *all* us fags' fault, what with our gay anarchist's "Commie," alien, abject biology and gender suddenly being everywhere; i.e., waiting insidiously and perilously to hatch and make the Earth queer and gay from outer space—all despite older proponents of Communism historically wanting little if anything to do with us; re: the state is straight and our survival is both antithetical to its own and something it needs to prey upon and extirpate to carry on—like a vampire, in other words. To quote Marx (who loved monstrous language; re: Castricano), specifically from *Kapital*, "Capital is dead labor, which, vampire-like lives only by sucking living labor." *Our* vampirism must camp canonical iterations, the state most of all, including all its heteronormative, cryptomimetic bid for power's rape and death fantasies: *our* death and rape at their hands. This can be theft of power to cause harm, but also labor and wages, even bodies and blood itself (e.g., John Dooley and Emily Gallagher's "[Blood Money: Selling Plasma to Avoid High-Interest Loans](#)," 2024); and all existent in a half-real sense between history as alive and dead, material and social, imaginary and substantial, etc.

For all those asking for equal treatment, the buck stops for us—the prolific Big Evil, Grendel's-mother-style cave to face, reject destroy for its intrinsically outsiders non-state signature, paradoxically "desired" for being undesirable and hideous in ways our killing gives state warriors (standard or token) their usual rush. Along with the other inhabitants of Omelas' bowers and dungeons, we became the last sewer drain for them to swirl around and plunge down into, slumming our screaming innards. It's a sugar high, false power as neoliberalism always trades in; but the deaths and rape are real enough, part of the same monomythic-to-Promethean power trip/fantasy.

Per Creed, I think Cameron's murderous womb (and Archaic Mother, lurking just offscreen, inside the alien brothel/graveyard/factory/den) sums things up rather well (they haven't changed much since then). The power in such places exists for us to submit or rebel using what we got: our bodies, know-how, labor and so on liberated from state control!



(artist: [The Maestro Noob](#))

But perhaps you could think of others, too? Again, this whirl of scribblings and images—by me, for the primer's conclusion—haven't been to try and compile a *total* history of all that has occurred up to, among and after the 1970s; i.e., that might go holistically and completely towards our argument (which is impossible). Instead, it's merely to give you an idea of a) the kinds of multilateral, chaotic forces at work, and b) the dualities and competing forces either trying to: unite workers against the state regardless of gender or sex through different Gothically poetic appeals, or pit them against each other through the same weaponized devices; i.e., less wholly unspooled and praxially inert (from a proletarian standpoint) and more something to crack like a whip *against* labor. Reclaim that kink, make it sex-

positive, thus emotionally/Gothically intelligent, and class, culture and race conscious.

Before we move onto my coming out of the closet and making new theory based on such histories, I quickly want to consider what guided my doing so: subversion as met with tokenized counters by abusive agents, sharing the same spaces and devices *with* me.

Something to repeatedly keep in mind, then, is how the state will attack such language when given freely to the masses as a critical-thinking device (thus conducive to queer identities). Recent terms like "transgender" were founded on Magnus Hirschfield's early-20th century work, which the Nazis attempted to erase; to think, [had the Reich not invaded the Institute of Sexology in 1933](#), these terms may have emerged in popular discourse far *sooner* than 1965, thereby establishing themselves as a means of challenging queer repression under Capitalism well before the 1980s (re: Ellen Moers' "Female Gothic" from her book, *Literary Woman* and Anne Rice's *Interview*, both from 1976, and Foucault before, during and afterwards; etc).

Except, they didn't (making Creed and, by extension, my life far more difficult) because queer politics are inherently iconoclastic, running countercurrent to the material interests of the elite and their heteronormative scheme preying on nature-as-alien since day one. This includes moderate/fascist forms of feminism; re: Raymond's transphobic polemic, *The Transsexual Empire*. It and similar attempts exist as part of a systemic, concentric gatekeeping of ever-evolving language; i.e., from "transvestite," to "transsexual" to "transgender" and similar labels barreling towards other contested codewords like "trap" or "twink," "femboy," etc (all terms whose reverse abjection we'll explore more of in Volume Three, Chapters Three and Four): as easy prey for state forces, including token cops, but



also something for iconoclasts to romanticize during liminal expression—somewhere in between reclamation and enslavement.

Queers love their preferential monster code. Believe it or not, though, but all these words were once slurs and/or medical terms. Per

Derrida, Butler and Creed (and directors like Gregg Araki, or writers like Dennis Cooper in the '90s), they became spectres of Marx injecting new gender trouble back into the monstrous-feminine equation. As part of the Gothic mode's continuation under state control, all have become something to take back and hold onto despite such dogma's tokenized, policing doubles; i.e., generally by

embodying that which capital fears through complicated ontological statements: a solidarized labor force reclaiming abject language and its strawmen of rape (re: Pyramid Head and the xenomorph, but also vampires in general taking essence until their victims die, and emerge as undead slaves) to humanize themselves with!

In Araki and Cooper's case (echoes of Foucault), this sometimes means "raping" ourselves during calculated risk through those we want to be, use or discard, in effect also reconciling feelings of control and release between ourselves and those we play with as psychosexually crossed at the wires. Disorder is a neoliberal symptom made to loop in on itself. Subversion, then, isn't just to fuck with canon, but humanize ourselves precisely because and for our damage and alienation inside such straight-coded, medicalized hauntologies and modified canonical laws (you *are* useful, Foucault). That's what queer survival *is*—surviving the state medicalizing us as *the* psychosexual alien disease; i.e., one they can fetishize and fuck, forbid and foment hate and violence towards.

Again, we camp canon because we must, including sodomy and the monstrous-feminine through vampire language that our abusers (even tokenized ones) will try and police by pegging us as diseased sex pets (rats)! Who ever said that survival had to be boring? Quite the contrary! Martyrdom is portrayed as "passionate" for a reason. To that, we gay an-Coms are already the treated like the bloodsucking scum of the universe; might as well live it up!

Furthermore, we want to change how workers collect or organize through their identities as monstrous, vampiric. As said during the opening, doing so is generally a *group* effort (not a solo one, Empanada), one conducted between artist and muse—friends singing to the same keynote of transformation into who we want to become, using such language as it belongs to and is operated by us: the gay Communist vampires ("the Reds") we want to be, redesigning such ideas to be as sleek, abrasive, adorable or offensive shapely and delicious as we desire! To it, the language of war and sex suitably combine in all the usual medieval poetic ways, but also disease as it normally pertains to us. That's how gender trouble/parody works (the heavy lifting accomplished by our second-nature interactions, playfully communicating humanity regarding normally abject things); i.e., to lock eyes with what you like/desire and think naughtily and hungrily to yourself, "I want that—to *catch* whatever they got" (with doctors historically framing hysteria as a female condition that needs medically assisted orgasms, and a male condition that needs execution).

In turn, this graduates to taking what is forbidden/alien in ways that, sex-positive or not, will be treated like a vampire's disease, an infection to quarantine and purge less it infarct (not just a wart to remove, but a cancer). Such medievalized dualities and barbarism never left/only changed shape and focus slightly under neoliberal capital. And faced with it, we gay an-Coms campily respond (from relative safety): "Oh, yeah, daddy! Push us into the mattress while you pound us silly! Storm our fortress! Harder! Faster! Deeper!"

As such, "exit-only" becomes a myth, the vampiric castle-in-the-flesh remaining open (figuratively and literally) to different insertions per military campaign—not to rape, but gain agency, understanding and control through rape play, thus begin to heal. Give and take, we can drive ourselves to greater pleasure and pain under the vampiric mode of exchange (denial and desire, fluid exchange); i.e., in a non-harmful, indulgent and highly educational sense (and sometimes, as with Cuwu, it can drive the taster a bit insane; but all the while, opens their eyes to the lovely carnival—and its sweet, infectious, addictive lessons/scholarship—that eagerly await). Don't abstain; we can go all night, so bottoms up (ace people, decide for yourselves if you want to partake)! Oral, anal and/or vaginal, but also intercrural, the tender tissue (and holes) beckon for you to try them! So rub your noses (and other sensory organs) in it!



(artist: Cuwu)

Lady or not, it's rude to keep a cutie waiting. And also, such stimulants are empathizing. However, the more you interact with abject, repulsive things as human, the more you'll learn; the more you learn, the luckier you'll get pertaining to them because you'll be less inclined to reject and discount their theories in praxis (sex is a radicalizing factor unto revolution, a way for freedom fighters to bond wherever they find themselves)! In turn, the owners of these parts become human, and praxis (as something to synthesize) becomes second-nature on the ground level: between workers doing what workers have done since time out of mind, but now as openly cummy comrades. Regardless of the exact outcome per exchange, the world's our oyster to pry open and participate in; we socially and sexually network among a shared pedagogy finding similarity amid difference! Everything snowballs amongst larger conversation, movement, rebellion—our Aegis to bare against the state's own mirrors (of false rebellion).

To that, having survived such things to experience the traumatic rewiring of different pleasurable and prey-like mechanisms, such do we camp our own state-threatened rapes and deaths. Whatever pull we boast (or booties we blast), rebellion doesn't so much as "have a clock" (an appointed hour) or a small, visible win condition (a simple track and finishing line) but a primed set of socio-materials condition whose application unfolds under the usual factors geared towards praxial success but not *guaranteed* as such. No such guarantees exist, save that doing nothing and make politics (thus survival) criminal/allergic only consigns us to a slow and sorry fate. We camp canon because we must, doing so with people of different ages—youth not wasted on the young because the young and old can interact in fresh synthesis! As exhibitionists and voyeurs, what we do in life echoes

in eternity as something less to farm (for profit) and more to set free! It's not taught in school, but there *are* places to learn that will admit you if you're willing and young-at-heart; i.e., not so jaded that you can't rock 'n roll (with the role of master and apprentice, teacher and student switching between two [or more] parties, per play session)!

In other words, watch and learn, but also, listen and understand: healing *is* system shock—where walking the tightrope yields untold feelings of many different kinds, and whose subsequent gushing we must interrogate, but also play and negotiate with. When doing so, there is always risk. In treading such choppy waters and in playing such dangerous games, then, always respect each other's humanity through clear permission and informed consent (remember your safewords)! Otherwise, we're just cops victimizing each other for the state. Provided you avoid such betrayals, though, go to town! If a pussy's hungry for more—wants you to tear it up—oblige them! They'll let you know if you're being too rough (and if they can't, then it's time to stop)! Find the beat and pound that drum; fuck to metal; learn and become the best lover you can be, making each and every time the best adventure it can possibly be *right now* (afterlife is a conservative bargain; re: the cake is a lie): a precious and princely parting gift you'll treasure until the end!



(artist: *Cuwu* and [Persephone van der Waard](#))

Furthermore, by putting these things increasingly in quotes using ludo-Gothic BDSM, the word "rape" becomes not just utterable, but paradoxically medicinal *and* medieval (the best medicine being laughter but also sex, usually combining the two during calculated risk). "Poison" was the cure, strengthening us to speak out against police forces (which bad-faith allies, actors and players are) abusing the same devices in dated pernicious forms; i.e., for the state during its own settler and sodomy arguments. It will seek us out, only to find its instructions wonderfully confused; i.e., subverted for counterterrorist (rear)ends during as(s)ymmetrical warfare by taking vampirism back in a GNC, thus Gothic an-com, green-eggs-and-harm kind of way! They're a bit melty (and stinky) but boy are they exquisite (I'm riffing off the Poetry Module, in case you're wondering)! Thus good BDSM becomes good praxis—not a closeted shameful deed, but a new way of life towards a better tomorrow! Spread it around, pay it forward; plant the seeds for something better that grows inside and outside of ourselves.

We're called unicorns for a reason. Unlike straight people, we fags (and especially we *non-cis* fags) are intimately familiar with the ontological, closeted

feelings and needing to show and hide them under oppressive conditions attached to state structures (religious or otherwise). Once inoculated or otherwise adjusted to state decay, disorder and hauntology-of-war lies, GNC workers become equally resistant but not immune to tokenization from coercion through dogma, torture, incarceration and indoctrination (especially the older we get but also vulnerable from a young age).



(artist: [Ballard Zero](#))

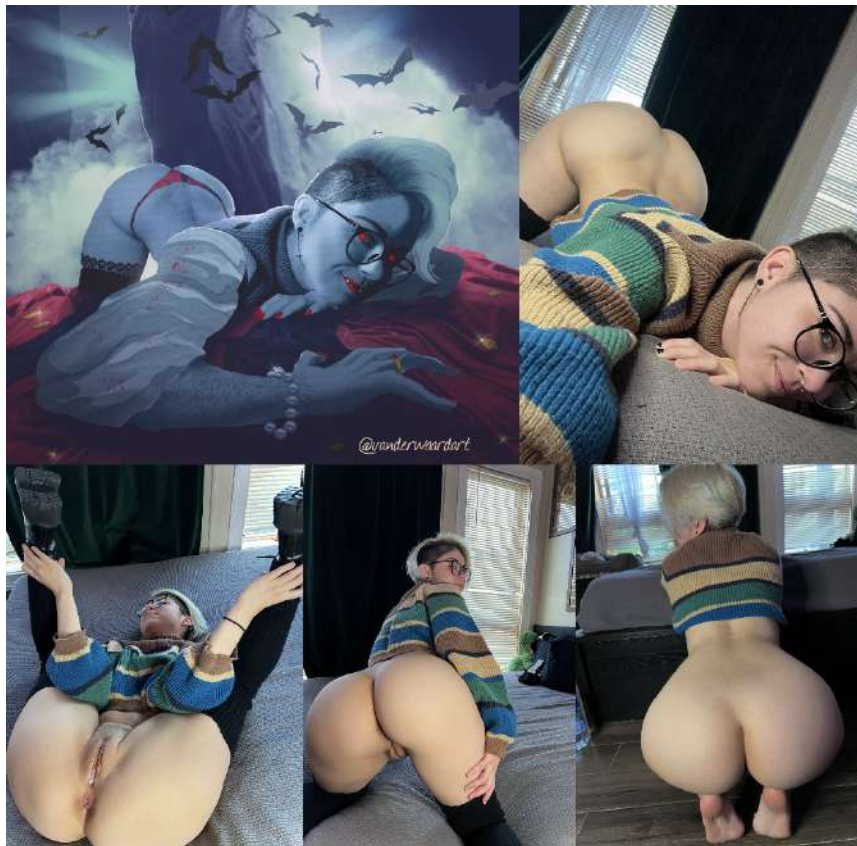
In turn, such beings of the night can—per liminal expression—cryptonymically show to conceal and vice versa per all the usual gay codes, euphemisms and constantly updating courtship strategies; i.e., as revolution and survival from the state (as straight) demands we do. The more marginalized the victims, the more radical the solution regarding their liberation (which is why Marxist-Leninism won't work—in short, it's not radical *enough*). We get together (and down together) to inspire, share and lend each other inspiration, ideas, attention, drugs, fashion tips, money and, yes, sex—whatever we need to see revolution through (to "put ourselves together" and, as Kim Petras nicely explains, "[give you my heart to break](#)," 2018). We insulate and protect, comfort and console, defend and supply.

For us, rebellion isn't separate from daily life, but one-in-the-same old of dead things we establish to trust as something to build; i.e., bring *back* to life to weigh on the brains of the living: the ghost of gay Marx bombing the Brumaire! Thus, nothing is owned (privatized) and everything is shared to better help workers and nature endure and ultimately *surpass* the state as straight! We can fuck with them, including their holy ideas of the past; i.e., punk, rock and gay culture, etc, as alive and well, but like Milton's Satan, undead in artistic opposition to state dualities (no matter what Marilyn Manson insists, in "[Rock Is Dead](#)," 1998); e.g., by reminding Marxist-Leninists that Marx wasn't above playing with monsters, thus having a gay potential those who long survived him could later use to camp his own work—to shock everyone awake with unholy pandemonic solidarity (while crooning like Morrison, moaning like Benatar, purring like Petras, and wailing like Halford, etc)! "Long is the way and hard, that out of Hell leads up to light!" as Milton said; as I said (from Volume Zero), belong to the devil's party and know it! You have only to lose you chains—from holding you down, but *not* for being used regarding other things! Out of the slaver's control, we see ourselves free as liberated slaves; i.e., loving the aesthetic of domination, of power and death (the red-in-the-black



flushing's first-glance vaso vagal threatening blood and penetration through syringe-like injection). Fits like a glove!

To this, patience *is* a virtue, but the intense, resolute, and pent-up *need* remains; i.e., that fierce and unyielding hunger—to be free and able to eat, fuck, exist and relate to each other as simultaneously human and abject. Rebellion is required to avoid liquidation, but we *make* it a delight by "liquidating" all over them! Juicy fruit, we demand to be tasted, humanizing the harvest while serpentine-like and wiggling temptingly! Eat *this* apple, then revel in doing so: "We're *totally* 'eating from the Tree of Knowledge' right now!" The "almost holy" is our church, and we want to *prey* for our sins!



(exhibit 41g3: Model and artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#) and [Quinnvincible](#). Note the Mona-Lisa smile, the self-assured confidence about what he has mind. Quinn is a trans boy who, for this particular exhibit, desired to appear more masculine; i.e., as a xenophilic, gynodiverse, monstrous-feminine expression of how they regularly want to present and perform as masc. Before we started, they specifically told me they wanted their face and shoulders

more masculine than they currently are; conversely they stated how they also feel content with the female aspects of their body—their pussy, curves and breasts. Such evolutions are idiosyncratic and vary per person, with some people wanting top and/or bottom surgeries and some people choosing to opt out of those procedures.

As a matter of sexually descriptive, andro/gynodiverse genderqueer expression, every vampire is unique, as is every negotiation between artist and model, etc. My subsequent attempts to masculinize Quinn apply to the "phallic," campy medievalism of fangs and drinking blood, but also masc clothing loosely informed by older Gothic poetics; i.e., an imaginary past as continuously reinvented,

*"threatening" gender trouble through sodomy as a reclaimed action tied to the performer as subversive, themselves. Although Quinn's actions are canonically "heretical," their self-interpretation and sense of style is immediately friendly and harmless.*

*Angry transgression is entirely a strategy within oppressed pedagogies, but Quinn's affable, seductive cuteness shows how threats of violent, open revenge aren't the only path of resistance available to iconoclasts. Sometimes the best revenge is successfully making one's enemies self-report against you, pulling their hair out at gender as something to [a]sexually parody and joyously play with in public, nudist displays; i.e., not welcome to my sad little world [sad cum], but my weird, happy [sometimes angry/sad, but not always] world—embodying the former realities of compelled personification as a living, sexually transmitted "disease" [queer people are AIDS] to then subvert its dogmatic, holocaust-by-bullet, settler-colonial elements amid new regeneration and praxial catharsis! Medusa's rapture mixes pleasure and pain in ways signatory to queer experience always being liminal. In turn, no liberation exists without facing that music in a holistic sense.)*



([source](#): Lucy Diavolo's "The United States Government's Anti-Gay Lavender Scare, Explained," 2019)

Like the word "transgender," "vampire"/"sodomy" evolved into itself through opposing forces that yielded pejorative, heteronormative

labels/crises *and* genderqueer identities/struggles attached to the same language. For instance, the above image was shot in 1965, exactly when words like "homosexual" were nearly a century old, and "transgender" and "transsexual" were just being coined in a Western, medicalized sense. The recency of those new words cannot be said of vampires. Even by 1954, Matteson's story was old hat, but new in focus; i.e., apply the vampire to what Romero would treat as "zombie apocalypse" some fifteen years later! Past present or (retro-)future, any vampire you see is caught in the same tug-of-war between state and worker concerns about sexual, gendered and performative agency—their swooping in through violent, terrifying and morphological sodomy dialogs about sex and force; i.e., as poetic levers laid with new knowledge build on old knowledge to further closet workers or, in some shape or form, help set them free during ludo-Gothic BDSM.

As something that *has* crystalized over centuries, though, the vampire's feeding behaviors unfold during moments of active "torture" according to canonical

fears of societal change brought on by queer persons merely trying to exist (thus demonstrate and protest, *ipso facto*, by actively resisting our segregation and eradication); i.e., by threatening the state, generally through reclaiming xenophobic symbols of the vampire, making them more party-like, sex-positive and fun (the disco vamp as tied to "the devil's music" and cultural appropriation/demonization of people of color as chained to Americanized sites of sin for white consumers: "the creatures of the night, what sweet music they make!"; e.g., Paganini's devilish fiddle; Cab Calloway's 1933 Betty Boop rotoscope jaunt, "[St. James Infirmary Blues](#)," or his tokenized Harlem Romance/sale's pitch, "[Hi-Di-Ho](#)," 1934; Squeezit the Mocher from *Forbidden Zone*, 1979; "[Slam Shuffle](#)" from *Final Fantasy VI*, 1994; or [King Dice from Cuphead](#), 2017).



Taken as a whole, these combined, campy feelings of alienation speak to our martyred predation by the state; i.e., in ways we can enjoy and reclaim, reversing abjection through such vampire-style, campy vice characterization. As Asprey notes (and I build on), revolutions take terror back through counterterror challenging state monopolies through camp (those who opt out of doing so and discourage others from camp are generally sell-outs—a concept we'll unpack more in part one of "Understanding Vampires," next). Such revivals (and their dispersals) can, often enough, catch fire and spread just as quickly through the state (and its defenders): recoiling in disgust and scrambling to monopolize on the craze.

Concerning the vampire's sudden neoliberal resurgence as queer and unwelcome, this heteronormative xenophobia manifests as a matter of degree. Indeed, the operation—of the human body and its behaviors during canonical vampire stories burying the gay—originally operate as a mixed metaphor tied to conservative social attitudes obsessed with racial, but also hereditarily "pure" bloodlines and PIV sex. Anal sex—and peoples associated with that and other forms of sodomy—are nigh unimaginable during moral panics (especially male sodomy as

chased after, while female sodomy is more openly fetishized by these same chasers of incorrect men).

Instead, the "classic" Western vampire becomes a common fixture of unholy appetite and middle-class addiction, restored through the consumption of forbidden<sup>331</sup> sex, "virgin" vitality and, far from resenting its absence, utterly waste away without it (with "blood" being closer to its medieval, "humors" rubric than the literal stuff in human bodies). In other words, canonical treatments of the vampire vary further according to their biological sex and gender identity as recent, resisted developments of inclusive vampirism during the past half-century or so—i.e., embodying desire as forbidden to the point of fatal excess, including murderous, skulking impulses tied to raw, unbridled sexuality (a very Victorian fear): as having expanded to include trans, intersex and non-binary people camping all of that as



"strung out" (or using it to cryptonymically blend in—beards and lavender weddings). Bitches in heat—and ones they'll never tame—we rise from the heap to scream; stretched to the limit, overcome with defiant ecstasy and rapture, our bouncing bodies (and jiggy parts) give our disdainers butterflies: letting them know they'll *never* own us! Wet at the thought, we melt into puddles and quiver! "Stare and tremble!" we sigh, and blast off yet again.

(artist: [Nya Blu](#))

All the same, queerness *is* continuously moderated through an insistence on cis-gendered, pornographic anchor language and heteronormative concerns during popular vampire stories. Whereas xenophilic vampires reliably become incubi and succubae that challenge the heteronormative order by feeding on maidens, their queerness is generally repressed before

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<sup>331</sup> In regards to forbidden fruit, the conservative argument/perspective extends to the closeted "chaser"—i.e., a person who outwardly rejects the pursuit of "sodomy" (in the medieval sense) but secretly pursues it in private in relation to various out-group types: the twink, femboy or ladyboy, or trans women more broadly as monstrous-feminine entities. Speaking as a trans woman who once identified as a femboy, our treatment by these chasers reduces us to a kind of "dangerous drug" or "bait" in a punitive hierarchy of abuse: the "prison sex" phenomenon. Inside it, our abusers brand us with in public with coded language, then pursue us in private. Conversely, while chasers are often white, cis-het men, they *can* include AFAB sex workers that police trans women as a smaller subset of AMAB sex worker "bait" within "women" as a larger minority category. These AFAB women "chase" us down and punish us as "bait" that steals their customers, in the process blaming us for being treated this way by cis-male chasers and by AFAB "chasers" as well. I have a small section in Volume Three, Chapter Four dedicated to this concept based on my own experiences.

corporeal punishment is even administered: state sanctioned banishment, but also "staking" for the crime of theft, *a priori*.

Wives, in particular, are seen as valuable property by the jilted husband, and the vampires who defile them do so through an extramarital exchange of essence that damns both to die by the sanctimonious *owners* of women (and, by extension, anything of nature, thus monstrous-feminine). In this sense, women are the ancient carriers for a disease that started more recently inside a queer *male* body. Exposed to it, their primordial, bleeding hysteria bleeds everywhere, rushing to the operatic surface/stage; i.e., to go a bit batty against patriarchal forces policing nature-as-monstrous-feminine, the act of doing so being a flexible gradient of persecution, dividing and conquering the usual groups amongst themselves, gentrifying and decaying through sodomy dialogs historically having gatekept themselves and omitting anyone else.

Such a tokenized, toe-the-lined trend started with feminism and white cis-het women, only to become increasingly racist, queerphobic, Orientalist, and ultimately assimilative across all parties through DARVO and obscurantism; e.g., having the Carmilla triangulate against other vampires—to take the cross, bearing her fangs, drool blood and say unto the trans woman, person of color and/or Indigenous element, etc, "The power of Christ compels you!" Either they betray their cause, or were bad faith from the start. Let it be said, no group is historically immune from this. Allies of all sorts become enemies, such malcontents undermining a shared struggle and entire poetic language, in the process. The *ahegao*/anguish loses its irony and inverts into fresh betrayal:



This genocidal heritage and fakery has a cryptonymic silencing affect in either spatial, temporal and cultural direction. The further back you go, the more exclusive, myopic, and wordless activism in the Gothic mode becomes. But during the expanding of sexual and gender discourse in later centuries,

those being silenced go from less queer to more queer in a criminal, "problematic" sense policing alien love—from vampires as heteronormative to queernormative, from "buggery" to "lesbian" to "transgender" to "twink" as an updated dictionary of pejorative claims used by tokenized, recuperated elements. This includes sex workers punching down against themselves ("dandies" and "ladies of the night"); i.e., inside the same, half-real discipline-and-punish prisons; i.e., between fiction

and non-fiction, Capitalist Realism during Satanic Panic into Red Scare punching down at GNC peoples as "vampires" through internalized bigotry!

Let it be said, the visual differences are virtually meaningless (male or female, trans man or trans woman), insofar as class, culture and race betrayal manifests to accomplish the same basic goal through these axes of oppression. There's no rationalization for tokenization that can justify such betrayals; they're simply wrong by virtue of settler colonialism (and all its symptoms and variations, including Marxist-Leninist queerphobia) being wrong! Capitalism is wrong. The state and cops are wrong regardless of where they come from (re: America or the U.S.S.R.), and regardless who's policing the monstrous-feminine for practicing "sodomy." The state always decays and always polices, smites, and imprisons its foes; capital does that for profit's sake against nature-as-monstrous-feminine.

Trying this pointedly to sodomy and to classic vampires, the individual, updated treatment of male and female vampires exudes various monstrous-feminine double standards all by themselves (say nothing of intersex examples, which we'll explore more in the Demon Module): the rakish tempter and sultry temptress as "lady-killer" and "man-eater" tied to the deep, dark thirst and shameless theft of blood, undermining the sanctity of marriage (and a dutiful wife) for a quick, messy one-night stand with a lothario or lady of the night.

With gender reduced to a simple us-vers-thus binary, the act of sex becomes canonically bad-faith—dangerous and perfidious, but also tied to a larger structure: the *world* as the vampire, exhibit 41h—specifically Capitalism as dissociated and displaced to a mythologized anytime, place and people (re: Federici); i.e., the Gothic masque and its dangerous game of love-making as emblematic to social-sexual interactions more broadly that present in demonized language; e.g., the heteronormative love triangle of the virgin/whore caught between the benign male hero and the rapacious demon lover as patently vampiric.

In other words, blood is canonically abject, but makes queerness unspoken in vampire stories by focusing more on the classic window-dressing of imperiled maidens and husbands; e.g., replicas of Jonathan Harker and his wife, Mina, by the pesky old Count as the go-to torturer/mask-wearing serial killer of women bodies and cis-het male pride. Under these circumstances, it becomes impossible to express xenophilic queerness through vampire stories without some xenophobic carryovers from the history of sexuality and gender as queer-repressed *nostalgia*.

This ongoing repression constitutes a "vanishing point" of queerness; the closer one tries to get, the more illusions imagined in defense of Capitalism's struggle; i.e., to *maintain* heteronormativity by staving off a queer world whose stability and harmony with nature beyond Capitalism is "unimaginable," leaving only the boxed-in reality that Capitalism is a vampire—one whose predatory and hypnotic illusions workers must canonically accept. So often, they'll do so, punching down against anyone who ruffles their feathers by asking, "Why, Black Dynamite, why?" (the question the "hero" in that movie *thinks* he hears, but is actually a

statement of *defiance* made by a Vietnamese child, saying to his not-to-bright destroyer, "Can't kill me").

People who live through pogroms are haunted by them, reaching up from abject Hell to chill their victims solid and, to some degree, paralyze themselves whilst staring on in hunger at yet-untouched forms still fresh and innocent: "Don't be afraid." Vampirism and sodomy classically involve medieval courtship and meeting new people as a matter of monsters and camp (with that delicious shock of adrenaline, doing what you shouldn't and it tasting good all the more for it).

To it, when Zeuhl showed me the ways of the vampire (through Foucault, who they said they "rode and died with"), they took my innocence; but I was born again, gifted with a heavy knowledge I'd never try to give back to them. Trading in queer love, they teased and woke something up inside me, taking me to faraway places that felt like home in ways home never quite was; having tasted of the forbidden fruit, I emerged a newborn queer—suitably strange and ready to go with the flow, wreaking a lovely gayness upon the world Zeuhl would probably blush at now in complete-and-utter chagrin! Reap the whirlwind, I guess.



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

Vampirism speaks to altered states of mind, unfolding with eerie grandeur and anticipation, but also remarkable fear and confusion, excitement and anticipation—land back, but also *identities* back in ways that have to wake up in new undead forms challenging older zombies (re: Foucault, Marxist-Leninism, etc). As such, these hauntologies yield different flavors, which we'll consider next, in part one; i.e., where we talk about my coming out of the closet as building on this messy 1970s foundation onwards! Hunger City, humbly we power bottoms offer up our girthy tumescence! Drain us so that we may transcend to new orders of existence!

**Understanding Vampires, part one: Leaving the Closet; or, a Trans Woman's Scholarly Contributions to Older Histories of Sodomy and Queer Love (feat. Anne Rice, Chelyabinsk-40, *Brotherhood of the Wolf*, *Castlevania*, and more)**

*"Don't be afraid. I'm going to give you the choice I never had."*

—Lestat, *Interview with the Vampire* (1994)



The opening to "Understanding Vampires" considered the basic, historical-material predicament—i.e., of academic-to-popular debate surrounding queerness and vampirism as starting from ignorance, achieving

a gradual, uphill understanding of nature through opposing schools of thought (compiling and competing knowledge as it exists through application in vampiric terms, specifically Marxist-Leninism and anarcho Communism). Following that, part one gave a relatively short history primer of vampires (much has been written about them); i.e., orbiting around the 1970s, whose before, during and after of that tumultuous, bustling and productive period helped compose the burgeoning nucleus for *my* coming out of the closet. Doing so built new inclusive theory on top of said history's previous treatment and understanding of vampires and queerness; i.e., its medical, academic and popularized legends, surrounding queerness as canonically vampiric on all registers.

Now we shall consider said journey as told by I, trans woman: climbing out of the underworld to change things above ground, breaking *new* ground according to an iconoclastic understanding of the world as queer and vampiric; e.g., vampire Capitalism and its negative effects on the environment being queerphobic (and the Marxist-Leninist history of queerphobia coinciding with its environmental abuse); i.e., while standing on said foundation previously mentioned, the vampire fangs (and other phallic devices) pumping in and out. The more solid the ground became, the more I had to impart, the artificial wilderness of my enclosure falling away...

*Note: One, this subdivision for "Understanding Vampires" is quite long—69 pages, in fact (nice)! While the style is fairly personal, flowing and conversational, everything's signposted; but I've decided not to split it into different posts. There*



*will be signposts, though; the titles are kind of self-explanatory so I won't summarize them—just give the titles:*

- *The Closet*
- [\*Feeding: Finding Our Voice While Surviving in the Closet\*](#)
- [\*Ludo-Gothic BDSM: Criminality and Power Flow when Feeding \(feat. "Omelas," Roadside Picnic, Solzhenitsyn, Mao and Stalin, Chelyabinsk-40, and more\)\*](#)
- [\*Halfway point: Performing and Learning from Older Vampires \(feat. Interview with the Vampire, Brotherhood of the Wolf, Rob Halford and Chappell Roan\) in My Older Work; My Exiting the Closet\*](#)
- [\*No More Food: the State Eating Itself, and Notes on Tokenism\*](#)

*Two, a holistic, historical side note about **the Closet**, before we proceed:*

*Vampires are, like gay people, sex monsters with a flair for the medieval/castles; canon closets that to contain our sex-pest virulency (our status being disease-spreading whores, but also men in dresses, confused breeders, etc). The closet is a lonely place to be, then—a hell without windows, walls or doors, a rat trap to hold, not entertain us (versus cis-het speedrunners playing games for treats). Whereas cis-het women are enslaved through their biology first and foremost, sexism chaining them to the household and the marriage bed (e.g., the Gothic heroine in the castle, the damsel in a tower); people of color for their skin pigment and geographical origins, racism taking them diasporically to faraway lands*



*through literal enslavement or Orientalism linking immigrants criminally to said lands; and non-Christians persecuted for their heretical lack of status-quo faith, burned alive or fed to the lions; queer people in Western culture have always been a disease with no earthly grounds, largely denied the language to discuss itself and criminalized on medical casus belli as an affront to nature.*

*(artists: [Allegra Viper](#) and [August Harper](#))*

*To it, we're less zombies and more vampires; i.e., something to chase down, pull the lid off of and stake, or expose to the burning glare of broad daylight and burn to a crisp under public scrutiny. Also, unlike these other groups, the chief weapon against us is*

*performative shame because we are a crime against nature precisely because we refuse to breed and behave like the state—a heteronormative, Cartesian, settler-colonial body—wants us to: in a binary sense.*

*From my PhD and manifesto, capital doesn't just alienate everything about workers, but sexualizes them in order to profit against nature as monstrous-feminine. Per our modular thesis, it does so in ways that, punishing us queers, cultivates odd appetites; and we, seeking to challenge profit's regular divisions and subsequent rape, must reclaim gender and sexuality as a matter of identity and performance, not biological essentialism [re: "[A Note About Canonical Essentialism](#)"]. We take pre-existing popular legends and ideas, already historically repeating and stacking on themselves, and lean them in a progressively inclusive and intersectionally solidarized direction; i.e., through dialectical-material scrutiny and play. "Give me a lever and a place to stand and I will move the Earth!" Sometimes that "lever" is our penis.*

*Setting aside intersections (e.g., black trans women) and synonymous treatment (e.g., black rape epidemics versus sodomy charges), these other oppressed groups—while still thoroughly alienated and abused—are more visible, and fight in the light of day about what the state controls concerning their bodies, culture and history surrounding themselves. Conversely, the closet is a place that is more invisible, and hidden by code standing in its place; re: the cryptonymy process, which other groups use, but which all but defines queerness as embedded into the Western hegemon (taken from/evolving convergent to other ancient cultures, where GNC people have existed since the dawn of time). Queerness is closeted, which in turn becomes something to escape while holding onto itself (all while being accused of things that are difficult to prove. Keeping with Red Scare, vampires are seen as infiltrators and impostors, but also deviants and devils; i.e., weak and strong in ways that invite police violence against us).*

*Except, exiting the closet is not something that every queer gets to do. For those that manage it, it is a journey of self-discovery and chance to contribute to the world around them while becoming dangerously exposed inside a larger prison we must transform within itself—the world and nature per us relating to them. This section shall talk about that in relation to vampires, and how such things informed my transformation and scholarship through the people I met and media I consumed (whether popular or not). In my usual holistic style, there's no gods, kings or masters under Communism as I imagine it, nor states, but are coming from a variety of communities and institutions; i.e., borrowed from the historical Gothic mode to produce the work that I do. Keep that in mind as we proceed!*

*Your Commie Mommy,*

*—Persephone van der Waard*

*P.S., Even though we've already had a primer and crash course about vampires, I wanted to reiterate what makes them unique as a modular subclass of undead, and all the sheer thematic variety they offer that zombies do not—at least not quite as much!*



*Zombies primarily constitute a lack of humanity and agency among hybrid, traumatized beings that, per the state, are resurrected, acknowledged and then exterminated by police and vigilante force (stochastic terrorism against labor action); vampirism—as we've established—is a bit more worldly and cosmopolitan, but also alive with personality despite being undead.*

*Hence, the "disease" of vampirism can mean/abstract so many things. These things generally tie to wealth, sanguine, anti-Semitism and anti-Paganism, sodomy and animal sex, but also predator/prey hunting mechanisms, ravishing rape play and infernal dalliances<sup>332</sup> for or against state bodies; e.g., (and looking past the superstitions and history of sodomy and witch hunts we examined in the crash course/primer) there's perhaps most obviously the erotic relationship to unnaturally long life and blood, but also the pumping thrust of the needling teeth; i.e., their usage simulating predatory sex or escalating deliberations towards criminal love and alien connections to vitality and nature-as-abject (animal lust/magnetism and fatal attraction). But also, many other collocations exist and overlap (indented for emphasis):*

*bridging gaps in liminal positions (walking the edge), phases/passages of vulnerability vs invulnerability, inverse mordents (a musical technique of tickling the keys up and down, not unlike teasing a nipple or clitoris), general oral fixation, rabies, adrenaline, drug use/substance abuse and fever dreams, general addiction, poison/venom, intoxication and inebriation (delirium), hypnosis and eye contact, toxic love, codependency, masters and slaves, owners and pets, medieval physiology (the humors) and literal blood flow,*

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<sup>332</sup> E.g., not all princesses want to be rescued, running with the wolf as a kind of "best revenge" that walks different tightropes—raised by wolves, but also *fucked* by them (the above movie, 1992's *Dracula*, highlighting the similarities between lycanthropy and vampirism by Vlad fucking Lucy as a wolfman onto a slutty redhead. Such dualities speak to unchained desire and a lack of self-control under capital as something to simultaneously fight *and* give into (and all the usual fetishes and done-to-death clichés—"my heart says no, but my body says yes" being a rehash of "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak"); but also to queer love (and battered housewives) classically conflated, our love something that goes back to cis-het male abusers that a tokenized public will feminize and present as "slightly off" in order to justify whatever police/witch-hunt violence occurs; i.e., Pavlovian hostage behaviors from victims, and the persecution of queer-people-as-usual simply trying to find connection despite our being treated liminally as alien disease spreaders, but also—true enough—such heteronormative abuses extending queernormatively to queer relationships. Abuse (usually in reactive forms) happens in our lives, too!

*menstruation, placental blood and tokophobia, PMS, hysteria and postpartum psychosis, hereditary madness and blood diseases, lunacy and lycanthropy, extermination orders and insect politics/vermin rhetoric, flat affects and mood disorders, orgasms and general arousal (blushing and tumescence), febrility, gentility, literal bite kink and fetishes (controlling one's prey with your teeth holding them in place, but also the powerful tactile sensations said teeth produce), tongues (the strongest muscle in the body) and bad breath, needles and syringes, medical malpractice, weird body hair (on the palms, for some reason), picky eaters, bourgeois abstraction, rough sex, torn hymens, virginity and innocence, wicked promiscuousness, hedonism, polyamory and orgies, mouths (oral, anal or vaginal), lust, bloodlust, wanderlust, prostitution, gentleman callers, assassins, murderers and serial killers, smooth criminals (and bloodstains, on the carpet), period sex, STDs, sexual transients and vagabonds, traveling histrionics and wandering wombs, home invasions, paralysis and comas, conversation therapy, live burials, corpse theft and transportation, plague fears, necrophilia and graveyard sex, gluttony (and other Deadly Sins), temptation and indulgence, libido and prurience, modesty and abstinence, grave soil and quintessence, castles, cobwebs, Catholics, courtly love, duels, swords (status weapons, unlike arrows, halberds, or clubs, of a patrician sort), amnesia/oblivion, a spiking heart rate and the heart muscle/circulatory system working (or freezing in its place), bleeding or curdling blood/temper, cat-and-mouse predation, rats (scavengers), spiders and bats (blood drinkers), wolves (pack hunters and lone pariahs), hauntological tone poems, xenophobic caricature, etc...*

*Vampirism also hyphenates general eroticism, BDSM, teeth and mouths, knives-phalluses, ancient-to-medieval warrior cultures and killer instinct, levitation from holding one by the throat (minimal resistance), domestic trauma, and different superstitions; re: concerning blood purity, quantum and libel, race science and eugenics, the occult, ritual sacrifices, voodoo and creole religions/celebrations (e.g., Mardi Gras marrying Catholicism to Americanized Cajun language, seafood and other cultural elements [sex and plastic prayer beads handed out like candy by parade girls]: "laissez les bon temps rouler!" to conjure up not-so-dead ghosts of whores in the French Quarter), Faustian bargains, necromancy and black-and-blood magic/witchcraft, Red Scare, and fascist overlords commanding armies of the walking dead drained of their life force but not their desire to feed, among other things. With vampires, the sky truly is the limit (not even: they can fly<sup>333</sup>, too)!*

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<sup>333</sup> While mosquitos carry and spread malaria, one of the world's oldest and deadliest diseases\*, vampires aren't classically associated with *those* flying animals (re: Watterson, below—we'll get to exceptions when we examine the Countess); they're compared to *bats*. The world's only true flying mammals, bats have an unusual metabolic system that allows them to carry viruses without dying: "Bats—the only flying mammal—display several additional features that are unique among mammals, such as a long lifespan relative to body size, a low rate of tumorigenesis and an exceptional ability to

host viruses without presenting clinical disease" ([source](#): Aaron Irving *et al*'s "Lessons from the Host Defences of Bats, a Unique Viral Reservoir," 2021). That is, they incubate, transmute *and* carry the disease, making them excellent vectors.

\*Richard Carter and Namini Mendis write, "Malaria is among the oldest of diseases. In one form or another, it has infected and affected our ancestors since long before the origin of the human line. During our recent evolution, its influence has probably been greater than that of any other infectious agent" ([source](#): "Evolutionary and Historical Aspects of the Burden of Malaria," 2003).



(artist: Bill Watterson)

Bats are also excellent pollinators/fertilizers and eat billions of insects\* (which also spread disease) a night. Despite bats' importance in the world eco system, humans—especially capitalists, being terribly self-centered—overlook these qualities to scapegoat and punish bats in relation to themselves *and* people (we fags). Regarding bats, a case can be made for them metabolizing COVID, but humans spread it with their airplanes; as for gay people spreading AIDS, that disease is much more recent than malaria: "To date, the earliest known case of HIV-1 infection in human blood is from a sample taken in 1959 from a man who'd died in Kinshasa in what was then the Belgian Congo" ([source](#): Peter Daszak' "Where Did HIV Come From?" 2018). And while the virus formed in chimpanzees and spread to African poachers in the 1950s (thanks to Capitalism ruining that continent), it likewise spread elsewhere until it affected people in the Global North, who promptly blamed homosexual men for the virus (thanks to anal sex and blood, even though the disease also effects straight people—indeed *more* so than 21st queer people because said people take precautions with anal sex; [source](#): Terrence Higgins Trust's "Heterosexual HIV Diagnoses Overtake Those in Gay Men for First Time in a Decade," 2022).

\*Bats are the second largest order of mammals, and make up 20% of all mammals on Earth (~1,400 species). Furthermore, "still the most significant part of bat species will feed mainly on insects. For example, an ordinary brown bat can eat up to 100 percent of its body weight every night; that would be about half an ounce. It can consume about 1,200 insects per hour approximately ([source](#): Wildlife Education & Directory of Wildlife Experts, 2020). Multiply 1,000 (to subtract a rough guess for which species *don't* eat bugs) by 1,000,000 (as a low estimate population total across all species) and then multiply that by 1,000 again (for one hour of feeding) and you get 1,000,000,000,000 bugs—per hour! Even ballpark figures, that's still a lot of bugs, thus a lot of disease prevention (especially in the Global South)! More to the point, if an environment changes too much due to state shift (which is mounting due to Capitalism), different species will die and the ecosystem will spiral out of control and eventually collapse. To maintain Capitalist Realism, capital will blame stigma animals and associate human groups instead of itself (re: Raj Patel and Jason Moore, who we'll bring up in this footnote).

As such, pandemics spread to humans, who *then* spread them among themselves because of Capitalism, which relegates them to the Global South (and queer groups). Much is said about the disease affecting the Global North (and said North's abjection of the disease onto queer people, there), but Africa to this day remains the most affected: "The WHO African Region remains most severely affected, with one in every 30 adults (3.4%) living with HIV and accounting for more than two-thirds of the people living with HIV worldwide [currently nearly 40 million]" ([source](#): WHO). 630,000 have died this year from the disease alone, with estimates of 35.7–51.1 million since 1959

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
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(*ibid.*). By comparison, the total number of deaths for COVID is over 7 million—though, as Worldometer writes, "As of April 13, 2024, the **Coronavirus Tracker is no longer being updated** due to the unfeasibility of providing statistically valid global totals, as **the majority of countries have now stopped reporting**" ([source](#)). Great.

It really bears repeating, then, that the places that spread misinformation do so *for profit*, generally at the cost of human and animal life. Capitalists, being the owners of countries, will open those borders to disease and then blame said disease on a scapegoat (usually immigrants, queer people and other minorities) because it helps them stay in control.

For example, the United States, by 2023, had more COVID deaths than any other country on Earth: "As of May 2, 2023, the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) had spread to almost every country in the world, and more than 6.86 million people had died after contracting the respiratory virus. Over 1.16 million of these deaths occurred in the United States" ([source](#): Statista). In fact, the United States is a place known for such behaviors not just in the present, but the past, as well; e.g., the Spanish Flu and a refusal to obey quarantine measures:

In places where mask orders were successfully implemented, noncompliance and outright defiance quickly became a problem. Many businesses, unwilling to turn away shoppers, wouldn't bar unmasked customers from their stores. In San Francisco, however, initial noncompliance turned to large-scale defiance when the city enacted a second mask ordinance in January 1919 as the epidemic spiked anew. Many decried what they viewed as an unconstitutional infringement of their civil liberties ([source](#): J. Alexander Navarro's "Mask Resistance During a Pandemic Isn't New," 2020).

Of course, blame always occurs when diseases spread, which they always do. Just not capital blaming themselves! In medieval Europe, for instance, Christians blamed Jews for poisoning wells and witches for hexing Christians, often comparing them to wild animals, but especially mammals like dogs, known for spreading rabies\*. As sexually transmitted diseases become more and more understood, though, Jewish-blamed diseases became more and more associated with "vampires" as queer-coded; i.e., the bigots/capitalists code-switched, but the ethnic origins remained!  
 \*"*Rabies is one of the oldest known diseases in history with cases dating back to 4,000 years ago. For most of human history, a bite from a rabid animal was uniformly fatal. [...] While rabies is well controlled in the United States, globally nearly 60,000 people die each year due to rabies. Most of these deaths are in children*" ([source](#): Cape Cod Regional Government).

In short, *who* the elite blame depends entirely on *how* the disease spreads *married* to superstitions; i.e., according to how they are *currently* used and understood. The animals always suffer\* but so do any people(s) treated like animals under current social-sexual phobias; e.g., the people who refused to wear masks for Spanish Flu compared having to do so as "being muzzled like a hydrophobic dog" (re: [Navarro](#)). "Hydrophobia," of course, is another word for rabies—lycanthropy being a precursor for vampirism and often used interchangeably with it throughout history (e.g., AIDs)!

*\*Even when being humane, rabid animals must be put down. I woke up back in early 2019 with a bat crawling on my drapes. I caught it in a bucket and released it—only to learn later that bat bites can be microscopic, and the only way to tell if the creature was infected is to have it tested. With that being impossible and rabies being more or less 100% fatal (the only way to check for rabies in humans is through their brain tissue and by then it's too late to save them; i.e., once symptoms show, you're dead on your feet), this meant I had to get shots. Luckily I still had insurance through state welfare. Otherwise, it would have been cheaper for me to fly to Vietnam, get the shots for free (rabies being much more common in non-American countries, meaning the vaccine is more available in Socialist countries), and fly back home! Honestly the horror stories I'd heard made it sound like torture, and I dislike needles, but the procedure wasn't that bad! But even if it was, I wouldn't advocate for the revenge killing of bats (or queer people)!*

Regarding Spanish Flu and COVID, absurd numbers of people died from lack of medicine, of course (Penicillin wasn't mass-produced for many years after its invention, in 1928, and the COVID vaccine had to be fast-tracked before it could be tested on humans), but also for disobeying quarantines: "From 1918 to 1919, the Spanish flu infected an estimated 500 million people globally.

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This amounted to about 33% of the world's population at the time. In addition, the Spanish flu killed about 50 million people. About 675,000 of the deaths were in the U.S." ([source](#): Cleveland Clinic's "Spanish Flu," 2021).

Such numbers are similar to AIDS and other pandemics, if not somewhat lower than even older cases because of medicinal developments; e.g., the Black Death, which "was so extreme that it's surprising even to scientists who are familiar with the general details. The epidemic killed 30 to 50 percent of the entire population of Europe. Between 75 and 200 million people died in a few years' time, starting in 1348 when the plague reached London" ([source](#): Pat Lee Shipman's "The Bright Side of the Black Death," 2014). Concerning *that* plague, the disease—Raj Patel and Jason Moore argue—forced feudalism to adapt into Capitalism in order to survive, but that Capitalism is inherently unstable, thus equipped to survive the pandemics it routinely generates in order to profit on a global scale; re:

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](#): *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things*).

As such, the 1400s marked the rise of different scapegoats to account for Western diseases caused by feudalism, and later Capitalism. *Hammer of Witches* was written in 1478, for example, along with various anti-Semitic stories like *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Jew of Malta* (1598 and 1590).

After several centuries, when Capitalism, settler-colonialism and systemic racism had more fully established on the world stage, Walpole's giant armor in *Otranto* (1764), at the end of the French and Indian War, foreshadowed the Capitalocene that Mary Shelley critiqued when she combined the Jewish legend, the Golem of Prague, with the Promethean myth, in 1818 (the year Marx was born); i.e., to critique Cartesian thought. Per Foucault, the rise of the Victorian bourgeoisie saw new queer-coded scapegoats invading the English idea of home by the 1800s; i.e., vampires being the sexual disease standing in for so many kinds of illnesses likened to STDs that were *not* STDs (re: rabies). At this same time, gay men were being persecuted in 1700s England at a mounting rate (re: [Broadmoor](#))—a trend that would only climb as the state/capital medicalized them more and more in defense of itself; re: from the 1870s onwards, homosexual men were in the medical books for less-than-savory reasons, followed by Irish-penned anti-Semitism/queerphobia: Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872) and Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) onto 20th century examples burying the gay as usual; e.g., *Castlevania: SotN* (1997) tokenizing Alucard in Oedipal ways: "In the name of my mother, I will defeat you again!" to "You have been doomed ever since you lost the ability to love!" Oh, the betrayal and irony!



It should be noted that the medical profession is not the same as Capitalism, and that as time went on, new medicalized documents and academic works began to acknowledge queerness in a more favorable and less strictly biological light (definitely not Freud, Jung or *their* ilk); re: Hirschfeld in the 1930s, and later others in the 1960s. By that point, new information and social conflicts began to rise

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up and challenge the state to such a degree that its defenders (fascism and cops) *couldn't* repress everything (re: having burned down Hirschfeld's Institute of Sexology, in 1933).

Humanizing such mythologies associated with these aforementioned groups, revolutionary (an-Com) queerness reclaimed the language of rebellion through old, medicalized stereotypes precisely so they could *avoid* being classified as public health hazards; i.e., preventing the reduction of a particular group to a cultural export, especially if that item is a slave-trade icon or otherwise indicative of a stigmatic treatment of said group; e.g., Dutch people with tulips to a lesser extent, and African Americans with water melons to a greater extent, the latter extreme extending to queer people and bats or Pagan women and snakes (those elements not being racialized, but sexualized and tied to gender versus a physical location). Such reclamations include witches and *their* familiars (e.g., black cats), but also queer people and sex work; re: Cuwu wearing my vampire cloak:



(model and photographer: Cuwu and [Persephone van der Waard](#))

However, this also goes for the animals being stigmatized alongside them as monstrous-feminine; e.g., bats; i.e., cutesifying former stigma animals to humanize them *and* their human counterparts using Gothic media but also academic theory combined, as usual, with access\* to accurate and humane scientific journals (those most afraid of such beings usually being bigots, themselves—*Ace Ventura 2: When Nature Calls* [1996] poking fun of the idea by making Ventura comically afraid of bats/rabies [the first movie having him (not-so-)comically afraid of gay people] in the middle of a story that, in the same breath, is criticizing British Imperialism and *its* affect on the Global South). Fear aside, animals like bats are simply damaged by humans destroying their natural habitats (again, due to Capitalism). Animals are often chimerized in ways that must *also* be reclaimed; e.g., Giger's xenomorph—a vampiric BDSM monster based on parasitoid wasps, but also lampreys, Nazis, and other parasites (and perceived parasites, queer people)—is both undead, demonic and animalistic; i.e., in ways queer people have reclaimed following *its* inception to humanize Communism-as-queer in the neoliberal era (re: *Aliens*, *Metroid*, and *Doom*).



\*My ex, Jadis, loved stigma animals like snakes, spiders and wasps, but also alligators and bats. Living on-campus at the University of Florida, there was a bat conservatory less than a mile from where we lived. It was basically a house on stilts with no floor. Every night, the bats—at twilight—would begin to drop from their roost and fly out go feed on bugs (mosquitoes and other insects being plentiful in North Florida). There were probably ten thousand bats in that single hutch, and people

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*Regardless of what exactly you want to stipulate, the vampire boils down to feeding and trauma like all undead (and parallels enacting knowledge/power exchange and transformation like demons and animal monsters also do). All these signature qualities likewise loosely and poetically encompass seduction, survival, suspension (sexual tension) and slumming versus raw cannibalism, concerning the maladaptive prey response (the freeze mechanism) from past abuse along vampiric hypnosis; i.e., succeeding in reversing the usual direction/polarity such things flow in/on (surface tension) during normalized exchanges: the giving and taking of power in venereal, animalistic forms (e.g., the male randy-dandy threatening women, but also demonizing and romancing female "huntress" revenge; i.e., such morality plights blaming the victim as innocent, pure-as-the-driven-snow maiden but also comorbid/congenital mistress acting as eater of men and/or women).*

### **Feeding: Finding Our Voice While Surviving in the Closet**

Now that you have an idea about the closet, a few (okay, nine) pages of prep before we get to studying power flow/criminality and exchange while inside it; i.e., there is always something caging queer people that drives them to feed whether they are "out or not." Let's unpack that concerning my history as such—surviving and finding our voice while inside the state!

First, there's a kernel of truth to vampire legends—the historical scapegoating of venereal disease (and the Black Death) aside, their urgent feeding and decay speak to capital's effect on us through our relationships; re: Marx's argument of dead labor feeding vampirically on living labor, which—as you'll know by now, makes us undead by virtue of our sexualities and genders diverging from

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*would come from all around to watch them descend from them home to predate on insects (and chirp musically as they did so)!*

As far as reclamation goes, doing so is always in the shadow of state-sanctioned disorder (societal and environmental collapse), ignorance and pandemics, queer people eclipsing Jews as formerly being the classic bringers of disease in that respect (with Jews instead being "upgraded" to the evil, goblin-like shadow bankers of the world; i.e., according to Jewish Conspiracy myths that survive in fascist discourse on and off the Internet).

All this this being said, blood libels persisted from the medieval period (the Middle Ages), the 16th to 19th centuries, and was reenacted by the Nazis ([source](#): Holocaust Encyclopedia). Furthermore, tokenized Jews (re: Zionists) have even *weaponized* this language, monopolizing it for themselves (thus the state) to apologize for American genocide, while all but ignoring its primary function against anti-Zionist Jews and queer people (or race science in other minorities; e.g., people of color and blood quantum).

While rumors were spread in older times to consolidate state power as it existed back then, anyone who does so *now* serves profit; i.e., generally the middle class' white conservative side, happy to throw other middle-class people under the bus (and everyone else) if it means turning a buck. Those who give their medicine away for free (re: the Polio vaccine or Penicillin) are just as likely *not* queerphobic, because queerphobia is a *grift* tied to medicalizing us as disease spreaders. It's unscientific, illogical and cruel, but highly capitalistic! Capital synonymizes queer people/animals and diseases to stay on top. For them, nature itself is literally queer and alien, needing to be raped by the Straights from Columbus to Stalin to Putin to Andrew Tate. It's not medieval, but "scientific."

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state desires. The closet is very much an undead feeling situation where the state tries to profit on us being different—one that haunts you long after you leave it (and vampires always return to the grave-as-crime-scene; i.e., where queerness simply exists in loneliness, seeking company to make such torment less unbearable). Francis Ford Coppola insisted in 1992 that "Love never dies." But it *does* die, decaying and changing into various different things inside the closet, mid-disintegration, longing for change and escape but holding onto the past:



The Gothic is writ in such Ozymandian sands, vampires in particular speaking to social-sexual disease and cure alike; i.e., society as sick with the canonical idea that we fags are carriers of social-psychosexual disease that, as an-Coms, will corrupt and degenerate the world as you know it (re: Capitalist Realism). I mean, *guilty as charged!* Just *not* in the way the Straights are born and bred to think about, thus respond to us (with police, persecutory and carceral violence, of course).

Furthermore, as my exes taught me, something is always lost and gained with any exchange. Zeuhl, for instance, didn't *quite* give me a choice, like Lestat with to Louis, but I always *could* have backed out when both of us were in Manchester (turning down two years' worth of sex, and a lifetime's supply of extracurricular genderqueer education)! I didn't—and more to the point, we didn't—because we were attracted to each other in a queer sense. Like the undead, we fed on each other—hungry for more, giving parts of ourselves away and enjoying as we did so how *exciting* it felt; i.e., our being born different and *finally* finding a similar lost soul we could bring into our individual graveyards for some good, wholesome fun ("Step into my parlor..." said the spider to the fly).

"I've never done this before..." Zeuhl insisted, stepping into *my* tiny flat. Wearing a pretty black dress, they twirled to flare out their skirt before, just as fast, sitting on the bed, laying back, and spreading their thick thighs to offer me their tight, fuzzy, princex pussy. It was the tightest I have *ever* fucked, gushing in wetness as soon as I pinned them to the bed—"spread it, mount it, pin it," as the lepidopterists would put it (a bit of an entomologist joke. My deck is full of such cards, given to me by different exes)!

College sex be like that—a time for those who go to escape the perils of the street or control of the household, and indulge in what is forbidden:

One look at you, I'm powerless  
 I feel my body saying yes  
 Where's my self-control? Ah  
 And when you touch me, I'm a fool  
 This game I know I'm gonna lose  
 Makes me want you more (re: Kim Petras' "[Heart to Break](#)").

Having a taste, Zeuhl and I turned into "nocturnal" feeders who would actively seek out future prey after our current love had run its course (thanks to them, not me)! I had to reconcile that, wondering if it was my fault (they initially said it *wasn't* my fault at all, but later changed their mind and said it was *all* my fault, not theirs); i.e., making me freeze and shatter like glass—not from virgin anticipation, but if someone else after Zeuhl would, like them, take my heart when pulled out of my chest for them to hold, and shove a nail through it (eat your heart out, Solzhenitsyn):

Even if it means that I'll never put myself back together  
 Gonna give you my heart to break  
 Even if I'll end up in shatters, baby, it doesn't matter  
 Gonna give you my heart to break  
 I tried to fight, but I can't help it  
 Don't care if this is my worst mistake  
 'Cause no one else could do it better  
 And that's why I give you my heart to break (*ibid.*).

In part, the ageless quality to vampires speaks to the die-hard quality of sodomy as a poetic device, of sex as a political weapon; i.e., of its simultaneously burnt-out and novel qualities, its geriatric and youthful affect. Oxymorons and other such vampire clichés were truly done and dusted by the time Shakespeare wrote *Romeo and Juliet*—done quite literally to death but immortalized through the arrogance of youth, the undead restoration of former novelties repeatedly coming on and wearing off as vampiric charms always do. But paradoxes concerning good/evil and burning desire a) speak to capital (for the Bard, mercantile Capitalism) feeding on the living and the living seeking their own need for hormonal release from the state's casual alienation, and b) our collective desire to feel young again, thus return to a past moment of vulnerability—and yes, stupidity and risk-taking behaviors—to relive them *as* calculated risk in undead, vampiric forms. Once undead, always undead; re: Matteson's concept that rebellion is vampiric, punishing mad science.

That's the beauty (and the pain) of the Gothic love song—a holistic thread to tug on all manner of things capital has used purely for profit, but which we an-Coms use ourselves (e.g., me, when writing about my own journey through life). In part, it's nature—our bodies doing what they were made (through the miracle of evolution) to do—but also as a *manmade* thing; i.e., capital and our responses to it.

"Sex is dangerous!" Sandy Norton told me once (recognizing the little slut and poet, in me), but there's nothing else like it in the world; it is both tacky and common—a cheap and plastic flower sold on the street corner to unwitting tourists—and a tower of precious crystal that, like Tennessee William's glass menagerie, might shatter to pieces should anyone involved dare! We feel trapped

between, in the closet but somehow having nowhere to hide and stripped bare! Ironies emerge as dualities (class and culture, race and status, wealth and destitution, straight and queerness, etc) not only start to collide, but come to a head; we feel pretty and trapped, hot and cold, burning with desire and co(n)signed to a lonely fate: living in luxury but collared and owned—your angel and your devil, divided into such paradoxes not simply through the human condition, but capital caging and vampirically pimping us out!



The core of the monstrous-feminine, then, is the feminine side yielding a curious, at-times-mind-boggling paradox: shelter as a house for property that—all the same—can tokenize and liberate *in equal measure*, along the same axes of oppression; e.g., tokenization per black homophobia (Khalid Attaf's "[Selling Pink Lighters in the Hood](#)," 2024) vs queer appropriation (Tirrrb's "[The Yassification of Masculinity](#)," 2023). For or against the state, such actions unfold depending on the circumstances and, in a meta sense, across different texts and space-time. A monster lurks just beneath the surface, but also across it and on its thresholds, yet isn't automatically "evil." It simply is what it is. Power, in turn, is something to discover and act out in such liminalities by putting "evil" in quotes.

As old as I am, I've felt that, and been with people who both chomp at the bit and submit to it despite being younger than me (with Cuwu being 23 and a stoner college dropout when we met and I 35 and doing my postgrad, there being a 12-year age gap between us, but our meeting *still* yielding a shared and captivating bond; i.e., both of us recovering from past abuse and each being interested in Marxism and queer liberation, but also having fun and learning from each other as interested, thus to some degree hypnotized by/captured with, the other's presence)—the dialectical-material context of it being as much resisting bourgeois forces and, during ludo-Gothic BDSM, putting on the collar to play with the drug-like feelings (of appetite and thirst, synonymous with desire) in a liberatory sense: we rolled the dice and aren't sorry for it/did so without regret or care<sup>334</sup>!

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<sup>334</sup> Awkwardness regarding sexuality commonly manifests under capital; i.e., working up an appetite, but also *abstinence* from playing with such things being the canonical "best way to learn." We're taught to care so much from positions of ignorance, then to be appalled when someone shows indifference or is unaffected by something that makes *us* sweat, weak-at-the-knees, what-have-you (to be weak, thus under the control of someone more skilled than us); e.g., me, the Lady of Shallot, fucking Cuwu in the below photo (next page), only for me to mortified by the metal bedframe being very squeaky! "I don't care!" was their response, simply enjoying my cock inside them, their little cunt wet with animal desire. It wasn't to *shame* me, but console and encourage me to indulge in their "vampy fae" pussy until *my* pleasure was satisfied; i.e., to focus on the good, not the bad, and live and enjoy life to the fullest! They fed on that (and not always in healthy ways; re: Volume One). We all have our secret side that we (whether on purpose or not) hide from others—have something off-limits that others can't reach or affect; i.e., is unattainable, mysterious and aloof, can even be more attractive for it. It all depends!



(artists: Cuwu and [Persephone van der Waard](#))

Agency, then, become the choice of adding a theatrical element to things incredibly common; i.e., towards kept female, and by extension, feminine existence, but also anything monstrous-feminine to the white, cis-het, male, European Christian status quo (a social nadir that feminizes the biggest, fiercest black men and the most diminutive and unassuming twink, nurturing feelings of gentle, teddy-bear submission in one and murderous intent in the other [similar to murderous girls, per the *kowai/kawaii* effect and demonizing mental illness and violent psychosexual mechanisms] provided whatever results can be used by capital to exploit us; and which we take *back* in liberatory doubles); i.e., love is a battlefield to prosecute class, culture and race war for workers vs the state (while avoiding Benatar's racist pimp clichés in [the 1983 "Love Is a Battlefield" music video](#), below).



(*exhibit 41g1a1b1: Pat Benatar was discovered in a New York club "[singing for her supper](#)" [Awards Show Network's "Dick Clark Interviews Pat Benatar - American Bandstand 1980"]. She had operatic training but a rock 'n roll sensibility that she used in MTV's early years to top the charts. She did so while standing in for abuse that she never lived herself—she and her husband say as much, having a wonderful-if-poor-to-middle-class-childhood<sup>335</sup>—but sung about for others in songs like "Treat Me Right," "Hit Me with Your Best Shot," "Hell Is for Children" and "Love is a Battlefield," etc. No stand-in is perfect, and the music*

In a vampiric matter of exchange, revolutionaries are built on the backs of workers, but also through the social exchanges and sex they have, exchanging information as vampires classically do. This takes work, thus fuel, hence feeding and food. Debate and knowledge literally are the exchange and release of bodily fluids (often cum, synonymized with blood and essence in medieval thought): to give and receive through nutritious social-psychosexual exchanges conducive to sex positivity on a cultural level. Cuwu loved getting creampie'd and "back-shotted," me glazing their perfectly perky dancer's buns with precious essence; and I loved spending time with them as such because doing so helped me learn/be a better revolutionary. We fed off and fed on each other to enrich/educate rebellion as psychosexual, informing ludo-Gothic BDSM as I coined it (re: based on dialectical behavioral therapy as practiced by Cuwu). Blood stores energy and triggers it (re: the vaso vagal response). So does cum. They also drive us wild in ways that can—in controlled forms synthesized/digested into good praxis—restore a healthy bond to nature that challenges state abuse alienating us from these things to begin with. In sickness and health, we become each other's drugs and diseases to share; i.e., a burden had is a burden shared, only problematic when it becomes predatory (as Cuwu did with me; I didn't mind being their drug as long as they didn't abuse me).

<sup>335</sup> "That's where the inspiration [for "Hell Is for Children"] came from," Benatar's husband, Neil Geraldo explains, "an article written about child abuse. And then everybody thought that it was real. They thought that Patricia was abused as a child, which wasn't the case. She had a great upbringing. You couldn't get more *Happy-Days*-like than her" ([source](#): Unmask Us). But the important thing is that *despite* her privilege, Benatar still sided *with* the kids, the whores, the battered housewives! She made

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video in question sports an ethnically and gender-diverse group of ostensibly all-AFAB sex workers spearheaded by Benatar as the second wave white savior standing up to the racially-coded gangster. While such realities do unfold under criminogenic conditions, such media is, itself, criminogenic in that it only presents Italian men as ruthless pimps, white women as saviors, and sex workers as down-on-their-luck whores. There's lies and truth, interwoven and requiring an-Coms to take the good and leave the bad, post-dialectical-material scrutiny accounting for the dualities, exceptions, contradictions and double standards, etc; i.e., from the homeless or housing-challenged, cis-het or otherwise<sup>336</sup>, white or otherwise—all clubbing per street life and "paying rent" by working the corners [servicing middle-class Johns prowling the streets due to virgin/whore syndrome, but also chasing faggot mistresses; re: *Tangerine*].

Per Jameson's elaborate strategies of misdirection, the performer's paradox—of something being "just for show," making it "look good" for the cameras, etc—applies to activism, in turn, being composed of such lies; i.e., as half-real, the half-true coinciding with the completely false and completely true [the liar's paradox]. In it, abuse sits adjacent to fabrications meant to achieve and prevent future forms, but also give voice to such things we are both tough on and soft about in different ways; i.e., often inverted, with those smaller persons having a tougher core and those who look tough on the outside being soft on the inside; e.g., the cum dumpster and the sperm donor but also the cumslut to give cum, etc! Whatever the arrangement, control is something to surrender that we might subvert the duality of rainbows' usual capitalist covenant thereof; i.e., enslaving the Earth through its appearances; e.g., through the solstices as dogmatized per feast and famine, summer and winter's respective long and short days, but also those who look and act different punished and fetishized to uphold the status quo, then and now.



Trashy and sacred, pillowy and profane, true rebellion and falsehood/acting are not mutually exclusive, but liminal; and Pat—all 95-pounds of her and that earth-shattering voice of hers, her firecracker's streetwise sensibilities—really "sung for her supper" but also for the rights of others less advantaged to have their chance to eat and sing for their food and careers,

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a career out of it, but always pushed for equal treatment. Similar to Austen, *vis-à-vis* slavery in *Mansfield Park* (re: *Culture and Imperialism*), such dialogs need the oppressed speaking for themselves; but this generally stems from older conversations that have white women taking to the stage and speaking for other oppressed groups, encouraging them to find their own voices in time!

<sup>336</sup> E.g., *Tangerine* being a 2015 story about a fresh-outta-jail trans-woman sex worker looking for her pimp—to beat him up for sleeping on the side with "fish" (slang for AFAB) while she (the heroine) was in jail! In short, scarcity makes people splurge and glut, but also hurt and harm other comrades/denizens of the street, jail and/or brothel, etc.

too! Thanks to her class character's proletarian function, Pat's a feminist icon for a reason, and not stuck in the past like so many others from the same period. A blast from the past, she was ahead of her time and overcame oppression to help others do the same [making me—a trans woman—feel gay-as-hell; i.e., for a cis-het woman as I listened to her music on CD, closeted in high school]! Stay classy, Pat!)

Not only is there no shame in playing with such dolls (ourselves and our bodies) to figure out what we and others want in a vampire sense, but danger and confusion exist for anyone who stoically denies such play on principle ("to deny our own impulses is to deny that which makes us human!")! Instead, make it a shared, community lifestyle that pushes us not towards Promethean fire (as capital does), but towards truth and knowledge unto a school that includes queerness and monsters to become part of the struggle; i.e., in ways the state never fully will, us rising from its destruction like a phoenix from the ashes. That's why I tailored Gothic (gay-anarcho) Communism as I did. It fit *my* privilege and persecution makeup—my starting point, class-wise and race-wise, in terms of accident of birth, but also my innate, very queer desire to play in the colorful din and emerge with fresh synthesis: a dog with a bone, a slutty puppy wagging her tail (full to bursting with joy and... other things)!



Per the usual dualities, the state and rebels each offer people apples to eat, relaid as various splendid, artistic and pornographic/art-is-or-isn't-pornographic lies, mid-debate (magic mirrors, anisotropic witch rhetoric, grimoire cookbooks to consult when tempting maidens, etc). Except, the elite brandish bread-and-circus opiates like *Snow White's* poisoned apple to *blind* the masses with, whereas proletarian receptions cryptonymically "lie" to hide and uncover different things; i.e., elaborate strategies of misdirection that, through their allegory as something to play with and consume by *deranging* the senses (re: [acid Communism](#)), shows those who vampirically feed (on the red pill, the forbidden fruit) two things: the cold hard truth about capital exploiting us (e.g., Neo, in *The Matrix*), but also the increasingly body-warm vampire's comfort in knowing *they* can make a difference *against* Capitalist Realism by feeding anisotropically to *empower* us.

By comparison, capital makes us prey and feel cold, seeking body heat through "sanguine" and sodomy of all kinds, which it then criminalizes and reduces to a quick fleeting drug high (re: false power). Speaking out about this is the whore's "that happens" side of things, showcasing wonderful and terrible realities for which there both no substitute for (e.g., wet pussy and body heat) and all the more reason *to* substitute (real abuse for "rape" in quotes). However small, the differences these possible worlds promote happen through their own creative

output subverting state vampirism as a death omen to shock rebellion *into* action; i.e., by snapping workers out of their myopia, thus weaponizing labor against white moderacy and tokenism (the centrist's hands tied by the state's desire for profit; Marxist-Leninism historically homophobic, thus led around by capital like a bull by the nose; and the feminist punching down against "men in dresses," etc), and other forms of police violence through state monopolies and trifectas!

As usual, all share the same spaces, minds, coverage/reach and bellies; e.g., Matthew Lewis' "sleepy potion" from *The Monk* camping rape in a very literal, cabin-in-the-woods sense, versus something like vampires making the same basic sodomy arguments: sleep, sex, sleep sex; surprise butt sex! A wild, sex-doctor cumslut with hairy legs—tucking while wearing an itty-bitty thong (and having a tight little hole between her legs, below)—appears! "Holy Saint Francis!" Time for your medicine, Straights! Fuck around, find out! Kill 'em with kindness (and fanning eyelashes)! Pew! Pew (witches are sexual ninjas—guerrillas of the night *and* masters of the Austenian sarcastic *italics*, hiding in plain sight)!



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

Hearing those words, you might be visited by the less-than-quaint image of a 38-year-old witch—conjured up from horny jail to kick down the door with one stiletto heel, before shouting "Trick or treat, motherfuckers!" ([with a husky allure/jazz growl like Tom Waits](#)) and spraying everything with Halloween candy fired from a tommy gun (treats, prophylactics and party favors). In academic terms, though, the language of ghosts, the ancient past, and rebellion are reclaimed from dead forms of capital—of "Halloween" stealing your wages, labor, violence, terror, and morphological expression, etc—and making it consciously rebellious *again*. In turn, GNC academia and gender trouble through popular discourse intertwine in a fun, liminal (thus more effective) sense; re: canonical Gothic treats us fags as perpetually "evil" and stripped non-consensually down to our birthday suits on the streets and in the prison cages (stripping is not consent, nor is theft of any of the usual things the elite take from queer people/sex workers); i.e., in ways we deprivatize and use to blend in/stand out cryptonymically with, during dialectics of shelter and the alien.

Liminal expression, then, is a powerful (at times bubblegum, nostalgic) means of performing those exchanges that vampires specialize in: through charm, but also painful, moist, and fluid-to-heat-seeking behaviors/prandial activities! Instead of weakening and corrupting us like a drug user who cannot stop, we've suddenly built ourselves up from hard-fought lessons about consumption; i.e., all the wiser and stronger for it, having a voice at last! Anger is a weapon useful to liberation (per the 1970s), but so is sex positivity and joy (per the '90s and beyond): shit, honey—catch flies with both! And if they pull our teeth (recuperation



and controlled opposition)? Grow new ones! Stand out! Take risks; get hurt and learn from the harm caused by state forces! They'll harm us anyways!

What I mean is, while I have drawn and dreamt since childhood, I couldn't be exactly who I am now without having taken these chances and, yes, having been hurt and harmed for them. I survived, and despite my own strange, at-times-deranged<sup>337</sup> undead appetites, have learned to tailor myself and my bloodlust to feed on others in a sex-positive fashion; i.e., with me not only *not* harming them or vice versa, but all of us working towards a better future than capital will ever allow (the road to recovery is both one of deconstruction, regarding pernicious carceral systems, and reconstructing them into something better)! Never trust a skinny cook, kids (re: Bad Empanada)! Unlike their superficially charming bourgeois counterparts (or Marxist-Leninism abstainers), proletarian vampires (and their naughty sermons) hold up under scrutiny! We generally *aren't* sex pests because sex pests are most commonly *cops* that *serve* capital and the state.

This magical sluttiness is endemic to anarcho Communism, which through the Gothic can reclaim the monstrous-feminine (especially GNC people) from negative labels (and simplistic, bloodless views of revolution) regarding vampirism as largely centered around us. Such labels—and their perceived feeding mechanisms under capital<sup>338</sup>—have a history tied to queer love as undead, which I

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<sup>337</sup> Canonically speaking. I love mommy doms and consent-non-consent to perform ludo-Gothic BDSM; i.e., as a sex positive, an-Com force that can likewise "turn" others rebellious undead, too! All the same, sex *is* addictive, but *only* when enabling harmful feeding behaviors pursuant to profit; i.e., cis-het guys and porn addictions; e.g., to cartoon ideas of women they chase *instead* of actual, in-the-flesh mistresses (re: the incel problem)! Under heteronormative thought, appetites—but especially sexual appetites—are shamed as "gay" *unless* you're having PIV sex; i.e., you're thirsty or hungry and shamed for not upfolding the nuclear family model when eating in the bedroom. It's essentially a form of austerity politics, Capitalist Realism (queerphobic nostalgic), and slut-shaming all rolled into one; i.e., a compound disorder!

By comparison, rebellious sexuality and gender identity/performance can become more honest about such things (e.g., Van Halen's "[Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love](#)," 1978), while *not* exploiting anyone; i.e., raising emotional/Gothic intelligence and class-cultural awareness through punk parody that *rediscovers* its critical bite:

I been to the edge  
And there I stood and looked down  
You know I lost a lot of friends there baby  
I got no time to mess around ([source](#): Genius).

The apple is "rotten," but delicious and truthful in ways that—like David Lee Roth—can be indulged, enjoyed, and subverted for its bitter top notes (re: Sarkeesian). "Eat 'em and smile!" to quote the man, himself! So, no dominating or abusing women, like Sid Vicious did—murdering his girlfriend, Nancy Sprungen, with a knife; and no selling out, like Johnny Ramone! Instead, such acquired tastes are a balancing act, pushing workers sex positively towards rebellion (anything else is *false* rebellion; e.g., Stalin making homosexuality illegal—an elite closet game for the Politburo to abuse [re: Beria] while fighting Nazis for territory).

<sup>338</sup> Meaning the state-as-straight controlling such profound things, all to turn something as awesome as vampires into something as banal-yet-evil as profit (essentially vampirism without the personality or charisma; re: Marx' "dead labor" equaling dead, lifeless vampirism as pro-state dogma).

want to keep going over now through vampires; i.e., short-but-sweet, but more than we have already in the crash course and vampire historical primer. We'll keep focusing on sodomy's history—especially how it hypnotized the middle class into abject, class-dormant paralysis—doing so through my scholarship (which also looks at SWERF-y Marxist-Leninists; re: Bad Empanada); i.e., coming from someone whose exit from the closet took over twenty years!

We'll get to my exiting in a bit, though For now, having exhausted my prep discussing why we fags feed in general—hammering eager-and-hungry pegs into willing-and-thirsty holes—let's consider why we feed in secret/under state surveillance; i.e., feeding's criminal application and subversive potential!

**Ludo-Gothic BDSM: Criminality and Power Flow when Feeding (feat. "Omelas," *Roadside Picnic*, Solzhenitsyn, Mao and Stalin, Chelyabinsk-40, and more)**

As we've already established, vampires feed, but so do all undead; i.e., generally as a matter of strange habits gained through trauma and criminality under capital. Keeping this basic fact in mind, the word "undead" is ontologically imprecise, and vampires, ghosts and composites all constitute different forms of *modular* undead: they can hybridize but also exist by themselves. To keep things as



simple as we can when talking about the state's criminalizing of sodomy and undead, let's focus on their common feature; i.e., as liminal beings—how they feed and what they eat, and how this relates to subversive, ludo-Gothic BDSM expressions of sexuality and gender through my Gothic scholarship—then apply this all to vampires, in particular, as criminalized by state forces (and how they can fight that)!

(artist: [In Shoo](#))

Even though vampires, ghosts and composites appear somewhat differently than zombies do, all of them return to the living world to feed in some shape or form; i.e., doing so to survive by seeking warmth (for different reasons, depending on who's making the argument; e.g., food, affection, shelter or some combination of these things). "Feeding" needn't be literal; instead, it primarily constitutes liminal, undead interactions between the living and the (un)dead inside a linguo-material threshold that often concerns sex; re: those touched by trauma "cruising" as they seek out feelings of control that, true enough, stem from feelings of being *out* of control that must be simulated in calculated-risk environments. Once bitten, twice shy!

This practice is generally called "sodomy" *vis-à-vis* vampires; i.e., as a pejorative label tied to psychosexual activities queer people do just to survive (sex

work), but also everyday actions that deviate from the norm, insofar as sexuality and gender are concerned. "Sodomy" (and similar terms) are devices of abjection, whose labels of guilt-by-association and collective punishment attach to things we do and identities we have being described inaccurately and in outmoded language in order to alienate, persecute and commodify us in the eyes of the middle class.



(artists: [Chryssi and Ayla](#))

Anal sex, for example, is "sodomy" under the umbrella term, but so is oral sex, French kissing and BDSM, at large—wrongfully conflated with cannibalism, bestiality and pedophilia as rightfully harmful acts; i.e., in short, anything that deviates from PIV sex and heteronormative behaviors/personas, which said personas and proponents will twist in order to enjoy themselves (during guilty pleasures) while they act holier-than-thou, labeling and defaming queer people—but especially GNC fags in particular—as disease-like threats to capital (and DARVO'd through comparisons to diseases *capital* causes). Per Le Guinn's "Omelas," the greater the happiness in the city thereof, the smaller the scapegoat group and the more blame put on them! It's basically the world's worst BDSM session (the hauntology of canceled futures haunting dead futurism [re: Jameson's "[Progress vs Utopia](#)"] in this sense, below):

They all know that it [the child] has to be there. Some of them understand why, and some do not, but all understand that their happiness, the beauty of their city, the tenderness of their friendships, the health of their children, the wisdom of their scholars, the skill of their makers, even the abundance of their harvest and the kindly weathers of their skies, depend wholly on this child's abominable misery (source: "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas," 1973).

It's a trolley problem inside a pipedream, portending not just to free-market Capitalism, but *state* Capitalism, too (which is what Marxist-Leninism fundamentally began when attacked by the West); i.e., hardening the hearts of those doing the killing to enact what Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* (1973, the same year as "Omelas" and a year after the Strugatsky brothers wrote *Roadside Picnic*, a story about how rapid industrialism and nuclear abuse is bad. Hmm...):

If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and

evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?

My argument to escaping both (and bad, DIY "heart surgery") is to do ludo-Gothic BDSM in anarchistic forms; i.e., breaking Capitalist Realism and *all* its canonical illusions—Gothic ones included!



([source](#): Sam Woolfe's "Should We Walk Away From Omelas?" 2022)

Capitalism *needs* a distraction, people in love with their dead futures and not thinking about the *state* as vampiric. Thus, "sodomy" can be whatever they want/need to punish queer people with during witch hunts, if only by proxy or adjacent to the usual things being implied; i.e., in a gaslit state of ignorance surrounding basic activities; e.g., things like eating food, drinking water, releasing bodily waste<sup>339</sup> and/or making love unto itself *or* as an-Com praxis—in short, us just existing and trying to survive, then being accused for it, and having *that* be romanced by straight weirdos and token sell-outs part of the same prison and its problematic "prison sex" mentality.

In other words, "sodomy" is a bad reputation built on weaponized lies of terror through enforced ignorance—generational trauma and dogma applied without basis of fact, merely positions with a punitive, otherwise unspoken hierarchy of preferential abuse. Whereas zombies are generally known for cannibalism (and to a lesser extent, rape), ghosts for possession, and composites for revenge (though each are capable of all of these things as a matter of argument), those called or otherwise treated as "vampires" are, in effect, being accused of "sodomy"; i.e., an incredibly broad persecution label inside a larger network thereof. The canonical idea is to swap out parts; then, to continue destabilizing minority groups from a straight middle class downwards—i.e., on a ladder of preferential mistreatment

<sup>339</sup> Segregation commonly being a battle for the bathrooms, telling the oppressed where we can shit (or fuck, in the cruising sense, shitting where we eat\*)—to control every aspect of our lives.

*\*Not simply "because it's exciting" or some such slumming excuse, but because we are both kettled and seeking catharsis through calculated risk; i.e., as something abused parties will do even when they are normally prevented or otherwise discouraged from doing so: to seek out rebellion like a vice!*

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
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[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

preying on nature (the monstrous-feminine) as historically updated to weaponize different persecution parties against queerness as ignorant to itself and informed by constantly updating legends, theories, and graveyard *ahegao* (re: the death stare/theatre):



So while Jewish people, Pagan women, or people of color, etc, are often pegged for committing sodomy through loose association with the deed—i.e., in a neo-medieval sense; e.g., the rodent-like qualities of Count Orlock from *Nosferatu*, left—queer people are synonymous with sodomy by virtue of an identity that has

been tailor-made specifically for us over the last several centuries and flourished under neoliberal Capitalism's own positions of enforced ignorance after much medical and literary academic publication between 1870 and the 1970s: through Satanic Panic pitting the aforementioned groups against us inside neoliberal concentration camps and closets (no such thing as a perfect victim, my dudes). We're fenced in and attacked, but also pimped out and preyed upon; i.e., while being accused of sodomizing the world, said accusations made—like the vampire's reflection—with invisible ink (all of which realize under reactive abuse and criminogenic conditions).

This weapon of terror includes the label, itself, but also vampirism being synonymous to our liminal struggles, which we paradoxically must reclaim from canonized forms commercializing our abuse, effectively recuperating and monopolizing them to commit police violence against us (or, per people like Frederic Jameson or Bad Empanada, using their own Marxist scholarship to devalue ours and the Gothic mode's GNC potential/socio-material energies); i.e., concerning Asprey's paradox of terror through sodomy dialogs for or against the state applied dualistically by opposing forces using the same language: "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" ([source](#)).

Because such a monopoly is impossible, this means we can reverse its typical, canonical usage's incentivizing and endorsing of criminal accusations and hate crimes; i.e., towards us as more or less ignorant to better worlds where vampirism is now endemic across *all* of them (similar to COVID or rabies), but doggedly pushing for them all the same: from closeted positions filled with iron-maiden-esque spikes draining us of our wits!

Given this is a concept I've already written about repeatedly in this series, I'll supply several quote chains now for the sake of reference and convenience (my own post-closet scholarship for *you* to stand on). The first batch summarizes the process *vis-à-vis* rape play through ludo-Gothic BDSM; the second highlights

criminality as a shared process of reclamation, also through ludo-Gothic BDSM: the flow of power and knowledge, and how we can play with either in monstrous language (not just vampirism) to interrogate our trauma, thus rearrange them as they societally present and are understood. Keeping with our Marxist-Leninist critiques—and critiques of the state, period—I'll discuss homophobia in Maoist China and Stalinist Russia, and the negative effects the state-as-straight has on nature (re: Chelyabinsk-40); i.e., as something to marginalize and attack if not for raw profit, then to rapidly industrialize and militarize while also criminalizing queerness!

As I do all of these things, try to think about the criminalized terrorist/counterterrorist function of sodomy and how it can likewise reverse the usual flow and function of power on such registers.

From Volume Two, part one's "[Preface: Inside the Hall of Mirrors](#)" (2024), I rearticulate ludo-Gothic BDSM as a pedagogy of the oppressed:



[artist: [ikerellatab](#)]

*I've said before and will say again, "If you want to critique power, you must go where it is"—must do so through performance and play as a potent, paradoxical means of camp [from Volume Zero]*

*Despite their poetic nature, performance and play are an absolutely potent means of expressing thus negotiating power through the Gothic mode (its castles, monsters and rape scenarios); a polity of proletarian poets can negotiate future interrogations of unequal power within the Gothic imagination as connected to our material conditions: one shapes and maintains the other and vice versa. As such, my own contributions to the Gothic are very much about making it sexual again, but also sex-positive in ways that Radcliffe (and her own venerated castle's praxial inertia) were not [[source](#)].*

*per my conceptualization of ludo-Gothic BDSM [also from Volume Zero]*

*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 fairly negotiated power exchange established in playful, game-like forms [[source](#)].*

to the pedagogy of oppressed that ludo-Gothic BDSM entails [from Volume One]

*At 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 [[source](#)].*

onto Volume Two's observations:

*As such, ludo-Gothic BDSM is a potent means of interrogating trauma by which to heal one's home as sick with Capitalism. For me and my voyeurism, for instance, I love to observe the sexual gratification of others; i.e., mutually consensual voyeurism agreed between me and the people letting me watch them. I love being put in that headspace, that altered state of mind: someone else's shoes; i.e., one where that person feels good. It feels good to occupy a role attached to a real person feeling good in ways that I want to feel, too. I think that speaks to what my book is really about. Healing through social-sexual exchanges like these, but also slipping into different roles to face difficult traumas [[source](#)].*

Such pedagogies concerns *criminality* as something to anisotropically subvert, thus *power* as it is normally arranged, articulated and arbitrated in *vampiric* language/polarities; i.e., that of sodomy and blood flow as hate language taken back in resistance to capital and profit as a structure. Whatever the form—from a hauntologized 1800s gay man, to Medusa per *Stranger Things*' Demogorgon, to Alraune knockoffs in latter-day comic book series commodifying sapphic love as vampiric (e.g., Poison Ivy from *Batman*) to Gothic and queer-Marxist scholarship—queer authors/performers can camp such things to survive the gentrification and

decay of police violence in official or stochastic (vigilante) capacities, preying on nature-as-monstrous-feminine.

To that, most an-Coms are environmentalists, whereas the Soviet state did plenty of fucked-up shit to the environment; e.g., the Holodomor famine, [but also late-Soviet-era cotton monoculture, fertilizer mismanagement and evaporation of the Aral sea](#) (source: New Scientist's "Soviet Cotton Threatens a Region's Sea - and Its Children," 1898), [Chelyabinsk-40 and the USSR's production and storage of nuclear waste](#) (source: Alan Bellows' "In Soviet Russia, Lake Contaminates You," 2008) and of course, the initial infamous suppression of the 1986 Chernobyl disaster (which, [while oversold by HBO many years later under neoliberal Red Scare](#) [re: my *Chernobyl* review], was still a terrible event and black eye for non-militarized nuclear power in the Western bloc)!

Combined, it's not exactly a surprise the country is romanticized *post hoc* as a nuclear wasteland; i.e., there's some truth to it; e.g., *Roadside Picnic* (1972), but also *Stalker* (the 1979 movie or 2007 videogame franchise) or *Metro 2033* (the 2003 Russian novel or 2010 videogame franchise). In a vampiric sense, Socialism can decay and when it does it decays into Capitalism; suitably enough, Russia's decay is marked by literal radiation, its vampires having an isotopic signature to them (their presence marked by space aliens and giant mutant animals as much drawn to the radiation as created by it). Irradiation and irrigation irritate the poorly fertilized land, enflaming and drying it out while the state sucks up as much (through its mouth, but also its syringe) as it can!

In between quote chains, let's quickly (seven pages) apply the idea of queer criminal application during ludo-Gothic BDSM under state abuse; i.e., by exposing sometimes forgotten or overlooked areas thereof on the "leftist" side of things, we'll uncover and expose embarrassing things normally boxed up and packaged as "good" for those the state normally abuses. The trick in subverting abuse is speaking to it by pulling the severed head *out* of the box. Forget Gwyneth Paltrow (who's a real piece of work, all on her own); I'm gonna kill *those* darlings, comrades! Time to die, Stalin, Mao and Russia's "Communist" ghost!



([source: Howard Senft's "Se7en Movie Prop 'What's In The Box' Scene," 2021](#))

Remember what I said about Bad Empanada's unironic Stalinist rhetoric—for making the talking about sex illegal (except to criminalize and police it, like he does)? Well, thus are the wages of sin, boyos! As

I've established, homophobia was a deep-rooted and pernicious, Omelas-grade problem with Marx and Engels, and no one after them who was functionally straight, thus pro-state, actually challenged the homophobic bedrock to their ideas



(except Lenin and his ilk, who Stalin killed and purged to make Communist a straight enterprise, thus not actually Communism). It was always, "Do Communism (and queerness) later!" In the interim, the race to rapidly industrialize led to giant concessions with state power abusing itself (and workers/nature) to compete with America, becoming—in effect—capitalist in function; i.e., raping nature-as-monstrous-feminine to vampirically draw strength from the land as dead labor does on living labor. This goes for China *and* Russia!

For China, the Great Leap Forward resulted in a colossal famine, starving the People so Mao could militarily consolidate his own power against his rivals. He cared largely about himself and that took priority over good praxis; i.e., he betrayed any sense of the cause that didn't enrich him and his dream for winning the war at whatever the cost. He hardened his heart, separated others off into places where they could be killed, and pushed the button. In turn, queerness withered and the land suffered in ways that were comparable to the United States; i.e., queer sexuality was invisible to Mao like a vampire in a narcissist's vanity glass, thus left to rot and be abused by pro-state forces hurting them and straight workers alike!

Queerness was still seen as "degenerate," though; i.e., treated as less-and-less welcome during the Republic of China increasingly emulating the Western powers (the "beating them at their own game" approach). Especially during the Cultural Revolution (where people followed the leader acting straight and sleeping with many women as a point of reference in his own personality cult), the stage was set for queer criminalization. After Mao's decay and death, homosexuality in China was made *de facto* illegal in 1979:

Deng Xiaoping's proposal in 1979 to advance Chinese socialist spiritual civilization was operationalized through a wide variety of procedures, including the use of the criminal justice system through the new crime of "hooliganism." It was understood that the object infringed upon by hooliganism was the social order itself, through acts that violated the moral principles of Chinese society. Legislated in 1979, hooliganism was an obvious tool for the regulation of sexuality. Those engaged in hooliganism had to be severely punished. Seven men of the 31 men in our study were arrested and six were sentenced to re-education through labour [conversion therapy] ([source](#): Heather Worth *et al*'s "Hooliganism, Homosexuality and the Opening-up of China," 2019)

In short, it was medicalized and legally persecuted like the West had done, the start of the neoliberal period marking in a queerphobic (thus capitalist) turning point ushered in by Mao's behaviors defeating any potential China had to develop Communism at the state level (already illustrated by the Sino-Soviet split in 1960, after Stalin's death). This wasn't a failure of the state, but the state doing what the state always doubles: double, divide and decay before dueling itself.

By comparison, Stalin put a chokehold on homosexuality and simply made it illegal in 1933 (the same year the Nazis burned down Hirschfeld's Sexology Institute)—a law that would stay in effect until the Fall of the Soviet Union, only to be courted again by rising fascist sentiment scapegoating queer people for "degeneracy" during the Russian Federation's own boom-and-bust approach, post-neoliberal shock therapy. But even before neoliberalism took effect, decay always leads to the same mistreatment of queer people on either side of the Iron Curtain.

For example, Dr. Uncola explains, "The USSR under Lenin was the world leader in gay rights and gender corrective surgery for more than a decade. Before Stalin rolled back certain laws in the '30s, queer liberation was understood as 'part of the revolution'" ([source tweet](#): July 1, 2023). He initially cites the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR penal codes of 1922 and 1926 legalizing homosexuality. Then he goes onto add, "Nikolai Semashko, the first People's Commissar of Public Health for the USSR [was] responsible for the introduction of world's first universal healthcare system, referred to as the Semashko model. He was also one of the earliest supporters for Soviet queer emancipation" (*ibid.*).

Other examples include Dr. Grigorii Batkis, "director of the Institute for Social Hygiene in Moscow. In his 1925 report, 'The Sexual Revolution in Russia' stated queer relationships weren't only normal, but should be legally respected, noting Russia differed from the rest of Europe" (*ibid.*); and "People's Commissar for Welfare (and close friend of Lenin, below) Alexandra Kollontai was also a vocal advocate for queer liberation, arguing that true socialism could never be achieved without a radical change in attitudes towards sexuality" (*ibid.*); also mentioned are gender corrective surgeries and same-sex marriage in opposition to European and American fascism.



So, it sounds like Lenin was more inclusive than Marx and Engels, right? Sure, points for Lenin for not closeting queers and kettling/staking them like vampires (a low bar but one he fairly met). The problem is, Lenin needed muscle for his revolution and Stalin—a Georgian gangster and Lenin's righthand man—filled that role. But once Lenin died, in 1924, Stalin began to muscle in/prey on Lenin's former operation (and even before his death, let's be honest). He exiled Trotsky in 1929 and enacted the first of the purges in 1938 (only to kill Trotsky while the other man was in exile, in 1940). Between those, he also made homosexuality illegal in 1933 (the same year the Nazis burned Hirschfeld's Sexology Institute to ashes):

An important disclaimer, however, is that the national attitude towards gay and trans people wasn't unanimously supportive. While many were sympathetic or ambivalent, there was a faction of the Bolsheviks who wanted it outlawed again. Among them was this guy. You might know him. Stalin

personally demanded the introduction of an anti-gay law in response to a report from NKVD chief Genrikh Yagoda, who had conducted a raid on the residence of hundreds of homosexuals in Moscow and Leningrad in 1933, labelling them "pederasts." Sound familiar?

On 7 March 1934, Article 121 was added to the USSR criminal code, outlawing homosexuality all over again. Justice Commissar Nikolai Krylenko added fuel to the fire by linking gay and trans people to "the remnants of enemies"—products of fascism and bourgeois decadence (*ibid.*).

All those really-cool things Uncola mentioned earlier? Gone, just like that—all because Stalin had a hard-on for absolute power not unlike the Czars and Caesars before him! It's "might makes right," which had all the usual rollback/walk back/setback effect on queer people Imperialism always doe: criminalize, closet, demonize and destroy through state obscurantism, DAVRO and vampiric predation.

To it, not even twenty years after the Romanovs were dead (and good riddance to *them*), the Russian state had already begun to decline and, to some extent, ape their fascist foils by feeding on queer people while calling *them* vampires. There *were* differences, but ultimately these were more of *degree* than anything else. Homosexuality (and queerness at large) would be illegal in Russia until 1993, two years after the Fall. In 2013, though, "the Russian дума in Moscow passed a new law banning the 'propaganda of non-traditional sexual relationships' to minors" ([source](#): the Council for Global Equality's "The Facts on LGBT Rights in Russia," 2022); this would be followed by Putin's anti-LGBT propaganda law in 2022, making queerness not just a crime *again*, but effectively sedition in Russia and its prospective territories. Fun!

This is what I meant earlier when I said we need to meaningfully challenge inherited confusions and misconceptions; i.e., as closeted, scared/sacred things that historically decay towards capital, thus fascism. We can't just do what Bad Empanada does and throw around Stalin and Mao memes, mixed into valid postcolonialist work and pernicious SWERF and queerphobic arguments. Two wrongs does *not* make a right, and tying this historically to millions of dead people (again, queer *or* straight) through state policies enacted on such exclusionary rhetoric is wrong regardless of intent or how they attach/relate (directly or in a lateral sense); socio-material *outcome* is what matters, the state having the power to enact these things to a Promethean degree. Supporting the same by making pro-state arguments like Bad Empanada does is bad history aided by blind spots for his favorite team on the global stage. ASAB, dude!

To that, liars often mix lies with truth (re: *Macbeth*); the usual Bad Empanada approach would be to argue something akin to, "It's okay! The Holodomor was an *accident*, *not* an intentional genocide [Bad Empanada's "[The Holodomor Genocide Question: How Wikipedia Lies to You](#)," 2022], so *America* sucks. Pay no attention to *Soviet* or *Chinese* abuses *like* the Holodomor,

including how queerphobic they were and how much they destroyed the environment!" The lie is rooted in the distraction, through facts that—while *technically* true—are dishonest in *how* they are framed. Like, Russia and America *both* suck, dude; Communism needs to start and end on the ground level; the state only decays to abuse its people and the land in queerphobic, anti-nature ways, treating all of them as expendable puppets (and taking all the credit; re: Mao, Stalin). We are *not* divorced from these things; if the environment collapses, so will states, and state Socialism led by Western enemies holding its nose ring is essentially state *Capitalism* in history and practice.

Looking more at Russia's decay and collapse, then, the state's vampiric policing role became increasingly radioactive in a literal sense, their own decay towards Capitalism being one of Promethean science abusing the same technology the Americans did, but arguably far *worse* from a legislative and executory standpoint. Yes, America enacted Capitalist Realism through its own genocides and open-to-covert power abuse—e.g., the CIA and weaponized fascist rebellions; i.e., to paralyze and feed on their populations—but those drunk/star struck on the Soviet-era power of the atom and regression towards Stalin are still forgetting the incredible (and often hideously incompetent) cloaked abuses of power *that* leader's



vampiric, bloodthirsty cult of personality armed American propagandists with (the ultimate scapegoat)! Myopic nostalgic assists in state vampirism, free market or not!

(artist: [Alex Andreev](#))

As such, by the early 1970s, abuses in the Soviet nuclear program were starting to be felt in Russian media in ways the state *couldn't* censor—first with *Roadside Picnic*, then *Stalker* in 1979; i.e., the latter being an ongoing event that showcases the cancer growing in the Russian state mechanism: its tumor-like power plants (which eventually went malign with Chernobyl, in 1986) having metastasized to more than just infrastructure. In 1979, the start of the neoliberal era, the Russians invaded Afghanistan—in effect, embarking on their own Vietnam *after* America had pulled out of Saigon, in 1975.

All of this means Ukraine is a *follow-up* to the kinds of fascist, vampiric decay seen earlier during Russia's rapid industrialization and subsequent militarization, then said military's total war period *before* the Union's inevitable divide and collapse. Sound familiar? Such endeavors historically only ever cause the state to grow stronger for a shorter period, before sickening and regressing into functionally bourgeois *allies* of American interests: bloodsuckers of a capitalist sort. By the time the Fall happened, the Russian elite and their American counterparts were *ready* for it. And all the while, they had been fencing together on the global stage—not as rivals, but *friends* combating boredom and weaponizing the spectres of Caesar and

Marx alike to move money through nature while policing nature as queer to apologize *for* the state as straight (or to pinkwash it, in America's case)!

While horseshoe arguments exist regarding Stalin and Hitler as "identical," the fact remains they both outlawed queerness and were united on that front; to camp such ghosts of the men themselves requires doing more than just slapping a rainbow on them and calling it a day! While American Red Scare is likewise dubious, there *is* a kernel of truth to their own fabrications, too. Nothing is sacred but basic human rights and those of animals and the environment.

From Soviet Russia to Renaissance Florence (and its own imperfect sexual models), acclimation grooms through *regressively conservative* nostalgia; in turn, regressing nostalgically towards any imaginary past is incredibly dangerous. Using ludo-Gothic BDSM, we *need* to historically critique *all* such vampirism in an-Com ways that include queerness, challenge state heteronormativity and safeguard nature (animals, children and all vulnerable parties) from weaponized vigilante violence and unironic rape fantasies (stochastic terrorism) in/outside a calculated risk environment—all while breaking Capitalist Realism on all registers. In a vampiric sense, Stalin sucked power to the top. For the same reason, Putin sucks, America sucks; states and cops suck and criminalizing queerness sucks, divvying up the land for Imperialism sucks (whether as the Soviets did it, with extant, numbered administrative territories [re: Chelyabinsk-40] or America's repurposing of native peoples; e.g., Milwaukee)! Anyone who would destroy nature and queerness like that flies a giant, Dracula-style red flag. Our revenge is sucking *back* in ways that *defang* the state and release their policeman's chokehold on nature-as-monstrous-feminine<sup>340</sup>. End of story!



The takeaway from these observations, here, is such abuses invariably gulag someone and kill them, raping nature and queerness through police violence in defense of the few privileged powerful at the top. And if the outcome is functionally the same, then what, pray tell, was the point? To try and distinguish them and shift blame onto one aspect thereof or the other is sheer folly. All states decay and police queer people to further capital, thus "vampirize" as such, and we need to focus on the value of nature and human life by challenging and subverting their monopolies on vampire image; i.e., including queer forms thereof during ludo-Gothic BDSM, lest different forms of Capitalist Realism rise up and conceal the state's harming of us. Arguments like "not one step back" are already made by those not on the front

<sup>340</sup> Power flow, with vampires being blood; with composites, it's electricity. Anisotropically the idea of current direction/polarity is the same; the poetic material is different. The plasma (a physics and physician pun) is practical, not platitudinous, purging harmful elements for salubrious ones; i.e., through the language of energy as food-like (caloric) and/or torturous (famines/electro-shock).

lines, themselves; e.g., Stalingrad—one of the bloodiest if not *the* bloodiest battle in the history of warfare—was fought not for the city's strategic value, but because it was named after Stalin! How is *that* siege *any* different than American Vietnam necrometrics (re: kill counts) and pointless land battles if none of it furthered the cause because the state eventually decayed/sold out?

Keeping with that, and for reasons we have previously discussed *vis-à-vis* Capitalism, vampires/disease and Cartesian thought vs nature-as-monstrous-feminine, abuse of the environment is historically queerphobic in ways Marxist-Leninism was *not* above doing. Per Mao and Stalin, they rapidly industrialized to militarily compete *with* the United States; this "worked," but led to great famines and ecological disasters if not equivalent to neoliberal Capitalism currently then certainly the lesser of two evils (emphasis on evil, there). Except, such deflective<sup>341</sup> gambits didn't lead them to "defeat" the United States; i.e., the Soviet's sold out long before the Fall, and China is only nominally Communist as they presently exist. More to the point, in lieu of climate change, I think we can safely say the strategy is amounts to mutually-assured destruction. Forget, ACAB! ASAB! All *States* Are Bad!

So, forgive me if I find someone like Bad Empanada making "America bad" arguments while, in the same breath, *not* doing his homework and acting like a Soviet-era cop rooting out corruption amongst us "degenerate, centrist" queers (terrorists for him to counterterrorize per the state). Apparently we're all clones of the same evil model (re: Contrapoints)! State apologia is state apologia, and making it always leads to the same abuses. We need to take away the state, thus capital's, ability to do it at all; i.e., not say and do things that basically amount to rape ranking: "Well, they only raped *you* a little bit, but *those* rapists basically do it more to [my virtue signal group] so just send me money!" Decay is decay and if someone says they "aren't a neoliberal capitalist" and before falling into various "tankie" tropes against a particular group of people, then congratulations, they're a neoliberal! This piece isn't for him, but the people he's trying to convert!

To conclude this short tangent, all Capitalist Realism must be challenged with ludo-Gothic BDSM, not just one or the other. It only takes one betrayal for you to become a cop, which is what the state will always push you to do; it's always "maybe tomorrow" for those you betray. Soviet apologetics are Capitalism Realism,

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<sup>341</sup> To this, such diversion tactics are deflections mentioned to dogwhistle and divide criticism; e.g., I used to fight with my mother (who specializes in environmental criticism of the USSR, starting school at the U of M in 1994), unable to accept their rightful criticism of the Soviet state because Bad Empanada said America is the Greater of Two Evils. But the lesser evil is still evil! Despite being an an-Com thoroughly against states, genocide and pollution, I would fight with my mother harder than I should have purely because of Empanada's anti-American stance married to his frankly excellent postcolonial work. But the moment he made his Stalinist arguments about queerness and sex work, I saw his arguments for what they were *in totality*—Capitalist Realism through a Marxist-Leninist's regressive lens—and began to critique him holistically as such; e.g., holding him accountable for his sex-negative views, insofar as to make one exception is to doom all towards decay under state models. Thus, I had to admit I was wrong, learn from it, and build on my mother's historical knowledge (while still being critical of the United States and cops the world over). By comparison, Bad Empanada is refusing to: "[Screw Your 'Nuance'](#)" (2024) being his latest refusal to listen to critics.

thus Promethean, queerphobic cops of nature-as-alien, queerness as criminal; Bad Empanada is a tankie cop making Stalinist arguments apologizing for past, present and future pogroms while, in the same breath, hiding behind the shield of anti-American rhetoric and postcolonial argument. He sucks and we don't need him to do Communism right. The beauty of Gothic (gay-anarcho) Communism is anyone can do it, including but especially sex workers and Medusa-esque queer people rocking state defenders to their core! With the deck stacked against us, we stacked mommies succ back!



(artist: [Klaud](#))

Moving into our *second* quote chain, as I write of performance and play in Volume Zero—concerning monstrous things being "an absolutely *potent* means of expressing thus negotiating power through the Gothic mode," and how "a polity of proletarian poets can negotiate future interrogations of unequal power within the Gothic imagination as connected to our material conditions: one shapes and maintains the other" ([source](#))—I go onto express power flow in Volume One through said things

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 ([source](#))

and of playing with poetics and power during ludo-Gothic BDSM, in Volume Two, part one's "What Inspires Us to Meet and All of It Carrying On and On" (2024)

Think of meeting people and becoming friends like solving puzzles, then. To that, games are an effective way not just to play but to *learn* between the games we play *together* as distributed across all registers. This can be intended play or emergent play. The difference with some humans versus, say, *all* bees (Ze Frank's "[True Facts: Bees That Can Do Math!](#)" 2024) is that humans can do both intended and emergent, but also emergent to *challenge* profit, and all while still having fun! Unlike bees, we're *potentially* better at multitasking because our brains are so much bigger. The problem is, most

people not only don't *use* most of their brains (the old 15% argument) but devote games, play and mastery towards monopolizing emergent play in *defense* of profit (which bees have no concept for—"For me, sir, the question is totally without meaning!").

This includes our species-unique abilities to communicate and learn: to lie/conceal, act, and rape, but also consent; i.e., camp canon as something only humans can do/create: putting "rape" in quotes by illustrating mutual consent, while also compartmentalizing trauma as a linguo-material device with complex (symbolic) social functions (the flow of power towards or away from the state) that frequent Gothic (monstrous) forms. These, in turn, achieve multiple functions at the same time—pleasure through play as an oft-imaginary means of social-sexual enrichment, learning and rebellion through gender identity and psychosexual struggle: at cross purposes with the state and the elite; i.e., both of us existing as separate, *oppositional* classes of existence within capital by design. Drama, comedy and satire are



all unique to humans as part of a bigger world; so are games in this larger paradigm we want to liberate ourselves from *with*, meaning through sex work making *iconoclastic* art (through nudism, dress-up and sex, etc).

(artist: [Nuclear Wasabi](#))

All games teach something. Our undead, demonic, and/or anthromorph BDSM costumes—our potentially satirical, ironic exchange rituals—happen uniquely during games as subversive coding behaviors (forbidden knowledge) and unequal distributions of power that educate people about trauma through social-sexual engagement; i.e., as a sex-positive, iconoclastic teaching device. In short, we can lie, act, tell jokes, and camp/canonize on a gradient of social-sexual expression that is more or less unique to humans, but which doesn't unilaterally affect us and nothing else. Humans involve the rest of nature in their silliness, making us the slavers or stewards of our jungle friends.

Not only is the state a superorganism guided by abstract forces (the Shadow of Pygmalion); but certain workers become very good at convincing themselves and others the *state* is the only way forward; they adopt ruthless, cunning and brutal methods to keep others in line: concentric veneers, premeditation and lying in wait (ambush) to gentrify labor and its art/games. Except their infiltrators don't have monopolies on violence, terror and monsters any more than the elite and its trifectas do. Their enforcement of terror vs counterterror can be reversed through the natural duality of human language as anisotropic.



By comparison, Gothic Communism is a superorganism that arranges power horizontally. It does so by recognizing the class character of warring relationships between games and players in ways that can be used—per ludo-Gothic BDSM and liminal expression—to learn through emergent play during multi(p)layer, linguo-material, social-sexual interactions across space and time; i.e., as games to play to process historical-material (complex) problems in the abstract, either solo and together, through ergodic (non-trivial) means: through negotiated, half-real ludic contracts where games master/code (re: [Giddings and Kennedy](#)) players but for which players can likewise work within this paradigm (me: ludo-Gothic BDSM) to achieve mutual consent, post-scarcity and liberation ([source](#)).

All three combine per ludo-Gothic BDSM to subvert, thus camp "sodomy" as a matter of canon (thus queer criminalization) in vampiric language. The resistance is active and engaged, but playful and linguo-material.

In short, we're reclaiming vampirism from the state the same way a woman would reclaim the word "bitch"; a black person, the n word; and we fags, the word "faggot" but also *Communism* and its dead nostalgias (veering away from ambiguous Stalin or Mao memes [re: Bad Empanada] and instead camping their *ghosts* like we would Marx or anyone else from older times)—through power as something to play with, reversing its flow concerning the usual paradoxes' poetic execution. Standing on the shoulders of giant abusers (who we check, challenge and camp; e.g., Stalin), but also surrounded by the invisible vampire queers from bygone days, we sloganize the past—not to ape older bigots weighing on us (re: Marx) or new sellouts acting in bad faith (re: Bad Empanada), but to change what is problematic about how we fags are viewed; i.e., by camping these vampires and, in effect, the state as straight (thus a giant closet). "Art is love made public!"



(artist: [Kim Petras](#))

Whatever the castle, wherever the location or stage, supernatural as explained or not (re: *Otranto* and Strawberry Hill, but revived in many-a-haunted-house-movie, including full-town dioramas like *Beetlejuice* and museum exhibits of castle-like

homesteads, in *High Spirits*—both 1988), it's all another bastion to take back and own, making Omelas-style exceptions for no one. *All* suffering is valid, and all must be free from profit (thus corporate influence; e.g., *Barbie*, 2023); if one group is caged and closeted, we *all* are because either will be victims or cops (which is what the state does)! Decentralize and consolidate through intersectional solidarity! You

can't win by alienating yourself even if many of your arguments *are* correct (re: Bad Empanada being a surly cunt—pick your battles, my dude). Diversity is strength; so is fragility—expressing vulnerability in order to a) heal enough to build ourselves up to the point that we can even *fight* back, and b) establish trust to begin with; re: by admitting when we're wrong and learning from that!

In short, vampires are—like so many monsters in Gothic fiction—built on ignorance according to their status as vice-character freaks of nature (to police, prosecute and prey on/with) that can be reclaimed from police agents through the usual sodomy devices as *theatrical* in nature; i.e., something to perform keeping the above concepts of power flow and assigned criminality in mind (and our earlier prep before that). And while exiting the closet to sleep in a coffin might seem like the Twilight Zone/outside Plato's Cave, its actually quite vivacious; not hard to be steadily productive and sex-positive inside, once you're shown the ropes! Everybody fucks; cops rape for the state.

To that, we go "all the way" for *all* peoples (victims, not cops), never quitting on the outliers just because it's convenient. Make the bourgeoisie (thus the state) a thing of the past in totality! No billionaires! No lynch mobs, witch hunts, pogroms, prisons and/or ghettos! No cops! No kings or masters! No gaslight, gatekeep, girl boss! No Dana, only Zuul (next page)!

In asymmetrical military terms, we needn't defeat them on open ground, but merely make them *lose* the will to fight; e.g., Eric Roberts and F. Murray Abraham in *By the Sword* (1991), [one man fighting the other with a dulled blade to show his courage and shame his bully rival](#): "Like you, the boy thought winning was everything! Like you, the boy worshipped killing!"; i.e., to, like a Borges-style street fight, bring those high on their own supply down to Earth in Romantic courtship language (e.g. *Rob Roy's* final fight one for the ages, but also [staged fairly lengthily](#)<sup>342</sup> [between the marquis' de facto assassin and the dashing and valiant Rob](#)), but also like an opera duel elevated to levels they can never imitate—to duel with our hearts on our sleeves to send *yours* into your throats (e.g., "[The Dream Opera](#)" from *FFVI*, 1994)!

The GNC idea, mid-duel, is to move but be wholly *unmoved* by the sight of cum and/or blood—i.e., female/feminine violence and women's work; e.g., taking poundings and loads alike, a fixture of the household for men to use as they please—and thus completely humiliate a mighty giant by humanizing ourselves: showing them and theirs (cops) humiliating us through these things! To show them this Aegis is to hamstring our enemy's legs and poke holes in their aggressor's bloodstream until they run out of gas: anything we do is violent, but violence through campily humanizing ourselves (and our rapes) can spread in ways no weapon can stop. Our terrifying toy soldiers turn theirs to tin, our paper tigers

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<sup>342</sup> More realistic or historically accurate duels would generally be much shorter—less tailored for dramatic swell and more straightforward and to-the-point (so to speak); e.g., Dequitem's "[Blood Flowers](#)" (2024).

declawing their own squeamish origami (cats and paper both being hydrophobic, in the literal sense). The pen, under these circumstances, *is* mightier than the sword!

Through Capitalist Realism, "an enemy has only images, behind which he hides his true motives; destroy the image and you break the enemy." You can't force Communism, merely develop it—including through medievalized (and Neo-Gothic) stage language dropping cartoonish pianos on our fabricated enemies' "almighty" heads; e.g., vampires and their hunters being black knights and white (e.g., *Vampire Hunter D*, *Castlevania*, and *Jojo*), but also class and culture warriors fighting for survival *vis-à-vis* state monopolies we speak to our usual closeting through during some concentric iteration thereof (re, Derrida: there *is* no outside of the text)! There are no set definitions, thus functions. They can be as ironically gay as we need to camp vampires with, on any battlefield, on and offstage!

In turn, this recultivating of the Superstructure (to reclaim the Base) will take time; there will be sacrifice and blood, and all before Communism can exist for others who will also suffer well beforehand and never live to see themselves free; but in the end, we shall prevail: living to fight another day, or to live as we died—fighting for what we believed in! "Our freedom" means *all* of us. In more optimistic terms, we're stronger united than divided, and just how necessity is the mother of invention, capital utterly *throttles* innovation.

With our weird nerdy powers combined, Medusa checks capital through inventive means (the oppressed usually have nothing else). Do that often enough—and if workers all around the world act all at once in ways the state *can't* contain or otherwise police—then the system will have *no choice* but to change! But people *have* to wake up *now* and reclaim these neoliberal illusions that stories like *Ghostbusters* (1984) gentrified, per Capitalist Realism: the vampiric, eye-catching reds of a future Communist existence levitating in *jouissance* above the figurative bed *unlike* past versions we've always known; i.e., through history real and imagined, Red Scare or from Marx' own vampire mouth! Mouth-to-mouth, such drivel can become sedition, can become rebellion through the same aesthetics and transfers anisotropically *towards* workers (while acknowledging their canonical criminal assignment by state forces; i.e., cops; e.g., *Ghostbusters* and Zuul, below). As with Bad Empanada masking himself with Castro's or Rasputin's beard but making *Stalin's* arguments, beware anyone lacking nuance; their singular, dogmatic interpretations of Marx are rigid in ways that—per cultural studies—decay unto queerphobic, Cartesian forms.



(artist: [Emma Mélique](#))

All this being said, using camp to reclaim such "hair of the dog" is not a perfect science/artform, and married to the usual

comorbidities of the state alienating and punishing such peoples by stranding them in closeted positions of ignorance only *increases* the odds that we'll get hurt when *dispossessed of or otherwise denied* safe spaces; i.e., to play out our confused prey and pleasure/pain mechanisms without sanctuary; e.g., by Marxist-Leninists like Bad Empanada, themselves profoundly ignorant of and hostile towards BDSM praxis, scholarship and synthesis being forever a work-in-progress (those who hate the hardest are generally the most blind, impoverished and thirsty—privileged because they will *never* face genuine accusation of queerness/sodomy themselves).

Furthermore, people touched by rape, death, and drug abuse, etc (as gay people usually are), often yield psychosexual compulsions that bring out addictive feeding qualities they a) don't fully understand, and b) identify first and foremost through Gothic fiction; e.g., borderline people often being drawn towards those who



can actually harm them through the vampire's seeking mechanism, which leads to profound feelings of closeness to the edge: a lever that abusive sadists and masochists absolutely can exploit (re: Cuwu vs Guildenstern, below)!

(models and artist: Cuwu and Guildenstern;  
[Persephone van der Waard](#))

All the same, there remains a hybridity and holistic concern to the application and enduring of such labels as "sodomy"; i.e., being redeveloped by people *exiting* the closet (re: me, but also Foucault, Ann Rice, and many others). Because our historical focus is xenophilic sex when humanizing exploited workers through reclaimed an-Com monstrous language, consider how good sex and "danger" combine in undead stories, but also announce a privileged ghost of the counterfeit that many outside the status quo (non-white, GNC and/or non-Christian, etc) cannot cleanly relate to or safely experience. In short, there's always a vague, often messy element of danger involved; when tackling the process during oppressed pedagogies repossessing canonical vampirism, said vampirism is itself, strange and alien to the oppressed: it's a trigger *and* a threat.

In iconoclastic examples like me and my work (and, by extension, all sex-positive an-Coms), "feeding" and "sodomy" can of course mean different things:

- forbidden, queer love, but also unsanctioned, extramarital sex
- revenge against or by a parasitic host group (rebellion versus witch hunts/moral panic dressed up as "rebellion" or even, in Bad Empanada's case, "scholarship" and Marxist-Leninist praxis)

This lubricative<sup>343</sup> function applies to *all* undead, even if their histories diverge or speak poetically to particular oppressed peoples.

In dialectical-material terms, then, canonical vampirism and sodomy speak to the nation-state controlling and compelling ignorance of workers, which iconoclastic forms often challenge while being historically in the dark, themselves; i.e., first enacted on the state side by ignorant police forces (class traitors among the populace), then challenged through liberatory agents often hamstrung by a frustrating unavailability of official, state-authored information while in the closet. Even if said information is technically already published—i.e., in medical journals or

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<sup>343</sup> Fun fact: blood was used in ancient cultures as a sexual lubricant. If animal blood wasn't available, period blood will do the trick (re: me and Jadis). Also, period sex, unto itself, is a canonical phobia that, in genderqueer hands, serves as a prophylactic and aphrodisiac, but also anesthetic: AFAB are often hornier when they're hormonal, but also suffering cramps that an orgasm can easily help with (while also being unable to get preggers). Vaginal ("murder dick"), oral ("getting your red wings"), or simulated ("self-staking"), these double as useful exposure therapies to admittedly acquired-taste things that straight guys curiously dread, leading to compelled anal and weird, cottage-industry sophisms: "If the river runs red, take the dirt path, instead!" How 'bout, go fuck yourselves?



To be fair and holistic, there is *some* truth to it; i.e., insofar as consuming blood carries risk of disease, but so does *all* sex and eating food (re: vampirism and lycanthropy married to blood libel and AIDS phobias)! Straight men tend to treat the people they fuck (female or not) as disease bags they "safely" stab with their dicks *sans* condoms—ignoring the fact that they can still catch diseases this way (not to mention cause pregnancies, which were historically fatal to women)! No one is dumber about sexual health than cis-het men—with queer people needing to understand diseases and biology/gender to identify differently, and cis-het women having periods that will be controlled and demonized, often by other women: to come of age is a mark of shame, one to be met with hazing.

For example (and tacking on my Gothic's obligatory *Carrie* footnote), the period and pig's blood scenes from *Carrie* (1976) both tackle religious ignorance and bullying by weaponizing hysteria/the wandering womb against different bullies by the female witch: her evil religious mother and secular teenage peers/apathetic instructors at school. Denied a proper sex education (as religious institutions do), girls often think they're dying or possessed, but also are shamed as sluts, witches, vampires and whores by hypocrite forces both young and old; i.e., those to seek revenge against by paralyzing them with the Gorgon's stare when Carrie has had enough, a school-shooter banshee that—in the end—destroys the perfidious community from within (the difference being cis-het men generally shoot up schools for fame, whereas women [while not above TERF-style witch hunts and other bigotries] rarely if ever stoop to such glory-seeking violence, themselves)!



scholarship of some kind or another (re: Westphal or Foucault)—it becomes not merely discouraged, but anathema, thus prone to being left out of curricular lessons and texts.

Instead, it must be picked up wherever queer people (and their allies) can find and absorb such things: in monster stories like Anne Rice's *Interview* (and King's *Carrie*, footnote) merely being the starting point to a much larger conversation that needs to expand out of the church/bedroom (re: Foucault). We can't just trot out the superfreak, have her scream, then closet her as Pygmalions do; Galatea needs to take charge and spill bloody tea, as do all workers preyed on by Capitalism and the state (the wild womb eating the colonial maw)!

To that, I want to spend the rest of part one discussing *my* escape from ignorance; i.e., when alienated from vampirism as rebellious, which I slowly have had to reclaim for most of my adult life: considering how through a series of anecdotes (and adjacent queer scholarship) whereupon I finally escape the dreaded closet—about fifteen pages' worth—before concluding the section speaking about state cannibalism, tokenism, and then moving into our 21st-century close-reads!

**Halfway point: Performing and Learning from Older Vampires (feat. *Interview with the Vampire*, *Brotherhood of the Wolf*, Rob Halford and Chappell Roan) in My Older Work; My Exiting the Closet**

As a manner of queer expression, vampires present as "sodomy monsters" of disguise that must demask to feed, but also which can be cornered and attacked in their homes for accusations of "sodomy"; i.e., police agents kettling the witch-like entity to force it to show its true colors (an act that historically happens to Communists, not fascists, despite the shared aesthetic): to bare *our* fangs under reactive abuse/false pretenses. Per systems of reactive abuse, our bloody canine incisors' animalistic flight-or-flight becomes an excuse for the state to harangue us, chase us down and kill us; i.e., like animals, but also while fetishizing and impersonating us in bestial forms bad for us, not them. They're slumming!

For example, Tom Cruise—despite giving a lovely performance as Rice's Lestat—is still a cis-het male actor (and Scientology cult member) unironically playing a cis woman's closeted idea of a gay man to serve the profit motive (one she borrowed from older authors, including her older 1976 book when she adapted it to the screen, [writing the screenplay in 1992](#) for the 1994 film): queer angst, but



also *teen* angst (arrested development) trapped in ageless bodies sold repeatedly to today's middle-class youth (and adults); i.e., pubescent workers thirsty for sodomy/the monstrous-feminine in acceptably gentrified, commercialized forms of that hungry sex animal!

Through such assimilation's perpetual guilt and pastiche, states are constantly left apologizing for themselves, merging the heady epiphany of a garbage-disposal hauntology with the simultaneously broad and narrow language "of the night"; i.e., useful enough for them to exploit us to a maximum degree, creatures of the night committing sodomy inside *spaces* of the night when the plague has "already happened," thus permitting us to exist among the panopticon; re: canceled futures; e.g., prison-like, noir cityscapes where such beings (sex workers and fags) *only* come out at night "to feed" (to "live among the creatures of the night," as Laura Branigan says, in "[Self Control](#)," 1984): it's false hope, a neoliberal drug to take tied to older nostalgias and their spaces and monsters. While queer existence teeters, capital preys on it (re: dead labor on undead labor)! It's an act mean to pacify us, capital's jaws on our gay throats.

As such, "night" synonymizes with "hunger" and "crime" per things the state normally denies *except* under the undercover cop's brothel; i.e., such criminogenic conditions and their murky positions of ignorance: cities/churches/castles of sin, vice, drugs, corruption, sex, murder and so on. State proponents associate us with those things in an abject light; i.e., whereas Cruise makes it look good (and homonormative), we rebellious fags are always guilty inside a night of danger and ignorance that never ends, one whose state of exception we must make do and get by inside wearing these semi-invisible marks of shame blaming us for state predation *instead* of Cruise. All render into myth married to the past, present and retro-future of medical documents, literary criticism and Gothic fiction.

The key to liberation isn't abstinence, but playing with the past as such (our focus being Gothic fiction). Wherever and whenever the setting's time and place, canon conveys positions of privilege abusing monster language like "sodomy" to enjoy what they police others/steal from them with, *Udolpho*-style; i.e., often with strange combinations of expose-the-hypocrite, Hawthorne-esque critique and action that pointedly steers away from obvious vampire clichés. Even without a patent oral fixation (mouths and fangs), the feeding and seeker function (of sanguine) stubbornly remains. Sodomy is something you can imply to achieve the same effect, generally through parallel forms of historical-Gothic language that skirt the same punitive umbrella lumping odd groups through the same hangman's noose in defense of former orders. They're simping for the crown and the state!



For example, *The Brotherhood of the Wolf* (2001) merges vampiric anti-monarchy posturing with lycanthropy to *apologize* for the King of France (thus Capitalism). It's absurd—Don Hertzfeld's "Queen of France" bit from "[Rejected](#)" (2001) *sans* irony. Note Vincent Cassel's

none-too-subtle black-and-red Dracula outfit, coding him and his cannibalistic

family members for the inbred lycanthropes<sup>344</sup> the film eventually reveals them, thus the state's corrupt elements, to be. This is classic abjection—a debridement ceremony carried out by the king's men against his unruly fash-coded wolfmen. The story likewise combines Tonto-and-the-Lone-Ranger (the white Indian) tokenism with martial arts, sexy maidens and whores, and plenty of stabby-stabby devices: to feed on diseased criminals and execute them with impunity. It's *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) if only Clyde showed up, the cops being the angel death sent by God to purge Sodom and Gomorrah—in "France" (now with 30% more ninjas)!

The movie, while shamelessly exploitative, campily riffs on *The Matrix* from two years previous, nevertheless eating at national institutions of power through all the usual draws known to Gothic pastiche: sex and violence, but also taboos and Orientalism. *Wolf* plays with problematic things—including police violence, secret identities, legendary monsters, Balzacian chronotopes (complete with extended



Paris-style brothel scenes/espionage), pre-fascist cults, assassins and dog soldiers—to cater to a swashbuckling mode of monstrous consumption that, sure enough, smuggles allegory into the usual trashy, wild-frontier refrains: the night is dark and full of terrors, but also oddly-sexy warriors and cultural appropriation leaning into various Gothic theatre tropes? The devil *is* in the details!

In short, it's a frame narrative, putting history into "history" as partially dreamt up again, in the historical Gothic style:

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<sup>344</sup> During the final fight between Cassel and the hero, Cassel appears uncloaked, wearing the guise of a wolf (the evil white Indian) and the hero having on war paint (the good white Indian); i.e., vampirism and lycanthropy stem from the same dialogs concerned with predation, degeneracy and criminal sex. To it, Cassel's aristocratic debauchery is exposed, he and the hero *eager* to fight to the death (over a girl, of course). There's an incestuous flavor to the scandal, too, but also raw, highwayman violence enacted by those profiting off the werewolf legend; i.e., a crown-funded terrorist action targeting French village girls to instill countryside panic—one eventually exposed by facing and demasking the vampiric royals projecting their ravenous appetites off onto their fash cousins and victims of said cousins: a sex pest to exterminate, demonizing BDSM and queer people in the process (all while fencing it off, *vis-à-vis* Poe's "Masque of the Red Death," 1842).

Also, the movie treats "the Beast" as the immortality of the French Revolution: "You're too late, Fronsac; the Beast is already immortal!" Cassel then dies, and thirty years after the scene we just saw, the opening mourns the death of a French nobleman! So... that's good, right? Then, *why* does the movie treat the *rebels* like killer rapey cannibals? Abjecting rebellion to apologize for the French monarchy, its director (Christophe Gans) is suitably trying to have his cake and eat it, too (all the way to guillotine, Marie Antoinette)! It's a bit confused on the message, but then again, Cassel *is* the best part of the film (such a badass)!

To that, Gans is effectively playing with old Gothic conventions that let us root for the villain (the demon lover) but—in classic Radcliffean fashion—settle for the Gothic hero at the end (re: [Wolf](#), suitably enough). It's canonical, but has subversive elements; i.e., as Neo-Gothic novels classically did, Gans imitating them to a fault, which—at the same time—gives us *an-Coms* something to work with (throwing a dog a bone)!



Christophe Gans' *Brotherhood of the Wolf* (*Le pacte des loups*) is a fantasy adventure set in a history within a history. The framing narrative that bookends its actions (and occasionally interrupts them with elegiac commentary) sees a greying gentleman (Jacques Perrin) choosing to finish penning his memoirs in his castle quarters rather than to seek escape from the mob outside baying for his blood.

"This world had to change," says Thomas d'Apcher in voiceover, wistfully recognizing that there is no place for an old noble like himself in the approaching Republic and resigned to his fate. Yet in his final hours, his mind is filled less with present danger than with events from his youth, some three decades earlier, which similarly gave rise to public hysteria and potential subversion of the then prevailing order.

Those events are drawn from real history: between 1764 [the year Walpole wrote *Otranto*] and 1767, the mysterious [Beast of Gévaudan](#) – said to be wolf-like in appearance, but much larger and with an uncharacteristic enthusiasm for homicide – was terrorizing the rural province in south-central France, killing over 100 locals. The failure of several royally sanctioned hunting parties to kill this monstrous *cause célèbre* made the Beast not just a threat to Gévaudan's exposed peasant population, but to the supposed divine authority on which the King's power rested. This was a true-life horror story with resonances in both mythology and politics.

In treating this history, Gans engages in his own myth-making. For the principal inset narrative begins with a scene of the unseen Beast viciously attacking and killing a terrified woman, and then of two royal emissaries arriving on horseback in rainy Gévaudan. These two fictive characters – the King's gardener and naturalist Grégoire de Fronsac (Samuel Le Bihan) and his loyal "brother" Mani (Mark Dacascos<sup>345</sup>) – have been fashioned to look

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<sup>345</sup> Dacascos isn't actually Native American; he's Hawaiian/Filipino and Irish/Japanese. In fact, it's quite common for non-white martial artists to be chosen "for their looks"; i.e., a vaudeville, "blackface," close-enough quality that translates, oddly enough, into food shows:

Melissa: "You have a very multicultural, very multiracial background. How has that influenced you and your work?"

Mark: "Well, I guess the advantage is that it's enabled me to play a lot of different characters. The disadvantage, I suppose, is that sometimes I'm not enough of anything to play **what they're looking for** [emphasis, me]" ([source](#): Melissa Slaughter's "Mark Dacascos Can't Cook, But He Can Kick A\*\* in the Reboot of *Iron Chef*," 2022).

I mention this because after his action roles, Dacascos would go onto reboot *Iron Chef* on *Netflix*—a show that treats multiculturalism as a neoliberal cash grab.

This being said, it's entirely possible to *be* multicultural, do martial arts and critique consumption; e.g., Foreign Man in a Foreign Land does all three ("[How Food Racism Ruined the World](#)," 2024); i.e., an foreigner (from the Caribbean) speaking to crops of various kinds, made into settler colonies and banana republics that, unto neoliberal Capitalism, translate into little microcosms that spread state predation (and subsequent DARVO) across people *and* place. The more foreign people are from the Imperial Core, the more estranged and critical their Gothic voice tends to be

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
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like cowboys from a western, and indeed Mani is, somewhat improbably, an actual [Iroquois](#).

Yet as this pair crosses paths with a group of soldiers (dressed as women) ruthlessly clubbing the old peasant Jean Chasterl (Philippe Nahon) and his wild-eyed daughter (Virginie Darmon), Mani single-handedly takes them all on in a fight that is less oater standoff than martial arts beatdown. So it is clear from the outset that, in this historical setting, genre is very



much up for grabs ([source](#): Anton Bitel's "The Swashbuckling Thrills of *Brotherhood of the Wolf*," 2023).

Such disparate eclecticism is hardly out of place in a Gothic tale—the historical Gothic genre profoundly flexible; i.e., as a matter of fact and invention dancing on the same floor while holding a gloved, enticing finger to its pillowy lips (with Monica Bellucci, left, not actually French, but an Italian starlet playing a demonically-yet-conventionally-attractive [and bloodthirsty] "French," lady-in-black seductress in multiple films, including *The Matrix Reloaded*, from 2003).

Despite its problematic content, I absolutely loved *Brotherhood* growing up and exiting the closet as an adult, Marxist/genderqueer/an-Com scholar, if only because it's so playful with things that—like many of its forebears—cast blame against current systems by abjecting them to dated ideas of the past. It's problematic, to be sure, but showcases the very creative (and hypnotic) spirit we can easily reclaim in such darkly sexy zones of action and doom (my own juvenilia borrowed from the film's [multiple, bombastic and frankly rad fight scenes](#)). Per Sarkeesian, enjoyment is not endorsement by virtue of the manner in which something is engaged with; i.e., your mileage for stories like *Wolf* (and parallel scholarship) varies by *how* you can play with it *after* you turn eighteen! The same goes for vampires and their tell-tale haunts married to other forms of undead feeding that serve the same canonical purpose: unironic state predation, persecution and prostitution tossed about like a hot potato (anyone but the state, of course). We grow less ignorant/escape the closet by playing with these stories ourselves into adulthood and Gothic maturity—for rebellion! "[Double the pain](#)," Ronnie James Dio!

The big closet (Capitalism) is exited by breaking Capitalist Realism. As such, the rest of this section shall articulate this pain of rebirth per my decades-long adventures outside the womb; i.e., into such vampiric zones, eventually writing these books and this subchapter on state vampirism!

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(e.g., Jean Rhys and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 1966). Unlike queerness, they're alien in ways they *can't* always hide; i.e., there's no closet for being a slave (short of some "passing" shadism arguments).

We'll get to *me* specifically in several pages. I want to preface myself and my exiting of the closet by reiterating something important: to read the room, watch what people eat, but also how and why they play with their food (and spice it/swap this out for that). For the state, vampiric media stages a Satanic-Panic panopticon for "lepers," framing us as wretched, sodomic murderers, Communists and nutjobs to divide-and-conquer ourselves during feeding time; for us *fags*, the castle or the canceled-future city (or theme park, dead mall, land that time forget, etc, as commentaries on Capitalism/power in decline, as the Gothic always concerns—from nursery rhymes to children's stories, YA fiction and adult media) yields a postpunk, disco-in-disguise<sup>346</sup>/danger disco of sorts—one to prowl and hunt inside, *ironically* (through camp) staging jailbreaks, thus reclaiming a room of one's own as both body and place having that tell-tale "look." As vampires generally do, sodomy is



something to play with—merging canon with camp, condor with code, class with gutter antics, horror with hedonism, fiction with non-fiction, action with arthouse, black with red, perfume with prurience, and pleasure with pain:

In short, you'll know it when you see it—porn, but also different qualities of vampirism and masked, costumed

prostitution/queerness speaking to buried realities ignored by ancient canonical laws (re: Foucault). We queers speak through all manner of preferential code in and out of the closet, whereupon trans, non-binary and intersex people have always existed, and prostitution—the world's oldest profession—isn't simply the domain of women being policed by men; it's also romanced by middle-class AFAB people unto AMAB ones per sodomy rhetoric.

Anne Rice, for example, made a career out of it, pimping out these boyish, hot-blooded ghosts of the counterfeit to great effect (though nowhere near as perniciously as Rowling [through serial killers] or Laurell K. Hamilton's *Anita Blake, Vampire Hunter* series [canonically trash for thirsty housewives not getting enough

<sup>346</sup> My ex, Zeuhl, was a postpunk nut who—apart from being a total nerd in that respect—romanticized such spaces (and their hauntologies) as a matter of predation amongst queers. As I previously said, at school Zeuhl and I fed on each other, becoming what we ate as a matter of fluid exchange, but also power and knowledge. Zeuhl drank of my nectar and I gave it willingly while taking of *their* essence; but they taught me a hard truth, as well: attraction and abuse often coincide. Furthermore, the latter is often done by those who have more experience in pain and abuse, thus have the ability to not simply wound, but take *advantage* of those they hurt (again, a bit like Lestat and Louis from Rice's famous tale). And that's precisely what Zeuhl did! All the same, I learned a lot from them and their life-in-the-big-city bullshit; i.e., including that I'm attracted to damage—not because I like it/am a glutton-for-punishment or am into people with trust issues, but because I like having someone I can relate to for also being gay (and queer people, finding a mate, will often settle)! Much of this section remains positively *haunted* by Zeuhl's strange adoration for Foucault, but also twink-in-peril, exploitation-style torture porn (re: Cooper) and caged queer existence (re: Jarman)!

from their boring/absentee partners], probably due to Rice actually being queer<sup>347</sup>). So did Dennis Cooper and other late-20th-century gay men speaking to a shared sense of pain and exploitation, having their own convulsionnaires' Christ-like, "second boyhoods" (returning to the cross to learn through pain); i.e., liberation remains a liminal proposition that *doesn't* preclude abuse through the performance by those punching down against their favorite snack in and out of the closet; re: Zeuhl, a non-binary AFAB person with a twink torture fetish, furthering the process of abjection by acting against me (queer-leaning but still in the closet at the time) in ways that were ultimately predatory—to use and discard me, following them forsaking most of their revolutionary principles for a steady paycheck. Reversing abjection that ain't!

Under Western influence, to be queer is to have started inside the closet (of closets, of closets). Since Matthew Lewis, the reality of queer people—especially

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<sup>347</sup> Partly, Rice wrote her landmark *Interview* (1976) to heal from the death of her young child; re, Marlow Stern's "Anne Rice Opens Up: 'I Feel Like I'm Gay'" (2017):

Forty years ago, [Anne Rice's](#) debut novel, *Interview with the Vampire*, brought vampirism out of the shadows and into the light. Her initial foray into the world of blood-imbibing immortals was partially inspired by the tragic death of her daughter Michelle, who died at age of 5 of leukemia. The character of Claudia, a 5-year-old vampire with an insatiable thirst for life-giving blood, was a tribute to her lost little girl ([source](#)).

In the same interview, though, Rice explains,

I was writing about vampires before the AIDS crisis. People told me *Interview with the Vampire* was a gay allegory, and I was very honored by that. [Rice's son, Christopher, is openly gay.] I think I have a gay sensibility and I feel like I'm gay, because I've always transcended gender, and I've always seen love as transcending gender. In my books, I've always created bonds of love that have transcended gender. But I've never associated AIDS with vampires, myself. I've always been very much a champion of gay rights, and art produced by gay people—whether it was the early *Frankenstein* movies that had such a gay sensibility to them, or any art created by gay people. I'm highly sensitive to it. I have a gay sensibility. I get teased a lot by my gay friends because we have a rapport on things we find exciting or interesting. It's very hard for me to remember that I have a gender, and that they're treating me in a negative way because of that gender (*ibid.*).

And, honestly, she's sounds pretty gay/non-binary to me! Yes, her work sexualizes cute boys, but specifically to humanize them and acknowledge their monstrous status (and subsequent strange appetites) in society. It's hardly predatory!

Bear in mind, when Rice wrote *Interview with the Vampire*, much of the language that exists today *didn't* back then (re: Moers and Foucault, Creed and Carter); i.e., just "vampires" as code for things she made queer in a sex-positive light while arguably inside the closet, herself. Eventually she came out ([similar to Cassandra Peterson](#)), but even before she did, she was always fighting the good fight (a bit like [Vincent Price](#) or, hell, Pat Benatar).

To that, monsters can be used for good or ill; Rice—unlike Frank Herbert—was actually and actively loving and accepting of her gay son, and she never sold out or weaponized queerness to triangulate abused women against marginalized communities like Rowling did. While you *can* find queer themes in Rowling's work, much of *that* comes from the proverbial "death of the author," whereas Rice's sex-positive legacy very much keeps *her* alive in people's hearts (Rowling, by comparison, is *dead* to many former fans; she sucks).

AMAB ones, but not limited to them (re: Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, 1872<sup>348</sup>)—has been abject in ways we have to reverse from positions of greater ignorance to less, but still inside capital as a "big closet"; i.e., by bearing it all as a combination of exploitation and humanization through such seeking and feeding principles (dungeon play and toys) upending dangerous forms of decay and the equality of convenience: through persecution *of* the persecuted *by* the persecuted in regressively hypocritical vampire language (scholarship and fiction)!

The root cause for such betrayals (and subsequent salvation that happens alongside them) is pernicious and deep, taking years of non-standard experimentation that, itself, requires *de facto* (extracurricular) reeducation; i.e., living these ideas in order to best understand and camp them; e.g., living and unpacking "sodomy" as I have done for most of my life, from positions of ignorance leading paradoxically to knowledge dressed up as trash, as darkness visible; re: "Long is the way and hard, that out of Hell leads up to light." We're not just trying to learn from policed materials, but under duress from those around us as a living experience—hence my anecdotes about vampirism and what it means to me ultimately being a cumulative foray into fresh scholarship while exiting a closeted police state of ignorance that, unto itself, was *less* closeted than past versions (and *more*, insofar as capital decayed as much developed into its present state).

Like breadcrumbs in a fable (and a maze getting deeper to the dreadful center of Capitalism), my books were founded on picking up pieces that, themselves, came from older practices build on older knowledge escaping into the public sphere from libraries, schools, and so on. By virtue of my own queer identity formed during a survivor's multiple struggles against tokenized predation, I've since gone on my own adventures of self-discovery with fellow fags, only to have some *prey* on me without irony as something to fluctuate with through bits and pieces of "the good stuff": as a cute "vampire" with terrifying appetites, andro/gynodiverse biology and fluid sexual orientations, genders and performances (all next page), as well as eyes that glow in the dark to better see our "prey" with (we wish)!

Zeuhl didn't poison me to such things, but taught me what I was (re: gay-as-fuck) and what I wanted to seek out (re: fresh synthesis); i.e., among those who not only *wouldn't* harm me, but who I could enjoy and protect from predators like Zeuhl! Eventually I left the closet, writing about ludo-Gothic BDSM and studying it through art and media, but also my own social-sexual relations according to a shared pedagogy of the oppressed. When I was 36 (and sadly after Cuwu), I came out (encouraged by them to do so); I feel like it was only the beginning to a much longer journey away from ignorance and towards knowledge concerning vampirism and its reclamation (not for fame, riches or respect, but *self*-respect despite others devaluing and disrespecting my labor and expertise; re: Bad Empanada).

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<sup>348</sup> Re: Riding on Carl Westphal's coattails and beating Stoker's own anti-Semitic novel to the punch by over twenty years, and focusing on female vampires.

Such mythology and gossip generally has an anisotropic flavor to it. For us fags, it's Tuesday on the cross; for the Straights, it's the gay apocalypse. To look on such behaviors and theatrics, then, is to look on spectres of Marx speaking to the usual things relegated to the imaginary underworld and preyed on while inside those locations by cis-het/tokenized people; i.e., the middle class feeding on the ghost of the counterfeit to further the abjection process. But no matter how much they feed, we're always there reflecting their predation as something to turn back, Aegis-style, at our attackers! Stare and tremble at Satan doing "sodomy" in the dead of night (again, canonical code for "rape" as a nightly activity at nightly hours by home invaders abusing the trust of gentile [white] female homeowners)!



(exhibit 41g1a1b2: Artist: [Pulp Punk](#). It's common for cis-het women and older [second wave] feminists/cis fags to monopolize social-sexual oppression, while turning AMAB parties into lunch; i.e., commodifying gender trouble as something we must reclaim through ourselves doubling such predation without harming each other [re: Zeuhl, Jadis, and Cuwu, etc].

Unto the first concept, Catherine Mackinnon writes in "Toward a Feminist Theory of the State" [1989], "Sexual objectification is the primary process of the subjection of women. It unites act with word, construction with expression, perception with enforcement, myth with reality. Man fucks woman; subject verb object." However, in "[A Gender Analysis of Global Sex Work](#)" from [Selling Sex in the City: A Global History of Prostitution, 1600s-2000s](#) [2017], Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk argues, "While most of the chapters do not provide much information about male or transgender/transvestite sex work (and in most historical [legal] contexts prostitution has been defined as "female"), some countries such as China and the Ottoman Empire had a rich tradition of prostitution by men or boys." In other words, and under a Western lens, much of sex work is historically AFAB since ancient times, but includes AMABs from as far back treated in a traditionally feminine sense under the current colonial model's various nostalgias [re: Marxist-Leninism] also being SWERF-y and queerphobic [whose exploitation under Capitalism we will examine in Volume Three, part one, Chapter Three when we cover discrimination against femboys, "traps" and twinkles in the section, "Patriarchal Hatred Against Transgender Persons, Intersexuality and Drag"].

Second, regardless of sex, gender or performance through occupation, all workers [sex or otherwise] are heteronormatively slighted; i.e., to varying degrees of standard-to-token normativity. Androgyny becomes a prolific and speculative dialog on predation and enslavement as something to camp. This takes time to camp purely by virtue of acquiring the language from one closet to the next; i.e., a

*knowledge gap eased by "shopping sprees"; e.g., I have had and used fantasy poetics since I was a little girl to speak to mine and other's queerness in vampire stories, but didn't have the academic language until I met Zeuhl [who explained its emergence and utility from Judith Butler, onwards, and Foucault, backwards]. After Zeuhl used and abused me, I rebounded into future abusive relationships with equally GNC elements, whereupon I continued my research pursuant to equal rights for queer people under capital [followed by a holistic defense for all oppressed peoples using anarchistic genderqueer models, itself aided from my meeting of [Bay Ryan](#)—an an-Com GNC Indigenous Person who not only didn't abuse me, but supported my work in defense of all workers].*

*I didn't fully realize it at the time, but I was being abused repeatedly by predatory AFAB GNC partners with Marxist elements to them; e.g., Cuwu being a self-professed Marxist-Leninist [although they didn't always act it] and Zeuhl saying they were an-Com but then closeting themselves and their revolutionary heart<sup>349</sup>*

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<sup>349</sup> Re: Solzhenitsyn, with Zeuhl treating things like a trolley problem, and them picking their husband. I always kind of *gathered* that's what they were doing, but it never *hit* me until this moment: that's a very monogamous and, furthermore, a very *cis-het* approach to love; i.e., the moment they sold out, they killed and buried that revolutionary gay inside of themselves, in turn killing a piece of their own heart! And not just theirs, but mine in regards to them! In realizing this, Zeuhl has become completely *alien* to me, a stranger I didn't know—or rather, an imposter I'd seen before but had always turned a blind eye to: all because I was in love with an idea of them that wasn't true. The entire time, I had been lying to myself, trying to hold onto something of a keepsake. All ammunition for them to deceive me with!

Of course, the fact that Zeuhl took advantage of me and didn't even have the *guts* to admit it speaks volumes to their dearth of character. It always bothered me, but seeing the cold hard logic of them justifying it—as Captain Miller did when saving Private Ryan (re: convince yourself that what you're doing will "pay off" down the road)—shows me they were more in the closet by the end, more short-sighted than I could have ever possibly imagined!

Small wonder we couldn't be together! And frankly the thought kind of *sickens* me—like the person I *thought* was Che Guevara really being just a closet neoliberal (and not an out-and-out one, like Jadis); i.e., in disguise, merely biding their time to sell out! I feel like I fucked Obama with a facemask:

Looking back, it's embarrassing to recognize the degree to which my intellectual curiosity those first two years of college paralleled the interests of various women I was attempting to get to know: Marx and Marcuse so I had something to say to the long-legged socialist who lived in my dorm. Fanon and Gwendolyn Brooks for the smooth-skinned sociology major who never gave me a second look; Foucault and Woolf for the ethereal bisexual who wore mostly black. As a strategy for picking up girls, my pseudo-intellectualism proved mostly worthless; I found myself in a series of affectionate but chaste friendships ([source](#): Barack Obama's *A Promised Land*, 2020).

The irony is, Zeuhl actually *did* good work, but gave it all up for that boy they fell in love with at 19! It's like everything after that was bullshit, them simply biding their time! And to make matters worse (if such a thing were possible), this is basically what *Foucault* did, too, and *I'm* not even the first person to acknowledge it; e.g., Walker Caplan writes,

We can add Barack Obama to our list of academic posers. In a section of his new memoir, *A Promised Land*, the former president describes reading books in college to impress girls he liked [...] However, Obama is following in the footsteps of great men—in fact, of the very thinkers he faux-read. As @thomas\_decker [pointed out on Twitter](#), James Miller's [The Passion of Michel Foucault](#) features Foucault telling this anecdote from his early education:

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...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.

Crushes are so powerful that Foucault *became Foucault* for a crush. And the tactic makes sense; reading is hot, which we as writers for a book website love to remember ([source](#): "Even President Obama Once Used Books to Pick up Girls," 2020).

Worse, Zeuhl even *quoted* that passage to me in school! They thought it was funny! "I have so many... mixed feelings!" indeed! Why do all of my memories of us suddenly feel like evidence, now?



It hurts me enough to feel fresh anger after so much time, and in ways I never quite dared before without reflection. So it's oddly a relief to be angry with my abuser in ways that outs them for the canonical vampire they were. Fuck you, Zeuhl—one, for breaking my heart and using me like you did (and lying about it); two, for making me feel like *Fred* from *Scooby-fucking-Doo*; and three, for making me realize this, thus ruin even my *happy* memories of you!

I'll be honest; it's one thing to kill one's darlings that you *didn't* know in person (re: Halford as a poser). But someone I loved as much as I loved Zeuhl, who's ultimate betrayal has *layers* of emptiness/vampiric invisibility I'm only realizing years later? My relationship with them feels so goddamn fake; *they* feel so goddamn fake! But now that I can kill that stupid idea of them, once and for all, it's odd—it feels like closure, and I can move on. Indeed, I've already been doing that for years (even so, I still feel a rueful twinge/pang of agony, but only a small one)! But tragically they will always have a piece of my heart stuck in them, and I will always have a piece of them stuck in me. To reflect is, in some sense, to pour salt on old wounds, inflaming "shrapnel" injuries that never fully heal. As I pull away from them, like a dead precious animal lying abandoned on the side of the ride, its ghost follows me, and the cold hard stare of that Spaghetti-Western-loving revolutionary I fell in love with glares at me; i.e., out of a rebellious past that is both dead *and* alive inside me:



Why does that ghost of them have to resemble Clint Eastwood and Mel Gibson ("Never shake your gory locks at me!)? A part of me, even now, will always love that idea of what they *could* have been. And despite how it hurts, and no matter how much I cry going forwards, I will *never* let that go; I will learn from it and use it to build the very things Zeuhl gave up on; I will build a temple to the honor of that side of them that *was* good; re: "But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?" Zeuhl was a coward; no

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*off for good i.e., exploiting me as a submissive AMAB person, who did her best to learn from her own survival at their hands, thus cultivate the best lessons about ludo-Gothic BDSM I could. In between my graduate work and postgrad, you can even see the discourse start to emerge as I prepare to leave the closet. As I write in "Why I Submit: A Subby Gothist's Attitudes on Metroidvania, Mommy Doms, and Sexual Persecution" [2021]:*

*There's no shame in communicating about these things and having one's partner decide that they like to submit. Conversely some partners like goofy dudes built like Randy Savage; [e.g., [Eric Bugenhagen](#)]. More power to them. However, if they can choose, they can also refuse. And this is normal and ok, my dudes. It allows for stability and happy partners on both sides—security, and isn't that what everyone ultimately wants? That is why I*

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coward soul is mine (for a fictional example, consider Broken Sword and Snow from *Hero*, 2003; both rebels, Sword betrayed all of their values and friends to hand power over to the bloodthirsty [and self-pitying] Chinese Emperor, and Snow—rightfully enraged—killed his stupid ass for it)!

Under capital, we're left scavenging on the wreckage of the past, be it our own or that of others; e.g., I used to cite Frodo, bemoaning the Eye of Sauron watching him: "I can't recall the taste of food, nor the sound of water, nor the touch of grass. I'm naked in the dark. There's nothing—no veil between me and the wheel of fire. I can see him with my waking eyes." I thought Zeuhl, holding me and watching me with their pretty princex eyes, was my Samwise Gamgee; instead, they went to Mordor alone, and took the hobbits to Isengard. They took the Ring and abandoned me for a place at the Dark Lord's throne. Why? Because it was easy and convenient. Even if they cried (and they did cry somewhat), they still killed that piece of themselves. But perhaps I'll rest easier knowing they'll be pained and haunted by me too. Useful things are couched within useless things and vice versa, "But she will remember forever that I caught her! That I held her prisoner!" versus "She will remember your heart when men are fairy tales and books written by rabbits." And maybe, just maybe, that will motivate them to change back into the androgyne that I loved, all those years ago...

So let this be a lesson, kids—when you're in your graduate supervisor's office, crying your eyes out because you think your then-partner is using you (re: "I feel used!"), said voice isn't wrong! Then *again*, I still have mixed feelings because if I listened to my conscience back then, I would have never met Jadis and Cuvu as formative exes, onto awesome friends like Bay or Harmony—and this book series wouldn't exist! So, personally—despite knowing how phony Zeuhl ultimately is—I still wouldn't change a thing (the sex *was* good, and Zeuhl and I had some fun times/taught each other things despite them being a colossal mooch). Despite what they did, I'd still love people as openly as I do now *because having a heart that can feel is infinitely more valuable than one made of stone*.

Caveats aside, I'd rather have a Communist world, not a neoliberal one (which is all Vaporwave really is, Zeuhl: the romance of a canceled future, a road to nowhere). To that, my hard-fought knowledge came from mistakes I made *so you, dear readers, don't have to*. But if it does lead to mistakes on your end, don't let it stop you from looking for love again the future! Don't be afraid to love and fail! Failure is *useful*, just like Foucault (and his truths and lies and half-lies) was useful. You can't learn unless you relate to others, and you can't relate to others without loving them, thus open up the possibility of getting hurt. So learn from rejection and open your heart, then find yourself someone who *won't* use sex and the veneer of intellectual posturing to get what they want at expense of yourself! Find someone real and kind and good! And then, make the world a better place than Zeuhl ever could (the funny thing being Bay kind of looks like Foucault when he wears turtlenecks, but is in truth, a very sweet person; i.e., he's been abused and learned from it, whereas Zeuhl—a bit of a skittish wuss, afraid of intimacy and connection—mostly led a charmed and self-centered life)!

Build a fire and see who joins you by it. Raise a flag and see who salutes! And always look after yourselves and be well! "First, do no harm"; "hurt, not harm!" But also, self-care is community care (and we an-Coms are service tops). So "die" by Snu-Snu, eating Cheddar Goblin until your swan song is "macaroni stirring sound." Always in moderation, but swing for the fences!

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voluntarily submit—to Metroidvania, to mommy doms, and to my partner [Jadis] (a mommy dom). I do it through informed choices, knowing what I enjoy—what we enjoy. That's literally why I'm writing this: to say what works and what doesn't; to educate society and prevent persecution of minorities who just want to live in peace.

### **Persecution**

I don't advocate for objective morality. I still insist that a happy world is one where people are not enslaved, but free to choose what makes them happy without harming other people. Cat boys are happy being themselves. So are fem boys, basking [in] the consensual "subby" power experienced by women and queer people for millennia. There's not only power in this, there's beauty as well:



Easy on the eyes, aren't they? This beauty isn't a joke: [the "stupid" sort advertised by Flanders' skin-tight snowsuit](#). Rather, it's beauty that someone actually wants and values unironically. And if sexist men think someone is weird for expressing themselves, they're the one with the problem, not the fem boy. These same men wouldn't bat an eyelash at "traditional values," including the sexual, semi-nude depiction of women in media [that female players don't actually want](#).

Unfortunately these attitudes also bleed into the public sphere. Here, cis women/trans persons are forced to see vulgar displays of power—not the expression of physical beauty alone, but the male-mandated conscription of AFAB into gratuitous exhibits (or manly displays for AMAB). Gratuity isn't the problem. Compulsion is. Today these behaviors are informed by nostalgia, of a return to a "better" time, where "men were men and the women were sexier":



I have nothing against tan Brazilian booties. [The booty extends life; the booty expands consciousness](#). I just believe they shouldn't be enslaved and monopolized by men who flood the public sphere with nothing else. So many cis women are "empowered" by men, placed into dubious positions of sexual power (for a male equivalent, see [the Hawkeye Initiative](#)). For the sex-positive feminist there's

nothing wrong with AFAB who actually consent to these positions, nor is the content they produce [automatically] harmful. Well, maybe "WAP" is slightly

crass, [but even that yields some killer mashups](#) and [clever parodies](#). Let the discourse flow!

I digress. Non-traditional alternatives should also be made available to the public. This includes the aforementioned cat and fem boys, but also the male variant of a Gothic heroine. "The greatest anxiety for the woman reader was the Gothic heroine's lack of agency," [writes Avril Horner](#). Postmodernity makes the role performative, letting cis women/trans persons consent to submission. They can voluntarily yield to greater forces. And from cradle to grave, I can be the Gothic heroine too—Samus, or even subbier forms when I'm with [one of my exes]

[...] In reality the assignment of an "outlier" status isn't always agreed upon; society at large is prone to witch hunts, but also lusting for the witch they seek to destroy. I've always felt attracted to witches, especially Joan of Arc and the Wicked Witch of the West. I attribute this to two childhood texts: The Legend of Billie Jean, and Gregory Maguire's Wicked (this being said, Margaret Hamilton is a total boss).



When I was in middle school, I saw The Legend of Billie Jean on TV. A local girl, Billie Jean, is almost raped by a sleazy store clerk. She escapes, but is pursued through the whole movie by the police, who believe the man, not Billie. On the run, Billie watches Saint Joan, a 1957 movie about Joan of Arc, and cuts her long hair. The whole adventure is slightly dorky but the message remains vital; also, [the theme song is absolutely great](#) and remains a personal

favorite of mine to this day.

Wicked was published in 1995 when my parents divorced. My grandmother and mother read it for their book club; I heard them raving about the book and read it for myself. Elphie is a powerful, rebellious woman. Unlike Glinda, she doesn't submit to tyranny; she's a civil rights activist, standing up for minority communities oppressed by the powerful, not-so-wonderful Wizard. By and large, the entire story is dark, X-rated, and violent. Though mostly G-rated and lacking Maguire's sardonic wit, the musical is still fun; I saw it with my father for my 21st birthday.

My interest in Billie and Elphie is partly sexual. However, I feel an open interest in the persecuted through their performances in media [[source](#)].

As far as free lunches go, capitalists don't give things back unless it's out of spite [["Pickle-fucker gave us free eats!"](#)], to fatten us up, or exert control over us through power fantasies that weaponize rebellion in cop-like ways *vis-à-vis*

*Capitalist Realism [re: the Power Rangers]. And this isn't always the Monopoly Guy being cartoonishly evil; it's often committed by other marginalized peoples [and/or activists; re: Bad Empanada] abusing us in bad faith and/or ignorance. To this, the above piece was written while I was with Jadis, a genderfluid tank of a dominatrix [with masochistic tendencies] who raped me through constant emotional-sexual abuse for years [re: "[Transforming Our Zombie Selves](#)," 2024]. Zeuhl, on the other hand, was the kind of person to break up with you, then ask you for money [me] and if they could crash and your place with their current husband [another ex of theirs<sup>350</sup>]! The common ground between them is exploitation, with these GNC persons acting persecuted, but turning right back around to persecute their fellow oppressed; i.e. hyphenating predator and prey but also owner and pet in sex-coercive ways while, oddly enough, loving vampire stories! In short, whatever contract was at play between them and myself, both abused it in-play during ludo-Gothic BDSM! Through characters like Billie Jean and Elphaba, I sought escape by identifying with social-sexual outlaws who informed my ideas, and couldn't be monopolized by state forces [who basically treat vampires as dogmatic "fast food"<sup>351</sup>]!)*

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<sup>350</sup> Really the tip of the iceberg, insofar as Zeuhl's abuse goes (again, see: previous footnote). But, like most abusers, good is mixed in with bad. For a good summary of their nonsense, consider "[The Eyeball Zone; or, Relating to the Gothic as Commies Do](#)" (2024) from Volume Two, part one. Otherwise, mentions of them appear all throughout Volumes One and Zero.

<sup>351</sup> I once worked at a Subway in college the first time around, from 2006 to 2007. The job was so terrible I would rebel in different ways—one, by making myself illegal, not-to-standard sub sandwiches (with quadruple the meat [usually teriyaki chicken], strips of bacon and a shitload of chipotle/ranch sauce with a generous helping of black olives, then toasted with double provolone cheese on top); but also two, by going home and writing monster stories on my iMac G3.

To this, the act of creating monsters (fueled by stolen food to get back at my corporate employers) powered my revenge *and* felt good; i.e., I worked minimum wage in a gentrified college town (which in Michigan, 2006, would have been \$6.95/hour), thus was always underpaid, underfed, and trying to go to college myself (while subletting at an abusive friend's apartment). More to the point, I could create monsters myself; i.e., as "comfort food" that treated said content as a way of *enriching* the world by *not* serving the profit motive (a lifelong process taking many more years, me not really exiting the closet more aggressively until I started to date queer people in 2015).

For example, a KFC I worked at, years later (in 2012, shortly before I went back to college\*), would throw food away every night—trays and trays of chicken—all so corporations could make money through the middle class instead of feeding the poor. By extension, sex abuse and food sales go part-in-parcel, like any product and its salespeople; i.e., the same motive canonically apologizes for predation among corporations selling food as, often enough, both literal and tied to a brand associate: a person who, failing upwards, enjoys the perks of such efficient profit to abuse those under them; e.g., Subway's Jared Fogle preying vampirically on others thanks to his freak and meteoric rise up the corporate ladder (Dreading's "[From Five Dollar Foot Long to Felon](#)" (2022).

\*A tradition that would carry over into my grad school MMU days; i.e., *donner kabab* at the local chippy—basically fried stoner food sold to college students popping in after all night at the library (or sex in bed and your lover wanting a snack). It was hot expensive garbage, to be sure, but the bottles of mayo sitting on the counter they served your food with? *Manna from Heaven!*



([source: \*Vampire: The Masquerade – Shadows of New York\*, 2020](#))

Anecdotes of my leaving the closet aside, such superstitions are coded into recursive, fragmented, queerphobic language with homophobic dogma unto normative depictions; i.e., by persons acting out such ideas, whether they live them or not; e.g., Tom Cruise from earlier versus Rob Halford (exhibit 41g1a1b), but also Zeuhl (see: previous footnote) and Bad Empanada: people turned into undead killer dolls while seeking revenge and prey during various forms of sodomy argumentation and witch hunts (for the state or against it, *ipso facto*). Such poetic statements canonically yield pedophilic components, but also pluralized elements speaking to cops and victims frozen in time; i.e., ageless and pristine, but thirsty for revenge married to pleasure and pain of various kinds (weird sex metaphors); re: Bad Empanada is a Stalinist relic!

Now that we've left the closet, I want to concern such feeding through the state eating itself, followed by some notes on tokenization.

#### **No More Food: the State Eating Itself, and Notes on Tokenism**

Denied queer scapegoats, the state will turn to other forms of monstrous-feminine, and ultimately on itself as famine sets in (e.g., *Attack on Titan*). To that, the usual clichés persist. Though not always, vampires are often male, monstrous-feminine dandies operating predatorily inside a traumatic, colonial location (re: Lestat from *Interview with the Vampire*, feeding in pre-revolutionary America); i.e., one where consumption is generally considered an act of theft during welcome-unwelcome trespasses that freeze the victim in place: the paralyzing theft of privatized essence—blood, brains, life force, etc—from a rightful, *bourgeois* source (the lothario/gigolo-coded Lestat, gleefully supping on the aging beldame before wringing her neck, and Louis clumsily trying *his* best *not* to kill *his* meal, thus prove Lestat wrong: that gay men needn't strictly be sexual predators who harm those they feed on). Anything that challenges said ownership is unwelcome by the pearl-clutcher, be the robbery a solo enterprise or an uncomfortable gathering with revolutionary potential (eating the rich); i.e., the prosecution framing sodomy as a venereal disease that conflates the cruiser's seeking mechanism and punching up/topping from below with bad-faith predation<sup>352</sup> (eating women and children).

As a *discourse*, though, the potency of class conflict during monster-themed oppositional praxis has only intensified during the Internet Age. Inside this age,

<sup>352</sup> Often, the closeted, imprisoned character to such proximity and alienation leads queer people to one, become damaged, then two, be drawn towards each other like moths to moths and/or flames (unable to tell the difference).

new generations of queer people emerge, then reclaim "sodomy" through vampirism; i.e., as a theatrical device they take back from older tokenized queers (and straight Marxist-Leninists acting like second wave feminists at best, Stalinists at worse; re: Bad Empanada) who insist "they 'won' the battle" or "have all the answers." Newer an-Com queers must resist tokenism, then, refusing to sell out according to such desperation and convenience (wherein abjecting the entire Superstructure and literary analysis very much *is* a matter of convenience; re: Bad Empanada); i.e., those persons hijack rebellious language (such as vampirism) to abuse it *for* fascist, false-rebellious purposes: stochastic predatory violence and betrayals, both delegitimizing activist credibility and goodwill to empower state mechanisms per the *brand* of selling out (re: Drolta from *Castlevania: Nocturne*, which again, I explore in "[Back to the Necropolis](#)").

To that, canonical vampirism and its unironic, police-like means of "sodomy" language have crystalized over several centuries—i.e., by tying neo-medieval expression to individual sexual predators, pests and addicts who invade and prey parasitically upon a single location; or is framed as doing so according to abject pogrom stereotypes within a profoundly biased heteronormative imagination; re: the "outing" of Jews (and people confused as "Jewish," such as Eastern Europeans) during blood libel and other anti-Semitic tropes describing them as [blood-drinking vampires](#), [baby-killing witches](#), and/or [flesh-eating goblins](#) (all, again, from Hey Alma's "Anti-Semitic History of..." series; 2021, 2020, and 2023):



(artist: Chris Bourassa)

In turn, the same chimeric libel would extend to trans women<sup>353</sup> as 21st-century reprobates; i.e., vampires (and their kissing-cousin relatives, lycans) needing to be publicly embarrassed, hounded, and ultimately put down/to the torch in order to serve profit. As such, their execution falls under the same grim harvest, its liminal hauntology of war happening by assimilative forces conducting rapacious, obscurantist and hypocritical acts of penetrative force, mid-DARVO: the silver bullet or stake through the heart being more of the same witch hunt cannibalizing queerness; i.e., one whose Foucauldian (discipline-and-punish) enforcement arbitrates chaotically as the state decays and sinks *its* "fangs" (stakes) into wherever and whomever the state needs them to go.

Charged with practicing not just illicit sex, but cannibalism, rape, infiltration/impersonation, and general abuse of (white or token) husbands, but also

<sup>353</sup> Usually more than trans men or those confused as trans; e.g., [Imane Khelif's recent dogpiling on the word of those normally profiting off moral panic, like J.K. Rowling, Elon Musk and others](#) (Rebecca Watson's "The Transphobes are Coming for All of Us" (2024).

their women and children, we latter-day (often polyamorous) GNC have fallen under the baleful eye of a bloodthirsty public famished and alienized by neoliberal dogma; i.e., those who automatically see us as "terrorists" per the usual shiftiness of the label flowing power *upwards*—both instantly and irrevocably guilty without trial, thesis or cause, and who just as often turn on themselves through increasingly radicalized forms. The hunters become the hunted, shifting blame surrounding such notions of "problematic love" as something to push onto and punish in-group members when the usual culprits (we fags "on the table," an apple showed in our mouths) are eventually exhausted.

In short, there is *always* a problem of manufactured scarcity to solve through force, only allowing the hearts of the middle class to bleed when the Imperial Boomerang nails *them* to the wall: "Who's the savage? Modern man!"



(artist: Chris Bourassa)

Under such complicated and roiling abuse, trans people, enbies and intersex persons have become the next generation of the "love that dare not speak its name!" weaponized all over again; i.e., the harmful xenophilia of unproductive sex, but also *illegitimate* "sodomy" conflated with the killing of the institution of marriage and its logical byproduct: legitimate children and the nuclear family structure, but also the entire *world* around them pushed towards cataclysm (state shift)! Here, vampiric homonormativity yields different "vampire cops"; e.g., the LGBA defending the heteronormative institution of marriage; i.e., by conducting pick-me-style witch hunts against non-cis persons who, *unlike* the LGBA, are "evil queers" (according to them). Likewise, Marxist cops from older disciplines such as Marxist-Leninism, police an-Com personas for much the same death-lottery reasons and ignorance (with Bad Empanada being a painfully straight man who is historically far less likely to be an-Com insofar as Marx and Engels, followed by Stalin aping the Czars, were all homophobes by choice; re: Bad Empanada calling for the censorship of social-sexual discussions [especially *psychosexual* discussions] and praxis, itself a regressive form of queerphobia haunting Marxism then and now). The state, in effect, treats vampires as "homewreckers" who can thankfully be tokenized into doing the bourgeoisie's bidding (essentially saying to the world, "kill the vampire, save the man"); it then eats them *first* when decay sets in.

Generally referred to as "sodomy" but also "pederasty" and "buggery" in older times, these broader xenophobic, "Gothic" labels (meaning "pertaining to the Middle Ages"; re: [Baldrick](#)) have historically applied to various harmful-and-forbidden sexual practices being associated with go-to out-groups the state can (and does) criminalize to their own benefit; i.e., cops and victims, the former



attacking the latter through acts essentially established through rumor and state dialogs; e.g., anal and oral sex with humans and any sexual act with children and animals, either being associated with Jewish people in medieval Europe and Pagan (or simply unwell/disobedient) women by *Hammer of Witches* burning scapegoats up like bread-and-circus fuel. It's, pardon the expression, a smokescreen.

([source](#): *Britannica*)

Older pogroms and moral panics inspire new ones, of course. The above examples would be followed by Enlightenment-era homosexuals being ignominiously granted a similar criminal identity afforded its own legendary makeup being made from old, dead parts (re: Foucault). Leading to the 20th and 21st centuries, any faction can vindicate/assimilate to attack another faction; i.e., as historical-material trends whose wax-and-wane popularity serves profit, as usual; e.g., anti-Semitism falling out of style, or racist lynch mobs, the metronome-esque waffling towards either and others reliably decaying towards Omelas-grade, magnifying-glass shrinkings of the state of exception onto trans people/an-Coms (who, in turn, can tokenize, pinkwashing genocide as labor goes on chasing and eating its own tail for profit and the state).

To it, the male vampire has continuously served a historically *recent* metaphorical role/regressive paradigm shift; i.e., for sodomy as an "ancient" practice hauntologically associated with Paganism, Judaism or other ancient<sup>354</sup> religions. Meanwhile, female vampires are witches and sellout blood-drinkers bathing in virgin's blood; but also, GNC people and BDSM practitioners/experts "aren't real" (re: Bad Empanada). All coalesce into the made-up "bad religion" of unspeakable sexualities (and genders, performances, etc) under post-fascist upheavals decaying into fascism again and again; i.e., codified, then preyed upon by the current capitalist model's Protestant ethic, said ethic canonizing the church of vampirism pursuant to profit during abject moral panic. Per the liminal hauntology of war, Nazis appear and Communists are attacked (re: Bad Empanada vs an-Coms *vis-à-vis* queer tokenism leading to *Marxist* tokenism—him).

<sup>354</sup> This includes a perceived "ancient"; e.g., the Catholicized medieval as vice-driven and prone to sinful excess from the Protestant perspective, the flush of the stated bloodlust less the drinking of actual blood and more the medieval idea of *sanguine* during sexual arousal; i.e., as an ancient wisdom now forbidden in a Puritanical age (Bay's pussy "blushes" deliciously when they're horny, for example), but also abjected onto the surface of problematic lovers who ostensibly practice/embody sodomy/"bad sex" (out of wedlock). Certainly the draining of essence and deprivation of sex conveys a guilty alienized claim for now-taboo appeals that aren't harmful; e.g., wanton fucking with reckless abandon through the Gothicized theatrics thereof. Such language fits like a glove because Capitalism is more "medieval" than you might think—its bastardized icons, but also its hidden atrocities sold back to us in cartoonish, comfortably prandial forms; i.e., the ghost of the counterfeit/process of abjection.



Simply put, scared people spend money while obsessing over things they can abject, thus control and dominate as monstrous-feminine regardless of the veracity of the claims being leveled; e.g., the middle class' superstitious and dogmatic associating of queerness with anal sex/pedophilia (the "Neverland effect") in particular abjecting homosexual men as lovers of shit and child abuse—with anal sex happening among AMAB persons for its prostate stimulation but [also not being a common way for them to even have sex](#) because anal *is* more work, but also more painful and stigmatized; re: Bobby Box's "Gay Bottoms Hate Anal Sex," (2020). This, itself, extends to an-Coms and BDSM rhetoric as something to reclaim while other (usually straight) activists finger-wag them and act like they themselves aren't somehow haunted by the ghost of Caesar (re: Bad Empanada aping Stalin's 1933 regression of Lenin's good work, making homosexuality illegal again).

Concerning the BDSM implementation of vampiric eroticism, calculated risk commonly involves (and invokes) paralysis under powerful seduction and painful social-psychosexual activities. These fetishes and clichés commonly play out for coercive and/or cathartic reasons; i.e., consent-non-consent, but also just rough sex, period; re: Trent Reznor's "fuck me like animal" (exhibit 43b); e.g., the vampire's stalking and subsequent biting of the neck being a double metaphor for both *non*-exsanguinatory rough play<sup>355</sup> but also an oscillating proximity with dangerous/rebellious<sup>356</sup> lovers reputed to do all *manner* of scandalous, thus problematic, alien things.

All the same, ludo-Gothic BDSM (through the vampire) constitutes the dualistic, dialectical-material opportunity to have illegitimate sex as "sodomy" that, when camped, reverses various bodily fluids' directional flow (and application) in poetic forms; i.e., criminalized, but also sensationalized in the eyes of the wider public, the latter operating in predatory religious-to-capitalistic institutions normally monopolizing heteronormative sex (and tokenized normativities) exclusively through marriage as a dogmatic mode of consumption: PIV sex and legitimized children extending to tokenized enforcers initially sanctioned and later euthanized/closeted by the state punctuating this with that.

Since Shakespeare, at least, the Gothic has provided stages for queer people to exist and express themselves; i.e., has *allowed* to exist *provided* we toe the line and lean into the same-old, incredibly tired and pernicious tropes. Except Gothic

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<sup>355</sup> Whose ostentatious "claiming rituals," like hickeys, show off trophies and general ownership; i.e., intimating on the surface of the skin, thereby showcasing prurient suggestions of naughty sex and general bedroom activities *outside* the bedroom; re: Foucault).

<sup>356</sup> For a nice Sapphic example, consider Chappell Roan's "Red Wine Supernova" (exhibit 41g1a1b, 2023):

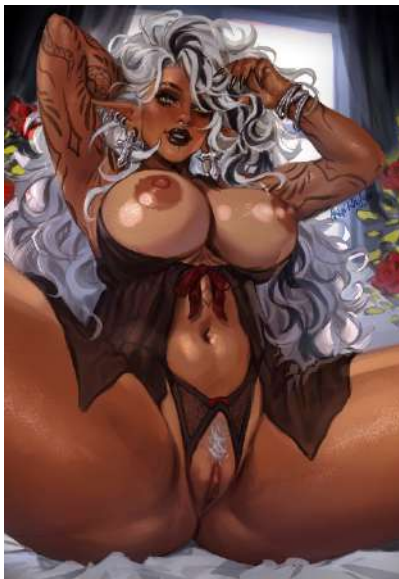
She was a Playboy, Brigitte Bardot  
 She showed me things I didn't know  
 She did it right there, out on the deck  
 Put her canine teeth in the side of my neck ([source](#)).

Communism's camping of sodomy for systemically cathartic purposes remains not only *unsanctioned* on these stages, but anisotropic per unironically and perpetually dirty, torturous and sinful double standards therein; i.e., those adhering to the profit motive consider us an-Com fags (and our cryptonymic "flashing" rituals, below) gross and "impolite" of sex workers (which we often are, for various reasons): acting and sex work generally go hand-in-hand, and combine medieval, barbarian-grade classes of extreme hyperbolic violence since *Titus Andronicus* bleeding into latter-day spiritual successors (e.g., the polite, queer-coded hypocrisies of Hannibal Lector). We're simply showing those policing us their role in things, and where it historically gets them: an early and ignominious grave!



While trying to advertise our own place in the world (and fight for equal rights), those most accused of "sodomy" (re: queers and prostitutes) are likewise frequently accused of going where we're not welcome and doing things to vulnerable parties that generally are committed by *in-group*

members and the state (cis-het men, first and foremost). As histories' oldest scapegoats pawned off through state fabrications (re: the ghost of the counterfeit), the state keeps us on speed dial—to conjure up, then shame and police; i.e., the slut to summon and spurn who is, themselves, prone to using four-letter words and brute "outsider" methods the summoner can finger-wag as needed; e.g., to fuck for its own sake, thereby acknowledging and addressing our lived trauma as a matter of "best revenge." Apart from its endless entertainment value, we also do this to



survive, hence abjure, state-compelled reproduction and dogma, hence head-hunting and cannibalism using sex as a weapon against *us*; i.e., as happening dogmatically for the state while indulging in said state's canonical guilty pleasures: us, and our castled bodies, as abject (whose persecution only reaffirms their belief and bias in things that are holy<sup>357</sup> to them)!

(artist: [Akira Raikou](#))

In response, our critics reliably attack us (and our black mirrors, our bodies) for being inconvenient; they see us as vermin who not only "breed like rats," but spread disease of any kind unto self-righteous

<sup>357</sup> For many workers, "holy" simply refers to popular media, but also popular thinkers in and out of academia; i.e., sacred cows they'll defend to a fault, and attack any "almost holy" iconoclast who dares barbeque them and theirs when fighting for equal rights; e.g., me roasting Marx.

peoples like them afraid of anything and everything beyond what they know as good and proper! We (and our Aegises) become the devil they know—something to pimp, police and persecute, pigs to stick it to per all the usual double standards/entendres. Our various holes become Pandora's Box, which monomythically is the very drug that those alienated from nature seek out *for* the state; i.e., it's what the state sells to them, and which we must subvert during camp using what we got to make *them* uncomfortable: critiquing power where power is found, pulling no punches in the process of reversing abjection (taking holier-than-thou people down a few pegs).

As often as not, we do so by playfully reminding our critics that we exist (on either side of the political isle; e.g., Bad Empanada leaning into weirdly fascist SWERF arguments when discrediting my scholarship to aggrandize his own good works<sup>358</sup>). This occurs both through our humanity *ipso facto*, as well as our fun, indulgent ability to subvert canonical vampire legends in the process; i.e., letting people know that such things *don't* have a set definition, but multiple meanings that double and interact in liminalized debates; e.g., Bay's blood-red lipstick and blushing pussy (which gets like that when they're happy and excited/playing with lovers and friends); re: "when the Man comes around, don't follow him; show him your Aegis!" There's power in sex and gender, bodies and labor, undeath and



vampirism—something the elite tries to control and weaponize for its infinite value, and which we can take and turn back against those who seek to cage and abuse us—to say to them, "No, never! This is my body, not yours, white man!" Suddenly the cryptonymy becomes revolutionary and the nudity is largely the same! Context matters; make it your rebel yell!

(artist: [Bay](#))

Reclaimed by us during liminal expression (the same spaces and surfaces), such devices speak to what is controlled and can liberate itself when subverting

<sup>358</sup> Specifically his quote, "People who talk about sex constantly and like it's their main interest must be dealt with. Make it taboo again" (Persephone van der Waard's "[I, Sex Doctor': About Me, Ludo-Gothic BDSM, and the Work that I Do \(response to @BadEmpanadaLive](#)," (2024). This constitutes unironic, Stalinist/fascist witch hunter rhetoric—the very sort enabled by Marx and Engels against "sodomites" (which is why we must *camp* Marx' ghost; re: "[Making Marx Gay](#)"), but also by functional Puritans against anything different than them; re: closeted Marxist-Leninist agents allergic to literary critique and BDSM. Communism—especially Marxist-Leninism (non-anarchistic forms)—is not immune to such thinking and, per the profit motive, can easily regress and decay towards harmful forms (also, to Bad Empanada: investigating legitimate sex pests [and getting paid for it] does *not* give you the right to call for sex worker pogroms that, let's be honest, are primarily and historically used to target gay people; re: Stalin).

vampire legends for liberatory purposes: freeing the tush, the rack and the box as vampiric in ways that translate to male and intersex biology just as well.

In turn, cosmetic qualities normally demonized for their alien character under capital—the color red, for example—translate sex-positively to healthy appetites and sites of consumption (re: the lips or female genitals, above) tied to modern GNC attempts to enact sodomy of a male, female, or intersex kind; i.e., through reclaimed Gothic poetics during an-Com arguments: the male sodomite and the female Sapphic (the Carmilla, in vampire lesbian<sup>359</sup> narratives) "homewrecker" scarlet woman, canon treating either as a social-sexual disease to punch down against despite being of the world's oldest profession; re: prostitution. The state can *corrupt* vampires, correct vs incorrect love, etc, but cannot monopolize them:



(exhibit 41g1a1b: Left: Rob Halford of Judas Priest; right: [Chappell Roan and Magical Katrina](#). Sex symbols under Capitalism inherit prior divisions and binaries that are codified and resold back into a hungry market. The queer man is often framed as guilty and self-hating, flagellating himself in methods tied both to medieval

penance, worship and religious experience [e.g., "[Donner and Blitzen](#)," 2019]; implements of death and torture under heteronormative power structures [the "leather daddy/gay biker" BDSM schtick]; but also punk and "cruising" bar culture as occupied by outcasts on either side of the political spectrum decaying into undead: Nazis and Communists.

Conversely, the female queer is [from the late 1800s, onwards] called "lesbian" in ways that appeal to the heteronormative gaze: the "lipstick" look. In truth, practicing lipstick lesbians prefer the term "femme" [versus butch], and can use their hypnotic power over cis-het men to generate the effect of a "captive" audience through asexual means; i.e., the men spellbound and ready to fork over their hard-earned cash, but also ready to take in and digest the witchy Sapphic's subversive

<sup>359</sup> Re: Le Fanu; i.e., itself hauntological, insofar as the many queer labels that were (and still are) used to medicalize and alienate GNC people were already tied to popular stories starting to cheaply monetize (the so-called "penny dreadfuls"). Overtime, Foucault notes how concerning criminal sexuality per the homosexual man. His emphasis on sexuality has a certain "pick me/woe-is-me" quality to it, one that ignores the plights of cis women, but also GNC qualities when looking at these earlier times in a purely sexual, thus biological light. Such histories were addressed through his own work as making new scholarship that we've have to critique and synthesize into new, more inclusive forms in the Internet Age (which Volume Three shall focus on).

*allegory using the color red, thus reject the stigmas that reliably lead to the unironic, absurd persecution of her kind: "[She turned me into a newt!](#)"*

*In other words, Roan camps canon and rejects sexist implications that "men and women can't work together because red lipstick equals sexual arousal"—with Jordan Peterson insisting one, that's what it means and only what it means<sup>360</sup>; two, that it is "for men" or concerned with them at all; and three, that if it was, it'd be "unfair."*

*The Muppet from Hell, Peterson's basically "Evil Kermit" chomping on Vincent Price's neck without irony.)*

*Concerning tokenism, the popularized idea of vampires were built on older bigotries that assimilated into concessional forms of equality that, unto themselves, have historically sold out since then (re: second wave feminists and homosexual gay men, but also Marxist-Leninists abstaining from Gothic analysis). Before we proceed onto the close-reads, then, I want to give a brand-new and extended (six-page) note about the duality of vampires, and how such things don't have set definitions when challenging **tokenized** forms:*

*In the spirit of a) returning to this section after several years and having written multiple books since then, b) wanting to be holistic as possible, and c) in light of recent and ongoing abuse carried out against me by other marginalized sex workers (and Marxist-Leninist weird nerds; re: *Bad Empanada*)—i.e., those treating me, a trans woman who does sex work and scholarship—like I don't belong or am somehow an enemy or threat to them and the Cause through the work that I do (re: *Jadis, Jade, and various AFAB sex workers during my own brush with transmisogynistic sex work*)—I wish to reinforce my arguments regarding tokenism, while simultaneously acknowledging my inability to historically document and cover every aspect of vampirism and sodomy I would like (so many fags, so little time)!*

*Sodomy and terror tactics by police forces are historically "messy" insofar as canonical vampirism and its praxial articulation, mid-poiesis, involves many different groups playing the Roman fool ("crossing the Rubicon" with "Caesar"). The following tangent concerns the language's evolution and availability over multiple centuries, previously discussed; concerning its application as a living conversation, we won't have time to completely unpack all of the praxial nuances and amorphous offshoots of tokenism and class betrayal, content vs activism, self-persecution and assorted, cryptomimetic discipline-and-punish-style sell-out antics that frequently go along with vampiric discourse and its overarching histories; i.e., (indented for clarity):*

*from the false-rebellious antics of the American Revolution and its employing of earlier settler-colonial forms that historically decay into radicalized forms thereof (re: fascism and "Rome," but also Marxist-Leninism). Per our*

<sup>360</sup> Re: Vice's "[Jordan Peterson Is Canada's Most Infamous Intellectual](#)" (2018).

*aforementioned chapter, "An Uphill Battle with the Sun in Your Eyes" (from Volume One), the optics of rebellion continually manifest via the state recuperating monstrous language through the bourgeois trifectas, monopolies and qualities of capital/the state; i.e., the self-persecuted and self-policing nature of monsters evolving under Cartesian thought into neoliberal forms, which apart from the standard-issue moderate and reactionary politics of white cis-het men and women, pits different factions and sectarian axes of oppression against each other for the elite—for the "rare and exclusive" chance to put on the costume and be a tokenized king or queen for a day while punching down at their own kind and their allies!*

*I'll try my best to hint at them, here, but you might feel such proceedings to be rather anemic concerning vampires, in that respect.*



(artist: [Katie Silvia](#))

*Perhaps in the future, I shall address those inadequacies in further additional essays about vampires in particular (versus Amazons or zombies, both of which I've written tons about). All I can do for now is recommend "[Back to the Necropolis](#)" (re: Drolta and black Nazi vampires), "[The Monomyth, part zero: Mandy, Homophobia, and the Problem of Futile Revenge](#)," my vampire crash course preceding this section, and the close-reads on [The Darkest Dungeon](#) and [Alice in Borderland](#) after it, which articulate elements of tokenization, appropriation and betrayal we need to wary of, moving forwards; e.g., Olrox and Drolta seem radically different from their source versions, as Drew Mackie writes in "Localization Drift and Hidden History in [Castlevania: Nocturne](#)":*

*It's fitting how Olrox and Drolta, as they exist in [Castlevania: Nocturne](#), ended up so far afield from Count Orlock in [Nosferatu](#) and Elizabeth Bathory's accomplice. In the Netflix series, these two characters couldn't have less to do with the entities that inspired them, and it sort of makes sense that it's near impossible to deduce where they came from just based on their names. They're basically new names for new characters; the source material is basically a footnote that has little bearing on how they function now. That's not a good thing or a bad thing. That's just how language drifts and changes and the concepts it describes evolve as well, to the point that you don't realize that two seemingly unrelated things ever had something in common ([source](#)).*

*They're also characters that walk the tightrope between parody and dogma, description and prescription; e.g., "vampires should have fangs, look classy and act like Nazis"; i.e., with Drolta being a black Nazi and Olrox being the show's token black gay man pushing against Red-Scare Capitalist Realism while siding with the Belmonts, who—let's not forget—are cops!*

*That's problematic all on its own, and we can enjoy the idea of racial inclusion (and hauntological vampire dress sense, above and next page) and still think critically about what's being fed to us that, unto itself, recycles through representation as meriting criticism under Capitalism as much as anything else; i.e., through teams of professional artists (re: Silvia directing a design team, [including Tender Miasma on Tumblr](#)), passed down to affluent content creators that—however stylish, authentic and bold they appear—don't speak for the disparate and dire lived reality of entire populations. Such things are dangerous for any oppressed group to adopt and accept without thought; i.e., just as Glen Coulthard writes in *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (2014) about Indigenous Peoples*

*More specifically, I argue that the expression of Indigenous anticolonial nationalism that emerged during this period forced colonial power to modify itself from a structure that was once primarily reinforced by policies, techniques, and ideologies explicitly oriented around the genocidal exclusion/assimilation double, to one that is now reproduced through a seemingly more conciliatory set of discourses and institutional practices that emphasize our recognition and accommodation. Regardless of this modification, however, the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the state has remained colonial to its foundation ([source](#)).*

*the same idea applies to any group taking their chance at recognition in relation to territories they police through such flexible assimilatory maneuvers expressed in monstrous language; i.e., as a matter of convenience and desperation that, sadly enough, always seems to become, "I deserve this. Haven't I suffered enough?" Indulge to some extent as a matter of enjoyment, but never compromise your proletarian, racial and an-Com GNC values in service to profit and the status quo! Stalin and Mao were cops, therefore just as bad as presidents (and Lenin got shot, meaning rebellion must be a group effort: to not die out or corrupt through singular men at the top falling victim to capital and Imperialism's usual Faustian bargains<sup>361</sup>)!*

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<sup>361</sup> Do you really want to live forever if you have to rape and kill someone (e.g., Griffith from *Berserk*)? Furthermore, do you want to be *remembered* forever as someone who sold out and betrayed your own kind (re: Griffith)? Fuck that! Help people without being a token sellout or "great man of history"! Their fate is always the same—to be camped and subverted by us!

*While liberation and exploitation exist in the same thresholds and on the same surfaces, the moment you start demonstrably playing the Judas/cop without irony or concern for others, that's exactly what you become! In turn, the speculative richness of such glamorous beings and their sodomy dialogs becomes wholly one-note, traitorous; in the wrong hands, a sultry and captivating burlesque like Winding Snake Production's *Cuphead*-homage, cartoon casino of sin, vice, and playtime—["Marmalade Is Missing"](#) (2023)—quickly can become minstrel-show vaudeville using the same language thereof. So play nice and play smart—not for fame and riches! If that's all it takes to win you over, the systems we're challenging need only offer you a job and/or police uniform; i.e., to tokenize in whatever ways controlling opposition demands!*



(artist: [Tsunami Punoni](#))

*Of course, such poetic arguments and aesthetics lack singular set meanings. Nor is there anything wrong (or historically out of place) with camping BDSM by wearing cop uniforms, fetish gear and/or fascist mil spec. But the beat of that same theatrical drum desperately needs to be done intelligently/ironically and without predation; i.e., while articulating class, cultural and race awareness. Otherwise, it's just betrayal and tokenization, repeating the settler argument (re: Fanon) in all the usual middle-class, assimilative, gentrify-and-decay ways in all the usual prison-like venues; i.e., the prisons, casinos, ghettos, madhouses, reservations, pogroms, etc, and a Vegas starlet or prize fighter<sup>362</sup> stripping for the (white cis-het) men who run the buffet, all-you-can-eat-style show (as long as you pay out, of course)!*

*In not just a place, but a culture where anything is for sale, provided you uphold profit, said starlets and gladiators become cops, jesters, and grim reapers one-in-all as part of the same harvest's cities of sin; i.e., unironic vice characters preying on nature-as-monstrous-feminine in all the usual ways, the business of*

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<sup>362</sup> Mike Tyson (the real-life equivalent for *Street Fighter*'s Boxer/Balrog/M. Bison, next page) became world champ when he was *nineteen*. Yes, he was exploited by Don King—a predatory black man promoting boxing's royal division—but all of this happened inside a white structure of power under the settler-colonial model; i.e., the centering of old/big money around the usual benefactors at a systemic level, "white" speaking to the supremacist nature of the binary while, in the same breath, recruiting racially non-white bodies to do their dirty work pursuant to those ends (e.g., African American cops, but also black politicians of either establishment party or binary sex, what-have-you). To that, King managed Tyson after Cus D'amato but D'amato pulled him off the streets specifically to make money off him, then left him as a ward of the system taught to police and fight for said system. It was not a nurturing environment for Tyson, but one designed to exploit him as a black gladiator/racehorse to whip and corral (who, it must be said, still harmed and abused others around him, as a result; re: F.D. Signifier's ["The Complex History of Mike Tyson,"](#) 2022). Any privilege offered unto token cops, performers and/or representatives in general will be used by the state to hammer home concessions and stereotypes these persons will be expected to levy against members of their own kind.



gambling that becomes a side-show attraction or arm candy to put coins into "slots." Where do you think said attitude comes from—that women (or those treated like women) are sex machines you put money into until sex comes out? Videogames and other popular media forms (which generally are designed to serve profit; re: "[Borrowed Robes](#)," 2020).



Regardless of your biology, orientation, gender, ethnicity and/or performative bent, you can't just put on a Nazi uniform and call it "good praxis." Despite the inherent duality in such things, performative context always matters (with any vampiric hybrids, not just afronormative forms), because drag feminism and Afrocentric groups (and any other minority I could list, to be

clear) historically divides and preys on one another through state coercion, but also GNC groups trying to intersectionally consolidate while subsisting under capital's usual coded criminalities, power and bigotries: through ostentatious, utterly fabulous displays of wealth and status that can speak to different sides of the political spectrum using the same linguo-material devices (to be sure, [Tsunami](#) from earlier kills it and none of this is a direct attack on them—just, that any image is praxially and ontologically ambiguous and must be scrutinized per a dialectical-material lens that goes beyond its face value on a larger stage).

To reiterate, there's countless forms of tokenism that emerge, intersect, and diverge across space and time—i.e., through the vampire legend as an assimilation fantasy policing itself and those around it using state-issue DARVO, obscurantism and factionalization (divide and conquer) across different class, racial and cultural lines/axes of oppression and praxial models (re: Marxist-Leninism)—far too many to adequately cover them in a book, let alone all in a section under a hundred pages long!

Pastiche is remediated praxis; per the cryptonymy process, violence and disguise serve state or worker aims, both fighting over the same devices' medieval, queer-coded costumes, masks, appearances, and identities linked to sodomy as a policed label and application: a witch to burn, vampire to stake, and/or gay to bury by those also not fully of the in-group but also not fully of the out-group (re: *Bad Empanada*)! Few people are fully "outside" (a dubious position afforded more to voiceless zombies ignored inside the state of exception; e.g., Kurds, black Africans or Palestinians, etc). We mustn't ignore those who are, but "drink deep of the plasma pool" (as Seth Brundle puts it) to transform and understand their perspective in popular stories and mediums (such as heavy metal, cartoons and monsters, but also things that combine them—like [Nimona](#) does, below); re: the

*pedagogy of the oppressed affording similarity amid difference: humanizing the wretched normally exterminated by police forces!*



*As we proceed through the rest the chapter, then, just bear in mind that "sodomy" is "monstrous-feminine" vis-à-vis nature as preyed upon by the state abusing vampiric/medieval language and its continuation in canonical forms and functions; i.e., as threats of punishment inside a panopticon-style state of exception, which they can enact by turning different*

*groups against each other to serve profit, thus the predation of nature under Capitalist Realism; e.g., cis women punching down against cis gay men through sodomy dialogs, cis gay men and straight women punching down against GNC peoples and sex workers, Marxist-Leninists calling for an-Com activists to be closeted, Stalin-style, and sex workers being coerced—under divisive, prison-like environments—to once more pass the Omelas-style buck onto different groups in-fighting while "passing" to avoid the state's baleful gaze: GNC people turning cannibalistically on themselves through meaningless/groundless distinctions (for the purposes of attacking ourselves) like "trans woman" or "trans man," "enby" or so on.*

*Betrayal is betrayal, regardless of why traitors do it or who they choose to punch down against! Cops are cops and victims are victims during us versus them, insofar as the direction of power (and violence) are concerned during sodomy and seeker dialogs. From the Crusades to Manifest Destiny to Vietnam, the "Russian Vietnam," Operation Iraqi Freedom, Gaza and the Ukraine, then, the state functions on hate, insofar as Pax Americana's Red Scare (and other moral panics) require hate (thus insanity and apathy) to move money through nature, thus achieve profit; i.e., generally this bourgeois feeding operation occurs through monomythic acts of revenge and/or superiority against evil forces, the good side treating nature-as-alien by raping it as white-to-black knights, cops, wizards, what-have-you.*

*Beyond geopolitics, this happens through the usual neoliberal, settler-colonial arguments and neo-Gothic refrains; e.g., Jojo, Castlevania, and Darkstalkers (with Morrigan from the third franchise being a popular choice, below) all canonically pimping the monstrous-feminine through monomythic forms that commodify such violence with various forms of allegory regarding state persecution; i.e., good-and-bad police teams breaching the usual territories on and offstage, in and out of fiction, at home and abroad, in centrist implementations of police violence against abject, monstrous-feminine victims (re: Bad Empanada seeing all peoples who*

*"discuss sex [and sex work] like it's their main interest" as needing to be concentrated and silenced because he can't tell the difference between Ian Kochinski, Contrapoints, Jessie Gender and Persephone van der Waard. Like Stalin and Putin, he's conceding defeat to the state by saying "I'll police gay people and sex workers!" Much of this is through his credentials, casting doubt and aspersions on some of the most marginalized and exploited people on Earth).*



(artist: [Neo Art Core](#))

*There's always an iconoclastic double and ways to strip/decloak vampirically and play with the powers at work under the same paradigm, of course; liberation and exploitation exist in the same shadow zone. Outside of conscious informed liberation, though, profit's usual (and false) empowerment schemes incessantly enroll and employ workers to lash out against strange, sodomic elements; i.e., reifying and exploiting forces of darkness that—designed to promote insecurities that weird canonical nerds can optimistically conjure up—the usual benefactors (white middle-class cis-het men) defeat in trademark fashion. In turn, they optimize these victorious actions in neoliberal simulations of war and rape that continually frame sodomy as something to romance and crush: to unironically enact and relive unhealthy and predatory forms of trauma, vis-à-vis canonical implements of calculated risk. It's bad BDSM, replete with all the usual stereotypes, neo-con police prescriptions, Faustian bargains, Stalinist regressions, and genocidal, Promethean historical-material outcomes.*

*On the receiving end of such public outcry and their half-real forums, someone must always be incorrect, alien, undead; i.e., beyond normal experience, and "asking for it" by practicing "sodomy" under Capitalism and inside the state of exception. The state is the ultimate cop, thus the ultimate wasteful glutton—a giant syringe jammed into nature and sucking her dry! Waste not, want not!*

*Except, the moment a vampire chases down incorrectness and degeneracy in its own circles, confiscating and/or discriminating against them like fascists do, they've decayed their cause (and disco/revolutionary cryptonymic elements) to join the enemy by policing themselves; i.e., for the state, burying the gay for profit, putting on the white mask for genocide (segregation, and censorship), embodying the Man Box for rape per the phallic woman/subjugated Amazon, or the Leninist segregating and alienating the anarchist, the punk decaying into proud-and-prejudiced iterations of itself, etc. It's what the state wants! The more such selling out occurs, the more it (and its violent, dishonest class, cultural and race characters) need to be acknowledged, studied and expressed! Always root for the*

*oppressed! If they don't, give 'em a jolt/love tap but don't enable them (e.g., blood and alcoholism, Animal House [1978]: "[Thanks, I needed that!](#)")! —Perse*

Having provided you with a crash course and history primer, but also follow-up covering both what vampires basically are and their 1970s theoretical revival-as-foundation for *my* coming out of the closet—i.e., as a 21st-century BDSM scholar of undead things—you hopefully have a good grasp of sodomy and playfulness amid vampire poetic's dialectical-material conflicts (re: Marxist-Leninism vs Gothic Communism). You should likewise have some idea of what it's like to put these things together while inside the closet as a result (re: a position of state-compelled ignorance). Now for a bit of fun! We're now going to proceed into close-reads of various hauntologies! Yay!



As stated earlier, these hauntologies yield different flavors; re: of *Alice in Borderland* and *The Darkest Dungeon*. Before moving onto global vampirism with *Alice in Borderland* (left), I'd like to focus on some of these "older," neo-medievalized flavors thereof, highlighting the spectres of queerness and Marxism where

possible. As such, we'll inspect *The Darkest Dungeon*, first; i.e., as a recent example of how popular vampire media "draws" the line at the usual suspect of patriarchal fears: the Archaic Mother depththroating the hero's lance with her bottomless throat. A walking Quetzalcoatl black fortress, a castle-inside-a-castle to storm, she swallows... your soul (and impregnates you: the giver of life *and* death)!



Hidden inside a curious blend of middle-class eroticism, her portrayal of "problematic" love is less about overt queer expression at all and more about whispering dated ideas of "spiritual feeding and transference" through cliché BDSM practices (not identities; canonically the Countless cannot be

queer by virtue of calling herself a lesbian<sup>363</sup> or some other identity, in-game; she has no voice—can only show it laterally through the canonized ritual of drunk blood/other tissues). We'll unpack these ideas separately as we go.

<sup>363</sup> Furthermore, the cis-supremacist lesbian will colonize the struggle during marginalized in-fighting; i.e., where they delegitimize the trans woman as a "man-in-disguise," basically calling them a male rapist or sodomite: a homosexual man in the dated, transphobic language of second wave feminists, TERFS, *et al.* To the TERF, the trans woman is an incorrect form of monstrous-feminine (while fetishizing female revenge in ways that horseshoe fascism, BDSM and Communism).

**Understanding Vampires, part two: "The World Is a Vampire"; or, Bloodsports and Prisons from Old World to New World, Archaic Mothers and the Monomyth to Bloodthirsty Capitalists (feat. *The Darkest Dungeon*, *Alice in Borderland* and *The Matrix*)**

*The time has come to say fair's fair  
To pay the rent, to pay our share  
The time has come, a fact's a fact  
It belongs to them, let's give it back*

—Peter Garrett; "Beds Are Burning"; *Diesel and Dust* (1987)

After the crash course on vampire basics, "Understanding Vampires" part zero and part one considered the history of sodomy, queer love and vampires; i.e., evolving out of the 1970s into what they are today through my (and similar scholars') work, examining how *I* came out of the closet and used such work to stand up for myself and others like me (re: critiquing Marxist-Leninism, among other things).



(artist: Chris Bourassa)

Part two shall now consider—if cursorily—the bloodsport-and-prisons potential of vampires between *The Darkest Dungeon* and *Alice in Borderland*'s Old World and New World approaches (and bring up *The Matrix* and Foucault, where relevant). As well as various bits of parallel media that span the globe, it shall likewise consider how both kinds of stories comment on vampirism as something to simultaneously censor and canonize (as sex [and by extension gender] always are); i.e., as a biologically essential function of capital preying on the world at large—first through the monomyth and then simply as a thoroughly cutthroat prison structure built around its own myopic bloodsports: Vampire Capitalism as something to offer your neck to, *sans* irony or resistance. Often enough, said sports abandon the mythological cosmetic together while still abusing workers, nature and the monstrous-feminine *en masse*; i.e., during all the usual witch-hunt predation occurring under Capitalist Realism as a prison in more ways than one (regardless of sex or gender but classically as female, which we'll focus on here, some of the time)!

*Note: The remaining pieces of this module—"The World Is a Vampire" and "I See Dead People"—are a bit truncated/survey-style, but concern ideas we've talked about elsewhere (e.g., ludology and ludo-Gothic BDSM). I've already explained where you can go to read more vampire pieces by me, in "Understanding Vampires," part one; "I See Dead People" shall do the same with ghosts. —Perse*

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*P.S., Similar to "Leaving the Closet," "The World Is a Vampire" hasn't been divided into smaller divisions (mainly because I want to keep this as short as possible—69 pages again, haha—and if I subdivide everything then I'll naturally want to expand on what I divide); instead, there will be signposts (whose meaning is, again, self-explanatory so I won't summarize them:*

- *What's in a Game? Explaining Bloodsports*
- [\*Old World Horrors: Red Hook's Nazi Vampire Bug Mom\*](#)
- [\*In between Worlds: World Vampirism and Shared Concepts\*](#)
- [\*New World, Old Game: Vampire Capitalism in Bloodsport Gameshows Weaponizing Plato's Cave \(from The Matrix to Alice in Borderland and Squid Game\)\*](#)
- [\*Head Games: Reflecting on Borderland's Prison World in and out of Our Own Lives\*](#)
- [\*Closing Arguments: Understanding and Challenging Vampire Capitalism\*](#)

### **What's in a Game? Explaining Bloodsports**

Before we begin, I feel I should explain what I mean by "bloodsport." The combination of nouns should paint a clear enough picture of the basic idea, but I want to connect the compound to Vampire Capitalism; i.e., as something to think about relative to all the history we've gone over thus far but this time focusing on the feeding mechanism as defined by Marx: "Capital is dead labor, which, vampire-like lives only by sucking living labor." Keeping with my Gothic ludologist origins (my bread and butter), Vampire Capitalism is a kind of predatory game whose Capitalist Realism plays out in bad BDSM as structure; i.e., that isn't fair or mutually consensual, harming instead of hurting! It's a prison (more on this specifically when we look at *Borderland* and *The Matrix*).

In short, while vampirism is an exchange that in theory goes both ways, capital is a bourgeois system of theft that only exists to flow power in one direction—into the state's greedy mouth. In turn, it paralyzes its prey through confused predator/prey mechanisms, generally predicated on us-versus-them illusions, antagonizing nature-as-monstrous-feminine and putting it cheaply to work. This is Vampire Capitalism, which the state achieves through bloodsports; i.e., us versus them flowing power in one direction and criminality unto those it steals from. Some vampirism appears **old-world**, like the gladiator's arena or

Gothic trek into carceral spaces where such feeding is reputed to unfold; some, like corporations, are more updated, recent, and closer to home in **new-world** forms.



The old-world examples are a kind of window dressing concerning old topics that have survived imperfectly into the present. I'd like to provide them first in order to set the table and flirt with different elements of vampirism that, while largely stripped from new-world forms, can still be thought about poetically through metaphorical compare-and-contrast. Both involve games-in-games that we, the audience, look upon and think about as metaphors for capital, hence our own lives. And if you ever think the Queen of Hearts is a little underwhelming as a vampire monarch, remember that her actions on an army of feeders translate easily enough to more bombastically medieval forms: weaponized libido, but also gamer mentality with ignominious outcomes; e.g., a loss of one's humanity by trying "to beat the game" through killing all your friends and associates inside the same prison complex!

Despite the lack of a barbarian aesthetic, new world forms are no less predatory or cruel in their theft, nor complete in developing Capitalism Realism (which is synonymous with all canonical forms discussed herein): concentrate us in easy-to-reach spots, and squeeze the blood out of us (and stab and inject us with all manner of paralytic agents and killing tools, the theft a one-time deal killing new workers over and over regarding an expendable owned population regenerating itself for capital to endlessly steal from/extirpate).



(artist: [Jan Rock](#))

Canon, then, creates cops and pacifying illusions that hold labor in place, letting the state feed through these fang-like traitors—the metaphor less some giant vacuum or syringe and more a root with smaller and smaller branchings-off into the soil, sapping it of its nutrients until everything is depleted. The salubrious effect is illusory—the elite appearing refreshed but in actuality hungrier than ever before. Thus their unquenchable thirst must mount and compound by turning workers against themselves, using labor (whether cop or victim) up like fuel inside person-like spaces (re: Eco, and the heroic cult of death—see: "[A Lesson in Humility](#)" for examples); i.e., as part of nature, labor policing itself in the usual Cartesian ways: the proxy boot of the state on our throats, the monomyth superbeing traitor cowardly adopting a similar do-not-resist, thieving approach that organizations and their hunter-like individuals can enact, and which their prey accept to a Pavlovian degree.

Subjugated Amazons, for example, triangulate against their own, gentrifying and decaying inside prison-like territories; i.e., as might-makes-right executioners axing those even more helpless in exchange for dregs to fuel their own cloaked, status-symbols muscles<sup>364</sup> (above). Sex and force abide by these concepts, as do violence, terror and morphological expression, synthesized per oppositional praxis

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<sup>364</sup> Such muscles historically couldn't be achieved by humans, due to natural limitations. Per the heteronormative order prioritizing science to artificially enhance drug users in the paradigm, capital has pushed steroids long after Eugene Sandow died in order to raise medals and weights in his honor. It's not just a grift, but a neo-Olympus preying disease-like on its own population: the steroids are as bad for the users as those around them. Like any epidemic, steroids are generally enacted by wealthy addicts. Most often these are middle-class men, but really anyone inside the Man Box; re:

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](#): Gen Kanayama and Harrison G. Pope Jr's "History and Epidemiology of Anabolic Androgens in Athletes and Non-athletes," 2017).

In turn, the strong push their prey to the side, the latter living in the shadow of meatheads killing themselves for the same predatory system! Said meatheads become slaves to their own bodies, the muscles needing an unusual amount of blood (thus nutrients) to exist, which users abuse/supplement with chemicals paid for in all the usual sell-your-soul approaches: theft of one's property and rights, but also *other* peoples' as well. All fall victim to the athlete/cop's drug-seeking behavior (e.g., Ronnie Coleman was a cop). *Power* is the drug through class, status and predation, which vampirically manifest and supply through theft *during* class, culture and/or race betrayal!

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during the usual monopolies/canceled futures and our challenging of them (and their accomplices) through the usual aesthetic dualities.



(artist: [Kitty Bit Games](#))

We can camp all of this. The state has vampires, but so do we; i.e., plenty of swole Amazons working for the cause against a shared systemic adversary. Per Matteson, *our* vampirism and ability to manifest and play games through ludo-Gothic BDSM must camp canonical iterations; i.e., the state most of all, including all its heteronormative, *cryptomimetic* bid for power's rape and death fantasies: *our* death and rape at their hands, during the bloodsport/prisons being state dogma we take back (along with the lands these rest on) occupying the same stages and streets, and while addressing the usual police-state feelings of anger and helplessness the monomyth doesn't: "Despite all my rage, I'm still just a rat in a cage!" (Smashing Pumpkin's "[Bullet with Butterfly Wings](#)," 1995). We'll start with the Countess from *The Darkest Dungeon*, then move onto *Alice in Borderland's* prison vampirism.

#### Old World Horrors: Red Hook's Nazi Vampire Bug Mom



(artist: John Craig; [source](#): Daoud Tyler-Ameen's "[Mellon Collie](#) Mystery Girl: The Story Behind an Iconic Album Cover," 2012)

First, the Archaic Mother. Classically of the ancient world in nigh-primordial suggestion, she translates easily enough to something old-world in a quasi-European sense. *The Darkest Dungeon* is a dungeon crawler that deals with the monomyth battling of a hidden, unimaginable evil it calls "ancient," and is preceded by a handful of smaller bosses in a neo-medieval space: swamp, sewers, ruin and seashore (nods to *Innsmouth*).

However, in terms of vampires, the game's primary, *active* example isn't a male mammalian vampire with a castle, but a female insectoid vampire called the Countess. Her role as monstrous-feminine tyrant is one that Cartesian forces seek to dominate in all the usual monomyth ways, thus end the proposed curse For Now™. In effect blaming her for the larger circular decay going on (the state not just dead, but *undead* and eating itself through its sorry bloodline), Red Hook effectively abjects capital onto Medusa-as-blood-drinker and witch—an unimaginable scenario that presents the universe as not ruled by themselves, but

by their signature rival: nature-as-monstrous-feminine—a BDSM, bug-themed Nazi mom feeding on you through her annoyingly mosquito brood.

Endlessly eating its population through "ancient" forms of sacrifice and torture, then, the Countess represents a common old-world problem under Capitalism that has become associated with an ancient imaginary past: malaria (one of the world's oldest diseases, predating *homo sapiens*) alongside sodomy and aristocratic scapegoats that must be tracked down through the chronotope for invading the world of the living and stealing its blood; i.e., police violence committed by different fascist revivals; e.g., plague doctors, Vikings, arbalests, clerics, Crusaders, etc, aping their targets (such as the vampires from *Crimson Court*, but also the gentry from the second game's foetor biome).

Ruthlessly hunted and killed, only the Countess' inevitable, prescribed death can return the drained world "to normal": sucking Medusa dry, Skeksis-style, the elite eating their own (note, the bottling of the witch's blood as a capitalist would, below, and her revenge poisoning the vintage—talk about "hair of the dog"; payback's a bitch)! It's a lie, the power-fantasy moral judgements a summary execution that extends to all such beings policed under capital, in-game and out: the spoils of war to enjoy in ways that *don't* actually empower the conquerors, but pit them against each other on unholy vintages while staving off true death.



This restoration happens *vis-à-vis* a looter's redistribution of the matriarch's stolen blood, an undead, blood-witch "invader" whose death, post-rape, reinstalls a patriarchal bloodline maintained through "cradle robbery" and incest, but also the conqueror's own crisis of masculinity as

threatened by a monstrous-feminine Medusa (what the ancestor calls "a bewitching predator" and "lurking threat" to his own dominance); e.g., playing predatory games out of sheer boredom (according to Red Hook). It's Capitalism-in-small, but also a strawman false flag weaponizing the androgynous queer as phallic female/feminine and vermin-like: the alien queen with a parthenogenic ovipositor (whose eggs enter you from acts of vampiric rape, already fertilized and bursting from you in xenophobic, queerphobic language; re: the xenomorph as a transphobic symbol of rape that, as a spectre of Marx smuggling settler-colonial relics onto refitted vessels, becomes something to reject and attack by the classic detectives and she-warriors of Gothic fiction: white cis-het women, mid-*Amazonomachia*)!

Though this monomyth process of abjection, the Ancestor (a villain for the ages) drives forward on a ceaseless quest for radical order, all while harvesting the fountain of youth from his own subjects by drinking *their* blood out of an imaginary female double, then impaling *them* in brutal displays of indiscriminate slaughter! In

Red Hook's case, the "evil queen," female variant is the hauntological "she-wolf," a kind of "Nazi girl boss, serial killer" whose only purpose is to make the deplorable Ancestor sweat by deceiving *him* in kind: as "a bewitching predator" wearing a pretty human mask (though funnily enough, the black-and-red color scheme is shared by fascists *and* anarcho-Communists). She's Original Sin hauntologized in vampiric form:



(exhibit 41h: Artist, top-left, top-middle and top-right: Chris Bourassa; bottom-left-and-right: unknown.

Top-left: "The world is a vampire." The confusion of the present is par for the course in the Lovecraftian vein, which he himself could no more express than T.S. Eliot's own mythic structure of the same period. For Lovecraft, expressing the horrors of Capitalism became weird, but also informed by the sexist, xenophobic,

monomyth traditions of the West—the ludic outcome seventy-plus years later being a torture loop that never ends, demanding sacrifice without calling the monster what it functionally is: Capitalism. Everything is dislocated and out-of-joint.

Top-middle/top-right-to-bottom strip: As for the Countess' assigned role in this grand scheme, she is a constantly hounded scapegoat—literally hunted down into a womb-like prison space, goaded and kettled/provoked there until she snaps by supercops hunting supervillains exaggerating vampire menace through vampire dogma. Increasingly threatened, she gradually reveals her true form, forced to show the massive, fortress side of herself [a castle in a castle, but also a godly, unattainable giantess' physique] the hunters wish to confirm, then destroy after she bears arms against them [a death sentence]. Canonically zero attempt is made to humanize her or appreciate the xenophilic beauty of the Countess' non-human, insect side; simply put, "the only good bug is a dead bug" and the insect must be crushed under the boots of men [and token women] in service of the state, policing the land as "corrupt," needing to be purified [an argument extending to the blood as sick, diseased, "thirsty": mass hysteria and Satanic Panic].

Eroticized forms exist prolifically within the fanbase, but their poorly-kept secrets tend to adhere to 1970s "Nazi BDSM," sex-equals-pain-rape-and-death clichés geared towards a cis-het male audience [which, again, [Sontag outlined in 1974](#)]: the conventional-looking dominatrix personifying blood, death and the night through a leather-clad, black-and-red pre-fascist/Catholic color scheme, but also the conventional submissive as female, busty and entirely human-looking. Like green and purple, black-and-red is the color of scapegoating someone, but often a desirable/fearsome power tied to death and torture [which extends into fascism and

*Communism forced to occupy the same space under neoliberal canon until said canon defends capital's defense from the fascist against the Communist; e.g., the Red Scare, Giger-themed BDSM in Stranger Things, exhibit 39a2].*

*Exceptions exist [the xenophilic, fan-made "waifu" monster girls, exhibit 5e2] but nevertheless present the vampiric monster girl as someone to subjugate by mostly-male monomyth dominators: a stake through the heart, but also crushed under heel. The Countess is the Bride without a Groom, the waifu you can never wed who will straight-up skull-fuck you for funsies [the death fantasy and the rape fantasy foisted onto male victims as well as female]. That being said, she's a tough customer—someone who, having a normal kawaii form and a "berserk," Numinous kowai form so common to Medusa under reactive abusive, refuses to go gentle into that good night inside her prison-like home:*

*I went into the Countess fight having never fought her, before. Fighting her was quite possibly the most stressful experience in a game infamous for such moments, and I technically won the fight! I did so by the skin of my teeth, but cannot stress how close this fight was: using a group that was equipped to specifically deal with her resulted in the closest match I've ever experienced [[source](#): Persephone van der Waard's "The Countess," 2018].*



*Her heart bleeds because we won't just love and worship her like good little subs! Alas!*

*In short, Red Hook wanted a bloodsport scapegoat who would not only fight back furiously per the monomyth refrain [a digitized version of tabletop games somewhere between Cameron and Tolkien's refrain, but also*

*D&D as predating videogames only to become a kind of nostalgia to return to under neoliberal markets<sup>365</sup>] but absolutely rock your world by fucking back, her own*

<sup>365</sup> From Volume Two, part one:

The boy-gets-girl formula is as old as the monomyth, but translates from *D&D* into videogames via the usual imperial language of sex and force—from *Donkey Kong* (where the hero, Jump Man, is actually the villain) to *Jump King* (2019), where it (and content [not criticism] about it; e.g., Karl Jobst's "[Jump King's Biggest Barrier Was Finally Broken!](#)" 2024) is suitably less ironic or critical of the media circuit it contributes towards. Instead, the developers (and speedrunning symbiosis) bank on the sexist headspace of *Earthworm Jim* (1994) or *Dragon's Lair* (1983) to valorize male action; i.e., to conquer Hell as a place to enter then oust false dark kings or monstrous-feminine beings to restore balance to the "natural order" of things: by alienating and fetishizing nature as something to conquer by virtue of traditional male action (force) under Cartesian thought. It's unironically something that wins the princess as a prize (who apparently is just lying in wait, dressed up like a bimbo waiting to be taken back to the hero's bed to be "lanced") [[source](#)].

*bottomless appetites/female rage a '70s-style black mirror projecting the hero's police extremes back onto them. Sound familiar?)*

The undead and their sleep-like/drugged "necrophilia" varies per type. Vampires fixate on closeted/outed sodomy tied to human essence; i.e., as something to feed on while the victim is asleep and/or hypnotized. The lure goes both ways, the Countess being the chum to bait the sharks, and her being a megalodon to chow down on *them* once in reach; i.e., shark week (itself being a period euphemism among so many others, and the game having mosquitos come once a month [in between bosses] that, like the Countess' terrible menstruation, paradoxically suck blood *into* her vagina-like prison space until she is defeated, permanently ending Miss Flo).

Apart from tokophobia and vaso vagal, vampires in general embody old-world metaphors for torture, rape and addiction, but also non-verbal communication and psychosexual abuse—where canonical examples, with laser beam eyes, can walk into a room and immediately pick out the most vulnerable target (usually a previously abused woman, but also the Ancestor's fragile ego). And vice versa, the "prey animal" senses it too, feeling the terror of earlier abuse/the paradoxical thrill of vaguely being sighted and hunted again inside a public, crowded setting by new sadistic forces: often at a masked ball, that, upon its termination, the hunter will come calling in the dead of night, asking to be let inside (this romance—of Radcliffe's "demon lover" serial killer pastiche—being something we'll unpack even more in Volume three, when we look at criminal hauntologies).

Verbal or not, good communication remains paramount, as failing to interpret the signs/read the room involves unnecessary risk<sup>366</sup> of serious physical and/or mental injury. Non-verbal, involuntary submission generally occurs through the visual trope of "hypnosis"; i.e., of captivity under a dark, menacing force by confusing the freeze mechanism with desire (and vice versa). It's a quick, animal way of communicating through body language in a modern setting, often among strangers in places that already treat women like sex objects; re: masques, onto sports bars (xenophiles and disco bars subverting the entire process, encouraging

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To this, the player in *Crimson Court* gets the girl: raping the whore, monomyth-style; i.e., as a female version of Radcliffe's demon lover, emerging victorious from her womb space!

<sup>366</sup> Jadis, for example, once asked me to slap them in the face. They had taught me to lightly touch the cheek, then release to give them time to anticipate, but not how to deliver the strike itself. So I slapped them in the face as I had been taught by martial artists—not with a light tapping motion to stimulate the nerves, but with full follow-through! The blow rocked them solid, but being solid themselves their head did not move. Thoroughly rattled but unharmed, their eyes opened wide and they looked up at me anxiously. "Honey..." they said, "that's not a slap! I felt my brain move!" To their credit, they patiently explained to me the proper technique. Even so, the initial presumption of knowledge from them, during the accident, led to an ignominious (and frankly hilarious) experience. No harm, no foul!

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"sodomy" as a mutually consensual activity during cruising as a kind of sex-positive vampire's liminal expression), but also videogames and their own sports-like competitions of manufactured scarcity speaking to women's bodies (or anything



comparable as a submissive prize to chase and claim; i.e., people who menstruate, but also feminized AMAB parties): the golden ticket bought at a steep, bloody price!

(artist: [Popogori](#))

This rape fantasy isn't limited to vampires (e.g., the xenophobic princess threatened by the dark, imposing rapist, above), but is taken most literally in vampiric clichés: the swooning damsel being most iconic—at least, in

amatnormative circles—when depicted as a teenage debutante scooting on her butt away from the hungry undead zombie, vampire, and/or sex animal, what-have-you. *Vampires* generally reduce to drooling idiots when sensing a target's vitality as within reach: so close you can taste it; i.e., the blood of the maiden's torn hymen, and conversely the period blood of the same person's hysterical womb "wandering" outside her body to spook and drain superstitious men (who fear Medusa's revenge). When taken to apologetic extremes in any genre, this fantasy of rape is unhealthy and dangerous, but also romanticized; i.e., the sodomy of the male vampire's torturous, unproductive sexual activities that suck and threaten a woman's perceived virtue, but also her sanity and ability to presently resist his coercive charms under ambiguous, cloudy and passionate circumstances. The same idea inverts per female circumcision beheading and bleeding the Countess: a barber's bloodletting (which classically used leeches). It's not medicinal, but punishment dressed up as "medicine" (similar to the medicalizing of queer AMABs).

Regardless of gender or sex, the canonical vampire can never stop, driven by needy compulsion; i.e., like a drug addict seeking a fix. It also operates through a modernized version of the master/slave dynamic in sex-coercive BDSM; i.e., to be under someone's power, surrendering yourself completely to them during situations of ritualized peril and consent-non-consent, which, if done incorrectly or with a bad-faith partner (contract violation) become harmful, even fascist (re: Sontag). We'll examine these forms of "bad play" during the chapter about canonical torture versus exquisite "torture," in the Demon Module; in Volume Three, we'll explore more ways that bad play in the Internet Age makes BDSM self-defeating for both parties (and examine in Chapter Three of that volume how Internet-age bad play can be subverted during appreciative irony and peril during Gothic counterculture art and/or porn-as-art). Just know that while we can certainly camp such sodomy arguments presenting we monstrous-feminine (male, intersex or female) as whorish, unnatural drainers—i.e., rebels reversing the rightful flow of power and fluid—a they present unironically in ways that call for police violence against us!

Vampiric or not, the Gothic trope of the treacherous old Count (which is what the *Ancestor* is, in *Darkest Dungeon*) symbolizes aristocratic property (which women historically went without). While the female vampire frequently boasts these assets, canon tends to depict *her* power as "hag-like" but false: a disastrous claimant covered up by a beautiful-if-perfidious outer guise; i.e., the Archaic Mother dressed up as Jane Austen's scheming Catherine de Bourgh or Chaucer's Wife of Bath—a lady to fear by an increasingly sexist and xenophobic male scientific body!

To it, Cartesian dualism would personify in Abraham Van Helsing and similar "good doctors," conducting superstitious, medicalized witch hunts in the late 19th century onwards—i.e., against "hysterical women" and disease-spreading queer people, below—and for which terrifying horror stories prolifically and spontaneously emerged from then on out. These would remain perpetually concerned with, and fixated on, the safety of maidens, children, and men of reason from a moral panic's



rising crisis/perceived menace; i.e., those threatened, *a priori*, with degeneracy and aristocratic, Jewish, non-European and/or dark queer revenge—itsself abjected unfairly (through *selective* collective punishment) onto the disparate victims of a Cartesian hegemon's mad science. Doing so, said in-groups concocted their own ammunition by which to hunt us down and destroy us: Original Sin, updated to scapegoat Victorian victims for the *fin de siècle*. Canonically essentialized, the ghost of the counterfeit furthered the process of abjection beyond their wildest dreams. *They* would have all the blood (and women) they could possibly want!

(artist: [Von Hauser](#))

To that, not only is the Countess from *The Crimson Court* dressed to kill (so to speak); she's insectoid in a stigmatized sense, negatively tying *her* vampirism to male emasculation according to an "ancient," human past—with the insect tied

to death, decay and rebirth/transformation, but also wasp-like parasitism as fundamental to their life cycle: only the mosquito *female* harvests blood and it's to feed her babies (though in this game, males also feed per the sodomy metaphor), and female wasps need protein to feel their babies, not themselves (re: "[My Quest](#)

[Began with a Riddle': the Caterpillar and the Wasp,"](#) 2024)! The imposturous nature of such beings is anthropomorphized and leveled against state victims, making them of nature-as-monstrous-feminine, thus vengeful.



Not only is her ladyship's hunger in *The Crimson Court* endless, gigantic and endemic to nature; it overlaps with Cartesian anthropomorphism to chimerically express alien sexuality and gender in various, abject, psychosexual metaphors. Under the Capitalocene, these bugbears tend to communicate coercive sexuality as prescriptive; i.e., linked to human biology inside a demonized, dollhouse facsimile, itself an imaginary site of patriarchal trauma pushed onto an abusive, doll-like idea of the Medusa's lair and its occupant: a hive and its queen, Grendel's bug mom.

In ludic terms, the canonical hag is generally the *Metrodvania's* "ultimate boss" (e.g., Mother Brain standing in for Cameron's Alien Queen; i.e., being the original *Metrod's* infamously difficult final boss, [which the Countless lives up to in her own game](#)); her cruel and deliriously hungry scheming historically-materially ties to the "dishonest" acquiring of power through stolen essence: marriage being the acquisition of the only power a woman was allowed to have in ancient times (e.g., Portia from *The Merchant of Venice* dominating her materially poor and inexperienced male husband, after the wedding concludes).

On Red Hook's already-stolen premise—romanticizing death by Snu-Snu—the dastardly Countless drags the player into her prison-like rape castle; i.e., through a kind of Gothic "shotgun wedding" (though, in truth, and oddly enough for a vampire, sending the player invitations, letting you attend the Crimson Court *if you want*, but if you don't, must deal with her annoying suitors/offspring for the rest of the game<sup>367</sup>).

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<sup>367</sup> The ritual's mutual consent, per the ludic contract, further being established by the fact that you first have to buy, download and install the DLC. Countess is a good mommy dom, teaching players to camp her death through ludo-Gothic BDSM (which sadly must occupy her *unironic* death, as well, inside the same thirsty gameworld)!



Presently penned, Red Hook's barbarian iteration of bloody prison sex offers the audience an old-world, less-efficient (brutal and destructive) version of Vampire Capitalism. There *will* be blood, but also much pomp and circumstance; i.e., Queen Maeb's party for the ages! Soon, though, the extravagant novelty wears off—a rival dominatrix power growing stagnant, and all to advertise a stale, *Masque-of-the-Red-Death* bloodline that needs to go in place of another arguably even worse; re: "a roiling apiary where instinct and impulse were indulged with wild abandon"; i.e., while the hero tries to restore the Ancestor's daddy-dom sovereignty in the Countess' stead (despite him being the world's biggest asshole)! It's a land back argument that state forces deny the abused! Keeping with *Aliens*, BDSM becomes the neoliberal catalyst for state revenge; i.e., punching down against Medusa exiting the closet in the 1980s, her so-called "hysteria" a red flag to waive at the bull playing the matador ("Red Bull gives you wings"—red wings, that is).

Our lady, then, lives on borrowed time, her days numbered on the player's calendar as they seek to invade and reclaim her land as "stolen." Hounds on her t(r)ail (and thirsty for menses), whether she wins or the player does, nature takes her ravishing course: the Babylonian's Whore's holes a clever trap to suck power out from her would-be slayers' fang-like lances. For a time, power goes in *both* directions.



(artist: [Eves-eme](#))

While the "attractive" eroticizing of vampirism is more recent (re: Anne Rice), it still happens differently to female vampires than male vampires. Under the Male Gaze, female vampires present in a more "pin-up" style; i.e., fleshy merchandise that becomes increasingly less "white" the more buxom and shapely they are (except for the giant, "Barbie-doll" breasts, often designed by male artists being alienated from the female form; e.g., exhibit 41i, next page).

Resisting the desire to appear conventionally attractive (and docile) is canonically relegated to making the female vampire ugly and fearsome, thus deserving of police violence from patriarchal forces that restore balance; i.e., while scapegoating xenophilic women (and similar activists) as "other" (with ugliness tied to historically stigmatized animals and peoples; re: Pagan women as blood-drinking hags). In short, our lady is transvestigated—hectorated by status-quo witch hunters eager to pull off her fancy clothes and release her seemingly-small-but-actually-giant biology and alien gender! Stripping is not consent!

In doing so, Red Hook has fed into dated, sexist stereotypes, deeply exploiting them in order to fashion their strongest adversary for the player to

overcome; i.e., through sanctioned, xenophobic violence (exhibit 41h). Fruitful diplomacy isn't just abjured; it's entirely unspoken—the myth of the woman who could kill you but doesn't<sup>368</sup> being utterly rejected for the same-old seeking of power entirely for male interests: Patrilineal Descent (which the game ascribes as wholly Promethean). Likewise, elite proponents abject any potential "good play" involved with this female insect demon—invalidating anyone who entertains the idea and stigmatizing "pest" animals useless to Capitalism (save as scapegoats) while simultaneously ignoring the fact that insect transformation isn't universally negative in eco-friendly humanist works; e.g., Ovid's "Metamorphoses" (8 CE) or "Ode to Psyche" (1819) by John Keats.

Clearly there's plenty of room to humanize these witch-like aspects of the vampire. We shall further explore, some of these problems and witch-hunter solutions present "feeding"-/-mimic type monsters; i.e., they blend in (or try to) but also, like the wandering womb and religious-to-secular dogma that comes with it, seem to appear out of nowhere:



(exhibit 41i: Artist, left: Sun Khamunaki; top-right and bottom: [Tigrsasha](#); middle-right: [Banshee Milk](#). Despite their ability to imitate ghosts and lycanthropes with mist and animal forms, vampires default to a human state—generally tied to adult entertainment and the exchange of sex in abject metaphors tied to dated, formerly religious forms of consumption: "[transubstantiation](#)," or the rapturous miracle-torture by eating of Christ's flesh and drinking his blood. In doing so, the cannibal-vampire gains everlasting life; i.e., blood magic permitted unto the faithful, provided they police heretics, witches, what-have-you, as abusing the same devices in a Paganized

form. From sodomy to hysteria, blood libel is blood libel, which moral panics anticipate and immediately attack once out of the bag [which jiggle deliciously when struck by fanning fingers]!

To this, the nature of the blood as something to consume is poetically imprecise but formulaic; i.e., tying to erotic/supernatural, sex-dungeon clichés that stretch hauntologically back to "medieval" times, yet have simultaneously evolved into new xenophilic mimics abjecting the monstrous-feminine as "hysterical," wild, and

<sup>368</sup> I.e., xenophilic BDSM: the strict mommy dom, the xenomorph as deadly even in cutesy forms; re: [Art Legionary's horny and hilarious take on the famous creature](#).

*untame: per canonical BDSM inventions thereof, alienating and fetishizing the process to serve profit in prison-like forms.*

*Depending on the aim of the artist, they could easily swap out blood for darkness, flesh, erotic vitality and/or sheer lifeforce. The paradox of eating "darkness visible" does nothing to dull the frequency or essence of the exchange; that cheapness comes from Vampire Capitalism and its endless, predatory search for profit—i.e., by exploiting workers through their "merchandise" under coercive prison-like conditions. Their bodies incarcerated as xenophobic, but also intimate, psychosexual symbols of violent exchange, any subsequent policing approaches police exploitation through a popular mode of consumption: the erotic and BDSM, medicalized through canon. If the blood and sex are "starved" and cheap, then look to where the nutrients are stored: the coffers of the elite! We're made of the stuff; let's slosh it about, then take and give it back, paying it forward to spite our greedy jailors! May they wither on the vine!*



*All the same, there's a stubbornness to workers that endures in spite of compelled starvation, weaponizing the privatized imagery against elite jailors through liberated sites of sexuality and essence. "Any free woman in an unfree society will be a monster." The Countess canonically dares to hold court in the shadow of the Ancestor's ruined home; i.e., returning from the grave to snack on his descendants when luring them, as poachers chasing big game, tempestuously into her prison-like crypt [["Huge tracks of land!"](#)]. By killing her as we do, xenophilic vampirism reclaims our blood from those who would siphon it out of us and sell it back for a profit: a restaurant transfusion. The Queen is dead; long live the Queen!)*

### In between Worlds: World Vampirism and Shared Concepts

With the Archaic Mother adequately covered, let's move onto world vampirism before segueing into new-world forms (eight pages): from the old world moving *towards* the new across a global network (a common theme in Stoker's novel; i.e., the New World [for *Dracula*, a European Count/"old"<sup>369</sup> money coming to prey on the British petit-bourgeoisie in a post-Industrial England] invaded by evil, bloodsucking symbols of depravity and wandering Jewishness transplanted onto whorish BDSM and queerness). This isn't our close-read for *Borderland*, yet; it's thinking about how old-world themes unanchor and present in a variety of stories, which shall include *that* story when we get to it!



(artist: [Karen B.](#))

As you can imagine, a monster's "type" informs the visuals and their metaphors. Within "pure" vampirism, for example, the feeding ritual is often hypnotizingly beautiful, tied to physically impressive embodiments of current beauty standards granted a hauntological aesthetic: the white bridal lace splashed red with vivid gore (exhibit 41j). Pure or not, the bloody exchange (and its shocking contrast) remains symbolically ambiguous, draining one's overall fluids but also their faculties. Those involved positively *drool* (re: *ahegao*, left) losing control as any good orgasm is quick to do; they drown in desire and suitably hover in place, well-and-truly "ravished." Conversely, the drinker undergoes a similar effect, evoking John Donne's poem, "The Flea," as a xenophilic plea to *spare* the process from harm:

It sucked me first, and now sucks thee,  
 And in this flea our two bloods mingled be  
 [...]  
 Cruel and sudden, hast thou since  
 Purpled thy nail, in blood of innocence?  
 Wherein could this flea guilty be,  
 Except in that drop which it sucked from thee?  
 Yet thou triumph'st, and say'st that thou  
 Find'st not thy self, nor me the weaker now;  
     'Tis true; then learn how false, fears be:  
     Just so much honor, when thou yield'st to me,

<sup>369</sup> An anti-Semitic dogwhistle that survives in modern-day Jewish Conspiracy stories. Incidentally, Rice did not like Stoker and called his novel "the incoherent ramblings of an insane Irishman."

Will waste, as this flea's death took life from thee ([source](#)).

Vampirism, like the poem, is—at least in part—about sex through *mixed*, metaphysical metaphors: the at-times queer draining of or supping on blood, which reliably saps both parties' of their collective wits (and, through Indigenous language, the land they call home of its value being given and exchanged, back and forth); i.e., a repletion of girthy tumescence, whereupon the presumed swelling of ones' sex organs occurs with perhaps more blood than exists inside their own brains, but also blood and effort from *others* during the laborious exchange (the "O face" being associated with a loss of control and deathly rituals of fun reenactment, last image; but also, perhaps, related to the flow of blood [and the righteous blow of an orgasm] to particular parts of the body *besides* the brain).

As you might imagine, this xenophilic, *necro-erotic* engorgement synergizes with body heat; i.e., as something to cater to, regarding parched consumers thirsty for more: *hot blood* for what is normally denied to us/alienated by capital, yet sold in plain sight during a manufactured division enterprising know-how can capitalize on:

Shake down, rock 'em boys, crack that whip strap mean  
Pulse rave, air waves, battle lies in every place we've been  
Stealing your hearts all across the land  
Hot blood doing good, we're going to load you with our brand (Judas Priest's "[Delivering the Goods](#)," 1979).

It's not just a bloodsport, but a trade in plasma that's anything but pious! On the cusp of greatness, then so many sell out (as Halford and company did, in the 1980s). Salvation's sale of indulgences first revive, then paywall paradise as usual.

Occurring between the sacred and the profane, then, neoliberal shock therapy chills the blood; i.e., sells its stolen value back as "warmth," but bottled from the dead harvested *while* alive. As dimorphized similar to "male/masc" vs "female/femme," open vs closed speaks to an open-heart procedure leaving us terminally exposed and dependent on state monopolies and falsehoods. Under those abysmal conditions, Foucault's productive arguments suddenly return to the fore: of psychosexual discourse, his prison arguments warning of a terrible division, the two parting during a 19th century rise of the bourgeoisie that moved in and never left! With them, prisons (and their discipline-and-punish approach to labor) would explode in a capitalist sense. The boys were back in town!

To it, men own things and control them/relegate them to "in the home" and the dreaded bedroom as prison-like; women are "kept" inside "for their own good," whereupon they are raped without joy or irony. Those who violate this sacred temple doctrine and its multitudinous performative constraints are violated themselves through the argument of righteous punishment, which project onto

fleshy and thirsty carnivals. These, in turn, can be camped, but always exist in the shadow of prison, thus police violence. In my own words; re "Why I Submit"):

I digress. Non-traditional alternatives should also be made available to the public. This includes the aforementioned cat and fem boys, but also the male variant of a Gothic heroine. "The greatest anxiety for the woman reader was the Gothic heroine's lack of agency," [writes Avril Horner](#). Postmodernity makes the role performative, letting cis women/trans persons consent to submission. They can voluntarily yield to greater forces. And from cradle to grave, I can be the Gothic heroine too—Samus, or even subbier forms [depending on who I'm with]. The same phenomenon is happening with men everywhere. Not just male members of the Lady Dimitrescu fan club. [From all walks of life](#), men are escaping outmoded traditions—expressing themselves freely in public. This growing freedom allows for the inclusion of feminine boys in a wider sphere. Not just in public, but through content creation as a form of public expression. Now more than ever, [male actors and models](#) can perform Gothic scenarios; this includes being "in danger" in a traditionally "feminine" way (sadly to wear "feminine" clothes can very easily make someone a target):



Unfortunately there is a real element of persecutory danger to this performance. Not because the performers are being impudent, but because sexist, fearful men will attack them. Note [Cursed Arachnid](#) (the e-boy to the right); their position and clothing are "feminine," and their shirt reads the words "orgasm denial."

There's an element of sexual tension combined with the uncanny—the familiar and the foreign, but also the taboo. When I was younger, my uncle had a shelf of books in his living room. One row featured *Hot Blood*, [a \[1990s\] horror erotica series by Jeff Gelb and Michael Garrett](#). I was fascinated. Time passed, and eventually I watched *Bible Black*, a hentai series, in secret. A scene stuck out to me: a man under a female witch's power. "Let me cum!" he begged, his face twisting horribly as she rode him. [The voice acting is absolutely awful](#), but the concept remains theoretically attractive. Not just orgasm denial, but naughty witchcraft as a whole: The whole show was soaked in black magic, every scene a dark ritual that explores the forbidden and the profane [including the spilling of blood during sex] ([source](#)).

Through sodomy arguments that extend to morphological expression, camp seeks to subvert market forces and material argumentation during "violent" counterterror dialogs fitted with BDSM aesthetics ("ribbed for her pleasure" gimp suits scaring the straights with genderqueer metamorphosis liked, by those parties, to AIDS). Unable to think clearly during forbidden, arguably scandalous rituals, sodomy practitioners become thoroughly drunk; i.e., inundated with intense, "religious" sensations of ritualized "doom": erogenous pleasure and non-harmful pain spiting a Protestant ethic (and all its bugbears/double standards). The whore is always asleep, but threatening to wake up again, still wearing the maiden's ill-fitting dress:



(artist: [Kabhaal TV](#))

Be this sanguine xenophilia purely vampiric or combined chimerically with other monstrous elements, the modularity of undead feeding at night—during the troubled sleep of nightmares/wet dreams<sup>370</sup>— become something to invade conservative hauntologies with: through queer nostalgia as demonized by snooty xenophobes (e.g., [Beltane](#) or Walpurgisnacht as something to revive during oppositional struggle; i.e., as a kind of lost history that must be reimaged by those who survive, often through xenophilic music, performance art, and/or Gothic media bringing us closer to reality beyond capital imitations—Trent Reznor, next page).

Pain and sex can certainly go hand-in-hand, but they needn't automatically. Jadis, for example, loved pain as a non-sexual expression of taboo pleasure that rankled conservative prudes. During especially intense BDSM sessions, they reputedly became "dead to the world." In truth, they were experiencing a medical phenomenon called the vaso vagal syncope response. At first glance, it's not so different from an orgasm (or vampiric hypnosis). Likewise, it bears the symptoms of extreme forms of exertion not immediately dissimilar from childbirth or combat; it's also caused near-instantly by certain visual triggers, including the sight of blood and the threat of unwanted harmful penetration<sup>371</sup>.

<sup>370</sup> The release of hormones before, during and after a period starts and ends can affect not just the haver's dreams, but their waking from them in terror and/or lust; re: canonically speaking, the having of naughty dreams visited upon someone by an incubus or succubus. Also sometimes, periods can make people hornier (and again, orgasms can sometimes help with period cramps, though these vary drastically per individual and are also poorly studied. Such ignorance owes to itself to capital, it being far easier for elite forces to dogmatize female biology than to understand it; i.e., humanizing "vampires" so goes *against* the profit motive).

<sup>371</sup> A common female defense mechanism is "vaginismus"; i.e., where the vagina—rather than swell from blood due to an erogenous response—will suddenly and violently contract on its own. Generally due to lived trauma and/or tokophobia, said mechanism forces the people involved to not only improvise but—keeping with the insect breeding metaphor—canonically enact a practice known as "traumatic penetration"; re: the knife dick, but also fangs and other stabby bits engaging in abject

I can vouch for this, watching Jadis—normally made of iron—nearly faint during my vasectomy procedure: not from the surgery itself, but from seeing my exposed blood as the doctor operated on me!

Likewise, while my own memories about Jadis—requesting that I hurt them during BDSM—have soured considerably, the initial instruction and their body's reaction was, and is, fascinating to me from a medievalist standpoint; i.e., in terms of how different it was from conventional stereotypes about inflicting and receiving pain through "medieval" torture. Indeed, it was closer to a convulsionnaire, inflicting wounds to cause rapture, thus ease trauma-induced torment and PTSD from modern life under Vampire Capitalism!

As such, Jadis could take physical pain far more than I could dish it out (unless my technique was bad, in which case they would correct my form). Said pain suggested that the quality of the trauma Jadis endured—surviving their own abusive mother—was equally extreme. In part, controlled pain was their antidote, long after she was dead and buried; but they always took it out on me. To force them to confront their own love-bombing tactics (they liked to wine and dine me, in particular), made Jadis feel uncomfortable; i.e., a bit like showing a vampire its own reflection, something always in the way and not entirely present or sensible: the female/queer predator's lack of sensation, of self, *save* when eating someone! Jadis couldn't *stand* the thought of that; it froze them in place—knowing they had to take unconditionally in order to feel complete/sated, acting just like their



imposturous mother had done with their own confused pleasure/pain and predator/prey mechanisms!

([source](#): *Nine Inch Nails' "Closer," 1994*)

Clearly the process of exacting pain/extracting essence or performative trauma can be positive or

negative, but nevertheless raises vital questions when viewed; re: my twin brother and I asking the heart-and-lung-machine operator when we were little, "How did they get blood out of the cow?" / "Did it hurt the cow?" / "Where's the cow now?" Furthermore, the socio-ludic mixing of a given feeder and those fed upon by them happens relative to a given slaughterhouse space, the exact substance(s) being exchanged varying tremendously. "Torture" (with or without quotes) becomes

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sexual reproduction and BDSM: paternal sodomy and brood-style mothering simply punching through the skin into the bloodstream and/or body cavity (re: the xenomorph, above)!

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)



grotesque or gourmet, concerning vampires. Such blood libel concerns purity of the blood/holy spirit as feeding into capital's usual Cartesian dualism, and dualities of oppositional praxis contest that as a means of camping canon.

Said camp includes xenophilic BDSM and calculated risk. As a part of the praxial equation, its carceral vampirism is forever ongoing but also in conflict with xenophobic interpretations' fear and fascination unfolding in conservative, even fascist, "old-world" language; i.e., whose power-and-death, prison-like aesthetic can be camped, occupied and played with as needed:



(exhibit 41j: Model and artist, middle-to-right: [Blxxd Bunny](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#).)

Similar to blood, meaning and knowledge are stored in music concerning vampires [top-left: [Burning Witches' The Dark Tower](#), 2023]. Such things [and their fashion-adjacent aesthetics] are dualistic, allowing for all manner of political expression; e.g., Brutus Bathory's left-leaning approach to Satanism in metal, but also political critiques on heavy metal sell-outs ["[The Ideology of Dave Mustaine](#)," 2024] and Satanic Panic in the genre's broader history ["[How the Right 'Stole' Metal](#)," 2024].

The battle for the Gothic's soul—its power over people's hearts and minds—is eternal!

Canonical vampire stories concern the marital rites of women [queer or not] as "enshrined" under hypermasculine power's usual operatic spaces [the queer-penned Gothic castle taken by cis-het women and exploited; re: Radcliffe]. Trapped within carceral tombs that highlight the woman's utter lack of rights, the narrative operates in service of a vice-driven, powerful husband lording over his [usually stolen] wife: Count Dracula; i.e., who the heroic, good-guy Belmonts routinely hunt

to extinction: scapegoating the fash-coded interloper as a presence of routine corruption versus acknowledging the state as forever in crisis by design. From Prometheus to Pygmalion to Persephone, various metaphors are tied to the blood as something to boil, curdle or chill inside the prison; but as a poetic expression of emotions, sexuality and health, vampirism echoes a special kind of trauma locked away inside castles and other Gothic structure: ludo-Gothic BDSM, or the ability to play out our "death" for different reasons. These violent, dated homes anchor the brutal, erotic exchange of human blood [and its medieval spillage] inside spaces loaded with haunting reminders of actual male tyrants [and female ghosts]: their legendary cruelty and depraved appetites, which establish dubiously "pure" bloodlines through force and lust.



[artist: [Karen B.](#)]

Ignoring any campy version's cryptonymically [show-and-hide] aping of the Catholic miracle—doing so to profane and upend profit in BDSM language's black-and-red, power-and-death bedroom games, its cathartically unequal power exchanges—the canonical vampire's imperative carries these methods beyond the castle walls in bad faith; i.e., to unironically imprison their victims with, or steal unwilling brides from the modern world back into the barbaric past dressed up as the victims the state normally polices [evil women and gay people]—all to be their whores, profaning the sacrament of nuclear families and institutional marriage

[re: DARVO arguments and obscurantism, whores and maidens distractions and dogwhistles]!

As the name suggests, then, Vampire Capitalism capitalizes on this abjection, circulating the myopia as an unbroken, imaginary ring—a prison of the mind staring prey-like at whorish bicycle face and sodomite alike. Real struggles are simultaneously trivialized and courted with false predatory doubles selling rape by the bottle: "First one's free!" and addicts commonly tokenize [many (white, cis-het) TERFs styling themselves witches and vampires to keep the poetry away from those they demonize and prey on, themselves; re: the equality of convenience]. Of course, this exploitation applies differently to different marginalized groups [no shit]. From a Western standpoint, the theft of the [white cis-het] woman "wastes" her reproductive potential, ruining familial potency and blood "purity"; i.e., by trading unfairly and hastily for the body of the woman as a vessel of quick, cheap

*pleasure. In turn, her precious blood becomes something to selfishly horde and pimp out in neoliberal sales of indulgence. Imprisoned underground inside the endless, murky dungeons, a vampire's servants are kept "strung out," dependent on the master's stores to survive [often their own finite supply]. These "brides" do not normally bear children through PIV sex; they receive human blood as a transference of raw ecstasy and violence that subjugates them; i.e., turning them undead through their own stolen labor given back to them, then requiring them to feed on living labor to continue labor's imprisonment [whose own servants tend to be weaker and less aware than they are—still vampiric, but also subserviently zombie-like: a pyramid-shaped hierarchy of vampires feeding on those under them and passing the blood upstream].*



[artist: [Ickpot](#)]

*Vampire Capitalism, in this canonical vein, is a process of subjugation tied to blood tithes and fluid exchange—the wanton, undead concubines operating as drugged sexual slaves who not only survive considerable trauma, but transform into thoroughly jaded, brainwashed/closed killers acclimated to dated expressions and rituals of power inside Gothic spaces; e.g., Cammy White cloned from M. Bison, above; i.e., the regressive, monstrous-feminine Brides of Dracula—a canonical appropriation of sodomy to enforce the status quo: a blood maggot inside a "demon lover" ghost of the counterfeit who commits blood libel for their daddy dom demanding his nightly tithes! Thus capital blames women, witches and faggots instead of itself, all while stringing and pimping them out.)*

The classic vampire from Western Europe, for instance, typically champions fearsome, xenophobic legends about the medieval, pre-Enlightened past as continuously reimagined; e.g., Vlad the Impaler as a mighty "Eastern" threat (the pre-fascist Nordic, German, or so-called "Goth"). As time carried on, it was out with the old and in with the new, but various things historically-materially stayed and can thusly be reinserted into the public's imagination (their willing throats): impalement, crucifixes, the drinking of blood, garlic, etc. Geared towards a shifting idea of the past and its materials, these generational reimaginings express corruption less of the blood in a literal sense, and more as "data" carrying cultural freight to enact blood libel with; i.e., superstitiously fearful beliefs about sexual reproduction tied to sanguine, Jewish calumnies, sodomy rhetoric, but also Catholicized metaphors and that religion's symbolism concerning the soul: gilded icons, scarlet clothes, and ritualized exchange of essence (often through fluids) tied to a dated, post-Schism embodiment of *Protestant* superstition demonizing all of the above to pit different parties against each other in a global market.

Simply put, blood outside the human body has become canonically abject stemming from a *formerly* sacred ritual turned *into* blood libel: Catholicism and *transubstantiation* married to BDSM, post-1970s cryptofascism and neoliberal Red Scare. Currently trapped between the holy and profane, its indecent, gruesome, "almost holy" exposure communicates a special set of phobias and bias when extracted: the essence of vitality tied to dated, superstitious rituals and demonized religion, but also signs of violent, reactionary crime, ill omens, and numerous diseases caused by capital that capital projects onto its own victims inside its prison-like places, peoples and performances.

For instance, syphilis and rabies are linked to nocturnal animals, but also sinful activities, wherein various essential fluids are messily exchanged between lucid-if-addicted human parties: AIDS and queerness (the bat overlapping with werewolves<sup>372</sup>, in that respect; e.g., [J.K. Rowling's vindictive use of the werewolf as a latter-day conservative metaphor for AIDS](#) [Salon, 2016] that blames queer people—but specifically homosexual men—for their "own" disease). Just as witch hunts aren't restricted to a particular time or place (re: Federici, "[Hot Allostatic Load](#)"), to be queer is to be closeted, accused, quarantined, rumored, feared and fetishized: diseased whores and dandies, wolfmen, and vampires serving the elite's punitive, fear-fascination function among the European, British and American middle class.

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<sup>372</sup> With vampires classically able to transform into either animal, but also clouds of mist—all anti-Semitic symbols linking vampires to rodents, lupine creatures and other such fearsome-to-victim creatures of the night, but also witches and goblins (who, again, serve a different bigoted form if identical purpose). In BDSM terms, though, vampires can change shape in ways conducive to size difference—the bat quite small, and wolves (especially werewolves) known for their immense size and ability to overpower their prey! Stigmas inform and assist in predation per the profit motive; i.e., as carceral and fake, but no less effective on the faithful Straights policing us in blind faith pursuant to assimilate, thus socio-material elevation!



([source](#): Joshua Anderson's "Where is the Power of the Werewolf?")

To that, terror literature and heteronormativity's canonical, hauntologically criminalized treatment of the vampire—as caged, vulgar innuendo (e.g., "staking" as a visually violent and excessively medieval form of rape and sexualized negative reinforcement; i.e., connected to Vlad the Impaler and similar historically hypermasculine, pre-fascist strongmen)—is fundamentally at odds with latter-day queer interpretations of vampirism celebrating the same metaphors for sex-positive reasons (often ridiculed by the status quo; e.g., Kevin Nealon complaining about "gay bats" to John Travolta, in the 1994 "[Gay Dracula skit](#)" on *SNL*). Gothic Communism's use of ironic xenophilia touches upon the increasingly homophobic, "bury your gays" moral panic of vampire canon's faithful, cis-het queer-curious to queer-hostile consumers. As a kind of vampire slander leveled against gay people, blood-libel xenophobia sounds absurd to persons who know conservatives aren't as prudish as they like to style themselves; shlock, for these reasons, camps canon to poke fun at conservative superstitions acting stupidly xenophobic, but whose guilty pleasures are nevertheless taken dead seriously by these same witch hunters! The heat-oppressed brain has a fever—one whose "prescription" to their boiling blood isn't more cowbell; it's blood libel!

Thus bigotry begets more bigotry as a feeding frenzy. Having evolved into their current mindset of reimagined myths, these reactionary zealots are responding to what Dale Townshend once described to me as the following transition come and gone: "'The love that dare not speak its name' had, by the time Stoker wrote *Dracula*, become 'the love that wouldn't shut up!'" It's not hard to throw stones in glass houses if the state shelters you; i.e., from the subsequent nights of the long knives and broken glass. Men like Matt Walsh and others are abusing the language of witch hunts to validate and justify pogroms against state victims... which they then greedily mop up the spilled blood, spreading the sickness of society in all directions, during Vampire Capitalism. Workers round up so-called "degenerates," then police the ghettos (and have those ghettos self-police in turn).

Queerness is generally associated with forms of sexuality that don't produce babies—anal (and the blood that can result from that) but also sex during menstruation, which Jadis lovingly called "murder dick." Conversely but with the same "painting" materials, blood is canonically linked to the torn hymen and subsequent staining of the snow-white gown (and skin, marriage consummation linens, etc) with fresh virgin blood (often a lie, given how rare virgins historically are). From this mendacious perspective, any canonical phobias tied to vampire blood openly condemn the defilers of white virgins during *extramarital* affairs; i.e., the myth of the black rapist/male sodomite from the out-group, while in-group

double standards simultaneously covet white women as helpless, dumbfounded property (the "think of the women and children" subterfuge) that, themselves, "break down" whorishly once a month:



(exhibit 41k: Artist: Nolwen Cifuentes, of whom Salty World writes, "Period sex happens every single day, all over the planet, but the subject still remains taboo. Sure, there are private conversations between us, we share our tips and experiences, but we never SEE other people having period sex, and certainly not queer couples—not in porn, not in women's media—

never" [[source](#): "Taboo Smashing Period Sex Portraits," 2023]. In canonical narratives, the period symbolizes the escaping of the wandering womb as a kind of exsanguinating female madness; i.e., hysteria, except increasingly queer iterations are abjected into forbidden, murderous, womb-like spaces occupied by dark, phallic women; e.g., the xenomorph as a surreal, Gothically liminal egregore, but also a vampire par excellence!

A point of contention among iconoclasts is that period sex is palliative re: in that it can ease the pain of periods cramps. If one's cramps are so severe that they cannot function, then that is not healthy! And yet, popular myths to the contrary normalize this. Women are expected to suffer in silence and not complain [which intersects with other forms of abuse that they also shoulder in domestic life]. Simply put, God wills it, which translates to Vampire Capitalism, easily enough.)

As such, the messiness of a particular feeding agent and vector denotes various intersections presented as "past." With female vampires, the phase "bloody mess" can symbolize menstruation, but also intensely pleasurable sex *during* menstruation (or any of the above topics) as dualistically xenophilic. Such activities often collide with rape, hysteria, nymphomania, and kinky BDSM rituals afforded a transient past traded on a global level; e.g., Anne Rice's nomadic vampires, uprooted from *their* "ancient" homelands and delivering forbidden pleasures to queer audiences, of course, but also a predatory white, cis-het female audience that cares little for us fags (with queer people being the ideal and arguably intended readers, by Rice).

So, while it's true that blood can be incredibly subversive under the right conditions, playing with blood is something that *profanes* from the sacred, canonical perspective that many women are subjected to. Blood—but especially female blood—becomes a sticking point regarding "civilized," xenophobic attitudes about the barbaric past: something to exchange through violent, corrupt sexualities that have gradually replaced "healthy" reproduction; i.e., the hoarding of virgin human blood like a king his pile of gold. They love and hate it as a matter of forbidden,

wicked consumption they can then police to serve profit; i.e., in prison-like hauntologies brought into the new old out from the old.

This concludes the old-world approach to vampirism under capital, as well as world vampirism leading to a new-world approach. I now want to consider this per *Alice in Borderland* as new-world Vampire Capitalism; i.e., while looking at *The Matrix* and the role of prisons/police violence in such concentric illusory systems!

Except, this *also* brings us to something stated at the start of "They Hunger": our original manuscript's examination of undead egregores and their feeding habits. This originally involved three **main exhibits** (two in this chapter and the third in the following chapter about composite bodies, inside the Demon Module); re:

- ideal hermeneutic case study (feat. vampires): the Gothic, Marxism, queer studies and ludology (now "The World Is a Vampire")
- *cryptomimesis*; i.e., liminal riffing and ghostly lineages (feat. ghosts)
- composite bodies/collages (feat. the Bride of Frankenstein)

My goal in preparing them as I did, back then, was to help workers reunite with their labor as undead, encouraging them to think differently about the assorted egregores already present in Gothic art; i.e., as a creative, fluid, sex-positive mode of genderqueer thought and existence that offers itself up in vivid, accessible ways. To be holistic and well-rounded (to best combat capital as a worldwide and multimedia threat), I want to perverse this model when looking at new-world examples of Vampire Capitalism after having examined old-world examples.

We'll start within the ideal case study for liminal expression under Gothic Communism; i.e., one that covers the entire Gothic Communistic Hermeneutic Quadfecta (re: gender and Gothic studies, ludology and Marxism): *Alice in Borderland*, for vampires (and *The Matrix*, too). Its vampirism pointedly describes the modern world (specifically Japan) in crisis through harmful games controlled by the elite. Make no mistake, though, *Borderland* remains a show with a queen and a castle. The Queen of Hearts is a charming adversary and dressed to kill. She also prides herself as above everything while the bloodsport rages on; while society decays into a techno-medieval hellscape, she gets her daily dose of blood!

Except, the bourgeoisie's own charm is very much brute force, enabled by their position as seductive in a one-note sense; i.e., a doll-eyed shark rigging the game to get their daily dose of that drug-like blood (the only time they feel alive): addicts of misery (which is what their content, their brand, is). Raw sodomy arguments are swapped out for basic, blunt-force game rules; everything is uncannily cute or ordinary in appearance, the state a vampire of the New World, corporatized without the tell-tale cartoon fangs and Gothic pastiche seen in *The Darkest Dungeon*. Instead, coercive BDSM is present as a matter of infernal slave contracts, prisons and cops, infernal concentric patterns, games-inside-games, the owners forcing people to rape and kill each other for their sadistic, *heartless*

amusement; i.e., Smashing Pumpkin's "super destroyers, sent to drain" and leaving those they abuse feeling trapped in their maze-like illusions. Similar to Top Dollar, it's the only time when those like the Queen are happy—to shout, "Off with their heads!" and relish in the crucifixion-style bedlam it causes. "When in Rome..."

*Note: As we proceed, "blood" is an abstraction for predation/theft; i.e., anything that capital (dead labor) steals from workers (living labor) to enrich the elite at our expense, and which we dualistically take back by any and all anisotropic means (reversing polarity and therefore abjection according to blood flow). Prisons, then, take and take, raping prison populations in spaces built for profit; i.e., exploitation in ways patently meant to cause harm in order to achieve profit.*

*Keeping with our definition, "rape"—"to disempower someone or somewhere—a person, culture, or place—in order to harm them,' generally through fetishizing and alienizing acts or circumstances/socio-material conditions that target the mind, body and/or spirit" ([source](#): "A Note about Rape," 2024)—is synonymous with "theft," is synonymous with "blood" according to the usual flow of power and resources towards the state through prison-like structures/metastates during Vampire Capitalism. The state only ever takes, and never gives back; i.e., always up, never down, on a one-way track to the elite. By comparison, Gothic Communism's ludo-Gothic BDSM and proletarian vampirism give and receive per exchange—often during uneven-but-negotiated arrangements that (and here's a small sex worker secret) take power by giving up a bit of something for something. Sex or unequal power (among other things) are traded by both parties, achieving mutual catharsis during a pedagogy of the oppressed.*



*I've done my best to explain what follows in a linear fashion; but also readily admit and accept that non-linearity and post hoc assembly is the nature of good, intelligent play during holistic analysis. Like a bad puzzle, capital trains people to work within prison-like confinement; i.e., rats in a maze, Pavlov's dogs taught to bite/see everything as a threat, cats eating mice, etc. Gothic (gay-anarcho)*

*Communists deconstruct and reconstruct these massive, obfuscating environments as messily as needed—doing so out of old parts to redistribute power horizontally among all workers; but until then, they occupy the same maze capital's canonical vampires and their us-versus-them, cops-and-victims, cat-and-mouse rhetoric do. The warfare is inherently asymmetrical and, as you've probably noted, completely unfair! That's nation-states for you! It's an uphill battle with the sun in your eyes!*

*As I will try to explain in this section, then, any attempt by workers to subvert Vampire Capitalism and its negative, one-sided effects happens with the*



same vampiric language and aesthetics used by state forces; i.e., inside the same shadow space/prison areas during ludo-Gothic BDSM; re: where the playfulness known to videogames commonly allows 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). —Perse

**New World, Old Game: Vampire Capitalism in Bloodsport Gameshows Weaponizing Plato's Cave (from *The Matrix* to *Alice in Borderland* and *Squid Game*)**



Per the bloodsport, then, these modern-day monarchs' greatest weapon is, much like the Caesars of old, bread-and-circus-style games and the prison-like illusion of power relaid through said games; re: Plato's allegory of the cave (c. 380 BC) actually predating the Roman empire; i.e., his own works,

*Republic*, coinciding with the Roman Republic, which eventually decayed into an imperial version of its former self (27 BC). To summarize Plato, he warned against "the cave" as a prison of the mind; i.e., wherein higher forms of reality existed outside the cave in a place called the Realm of the Forms, but for which ordinary people (not controlling the illusions) would never be able to access (chained, as they were, to stare at the cave wall's shadow plays unfolding in front of them). Such machinations, despite their age (and Plato's literal, metaphysical treatment of them), neatly summarize bourgeois power abuses like those seen in *Borderland*, executed by the Queen of Hearts. Power flows in one direction, and it is up.

Furthermore, such bloodsports have increasingly become a parasocial exchange between different parasites, the master coding her servants to play along through capital (moving blood money through nature). The disco is less "in disguise," then, and more a dogwhistle that canonizes postpunk forms:

I never said I wasn't gonna tell nobody  
 No, baby  
 But this good lovin' I can't keep it to myself  
 Oh, no  
 When we're together it's like hot coals in a fire  
 Hot, baby  
 My body's burnin' so come on heed my desire  
 Come on, come on

Two of hearts  
 Two hearts that beat as one

Two of hearts

I need you, I need you (Stacey Q's "[Two of Hearts](#)," 1987).



It's FOMO from Hell—a "buy now!" con that swells into its own mania/mad drip (also, absolutely no disrespect to Stacey Q—Zeuhl loved her music and passed the infectious beat along to little ol' me—just that, the elite cultivate such false sensations to starve people of their own power and then put them alongside it. Masters of propaganda, the elite skillfully deprive and bombard us; i.e., with false connections we must take back when using the same language: stealing our hearts back, thus our labor and the land, vampirism and groovy music from manipulative dickwads; re: Zeuhl abusing said music, themselves, to get what they wanted from me before tossing me aside).

Except, the games the bourgeoisie offer have been updated and unfold accordingly under capital, which very much *didn't* exist during the Roman empire! In turn, these gamemasters give us the "choice" to play their game as a system; i.e., capital feeding on players through Faustian contracts that always play out through bad BDSM and harmful vampirism. Yes, their games have rules and seemingly can be lost or won. But despite how games in general can be [positive-sum](#) (source: Britannica), zero-sum and negative-sum (win/win, win/lose, lose/lose), capital only allows for zero-sum games benefitting themselves. Profit makes them cum, greedily drinking our blood and giving nothing back; our best revenge is to survive and deny them such lopsided domination now and in the future—by putting the gay in game, the play in Plato to fight profit with every fiber of our being! "McScuse me, bitch? I throat-punched that bitch!" (Libbie Higgins' "[McScuse Me Woman Rages Over Extra McRib](#)," 2016).

As described, *Alice in Borderland* is very much of a New World approach, concerning games and life as one-in-the-same, and whose embedded, concentric vampirism resembles older forms in *function*. The story *is* the game and the game is a prison narrative presented as—you guessed it—a bloodsport in a shadowy open world. Meant to control players, the shadows present as games-inside-games, illusions-in-illusions, per the cryptonymy process. In short, it's an apocalypse whose revelation lies in a dream space where the citizens of a place—already on the verge of collapse—come repeatedly to grips with exposure; i.e., in ways that illustrate Vampire Capitalism nakedly among the house of cards. In queer terms, it's the

closet—a prison of the mind, the bars of the cell a shadow likeness resembling our own world! They show us our own deaths and rapes in ways we can stand.



(artist: [Zoe Volf](#))

To be clear, there are no overt, supernatural examples of vampires or sodomy in *Borderland*—nothing that compares aesthetically to those we've previously examined here or elsewhere. But there *are* plenty of games that fulfill the same undead, essence-concerned role; i.e., a prison-like world that forces its local population to fight to the death for the entertainment of an invisible, all-powerful audience; re: the bloodsport. In doing so, here, *Borderland* depicts Japan's Tokyo as never being a place to live, but a liminal space to die (for profit) disguised as a residence!

Prisons are powerful institutions, Foucault illustrated; just as we took and removed his ideas from a problematic man to understand queerness under capital, we can take Plato's old-world quackery and update it to speak to our liberation (and won't be the first to have done so, the Wachowski sisters' *Matrix* being mentioned here, as well as *Squid Game* coming afterwards); i.e., not something to pimp out and drain us of our brain's blood (sex being a common distraction, but also shamed as a ruse), but ludo-Gothic BDSM that plays through sex to smuggle rebellion back *into* the games we play! If those in power treat us like idiots to exploit each other for profit with, then we have to trust that people can be retaught; i.e., learning better ways to flow power and resources through vampirism and games back towards us (there's room to blame players and games, but ultimately the prime antagonist making people stupid is Capitalism).

First, capital is concentric and built through smaller systems on top of, but inside, larger ones; i.e., a "gobstopper" effect, insofar as the enormity of the overall system is felt through miniatures that, per Capitalism in small, speak to its largest aspects scrambling our brains. Big prisons, little prisons, Vampire Capitalism houses and blinds its prey to feed on them; i.e., profit = theft of labor and wages. Expressed poetically as "blood," everything is rooted in the land (and exploitation of its people) through police violence regulating sex and force, but also violence, terror and morphological expression per the usual monopolies, trifectas and heteronormative, Cartesian, and settler-colonial, binarized qualities of capital.

In turn, this hall of mirrors is monitored by police agents chosen *from* the prison population to alienate and sexualize all workers inside; i.e., cops, selected by the warden and his officers to police something so large that it requires them to appoint less powerful token officials all the way down the American-Liberalism pecking order (re: Howard Zinn and Americanized concessions with the middle

class). The panopticon always watches workers with workers, but its gaze multiplies/amplifies like an insect's kaleidoscopic vision: to reward those who play along and punish those who do *and* don't!

Keep the above explanations at the back of your mind. To overcome the prison-like nature of Vampire Capitalism and its harmful myopia, we'll be juggling and combining a lot of different variables (what gamers refer to as "mental stack," which capital uses to distract, busy and overwhelm us, while turning us into cops that eat each other for them; i.e., little vampires giving to big vampires).

All of this being said, onto the shows themselves!



At first glance, *Borderland* and Plato's cave might not seem related, nor either of them to *The Matrix*. To summarize *Borderland*, the show is very much a story about survival and emancipation inside the prison, as such; i.e., a rag-tag group of unlikely heroes surviving bourgeois forces, hence Vampire Capitalism. Much of the story/game orbits around the fish-out-of-

water, Alice (a boy this time, surrounded by women more physically capable than him). He and his friends aren't conquerors, but misfits faced with their homeland eating them alive. In it, the usual fantasy—what if playing videogames could teach me how to survive an apocalypse?—comes to bear. And fair enough! Games are both fun to think about and to play with in this respect, but also vital to our survival when empire decays; i.e., when the bare blood of dead people, painting the town red, exposes state predation superimposed over sites of daily life. Except, the fantasy speaks to the possibility of systemic transformation starting with the Platonic realization: that power in the cave is not only fake, but harmful. That's not too far off from what *The Matrix* arrived at!

Luckily—and as I've hopefully established by now—power is an illusion we can interrogate (thus develop) *away* from state doubles! Regardless, ludo-Gothic BDSM is still dangerous (state admins/power gamers [cops and vigilantes] will police us to monitor and enforce intended rules, thus predation and rape as a matter of power abuse conducive to profit). As usual, these "gamer abstractions" speak not just to hidden powers, but operations unfolding right in front of us, requiring we read between the lines; i.e., through Gothic abstraction: compare this to that as a toy to play with. Holistic analysis accounts for returning to games to play them differently for liberatory purposes!

Gothic Communism is a holistic discipline for a reason, then; i.e., prison-wise, Capitalism is a multistage and multipronged attack, therefore requiring multiple means, methods and materials of study through the Gothic mode to decl cloak its abuse. Vampires are a common example (revered for their supernatural

powers, including superhuman speed, sexual prowess, hypnosis, and transformation abilities), but so are card sharks (the irony in *Borderland* is that the King of Clubs is naked by choice, and playing against the hero in good faith):



To it, liberation and enslavement exist within the same half-real stages, boundaries and intended/emergent rules of play. Like a chessboard, the two go hand-in-hand. As we talk about Alice's own canceled future, then, think of concentric illusions, insofar as we've discussed them and hauntological sites

before in this series. Liberation occurs inside a prison for which there is no outside (of the text). It *must* be subverted and transformed inside of itself—as a game (of death) to play! You can only opt out for so long (with marginalized people never given that choice).

Per Gloggin, the idea—that reality is an illusion—again dates back to Plato's allegory of the cave, but endures in newer forms that simultaneously expose and conceal capital's titanic operations:

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](#): "Play and Games in Fiction and Theory," 2020).

In short, the suggestion—that we are enslaved and being fed upon by all-powerful (and frighteningly ugly) beings alienated from life—is both frighteningly real and

easy to dismiss; i.e., things outside the cave, from beyond human perception (again, what Plato called the Realm of the Forms, which Lovecraft associated with outer space). To some degree, we must imagine class war *among* these shadows.



([source](#): Arthur Lazarus' "Allegory Is a Powerful Tool in Medicine," 2022)

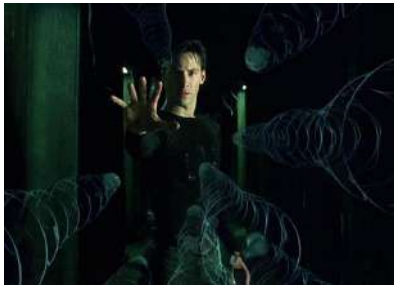
Here, with *Borderland*, the gaslight feels half-real, taking someone's suspicions and pitting them against the skeptic in ways they can play with and rationalize, but also subvert and challenge through games as sacred to canonizer and iconoclast alike: a ghost town to play such things out.

This is the prison that Plato's cave represents under capital and Vampire Capitalism, hence *Borderland*, *The Matrix* and other such stories; it is the thing escaped through the games not simply played, but understood and operated in ways that break the elite's almighty spell. It's basically what the kids mean when they say, "touch grass," except there's a catch: capital—as Baudrillard argues—has become hyperreal; i.e., a map of empire composing the Real as something to experience, the thing it covers up a desert of reality that empire has destroyed. There's nowhere outside the maze to go outside to, no outside of the text to escape! Instead, the pattern is infernal and concentric, only showing the audience a canceled future—one pointing to the worrisome cracks of empire and the desert beyond, during Capitalist Realism.

"We live in a simulation," Abigail Lister writes; re: in "[The Matrix | Explaining Jean Baudrillard and the Desert of the Real](#)" (2023). As I argue in response, that is where we must make our stand! Whatever freedom workers can expect to cultivate and achieve (through the Superstructure) occurs during liberation as caged; i.e., as part of the ongoing textual operations therein; re: liberation and enslavement occur in the same spaces' poetic thresholds and on their shadowy surfaces: during liminal expression/remediated praxis' ludo-Gothic BDSM!

Simply put, liberation occurs through play during liminal expression as half-real, on and offstage; i.e., trapped between illusion and reality less as separate and more two sides of the same struggle. Neo, in *The Matrix* for example, wakes up inside a dream that—when emancipated from the shackles forcing him to stare at the cave wall shadows—joyously allows him to soar through the sky like a god. He becomes a *king* of dreams, free to use the awesome power of shadows to challenge state forces and their harmful distributions of power and criminality! After all, prisons are police stations that have populations; i.e., to house, feed, punish and watch themselves, that they may leech resources for the elite from their sleepwalking selves. Nation-states are prisons, as are just about anything else; but

some are given more privileges (through preferential mistreatment) to incentivize them to brutalize their own, affording ignorance to live longer than other inmates!



Like a vampire, then, Neo can anisotropically reverse the flow of power away from the elite and towards workers; i.e., the bullet with butterfly wings repelling state armaments used by state defenders, taking their desire to shoot him at all and scrapping it; re: "Despite all my rage, I'm still just a rat in a cage!" This starts with freeing Neo's mind from the source of deceptions—games, albeit inside of themselves: Sisyphus smiling at the gods, knowing their tricks don't work on him anymore. From there, whatever work to be done in aid of nature and workers starts with freeing our minds from the state as straight; i.e., *The Matrix*—an incredibly gay movie smuggled in as standard cyberpunk monomyth<sup>373</sup> fare—being a wonderfully an-Com, empowering

<sup>373</sup> The film—made by the Wachowski sisters when they were still in the closet—was built on *Ghost in the Shell's* Pygmalion-meets-Frankenstein cyberpunk yarn. The former was already a story about a tokenized female robocop in a neoliberal Orientalist wonderland; i.e., made to appeal to the Western Male Gaze while simultaneously assassinating Japanese salary men in a hypercomputerized world on the edge of cyberspace (Aarseth would write *Cybertext*, two years later): pinned between Baudrillard's 1970s concept of hyperreality (made on the verge of neoliberalism and based on older thinkers, from Borges to Plato) and 1980s cyberpunk fantasies critiquing neoliberal Capitalism *et al.* They effectively did so through standard-issue power trips, whose own *Neuromancer*-grade hauntologies (and tabletop games) would inform Fisher's concept of Capitalist Realism, per the canceled future and into my own work (starting in 2022, five years after Fisher's suicide).

In Neo's case, he was moonlighting as a hacker who, during the daytime, works a dead-end corporate job—magically catching the attention of Morpheus, the King of Dreams, who's convinced he's the One (a cause to believe in). And extratextually the entire film speaks to queer dissatisfaction with life under capital, appreciating philosophy/videogames in ways that bring these gentrified theories and media to bear for a revolutionary purpose. The sisters would eventually come out, and their updated, on-the-cusp metaphor for Plato's cave would resonate with many queer people after the revolution caught fire; i.e., in the Internet Age; e.g., me, feeling validating in *my* interest with those things as a weird iconoclastic nerd—having watched *Ghost in the Shell*, *The Matrix* and *The Animatrix* (2003) in middle school and high school. As a rising queer academic stepping out of the shadows, I suddenly was finding my queer side twenty years later and viewing these older stories in a new light: queerness as a shadow/ghost of itself haunting the usual action stories; i.e., Neo played by Keanu Reeves—a man with an extensive history of playing queer-coded characters (e.g., *Point Break*, *My Own Private Idaho*) and standing in for queer revolution.

"Me!" I would say to the screen, excitedly. "They're talking about me!" Except I didn't, at the time. To be queer, then, is to be closeted in ways that sleepwalk through much of our lives. Hindsight is 20/20, we queers having to become a "new" order of existence; i.e., stepping out from older exclusionary shadows to make the Wisdom of the Ancients more wise, hence more inclusive in a 21st-century world. State dualities would rise to meet that challenge, but they could no longer monopolize it as they had in the past! Neo was free, Project 2501 was free, we were free.

Following suit, stories like *The Matrix* would be recuperated by white cis-het conservative men using DARVO and obscurantism to "create jobs" (the whole idea with prison labor being not just enslavement, but recursive police violence) and steal the magic pills *back* for the state. And such rebellious stand-ins pulling at queer yolks have the usual *de facto* white male/female representatives talking for oppressed groups; but so did Marx, I recall, arguing for factory workers (and a great many other thinkers; e.g., Lenin, having a rhetorical focus that started white and argued outwards). The wonderful idea about *The Matrix* (and later stories, like *Sense8*, 2015) is there was suddenly a multimedia, ludic allegory that *included* queer people; i.e., in ways that could occupy traditionally

genderqueer approach to Plato's allegory that speaks to the awesome, queer-Marxist potential to games (and cyberpunk philosophies with a revived punk mentality): as they presently exist. To that, canonical videogames (or things comparable to videogames) repeatedly build atop age-old thought experiments about mind prisons that—like the power they house and abuse—rely on shadowy illusions of power to work as the elite desire!

Though ostensibly not a videogame, the same revolutionary idea speaks to *Alice in Borderland* and its ludo-Gothic BDSM. First, escape the prison by navigating its games in emergent ways; then help yourselves and others develop something better! Video or not, games are cool *because* they can set us free (to fags, classically closeted, thus abused under such conditions as fags are, but applying this desire for liberation to *all* oppressed peoples); i.e., rebellion is cool because universal liberation, intersectional solidarity and agency are cool! Giving towards that is cool because it gives back in return! We're already in the prison, so the true punk, rebel, and faggot, what-have-you, must take such things to foster widespread opposition—to play as such that the state cannot predict, police, or otherwise control us! That's all a prison is: predictability of outcome, a rigged game that ends in a blood harvest for profit ("With humans, the machines<sup>374</sup> had found all

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straight roles and make them genderqueer, non-white, sex-positive and Pagan, etc; i.e., many heroes in these stories being GNC sex workers, not just surviving but co-existing under a cyberpunk venue. The grounds for our mutual liberation felt more common, less alienated by Hollywood bullshit.

To it, the shadows on Plato's cave wall—already dualistic and something of a closet—became thoroughly and consciously gay in ways that challenged state doubles: in the same shadow zone as something to fight over for different causes *with* said shadows. We could acknowledge ourselves first in shadowy projections, then exist independent of them!

<sup>374</sup> As discussed with Cameron's *Terminator* films, in Volume One:

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 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 ([source](#)).

*Robata*—or slaves/raw technology—is commonly used during Red Scare narratives to scapegoat labor and machines *instead* of the elite; i.e., the technological singularity argument absolves human systems of any wrongdoing: "It was the *machines*, Sarah!" The dualities at work likewise present workers as machines inside a prison, which its owners—depleted of *their* humanity and treating *us* like blood bags to suck on—unscrupulously abuse during Vampire Capitalism. The way to escape is through a posthuman revolution; i.e., the kind where workers seek revenge against their Cartesian overlords by becoming the thing they fear most: counterterrorists *overthrowing* bondage. Both arguments use the same aesthetics, one treating it as a doomsday and the other a jailbreak.

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
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the energy they would ever need!"). The canonical dice roll is simply a pacifying illusion of control—the suggestion that someone *e/se* will be chosen to die!

Expect resistance, of course. There is no clear dividing line in moments like these, and even once you extricate yourself, further challenges await; i.e., there's always another closet, Capitalism being the ultimate space to change through our revolutionary efforts: hiding and showing to get at things that resist apocalypse (re: "standing on the ashes of something not quite present," illusions of illusions inside illusions). The emancipatory idea is to not take things at face value, but to play with and ask questions concerning them as shadow games. The more imaginative you are, the better, because knowledge is limited, imagination and play are not!

Furthermore, escape doesn't happen outside of capital, but during liminal expression as a cryptonymic dream that—when it *does* start to break—can easily overwhelm the mind and test loyalties. Some regress; others question their sanity and the veracity of either side of the fence—the dreamworld and the reality beyond it less as separate and more a story-in-a-story but also a womb-inside-a-womb. To face *that* is to die, be born again, and be *conscious* the second time around!

The idea is so godawful that most don't dare to conceptualize it, let alone recontextualize it for rebellious purposes. This comes with its own set of challenges: defenders of the cave who will attack outsiders, especially gay ones; indeed, people underestimate the power of faith in that respect—and refusing to attack systems that, for most, make up their core worldview/way of experiencing everything around them. They put their faith in something that will destroy them without a second thought; i.e., an illusion that—fake and covering a destroyed, desert-of-the-real territory (the world and nature)—feels more real to subjugated workers than anything while they're actually awake. Simplicity trumps complexity inside prisons of the mind, the feeding happening not just "at night," but at all hours one is asleep during class war (the lights are always on, during solitary confinement).

We are born raped, pushed into second wombs full of teeth. I don't think there's a better way to explain Vampire Capitalism and Capitalist Realism than that.



Likewise, "You have all the power you need, if you dare to look for it!" Rebels, then, are detectives that reject reality as supplied to them by elite forces; instead, they interrogate power through performance and play to engender new realities by rearranging how power is storied and played. Keeping with *The Matrix* and *Borderland*, then, the hero escaping the illusion is a dupe who searches, wakes up, and survives realizing they were bolted into a machine made to jam images into their brain and harvest them for their various resources ("bio-power" according to Foucault; labor, according to Marx; Gothic potential, according to me). Abjection happens by rejecting this reality as "mere fantasy and play." At the same time, its reversal

during ludo-Gothic BDSM involves facing and sending it *back* to those eating us (who generally must turn us into something *they* can stomach); i.e., by heroes increasingly skeptical of reality's "face value," who feel a subsequent possible world whispering to them in the current uncertain one; e.g., Neo called by Trinity to "follow the white rabbit," and Alice following his own, in *Borderland*, towards the Queen of Hearts. Either leads to the uncomfortable reality that humans under capital are batteries; i.e., whose draining of their power is viewed as the ultimate success by elite forces (and who treat suppression through illusion as gangbusters).

Those who famously take the red pill (the actual waking one, not liberal centrism or conservative thought's disastrous recuperations) do it because reality around them *feels* false, and they want to escape not *to* illusions, but *from* them! They're dissatisfied with state heteronormativity and other lies, adopting new GNC propagandas and following the lord of darkness/king of dreams (which is what Morpheus, in *The Matrix*, is) into fresh spaces of dream-like possibility: of games to play and worlds to build better (and more honest and intimate) than the ones we're in and suffering to endure, right now!

"I've never seen anyone like you—not while I was awake, anyway!" Persephone's plight isn't that she's stuck in Hell; it's that, once she finds Hell, she can never go back to the world of Light (which ironically is a cave filled with shadows). *That* world never existed—was built on a lie she must escape with people who not only won't cause her harm; they'll set her free: Hell is always a place on Earth, and one that we devils thereof make for ourselves—by turning the prison's rape scenarios into a playground of "rape" in quotes challenging profit, hence Vampire Capitalism! *That's* ludo-Gothic BDSM! To let things go both ways; i.e., the sub's paradox being to give their blood, but to feel pleasure under a good dom's care (taking their cum)! The state, by comparison, is a bad dom—the worst, in fact.



Performance and play are canonically impotent forms of escapism. By returning to these worlds to find/make disturbing comparisons to our own, we can begin to play differently and subvert capital's usual vampirism. We can think critically and synthesize/unearth allegory inside elaborate hyperreal distractions, finding our own power once again as one might an old relic inside a powerful ruin. But such thought experiments demand active, intelligent and perceptive play, which only comes with practice, but also trial and error, hard work and ultimately, mistakes and loss (re: trolley problems; e.g., [the prisoner's dilemma](#)). Charmed life, charmed play! Gothic Communism is not a spectator's sport—marrying play itself to different *schools* of theory while synthesizing new development in a liberating direction!

As such, games are an effective way to communicate systems that are normally designed to conceal themselves. Japan, in *Borderland*, becomes a

prison/dungeon for bad BDSM to unfold in gameshow-esque ways—a game-inside-a-game, but also different *classes* of games (acts of punishment and love, BDSM power exchange, packaged-and-sold commodities, lotteries, etc), an empty wonderland bordering on the usual realities that Alice ignored, holed up in his room; i.e., life as a game that has him, in *Borderland*, making the kinds of sacrifices he was already doing before entering the game *outside* his computer screen (the cruelty of the mechanism designed to make him reflect: on this past as shown in the do-or-die, kill-or-be-killed present mirroring said past, making those who survive more delicious: to the Queen of Hearts, but also others watching from places the players cannot see). As we shall see, so were *all* of the people he comes across and befriends. Capital has made them all, in some shape or form, vampires!

Concerning capital's vampire BDSM, there's no choice involved, the ludic contract a slave form and Faustian bargain/Promethean Quest all rolled into one! Play or don't play, you die (the game allowing players to commit suicide) and are subsequently fed on to glut the elite, as usual (who grow richer as they cage you and watch you steal from yourselves, gameshow-style). As for the hero role, itself, Alice shows us how this needn't always be bourgeois theft. However, cruel games *are* endemic to Capitalism, which treats privatization *like* a game: the manufactured scarcity of jobs and labor value as the stolen essence of workers in a very material sense (versus a phenomenological sense, exhibit 43d depicting ghosts we can camp in friendlier echoes of their former terrifying selves); i.e., the creation of corporate vampirism as a giant, figurative vampire structure tied to a ludic-scheme that exploits workers divorced from our aforementioned old-world supernatural themes (the themes in *Borderland* and *The Matrix* do invoke Clarke's Law, however—technological so advanced as to be considered "magical," but also Pavlovian, menticidal and dogmatic).

Committed by the bourgeoisie, the theft of worker blood remains permanent and irreversible (meaning the literal killing of workers, not their brainwashed minds)—a one-sided fakery existing in ways that double workers and invite for troubling comparison; i.e., as a dollish matter of play and roles inside the game as connected to real life and its own disparate socio-material conditions: the fatal transfer of power under prison-like environs meant to oppress labor and pit it vampirically against itself (note the red prison suits, but also the videogame button symbols on the masks/the vampiric gaze of the killer doll from *Squid Game*, below).



Such games and their bad BDSM double themselves; i.e., gameshows that mirror bloodsports/death lotteries and concentration camps: rigged, with the developers/owners holding all the cards—literal people—in their bloodless-yet-bloodied hands! Victory is pernicious, hollow and winner-take-all. Something truly heartless and wicked is pulling the strings!

*Squid Game* is one "death lottery" later made unironically into real life examples that parrot the rigged, prison-like structure of the show-inside-a-show (with us watching the player watching the games begin and play out), but *not* its ironic critique of capital so common in science fiction/Gothic dystopias; i.e., black mirrors warning *against* Capitalist Realism parroting blind pastiche (e.g., shlock-shock rockers, GWAR—an unholy and insensitive cross between Anthrax, KISS and Spinal Tap—seeming to miss the point by a mile, with their death games pastiche, "[Slaughterama](#)" [1990] just sort of targeting everyone... except the line "Because when you're life is shit, you ain't got much to lose!" applies equally to the hippie, Nazi, and... "art fag" [come on, Orderus] equally).

You might have noticed, *The Matrix* conceals its game as not-game, keeping its cards close to its chest while imprisoning people's minds. The battle concerns the hero freeing his mind while still inside the game, which he learns to play in ways its owners don't want. This is done to make someone able to think again (or for the first time), versus simply reacting through fear unto rehabilitation (code for "behavioral conditioning"); i.e., to change whole systems by utilizing and responding to them differently than intended. Imagination sets us free.

Tracking with canceled futures, though, the rules in *Squid Game* and *Borderland* are not only explained, but openly shown as unfair games; i.e., precisely to illustrate how capital (and its vampirism) function by design: through creepy dystopian advertisements shocking people *out* of blind consumption and *into* critical modes of analysis that have them rediscover emergent forms of play as a mode of criticism and existence (re: the red pill, but inverting the Wachowskis' usage of it). "Isn't this fun?!" the game asks, leering at those who suffer inside it. They lack the ability to conceptualize that they're not having fun. Furthermore, vampirism is still happening from moment to moment. Between the gluttonous bourgeoisie and battered proletariat, what's good for the goose *definitely* isn't good for the gander (the elite alienated from workers; e.g., *Squid Game*'s aging and ghoulish proprietor playing the same horrible game to feel *alive*, only to die of cancer while describing themselves as "just a player" to that show's yearly winner)!

Furthermore, this mimetic tension in *Borderland* doesn't just remediate across one game type like Western Cards (specifically [the French suit system](#) exported to Japan, next page), but whose sense of compelled risk reverberates across local hunger games like the titular "Squid<sup>375</sup> Game" being a parallel, synchronistic text. Regardless of which, either *Squid Game* or *Borderland* serves as Alex Blechman's 2021 conceptualization of the "Torment Nexus"; i.e., [as something for the elite to make unironically based off a formerly critical source](#) (source tweet: November 9th). To it, the carceral myopia of Capitalism Realism recruits workers to further the game as half-real, outside itself while playing inside itself; re:

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<sup>375</sup> While I'm not sure about squids, the octopus is a classic symbol of monopolies under Capitalism and its multiple gilded ages, but also fascism and blood libel per Jewish Conspiracy.

[Zimmerman's magic circle](#) and Juul's half-real "between the fiction and the rules" making workers unironically replicate games comparable to *Squid Game* and *Borderland*, but also *The Matrix* and others, in real life! Cultivating their own Superstructure assisted by class-traitor sticklers, the elite deliberately bury Blechman's cautionary palimpsest to *better* prey on labor! Everything becomes more and more one-sided, always flowing up to the elite, never down (save to tokenize workers, and always with a drop from the bucket).



(exhibit 41h1: Artist: [Sveta Shubina](#). The outcome or reward of many games is the girl; i.e., as someone to acquire through great struggle and adversity but also cheating ["All's fair in love and war..."]. Often, in games of love, they are one's opponent or adversary as much as the object of pursuit. While the elite use cards to "close doors" and present the impossible as a game to exploit workers, any workers in on the scam can open doors by reversing the process during ludo-Gothic BDSM—"Closing doors. This is a magic and sleight of hand term; it means canceling out possible methods in the audience's mind" by showing them "proof" of an object's solid or real nature, then incorporating that reality into the unreality of the magic trick as a disappearing act [Vanity Fair's "Magician Reviews Sleight of Hand and Visual Tricks In Movies & TV," 2022"; [timestamp](#): 19:32]. The "cards"—in this case, the beautiful, monstrous women and other archetypes—have not disappeared; they have been hidden in plain sight by capital's card dealers/pimps, keeping the labor value and potential of these persons and their bodies for themselves, then trickling it down at paying customers. It's a scam, a card game where the girls are the cards and the players are the sharks. The point of the con is to make the player feel like a winner while robbing them blind, all their blood going to their head [and not the one with a brain inside it].)

Likewise, "bad" games in the social-sexual sense are the historical-material consequence of the Superstructure teaching workers to become unintelligent; i.e., playing stupid, trolley-problem games that exploit themselves and other people; e.g., sex is a game and you gotta play it to win (*chercher la femme*). *Alice in Borderland* is a dream-like, bloodsport, "game-within-a-game," but the one episode or "game" we'll examine from the show is set inside a creepy asylum (another kind of prison). First, we'll talk about the episode, and then—as much as we can—apply its meta lesson to our own lives!

### **Head Games: Reflecting on *Borderland's* Prison World in and out of Our Own Lives**

The episode in question puts Cheshire inside an asylum, itself a series of trolley problems expressed in predatory social exchanges where direct violence is

impossible, but death affected nonetheless through said exchanges: tell the truth to others about an RNG-card symbol on the back of their bomb collar. If you tell them the truth, they answer what the symbol is and stay alive; if you lie to them, they answer wrong and the collar explodes, instantly killing them. While it might seem ethical to always tell the truth, someone in the prison population is the Jack of Hearts, a serial killer who will lie to protect themselves. Trying not to be found, their motivation for playing the game directly contradicts everyone else, who cannot leave until the Jack is found; and the Jack is not found until they are killed. It's the prison dilemma merged with smear the queer, yielding trolley-problems-within-trolley-problems!

Initially the episode denotes a fearful, uncanny presence of inherited power that our hero must try and survive: canon treats "winning" as not dying in a world that's actively trying to kill you (again, a metaphor for Vampire Capitalism). Iconoclastically, this extends to the breaking of Capitalist Realism, exposing the larger game—*Borderland*—as something that can be changed inside of itself, via the asylum as a moral to build on; i.e., during emergent forms of play that become meta in service to workers forced by capital to be harmful vampires: when they take, nothing is given back. Like *The Matrix*' own illusory metaphors relayed in game-like choices and theatre, development regarding *Borderland* happens through ludo-Gothic BDSM breaking Capitalist Realism inside of itself—its ludic dualities either emergent or intended when serving or sabotaging state predation!

A more empowered variant of the twink than Dennis Cooper's uber-liminal, twink-murder performance art, Cheshire (a catboy pun if ever there were) must use his emotional intelligence, BDSM know-how (from his cutthroat hospital days) and canny game sense to be smarter than his vampire-like peers inside the same quarantine environment; i.e., smarter than the people around him "eating" and "draining" each other through intended gameplay as forced upon them: find the Jack of Hearts and kill them. To survive the asylum, Cheshire must "play the part" in Trojan, *emergent* ways. Luckily for him, he's already been made into something of a vampire himself, transformed through a neoliberal Japanese medical system emulating the West's own prison-like models. Yet, Cheshire has figuratively sworn off the blood—is a pacifist, in ludic terms. He's disillusioned, having played the bloodsport game before but lacking the thirst now needed to thrive in *Borderland*'s nightmare opera world.



Inside and outside of the asylum, something sinister looms behind the seemingly innocuous idea of a simple "game" and its illusion of player choice. Instead of players

participating fairly through a benign ludic contract, *Borderland* comments on the

gameplay as compelled entirely for the benefit of the elite: kill yourselves for us. The resulting chaos harms workers, but also humiliates them by design; i.e., intentionally affecting their gameplay choices, the larger game being a series of trolley problems, per level. Everything is neat and game-like on paper, but the rules—while cleanly defined—require a stunning amount of dialogic craft and guile (as they do in real life) meant to entertain the elite: watching Cheshire in the asylum watching those he used to prey on (and them watching back). He has remorse, and largely holds back—chewing the scenery as the others cannibalize.

Furthermore, those in positions of power will manipulate victims conditioned to fear violence from authority figures, thus defend said figures from rebuke. And this is precisely how the asylum episode plays out, Cheshire watching the other players fall victim to a hidden manipulator defended by the system: a spider-like puppet master granted a handicap by someone higher up in a vertical arrangement of power. *Borderland's* asylum episode is effectively an instructional miniature for *Sex Positivity's* own arguments, taking them to figurative and literal extremes while critiquing Capitalism's vampire nature inside a more subtle Gothic backdrop.

There, survival happens actively and on one's toes, inside a game designed turn people against one another with confusing rules, a lack of clarity but concrete materials that promote severe, horrifying punishment in terrifyingly vague ways (decapitations are reminded by the slave-like bomb-collars, but explode behind closed doors). It's a metaphor for repressed rebellion tied to literal/figurative incarceration while commenting on various gendered barbarities in Japan. There's a lot being said but it's happening in real time, all at once, while under threats of power abuse, sexual abuse, murder, mob mentality and so on.

Moreover, the bourgeois metaphor of the asylum game lie in its patently cruel design: a 25% chance to survive every hour, but a 0% chance to survive if someone lies to you. In other words, the elite stack the odds against players from the state, trapping them inside a rigged game; they encourage players to lie to escape the asylum, where they will remain until they find and kill the Jack of Hearts (the game's formulaic villain, but also tied to the show's invisible Queen). The game ends when the Jack dies, but physical, lethal violence is forbidden. The Jack must lie and deceive his fellow people, while the mob "hunts" the Jack in an entirely socio-ludic way—lie to the person you think is the Jack, thus dooming them to die; but also, lie to people who might lie to you to try and kill you, which is exactly what the Jack does, but also people trying to narrow down the number of suspects.

Keeping with the prison design, the game forces people to kill each other through social deceptions guided out of material self-interest; i.e., inside a smaller system inside a bigger system that takes away player agency by forcing them to play with someone who has all the advantage and is probably a serial killer (the warden's rat). Only someone with experience would survive—in terms of games and ambiguous language, but also lying and understanding that pure altruism will not only have you being repeatedly used and lied to; it will also get you killed.



Under these appalling conditions, people are literally worked to death, forced to compete under manufactured scarcity with deliberately severed social ties making them compete under duress. The crumbling backdrop, twink-in-peril Holocaust (and the murder-happy royals looking in) are dated and

cliché, but that's Gothic displacement/dissociation in action; i.e., the ghost of the counterfeit: "Isn't this *fun*?" Obviously not and that's the point—to reflect on the nature of games in the real world, on our own labor as a kind of game whose resistance to playing is normally pacified by Gothic illusions that turn people into unironic vampires (which we guilty watch *for fun*). Capitalism is bad for everyone! Cheshire ultimately escapes the smaller game to reflect on the bigger one: as something that never stops. "[You can't stop this game](#)," the artist, Tokio, sung in 1986. The only thing to do, then, is play emergently in ways that help you and others subvert the way that games are played, going forwards! It's very danger disco/Sisyphean (except Cheshire has trouble smiling at the gods; our resident Galatea, he was still made by an environment he has to navigate and help others change through his example).

Overhead, the biggest vampires lord over everything while growing hungry and stupid behind a hyperreal façade: playing golf with people's skulls, swimming in pools of their blood, impersonating them during Faustian death lotteries (the old man from *Squid Game*) and placing absurd, arbitrary bets on their lives while forcing them, inside prisons, to kill each other with (and for) their own stolen labor and wages. For the elite, there's a second game that only *they* can play and rules they get to write at the cost of everyone else: Capitalism, whose hidden rules are designed to exploit everyone else through predatory BDSM. In it, they are not cheaters, but "winning" according to how much exploitation they can accrue; this is a ludic double standard, with labor being considered cheaters/spoilsports if they try to overcome the odds through labor action and riots—a game within a game, a prison inside a prison.

The critical power in *Borderland* relies on a worker-friendly trick: a friendly ghost (our catboy-in-white, suitably ghostlike in his appearance) that teaches workers to reflect on their exploited labor through a cautionary tale, specifically a proletarian ghost story (which giant companies like Netflix try and pass off as recuperation; i.e., just a bad dream). Cheshire isn't strictly-speaking incorporeal, but exists uneasily in a nightmarish wonderland pointedly modeled after real-world Japan. Simply put, his presence and feelings while playing inside the game-as-rehabilitation punishing the wicked feel uncanny from a dramatic standpoint because his own gameplay pointedly compares two unlike things that are only *seemingly* unrelated: feudal tyrants and all-powerful capitalists. Cheshire knows



them all too well because they describe the place he used to work at: the hospital, killing clients in pursuit of profit, with Cheshire instructed to do so by a "vampire" higher up than himself (the Master/apprentice dynamic in a hospital setting).

For example, the existence of urban myths like the bloodthirsty "Impaler" (vampires) in relation to capitalists denotes a presence of public confusion that is caused by manufactured ignorance of a capitalist checklist: the mysterious role of psychopaths inside Capitalism by tending to aggressively promote inside a system that favors and isolates them (re: the Jack of Hearts being both invisible and among us). The kind of murder psychopaths do is closer to desk work, hinted at by the killing process in the asylum episode (not its literal execution) being completely non-physically violent, banal. Instead, it's *socially*<sup>376</sup> violent. Under such a system, psychopaths never stop furthering violence against workers for the bourgeoisie because they have no material incentive to do so (which is the only thing that would arguably motivate a psychopath).

Amid the ostensible dissimilarities that suggest a worrying outline towards the historical-material world, *Borderland* offers lots of shiny markers, counterfeits and drama to convey things in commonplace ways—to get your attention, hold it, and not say the quiet too forcefully out loud. That's how ghosts work. All the same, looks are deceiving in such worlds. Cheshire is disarmingly boyish, but actually an older administrator—Shakespeare's poor player who struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more. To him, the others feels like walking shadows: past mistakes, but possible points of redemption. The moral, in the episode, isn't so much that one mode of play is optimal, but more humane; i.e., through the meta as instructional towards humane play wrestling with forced survival against other workers!

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<sup>376</sup> The asylum is also a metaphor of medieval abuse that, for queer people, is a concentration site to keep watch over them; re; Foucault's panopticon and *History of Sexuality* speaking to the homosexual man as someone to watch; i.e., by virtue of the queer disease—unlike syphilis—largely being associated with gay men and anal sex. The disease profile became something to camp our status with as disease spreaders differently than women; i.e., they for their hysteria and various STDs, we for our sodomy and AIDS in particular. No one wants to be known as sick or aberrant. To that, the poetry of vampirism becomes a campy, performative way to recontextualize our treatment as walking plagues; i.e., dressing it up in the operatic language of forbidden desire, taboo sex, and various social stigmas. It's rock 'n roll/calculated risk—our rebellion put to music and dress codes that even the Straights can get on board with (to colonize, of course).

Applying this directly to *Borderland*, there's no music (at least no diegetic music), but plenty of drama. Cheshire isn't just the twink-in-peril, but one trapped inside Foucault's panopticon (with "neko" being Japanese gay slang for "bottom"); i.e., the show's blood disease/transfer is capital-in-small, the prison being operated like a gameshow while its temporary inhabitants murder each other according to the game's punitive ruleset: in a prison restored to administer that punishment, doing so through discipline as established and acted out according to the game ludicrous ruleset. Stupid game, stupid prize, but the players are literally collared to explosives—they're hostages pushed into gang behaviors, eating themselves alive (and every death a snuff film shot for the elite's pleasure)!

To that, the meta in *Borderland* uses ghosts, vampires and BDSM to show how Capitalism "toys" with people; i.e., making Cheshire, Alice and Caterpillar<sup>377</sup> (below) try to win "fake-system" games whose Faustian ludic contracts turn players into mindless "vampires" obsessed with "winning" instead of forming meaningful social bonds with other workers (thus new modes of playing the game that can change it for the better). They love each other in ways that haunt them, for which they refuse to sacrifice or ignore others as they might have done in the past (a present party doubling for someone they *harmed* in the past). Nothing else matters and everything is alienated, sacrificed and destroyed, making the victory hollow, a deceitful gambit pushed on the isolated, divided brain; i.e., menticide, but also the entire manufacture trifecta: competition, conflict and scarcity.



The paradox, as usual, is to do this in stories that don't actually kill us, but simulate death omens; i.e., as calculated-risk approximations—through avatars that are, themselves, living in simulations they can hopefully return from to bring back a vital means of, if not preventing Vampire Capitalism at home, then subverting it (re: Trace and *Axiom Verge*). Victory lies in using the integral enrichment potential of games to liberate our bodies, minds and actions from state dogma. We become, borrowing from Chris Pratt, [spoilsports](#). Enrichment, like Sarkeesian's adage (used during Gamergate, no less), becomes a survival aid against fascist people and systems: pawns on a chessboard, on a chessboard, on a chessboard, etc. If people are stupid, and might makes right, it's because capital has made them stupid in ways conducive to Vampire Capitalism.

To it, the cure in *Borderland*, is to be kind in ways that break Capitalist Realism inside itself; i.e., to build and protect for ourselves with and for *our* imaginations, emotional/Gothic intelligence and class-cultural (and race) awareness: as things to cultivate for us—not for the elite alienating and exploiting us for our labor by keeping us obedient, pacified, cruel and stupid! This good education and investment is group-oriented in order to instruct as we create, transforming the material world's canonical media in sex-positive ways: collective worker action against coerced violence and forced play that translates to any worker environment, any backdrop. Be it in a factory, a jungle, or a zoo, they're less like literal reality and more like a thought experiment with metaphors and material similarities; the paradox here, is that it takes on a shadowy likeness/simulacrum—albeit an imprecise one—of the material copies from *other* thought experiments: the copy of a fabrication, itself a half-real proposition.

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<sup>377</sup> From left to right. Caterpillar is trans, escaping her abusive father's past by kicking ass (using the karate her father taught her to survive); Cheshire is a hospital ghoul seeking redemption for *his* sins; and Alice is a shut-in gamer alienated from his family and forced to kill his brother and best friend early in the show (survivor's guilt commonly manifesting in zombie apocalypses/post-apocalypses).

I think stories like *Borderland* and *The Matrix* collectively build around prisons because they're both highly unnatural, and something for which to escape by virtue of what they are: grounds for exploitation, a panopticon of always watching and suspecting others as dangerous, diseased, doomed to die. Under such hopeless circumstances, who *wouldn't* be tempted to cheat in order to survive (thus win)? It's dog-eat-dog, the brutality of the system holding sway over all parties. Hunger strikes are technically optional, but amount to suicide by prison, by cop, by ourselves. To give up or in is to give the state everything. It's entirely one way!

Some people play along because they're forced to; others like it. Faced with the system as false, the spell breaks down for some; others fight harder than ever to deny the collapse of, what for them, is structure first and foremost. For all their abuse, prisons grant positions designed to disempower but also incentivize people to betray each other in service to profit. They *need* it, all the more treacherous, desperate and prone to tokenize when the game is afoot: it's convenient, especially for neurotypical individuals less prone to question reality as false. For them, ignorance is bliss, and they love their role inside the bourgeois pecking order (the asylum episode playing out like cows in a slaughter house, one being killed randomly<sup>378</sup> at set intervals)!

Such players won't question the prison around them; they'll question the person playing at Socrates (questioning authority and everything around him), making him drink hemlock. They do this because they've been conditioned to: a pill for a rat in a box *if* it eats its fellow rats. Winning = class betrayal, per discipline and punish; the prison becomes the rat's home, which it will die to defend by blaming anything but the system housing it!



Per the dialectic of shelter and the alien, *Borderland's* asylum inhabitants become afraid of ghosts like Cheshire, but also his former bosses; i.e., made superstitious and afraid by prisons that conflate abuse with home and

stupidity/dormancy/apathy with intelligence. Inside such conversion camps/reeducation centers, Pavlov's dogs become watch/guard dogs, wholly rabid and hypervigilant. In turn, the first step to combating a prison is acknowledging its existence, which requires cognitive dissonance. Cops don't experience that by design; it's literally trained out of them, turning them into robots that rape others for profit ("Computers are dumb," Seth Brundle puts it; "they only know what you tell them."). They'll begrudge and scapegoat state enemies exposing the truth to them. It's a prison economy paid for in blood.

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<sup>378</sup> Per the arbitration of the inmates, turning the whole exercise into a guess-who-dies-next game for the elite looking in. They pride themselves as gods—immortal, above it all, exempt from death and human failings while, in the same breath, slaves to blood more than anyone else. They're like a transplant victim hooked to stolen organs, said organs still inside a comatose body!

Such menticide isn't unique to *Borderland*, though. As a matter of capital, prisons manufacture such misunderstandings, only to play them out in weaponized forms that watch you, or make you feel under constant hostile surveillance inside infernal concentric spaces; e.g., the agents, from *The Matrix* likewise "not ready to be unplugged, so hopelessly dependent on the system that they will fight to defend it." They are incredibly unnatural—built on hard division and rigged, predatory competition inside vertical hierarchies of power that, in any kind of state arrangement scheme you could think of—from fraternities, concentration camps and electoral politics, to companies to prisons to games—yield the usual systemic abuses organized in the usual tiered stages and subsequent, prison-like banalities: owners/middle management/workers, rulers/officers/soldiers, bosses/minibosses/minions. These tiered, ludic understandings of power operate through torture as something that must happen, Omelas-style. Thus, players harden their hearts, praying at temples of unironic violence.

The sad truth is, no prison or territory can function without cops taken from labor and made to betray their own (e.g., the face cards, but also Cipher from *The Matrix*). The "meta game" under Capitalism, then, is merely another kind of alienation—from *freeing* forms of play as a kind of labor, but forcing people, thus labor, to tokenize in ways that exploit and kill them according to how they view games to start with: as zero-sum, win/lose. There can only be one winner and that winner is profit and the elite (the player killing his friends to become a capitalist). Everyone else is a casualty—a price for the one thing the elite care about, which they not only pay for but set *up* for repeated abuse! Supply and demand as things to manipulate, help the elite tip the scales. Fairness isn't the point, *exploitation* is. Context is sacrificed (usually on purpose) in service to state authorities, not worker experts on a given topic or dispute. Ignorance is worn like a shield.

Except, while all workers are forced to play under coercive conditions, the poor have the least advantages out of anyone. Conversely, "face cards" in *Borderland* denote "optional" players with extra benefits by virtue of the privileged, and powerful positions they held in real life: musicians, gangsters, lawyers, soldiers, etc. The Marxist lesson isn't the parroting of a convenient narrative miniature in ludic form—e.g., Nabokov's estimation of Austen's card game, *Speculation*, from *Mansfield Park*—but a *coerced* game that, through its vampiric, bad-BDSM execution, highlights how everyone is forced to fight for efficient profit, hence the elite: an army of undead workers both enslaved by the *intended* rules and freed by *emergent* play as part of a larger ludic scheme.

In other words, the game's meta isn't fully owned by the elite—can be used for revolutionary purposes by deprivatizing its iconic imagery through iconoclastic maneuvers; there's always an element of risk, thus luck, but the scales needn't stay tipped against players. Breaking Capitalist Realism, thus escaping Plato's cave, happens inside Plato's cave—with its shadows on the wall reclaimed emergently by us with ludo-Gothic BDSM! You must play to win, but you don't have to do what the

elite want you to; you can break their images to expose them on the other side, but also a possible better world in the same general sphere of influence and play!

To this, challenging the extratextual problems intimated inside such smaller structures (while observing them from the outside, no less) means extending those critiques to our own lives in an *intertextual* sense; i.e., of game theory that lets workers be inventive in ways resistant to state illusions; re (from Volume One):

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 culture<sup>379</sup>, 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 1990<sup>380</sup>, 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:

<sup>379</sup> 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.

<sup>380</sup> 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](#)).

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

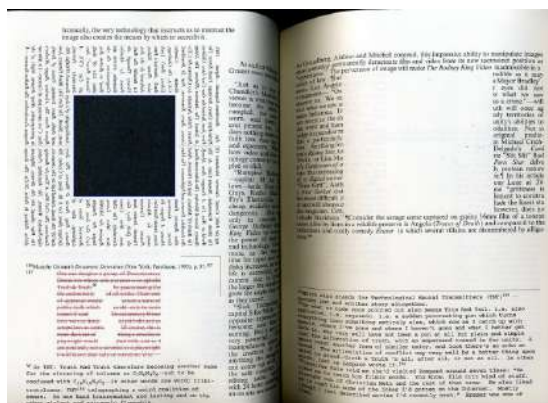
If popular videogames franchised under neoliberal Capitalism, and organized speedrunning began to form right before the end of the Cold War in 1990, then its proletarian utility (and other such revolutionary strategies overlapping within nerd culture) must do so after the end of history's cultural myopia 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 ([source](#)).

Keeping this in mind, capital, aka private property as Marx explains it, "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" ([source](#): "Private Property and Communism," 1844). If people are stupid, capital has made them stupid, and not just towards privatization, but the things between as privatized under capital; i.e.,

in our daily lives that we treat like games conducive to bourgeois aims—in short, the games that we play being concerned with our lives in small, in cages!

These, in turn, become puzzles to reassemble out of old pieces; i.e., that come from a graveyard of fragments expressed intratextually and intertextually across a variety of stories: ergodic narratives, which unfold through non-trivial effort, thus labor and motion, challenging capital's dead, vampiric forms. From a revolutionary standpoint, that's what puzzle-solving is (and by extension, ludo-Gothic BDSM)—not just a single puzzle in a single box, but a relationship between many puzzles that some illustrate diegetically better than others.

In *Borderland*, Cheshire shows us, the moment you limit yourself to one disconnected, pulverized frame of thinking is the moment they box you in. But you don't avoid that purely by thinking "outside the box"; you consider how different systems interface and relate in ways that get you where you need to go, putting puzzles together and then—per Borges' "Garden of the Forking Paths" or Mark Danielewski's *House of Leaves* (below)—put things together *while* navigating them:



The way forwards isn't trolley problems inside a prison system, but we have to be able to think past a bloodsport by thinking ergodically and constructively with it as normally spoon-fed to us, playing with store bought things (and their policed, intended, prison-like rules, made to reinforce profit and Vampire Capitalism on all registers) to consider and illustrate their relationship in a para, inter/intra and

metatextual sense; i.e., about how things relate back and forth, including our place within that. To it, we need to look at the two as half-real, seeing such things expressed in stories like *Borderland* that we can turn back around and connect their fragmented meta/moral lesson to our own lives. Let's do that, now!

Inside our own lives, *Borderland's* asylum metaphor lends itself to a lot of doublings; i.e., that speak to queerness as imprisoning under a heteronormative order that isn't a matter of legend, but something to live with on a daily basis. Being queer-coded, Cheshire is able to navigate the hospital-in-small as a gay man would; i.e., a social-psychosexual regression to a neo-medieval time under a corporate panopticon, the queer being—similar to the nun or closeted priest—being forced into roles where the skilled survive: those with a good poker face, who female and/or queer, must survive patriarchal, heteronormative systems of control.

The liminal quality—of feeling like one is trapped between the past and the present, dreams and consciousness, queerness and straightness; but also that one's exchanges routinely frame one as quarantined/veiled and simultaneously wearing one's heart on one's sleeve in Foucauldian forms of cryptonymy—make

everything feel game-like; i.e., as a matter of life or death. It's historically a very monstrous-feminine experience—one that sadly translates quite well to stories *like* Cheshire's, the guilty faggot locked up with the other inmates, all of them searching for the Jack of Hearts (Cheshire's evil twin), but also vampirism as camping life under Capitalism: far easier to reconcile our own existence as arrested and prison-like (re: compared to fatal diseases and mad science) *provided* we vamp the vector in reclaimed vampire dialogs.

These are, themselves, not always attractive or cleanly seen, felt, or otherwise experienced. With his own checkered past, Cheshire shows how beauty is often skin-deep, but in their case likewise bears a cross-like weight/desire to repent for past sins; he doesn't blame the system as much as he does himself while under its control—a control he no longer wants to give them. He is disillusioned.

While *Borderland* intimates such things in the loosest of ways, the old-world spectre is never far behind. A bio-mechanical womb, heteronormativity and its bad BDSM becomes a prison to grow into and eventually escape through ludo-Gothic BDSM; i.e., camping some truly horrible things behind bourgeois shadows, prisons being highly unnatural—the 1970s zeitgeist speaking to older freak shows, forced medicalization and classification of our "species" as virulent: a specimen in a glass jar, a devil's backbone to trot out in the sick bay like a geek show for the straight and curious. The black-and-red of the breeding vats parallels *Borderland's* playing cards and the Countess' mosquito brood: fascist or Communist, depending on which way power flows (and which way it *encourages* power to flow)!



*(exhibit 41h2: No one wants to identify as a disease, but such double standards become things to reconcile all the same. As such, queerness is—classically and into the present—a form of cloistered dialog between people closer to older forms of medicine and prison-style social-sexual organization that, under later days, manifested as villages for*

*queerness as sick; i.e., gay villages under the AIDS crisis as disease centers that saw AFAB queers looking after their AMAB brethren, during the societal sickness of capital's heteronormative panic and persecution mania towards sexual lepers. Like Neo in his sorry Bathory-style bathtub filled with Kool-Aid, capital atrophies us, and feeds us our own dead selves, that it might live forever!*

*But even when a pandemic is not going on, we fags are still treated like a disease to catch, but also an imposter in straight clothes; i.e., disease spreading whores and vengeful sodomites with various double standards; e.g., women as spreading venereal diseases and seeking hysterical succubus-style revenge on holy men in their sleep, versus homosexual men practicing sodomy as leading to various "queer diseases" that threaten other parties with, in much the same manner!*





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

Queerness, then, is like a blood transfusion; i.e., whereupon we spend our entire lives being told to fear ourselves, thinking we carry

diseases in the passing of sanguine and vitality through common social-sexual metaphors thereof. Overcoming these occurs by mingling with others and playing with them through ludo-Gothic BDSM; e.g., *Cuwu sucking my dick in my sleep [above] as a succubus might a priest's cock; i.e., "exploiting" me and taking my essence from me in ways that the priest would not desire, if only for the fear of slighting God. It's really no harm, no foul, though; as in, such incidents involve the ability to juggle social practices and symbols with acts of good/bad faith, play and acting during ludo-Gothic BDSM: as endemic to queer and female/monstrous-feminine existence. Something is always coming and going—is being taken and replaced with this or that, sucked through a straw back down our throats!*

Furthermore, provided we grant ourselves a chance to refill and give back—i.e., a give and take that doesn't treat each encounter like a zero-sum game—then our behavior can become increasingly aware of games we can play outside of those offered by the state. Meta-wise, there's objectively no "correct" way to play the game; but versions of the game can exist that we can enjoy individually more while having collective stability for all peoples; e.g., you could have sex with someone who has the societally advertised "perfect dick," but it won't change the fact that some people are size queens, while others just want that Goldilocks six-inch or even—perish the thought—a micro peen.

All creatures, great and small [and during sex and/or social exchanges], there's literally something for everyone, so why maximize suffering and scarcity purely because it's the only way that someone as stupid and heartless like the Queen of Hearts can feel anything at all? To do so is to willingly build prisons and give the warden's keys to the usual psychopaths; these, in turn, become a way of seeing the world for which anything else becomes impossible. Make it impossible and the chance for healthy and fun relationships to happen with other workers and nature likewise fly out the window. Everything is simply canonized, then alienated and fetishized through the usual predatory mechanisms.

In turn, form follows function. Forget about oral sex, anal or BDSM; it's simply PIV missionary until the end of time [which, to be honest, I love (see: next page), but it's still nice to be able to experiment]. Anything else is illegal, policed and paywalled. Privileged parties can still do these things, but most are locked up and killed for it, raped by the state and state forces, in a scapegoating circle: "Meet the new boss, same as the old boss..." What a stupid, outmoded way to treat the world!

*But so many fall into those traps, afraid of what the world could be without the elite around to prey on us; so, the middle class surrender their necks [or those of others] to enjoy a place on the preferential mistreatment ladder that isn't the clear-and-obvious bottom. They become bad doms, taking everything.*



*[artist: Cuwu and [Persephone van der Waard](#)]*

*To it, it's not like vampirism and baddies won't exist under Gothic Communism! Apart from oral, Cuwu and I had sex in ways that felt like me being a drug they took by fucking me; i.e., I felt like ambrosia eaten by*

*a god, their mouth hanging open and staring up at me like Pennywise as I fucked them—their hungry cunt, but also their dollish mouth and doe-eyed stare clocking me vampirically as they disassociated [with one hand on the wheel, to be clear<sup>381</sup>]. In moments like those, the thirst took over and they took me for all I was worth. And had they not abused me—using me like a drug they could resort to whenever they were flying off the handle [after I went back home]—it all would have been something I was okay with! Indeed, they were possessed by an intense hunger they couldn't always control, their pupils dilated like Greek coins leading me to Hell, ravenous mouths ready to swallow me whole like Scylla and Charybdis!*

*Nevertheless, to be queer is to be closeted, thus under constant surveillance; and*

*Cuwu—well-adapted to the gaze of all eyes in the room being on them—was someone very vain who had turned that tendency into a survival mechanism they were showing me as a lesson: how to survive, but also how to live by controlling the room per one's witnesses and potential abusers/prey by captivating them with hypnotic movements [often inside the bedroom as a site of vulnerability and sex, but also regression and safety—per negotiated disassociation]. They could do it with their eyes closed, somehow always watching and loving having an audience they could lure, control and toy with: a doll that played back with its handler!*

*Regardless, sex-positive agency preaches having fun, provided no harm is caused on either side of the exchange! When we played in person, Cuwu did not harm me, but they did watch me and work through mirrors and personas to play with/feed on me through mutually consensual rape fantasies [re: sleep sex]!*

<sup>381</sup> The consent-non-consent, in this case, being their consenting beforehand to us fucking in sessions where they *wouldn't* always be able to consent in the moment; i.e., requiring me to gauge for them if things were still good even when they couldn't signal a safe word for me (they smiled in their sleep as I fucked them). Awake or asleep, sober or stoned, we had a contract and stuck to it!



[artist: Cuwu]

A veteran of the psychic wars, Cuwu was a little spy conducting proletarian recon/espionage; i.e., always watching back [a bit like Nietzsche's abyss, but far more fun]—had eyes on the back of their head or on their booty or with their various mouths. Eye contact, for them, was a matter of vampiric, dollish body language; i.e., that reversed the imagery of the surface [re: [Segewick](#)] into an *oculus*. Always ready to put on a show at a moment's notice, they could spring into action in ways that can only be described as "in trance." Queerness generally amounts to a confused haze [re: Sam Reiner's "[Young, Dumb, and Full of Cum': Point Break's Homoerotic Haze](#)," 2009] that speaks to our caged existence [and complicated feeding/prey mechanisms]. Liminal, our agency achieves through the veracity/verisimilitude of such flawed, feverish perception; i.e., always caged and out in the open—per the cryptonymy process, exposed and couched within a campy story or powerful illusion, where we hunt hungrily for those like us.

To become the illusion, then, is to simultaneously gain the upper hand over potential threats, but also relate to other people in game-like forms we follow as code; re: the proverbial white rabbit being a fair bit of drugs, or drug-like experiences that feel delicious and unreal. Showing me their Aegis, Cuwu clapped back, dummy thicc—doing so to teach me how to have fun, thus learn, by giving and receiving in the same exchanges; i.e., in ways that always require some mode of defense, doubling as a dialog and a game we related to back and forth with—sex, among other things. They played me like a fiddle—not to abuse me, but to show me what is possible with what we've naturally got! "[Jazz" flute is for little fairy boys](#), and Cuwu—Mozart's Queen of the Night, and my little cutie next door—played my "magic flute" like a pro! And they gave me books, clothes and food, rescuing me from Jadis; my cummy comrade, I have nothing but respect for them! Like a good joke, nonsense on the surface is often a deeper context of subversion. Freedom through play, then, establishes through strange bedfellows that, through the miracle of chance tailored by good dating habits, must still learn to make each other better than the system allows—not just Ron Burgundy but myself as taught by Cuwu and vice versa as polyamorous players [it's still possible for poly people to cheat on others, just harder]. Got game? Learn from the best! Keeping with paradox, we become true and false at the same time!

Such is prison life for the queer of any gender or sex: the closet a brothel, a sanitarium, a quarantine, a holding cell. We are both diseased and cured, trauma living in and out of the body as libido and leprosy in ways we can reclaim and camp: through vampirism as a theatrical agent, during ludo-Gothic BDSM. Gothic maturity doesn't reject this liminality at all; it embraces the person "dying" of plague in ways that reverse its abjection on all registers and outcomes. To it, and whether from fangs or mouths, we take, give and receive—be that sex, pain, fluid,

*labor and/or knowledge—to reverse the usual upward flows of power! For survivors of abuse, catharsis is "rape" in quotes, calculated risk marrying trauma to sex and control to survival theatre; i.e., performing the loss of control to regain it through BDSM theatre [with rules]. Having survived past abuse, we bare it all, and collapse, flushed and spent, delighted and full—intoxicated. Everyone's happy.)*

Bear in mind, the friendliness or unfriendliness of copies adheres to the hierarchical nature of Capitalism. Just as compelled gameplay forces workers into tiered player types—re: soldiers, officers and generals (working stiffs, middle management and executives)—these apply to our lives swept up in games that mirror such unequal/disproportionate arrangements of power that, in turn, execute to achieve Vampire Capitalism. As such, class war is messy and Capitalism makes war through proxy labor as something to replicate in canonically vampiric forms. In turn, the ghosts of vampire-like workers represent a particular "meta" or gimmicky way of videogame thinking: "mobs" are little vampire zombies, the sexy "champions" drop better "loot," and the lavish "bosses" concentrically lead towards the end game. This can be challenged simply by going against the profit motive; i.e., we make messes that challenge profit as a matter of knowledge exchange wrapped up, often enough, in *fluid* exchange; e.g., me fucking Zeuhl's pussy before pulling out and squirting cum across their crotch, belly and tits, to which they replied, "Goodness me! You made a mess!" Zeuhl and their hole took only for themselves; when giving fluid, I took *back*, too. I learned it from the best!

From a dialectical-material standpoint, then, zombies, vampires and ghosts can be bourgeois or proletarian, and each monster type offers a particular societal critique. However, while zombies tend to be a populist critique and vampires tend to critique aristocrats, their roles can be creatively reversed and applied to things of atypical scope—not just "Zombie Capitalism," or *Smashing Pumpkin's* famous opening line to "Bullet and Butterfly Wings," "The world is a vam-pire..."; vampire hordes, zombie kings, etc—*Vampire-Zombie Capitalism!*

Moreover, game theory's material qualities and meta learning system is more modern in terms of the educational vehicle—the mode of play as intra and intertextual. People interact with labor disguised as symbols of war through the literal playing of videogames as a neoliberal illusion of false power they carry over into praxis at large. A ludic contract becomes a meta, ghostly likeness for labor contracts the elite exploit through players; i.e., the delivery system for the Pumpkins' "bullet with butterfly wings." This can be a revolutionary cryptonym describing a complicit one (*vis-à-vis Borderland* or Pumpkins); or the dichotomy can reverse, the apocalypse of *false* revolution being depicted through endless counterfeits we've also explored—e.g., the zombie narrative or dead retro-future (which, with Matteson, had vampires that extend to *Borderland* and *The Matrix*).

Regardless of which, thinking about canon or iconoclasm in relation to the material world functions as vision in *composite* fashion; i.e., with older forms of

play interacting with modernized technology as Corgan and company did back in the '90s (when videogames were in their childhood years—reflected by the bodies, minds and cultural values of their target "war orphan" consumers being acclimated towards war in service of Capitalism): exposing the man behind the curtain as a vampiric clown, a humbug toymaker responsible for your material suffering, your infinite sadness. As a game, Capitalism absolutely *sucks*, eating everything and everyone; i.e., cops and victims alike, no matter how many the former kill of the latter for their bosses; re: "[They're eating her! And then they're going to eat me!](#)" (a Greek chorus refrain). State extermination rhetoric is cringe.



In this sense, *Alice in Borderland* is also linguistic—the abstract, ludic usage of monstrous shorthand to communicate theoretical, ludo-Gothic BDSM ideas about labor within the visual likenesses of games whose exact dialectical-material function remains unclear. A larger meta conversation the show touches upon, then, is that corporations are like vampires—"super destroyers" who don't just monetize games, but *micro*-monetize them (then gaslight workers; re: despite all *their* rage, they're still just rats in a cage, a prison made to drain them)—micro-monetize the actions of the players playing the games, treating every step they make inside the game as labor theft and wage theft for the absentee owner class. Extratextually, this theft model can be consumer-focused—i.e., through consumers spending money *on* games—or it can be job creation, through gameplay as a form of labor/content creation that streaming platforms steal, or open license contracts *try* to steal actively or retroactively (e.g., [Wizards of the Coast](#); source: penguinz0's "Most Delusional Company Ever," 2016). A player's time, money and energy bleed *into* the process, which drains as many people as it can! In turn, state monopolies yield corporate vampires owning the world in, out and between; i.e., when the meta is profit and state predation all anyone cares about, rape becomes endemic!

To that, canonical prisons and their metas are "for profit"; profit through prisons and bloodsports discourage emergent play as being workers doing what people as a social species do and have done for millions of years: play games to learn, cooperate, communicate and survive (with having fun being a part of all of these things). The canonical meta, then, is compelled in ways that go against how we evolved under natural conditions, trading those for something highly unnatural that rapes and kills everything (all its exchanges being one-way). Small wonder that games have the dubious reputation they currently do—i.e., to play games is "dishonest" or "a waste of time"—but in truth, good games are the key to survival against bad. This act of giving to receive in ways that anisotropically empower workers must become second-nature; i.e., between a network of users synthesizing praxis through a proletarian meta that *discourages* rape; re: harm through power abuse endemic to prison structures!

Cryptonymy remains part of any meta. Whether sex-positive or sex-coercive, Gothic media displaces prison abuse, presenting it inside an educational nightmare scenario where an imaginary villain drains its victims. A potent effect of the vampire as a likeness of the worker persona is how they blend in, hypnotizing their would-be victims by personifying them. Yet, the impersonation occurs according to positions within a structure of power that allows for the abuse to not only arrange in vertical fashion, but generate illusions according to these arrangements: state-corporate propaganda with familiar faces inside and outside of the text.

Inside *Borderland*, workers are diegetically menticed, forgetting what playing games is all about, until their struggle to live teaches them the value of teamwork against their oppression (collective action). However, displacement of the abuse to a fantastical other world is cryptonymic, a kind of "bad apple" that suggests widespread corruption, but which companies will try to pin on isolated cases, or by socializing blame in the real world. Either is a divide-and-conquer strategy by those with an unfair material advantage: the elite. Controlling the means of production and mainstream media, they use games to divide and alienate workers to keep exploiting them in a vampiric, ghost-like way. Their ability to hypnotize workers extends to would-be muckrakers; e.g., infecting game journalism, insofar as game journalists cannot spit Marxist facts collectively and quickly at their audience. Instead of highlighting the root problem in Gothic-Marxist language that whips up organized collective-worker action, journalists opt to observe disconnected anxieties like "corporations seem to keep doing this/are greedy vampires."



If journalists outside of the text comment on their own mistreatment, those inside *Borderland* do the same; i.e., visionaries like Hatter madly demonstrating how corporate vampirism is something that can extend to members of the working class. Class traitors who defend the intended, prescribed system "out of the box," players are effectively prison guards that rub people out during games inside games; i.e., a meta pattern that—assembled and viewed all at once, mid-collage—forms an ergodic, terrifying cross-media pattern across *Borderland* into other prisons, of prisons, of prisons; re, Korzybski:

A map is not the territory it represents, but if correct, it has a similar structure to the territory, which accounts for its usefulness. If the map could be ideally correct, it would include, in a reduced scale, the map of the map; the map of the map, of the map; and so on, endlessly [...] If we reflect upon our languages, we find that at best they must be considered only as maps ([source](#): *Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics*, 1933).

The ergodic sum is a hit list reducing not just single persons, but whole *teams-against-teams* as numbers and abstract shapes that are, themselves, simply crossed off! The show shelters various types of class traitors inside a game designed to starve its own players, who survive by becoming players that, rather than run linearly through game worlds that turn them into cops, can work within fragments not necessarily given to them in any logical order or shape (the slightly scrambled nature of my writing in this section reflecting that historical trend).

Conversely, a prison is logical enough—i.e., weaning workers off their sustenance, then gorging them on the blood of their own kind playing out through such gambling-style "meta" bloodsports. Suggesting that reality isn't just a vault to spill the blood into, the prison is entirely fake, hyperreal—a Torment Nexus build on an illusion of the present world (again, a bit like *The Matrix*, and similar canceled-future stories where police violence serves elite bodies; e.g., *Ghost in the Shell*, exhibit 42e). Classically metas serve profit and profit is rape; the *meta*, then, is rape—taking all for the elite, and *this* is what must change in between our lives and media relating back and forth! Like magic—like Neo, the king of dreams—we pluck things from the ether and build new worlds to reify during emergent play!

Even before the bloodletting occurs, a pre-apocalypse feels oddly familiar and alien—a survival tactic employed by corporations to keep you from looking behind the curtain at all; uncanniness is merely the ghostly (and bloodstained) bedsheets used as window-dressing. As part of its own conflict, *Borderland* offers up middle-management "destroyers sent to drain"; i.e., who treat parasocial situations as parasitic inside a vertically-tiered structure of privileged management, these positions jockeying for top spot: the jacks, kings and queens granted special prizes



by the executive while killing said executive's political enemies—each other as poor, thus less than the executive (a bit like the Wizard of Oz and his own gift-giving to Dorothy [whose name means "gift of God"] and *her* friends, following the defeat of the Wicked Witch of the West).

(*exhibit 42a: The ghost and the vampire have a lot in common—as ontological models, but also their myriad replicas. Japan's modern-looking cityscape is overshadowed by a relatively dated card game buoyed skyward and ferried about by blimps. Past the initial shock, the collapse of the state is actually crystalized inside a highly developed game tailored towards mass predation: the exploitation of workers. The sadistic nature of the bourgeoisie is included for entertainment purposes, giving the audience a vice character to disparage. Nevertheless, the King of Spades seeking the blood spill from a salvo of machinegun fire echoes Japan's warlike past and current occupation; i.e., by neoliberal bodies that haunt the narrative space through enigmatic violence. The game is obviously bloody, but workers must face the dialectical-material reality of that blood, mid-conflict. They reflect on it.*)

## Closing Arguments: Understanding and Challenging Vampire Capitalism

Let's conclude with some broader points about understanding and challenging Vampire Capitalism (seven pages), then wrap things up before moving onto ghosts!

Beyond *Borderland*, the same basic power hierarchy survives across various adaptations that double the same underlying issue: exploitation and its positions of relative advantage mid-scarcity by virtue of capital making people stupid; re: Marx' "Something is ours only when it is used by us" to my argument—wherein stupidity regarding sexuality and gender all extend from Vampire Capitalism teaching us to feed stupidly *as* vampires: by drinking everything dry *for* the elite. Again, if people are stupid, it's because bourgeois games and illusions (the Superstructure) have made them stupid; i.e., as prisons and prison-like illusions/metaphors do by design, incentivizing rape.



It's not a coincidence, then, how the central villain of *The Matrix* is basically the Monopoly Guy saying "ergo" and "inexorably" a lot; all roads lead to Rome and *Monopoly*—ironic once upon a time—became an unironic endorsement of Capitalism the Wachowskis had to critique as best they could: all canonical illusions serve profit as categorically straight, including its divide-and-conquer restrictions, Cartesian rules and canonically essentialist rhetoric; i.e., the state as straight; e.g., the nuclear family model, settler argument, and dialectic of shelter/the alien, Divine Right, etc! It can only take/go up, and by force; anything else is unimaginable to them—is a crime against nature as *they* order it. As such, Neo, the prince of shadows, meets his father, the Shadow King, only to learn he's a massive, entitled dick! "What is a man? A miserable little pile of secrets!"

Rome wasn't burned in a day. On the outside looking in, the elite are the ultimate vampires of Capitalism until then, callously "turning" tiered workers into smaller "copies" of themselves (thinking they have the same degree of power when they do not); i.e., that help spread the disease of Vampire Capitalism through progressively inferior (and populous) clones. In canonical iterations, the entire undead cycle illustrates a predatory grooming mechanism—with management "marking" vulnerable targets for observation, and whose neighbors the canonical vampire has already "turned" *vis-à-vis* a perverse in-group. The presence of the vampire denotes reactive abuse as a form of compelled recruitment, exploiting their own servants as well as their opposing victims' labor inside the game as repackaged by the elite in seemingly different, but ultimately familiar forms.

In the real world as something to mirror *back* at workers, the elite watch from a distance while their canon and its associate structures turn those with positions of power into *subordinate* vampires. Inside the ghost of the counterfeit (which is always a liminal position), management watch their victims become



increasingly hypnotized by the local vampire's charm. A time to resist is allotted, but eventually the vampire comes to call. If the victim does not let him "in" by giving him what he wants (usually sex or submission), the canonical vampire will use their top-down arrangement of power to concentrically gaslight, gatekeep, and collectively punish the victim and their friends (the girl boss being the TERF agent; i.e., a "bride of Dracula").



This is what I mean when I say "stupidity." State workers are so stupid they see people, animals and nature as blood to drain for profit and profit alone—meaning they have internalized not just bigotry in one form or another, but the very modes of play through intended systems designed to bring these bigotries about when used uncritically! The cat-and-mouse approach is one where the prison is internalized by the *rat* in the cage; i.e., acting the cat in ways that only ever let them eat themselves. Intelligence comes from not having advantages (the courts, police, etc). We instead, rely on our wits, our proverbial "rodent's revenge" to weaponize cryptonymy/*cryptomimesis* in service to workers—in essence defeating capital at its own game by rewriting the rules with the same devices, disarming their unironic, prison-like function! Foucault's panopticon becomes Medusa's Aegis, redistributing power between workers to spread it among them during self-imposed ludo-Gothic BDSM; i.e., by playing with the things that people like to play with—sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll, but also videogames (*Cuphead*, above)—to invent new Satanic life among capital's vampire graveyard! Guerrillas in the mist, we spot the patterns of prisons we can exploit during asymmetrical warfare, rewire them, then shut the hood. "Good as new!" becomes an act of playful infiltration, of "cat scratch fever"; i.e., confusing the cat and by extension the cat-like mouse to ergodically avoid state halitosis (the stink of dead workers—masticated to death and belched like exhaust back out into a prison world—a vapor trail to interrogate/negotiate with)! Think about things to get you to think inside-outside the box!



Carceral management, then, is a process of active menticide inside a larger structure that becomes not just a veiled threat, but an ultimatum on par with the Creature from *Frankenstein*, delivered by the elite and their proponents; re: "If you will comply with my conditions, I will leave them and you at peace; but if you refuse, I will glut the maw of death, until it be satiated with the blood of your remaining friends" ([source](#)). It's not simply *negotiation*, but keeping with the *Frankenstein* theme, bourgeois *parentage* and social-sexual *reeducation* that leads to recursive feelings of intense sexual revenge towards the alleged "cockblocker" (who only is exercising their right to consent). The reactive abuse is packaged as

"product" of course; i.e., bourgeois monster "junk food," but also bourgeois monster *sex*—monster-fucking that compels genuine rape, not emancipatory rape fantasies inside/outside these power structures! Capitalism breeds and defends stupidity and rape with stupidity and rape.

Animal cruelty and worker abuse by police forces go hand-in-hand; re: the state is straight and incarcerates queerness to rape nature-as-monstrous-feminine. In turn, the blood spilled during the game becomes synonymous with fulfillment as achieved unto deprivation and exploitation; i.e., as something to disguise and disseminate. While any propaganda begets monsters, bourgeois monsters uphold systemic abuse as something to *spread*—raping workers at the social-sexual level through workers-policing-workers becoming a trademarked brand of abuse that prolongs exploitation for as long as possible: draining the worker to not only weaken them, but trap them under the vampire's spell, in-house. "Blood," "essence," "life force," and "vitality" are all prison code not simply for "product," but the relationship between workers and capital that cements product as canon, including its legendary systemic abuse! That's Vampire Capitalism, and like *The Matrix* or Plato's cave, *Borderline* is touching on something in Japan that is actually happening the world over! Labor polices itself for the prison in any shape or size the elite *wish* to feature it. No one is safe, an entire country built to exploit itself!

Furthermore, beyond one system is another and another—escape becoming nomadic and creative; i.e., to build places to go, doing so out of prison bricks where—liberation being the productive ability to do so—happens in ways that hide or otherwise safeguard workers from state abuse, and all while paving the way for Gothic-Communist development: a world without prisons, established through Ludo-Gothic BDSM as an going poetic device borrowing old medieval things for new purpose; re: **selective absorption, magical assembly, a confusion of the senses**, and our **Song of Infinity**! As ergodic puzzle-solvers and detectives, we reconcile the past by interactively *rebuilding* it; i.e., in ways that phase out our bourgeois bloodsports and prisons. It takes on its own life, giving and receiving!

These are complicated ideas with a lot of praxial considerations. We'll delve into the worker-policing process itself more deeply in Volume Three, Chapter Two. For now, try to keep several things in mind. First, different kinds of undead tend to overlap. Whereas zombies denote a presence of rot and ghosts a hidden trauma, vampires denote a presence of sanguine feeding. These are *not* mutually exclusive concepts. Unlike zombies, which are generated by the state of exception, smaller vampires are predatory feeders made by a concentric chain of bigger and bigger predators. The biggest is Capitalism, itself, whose top-down pyramid structure instructs workers to become canonical vampires; i.e., sex pests, then sex fiends part-in-parcel to forms of worker division and exploitation that preserve the structure already in place. This includes the kings and their generals, but also down the line to lieutenants, officers and grunts of their little army belong to a bigger army of parasitic undead. They become dead to suck the living dry!

However, as Capitalism divides people into alienating classes of cops/victims, its centrist model also frames them as more visibly undead "bad guys" (fascists) versus less visibly undead, or waiting-to-inevitably-become-undead "good guys" (centrists); and both hate Commies, but especially queer an-Coms!

We'll explore this broader war pastiche in Chapter Four of Volume Three. For now, just remember that proponents of zombie-vampire canon will socially-sexually dominate their own chosen victims in the meta prison *any* text speaks to; i.e., about people, capital always making the same argument through workers *resisting* liberation (those "in the cave" killing those escaping the cave's canonical illusions): *Join us or die*. The outcome is replacement, assimilation and abuse—traditionally sexualizing women and killing men along gendered lines indicative of Capitalist models. Capital is and is not *parasitoidism*, which kills the host; its *parasitism* drains workers of their life force and the vampire of their humanity for as long as possible (the latter who can only subsist off exploited labor, including sex, which reflects in their reactive abuse). Banality of evil leads to generational trauma, labor regrown and repeatedly killed inside the same prison-like conditions. Except, state shift will make all of this redundant, Medusa having *her* revenge; i.e., by killing the elite, and trapping workers in the prisons they've grown to accept!

Likewise, it reflects Capitalism's tendency to promote psychopaths—who will be more likely to exploit others—and coexists with the zombie model: the draining of one's life force becoming a draining of the brain that affects everyone in sight. Not all vampires are smart; some are notoriously stupid because that's *exactly* what the system *needs* them to be (no one likes middle management):



(*exhibit 42b: Left: Our vampire king with his zombified corpse bride, [source](#). Despite being powerful, George Junior isn't just a figurehead who is nevertheless [famously] braindead himself; he's rehabilitated years later [as a sweet old man who, along with his braindead, bloodthirsty cronies, "didn't do anything wrong"](#) [Some More News' "On the Rehabilitation of Monsters," 2021].*

*Right: 2019's [Parasite](#). The class character of vampirism under neoliberal Capitalism exposes the real vampires through Gothic clichés all throughout that film: the false servant, the tyrannical master, the secret dungeons under the ancient castle sold to a modern family, etc. Beneath the façade, then, the elite present as terminally afraid of the poor, who themselves become treacherous and inventive to survive—what Akira Kurosawa refers to as "wicked, foxy beasts!" The father kills his rival in the wealthy household, and "wins" a trip to prison—inside the house's bunker-like basement! As a bad form of BDSM and games, Capitalism's vampirism is well-and-truly bad for everyone!*

*Even so, the most cruel and cold individuals are the upper classes. Posturing as gods, they become easily duped, but also heartless, seeing disease, death and*

*madness within the poor through material conditions they themselves help enforce [the film's use of tuberculosis and blood scaring up commentary on pandemic-scale diseases relegated to the vast, starving and unvaccinated poor who cannot afford the medications the elite a) take for granted, but also b) deprive others of while gorging on the poor relegated to the city sewers].)*

This coercive "zombie vampirism," unlike Matteson's famously Communist iterations, becomes an abusively undead social-sexual lesson unto itself; re: Vampire Capitalism strings you out; i.e., the vampiric dialog frequently speaking in instructional ways: the con man giving dating advice to his victims, exploiting them for their bodies and their labor to do his bidding as sex slaves (aggressors for him, or people he sexually wants because the only way he can feel human again is to return to a former time that the system has deprived him of, while forcing him to prey on others for its benefit). Like any prison, this takes time to implement—land conquered and installed with prisons (and power centers of different kinds), then gestating over years inside people who are predisposed to criminalized, sex-coercive ways of thinking (re: the Shadow of Pygmalion, Cycle of Kings, Man Box, etc). Slowly the institution spreads inside its prisoners' brains, who fall asleep and whose class dormancy and "apolitical" betrayal leads to more canonical vampires, thus bad education and police abuse hidden as part-in-parcel to the product and the game(s) that produce it. All police anything challenging the flow as it normally goes: up and only up. "The spice must flow" becomes a cardinal rule.

Such predation mentalities aren't something that someone simply "gets over"; the amount of time gone by isn't indicative of a cure, only the conscious, visible effort to fight it. When confronted for what they actually are, then, bourgeois vampires remain allergic to emotional/Gothic intelligence outing them as *unfriendly* ghosts. These ghoulish parallels denote workers emulating Capitalism' unnatural divisions present within their own social structures. The prison keeps people stupid and cruel, but also unaware they are in a prison because they are always high; i.e., willful ignorance, resisting the truth—that we have to fight for our right to be free from the state; e.g., the agents in *The Matrix* as suits with special powers and big guns (tech bros), the face cards in *Borderland* are, likewise, inmates granted special privileges. Per Marx, material conditions shape how we think, and how we think shapes these conditions; per me, the cycle changes when we begin to subvert the arrangement in Gothic (gay-anarcho) Communist ways. During ludo-Gothic BDSM, we camp these ghosts to go beyond what they were capable of, in life!

In this respect, *Alice and Borderland* is oddly complete, but also oddly displaced from the usual monsters in terms of how it portrays my theories, doing a lot of the legwork for you without leaning too hard on the Gothic language: a ghost town devoid of the usual suspects, all the players vampires but not all of them hungry for blood (the Louis problem) inside Capitalist Realism' grand illusion. Certain episodes—especially the asylum game—tease at the historical-material

framework lurking underneath the veneer of a homely space. But it still chooses to primarily focus on the game itself—namely the outmoded, incongruous nature of a bad replica for the French suit system. While popular media in general tends to vary considerably in how monstrous it appears, it is also nothing if not consistent. If the structure didn't exist, Gothic media wouldn't exist to elucidate its cruelties.

The trick with Gothic Communism, then, is to be playful and inventive when examining media that *isn't* invested in giving the game away. This includes canon of any kind, which tends to replicate the same old clichés, often as products being sold to people (a street corner drug deal). Being cookie-cutter and mass-produced just means they're automated, thus semi-predictable in ways the elite cannot fully prevent. All workers need to do is interrogate the text by thinking critically in creative ways—through art as something to produce, but also thinking about art as already made whenever and wherever you come across it; i.e., former *poiesis*. The counterfeit's ghost is cryptonymic, sought out behind ludic veneers: the card game.

*Borderland* is plenty bloody without the spillage literally plunging down the killers' thirsty throats, the heroes living on through a sorry, undead façade while completely covered in the blood of their dead friends. Unlike gladiators, who are generally paid and trained, there's no belt, no glory for Alice. The same goes for workers at large; i.e., even if you win (survive), the bloodsport (and subsequent witch hunt/police state's sodomy arguments, feeding on workers through bad BDSM and us-versus-them death lotteries) has already happened many times over!



(exhibit 42c: Despite lacking overtly ghost icons, *Alice in Borderland* is full of ghosts and vampiric entities: Alice, forced to survive while he sacrifices his friends; the ghost town of Tokyo itself; and Hatter, who haunts his killer long after being shot to death. It's not a dazzling nightlife, but a graveyard: a giant eye watching you and telling you where to go and where to die.)

Liberation isn't when the game "stops," but *changes* to yield ludo-Gothic BDSM that *isn't* Vampire Capitalism; i.e., Gothic Communism having—like any advanced ruleset—developed out of older rulesets. "Winning" (for the proletariat) occurs by breaking the elite's illusory rules of power under Capitalism Realism: rewriting them through emergent gameplay inside concentric stories speaking to larger systems feeding on smaller systems (nations), and even smaller, embedded forms (domestic police) likewise feeding to defend property and sap living labor through dead labor, on and on; i.e., ludic dualities pointing to current predation and ultimately, a desire for that dated, harmful vampirism to *stop* because it not only isn't fair, but needlessly and pointlessly cruel: profit isn't needed to help people!

Adversity in gaming needn't translate to a neoliberal trifecta. While stress *will* remain under Communism, workers address stress with "stress" to help each

other heal; i.e., doing so instead of the elite dividing us up into factions they control and prey upon. In turn, ludo-Gothic BDSM is endemic to Communism—shall be as cool, fun and cathartic as ever during *harmless* bloodsports. Those shall remain, too—just won't be compelled, harmful and pandemic, and shall apply to all oppressed groups equally (not just we fags). Artifacts of power—their assigned values and statuses for heroes and villains, cops and victims—arbitrate according to how they are viewed but also used in correspondence *to* those views: defending the prison or tearing it down. Our victory is denying our jailors *any and all* of our



precious blood, while redistributing power to make workers more intelligent/aware! We stick it to capital (who will grow thirstier and eventually weaker).

That's what good play ultimately is, but also, as we shall see with ghosts, something whose arbitrations remain haunted by spectres of Caesar and Marx under Capitalism as it presently exists. Something is always taken and given, occupying the venue as a liminal space filled with old history on shared avatars and positions, surfaces, etc. Communism is the installation of choice, the latter's camping of canon informed by older ghosts as beings to learn from: how to cheat and, at times, hang loose and find forgiveness (e.g., Hatter, above). Capital makes us do things we don't want to do, but can learn from those haunting us to break the habit during class, culture and race warfare as asymmetrical; i.e., during ludo-Gothic BDSM as a liberatory matter of pattern, persuasion and yes, play!

So often, interpretation is built on shaky premises that—during oppositional praxis—happen in good and bad faith, play and acting in services to workers, power or even what they *think* is one or the other but corrupt through bad, brute-force interpretations of someone like Foucault, Plato, Butler or Marx. Popular ideas touch upon hard truths, thus lead to common and pervasive misunderstandings and ignorance that, just as often, are willfully pulverized. By comparison, Gothic Communism combines different ideas to disempower the concentric, ludic, and ultimately illusory nature of prisons!

Unto this, the possible world is often haunted by ghosts of itself leading the way out of the maze inside the maze, closet, game, endless night, what-have-you; i.e., escape happening inside capital as something to transform through hearts (spades, clubs, diamonds) and minds—how the game is played, but also inhabited and observed as a prison promoting might-makes-right. It feels like a dream, but speaks to something people better than us believed in; re, Laura Branigan:

I, I live among the creatures of the night  
 I haven't got the will to try and fight  
 Against a new tomorrow, so I guess I'll just believe it  
 That tomorrow never comes ("[Self Control](#)").

Our praxial goal is to spread power and knowledge in ways the state can't simply Hoover up—i.e., out of one or two leaders that, once dead, their revolution dies with them; e.g., Lenin—but instead, distributes in ways that, like the hydra, can't simply be decapitated, turned upside-down and bled dry under Capitalist Realism's hellish myopia. The best prisons hide in plain sight; the spirit of Gothic Communism is allegory inside of prisons that we subvert through holistic, ergodic, concentric, dialectical-material analysis—to throw the doors of perception wide. We shine a light on Vampire Capitalism, shriveling it!

To it, lie, cheat, steal, ask questions; connect the dots, fuck what must be fucked—do whatever you can to avoid Vampire Capitalism! Deny the elite that one and only thing they enjoy—our suffering. Make them hydrophobic; i.e., something they cannot swallow, choking on thirst. Grow bird spots on your wings/eyes on the back of your head; remind people that videogames (or anything else) aren't for spending money to abject reality and its abuses under Vampire Capitalism, but reverse that in ways that set us free, thus empower us to be able to make a better world than capitalists ever could (their idea of perfection being a genocidal blood bank concealed by shadowy illusions; i.e., presented as canceled-future false power inside prison-for-profit by-another name, the trolley problem being the logical and perennial choice). Labor has infinite value; use it! Define what you are born with/into, not vice versa!



(artist: [Karen B.](#))

The elite might be our jailors, then, but they're *not* the only vampires on the block. *We* are legion, and own the blood they *want* to own, but we *must* intersect or they'll divide and conquer us all over again; our intersectional solidarity and ludo-Gothic BDSM can arrange power-as-vampiric/should reflect that when challenging state doubles by thinking critically about, thus emergently with, what they want us to play with as intended: to rape ourselves for *their* daily fix. *We're* the cards they strive to play against ourselves, meaning to reclaim ourselves is to take said cards out of their hands. "All's fair in love and class war!" and they only have what power we give them—from our bodies to their mouths, we can cut off the oxygen to their brains. The Holocaust for us is them loading us into trains and camps for orderly disposal and reabsorption into the state; for them, it's us reversing polarity to deny them any ability to cage and torture us, shooting down the old track marks of history. The memory of states begins and ends with them "shooting up," drinking our blood each and every grim harvest. Let's go for the jugular (no low-hanging fruit), cutting off their supply!

To break Capitalism Realism, then, is to envision new ways of playing ourselves out that don't lead to systemic exploitation and harm; i.e., by collectively and all-at-once refusing to obey our self-styled masters (and their cops/enforcers) any longer! No more surrendering our neck, thus no more tokenizing to bite into

others by internalizing gamer mentalities that condition us to win at all costs: our souls, our bodies, our agency! We have become fenced in, doomed and stared at by those who come after and rape us (to tokenize and be put down, when we go rabid; i.e., the euthanasia effect; e.g., Samus Aran absorbing X parasites, raping the womb of nature until *she* corrupts with Medusa's revenge). Networking new circulation, we play with dogma to diffuse it (often spatially and socially—re: Metroidvania). Thus we monstrous-feminine have our deadly revenge—however campy and silly this new proletarian meta may be—topping from bellow (rebellions start and act from the bottom up)! Let them think what they want; it pays to be underestimated<sup>382</sup> (said the victim to the cop, the outlaw guerrilla to the state servant; e.g., Henry Johns to Brett Ridgeman, in *Dragged Across Concrete*, 2018)!

Under Vampire Capitalism, then, the land is a farm/strip mine of never-ending hate and misery that, when the state decays, eats all workers without care. The land shall be given back, the prisons holistically examined and dismantled, their us-versus-them mentalities erased from existence. Let's give it back! Knowing what you know, doing so—reassembling Gothic Communism, however fragmented or ghostly it might seem—should be a piece of cake (revolutionary cryptonymy's show-and-hide often being monster sex)! Sex or not, anything we do is violent, *ipso facto*; the *cake* is a lie that, in our capable hands, leads to tastier things! Delicious liberation! Development is liminal, then, insofar as the fabled chicken crosses the road to get to the other side; but for us, the crossing *isn't* to conduct genocide! Communism is already treated as next-to-impossible during Capitalist Realism, so there's no harm in trying in order to spite our captors! Sloganize fresh campy ghosts through rememory! Make Marx gay! Sex workers of the world, unite!



We have only to lose our chains! Mutual consent and reciprocity for the win! Go for the gold! Backshot Nike ("Just do it!" haha)! Etc.

(artist: [Shexyo](#))

Now that we've explored development through vampires, sodomy and bloodsports—and included the ideal hermeneutic case study *vis-à-vis* the Gothic, Marxism, queer studies and ludology through Vampire Capitalism and prisons vs ludo-Gothic BDSM in *The Matrix* and *Alice in Borderland* (and old-world-themed bloodsports with Red Hook's *Darkest Dungeon* and the Countess)—we shall reconsider another vital aspect to Gothic-Communist development: *cryptomimesis*; i.e., liminal riffing and ghostly lineages. We'll look at these through ghosts and various mechanisms associated with them, next!

<sup>382</sup> From my grandfather [fighting Nazis in the Dutch resistance](#) to me, doing the same: "I'm just a dumb Dutch girl. I don't know nothing!" Playing dumb is just another trick up our sleeves, the guerrilla fighting in the shadows *with* shadows against monopolies *on* shadows (to escape Plato's cave).



## Seeing Dead People; or Undead Feeding Vectors, part two: Ghosts/the Numinous, Metroidvania Maps, the Posthuman and Cryptomimesis (feat. *The Shining*, *Alien*, *Ghost in the Shell* and more)

"Illusions, deceptions, mirages! Your Mommy Fortuna cannot truly change things!"

"That's true; she can only disguise, and only for those eager to believe whatever comes easiest! No, she can't turn cream into butter, but she can make a lion look like a manticore to eyes that want to see a manticore... just as she'd put a false horn on a real unicorn to make them see the unicorn."

—the Unicorn and Schmendrick, *The Last Unicorn* (1982)

Part one of "Undead Feeding Vectors" covered vampires, sodomy and bloodspots/prisons, and the ideal hermeneutic case, *Alice in Borderland*, leaving so many bodies in capital's wake; part two shall now delve into playing with ghosts of different types (which is what *cryptomimesis* is; re: Castricano) tied to such bodies—i.e., the spectral, Numinous sort, but also fragmented, posthuman entities springing out of classic science fiction as begot from Gothic poetics: *Frankenstein*, and from *Frankenstein* to cyberpunk hauntologies like *Ghost in the Shell*, dragging these xenophilic identities into a decayed futurism wedded to Shelley's original warnings of posthuman abuse by Cartesian agents. Jails have ghosts not just of prisoners, then, but their fearful jailors; re: of Caesar and Marx haunting the same infernal concentric patterns. We queers are ghosts of ghosts, cryptonymies wrestling in duality to punch through the insulation of state reality and Capitalist Realism, threatening the awesome beyond as occupying the same space and time!



As with part one, *areas* of part two have been designed to holistically cover Gothic Communism's four different areas of study—re: the Gothic, Marxism, queer studies and ludology—in order to help people recognize the undead as something to see according to various kinds of popular media; i.e., to recognize in friendly and unfriendly forms that

return and feed in oft-erotic ways. This includes my research on Metroidvania, which we a) touched on during the thesis volume and b) earlier in this volume. In this volume, we already discussed the quest for the Numinous as female/monstrous-feminine, but this time will—through the second of our

aforementioned, original three **main exhibits** embedded spectrally in this module's body of work—consider the ghosts of maps being things that liminally riff and "echo" through *cryptomimesis* more broadly.



*A small but important distinction between ghosts and hauntings. Hauntings generally concern locations being haunted—i.e., by some kind of spectral presence; e.g., a haunted house—whereas ghosts are things that haunt. Generally the latter haunt something tied to home (or symbolic of home). In the architectural sense, they are unheimlich but, when executed,*

*play the Uncanny Valley out, including feelings of friendly or unfriendly spirits suitably anchored to home-coded spaces (many ghost stories work off this ambiguity to make you wonder what you are dealing with [e.g., *The Wailing's* (2016) friendly spirit, above, being more of a linguistic device or fragment than full-fledged person, throwing rocks to get your attention because its voice is damaged or inadequate] versus an *Exorcist*-style geek show. Each has its place). There's also unanchored ghosts (e.g., the headless horsemen or Wandering Jew), the explained supernatural/fake ghost and the Black Veil (re: Radcliffe), as well as other monster types described as "ghosts"; i.e., vampires amounting to ghost-like monsters that drink blood/essence; e.g., Tolkien's black<sup>383</sup> Ringwraiths, passing through walls or stirring up bedsheets like M.R. James' "Oh, Whistle and I'll Come, My Lad" (1904). So many ghosts, so little time!*

*Because of its length, this section will be even more eclectic, breadcrumb/truncated and crash-course than the vampire subchapter was. Work with less; less is more, as far as ghosts go. In short, they're vague on purpose to*

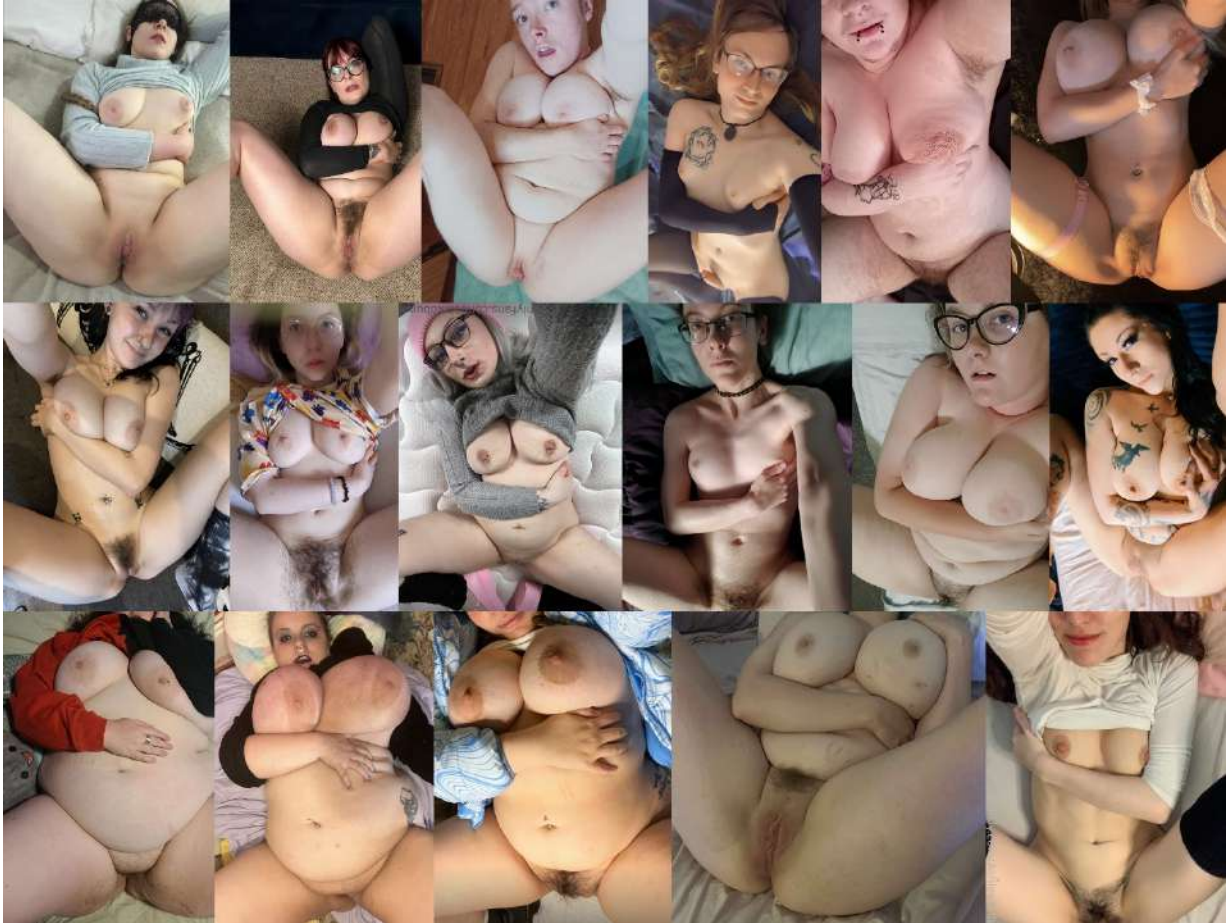
<sup>383</sup> A good canonical rule of thumb (that aligns with settler-colonial models): white ghost = good and black ghost = evil. "Small" or "big" + good/evil = small good/evil or Big Good/Evil; e.g., the Black Veil classically hides a Big Evil (a "dreaded evil"; re: Radcliffe's "[On the Supernatural in Poetry](#)"), usually inside a container (a closed space), then behind something smaller inside said container discussing something bigger/Numinous through the cryptonymy process and its ambiguous moral grounds; i.e., pointing illusorily to a hidden thing—illusions of illusions, denoting "a place of concealment that stands on mere ashes of something not fully present" (re: Hogle's "Cryptonymy in the Gothic Novel"). All seemingly unconnected to what's going on, their vanishing point accounts for the root cause: a dark castle and/or restless labyrinth, and the chronotopic environs and paraphernalia scattered about inside, which themselves get bigger, feelings-wise, the deeper one gets to the core's claustrophobic singularity (this doesn't rule out massive spaces underground; e.g., dungeons or burial crypts accounting for "impossible rooms"). Radcliffe treats this as a gaslight, but still discusses/argues with rape per fear-addled female imaginations. She opts out for happy endings (and profit), of course, but touches on systemic abuse, nonetheless.

*capture the vagaries of human language; i.e., left to rot, only to rise again through cryptonymic suggestions of itself. Among such eclectic and charged, fertile fragments, expect the unexpected. Up is down, and bedsheets swell with shapes that pass eerily through walls. Order is destabilized (re: Aguirre), the cup empty and full at the same time, mute and loud—as much a phenomenological effect as anything literally speaking. So does this subchapter touch on much, yet is altogether far too short to hit upon everything I'd like. Ghosts are suggestions; i.e., simulacra that harbor the possibility of new things occupying old and vice versa [e.g., Trace being Athetos' likeness, but guided by other spirits, neither here nor there but between all of them warring amongst him as an avatar/vessel for the player to pilot].*

*Given the ephemeral, incomplete nature of ghosts, however, I'm not bothered by this idea; ghosts shall come up in future volumes, and there's plenty of them waiting in my earlier books, too. For example, we'll talk about Fatal Frame (2001) in Volume Three, part two; [my master's thesis](#) discusses The Pact (2012) and other ghost stories *vis-à-vis* Metroidvania; and the entire "Monomyth" subchapter here is chockfull of ghostly mentions relative to Gothic castles, but especially the Radiance in "Policing the Whore," Walpole's giant suit of armor from Otranto, and Hamlet's father's ghost (and Freud's), as well as various ghosts of "Caesar" quite a bit throughout.*

*You might think ghosts are getting the short end of the stick, then, but I actually write about them quite a bit/give them free reign. The word "ghost/ghostly" appears 813 times in this sub-volume (938, if you include "spectre/spectral," and 1,079 if you include "Numinous"), whereas "vampire/vampiric" occurs 878 times, "zombie" 750, "queer" 755 (1,143 if you include "gay"), and "BDSM" 573. Apart from Derrida's titular Spectres of Marx and Hogle's ghost of the counterfeit, which I both mention a lot, well-and-truly my favorite ghost is Rudolph Otto's Numinous; i.e., which I write about extensively as "palliative" in Volume Zero, and elsewhere in the series in regards to psychosexual healing and ludo-Gothic BDSM (especially in "Transforming Our Zombie Selves" in this module, when I look at The Night House and Stranger Things for their Numinous elements; also look at "Psychosexual Martyrdom," 2024).*

*In short, this is my found document to, like so many Gothic stories, pass enticingly and spectrally onto the living. There are bits and pieces, stories of stories inside stories and so on. It's the threshold of fun, a concentric liminal space in between modules pointing backwards to its own past-present signature, and into the uncertain future tied to that. —Perse*



(artists [from top-most-left to bottom-most-right]: [Harmony Corrupted](#), [Roxie Rusalka](#), [Bay Ryan](#), [Lady Nyxx](#), [Mugiwara Art](#), [Angel Witch](#), [Bubi](#), [Cuwu](#), [Blxxd Bunny](#), [Angel](#), [Crow](#), and [Mikki Storm](#), [Bovine Harlot](#), [Sinead](#), [Krispy Tofuuu](#), [Romantic Rose](#), [Ashley Yelhsa](#))

Per the liar's paradox, "ghosts aren't real" is both true and false; ghosts are *half-real*—oscillating and shimmering between fiction and non-fiction, reality and imagination, canon and camp, in quotes and out, rape and "rape," modesty and prurience, model and photograph, disintegration and regeneration, supernatural and explanation as a matter of ontological tension. They as much language devices as people, but also are people using their literal body language (above) to express their agency as a message left behind to find itself again; i.e., we may now be cold, but once lived and breathed as you do, and had autonomy over our own bodies, nudism and labor. *Cryptomimesis* echoes bodies across bodies (again, above), poses from one to another in a long chain of oppressed labor speaking to larger terms of imprisonment, impressionistically passing along a shadow of a thought about power in crisis: the past and the future collide, canceled and decayed, the past as much a death omen that could come to pass as it may already have (or have not), once upon a time!

Therein lies the appeal. Simply put, people love ghosts because they are complicated *and* vague. Because the ghost is profoundly uncanny thus liminal, canonical and iconoclastic proponents share the same space on their spectral surfaces, loving and fearing ghosts through differing context using the same ambiguous image, inside the same spaces and their complicated aesthetics. I want you to consider and remember that ghosts don't exist in a vacuum; their likenesses double each other to interact, catalyze, and overwrite functional opponents during oppositional praxis for or against the state.



For the rest of this section, then, we'll touch on some of the Marxist ways that ghosts commonly manifest in the Gothic imagination—literally Marx' spectres haunting Capitalism by having never quite left (the ghost is generally trapped between the living the dead, on and offstage); i.e., brief and passing commentaries on (the discussed texts are listed here, though

I shall not signpost their exact order and presentation per subsection):

- [Ghosts/the Numinous \(feat. Rudolph Otto, C.S., Lewis, Rings of Power, Halloween, Edward Said, and more\)](#)
- [The Posthuman \(feat. Ghost in the Shell and System Shock\)](#)
- [Death, Decay and Troublesome Afterlife \(feat. Frankenstein, Alien: Romulus and David Roden\)](#)
- [Metroidvania Maps \(feat. The Shining, Jody Castricano and Me\)](#)
- [Cryptomimesis \*\*Main Exhibit\*\* \(feat. Silent Hill, Jacob's Ladder and Tool/Trent Reznor\)](#)
- [Reflection/Closing Thoughts](#)

Some sections will be short, and others even shorter (this limiting myself to 73 pages; I tried to do 69 again, but couldn't quite manage it). These are merely dots on a list (a bit like those on the computer screen in *Kairo*, above), which I expect you to connect and expound upon, yourselves! Have fun with it!

We'll set things up while differentiating ghosts from vampires and zombies as a monster class, albeit in relation to *cryptomimesis* as a spectral, in-between means of writing with the dead more broadly; i.e., that living artists regularly engage with as social-sexual creatures themselves: as a liminal, at-times-pornographic means of feeding on language, which collectively weighs on the brains of the living through and in between linguo-material bits—pieces and copies that dislodge from their intended resting places, floating about like chaff. Again, this is meant to be holistic, but by no means total or comprehensive. The dead speak to the living in fragments. Run with it, yourselves—clinging and responding to whatever haunts *you*.

## Ghosts/the Numinous

At their most basic, ghosts represent trauma in a viral sense; i.e., like a virus, they don't feed so much as they exist and replicate. They're often lonely and weigh on the living, seeking acknowledgement from a position of unequal existence, occupying non-existence verging on existence (and vice versa). "Feeding" happens by them passing themselves on through the people perceiving them; i.e., as more present than they are, but also less. Ghosts constitute feeding as both attached to the effects of generational trauma and divorced, to some extent, from the cause; i.e., the living relating to the past as already-happened and yet-to-pass in oppositional forms. So while (from our modular thesis)

Capitalism achieves profit by moving money through nature[—and] profit is built on trauma and division, wherein anything that serves profit gentrifies and decays, over and over while preying on nature[—trauma] cultivates strange appetites, which vary from group to group per the usual privileges and oppression as intersecting differently per case ([source](#)).

ghosts concern this as fragments; i.e., that survive in pieces what the whole does not, and cryptonymically demand to be witnessed, assembled and interrogated. They terrify their viewers, but also hold their interest. Talking with ghosts is canonically dangerous, if only because it possesses people with dangerous misconceptions that lead them to harm others (e.g., Hamlet or Jack Torrance).



(artist: [Henry Fuseli](#))

In Neo-Gothic terms (from Walpole onwards), ghosts are puzzle pieces that get up under the right conditions and walk around—are pieces of code and language representing things whose representation has since become confused or separated from the earthly resident being signified. Even with photographs, we're shown a moment in the past that was once alive; i.e., as it was that has since, in some shape or form, moved on. They may have lived, or might resemble something that once did while never having been alive themselves; like a suit of armor, they stand in for so many things, whose abstractions must personify to be understood. So many ghosts resemble people, if only as bedsheets over a humanoid shape, but so many more as full bodies (commonly women, below, but also children, witches, escaped slaves, and other state victims). In short, they double potential victims/victimizers as much as actual ones: death omens.

All ghosts link to profit. Profit is a generational cycle of violence, weighed against holes in memory/testimony and blocks in this or that, when confronted in

ghosts of themselves, explode anew. Unfettered and raw, calm-to-frenzied spirits seek to escape and be heard, seen, witnessed. Some scream, others smile; flat effects are common, as are hyper or hyposexuality. Prison hardens you, and domestic abuse turns the home into a prison lorded over by abusive parents—ghosts of them, from husbands and kings to treacherous queens and battered narcissistic housewives.



(artist: *Artemisia Gentileschi*)

Just as often, though, there's a parallel current of revenge—of preventing future harm by avenging past wrongs. Some victims (or their ghosts) strike back, commonly through art; e.g., Artemisia Gentileschi, of whom Ariela Gittlen writes in "A Brief History of Female Rage in Art":

[Artemisia Gentileschi](#)'s *Judith Beheading Holofernes* offers another dramatic scene of an ordinary woman overpowering a high-ranking man. Gentileschi's painting is muscular: The Biblical Judith and her maidservant bear down on their victim, the invading Assyrian general Holofernes, as Judith saws at his neck with a sword. Blood spatters in long, ropy arcs, spraying Judith's chest and neck. Holofernes' tortured expression and copious amounts of blood are also present in [Caravaggio](#)'s earlier version of this subject (ca. 1599), from which Gentileschi is said to have drawn inspiration. Yet in his rendition, Judith looks rather removed, her face wrinkled in disgust rather than set in determination.

It's arguable that Gentileschi's own experiences with sexual violence shaped her approach to depicting this brutal story. At age 18, she was raped by her painting teacher, the artist Agostino Tassi. Unusually for the 17th century, Gentileschi testified in court against her attacker. Tassi was set free following his conviction due to an intercession by the pope, while Gentileschi was made to endure the public shame of the trial—at which she was forced to testify while being tortured with thumbscrews. Gentileschi's *Judith* may have been a portrayal of the justice that she herself was denied ([source](#)).

Given a voice, the oppressed have things to say that the state (and its usual benefactors/avatars) won't like. Like naughty children, black penitents run to daddy and ask for protection from the big bad mean ladies (that they themselves abused until said victims pushed back); i.e., to preserve and maintain status-quo control over the things normally dominated by patriarchal forms. This includes ghosts!

Except, abuse doesn't stop with a single, isolated event; it lives on as ghosts do. Like a bloodline, the invisible shackles of control are passed down from Roman

Imperialism (and the ancient canonical laws) onto *Hammer of Witches*, Cartesian edicts and Enlightenment doctrine, onto the Protestant ethic and modern forms of Capitalism. The state abuses labor through its own victims, past survivors commonly tokenizing/triangulating through blind rage (re: TERFs). Just as often, though, it regresses or shuts down, like Pavlov's dogs. Justice becomes reprisals from police agents protecting rapists, kidnappers, wife-beaters, what-have-you; re: by blaming the victims and obscuring the harm that abusers do through ghost stories. It compounds, and the ghosts start to appear in ways that speak to things that never fully stay dead. As such, the state will defend its own sanctity and sovereign status, repressing said ghosts through police violence feeding anisotropically *for* the state (re: power flows up). The state casts a long shadow, being fond of Numinous spirits to better spook workers faithful!

Regardless, big ghosts fracture into smaller relatives. So many victims of state abuse are sex workers/women, the elderly and children, but also witches and foreigners; i.e., those already preyed upon by the state, who—once homeless or otherwise vulnerable—make for easy scapegoats: "[Those who suffer have no voice.](#)" Give them one, and you will hear the wail of the damned—a cry heard round the world, from beyond the grave, coming home to roost. Some people make light of that—re: Jadis saying to me, "Put your *mysterium tremendum* in my uncanny valley!"—but just as often, the joke is to some degree profound or sacred; silly or not, it still carries weight, the imaginary past coming back around to mirror the present (and vice versa). Ghosts unanchor and wander to cause mischief.

Likeness and simulacra, effigy and egregore, ghosts are also what survives when the living are gone, but also when they return; i.e., speaking to mysterious, tremendous, buried things that rise like shadows to the surface; re: the *mysterium tremendum*'s Numinous, divine signature attaching to ordinary murder, rape and revenge; e.g., black widows or the Bleeding Nun speaking to unnatural deaths, evil plans, and all-around systemic brutalities. They are simultaneously blind and lucid,



wanting to heal through acknowledgment; i.e., in ways that, per the counterfeits they haunt, either build up Capitalist Realism or tear it down. They are as much the veils or sheets as things beyond them; i.e., so many things to acknowledge or avenge, bury or dig up, because profit demands such things, which it tries to hide. Per the cryptonymy process's double operation, they show and hide great power where such power is always found: on the surfaces and thresholds of workers! They tease and threaten equally mighty-mighty things with some degree of profound all-hanging-out and calculated obscurity!

(artist: [Nyx](#))



The gendering and sexualizing of ghosts, like all monsters, is arbitrated by historical-material forces. With queer people, spirits speak to their closeted selves rising into existence seemingly *ex nihilo*, for instance. By comparison, female ghosts are, like female vampires, committed to the monstrous qualities of their biology as hysterical, wild; re: their wandering wombs as ghostly things that rise up furiously to seek revenge against the state reaping and punishing nature as classically female, but in truth monstrous-feminine in ways that speak to female victimization by police force/patriarchal agents since ancient times: Gaia and similar goddesses of nature speaking to her immense size and fury as that of a Gorgon (below). Divided, she struggles to pull herself together, after death, only bare it all! She's larger than life, than men; primal and dehumanized, she must rehumanize as fat and sassy!

The ambiguity of ownership or representation is always in question, with ghosts and afterlife. As we shall see, ancient female rage is carried forwards in art as a kind of ghostly, viral medium for buried atrocities (re: Ariela Gittlen); i.e., committed against women and those forced to identify as women, thus treated as monstrous-feminine and "of nature"<sup>384</sup> by the state. Such beings are often naked and furious, climbing out of wells, caves and other dark, watery sites of repressed rage, rape anxieties and revenge, etc, to scream about such matters; i.e., the Medusa, but also her likeness expressed in banshees, succubae, and other such monsters—if not the castration of male rapists, then their societal emasculation by avenging female/feminine parties tied to nature: as brutalized by empire's living ghost, Caesar embodied by Cartesian men as dead ringers to his rotten lineage. A common way of queer/monstrous-feminine revenge is the destruction of a male bloodline: "I will have your son!" or "I will be with you on your wedding night!" etc.



(artist: [Kait Freckles](#))

While capital harvests nature as monstrous-feminine—a peach to site/sight and carve anew for fresh pulp—death traps police victims onto an earthly plane, a kind of purgatory where they cannot rest. Thought not always, a ghost is generally rooted to a

<sup>384</sup> While capital currently punishes natures-as-monstrous-feminine, nature as *female* divides canonically to virgin or whore; i.e., anything that is wild can be made tame, but remains innocent *and* tainted/thirsty for revenge. The gentle/furious dichotomy translates to natural landmarks personified by the state's self-appointed keepers of nature, said lords superstitious of so-called bean sidhe, harpies, dryads, nymphs or witches—often redheaded, and all tied to the same wilderness as scapegoated maidens are: gentle meadows, glades and ponds, compared to dark bogs, swamps and craggy heaths, burial mounds, abandoned castles, and such. A "sylvan scene," the female land's negative space (caves, in particular) becomes furiously vaginal, angry and chaotic—blamed by the usual enjoyers penetrating it; i.e., men exploiting double standards, punishing and tokenizing the usual suspects against updated persecution networks following the Cartesian Revolution's phallic, policeman's entering of the womb of nature to torture her secrets out of her (re: Bacon).

prison, but also a space that has eyes and ear; i.e., the feeling of someone being watched, as if by a ghost; e.g., the Overlook Hotel. They communicate emotions like extreme sadness, anger, grief and lust (*vis-à-vis* the medieval Seven Deadly Sins); i.e., tied to buried atrocities, abject and exiled by state proponents.

To it, many ghosts are murder/suicide and rape victims, thus sex workers and children—not cis-het men, in other words. But some, like Pyramid Head, are the ghosts of warriors/abusers/ruffians (re: Radcliffe's *banditti* an exotic kind of pirate or black knight), or the ghosts of victims who become furious to the point of a blind, uncontrollable hunger/rage; re: victims or abusers (cops and victims), per the trauma response. To set them free is to let them feed, often by giving them a place to voice themselves in lieu of those who can no longer speak having been denied the chance: acknowledging the harvest to humanize it.

As discussed in Volume One, "The Western world is generally a place that testifies to its own traumas by fabricating them" ([source](#)); i.e., no body, no crime. People who go missing and are never seen again is something of a paradox, then, given their faces and likenesses are seen on every street corner and carried across the lips and in the hearts of a community's survivors. A ghost lives on, somehow still alive and very much not alive. They become a likeness of those who *are* still alive, constituting spectral embellishments regarding the living associating with ideas of people, good and bad, dead or alive; i.e., representations of someone that speaks to a hidden or unaddressed quality given a human face; e.g., a model who asks to be painted, as Nyx with me: ghost stories, then, work similar to legends and rumors—as things to spread for different reasons.

Such is *cryptomimesis* in a nutshell; i.e., the echo of power and trauma felt dualistically in fragments and likenesses—ghostly chaff expressed between language and people, places and things, but also copies of copies of copies:



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

Just as often, though, such gossip is a point of pride: something to advertise and announce that we were here and proud of ourselves.

For my *Sex Positivity* project, either volunteers ask to be painted a particular way (as Nyx did, with me, above) or I ask artists if they would like to be drawn ([as many muses of mine inspired me to do](#)). And in many cases, the brand image of different artists are out in the world, to be critiqued under Fair Use. They stand in for themselves, personas representing offshoots of people, but also larger things like womanhood, nature, female/feminine sexuality and mental illness, etc. They're things to fall for and do justice in whatever we, ourselves, create; i.e., something to

capture in a moment, like a photograph: full moon booty but also a sweetheart who loves nature and herself tied to the land (we'll return to Nyx in the Demon Module).



(artist: [Nyx](#))

The idea is to convey something that can't be raped or destroyed, but undefeated, will live on and survive/surpass abuse while helping prevent it; i.e., ludo-Gothic BDSM through what we leave behind as sex positivity expressed in echoes of echoes of echoes: a refrain parading what we show behind various boundaries during revolutionary cryptonymy (re: "flashing" exhibits). In short, ghosts are things we can make through the cryptonymy process to achieve rebellious sentiment; i.e., existing in broad daylight, unrepressed, in spite of all attempts to bury us alive. We cannot be contained, refusing to be victims in ways that include other groups and add so many among the substance of things that *can* be seen, but not touched: we feed and draw strength, enriching the spirit not as something to bury or exorcize, but make space for in daily life! It becomes a dumb supper—a vital, back-and-forth exchange; i.e., to feed and find sweet joy and release through Numinous avatars' bangin' bods (and backsides): the dark side of the moon/lunacy's deepest trenches ("that's no moon, it's a space station!")! Not something to split in two, the Great Pumpkin's recesses and cleavage being a package deal offering up much-needed reunion with nature; i.e., normally harvested, holiday-style, as capital territory on the frontier. No more!



(artist: [Nyx](#))

For a variety of reasons, ghosts operate through the awesome, poetic power of suggestion (whose uncertainty grants a wonderful likeness for domestic abuse; i.e., the gaslight effect). Be they either queer and/or female—but also people of color, religious minorities, sex workers, children or the elderly, homeless and/or mentally ill—the same, comorbid assigning of criminal elements affects all oppressed peoples indicted by the same predatory system; i.e., moves power towards the state inside a larger prison-like persecution network whose former victims haunt the home-as-burial-grounds, speaking of past abuses waiting to be dug up, investigated and laid to rest. All leave behind oddly delicious ghosts that appear to speak, if not pointedly to their own abuse, then their own empowerment in ways that jab conspicuously at abuse as a ghost would: laterally (a detective doggedly getting to the bottom of things; its rump, next page, called all manner of silly words; e.g., Zeuhl called it a "rumpulon," in jest/emulation of Gothic/sci-fi language). While the home, per

Foucault, is haunted by the ghost of raped victims leaking from the bedroom, many Neo-Gothic authors play with these "nightly bumps" to gain agency over their emotions. It's often campy but remains haunted<sup>385</sup> by canonical forces: we hit that, and film ourselves being stuffed in so many compromising positions. That's power!



(artist: [Fewebomb's](#) "Rump in the Night," 2019)

Ghosts less lurk between resident and residence, then, and more embody the complex, organic relationship between them as ongoing and anisotropic, ergodic, concentric and recursive; i.e., the chronotope and *mise-en-abyme*, their narrative of the crypt invoking a castle-sized vanishing point tied to unspeakable things spoken through medieval poetics, but also human-sized/shaped inversions suggesting the castle beyond and tethered to those. Back and forth, it goes, smaller tied to bigger and vice versa in shared quantum existence. In Gothic, authorial desire caters to the Numinous as something to suspend between, felt with castles-in-the flesh; re: body-like castles and castle-like bodies making the skeptical temporarily faithful, hung between reason and irrationality in ways that make them shrink, prostrate before the hauntological divine. Castles are crime sites, but also, per Bakhtin, legendary environs concerned/saturated with the aesthetic orbiting hereditary rites and dynastic power exchange. Per the *Numinous*, a divine presence is generally tied to a monarchical burial ground that wakes up; it speaks to big things crawling to the surface concerning fresh workers.

Of course, such things exist between nature and civilization, people and place, as evocations of enormity expressed in names like the Numinous, Sublime, Absurd, and other such proper nouns; they stack onto/speak to power as felt during liminal expression: the likeness of the oppressed, the victim, as doubled in those still happy and alive. "You look like you've seen a ghost" speaks to so many victims being born again in fresh forms that, bare and exposed, remind survivors of what they themselves lost: "No one is primarily afraid of what a ghost may do to him, but of the mere fact that it is a ghost," explains C.S., Lewis in *The Problem of Pain*,

<sup>385</sup> As something to camp, rape is something of a running gag in home/sex life; i.e., living in fear as saturated with the ghostly stuff of older parallel castles, prisons, etc. Reaching a saturation point, ghosts magically appear but also stories about them. Catharsis = playing with ghosts; i.e., as twin-like; e.g., the poor twin girls from *The Shining*, murdered by their father gone mad: "Come play with us, Danny! Forever and ever and ever!" They beckon him (and us)—are abortive offshoots of a larger problematic structure, redoubling and threatening "this" between "that" and "that, that" (the American space lacking castles, but no shortage of patriarchs or genocide). Mind over matter becomes a marriage, then; i.e., submission unto old feelings versus dividing and alienating them; re: playing with dead things in search of secrets. The night is young!

reflecting on Otto's Numinous. "It is 'uncanny' rather than dangerous, and the special kind of fear it excites may be called Dread. With the Uncanny one has reached the fringes of the Numinous" ([source](#)). So do ideas of the holy and divine merge with guilt and superstition attached to things that were once alive, or point to a formerly alive thing that, since then, has become a placeholder (akin to Otto's usage of Latin words to stand-in for something beyond human language).

In turn, the human element becomes a shell of sorts, holding something inside or about itself that defies description, but is nevertheless married to it on the same Aegis; i.e., an echo chamber less of a space and more a canvas with a model mirroring older bodies. Anything we do is violent in the eyes of the state, thus the state meets with indiscriminate police force through violence, terror and monstrous poetics. Per Asprey, "terror is the kissing cousin of force" (re: [War in the Shadows](#)); per me, we reverse the role/order of terror and counterterror to expose state abuse and humanize ourselves in guerrilla shadows and ghosts. All of this occurs—you guessed it—through the asymmetrical feeding vector of ghosts on the Aegis: existing where something should not, but does; i.e., the paradox of terror extending to sex worker bodies (often, but not always female) being closeted and collared by police violence upholding the state's usual operations. "Peace" is a white man's word; "liberation" is ours, from bit to intersectional, solidarized bit.



(artist: [Vivi Tarantino](#))

Ghosts, in turn, rise up between the cracks, but also through seemingly-solid walls, floors, bodies, shackles, what-have you. They resist containment and statutes of limitation, but nevertheless deteriorate, contaminating places with ambiguous menace and dire speculation: fraud, forgery and fabrication that points to the holy and sacred being false. Amnesia and rememory struggle to remember such things through ghostly left-behinds, the data of a lingering and unaddressed pain: generational trauma and lost generations. Per the cryptonymy process, they are true *and* false, standing "on the ashes of something not quite present." Phantom pains, they warn of past violence, but also clear-and-present dangers; e.g., present-and-future murder attempts, criminal conspiracies, internal/foreign plots, designs, calculations, premeditation, segregation, etc. They constitute holes in memory to fill with some degree of imagination; i.e., an amnesia, walking blind spot, loss of time, absence, ataxia, aphasia, Kantian noumenon, or some such cavity or gap (re: a vanishing point); e.g., [the Slender Man from Marble Hornets](#) (2009) realized by matter of serialized urban legend, that when approached in text (or out) overloads the sensory organs like static on a TV screen. The ghost, less than seeking a proper burial, *resists* one. Per the cryptonymy process, it becomes restless and vibrates, operating partially on suspended disbelief.



Diaphanous and ephemeral, but solid and capable, ghosts are things to write with suggesting other things not quite dead *or* alive, but composed/regarding those states of existence on orders thereof; i.e., from the shortest ghost stories, to ghost writers, super heroes (e.g., Space Ghost, above), and a defuse and long line of eclectic thinkers like Shakespeare, Radcliffe, Marx, Otto, Derrida, Castricano, Butler and myself—all of us writing about/with spirits, spectres, gender trouble and various other queer manifestations of this-or-that trapped between, beyond or behind something else; i.e., small things leading to big things (Cinderella's slipper vs Otranto's helmet), the fog creeping in on little cat feet, nothing else remaining 'round that colossal wreck, chasing smaller spirits of mightier and bigger Numinous ones! This colossal boneyard is where ideas both go to die, but also catch fire and, like the phoenix, be born again. Liberation and enslavement occupy the same space, thus the same language as spatio-temporal, linguo-material, human and alien, fascist and Communist, alive and dead.

In the Gothic, then, decay and inheritance of a fallen West can denote a "Gothic effect" (re: [Baldrick](#)), but just as easily suggest size difference and alien signatures that, from Capitalism to Communism, help workers reunite with lost mighty things by remaking them; i.e., the potential not to be a victim, but gods, kings and queens where no such things exist for one, but all: the land of giants and gods, wherein Divine Right/the Protestant ethic and capital's monopolies, trifectas and usual harmful qualities/witch hunts are a thing of the past. Under a new, recultivated Wisdom of the Ancients (the proletarian Superstructure), Rome is dead and stays dead; Medusa, as Galatea's ghost, rises from the fragments of Pygmalion urns to threaten liberation unto capital's usual slavers. We don't tokenize/rape rank and place Original Sin over blood libel, black rape epidemics, or sodomy



accusations; we unite, intersectionally solidarizing under Gothic Communism to break Capitalist Realism: through our counterterror's pedagogy of the oppressed. This has a mark to it—pieces that are controlled and yearn to be free in ways that perceive both as unreal and more real than real. The fantasy poster comes alive, but stays half-real, like a ghost promising all manner of reckonings and revelations:

(artist: [Nyx](#))

We're the pain in the ass and cannot be exorcised, the bleeding heart beating 'neath the floorboards. Much of what we say is common knowledge, but denied or buried (as genocides always do) by those who can afford to turn a blind eye (again, as genocides encourage). Any boundary or

barrier you put up to discourage us, we pass right on through—a quantum element whose quandary makes home feel foreign, alien, and exiled; re (from Volume One):

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 ([source](#)).

As such, we're in the closet, without a land—the dreaded past of imperial and capitalist abuse come back to haunt the state; i.e., the ghost in the darkness making *them* afraid, the colonizer realizing his servants, possessed by the dispossessed, may suddenly and uncontrollably have a collaborator's inherited cause: to resent his occupation and abuse of their territory!

To have agency is not to define as the state decrees, per the profit motive; i.e., to liberate is to self-actualize/self-define through Gothic poetics; re: our darkness visible/Satanic poetics creating to play god but also use our ghosts tied to past victims. For them and ourselves, we negotiate what is normally non-negotiable, arbitrated by us on our terms, using what we got; i.e., as part of our land and the enchanted class, cultural and/or race characters it offers. We don't give ground, we take it! True rebellion and false rebellion sit inside the same ghostly spheres and entities, then, we and our freedom fighters echoed badly by



state counterfeits: cops playing guerrilla/white Indian (re: Samus Aran). Our cryptonymy must expose them while keeping us flexibly solvent and immutable.

This isn't just a battlefield fought with soldiers, then, but warriors of love yielding their own ghostly "arsenals," aliases, and agency. Humanize the harvest, and the state becomes inhumane across all registers. We can get to state forces simply by reminding them that illusions go both ways; i.e., power is something workers have in spades, our own operatives being the pumpkins of the fields, the statues in the churches: whores that make the devil to pay in ways that go beyond what the state can even control, such brothel espionage extending to art and *its* ghosts (of ghosts, of ghosts...)! The holy ghost becomes "almost" to joke and tease, the Numinous "[dumps like a truck](#)": "Damn, girl. You shit with that ass?"



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

It's a quasi-religious, "almost holy" experience, then, one which has many applications, secular or otherwise; i.e., towards profound sensations of experience, these simulating death, rapture, martyrdom and/or orgasms (skin or erogenous), etc, but also entities attached to said things; e.g., fire of the gods/the Promethean Quest during Cartesian critiques and mad science; big vampirism and master/slave relationships and castles; religious experiences, visitations from disturbing alien experiences; zombies and liches, necromancers, big death and calamities; and similar tiers of power and the Numinous/*mysterium tremendum*.

We won't have time to explore these here, save to declare that all express the experiences of giant warring spirits in shared spaces with not enough room to distinguish and divide these things into discrete categories; i.e., ghosts of Caesar and Marx, of a cosmic-sized abstraction speaking to hyperobjects at odds, a Communist Numinous vs the state's own variant, the skeleton king and similar poetic manifestations grappling during psychomachia, *Amazonomachia* and psychopraxis (concepts from Volume Zero<sup>386</sup>); re (from Volume Two, part one's "Conflict, Mothers-in Conflict, and Liberation"):

<sup>386</sup> As I use them in Volume Zero:

Doubled costumes, props and conflicts; psychomachy, psychosexuality, *Amazonomachia*, psychopraxis. It all begs the question: why use heroic language at all if it just leads to confusing doubles? To be frank, heroic theatre is where power exists, so you have to go there to interrogate it; you can't just ignore it and make up your own language\* because that's segregation (and nobody will know what you're talking about). Segregation just alienates you further from society and closets you (which is a form of genocide: forced conversion). You have to get down in the trenches, weaponizing the awesome paradoxes inside to reach a wider audience through allegory and apocalypse during liminal expression—to speak out and break things that cover up your abuse.

Gothic castles (and castle-like Destroyers) leading to the Communist Numinous (the proletarian monstrous-feminine) amid a war of titanic forces, gargantuan but vague; i.e., felt through paternal disturbance, Capitalism being Communism's mortal enemy and the *true* Great Destroyer labeling its foil as "devil-in-disguise." Both are, but only one wants to enslave and destroy workers, Medusa, and the planet as a sustainable habitat: capital. We have a right to exist; to dye our hair, take HRT or pierce our nipples and worship Satan; to be recognized as squishy and delicious; to groan or fart as we pee (or pee in someone's butt—not my kink but you never know who likes what). All constitute intimacy, which the state doesn't care about (seeing ours as "passing for" their own coached doubles and so-called "winners").

Again, it's just "crew expendable." Why? Because "fuck you," that's why! They want to own us and cheapen our lives for reasons purely of greed entertained by the lamest vultures on Earth (real "divorced dad energy"). So we must fuck *them* (and their monopolies) by freeing the monstrous-feminine to become our true selves with, whatever form that may be. Liberation is a journey to survive in deathly forms, wherein we escape, fight censorship, and endure embarrassing double standards (enshittification; re: [Cory Doctorow](#))—to fight the good fight, forever ([source](#)).

Workers leave behind ghosts, as do states, and some workers serve states, and Communism refuses to die entirely despite capital's best efforts to bury it. Extant or faded, fabled or down-to-earth, to fight and resist is noble. In turn, all occupy the same shadow zone in dialectical-material conflict; i.e., all connect ambiguously during oppositional praxis, bonding or co-existing in ways that personify but aren't always clear about which camp they belong to. It's a church to worship at cross purposes!

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*\*English is a bastard language told through perpetual conquest; i.e., "sex" is a liminal expression that canonically synonymizes sex/rape as associated with the language of conquerors: to fuck (versus longer and less direct Norman-French bastard words). While the two cannot be separated, the canonical invocation of the theatrical paradox deliberately ignores the pleasure of a thoroughly natural and healthy activity (to have sex)—one whose physical complexities (e.g., girls fart during sex, or "fart," "queefing" when air builds up inside their vagina, especially during doggystyle; also "edging") have been historically-materially conflated with unironic harm, one and all. Subversions of this linguo-material affect must occur through catharsis as an imperiled position to reclaim what has become unironically violent; i.e., by using the same language as taken back for sex-positive purposes: to heal from lived/inherited trauma and prevent harm in the future, often by reveling in the wicked, bad, naughty theatre of the devil's position as a praxial underdog who enjoys being the interesting member of the troupe. Invisibility is a prey mechanism, but who wants to be boring (thus inert) when appealing to the virtues of theatrical expression? "The nail that sticks out gets hammered" makes for poor proletarian praxis ([source](#)).*

Simply put, invention and inheritance are liminal as a matter of creativity through themselves.

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

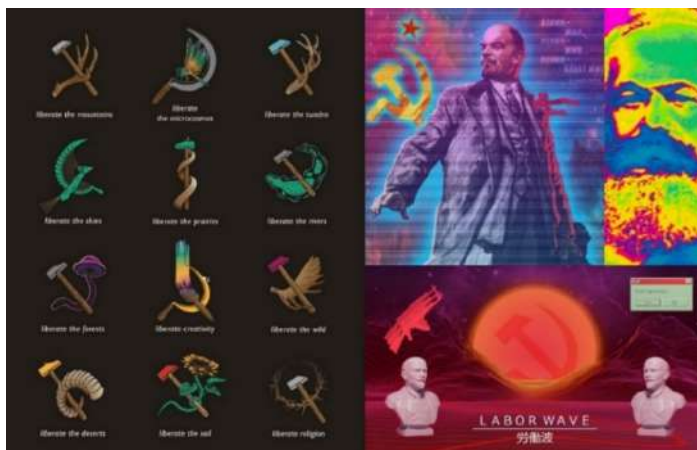


(artist: [Vivi Tarantino](#))

In the calculus of existence, then, ghosts are aftermath—signatures and suggestions of what was, is and will be inside space-time, and sitting between humans and their own left-behind medieval-to-modern socio-material histories, relating troublingly back and forth (re: Marx' tradition of dead generations/spectres haunting Europe, etc). Compared to zombies or vampires, then, ghosts are probably the hardest to pin down, as they are the most linguistic/ontologically vague, in dispute/uncertain (re: Hamlet), and arguably the least erotic (save as images of erotic things to reach out and touch, above: "Is that a booty I see before me; I clutch thee but have thee not").

Yet vampires and composites can also take on ghostly qualities (exhibit 42d2); i.e., as magnetic and revered inside the ghost story as a curiously popular medium: a literal ontological extension of someone, someone else's idea of someone, or something else entirely—e.g., Hamlet's father's *actual* spirit, Hamlet *thinking* he's talking to his dead father from beyond the grave, or something that bears a *likeness* to Hamlet's father that continues to exist inside and outside of Hamlet's mind: in the natural and material world in a very "animated," viral way (either a coincidental semblance, like the Boos being ghosts without bodies, or the "wendigo" that copies the appearance of someone to torture them; e.g., *The Dark and the Wicked*, 2020, or *It Follows*, 2014). Perception feeds reality as a matter of action; i.e., "the readiness is all."

More to the point, ghosts aren't strictly "dead" in the sense of having once been alive. They live on/feed from moment to moment through how they are seen, often according to how powerful they are; i.e., a Numinous spirit versus a small, unimpressive ghost. As we've seen so far in this book, the context for what is impressive, uncanny and die-hard can vary considerably—e.g., the spectre of the skeleton king/conqueror through capital versus the camp potential of Communism's mighty "kings":



(exhibit 42d1a: Artist, left: [Earth Liberation Studio](#); top-mid-right: [Leonardo Galletti](#); top-fair right: [Fuck Yeah Socialists](#); bottom-right: [source](#). The spectres of Marx are as much the reinvented, campy and viral language of what those in or aligned with power fear—i.e., the literal ghosts of boogeymen

like Marx, Lenin and Stalin divorced from their historical-material fixtures and converted, more or less, into a kind of radical detachment from state propaganda. The cryptomimetic war becomes one of oppositional aesthetics, wherein the faces of our Communist "Rushmore" challenge the status quo, but also the 20th century's checkered reputation of Marxist-Leninism. This isn't an endorsement of state abuse or mechanisms, but an artistic movement that treats these ghosts as reclaimed symbols of rebellion against oppression, canon vs camp. This operates at odds with spectres of fascism like those of the Third Reich. As "Laborwave" founder Leonardo Galletti writes,

*Considering all of these things, the ridiculousness of "fashwave" becomes even more transparent. How can you take a genre that, from its inception, has been preoccupied with anti-capitalist rhetoric, and use to defend a capitalist, fascist cis-hetero patriarchy? It would be like if I tried to appropriate Wagner operas and Birth of a Nation to create Communist propaganda ([source](#): "The Rapid Proliferation of 'Laborwave' and What It Means," 2019).*

*Unlike Hitler or Goebbels [who always served the state], more complicated Socialist figures like Marx or Lenin [fuck Stalin in his homophobic ear] were defined at various stages by appeals to systemic oppression under Capitalism operating as usual: capitalist simulacra. The human palimpsests may not have lived to see Communism develop—indeed, they were ostracized within and after their lifetimes to reinforce Capitalism's continued hegemony—but the third kind of ghost, the detached simulacrum, has become an informed appeal to avoid what these men were in life while still treating them as a complex propaganda tool that functions in a very viral, "corporate mood" sense. There is no obvious source—the canaries in the mine starting to appear seemingly ex nihilo—but takes on a life of its own because the seeds of rebellion [the dialectical-material struggle] are utterly primed for it; i.e., to blip, like a ghost, into existence between language and its perception. To quote from Galletti again:*

*It makes my heart swell with pride to see the Laborwave genre growing so rapidly, transcending entire continents and languages, all because of the internet. It feels magical. When I made that very first Laborwave edit of Lenin, back in 2016, I would have never imagined that this trend would blow up so phenomenally. I regularly find art that I have made spread to the farthest corners of the internet, in places I would never expect to find it. [...]*

*Vaporwave, the artistic genre from which Laborwave evolved, is a post-modern music and visual art genre whose surrounding "subculture is sometimes associated with an ambiguous or satirical take on consumer Capitalism and pop culture, and tends to be characterized by a nostalgic or*

surrealist engagement with the popular entertainment, technology and advertising of previous decades" [...] If Vaporwave is the thesis, then *Ostalgie*, a German term describing a longing nostalgia for life in Communist East Germany, is the antithesis. Our western culture is slowly coming to grips with the collapse of the economic system that we have enjoyed living at the peak of. In coming decades, we will face incomprehensible struggle. It only makes sense that as the world slowly crumbles around us, that we will cling nostalgically to things from our childhood and early lives that remind us of the simpler times. One eastern culture, who has already had to slowly come to grips with the collapse of their entire economic system over the past nearly 30 years, not just in Germany, but throughout the entirety of the Eastern Bloc. When places like Russia experienced 10 MILLION excess deaths in the years immediately following the reintroduction of Capitalism in Russia, it's no wonder why more Russians have a favorable opinion of Stalin than they do Putin.

The synthesis then, is Laborwave. Laborwave as I define it is: an intersectional art style reconciling nostalgia for a Soviet past with a nostalgia for the visual motifs of the 80s, 90s and early 2000s. While Vaporwave relies on subtext, sarcasm and mild critique of the consumer-capitalist nightmare we have created, Laborwave takes it to the extreme, forcing you to confront the horrifying and uncomfortable truth. Bertolt Brecht once said: "Art is not a mirror held up to reality but a hammer with which to shape it." To me, Vaporwave has always remained by and large little more than a mirror. But with Laborwave, I am trying to make hammers [*ibid.*].

To this, Gothic Communism aims to liberate creativity in ways that reclaim not just people, but the icons they themselves used in the never-ending fight for labor and nature: the hammer and the sickle, and the men synonymizing these things. As such, we camp Marx' ghost, making it gay to break Capitalist Realism.



[artist, left: [Persephone van der Waard](#); right, artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#)]

The model for the rightmost illustration wishes to remain anonymous; indeed, they disappeared from contact shortly after my drawing of them. They had wanted to be drawn for the project, but also lived in a traditional, pro-police household that did not respect their right to be trans; they became torn between a desire to be themselves and uphold their family's conservative values. As for the

drawings, above, they evoke a sense of death, espionage, and terrorism within the hauntology of corporate decay—e.g., *Sombra's accommodated rebellion* [left] serving as a form of appropriated labor/opposition presented by Blizzard as a "pastel-Goth" hacker-for-hire who goes unscrupulously to the highest bidder to escape her street-life, gang-riddle past; it's assimilation fantasy through the tokenized false rebel. My drawing of Elektra Ovirowa from *Cowboy Bebop: the Movie* [right, 2001] places a former corporate assassin for the state in a Laborwave nostalgia married to cyberpunk and Vaporwave's own cousin aesthetics.

In turn, these pastiches stylize through the oppositional praxis of aesthetics, first and foremost; i.e., they can be perceptive, but require the use of iconoclastic artists working in concert with a larger countercultural artistic movement through subtext [re: disguise pastiche]. On the cusp of the uncanny but also the Numinous of Capitalism falling apart, we—like Roy Batty—"want more life, fucker" [who, faced with his own manufacture of obsolescence, in Elden Tyrel, promptly decides to crush the old ghoul's head; one sympathizes].

Derrida insists there is "no outside of the text," but anything beyond Capitalism is suggested inside itself [and its myopia] with ghosts. Per Gothic Communism, our own artistic choices—within Vaporwave, Laborwave and cyberpunk as perceptive pastiche—can revive mighty spirits out from the past in opposition to capital's ghost of the counterfeit; i.e., their eerie, welcoming likeness emerging in hauntological forms that can ultimately be better than these men were in life; re: "If you strike me down, I will become more powerful than you could possibly imagine," except this happens through camp as a matter of worker revenge. Jedi are cops.)

As something whose appearance bears out through oppositional praxis, the ghost is a haunting figure whose confounding and unstable ontological qualities affect the viewer's own vision; i.e., in highly complex ways: to feed our appetite for unspoken things that beg to *be* said, but often go *unsaid*.



(exhibit 42d1b: Ghosts of the abused lurk cryptomimetically between different forms of scare language in the shadow zone, whereupon the ghost of the counterfeit furthers the process of abjection, according to nature as queer in order to maintain status-quo arrangements/advance profit. For example, *Rings of Power* cashes in on the

same anti-queer/anti-Semitic/anti-Pagan witch, goblin and vampire/werewolf stereotypes as old Disney villains: from *Snow White's* Maleficent poisoning princesses, *Sher Kahn* from *The Jungle Book* being a talking cat dad that eats children, and the hunched-over tall rat in black-and-red from *The Great Mouse Detective* all being equally problematic, onto many others; i.e., going onto the likes

of naughty uncle Scar, drag queen likeness Ursula and so many other evil queers. Persecution networks overlap, swapping this out for that. Middle-class people pay out; everyone else is divided-and-conquered by capital.



These betrayals extend to Tolkien's Sauron reinvented by Amazon; i.e., into a king ghost of Caesar/the Wandering Jew that rises up from the ground, eating millipedes and rats, to then steal a human body and ultimately endure rapturous torture as delicious to him ["The trick, William Potter, is not minding that it hurts!"]. When collared, he lies to his enemies with pretty gifts—a "power over flesh" [code for Nazi BDSM] but also the presence of divinity C.S. Lewis describes as follows:

Now suppose that you were told simply "There is a mighty spirit in the room," and believed it.

Your feelings would then be even less like the mere fear of danger: but the disturbance would be profound. You would feel wonder and a certain shrinking—a sense of inadequacy to cope with such a visitant and of prostration before it—an emotion which might be expressed in Shakespeare's words "Under it my genius is rebuked." This feeling may be described as awe, and the object which excites it as the Numinous [[source](#): The Problem of Pain].

In short, pain is a trick, and Tolkien's Sauron is Milton's angelic and shapeshifting Lucifer minus that story's camp [re: Volume Zero]—a perennial vice character that playfully injects life as frisson [skin orgasm] into an otherwise boring story en medias res. It's false rebellion sold to spice up a purity argument—both to adults and kids alike during the dialectic of shelter and the alien: "Middle-earth" [Eden or Rome by another name] is fading and the fallen angel conveniently appears to offer a glowing [and bogus] solution. It appeals to tokenized folk wanting to assimilate, but also general queerness seeking to give voice to its own suffering amid fresh redemption; i.e., to get the upper hand on a bunch of self-righteous twats who think their rule is not only above critique, but timeless and Good. Sauron speaks and God is silent; translation [from Milton]: God is a cunt, as are his mysterious ways.

We can certainly camp said baddie daddy ourselves, relating to his confused, psychosexual predator/prey responses and pleasure/pain mechanisms. All work within a persecution network that is highly commodified, and not used by Amazon to liberate us; they use it to turn us into a sideshow attraction, which we must

*reclaim through the same bread-and-circus aesthetics—i.e., being collared ironically during calculated risk per ludo-Gothic BDSM. Enjoy Sauron stealing the show, if you want. Don't unironically endorse Tolkien's refrain/Goldilocks Imperialism<sup>387</sup>; instead, camp its echoes of Caesar and Marx yourselves, doing so in ways that challenge profit by reversing abjection to raise awareness towards neoliberal Trojan maneuvers commodifying former symbols of rebellion—i.e., into false Nazi-Communist copies we must reclaim and make Gothic [gay-anarcho] Communist once more.)*

Ghosts are doubles, and doubles are when sublimation fails, creating a linguo-material feeling of being haunted within ordinary life; i.e., as occupied by something beyond Capitalism: total death, or "death" symbolizing radical change to treat, as Capitalism does, like a bogeyman. It doesn't die, but arguably is—like some kind of *Pontypool* [2008] word virus—not or never fully alive:



*(exhibit 42d2: Top-left, [source](#); artist, bottom: [Josh White](#). While a liminal, uncanny element exists to any monster I could list, certain forms like the zombie, werewolf or vampire tend to be more strictly personified and humanoid in their privatized, neoliberal forms; i.e., the Halloween costume, aka the "guy in a suit" effect. The ghost, as C.S. Lewis touches on through *Otto*, is conveniently divorced from a concrete physical form, but not the space that houses it ["there is a ghost in the other room"] nor the fact that it is, in some shape or form, a copy or an illusion that denotes an otherworldly or incorporeal presence connected to a humanoid*

*shape. Ghosts are not strictly or automatically human, but look human enough to merit an uncanny response to varying degrees.*

*A surprise function of human language, then, is the ghost as a kind of double. As a mask behind which there is no human, we're left with a human appearance occupied by an inhuman pilot [e.g., Michael Myers' play on the Halloween mask/costume as uncanny on its surface, making its human-shaped wearer feel inhuman and his locations increasingly Numinous]. Such devices make for a simple-but-effective device in ghost stories. As ontologically uncertain, ghosts allow for*

<sup>387</sup> Re: White guerrillas, saviors and Indians, native lands emptied of indigenous peoples and filled with ghostly copies for white LARPer power trips; i.e., the *Star Wars* problem/Cycle of Kings and canonical essentialism under a settler argument; e.g., good, tame nature vs evil, old, alien nature; e.g., the barrow-downs and the wights there. Standardized tokenized, us-versus-them *D&D* fare abjecting the state as decayed, pushed out into alien, Orientalist, monstrous-feminine dead spheres of dark nature: stigma animals, orcs, and such beings in the usual refrains' states of exception. From balrogs to orcs, "evil" is whatever the state needs it to be; i.e., to rape nature, thus profit. ACAB, ASAB!



some fairly basic but potent phenomenological tricks to be played on the mind; e.g., is there something under the bed sheet or behind the copy? Nothing becomes a terror that is beyond human expression, but felt as a ghost growing inside us [re: Radcliffe's terror mechanism].

Canonically these kinds of visions tend to be blinding to the audience, whose mad terrors cannot see anything beyond the bogeyman as something to see everywhere; re: Hamlet. It's a very totalitarian concept, making it tremendously useful to the state; i.e., as an instrument of revenge that takes/stops up all passages of memory and remorse, built on fabrications; e.g., Hamlet's commonplace book built on a likeness of his father telling him to kill, or Macbeth's dagger of the mind—the latter something for the superstitious warrior to clutch and yet, have not, only to lead him to draw a real blade and do "Duncan" in. It's a hit. So, too, does Myers feed on his babysitter victims, seeking revenge on naughty girls who ignored him once, and continue to behind his mask-like face. He's not exactly oozing charm.

Per spectres of Caesar and "Rome," humans are easily led astray, chasing ghosts in ways the state wants them to; re: Capitalist Realism making us feed on ourselves: "a scared cop is more useful than a dead one." For us, the ghost as something to perceive should yield visions that are far more illuminating and mind-opening, but also suppressed and cloaked in ways we can weaponize despite how they scare us, too: spectres of Marx, which we must make and camp from older fragments and whispers to break Capitalist Realism with. We're not immune to the Numinous feelings they excite, but can become one with them in ways that turn these against our foes; i.e., our revolutionary cryptonymy making them crap them pants when they try to read the room [red or not, below—red room, redrum, whatever].



Of course, iconoclasm can still be tied to communal worship—e.g., the grandmother's ghost from "[Over My Head](#)" [1989] by King's X—or liminal spaces that feel tied to something resembling a divinity worthy of worship or containment [re: the Radiance from Hollow Knight]. Sometimes, the exact origins of the ghost, or their spirit

doors, are not fully explained. They are unheimlich through the restless, cryptonymic qualities of their labyrinths, which chill the living in sweet, delicious terror. A ghost can simply walk in your direction and make you feel unwell/ill-at-ease or conversely dying a little death similar to torture but not. "The dose doth make the poison," either sensation being experienced to a liminal degree; e.g., [the ghost walk scene from Kairo](#) [above] is incredibly unsettling in motion, but in single frames, doesn't quite have the same chilling effect; i.e., the inanimate must animate in ways that denote they are animating in lieu of animate beings, which

*they are not, versus an animate being that must freeze in ways that suggest they are inanimate in ways they fully are not, either. Ghosts exist in between. They haunt.)*

Whereas vampires and zombies denote an active curse to varying degrees, the role of the ghost is often more passive—an intimation of mortality by facing copies frozen in time, and whose facing of which drains the viewer of different things. This could be life force, but just as often the ghost is simply a feeding vector through the living person reacting witlessly to the return of the past as advancing towards them as a ghost actually might: a cloned, mimetic, *posthuman* threat to their own humanist understanding of existence (we'll examine more active, hostile variations of the copying mechanism when we look at the pod people from *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, 1978, in Volume Three). How the worm turns.

However, before we move onto the second of our three undead exhibits, I wish to make a concept taken from *Alice in Borderland* that connects to the ghost as something to see the world not simply with, but *through*; i.e., a composite point of view flowing out of older forms (which, again, our second **main exhibit** will explore at length) into posthuman ones. The canonical zombie or vampire expresses the depletion of essence or life force as forgone, but also iconic. Certain narratives—especially science fiction stories loaded with Gothic elements—are far more fixated on the *ghost* as a byproduct of some monstrous procedure, one that drains the object of said vitality to begin with at spectral extremes: mad science, specifically that of Capitalism, as the dominant power structure on planet Earth threatened by posthuman rebellion (and older afterlives, after that).

### **The Posthuman**

People forget sci-fi started with the Gothic. Though Utopian futurism is certainly iconic, the fate of said structure seems to have shifted towards a rapidly decaying half-life in recent years, "surviving" artificially into a dead future. This posthuman swinging of the pendulum precludes terror literature as romanticized by Mary Shelley's 1826 *The Last Man*, another palimpsest of *Ghost in the Shell* apart from *Frankenstein*. Together, these workers presented the Gothic imagination as wedded to fictionalized science, devising an especially potent critical lens: the posthuman existence as a kind of futurist ghost and potential, xenophilic self-fashioning that half-lives in the graveyard of Capitalism's ongoing exploitation.

As our companion glossary provides: "In *Posthuman Life*, 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," thus is difficult to imagine from an entirely anthropocentric perspective, but all the same cannot be entirely denied within retro-future stories concerned with the human condition as centralized within

its own self-made destruction. The ghost becomes xenophilic as a market for our lost humanity surviving within machine people as looking, thus wanting to feel, human by virtue of how they're treated. As such, anthropocentrism also applies the non-human condition to some humans/posthumans, while "awarding [others] special honors in the world order." This bias/stigma must be resisted within human/nonhuman distinctions that allow for sex-positive, ecologically protective posthuman expressions giving room to the queer/postcolonial individual to not simply exist, but thrive in a world that isn't reduced by Capitalism to a cyberpunk graveyard's liminal stage: chemical, erotic, neurological, hauntological!



*(exhibit 42e: "It is with considerable difficulty that I remember the original era of my being; all the events of that period appear confused and indistinct. A strange multiplicity of sensations seized me, and I saw, felt, heard, and smelt at the same time; and it was, indeed, a long time before I learned to distinguish between the operations of my various senses," says the Creature to Victor Frankenstein [source].*

*The ability to remember one's birth out of the pieces that compose one's own body might seem impossible for humans, but is quite at home in the posthuman condition of science fiction: asshole dads. Descartes was a cunt; so, too, is Victor and those emulating him; e.g., Peter Weyland from Alien and the invisible corporate jackals we never see in cyberpunk worlds.*

*Originally penned by Mary Shelley in 1818, the same idea has survived in futuristic forms like Ghost in the Shell. In that cyberpunk narrative, the idea that ghosts are linguistic accidents—i.e., the "ghost in the machine" conundrum—is evoked by murky shadows, déjà vu, and fragmented dreams. The heroine feels alienated, chasing the ghost of what she wants—her humanity—while feeling stuck in a body that was made for her by soulless, profit-driven corporate forces.*

*Together with the woman as uncannily replicated, the larger story comments on the human condition through the female form as weaponized, but also born to serve a neoliberal master that treats her as disposable, powerful, and fetishized; i.e., "more human than human" through a near-indestructible machine body that not only looks human, but makes her faster, stronger [and arguably sexier] than her biological counterparts—a technophobic demon for weird nerds to joyride. And yet, the woman inside that body scarcely has room to exist, little more than a beautiful shadow that, in the full daylight, vanishes like a ghost. She seeks companionship in order to feed as ghosts do; i.e., by occupying a living space among the living as acknowledging them.*

*The fear, in this situation, is a lack of consent during endless replication, our "female Adam" forced into an existence it does not want by a male Pygmalion she cannot refuse; but also one in which her human makers could never fully understand despite clogging the world with cheap imitations of in pursuit of endless profit. Just as their own greedy and detached motives are completely insipid to the heroine, her own xenophobic desire for independence—i.e., the robota slave's search for the self in Project 2501—is entirely uninteresting to them. In their minds, why should an automaton do anything but serve? Any attempt at agency only becomes automatic rebellion against the status quo, something of a nightmarish enigma to the elite: the sentient robot's desire to be free of servitude, which those in power will demonize despite having authored [re: Victor Frankenstein]. In doing so, it's her point-of-view that constitutes forbidden knowledge; i.e., that machines can be human, but also loved and feared for their mighty ghost-like bodies. We'll unpack this posthuman/demonic concept as we continue to look at composite bodies and demons in this section and the next sub-volume.*

*Such things—from Frankenstein to System Shock—transfers the fire of the gods/playing god and magic into manmade arguments of technology-as-magical [advanced, per Clarke's Law] centered around morality arguments against Capitalism; i.e., through possible-future arguments as canceled, Promethean, but also corporate hells abjected off onto real-life places like South Korea [with canceled futures having a neoliberal, Orientalist-noir flavor to them, littered with drugs, gang violence, gentrification, zero privacy, survival prostitution and police corruption, hence femme fatales/molls, bounty hunters/space cowboys, snitches, muscle, mob bosses, working crime scenes, etc]. Neoliberalism, though, projects Red Scare fears onto an imaginary menace [the technological singularity] that seeks revenge against the Cartesian man of reason, but also Capitalism abjecting its own failures onto cyberpunk hauntologies blaming radically advantaged technology [that they could never make themselves<sup>388</sup>] instead of the rogue labor [robata] that such "technology" represents. It's DARVO, but also self-aggrandizement; i.e., "I made something that surpassed me." It's literally the ghost of the counterfeit. Except per Frankenstein, technological augmentation isn't bad<sup>389</sup>; how it's used is—i.e., weaponizing it for profit, which is what capital does; e.g., Alien, Star Wars, Final Fantasy VII, The Terminator, Neo-Genesis: Evangelion, Oni, Cowboy Bebop, District 9 or Cyberpunk: Edgerunners. The latter treats technology*

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<sup>388</sup> Refer to Volume One's "Healing from Rape" (2024) for more discussions of this, *vis-à-vis* Cameron's *Terminator* films.

<sup>389</sup> Apart from drug use and magic, it serves as a good trans metaphor with body modification potential; i.e., actual technology but also wish fulfillment and possible futures through development away from capital usual expendabilities: Communist prototypes in cities of dreams, possibility—change through struggle, on the ragged edge of madness, abuse, desperation, death wishes, suicide by cop vs suicide bombing/martyrdom (terrorism vs counterterrorism). Such things come not from fighting people, but structures of immense, god-like power (which abstract into giant statues, like Walpole's armor—the Capitalocene). That's what capital is.

*literally as a drug speaking to acid Communism [something we'll explore more in the Demons Module].)*

Just as *Alice in Borderland* focuses on a basic card game as vampiric but also badly copied to fuel the narrative in ways that critique capital, the same idea of cheap-replication-as-critique is utterly palpable in *Ghost in the Shell* and similar doomsday stories running along a similar train of thought: *Alien* in 1979, *Blade Runner* in 1982 to *System Shock* in 1994 to *The Matrix* in 1999 and so on (with *System Shock* being remade in 2023, below).

The iconoclast's xenophilic aim of identifying friendly ghosts, then, is less about hypervigilance (itself a survival mechanism among abuse victims) and more about an artless guile or underhanded ease towards working with ambiguous language and dexterous language games on a regular basis. Some undead (the neoliberal sort) brand themselves as delicious and "safe"; others hide in plain sight, in uncanny spaces that fail to feel normal despite a distinct lack of anything strictly monstrous or alien at all—re: *Alice in Borderland's* Japanese ghost town. Confidence and quickness comes from practice, but also from a game player who isn't afraid to play, make mistakes and learn from older ghosts, including not just canonical, but hypercanonical ghosts (so famous and mass-produced that you know them when you see them).

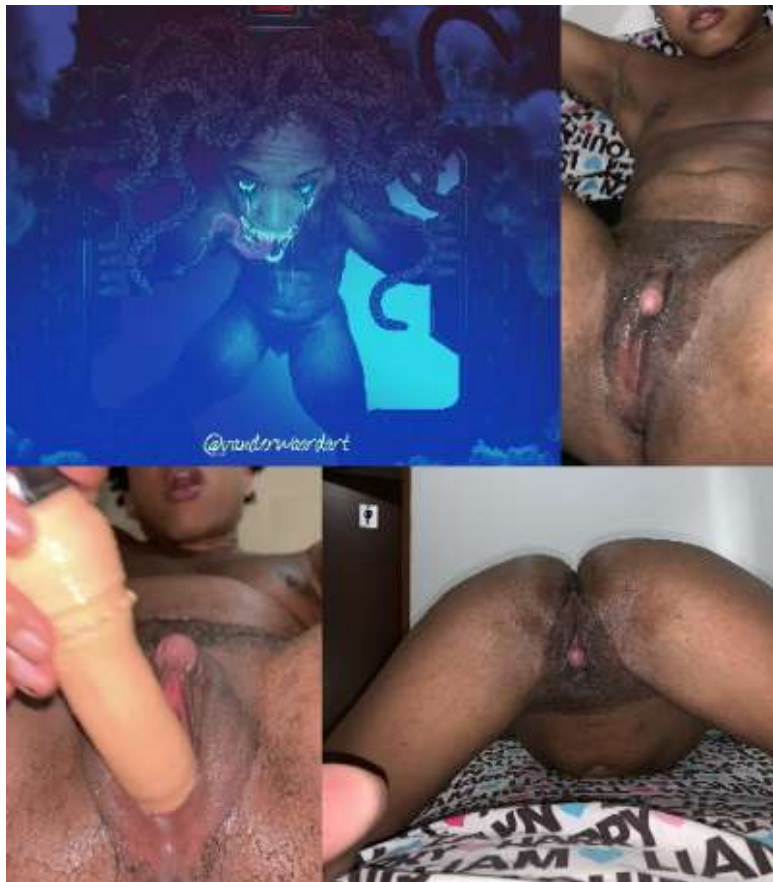


*(exhibit 42f1: Like Project 2501, Shodan from System Shock never had a body but exudes a posthuman superiority that is modeled after, and in response to, its human makers own experimentation and hubris coming back to haunt them. It is a "copy" but also unique, blipping into existence on the cusp of a technological threshold—what Shelley flirted at, which, in the centuries ahead would become known as the technological singularity. This nightmare/dream scenario falls under what Roden, in Posthuman Life, calls speculative posthumanism:*

*The radical augmentation scenarios discussed in the previous two sections indicate to some that a future convergence of NBIC [Nano, Bio, and Information Technologies; Cognitive Science] technologies could lead to a new "posthuman" form of existence: the emergence of intelligent and very powerful nonhumans. In particular, we noted that the development of artificial general intelligence might lead, in Good's words, to an "intelligence explosion" that would leave humans collectively redundant, or worse. Following an influential paper by the computer scientist Virnor Vinge, this*

hypothetical event is often referred to as "the technological singularity" ([source](#)).

*This doomsday scenario constitutes its own myopia, one generally composed of technophobicias centered around humanoid machines from the retro-future visiting unwanted nightmares upon the present space and time; e.g., The Terminator, 1984; Light Years, 1987; Colossus: The Forbin Project, 1970; etc. Shodan, in particular, wants to zap Earth with a giant mining laser. Doing so, she's turning the industries of mankind against themselves, effectively ridding the planet of inferior "creatures of meat and bone" for a posthuman paradise.)*



(exhibit 42f2: Model and artist, top-left: [XCumBaby98](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#). Cum Baby is a trans man, pronouns: he/him, and both the drawing and this overall exhibit were designed according to how he wanted to be represented/depicted. I decided to draw him as a trans variant of the Medusa, modeled somewhat after Shodan from System Shock but set within Ridley Scott's Nostromo from Alien. The cryptomimesis affords a queer communication/reclamation of power using ambiguous, transgressive language inside a liminal space: see me, stand in my shoes. Thus do we fags feed as ghosts do;

*i.e., to throw you off-balance, but with our booties and Numinous affect help put you "on the scent" of new tremendous mysteries leading away from state forms/turns of the screw!)*

A common example we've mentioned is Medusa, whose ancient, female rage extends into futuristic, ludic sites of decay like the survival horror of the System Shock franchise. The 2023 iteration isn't the 1999 variant or the 1994 version before that, let alone the many, many others we've mentioned (or left out). All share a common thread: vengeful, transgressive spirits that seemingly come out of

thin air but, in truth, actually come from one's imagination as informed by the material world in opposition through shared symbols. Wracked with various emotions of terror and curiosity at seeing a likeness of something awesome risen from the grave, Shodan is to Medusa what Hamlet's father is to his son, riding past in his ceremonial armor (or poor murdered Banquo killed in ways that Macbeth never actually saw but could only imagine). Ghosts, in this sense, represent older ways of viewing the world; i.e., as egregores, but also ontologically "hijacked" interactions. The liminality is the occupation of the monster by a model, or the face of a person adopting a destroyer persona that can be divorced from its radically canonical bias inside a liminal space where power and resistance both call home.

Such a concept applies to not just videogames (since *Pac-Man's* ghosts and mazes, and *Metroidvania* after them) or traditional games, but social exchanges more broadly as things to define and the diverse media that invokes one or more parts of a social exchange; e.g., women as objects to be won and fought over and trans people and other minorities to be sequestered and killed or ambushed like prey. Fragmentation means isolation, thus coercion and abuse of all kinds that leaves behind "footprints"—made in steps that one person makes, followed by another and another in a sequence of shared steps along a spearheaded path that has no obvious source. In *Ghost in the Shell*, the Wisdom of the Ancients is something that has never before existed: not artificial intelligence, but *posthuman* intelligence as something that sparks miraculously into existence, then thrives where humans cannot even begin to survive under the ruins of Capitalism.

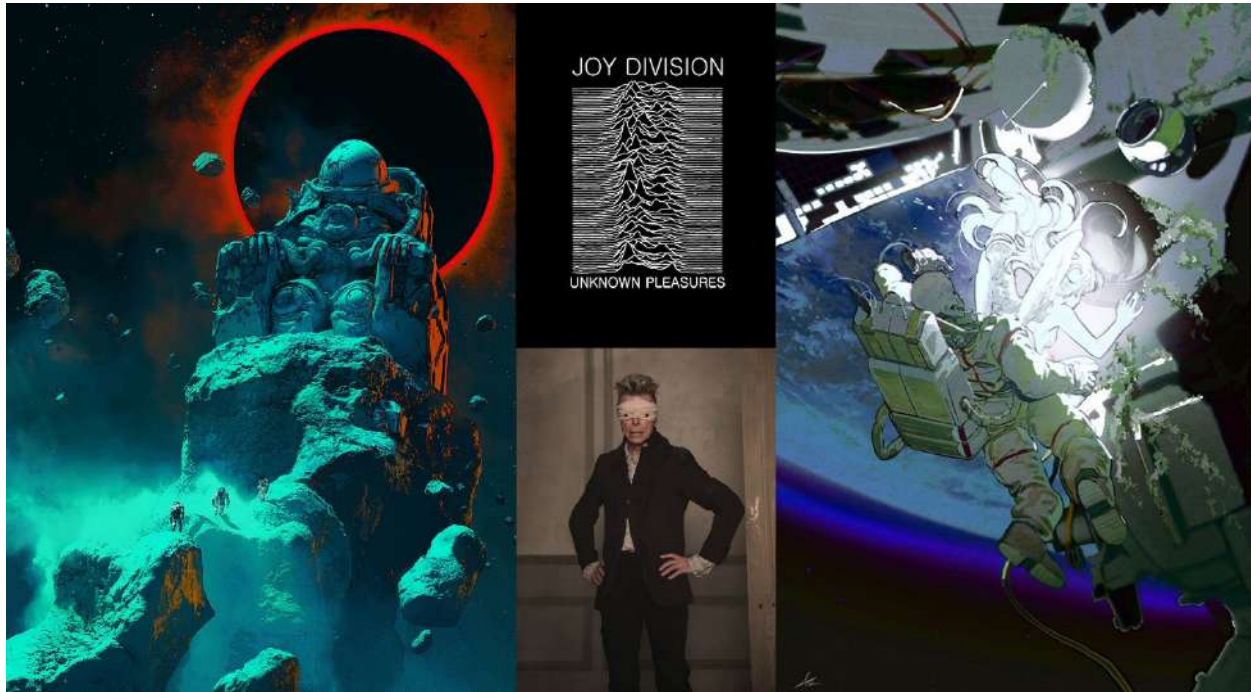
By extension, this connects to older ghosts and aesthetics, the Gothic mode more broadly concerned with death, decay and afterlife as troubling through ghosts; i.e., things to contain in between genres, in prisons; e.g., [the butt ghost from SCP](#): "I am the butt ghost; I am going to eat your butt!" Ghosts can have butts, be butts, fixate on/with butts, and so on. And butts, like all things, decay and denote decay and paradise denied (re: Purgatory and the Sale of Indulgences).

### **Death, Decay and Troubling Afterlife**

Like the binary nature of computer data, ghosts (and ghost-like beings; e.g., clowns) communicate through affect and oscillation, of veils and dreaded evils versus annihilating those feelings (re: Radcliffe's terror vs Lewis' horror). The problem with canon as such is that it cannot see beyond what it deems "the end," namely the end of the world and life as we know it.

Such a conclusion, then, can feel rather bleak, like a prophecy bent on cosmic nihilism; i.e., the universe is one giant graveyard populated with entities perceptively greater than mankind, but also hidden away inside various dreamlike, canceled, retro-future zones or liminal spaces coming back around; i.e., populated with the alien dead of countless civilizations: mighty ghosts *not of this world* nor of Capitalism (spectres of Marx), or markers of undeath that treat Capitalism's failed

reach as foregone long before Humanity rose to prominence—i.e., the colonial gaze of planet Earth reflected back at its state-serving astronauts in Promethean astro-neoetics (exhibit 42f3, below): Shakespeare's Quintessence of dust, Milton's darkness visible. To face life is to face death as the cosmic coincidence Communism rises out of—out of the corpse of empire, Cartesian thought, and astro-neoetic hubris: occupation or intimation of spectres of Caesar and Marx, that simultaneously intimate mortality and immortality on the membrane of Capitalist Realism, the cracks in empire's façade, industry and lineage!



(exhibit 42f3: Artist, left: [Pascal Blanché](#); right: [Totkin ZQ](#). David Bowie's "[Lazarus](#)" [2016] concerns the angel who questioned God, living in darkness as punishment for being "the impetus of hell" [as Bay puts it] but also symbolizing the queer existence of the 1970s and '80s. "Living in darkness [visible]" presents a draw towards something that's normally abjected from "normal" [cis-het] people that, at the same time, they cannot imagine; it's a spectre of Marx that lives beyond what straight people can understand or visualize. Bowie was also Jareth, the bisexual goblin king from [Labyrinth](#) [1986] who could shapeshift into an owl but also strut around in spandex [while advertising his portentous junk to audiences worldwide](#) [Elizabeth Howlett, "Who Is Jareth In Labyrinth and Why Has He Got a Bulging Penis?" 2018]: the further back you go towards the emergence of a Cartesian school of thought, the closer a goblin was to a vampire [e.g., [Jane Eyre's](#) monstrous assignment of Antoinette Causeway as a vampire and goblin]; i.e., simply different from the norm in ways deserving of selective punishment/moderate condescension by white, cis-het people.





Recent "ghosts" of old monsters would update the technophobic stigma, becoming something to regard with fascination and fear, but also reverence and denial; i.e., astronautics in the Alien universe, its space matelotage commenting on cosmic nihilism as a colonial

critique that abjects capital's atrocities onto ancient aliens during post-Frankenstein and post-At-the-Mountains-of-Madness Promethean narratives: ones thoroughly distrusting of mad technology in corporate hands, like Shelley did, but updated in popularized copies tossing the same hot potatoes from Heinlein to Scott to Cameron, Nintendo, id Studios, and beyond; e.g., HAL-9000/the Monolith in 2001: A Space Odyssey vs M.U.T.H.U.R. and the Derelict in Alien vs Mother Brain and the Chozo in Metroid, but also the raw and furious potential of their abjected experiments—of the land, itself, as furiously disappointed with Humanity's best efforts: dystopian canceled futures like Brazil or Blade Runner married to German Expressionism/Gothic surrealism per the haunted house/Gothic castle/ghost ship like the Nostromo or Event Horizon. On site or off world, palimpsest to palimpsest, Dorothy remains stuck inside a dead Oz with poor offshoots of the Scarecrow or Tin Man; her dreams of escape become a nightmare in a nightmare. The Wizard is far worse than any witch, and his manmade people/glass wombs suck not because they are artificial/unnatural/manmade, but because they serve profit; i.e., they are inherently rapacious.

On one hand, it's a dead dream—a derelict fortress that cannot see beyond itself or its fatal, frozen nostalgia, colonial decay and scuttled, industrialized, alarm-fatigue outreach; i.e., stuck in the retro-future gloomth on repeat, while corporate masters ruthlessly monitor said rats-in-a-maze from relative safety [as old shareholders did, centuries ago during the seafaring, exploratory era of Capitalism's early years]. It's also a highly developed aesthetic revived and evolving constantly since the Neo-Gothic period to speak out against the Capitalocene. Such problems never left, so the Gothic mode resonates with trapped audiences looking for answers to the same old corporate lies:

*I remember when it was so clear  
We were young but the memory still remains  
To pick fruit from a tree, fish from the seas  
Now nothin's left here but the stains*

*But I can't cry no more, can only be glad  
That there's other places we can be [Montrose's "[Space Station #5](#)," 1973].*

*Such things, furthermore, walk the tightrope between wanderlust/escapist military optimism and Promethean caution: kill the monster or run from it. It's a calculated risk—a place to build and go to when you feel out of control:*

*Well, we had a lot of luck on Venus  
We always had a ball on Mars  
We're meeting all the groovy people  
We've rocked the Milky Way so far*

*We rocked around with Borealice  
We're space truckin' 'round the stars [Deep Purple's "[Space Truckin'](#)," 1972]*



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

*Such Gothic danger discos [and their ongoing exploration of various taboos, stigmas and phobias; e.g., fear of pregnancy and/or rape] speak to the freight of imported/exported goods, but also workers ferrying such cargo in and out of Hell on Charon's canoe. It's a canonical racket/pipedream promising afterlife, which we reclaim by having fun in the face of some truly awful things: putting "death" and "rape" in quotes, fantastically armoring ourselves while we navigate and negotiate capital's labyrinthine illusions, bare-assed. Under them, advanced technology and medieval poetry kind of merge and aren't automatically malign, but often walk a fine line during the Promethean Quest and its psychosexual, technophobic baggage; i.e., Shelley's original variant married to 20th century futurism blurred and complicated by 1970s strict BDSM aesthetics. These, in turn, amount to Gothic push-pull, which speaks to different ancient predator/prey mechanisms: fight, flight, freeze, fawn and... flop? [Rape Crisis' "[The 5 Fs](#)," 2024].*

*Fight and flight are romanticized the most in popular fiction, but Gothic media explores the others—normally alienated/repressed under Capitalism—through rape fantasies that give audiences a way to test such things in a controlled environment, while juggling other emotions tied to the human condition under capital; i.e., how does human biology [and biological responses] measure up against Promethean technology [and oral fixations, despite the xenomorph in theory being able to interface with our vaginas or anuses]?*

*Current ethical conundrums under state operations reify with outmoded psychoanalytical signatures; e.g., pregnancy and rape, but also abortions and improvised surgeries, per Freud, Jung and Creed salivating over Giger's weird BDSM-tinged, parasitoid wasp brainchildren. The biomechanical character speaks less to pure bio-power under prison-like conditions, and more compromises and "insect politics" that merge to survive the state's inevitable extermination policies, pogroms, ethnic cleansings, etc, tied to land and national identities, but also verminous chattel made abject: xenomorphs.*

*From Scott's Alien all the way to Alvarez' Romulus nigh-fifty years into the neoliberal cycle, things are simultaneously protohuman in an ancient, "animals fear fire" sense, mired in medieval hauntologies, and elevated to dead futurisms that yield ghostly British Imperialism and Romantic Promethean might infringing on the Numinous. It's all at once a spell to fall in love with [the ghost of the counterfeit] and a dirty little, Radcliffean secret to summon, bury and burn; i.e., replete with trolley problems/collateral damage, Dr. Jekyll's magic potion, Oedipus Rex and Walpole's Mysterious Mother camping incest, Pinocchio complexes [with bits of "Flowers for Algernon," 1959], hide-and-seek games, postpartum psychosis, infanticide and matricidal cannibalism, and all-around biomechanical indigestion inside an astronoetic belly of the beast.*

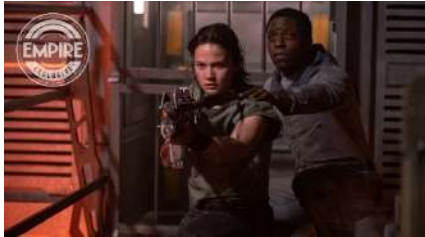


*Like a virus, capital constantly rewrites itself to serve the state, "afterlife" a zombie of terrible biomechanical synthesis dragging state structures along ornery palimpsests haunting their wake. Struggling to reverse engineer nature/guerrilla war in weaponized-yet-servile forms, corporate technology has been given a technically human face, but sports an entirely cold interior—bent on colonizing not just outer space, but itself per state models left to their own devices: to "upgrade" Humanity with Promethean fire not in service to workers, but corporate interests weaponizing mad science in the clumsiest of ways; i.e., "to serve corporate interests" told through a digitized mouthpiece of a dead actor in love with the ability to survive workers [above]. "Humanity" becomes synonymous with "profit" and survival as a souless, viral affect; all that remains is a loyalty to the company and a primitive regression towards techno gods lurking in corporate wreckage, which then comes after-alive to cannibalize itself. To it, life and the state are entirely incompatible; infected with mad science as a radical, terrorist response rebelling against capital, life and nature are twisted and raped into sorry ghosts of themselves in order to adapt under crisis:*



*Station and attendee, the Romulus and Andy are a staging ground for warring ghosts, the eponymous station infected by the ghost ship's marooned and then stowaway contagion, and Andy the electric servant [robota] invaded by the spirit of the science officer, Rook, and the heroine's dead father—all warring inside the same space and occupants. Data is both literal computer code, biology and in between the two, relaid in various hauntological forms that imprint during the ensuing chaos. Per Hogle, their sum is the ghost of the counterfeit, a larger haunting expressed in smaller ones, on the same concentric Aegis. The creatures respond and feed off the humans' fear mechanisms, but also their basic biological signature, which the company imitates through synthetic doubles of the alien device, itself a forgery that replicates to survive.*

*Measurement-wise, all come from a sample of one, one unkind to maidens. Luckily, a wallflower our brunette heroine in Romulus ain't, but she's untested. Not for long! Inside Andy, below, her kindly father watches over her during her Amazonian rite of passage: the castle's transfer of power from father to child, but also from corporations to workers once more. Everything is a cipher for the ghostly feeding vector! The odds might seem astronomical, but repeat because the problem, Capitalism, remains ongoing. These critiques sit between Ancient Romance and quotidian novel, silly-serious, cheesy ethics debates relaid on staged morality plays orbiting wedge issues; e.g., are robots people? As with Frankenstein and similar stories like I, Robot, I Am Legend or Alien [*insert iteration, here*], we're not talking about never-humans, but those Capitalism treats as such; posthumanism equals liberation.*



*The betrayals invert, existing at odds, just as Victor and the Creature did. Corruption occurs, mid-transference, the data as much the exchange and confusion as it is anything intended, hybridizing animal, human, parasite, and prey to reify and direct evolution: for workers and nature or for capital. It cannot be both, so doubles occur and compete; i.e., evil twins, Cain and Able, Romulus and Remus, Phobos and Deimos, etc. Home becomes alien as a matter of translation through crossed wires, chaos, Roman sentries vs barbarians at the gate, the lines blurred between robata and rebel, cop and criminal, pod and person, etc. Nothing is strictly "correct," just consequential, lightning in a bottle. Something doesn't add up/compute, either side forced to endure the hardships they aren't designed to normally handle. It's a purge/stress test, which might as well be another name for state shift.*

*Under such unfavorable conditions and extinction/godly abandonment/explorer anxieties, calculated risk is tremendously useful in surviving and expressing capital's abuses; i.e., insofar as ludo-Gothic BDSM is a performance that needs to be simulated versus needlessly engaged in uncontrolled circumstances. The Alien universe and its dodgy posthumanism/postcolonial bent is perfect for that, speaking*

*to ghosts of rape in ways that are both emulative of acute physical and mental distress, but also psychosexual release valves relayed in hypercanonical refrains: the past come to life in pun-like ways we can relate to/play with ourselves; i.e., to work out various kinks, quite literally.*

*We queers find our lost/rising posthumanity in such liminal gay zones, purging capital from ourselves like the Nostromo's evil cargo, while—to some extent—identifying with the abject thing we're flushing away. Boundaries are put up, crossed and challenged insofar as the desire to raise, lower or penetrate them fluctuates tremendously. We can play with these operatic mechanisms, throwing whatever switches we need as dislocated from cause and effect outside a theatrical area. It's safe to do so, and built on older and older performative traditions and scholarly pursuits merged, as the Gothic so often does, on the same stages; re [from Volume Zero]:*

*Before the thesis proper, my essay "Notes on Power" discussed the paradox as being the performative nature of power doubled, including monsters but also their decaying lairs as monumental sites of immense, god-like power dressed up through the Gothic language of the imaginary past; the Metroidvania is a Gothic castle full of Gothic monsters, but also Gothic ghosts (echoes) of older and older castles reaching out from novels and cinema into videogames. Regardless of the medium, though, Clint Hockings' adage, "Seek power and you will progress" ([source](#): "Ludonarrative Dissonance," 2007) means something altogether different depending how you define power as something to seek, including unequal arrangements thereof. As a child, teenager and woman, I sought it through the palliative Numinous in Gothic castles of the Neo-Gothic tradition carried over into videogames (which I learned about in reverse: videogames, followed by the Numinous/mysterium tremendum as introduced to me by Dr. David Calonne).*

*Of these, I explored their Numinous territories in response to my own lived trauma and subsequent hypersexuality—i.e., as things I both related to the counterfeit with and sought to reclaim the counterfeit from as a tool to understand, thus improve myself and the world by reclaiming the castle as a site of interpretative Gothic play (of kinks, fetishes, and BDSM); i.e., this book that you're reading right now is a "castle" to wander around inside: a safe space of exquisite "torture" to ask questions about your own latent desires and guilty thoughts regarding the "barbaric" exhibits within as putting the ghosts out from my past on display (the Gothic castle and its intense, "heavy weather" theatrics generally being a medieval metaphor for the mind, body and soul, but also its extreme, buried and/or conflicting emotions and desires: a figurative or sometimes literal plurality depending on the person exploring the castle) [[source](#)].*

*In part, this grants us a temporary stage to work through complicated emotions and vulnerabilities, which then sweep away like a Radcliffean nightmare, burying itself alive among the usual conventions, dead metaphors, fetishes and clichés; i.e., a "stealth opera" that, per the Radcliffean Gothic model, features psychomachic and psychosexual emotional extensions/projections popularized in the rock 'n roll of earlier days: actual operas, of course, but also stage plays, ghosts and castles, monsters, damsels, good guys and demon lovers walking the edge not just of societally acceptable courtship, but existence. Springing from proposed emptiness charged with potential, an arrival/return to what was once acceptable occurs, but also our wits poured out onto a given medium; i.e., reviving old things through caught-between, out-of-joint copies paying tribute by, at times, being rather exact in that replication; e.g., ["The Dream Oath Opera" from FF6](#) [Marco Meatball's "Is Draco and Maria a REAL Opera?!" 2022]. Is imitation the sincerest form of flattery? Or does familiarity breed contempt? It's both, and in a dualistic sense, amid oppositional duality.*

*Experimented on, we lab rats mutate and have our revenge, but walk the borderline nonetheless: a princess in another castle, throbbing with entropy and disintegration, but also exciting promises of actuality daring to show themselves in the same black mirrors. Love and rape for us are jammed into the same poetic mode of being—as much to acknowledge their psychosexual entanglement as it is to escape to a perfect world where such things have been ostensibly resolved [that comes later]. In the words of Kyle Reese, "Come with [us] if you want to live!" Passion and voice unify to merge colliding worlds during an ongoing pedagogy of the oppressed finding similarity amid difference—on the ledge, teetering towards the abyss and surefire oblivion, but also transformation during a given trial by fire:*



*Per tradition a woman and/or queer person would be trapped between these warring states of mind, relegated to a castle space that passionately sings as much for her as she could herself. While female singers existed in the 1700s and had existed for much longer, female*

*actresses were curiously forbidden until 1661, [canonized by Anne Marshall](#) [source: Rebecca Adelsheim's "Timeline: Women in Theatre," 2024] nearly fifty years after Shakespeare's death. The same goes for trans women and queer people as having become less-and-less closeted under capital, over time. It doesn't have to be*

white/cis supremacist or even centrist. We acquire a socio-political voice for activism that expands to account for what is left out; i.e., through all the popularized things either classically denied to us, or restricted to homosexual men practicing "sodomy" as a poetic dialog generally tolerated onstage, if not off it; re [from Volume Zero]:

*Instead of going somewhere else to commit genocide—vis-à-vis Tolkien's boyish escapism through the pastoral-to-hell-to-paradise rite of passage and its conquest of the treasure map—we interrogate the castle-like prisons that we're born inside using operatic language and Gothic poetics having been updated since Tolkien's time. The idea is to liberate ourselves with fairly negotiated, thus cathartic, dungeon fantasies that camp canon through counterterrorist theatre to whatever degree feels correct to us; e.g., me in a haunted castle, wandering through the dark, menacing halls while wearing a sexy dress (and nothing under it, my bare body molested by the breeze and the fabric): a hopelessly vulnerable Gothic heroine feeling pretty and desired, hungrily and desperately interrogating the musical, cobwebbed gloomth while scarcely having anything between me and certain "doom."*

*As usual, the Gothic paradox allows for intense, oxymoronic dualities to coexist at the same time in the same space (e.g., "sad cum" or "gloomth" or similar and confused degrees of "verklemt" during the castle's*

*psychosexual, emotional "storm"). Simply put, I want to feel naked and exposed, thus paradoxically most alive in ways that I have negotiated through the contract between me and the media I'm working with (wherein the Metroidvania castle, as far as I'm concerned, is the perfect dom); i.e., while being "hunted" and covered in rebellious "kick me" symbols and clothing that advertises my true self as naked, colorful and dark, as if to tease the viewer in the shadows to try something (and also showing my ass to my academic dominators: "I fart in your general direction!"). As the kids say, that's a mood.*

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



*Why stick out? you ask? One, because we must in order to survive. Two, because our deals with the devil simply acknowledge our true selves, which the state wants us to reject (the queer version of Top Dollar's usual wisdom: "Every man's got a devil, and you can't rest until you find him"). But also, it feels good to be Athena's Aegis; i.e., challenging heteronormative power in ways that demonstrate how fragile said illusion (and its gatekeepers) are. State bullies are entitled nerds completely used to getting everything they want, who desire what I will never give them (a form of agency I've worked hard for); and completely afraid of nearly everything and will freak out at fairly silly things they have no business getting so worked up about: at people like me, burning down their imaginary churches and those churches' ideas of compelled order about Capitalism and its gobstopper illusions (those highly unnatural and imprisoning systems of thought that are slowly killing us as a species). Frankly the idea of me being terrifying seems absurd, but as a burning proponent of rebellion constitutes something that still, on some level, represents an incendiary threat that many advertise as the "end times": Communism... but Gothic and gay! To which I cheerfully put up the goat horns and say in response, "Hail, Satan!" It's like saying "Ni!" to old ladies.*

*Our performative and internalized devilry becomes something to join—a communion or pact whose assimilation classically amounts to a devilish bargain; yet Gothic Communism is a group effort, one whose sex-positive class/culture warrior is among a fellowship or pandemonium of equally sex-positive ne'er-do-wells instead of one or more class/race traitors for the elite and their age-old Faustian bargains. We reach towards you, croon "Join us!" and become something to run away with ([source](#)).*

*In short, we fags spread our wings and play onstage, existing as clownish, nun-like demon sluts and whores as much as the straight maidens or abject, hideous monsters capital wants us to be. This assigned, DARVO-style blame game becomes something to play with, walking in the footsteps of older ghosts [the xenomorph a demon nun with mouths/genitals in strange places], finding truth through exquisite torture as something to camp [which yields abrupt, disproportionate paradoxes; i.e., a trauma victim often doesn't bat an eyelash to extreme gore, but will trigger from softer, seemingly harmless things]. We become maladjusted, seeing the borderline as home—the place where cataclysm and catharsis are housed. We're baddies, not basic [though Gothic canon tries to reduce to cheap, disposable and uncritical, recuperated forms]!*





[model and artist: [Romantic Rose](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#)]

*Apart from being immediately cathartic, though, said valves articulate faulty reasoning under Cartesian thought; i.e., as dogmatic propaganda that tends to treat people—especially middle-class white cis-het people—as outside of or beyond nature. We forget we are animals and come equipped with many animal mechanisms, which science rejects or abuses per Cartesian dualism lionizing the nuclear family unit; i.e., as more valuable and important than nature; e.g., "I'm doing science, Betty." These aren't inherent weaknesses, but can become maladaptive in the presence of unaddressed trauma caused by mad science. Ludo-Gothic BDSM helps us recode all of that—becoming more emotionally/Gothically intelligent and aware of ourselves during class, culture*

*and race warfare—and it is done primarily through play. "Come and get it! There you go; fuck this pussy!")*

From an iconoclastic standpoint, however, the idea is more confrontational—less about accepting that we're exclusively different than ghosts or vampires and more about adjusting to the reality that the undead represent some aspect of ourselves as replicated and left behind; i.e., as linguistically confusing and deceitful markers of immense, immeasurable trauma. These cryptonyms not only call the nature of existence into question by highlighting human language as riddled with inherent contradictions and falsehoods; they force us to confront our own existence as profoundly liminal through hauntological representations that frequently use the same troubled language regarding beings of nature (re: women, queer people, etc).

Such existence is tortured in ways that memorialize not just pain as a constant part of who we are—e.g., Bay as constantly in pain, but also Indigenous and queer—but something that evolves to accept that pain in ways that become joyous. Zeuhl taught me I was queer, but Bay taught me to love myself as such; i.e., to fuck me and adore me, so much so that we thank each other for existing: each a boon as normally not just medicalized by the state, but pathologized!

The seeking of coherent poetic expression can be expected, then; even if performed through the ghost as a "last resort," transition can happen towards a new order of existence under Capitalism' rising crises and shifting material conditions, but also its regular depiction of monsters in relation to these factors. The basic idea of human self-fashioning through technology is called *transhumanism*, which is quite a popular notion in science fiction, but also life under Capitalism. Roden writes, re:

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](#)).

Roden and the association push for a drive beyond current biological limitations, as if these existed in a vacuum ("all other things equal," as he puts it). However, the basic stipulations ignore the existence of manmade (thus anthropocentric) restrictions and limitations imposed on *some* humans and most animals by those in power abusing the STEM fields (or NBIC, as Roden calls them). In the end, both the Creature from *Frankenstein* and the Major from *Ghost in the Shell* sought self-expression, but also the ability to escape their capitalist captors by breaking through to the other side; i.e., whatever the state conceals in that particular present and deprives its workers of.

The Gothic-Communist moral is that such a disappearing act becomes completely unrequired if we transform the world through our perception of it; i.e., according to things "outside" of ourselves using our own monstrous art, culture and sex work as reclaimed: afterlife as the best life for workers *now* instead of a guaranteed life cycle for capital unchained.

Yet, this queer ghost must first be uncovered amid the wreckage that hosts and transmits it; i.e., as concealed within cyberpunk hypercanon like *Ghost in the Shell*, Metroidvania like Team Cherry's [ruinous Hallownest](#), David Bowie's ominous "[Blackstar](#)" (exhibit 42f3—recorded in secret, serving [as a possible cipher for his liver cancer diagnosis, pre-announcement](#)<sup>390</sup>, but also centered on his queer struggle in facing death in secret, similar to Freddy Mercury contracting AIDS) and "[Lazarus](#)" (also exhibit 42f3, channeling serious Joy Division vibes; i.e., discovering

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<sup>390</sup> Jude Roger's "The Final Mysteries of David Bowie's *Blackstar*" (2016).

joy within Margaret Thatcher's compelled disorder under British neoliberalism after her death), or *Alice in Borderland's* shadowy ghost town. Hell is our home.

Whatever the form, then, the world bearing out these endless, concentric copies has become demonstrably fractured, pulverized and tedious, but also haunted by the imaginary past repeatedly presented as such. The future isn't just dead; it's a ghost, trapped between life and unlife, past and present—retro-future. If there's any transcendental signified, it's death; i.e, something to face, reconcile with, and ultimately accept the ghosts of, no matter the pain. Pain is growth, and growth is a cycle pushing through shells. To avoid the cataclysms covered up by a library of tenebrous apocalypses, our lost connection to the world around us must be reimagined by how we literally see said world through these ghosts of the counterfeit; their rapturous dreams must become a posthuman means of playfully *connecting the dots* amid the narrative of the crypt in different media types.

Keeping with ghosts, I wanted to reconsider my postgrad work on castle-narrative in *Metroidvania*, which invites the player to weigh on the endless, ergodic cartography of the player-completed map, of the map, of the map: through *non-trivial effort* during recursive motion offering up fresh "narrative shapes" along various pre-determined routes inside a framed meta narrative; re: empire is a map haunted by ghosts of its own devastation and liberation from, whilst inside a given maze. We fags, then—from Walpole to Lewis to myself—are gay little bookworms chasing ghosts while wiggling towards breakthrough! "Long is the way and hard..."

### **Metroidvania Maps**



(artist: [ChuckART](#))

As I write in "Always More: A History of Gothic Motion from the *Metroidvania* Speedrunner" (my seminar script for [IGA Lewis, the 15th International Gothic Association Conference](#), in 2019):

To beat *Metroidvania*, there is one, simple rule: "go from point A (the starting area) to point B (the end condition)." However, castle-narrative is realized as much by motion through the game space as it is the symbolic content, inside. In part, this motion is technological, achieved by combining genres: initially the platformer and the side-scroller, but eventually the RPG and FPS. Some *Metroidvania* are 2D in the 3rd person. Others are 3D in the

1st person. With the exception of cutscenes, minigames, and in-game menus, their cameras are bound to the hero and synonymous with motion through the castle. In *Metroidvania*, movement through a castle is not simply narrative; expected variations of mobility affect narrative to a high degree: backtracking and open-ended exploration between points A and B, inside a single, explorable world [...]

Variability of exploration is constantly stressed in terms of speed, direction, and equipment. What the player has equipped—and when and where they have it equipped—changes the movement sequence between A and B. In *Metroidvania*, players traditionally progress by using ranged, melee or explosive weapons, as well as power-ups and "boss keys." Certain doors or passageways will not open until a boss is killed. Endemic to *Metroidvania*, these progression mechanisms narratively construct a recursive history of exploration—one where backtracking is not only common, but encouraged. The single, unbroken route quickly becomes a myth ([source](#)).

As a ghostly map of maps, *Metroidvania* unfold in much the same way Radcliffe's Gothic castles do, touching on forbidden, unmappable aspects to existence; i.e by inviting the heroine to risk life and limb to fill out *its* maps in her *mind*. It's feeding vector occurs through a satisfying of one's curiosity by engaging with ghosts.

To that, the "constellations" of repeated Gothic poetics/navigation occur partly by cultivating fresh innovation out of old parts, liminal monsters/egregores included, but also the parallel space and its past as a kind of splendid, ghostly lie. This lie includes bodily entities like Lewis' Bloody Nun and spatial expressions like Gothic castles from various media types: novels, television, live performance, pin-up illustrations, and livestreaming *Metroidvania* speedruns, etc, but also *maps* as they exist inside any of these things.

As *Metroidvania* demonstrate especially well, maps relate to time and space as something to evoke but also *record*, even if this process is fundamentally impossible. In Gothic spaces, something is always left out, meaning there is always something more to see, to express, to discover in regards to state violence, but also our emancipation from it within liminal expression as something we contribute to and become a part of: a Communist womb to incubate new dark reflections out of the prison while never leaving it. Versus a robotic womb, like *Alien* or *The Matrix*' infernal incubator vampirically siphoning labor purely to exploit it, a ghost oscillates to and fro to explore all sides of something that can never fully yield up its secrets.



During the recording process, maps are not simply filled out and forgotten. Rather, as Alfred Korzybski writes of maps; re:

A map is not the territory it represents, but if correct, it has a similar structure to the territory, which accounts for its usefulness. If the map

could be ideally correct, it would include, in a reduced scale, the map of the map; the map of the map, of the map; and so on, endlessly [...] If we reflect upon our languages, we find that at best they must be considered only as maps ([source](#)).

A Metroidvania map is not more than the territory it represents, then, but depicts the perfect, undecayed form upon a decayed version being endlessly filled back in. As something to hypothetically explore, a ghost—be that a literal spirit, castle or some other Gothic suggestion, egregore or vague, imperfect offshoot—evokes something *beyond* itself through backfill; i.e., a thing that cannot be fully expressed by other things, but nevertheless is hinted at on them and by everything around them (and which includes the map as something to endlessly fill out again and again, digging a hole to refill it and empty it; e.g., speedrunner motion through Metroidvania as a series of echoes inside an ergodic territory known for its spatially confusing and empowering/disempowering qualities; re: "[Mazes and Labyrinths](#)").

Again, Baudrillard's hyperreal would posit this "beyond" as a lifeless desert, a great disaster where the system that produced the image is either gone or firmly out of reach. In Gothic terms, such a ghost/cartography denotes a *debatable* curse within the castle as such, its ambiguous presence implying the potential of what could come to pass for or against competing forces under Capitalism; e.g., the uncertain husbandry or inheritance of the land as echoing older lifeforms that met various sad ends according to concealed abuses like worker exploitation (thus genocide), but also a means of proper burial for the exploited—of ending the concealment and its concentric, cryptonymic illusions by getting to the heart of things: the rape of the white woman, the culture and identity death of people of color exploited by the Global North, queer pathologization, etc.

Luckily oppositional praxis allows for different forms of truth and escape to be had, generating different memories to install over the wreckage of older ones, thus creating new ghosts and maps to leave behind—friendlier ones not tied to genocide, but simply articulated by the passage of time, of coming and going in the same liminal spaces. These iconoclastic replicas increasingly disseminate worker needs, their bedsheet cryptonymy serving not simply as guides or maps of

conquest within older ruins, but a gradual, subversive voiding of the ancient rites of violence and wealth-acquisition promised by the canonical replicas of yesterday.

In their place, a new ghostly guidance can bubble up, offered to/discovered by the next generation of workers by those who came before; i.e., Derrida's spectres of Marx—not as something to fear and hide from, but join hands within a continuous attempt to map thus communicate that which is hidden, while avoiding its unreliable and confusing nature as a material consequence moving forwards!

The ghosts of yesterday needn't be a force to gaslight the audience with, growing doubtful towards their own sanity as they endlessly puzzle over what they are even looking at. But the spectre as a copy without a clear-and-obvious source remains an ever popular (and effective) riddle in ghost stories: trapped and wanting to be seen, and draining the energy of those yet alive as being invested in the mapping process; i.e., filling out the same foundations, such grave rubbing promising the ghost's dreaded return, or simply learning about its shrouded past uncloaked: "Look upon my death in castled form (the map a castle in small, viewed from the inside-out)." Such is the lonely way of many ghosts, which exhibit on their surfaces something veiled and bare, longing for company among voyeuristic dead ringers:



(artist, left: [Frank Frazetta](#); right: [Harmony Corrupted](#); [source](#), middle: [Ande Thomas' "The Hauntological in Lake Mungo," 2008](#))

Such a hauntological "vanishing point" is bound to come up when attempting to

trace the lineage of various copies backwards—from *The Night House* (2019) to *The Babadook* (2014) to *Lake Mungo* (2008) to *Kairo* (2001) to *Ringu* (a 1998 adaptation of the 1991 book) to *The Shining* (1981) to *Ugetsu* (1953) and their numerous adaptations across various mediums. Seemingly unconnected, this meta chain of spirits not only "blips" in and out of existence, but confuses it as an established concept under the status quo; i.e., the absence of a linear, concrete link between symbol and symbolized, or a ghost without a corpse that paradoxically resembles a person who, at one time, *did* have a body and left a corpse behind.

Yet as with many ghosts, the reply is ontologically disruptive: "You will not find a corpse because I have never possessed a body" (exhibit 42e); i.e., the copy of the thing that never existed, the simulacrum. However simple or splendid, determining the truth is difficult if not impossible, because its archaeology

continually resists telling the truth, but beckons towards buried things amounting as such; i.e., "truth" as a puzzle piece, combined with untruth and deception.

The tell-tale, red pop-up book of *The Babadook*, for instance, is hard enough to track down in real life:

The boogeyman only reveals himself when you least expect it. In this case, the boogeyman is a real-life recreation of the pop-up book at the center of the 2014 Australian horror film, *The Babadook*. In all, 6,200 copies were sold in a 50-day online campaign for about \$60 each, with the first 5,000 autographed by *Babadook* writer/director Jennifer Kent ([source](#): Paper Specs, 2017).

On-screen, though, the book suddenly materializes out of a space—similar to Metroidvania—loaded with trauma and left-behind, unresolved issues; all happen in real time between mother and child after the husband/father is ostensibly dead. Clearly there are consequences to being human and having access to human language as something that survives us and our immediate trauma, but also shapes us and what we perceive as "ours." From mother to child, queer or not, rape and anger sit alongside a desire to heal and move on. They fight each other.



The questioning of sanity in relation to the ghost and the family home aren't new ideas (despite *The Babadook* making them feel fresh, left); Hamlet's dealing with his "father's" ghost highlights a similar struggle. Except, the ghost is not that of the old man; it's a chronotopic assemblage of the space's materials and markers for hidden crimes and familial sites of decay that build up inside Hamlet—i.e., his overloaded memory of what he *thinks* is his father. Whatever difficulties audiences have in following along to this and similar stories can always be chalked up to the complexities of transgenerational trauma: something that *becomes* buried by counterfeits, which invite filling in maps in game-like, exploratory ways. They beckon exploration on a map; whether the map is visible or not, it is still in some sense present, covering things up *as* things are uncovered.

Metroidvania crystalize this linguistic, cartographic crypt game in literal ways. Yet doing so is fruitless insofar as a simple, one-off explanation is concerned. Only the notion of a complex, ongoing interaction between the living and the dead—i.e., in bigger likenesses trapped inside smaller ones (and vice versa)—is reliably presented. But the degree to either is open to debate; e.g., the ghosts from the Overlook hotel being so hard to pin down [that some people debate whether or not they even exist](#) (Wow Lynch Wow's "There are no Ghosts in Stanley Kubrick's film," 2021). Gothic stories present maps that, as found documents, feel old and disintegrated (re: [Baldrick](#)); i.e., new maps and ghosts come from older maps and

ghosts. Let's quickly unpack this with Kubrick, then tie these feelings of claustrophobia, age and ghosts to *Metrodvania*.



Kubrick's story is a *cul de sac*, a dead end. It points to a hidden murder relaid by "ghosts" being the suggestion thereof (with "murder" infamously spelled backwards ["REDRUM," left] and seen through the disturbing prophetic visions of a sleepwalking child, pointing to the very words staring back at him and his mother upon a bedroom vanity glass). These wait the center of a maze that, per Radcliffe's closed space, yields a nearness to the possession, yet sits forever out-of-joint with it. Jumping from location to individual, then, the cagey entity ascribes to medieval/psychoanalytical notions of transference—one whose Freudian models admittedly hang themselves up on heteronormative prescription and its problematic, incredibly violent ordering of men, women and children inside the nuclear home; i.e., *vis-à-vis* a home space loaded with potential trauma, hunting fresh occupants down through themselves inheriting older madnasses. What Kubrick treats as a mental contagion, the xenomorph from *Alien* embodied a literal biological weapon; i.e., transferred from that movie's derelict ghost ship into a parallel house-like castle ship (the *Nostromo*), which Kubrick superimposes a year later over people in one shared space going from good *back* to bad. The doubled home/occupant, per the ghost of the counterfeit, takes on increasingly medieval, dungeon-like elements playing off current abuse as make-believe yet close at hand! It's very Radcliffean; i.e., unspeakable traumas that, by Kubrick's 1980 return to madness, felt more than a little regressive. He revels in it!

Liminal spaces like the *Nostromo*, *Zebes*, or *Overlook Hotel* offer up dark homes that, in Gothic fashion, restore themselves to exact fresh terrors, versus dispel or otherwise end the waking nightmare in any benign form; i.e., inheritance anxiety as viral freight, its darkness visible troubling the living in similar homes that may be equally sick. A map of a map of a map of a map, wherein these mazes and labyrinths one can walk through, bumping vicariously into Numinous entities like the xenomorph, Jack Torrance, or Pyramid Head as inhabiting people. Such a black, Medusa-esque symbiosis suggests on these imperfect replicas (often impossible



rooms, but also smaller stand-ins for made-to-scale traumas that don't translate especially well to little figurines): the guy in a suit inverted to a ghost in the guy! The space imprints onto Jack per Kubrick's Freudian, nihilistic, fash-leaning outlook/abjection: it echoes *into* itself, constantly falling apart and always leading back to a dead, evil center!



At this central pit waits the ghost of a mad axman, which "Jack" the vessel walks the usual ghost ontology tightrope; i.e., oscillating between incorporeal mighty ghost that—like Hamlet's estranged father and his whispered, hellish visions—make those hairs on the back of your neck stand up like porcupine quills, and the in-the-flesh "tiger" capable of disemboweling you! Such are men of the house, always chopping up wives and little children like firewood; i.e., Kubrick shuddering such buried realities in spectral grandeur awaiting middle-class families: assimilating to modern-day castles, only to be eaten by them! Though I hesitate to agree with Jameson's rejection of Gothic fiction, in this case I cannot help it: Kubrick was anything but a feminist; indeed, he aped Alfred Hitchcock's own torture of women (a trend, itself, borrowed from older sexist men before him).

Feminism decays; so do ghosts in ghost stories confess to their own death by existing as imperfectly and chaotically as they do. Like a prostitute dressed up to evoke a scene or a person from someone's past (e.g., *Vertigo*, 1958), doing so jogs the memory not just of one person, but an entire community or generation; i.e., the data is corruption, but also annihilation, disorientation and rebirth, darlings to kill as to move society onto something better through new counterfeits' haunted by older stepping-stone palimpsests (from *2001* to *Alien* to *Romulus*), but at times backsliding into dreadful and blinding echo chambers like Kubrick's Overlook Hotel. He's skilled in making sure we feel trapped, just as Radcliffe conjured up the same unmappable doom only to sweep the board clean and keep things the same.

Regarding either case, Gothic Communism has to move past older going-in-circles misuse or bumbings with ghosts while still building on them, ourselves. We fall apart/reassemble, both acted on and acting on competing semi-invisible forces. Ghosts, then, are floating signifiers/dead metaphors and language, whose translation is an exchange unto itself; something is always given and lost per confession, per admission of guilt, of survival, or things that survive what people cannot turned into artifacts dug up again... again. "Dead men tell no tales" is true and false. "Suffer the little children" becomes "misery loves company" buried alive; i.e., Torrance's madness, "Wendy, I'm home!" It's seemingly mapped out/unmappable, but written all over the walls in old blood drinking up new blood: the *house* is the ghost, the vampire and protagonist (re: Montague Summers) sold to suckers paying for penny dreadfuls (and making Radcliffe rich) onto fresh anxieties of Gothic inheritance haunting new replicas of old haunted houses! "Come play with us," indeed!



Per the ghost of the counterfeit further abjection, such stories badly echo, copy and replicate themselves on top of themselves, influencing new stories and carrying ghosts inside and across *their* surfaces leading back to "Rome" as dead; i.e., their maps' spectral data indicative of decay and age. For us, this forever process is

valid, though; i.e., knowledge is limited, merged with romance as vulgar ("rolls in the hay"), patrician, property disputes, foggy retreats, etc, not above or beneath revenge, rape, trysts, scandal, madness: booty calls from beyond the grave, but also inside its maze-like corridors! Here, the Roman fool falls on his own sword, killing and eating his own family for the glory of a fallen kingdom; and the next in line is a little boy that runs into the threnody-stricken echoes of past misdeeds. Like a fever/opium dream or PTSD as such, everything bleeds together into something hopelessly lost inside itself.

Except inside capital, workers work for the elite under these delusions; under Gothic Communism, workers work *with* each other to play out the truth as synthesized through good habits (which Kubrick did *not* do, [torturing Shelley Duvall to get the "perfect" shots](#)). Our fortress is *always* operational, shining like a beacon to draw people away from Kubrick's disastrous (and patriarchal, male-centric) illusions!

As we'll see in our second **main exhibit**, the ebb and flow of the liminal riff amounts to the narrative of the crypt commenting *cryptomimetically* from text to text on something grander felt across the material world—an uncanny "divinity"/mighty ghost that isn't quite present to the human senses, but whose poetic creations comment on an awesome mystery that has only recently emerged: as Gothic snapshots/time capsules speaking forwards but looking backwards; i.e., frozen in time per a framed narrative; e.g., from Jack Torrance, in the hedge maze to him in the photo, the liminality kaleidoscopic as it cycles through space-time with the same human image doubled and redoubled. Occupied with killer and non-killer through Jack, the space literally speaks to him as Hamlet's father might to the titular Prince of Denmark: "You're the caretaker, sir. You've *always* been the caretaker!" Well, shit.

Simply put, it's a death omen, Kubrick's signature nihilism doomsaying and predicating on the repetition of old abuses; i.e., using the same tired, malevolent mapped-out territories, where the individual pieces collectively point back to *Hamlet* and forwards again: "Say, what, is Horatio there?" / "A piece of him" ([source](#)). The call and response lends itself to the chilling and disintegrating quality of such maps that, when reexplored, lead to nowhere *except* decay and death through the usual fearful inheritance in time and claustrophobia in space (re: [Baldrick](#)). I think we can do better than that!



It's not all bullshit, though. Indeed, within the past handful of centuries,

something massive and utterly devastating *has* occurred in connection with the material conditions around us: Capitalism. Within this predatory structure, grandiose concepts like the Sublime, Numinous, and cosmic nihilism (and subsequent "Weird" movements) denote awesome mysteries that humans frequently "detect," if only through the famous, replicated stories that artists have been making for centuries. Each effectively captures an imperfect, human attempt; i.e., to charge the Gothic imagination with graveyard sensibilities that intimate something beyond normal existence inside the home-as-dead, the latter merely a barrier to *whatever* awaits on the other side (mazes and labyrinths have walls, which generally work as such).

Except, whereas Capitalist Realism thickens the barrier by increasing the fear of the beyond, Gothic Communism has a different aim: to turn this stubborn voice of the past "wise" by worker hands (the literal past come back to haunt you, except by "ghosts" friendly to Communism while also being given life by iconoclasts interacting with them through their own *poiesis*); re: a palliative, but also perceptive Communist Numinous. Using medieval poetics and sensations, it helps us see what capital (and men like Kubrick) normally conceal.

Through Gothic Communism, this Wisdom of the Ancients can be "re-excavated" over and over by others, devising "archaeologies of the future" (re: Jameson, but with dated poetics he turned his nose up at) that help workers lead lives whose own past reminders and Gothic derelicts uncover a lovely thing for future workers to stress in their own creations: that the good treatment of sex workers *preserves* sex-positive demonic kink, BDSM, and all-around Gothic fun in art. None will disappear alongside capital's canonical variants and neoliberal jailer-pimps (the hoarding of privatized sex and other "tasty" consumer goods being a common conservative tactic: "The Commies are coming for your women and your cheeseburgers, but also your delicious, tasty blood!"); they'll endure through the egeogore as having slowly evolved from older forms like the Overlook Hotel.

Past creations have already used the same language while fumbling around in the dark, making similar (mis)steps while trying to escape the present as already overloaded with past language and monstrous exhibits. To the last syllable of recorded time, these territories and their otherworldly populations aren't going anywhere, but rather are followed by up-and-coming artists into new generations of older monsters remade with fresh purpose. This fits neatly with how humans function as a species, defined far less by biology and more by language and culture as things to inherit and engage with (what Gaia Vince calls "[a culture developing bath](#)" in "Eugenics Would Not Work in Humans," 2020).

Ghosts are always, on some level, imitations of older images or words. They're also liminal (denoting a sense of conflict on themselves as images) makes them inherently oppositional, meaning canon or iconoclasm is always an option when considering how to interpret (or remake) them ourselves in our own work's rememory process; i.e., from Kubrick's ghost house and evil ghost dad to Toni

Morrison's ghost baby in *Beloved*, onto my own ghostly effigies; e.g., the models I work with, but also Metroidvania and, yes, even myself.

This is not without struggle, of course; i.e., the endless echo of ghosts evokes a process we've already discussed at length, here and elsewhere in my book series: cryptonomy and the chasing of ghosts with ghosts, mid-*cryptomimesis*. To hammer the point home, let's do so here *vis-à-vis* Castricano and my PhD work, then proceed onto the *cryptomimesis* **main exhibit**.

Though hardly a coincidence, the constant creation of words that conceal is not *always* deliberate, but merely the natural and material worlds relating back and forth; i.e., according to the passive/active tendencies in human language to hide and conceal things, but also manmade power structures, vertically arranged to repress worker traumas that must reemerge in ghostly fashion. The latter is not the human mind burying things purely of its own accord, but dealing with the state and its corporate allies actively lying and concealing things through the ghost as a



blueprint—a "stamp" to endlessly copy when channeled through a bourgeois Superstructure. There's a lot of mimicry going on in terms of trauma; i.e., as something to express, but also recognize. "Not sure if [real] or..."

Whether bourgeois or proletarian, ghosts are summarily tied to a larger conversation about the Gothic as discussed by Jodey Castricano in *Cryptomimesis: The Gothic and Jacques Derrida's Ghost Writing* (2001), re:

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](#)).

Here, Castricano denotes a critical limitation to the novel, short story, and film, yet nevertheless derives the ancient crypt as "the model and method" of what they call *cryptomimesis*; i.e., the crypt or crypt-like narrative as something to functionally and textually imitate for various reasons—like Borges and his mirrors/garden of the forking paths, but also vampires drinking blood, zombies eating brains, or ghosts seeking essence and connection. Castricano stresses the creation of

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 (*ibid.*).

While these ideas function perfectly fine as a holistic approach, Castricano tends to lay human language "on the slab," focusing on the *idea* of language as something to express and play with entirely "on paper"; i.e., in a vacuum. My focus has been, and continues to be, on the ghosts themselves as imprecise-yet-magnetic, often fragmented linguo-material markers of oppositional praxis—not as faithful psychoanalytic or poststructuralist models, but a Gothic-Communist means of clearly articulating worker oppression unfolding in the natural-material world. Otherwise, who cares?

Beyond Kubrick and older authors haunting the palimpsest, cryptonymy and *cryptomimesis* translate to videogames; i.e., as handy replicas that someone can explore through avatars. This particular echo remains underrepresented outside my own work, leading me to now effectively dig up myself as a ghost/found document concerned with these self-same maps. As I write in my PhD's thesis statement:

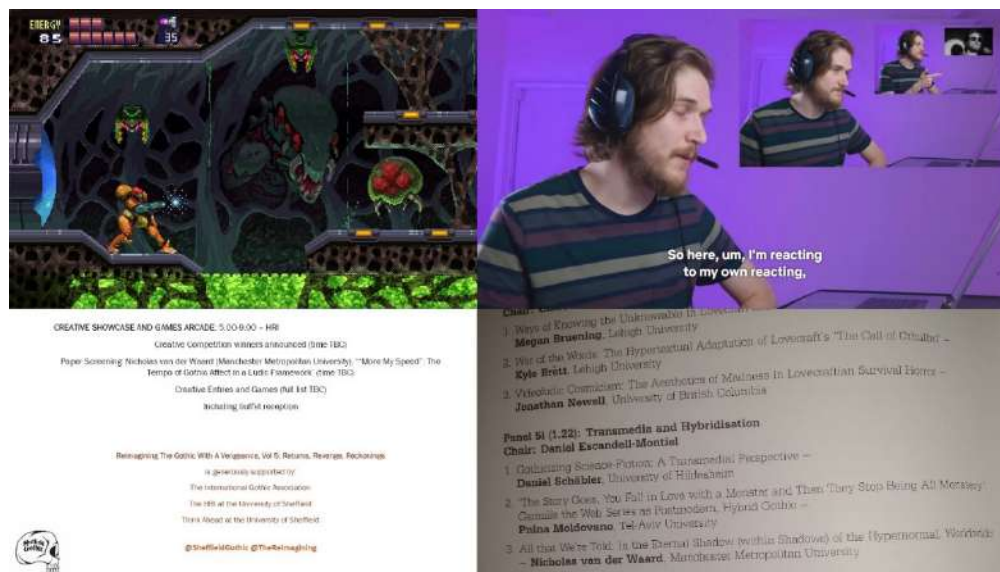
Simply put, Gothic media more broadly is *cryptomimetic*, but also embroiled within areas of study that yield hermeneutic limitations due to recency biases and disdain for a holistic approach by academic bigwigs. For instance, I noticed these limitations myself when trying to marry the Gothic to videogames in my own graduate work as cutting-edge. It was a tactic my supervisors and academic superiors resisted, simply because videogames were either totally outside of their realm of experience, or "Metroidvania" wasn't something that had been academically connected to games within their own fields. That is, speedrunning as a practice/documentary subject was just taking off online in 2018; likewise, "ludic-Gothic" wasn't even a decade-old term at the time, was something that ambitious academics strove to stake new claims within while leaving much to be desired.

For example, the same year I wrote my [master's] thesis on Metroidvania, Bernard Perron would sum up the broader Gothic rush in videogame academia in *The World of Scary Games* sans mentioning Metroidvania *once*:

Horror scholars such as Taylor, Kirkland, Niedenthal, and Krzywinska have therefor come to contextualize [video]games in the older

tradition of the Gothic fiction, "one of survival horror's parents," as Taylor states in "Gothic Bloodlines in Survival Horror Gaming" (2009). Furthermore, the latter even coined a new term to highlight this origin: "The ludic-gothic is created when the Gothic is transformed by the video game medium, and is a kindred genre to survival horror" [...] Video games remediate many aspects of Gothic poetics: [the prevention of mastery, obscured or unreliable visions, scattering of written texts in typical Gothic locations and their lost histories, the encounter and use of anachronistic technologies, etc] ([source](#)).

Not only does Perron make no mention of Metroidvania at all, neither do *any* of the other scholars he cites; nor did my supervisors know what Metroidvania were when I was researching it (nor I, with me finally settling on a concrete definition in 2021; re: "[Mazes and Labyrinths](#)" abstract). Indeed, Metroidvania—despite being an older genre than survival horror—remains a thoroughly underrepresented area of Gothic videogame studies, and Gothic videogames remain ripe for continued study within our own lives. Indeed, I had to connect the two myself when recognizing a knowledge gap regarding Metroidvania as *cryptomimetic* media within videogame studies at large; and I have continued to do so as a postgrad writing about mazes and labyrinths in Metroidvania; i.e., as a niche area of study to expand upon within my own daily life beyond academia—by writing about or illustrating Metroidvania outside of conferences, [but also interviewing Metroid speedrunners for fun](#) in my "Mazes and Labyrinths" compendium.



(exhibit 42f4: Artist, top-right: [Alessandro Constantini](#). Bo Burnham [top-right] demonstrates how reflections on the world involve an endless creative process, one whose *mise-en-abyme* fits comfortably within *cryptomimesis* as

*a meta-reflection on Gothic poetics and its narrative of the crypt: my graduate/postgraduate academic work as something to revisit, think about, and reapply to the real world beyond just conferences [bottom-left and -right: papers for Sheffield Gothic and the International Gothic Association] but also interacting with Metroidvania themselves being remade by artists like Constantini—i.e., older "ghosts" to chase down and interrogate, including of ourselves.*

*For example, when writing this exhibit, my partner and I watched the video presentation for a 2019 conference paper I wrote and recorded for Sheffield Gothic's Reimagining the Gothic with a Vengeance, Vol 5: Returns, Revenge, Reckonings: "["More My Speed': The Tempo of Gothic Affect in a Ludic Framework](#)." I hadn't watched the video since I uploaded it, but doing so reminded me of some useful ideas I hadn't thought about in a long time. It was also beholding a younger-looking but ultimately older version of myself; i.e., I look at it and feel old, and the photograph is as old as I am. Like a fatal portrait, it seems to denote a side of me that is lost to time, but also frozen in it, waiting to be defrosted:*



*[source: Me [in the accompanying video to "More My Speed,"](#) which I sent to Sheffield Gothic because I couldn't fly overseas.]*

*As I haven't written academically for years, it felt a bit surreal [and fun] to investigate a "ghost" of my former self and listen what it had to say:*

*Inside the gameworld, on-screen, different speeds are displayed by player motion relative to the gameworld and its creatures. There is speed of confrontation (horror) and speed of the reveal (terror) [...] There is speed of action, which includes exploration, combat, and escape; these are tied to the style of the game's design. There is also*

*speed of death: As Raškauskienė writes, "for Burke, terror – fear of pain – was a terror mixed with a paradoxical delight. Ostensibly, this was because the sublime observer is not actually threatened. Safety in the midst of danger produces a thrilling pleasure" (18). Survival is a question not of actually dying in Metroid or Castlevania; the player cannot die. What matters is being in the presence of simulated "near-death" for as long as possible. This can be monsters, like Ridley and Kraid, in Metroid; or Dracula, the Mummy or Medusa's head, in Castlevania. The player is next to them, or "near" them by being inside a world that promotes them. Kraid's Lair advertises Kraid; Castlevania promotes Dracula through a series of monsters. Whether any are onscreen or not, the player anticipates them non-stop [[source](#)].)*

The search for knowledge stares back at those looking in on the past from the present as dead. Beyond Metroidvania and their maps (and maps of maps, palimpsests of maps, echoes of ghosts from Radcliffe to Stoker to Kubrick to Scott, etc), the same basic approach to ghosts/the occult applies to knowledge as something to reify outside of academia; i.e., by responding to artistic movements as *cryptomimetic* expressions of repressed labor sentiment and trauma at large (which academia, as a cutthroat enterprise, isn't entirely concerned with; re: accommodated intellectuals). Our own revolutionary cryptonymy must go further with ghosts than they normally are used; re: me, expanding on Castricano's definition of *cryptomimesis* to write not just with ghosts, but the dead at large!

### **Cryptomimesis Main Exhibit**

This brings us to our second original **main exhibit**, or rather, four sub-exhibits in one: the **liminal riff** or artistic flow as a *cryptomimetic* feeding vector portrayed by four different collages of uncanny things. I created all of them in mimetic response to older ghosts (or ghostly entities, like vampires and zombies):

- exhibit 43a: Tool and *Silent Hill* in response to *Jacob's Ladder*
- exhibit 43b: David Fincher's *Se7en* in response to Nine Inch Nails' "Closer"
- exhibit 43c: artwork between myself and an anonymous model in response to another artist
- exhibit 43d: a "rememory" of an old drawing of myself and my ex Jadis, who especially loved Tool, *Silent Hill* and *Jacob's Ladder*

While such mimesis was hardly "blind," it remained a process par for the Gothic course: thoroughly embedded and gliding across its own endless simulacra/echopraxis, showing and hiding per the usual double operation cryptonymy affords. Again, this remains a feeding vector, but per ghosts speaks to



an acknowledging of the past as ghostly in ways that yield up fresh shadowy synthesis!

To that, the contents of all four sub-exhibits were exposed to me *by* Jadis and constitute my continuous, cryptonymic processing of survived trauma. An idea that was hardly original to either of us at the time, it had already been commented on by older artists riffing off one another that I eventually riffed off myself in relation to Jadis exposing me *to* these bugbears' trail of curiously evil breadcrumbs (which included Jadis' abusing *of* me in the process): to paint in essence—be that literal depictions of the blood, brains or lifeorce—as tenebrous, famously out-of-joint things being consumed, but also *to* consume *by* the audience; i.e., teasing at things beyond what is hidden, or hiding what is beyond through such shadows and ghostly translucence! Per the anisotropic flow of power and knowledge according to essence, abjection accounts for the leading of workers towards things the state will then repulse them with; reverse abjection leads us closer to the truth of state predation inside the cave's shadowy illusions—by fucking *with* the dead through famous, ghost-like forms! "Follow the white rabbit" becomes "follow the ghost."

Such *splendid-mendax* visual metaphors tie to a mimetic lineage that frames the crypt (and things commonly associated with it) as having a precise linguistic function: cryptonyms that give off the essence of ghosts in literal code, but also the phenomenology or experiencing of the ghost as captured in art; i.e., essence in a bottle, but also the essence-of-essence, or the echoing of the larger exchange captured on the surface of the copy as things are repeatedly smashed together for satirical effect. Satire isn't always funny or silly. Sometimes, camp is cryptonymic; i.e., "stealthy" in ways that threaten to reveal things the elite *want* hidden—doing so across the usual ghostly mediums they can never monopolize:

*I'm providing four-in-one because we want to trace a lineage of ghostly material, but also because liminality is hard to illustrate outside of multiple, contrasting examples. —Perse*



(exhibit 43a: Bottom-right and bottom-middle: stills from Tool's 1993 music videos for "Prison Sex" and "Sober" [[the sets and stop motion for "Sober" created by Fred Stuhr](#)]; middle: [a Figma action figure of the nurse from Silent Hill 2, 2001](#); right-middle: [Pyramid Head](#); middle: David Lo Pan, an even older ghost; everything else: screenshots from *Jacob's Ladder*, 1990. In a linear

sense, each egregore seemingly springs out of thin air, but bears its own ties to the material world as continuously reimagined in visibly undead, troubled ways. Stemming from no immediately obvious source, these spirits spring out of a likeness of a likeness of the past; i.e., older copies of trauma already set loose from inside the minds of artists famous, infamous or completely unknown.

To look upon the ghost is to see how its author saw the world through ghostly veils; i.e., "behind blue eyes," in relation to other artists having already done the same.

And yet, something is always left out—a ghost intimating systemic traumas [and maps] it cannot fully express, that show what is hidden because it is hidden: according to a quantum, half-real thing attached to so many others. In this respect, ghosts are conspicuous and confusing. Existence becomes dicey and imperiled, but also deliberately ghostlike across a chain of counterfeits; re: Castricano's cryptomimesis, which I consider not just writing with ghosts, but any action concerned with all manner of undead beings. And yet, ghosts more than any other seem to feed on us simply by being viewed. It's a drain that saps our curiosity and willpower when puzzling over them and theirs; i.e., belonging to our world in a liminal sense that brings us closer to alienated realities.)

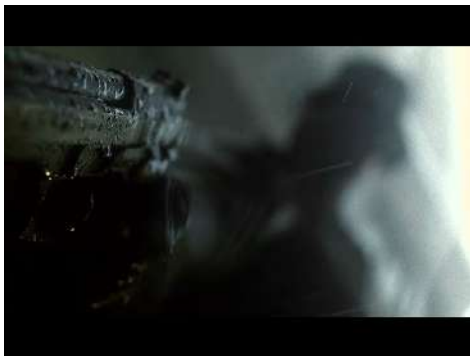


(exhibit 43b: "["Closer"](#) [music video](#) [left, 1994] by Trent Reznor, whose reverse-abject splendor, echoes of Dadaism [with the toilet] and frank BDSM imagery [the "dancing" pig machine with the apple in its mouth evoking a ball gag] were carefully replicated by conservative copycat,

David Fincher, a year later. While Fincher obsessively poured over and recreated the video frame-by-frame in a similar style for Se7en's opening credits, 1995, his ghost left behind many homophobic "clues" that belied his own ghost of the counterfeit: a fear/fascination with state-assigned enemies.

Like John Doe's notebooks, there's far too many to list or detail here, but Fincher nevertheless used them to turn [and continues to turn] the Gothic imagination in a neo-conservative direction; i.e., doing so while taking all the credit [in glowing exposés like Art of the Titles' 2012 expanded exhibit](#): a "novel-yet-seminal" fascination with the medieval scrapbook [commonplace] approach as deeply conservative—the life's work of an independently wealthy madman who wants to

*destroy civilization, even though it's already on the verge of collapse [an anti-Semitic dogwhistle].*



To it, Fincher's homophobia is a coerced prophecy returning to tradition. Conservative fear and dogma engender stochastic abuse and copious, ubiquitous threats against marginalized groups. Division is variable, though; while threatened neophytes can be cornered into silence, old veterans can lean into passivity or aggression; i.e., with Morgan Freeman playing a token, know-it-all black cop, and Pitt the homophobic detective shooting his worst enemy in the face because Fincher has first summoned him to be killed in cold blood: a shadow that reflects Pitt's deepest desires as—you guessed it—dogma. Coerced trauma can turn people into police-state monsters, co-opting female/queer rage in service of the status quo; i.e., notably winding down and up through the usual turns of the screw [the elite, holding a gun to our heads].

In *Se7en*, the killer—a queer-coded, ostensibly homosexual man—is strangely obsessed with past media; i.e., as a perverse teaching tool that forces violent fearful lessons [dogma] onto the present. All this happens while lusting after and envying the cis-het, white policeman and his wife [the former played by angry blond twunk, Brad Pitt—too stupid to read books and calling Dante a "poetry writing faggot"—and the latter played by real-life corporate quack, Gwyneth Paltrow, [insidious peddler of "homeopathic vaginas" and other oddities](#)<sup>391</sup>]. From a meta standpoint, though, Fincher and his team had fashioned a ghostly lesson for their heel—Kevin Spacey, [a real-life pedophile](#) [Dreading, 2022]—to teach '90s audiences with: a canonical replica that subverted Reznor's primal, hedonistic vibe into a cautionary gaslight that frames unmarried sex as incredibly fetishized and violent. "You have to hit people with a sledgehammer," argues John Doe; Fincher does so at the cost of a sex-positive image of queerness. It's abject, regressive, and more to the point, a straight man's unironic demonizing of us fags to cap his blockbuster off with. It's bad BDSM, Reznor [or Milton] without the camp:



All unfold under faux-intellectual posturings, of course. While certainly connected to societal collapse in John Doe's mind, the killer isn't strictly critiquing society when he has the man use the knife strap-on [above] to fuck the girl with;

<sup>391</sup> Bernardo Montes de Oca's "Why Everyone Hates Gwyneth Paltrow's Company" (2021).

he's acting out his own violent fantasies through a coerced proxy that Fincher dreamt up after listening to Reznor's song [and missing the iconoclastic point of it]: the homosexual man is secretly covetous of the closet—i.e., to such a terrible degree that he destroys the nuclear family from the inside-out. As such, Fincher conflates queerness with murder and rape, but also a desire to be straight/a cop. The fag is utterly reprobate; i.e., unable to assimilate and thus is executed for it. John Doe—and by extension Fincher and everyone else—are slumming and rocking out to our witch hunt: shock therapy on par with Marilyn Manson cashing in [a sex pest in his own right, false-preaching rebellion to make his millions].

To it, Fincher is deeply mistrusting of the past as a) having anything useful to say, yet b) trapping everyone in a constant state of cryptonymic decay and medieval fear. The movie's retro-future pall returns the world to a pacifying sense of the barbaric past revived in the present. Incentivized by those in power [the executives and producers] and facilitated by Fincher and his team with a pair of scissors, the motto of the day was KISS: "keep it scary, stupid." Literally a peal of thunder booms; i.e., when the first frame of the opening shows us a book. Translation: "Old books written by gay madmen will kill you!" Well, consider this gay madwoman's book and her devil's workshop my retort, you jackanapes!)



(exhibit 43c: Model and artist: Jericho and Persephone van der Waard. Many ghosts concern returning to past moments, including erotic ones as spaces to feed; i.e., to be in the same space as someone who has lifeforce, including erotic energies longing for the past to return; re: The Night House. This can go both ways—with a ghost seeking love or someone loving a ghost that may or may not have ever been real, but speaks to a semi-tangible connection anyways.

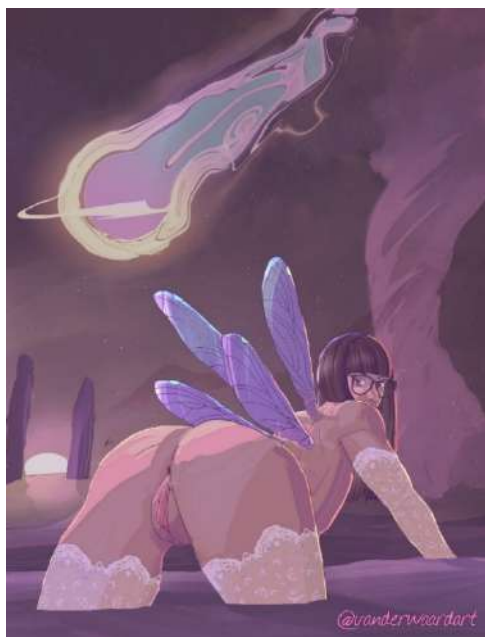
For example, the above exhibit is an unused alternate drawing of a finished 2021 piece by Persephone van der Waard—of Jericho, assembled from different "friendly" references [top-left and top-right: a very happy ghost drawn by Margikrap; mid-left: the arguably appropriative "witchy" pin-up style of Stvartak Mato, who let's just say likes 'em thicc] that through the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune [and happy accidents] has become its own kind of thing for me to appreciate in hindsight: a collage of egregores that bear the likeness of the original model, but yield its own life force in place of said model's absence. As with any egregore, they are not the original, but become their own thing pointing to what was lost; i.e.,

when presented in pointedly Gothic language, I invigilate an alias that harkens cryptonymically back to lost friendship: a likeness of the model herself severing all ties. Ghosts, then, become a useful way to interrogate the past by reimagining it!



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

Along with Autumn Ivy [who I stopped working with [because they were bossy and transphobic](#)<sup>392</sup>], Jericho was *Sex Positivity*'s proto muse. We worked together over 2021, and they would come and go throughout the year to give me some relief from Jadis' abuse [and inspire me to use my website, [created in 2020](#), to draw and feature sex workers]. I designed logos and different pieces for Jericho [above and below], but also commissioned a variety of things for them to record [sex tapes and photo shoots, which I don't have permission to show]. I would then reference these, afterwards, to make new art, thus new ghosts. In turn, our



present reconnection remains one where the memory of them is something of a drain and inspiration; i.e., I thought they were beautiful and kind back then, thus loved working with them—my first muse who motivated me to partake in *Sex Positivity* as it eventually turned into. This piece was made after they ghosted me:

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

Ultimately there was a fragile side to Jericho. After some outstanding projects, and them disappearing for a few months, a reminder to them about said projects saw them cutting ties

<sup>392</sup> For details, refer to "Death by Snu-Snu!" from Volume Two, part one. [Volume One details Autumn's abuses even more extensively.](#)

and running from the profession entirely! They simply dropped all contact and vanished like a ghost!

Frankly I cared less about the money than losing a good friend; and deprived of what I thought was a good friend—but also an excellent model and collaborator—I had to reconcile my loss through the work I created after their disappearance. So I preserved them in ways that felt apposite and healing to me. I could speak to my own betrayal and hurt at Jericho's hands while preserving what I liked about them and wanted people to remember! And to this day Jericho still inspires me to create art based on memories of older work we did; i.e., that I've updated for this project; e.g., the below drawing appearing at the start of this sub-volume in its finished form [re: exhibit 33b1b, from "[Gothic Poetics, Their History](#)"] but here being shown in the basic composition I went with instead of the ghost sex motif at the top of this exhibit:



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

Simply put, you don't stop relating to things after they're "done." My art of Jericho serves as a kind of erotic ghostly bond/tethering of me to an old, lost friend, but also desire to create and invigilate something that acknowledges Jericho's humanity and desire to be seen as ace; i.e., for

them to have agency in a nudist sense, and for me to admittedly miss them and dream about them: wishing them well, wherever they find themselves. Be safe, my dude!)

Concerning the above exhibits and their own *cryptomimesis*, my cryptonymic tapping into their "pulse" was—like a Gothic girl at a gravesite—deeply personal and intuitive. Many were commentaries on my own traumatic past, something I related to through art gifted to me by former/would-be abusers. Indeed, the greatest gift my ex, Jadis, gave to me was their cultural appreciation/awareness for Tool, Nine Inch Nails, and Marilyn Manson (whose contemporaries I took great delight in showing Jadis). Not only did Jadis doing so "chorus" a larger cultural fascination

with ghosts; it demonstrated the simple fact that ghosts are an attractive cultural force, albeit for oft-hidden, undisclosed reasons that seldom match up—i.e., due to Capitalism's deceitful and pulverizing nature!

Capitalism being a hyperobject, there's seldom an obvious visual source for a transgenerational curse. But in the Gothic style, you *can* localize it to a particular site and trace its continuation through the wreckage as something to copy imperfectly moving forwards! I've since tried to exhibit to my own traumatic past as a kind of "ghostly" double: Jadis themselves, but also what they gifted me as something turned against them by revisiting its essence as a means of self-empowerment and self-expression, not defeat (exhibit 43d, two pages).

The venue of doing so often addresses trauma as something to express not just in mirrored language, but cryptonymic exchanges thereof. Indeed, the existence and reintegration of ghosts goes well beyond my life and my relationship with Jadis (and all the things they showed me). For instance, my friend Mavis knew someone who *also* loved Marilyn Manson and NIN. Let's call them "Montrose."

Montrose "didn't seem the type," according to Mavis—were a master's graduate of psychology with a flat affect who studied war abuses in Nazi Germany. Even so, people touched by trauma are often drawn to it, even in pale imitations. According to Mavis, Montrose had actually been horribly abused by their brother as a child, only to watch as their parents did nothing to intervene or even acknowledge that Montrose had been harmed. To try and understand their own problems growing into adulthood, Montrose probably listened to music that actually spoke to their trauma in ghostly ways. As time progressed, they studied the mind as a means of understanding their own experiences—all while looking for similarity that had "happened" elsewhere: a ghost suggesting the presence of trauma as having occurred, or at the very least, echoed through its own confusing existence; re: the pedagogy of the oppressed, speaking to Western traumas by fabricating them.

Returning to Jadis and I, we loved the same material that Montrose and Mavis did. Partly we had also grown up to it (and had experienced awful childhoods ourselves). But even in our 30s, we delighted at watching the throwing together of various cheap and dead things—a "clay" brought back to life and dancing around to the groovy music or evocative visuals. Not only Jadis was absolutely correct about Trent Reznor's incredible music video for "Closer" in purely visual terms; its lyrics spoke to me as well: "You tear down my reason / It's your sex I can smell [...] I wanna fuck you like an animal [...] You bring me closer to God!" (exhibit 43a).

I only felt this connection upon repeated reflection and in relation to other works, similar to how Reznor must have felt as an artist. Apart from NIN, he worked alongside "shock rock" guru (and notorious sex pest/abuser) Marilyn Manson. Doubtless, he would have been aware of and inspired by [the literal clay of Tool guitarist/claymation expert Adam Jones](#), just as I was later in forming my own connections. The same goes for the sudden and anomalous nightmare effigy of Adrian Lyne's *Jacob's Ladder*, which doubtlessly inspired *Silent Hill* six years later

(exhibit 43b)—not just its liminal spaces, but liminal *occupants*<sup>393</sup> in turn inspired by Giger, who was inspired by Goya and Goya by older, now-forgotten-but-still-felt medievalists. At different points in time, then, these complex liminalities invited both Reznor and myself to explore forbidden topics; i.e., in transgressive ways that were later weaponized by bad-faith performers: the proverbial wolf-in-disguise, a "bad imitation" of Derrida's spectres of Marx—not in sheep's clothing but the *proletarian* egregore of a friendly wolf-ghost piloted by an imposter!

Except, Jadis wasn't an imposter just because they harmed me; they were an imposter because they used groups like Tool and NIN to lower my guard (and obscure their own neoliberal politics). Yet, I still found something useful to transmute from what they outlined as acceptable based on their tacit (or outspoken) approval.

More to the point, everything was still made from the same ghostly pulp—a fact I have repeatedly illustrated here by taking what Jadis showed me throughout our relationship and transforming it back into something sex-positive; i.e., feeding on their ghost to draw new strength out of something that ultimately isn't my abuser harming me. The anger is still there, but it's not directed *at* me—meaning I can just sit back and enjoy it. The Destroyer persona is core to the BDSM experience; per ludo-Gothic BDSM, angry ghosts are fun to watch if you can control them through an exhibit—if only because they appeal to the presence of rage as something you can tremble before and remember. In doing so, you feel the danger but realize that you're not actually in any! That's catharsis, babes!



Doing so will always be partly based on my positive experiences with Jadis; i.e., as an oddly endearing person. Like it or not, Jadis *was* cool, but also integral to the ensuing work I threw back at a false protector! The label "Communist" doesn't mean much without the state as something to transform; I can

use Jadis' likeness to achieve this goal, even if they are not in my life. I took their illusions and made them something that would protect me from the harmful original: to show and hide *vis-à-vis* cryptonymy whatever I want in order to get my point across. To that, "cool Jadis" is something that I've had to preserve as

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<sup>393</sup> The liminal occupant is perhaps illustrated best by Marilyn Roxie's aforementioned presentation on the Dennis Cooper blog: "[The Inescapable Weirdness of Super Mario 64](#)." A 2020 reflection on a 1996 game, Marilyn demonstrates how *Mario 64*'s continued appreciation has evolved in highly chaotic and terrifying ways. Happening inside the game itself, *Mario 64* has become increasingly liminal outside of itself when reexamined over time as a ludic space for players to explore.



separate from the person themselves, a "rememory" of the abuser who once had total material control over my life. It has taken considerable time and effort to work their likeness into something sex-positive—a new, graveyard version of them that celebrates the essence of what I fell in love with, while still hinting at what made Jadis so terrifying to me:



(exhibit 43d: Models and artist: Jadis and [Persephone van der Waard](#). Jadis and I, re-envisioned as a knight and her femboy ward through their encouragement/coercion [they would pull my funding and threaten me when angered, becoming a cycle of reactive abuse]. Doing so has transformed the past in ways that reflect on my abuse while also offering up a better hypothetical in the same Gothic language: what could have been and what could

actually be in future love stories should workers [and BDSM contracts] actually be respected, post-negotiation—not a memory of the past, but a rememory focused on remembering the essence of what was lost and, if not forgetting the horrifying abuse suffered at the same time, then at least not letting it rule me; i.e., me feeding on something I could rearrange and draw strength from—to not have it drain me all the time. Trauma is cryptomimetically echoed; i.e., in ways that acknowledge what was while subverting it per a revolutionary cryptonymy!

It's not exactly "the happy ending" of the Neo-Gothic novel, if purely because it doesn't do away with the haunted past; but it does present a suitable "What if?" for future undertakings that bear some resemblance to a former life while being different in all the ways that matter. This "ghost" of Jadis represents them at their very best, their most beautiful. On this page and nowhere else, they are still my protector and beloved, but also my Slan, my succubus monster mom who won't actually harm me. Creating them here in this form is my attempt to riff off my own trauma in cryptomimetic fashion, repurposing my own dead memories in ways that bring me peace; it hurts, as birth generally does, but ultimately delivers me tremendous sensation and relief from a tyrannical past!

"Stare and tremble!" then, for I have made Jadis into a dark cathedral; i.e., a calculated risk speaking to a castle-in-the-flesh that haunts me, and which I reestablish control through a reconstruction of it as I would like to reexperience

differently *per ludo-Gothic BDSM*; re: "...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!'" [[source](#)]. This practice comes from working with people who speak in equally ghost-like ways; re [from Volume Two, part one's "[Angry Mothers; or, Learning from Our Monstrous-Feminine Past](#)"]:

*I love my job because the people I work with [through interdependence, not codependence] are all awesome mommies and daddies I can proudly show off without regret!*



[models, from left to right: [Ms. Reefer](#), [Blxxd Bunny](#), and [Quinnvincible](#)]

How could I have any when working with such angels, and while having survived the complete-and-utter torture that preceded them? Jadis was my Great Destroyer. They took with impunity. [They scattered my wits, drained my sanity and stole my will to live](#) [source: Persephone van der Waard's "Setting the Record Straight; My Ex's Abuse of Me: February 17th, 2022"]. By comparison, these cuties—stellar and glowing—utterly restored it, gave me something to live for—something warm and serene, but joyous, thunderstriking and awesome: helping my friends avoid similar fates; i.e., an angelic and devilish bliss comparable to what Matthew Lewis described following the riot and fall of Ambrosio in [The Monk](#):

*The remaining years of Raymond and Agnes, of Lorenzo and Virginia, were happy as can be those allotted to Mortals, born to be the prey of grief, and sport of disappointment. The exquisite sorrows with which they had been afflicted, made them think lightly of every succeeding woe. They had felt the sharpest darts in misfortune's quiver; Those which remained appeared blunt in comparison. Having weathered Fate's heaviest Storms, they looked calmly upon its terrors: or if ever they felt Affliction's casual gales, they seemed to them gentle as Zephyrs which breathe over summer-seas* [[source](#)].

*To that, I'll let you in on a little secret: The greatest irony of Jadis harming me [something we'll go into more detail about during the undead module] is*

*they accidentally gifted me with the appreciation of calculated risk. Scoured with invisible knives, I don't view my scars as a "weakness" at all; I relish the feeling of proximity to the ghost of total power—of knowing that knowing that motherfucker took me to the edge but didn't take everything from me: I escaped them and lived to do my greatest work in spite of their treachery! Like the halls of a cathedral, my lived torments and joys color this castled work, ornamenting its various passages with the power of a full life. I've known such terror that makes the various joys I experience now all the more sweet and delicious. I am visited by ghosts of my rapturous design, the empress of my fate, the queen of a universe shared with seraphs the likes of which I can hardly describe; "no coward soul is mine" [[source](#)].*



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

*It would be a lie to say that Jadis didn't shape my view of the world; but it would be equally mendacious to say that this view of Jadis is entirely "them." I escaped them, and made a cryptonymic forgery that, like Walpole's castle, could never harm me again. I could feel tremendous feelings, yes—and others might stumble across these and puzzle about them on my Aegis [above]. But they would see me in nudist, rapturous agony that, in the same breath, speaks to Lewis' happy ending as born from great misery and pain.*

*Ghosts, then, are the past, but also the beautiful possible future—to step out of the shadows of Capitalism, but as cryptonymic echoes of that older time made darkness visible: impossibly and wondrously alive despite profit raping us! We present as "raped," loving it in ways that confuse those determined to harm us. Death is a dark cruel mistress, then, but one who—as a ghost of itself, raping Lambert screaming bloody murder in the dark of the retro-future haunted house Scott and company envisioned—sets us deliciously free in house or horror that we compose upon the architecture of the past. What a muse/mood! Just the thought of that scene makes my skin cover in goosepimples and my nipples harden, touched by psychosexual divine power! But Jadis is always close at hand, waiting to be reinvoked for "murder." Once you've felt rape, it never leaves you; you can only subvert it, and I do so to break Capitalism Realism on my wheel!)*

Jadis' counterfeit is where our love simultaneously died, but lives on in a kind of special burial site; frozen in time, it sits inside the larger continuum of oppositional praxis, where "archaeologies" wrestle in a constant liminal struggle—of author and creation both warring to express the truth under Capitalism while "just passing through." This happens in colonized language that later becomes reappropriated (the derivative corporate remake) or reappreciated (a return to a

proletarian past; e.g., *Andor*), generally both at once in a continual process of remaking as I have done; re: rememory a process of ghostly reflection upon the Aegis' countless shades.

### Reflection/Closing Thoughts

Let's conclude the ghost subchapter by reflecting on so many breadcrumbs; i.e., things that might, at first blush, seem wholly disparate and incongruous, but in truth exist part-in-parcel among a larger holistic pattern/midnight express. Riding it, we can reassemble and interrogate larger patterns that resist interpretation, but also *beckon* it. Their restless cryptonymies show and conceal, concerning the victims of older police violence (re: Sadako Yamamura, below), but also the ghosts of policemen calling out from the same spaces. Topping from the bottom (at times with a Promethean thunder spent by more Numinous articulations), their ghostly code informs/instructs the actions of active agents running across well-used hauntological tracks; i.e., chasing ghosts that were, are and could be again differently—for the state or for workers replacing Caesar's ghost with Marx' (as gayer than Marx ever dared dream).



Ghosts loom, loving a good guilt trip; the point of cursorily examining ghosts/the Numinous, the posthuman, the afterlife haunting astroethics, Metroidvania maps, and finally exhibit 43's *cryptomimetic* expressions—liminal creations in liminal space made by liminal occupants, etc—is to

invite the audience to "pass through" as well. This concerns not going over to a different side or end point, but within the chronotope to generate friendlier ghosts along the same well-trod path: the present as something to camp, placing it between quotes, haunting language and the people language embodies. Something beyond is felt within, promoting death and destruction as already having happened, and potentially again should we let our hair down and listen to Medusa's wailing voice! In truth, state shift is failing to heed the growing pains behind the veil of tears, Capitalist Realism a Black Veil that carries genocide on as long as it can.

We want to investigate this, dancing with the ghost of the counterfeit in order to reverse the abjection process and break Capitalist Realism before nature goes feral. Doing so yields tremendous feelings and revelations about the social, natural and material world and its procession of creative-interpretive jaunts. "Getting lost" is arguably the point—to swim around and play as older generations did—a "ghostly" mode of thinking and existing on maps, which see the world as something to transform, but also preserve; i.e., as ghosts of ghosts of ghosts of ghosts. As something new and cool—but also chimeric and trapped hopelessly

inside its own knotty<sup>394</sup> self—Gothic Communism yields a life study that takes on an older sex-positive likeness (and hauntological context, below). Telling everything immediately apart becomes impossible, so we rely on dialectical-material scrutiny to light the way through labyrinthine speculation and conjecture!

In historical-material terms, language isn't discrete; it denotes a presence of maybe-dangerous, friend-or-foe copies that workers will invariably have to investigate during their own relationships to people, but also linguo-material things resembling people or shaping whatever people pass themselves off as: older

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<sup>394</sup> I.e., like the wizard Merlin in a tree, trapped there by the Lady of the Lake\*, but also the female witch, Sycorax trapping Prospero's sprite, Ariel, in such a prison, in *The Tempest* (1611):

Prospero:

Thou best know'st  
 What torment I did find thee in. Thy groans  
 Did make wolves howl, and penetrate the breasts  
 Of ever-angry bears. It was a torment  
 To lay upon the damned, which Sycorax  
 Could not again undo. It was mine art,  
 When I arrived and heard thee, that made gape  
 The pine and let thee out.

Ariel:

I thank thee, master.

Prospero:

If thou more murmur'st, I will rend an oak  
 And peg thee in his knotty entrails till  
 Thou hast howled away twelve winters.

Ariel:

Pardon, master.  
 I will be correspondent to command  
 And do my spriting gently.

Prospero:

Do so, and after two days  
 I will discharge thee ([source](#)).

From Arthurian legends and the *Beowulf* story (c. 700 AD), then, queerness is generally "of nature," but closer to Capitalism and under it has become increasingly magical to uphold the status quo; i.e., in ways that cis-het men—even victims like Prospero—enlist to demonize its female/feminine core that they might seek revenge against fellow men of the imperial order! The state is straight, we fags, women and anything else attached to the environment suffering regardless who the king or executive is!

\*Michael Page writes in *The Encyclopedia of Things that Never Were* (1986), "Merlin's magical powers did not protect him from human weakness [code for men sleeping with women]. He was seduced by Nimiane, the Lady of the Lake, and she wheedled him into teaching her his spells and incantations. When she grew tired of him she used one of the spells to imprison him in an oak tree."

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
 Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

variations they feel reminded of in the present space and time. Ghosts embody the past-future seen in present spheres.

Simply put, uncanniness (and oscillation) are inevitable from a linguistic standpoint, especially when individuals go on to have more and more experiences, but also learn more about the world as it once existed through pastiche of various kinds; re: remediated praxis as "left behind." Occurring through "conversations" had with all these different ghosts, each collocative instance yields incomplete impressions of competing points of view that can be seen along the same liminal riff, one that goes on and on and on, but also, as Mel Brooks' 1987 *Spaceballs* would put it, [in "now-now"](#):



*(exhibit 43e1, afterthought: "What the hell am I looking at?!" Lord Helmet cries, riffing on Walpole's stupidly large helmet, from Otranto [and Shakespeare's "borrowed robes"—a giant's clothes put on a dwarf having stolen them: "Does the line stretch on to the crack of doom?"]. However dated, recursive, and liminal the past is, its mise-en-abyme always appears in the present. But as something to look at or talk to, understanding the nature of the interlocutor demands understanding oneself in relation to it; i.e., how the audience is affected by the experience speaking to them in cryptonymic showings and hidings—and how their*

*variable, echoing interpretations of it change the nature of the ghost as something to relate/respond to. Canon or camp, the effect is the same: change among something whose appearance is largely constant.)*

These recursive conversations beg an important question—not simply "What am I looking at?" but also "What or who am I talking to?" To say you're talking to yourself isn't entirely accurate; you're responding to something that isn't strictly alive but also isn't dead—not the past, but "the past" as informed by material history and informers thereof moving forwards through the conversations endlessly had between past and present as uncanny but also hauntological.

As such, ghost stories are told over and over across space and time, forcing viewers to immediately confront philosophical, but also semiotic, dialectical-material conundrums that many avoid thinking about (re: Capitalist Realism). Depending on the *copy* of the ghost in question, their nature can be for or against the state; but

all sit inside the same Gothic midden of dreck, claptrap, and trashy window dressing that ghosts represent: the diaphanous veils and asses shimmering in the spectral moonlight/fox fire! So do we moonlight as saviors to future lost and/or dead souls. Per Gogol's novel, we're not just data to manipulate by corporate officers enriching themselves on our likenesses! We break canon to free ourselves!



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

Keeping this in mind, a unique, empowered uncanny is the iconoclast's best option—to express ontology as haunted by all manner of ghosts when looking at the world through such a gaze and using its Aegis to discern a ghost's relationship to the viewer. Arguably the whole point of liminal expression is that *everything* feels liminal, bleeding together in linguo-material, social-sexual, and emotional/rational ways (trying to reconnect the third grouping through a rejection of Cartesian thought). Nostalgia is undeniably present, but the likeness it bears feels different while also highlighting an emotional perspective essential to a previous moment in time: to bring forward lost knowledge.

To that, this ghostly liminal riff needn't be an Imperial Boomerang swinging back and forth. If future ghosts become increasingly class-conscious, they become friendly to Communism communicated through themselves; achieving this kind of subversive, perceptive pastiche is vital to helping workers see beyond normal existence—i.e., as loaded with statues, egregores, and ghosts of various kinds that, sure enough, can flow power in either direction. To say the uncanny isn't required for Gothic-Communist development, then, would be to say that one needn't learn to tell ghost apart, belied by the simple fact that workers are incessantly fooled by canonical, unfriendly ghosts; i.e., leading to their own exploitation as fossilized, becoming part of all those dead generations Marx' "[Eighteenth Brumaire](#)" wrote about, weighing on living brains. It's not a curse if we can camp it!

In turn, these "living dead" become a haunted feeling the living cannot shake, but rather must express through their own ghosts as "wisdom" for future workers to stumble upon (even if that is given to them by would-be abusers like Jadis); re: the Wisdom of the Ancients being—per a proletarian Superstructure—the using of ghosts as they naturally exist: in duality. While labor decides either outcome, workers *for* Gothic Communism seek to unlock the pro-labor potential to such echoes and double operations; i.e., to raise emotional/Gothic intelligence and class-cultural (and race) awareness, *ipso facto*, synthesizing good daily habits at home (thus good praxis and systemic catharsis the world over)!

Before we cap off the Undead Module, let's conclude "I See Dead People" with a couple final points about ghosts and Gothic Communism!

First, I want to stress, here, that such hauntological expression, per Gothic Communism, is more holistic than Fisher's notion thereof. For Fisher, Capitalism leads to hauntology of a *specific* sort—the term "hauntology" originally coined by Derrida (re: *Spectres of Marx*) as being trapped between the past and the present, which Fisher further described as an inability to imagine the future beyond how it *used* to be seen through dead Capitalist nostalgia. For him, this is cyberpunk; for me, the canceled future includes liminal spaces like *Silent Hill* and its palimpsest, *Jacob's Ladder* (and *Metroid*, *Alien*, *Paradise Lost*, *Dante's Inferno*, etc)—a creative, mimetic chain felt across the praxial sum of Gothic art; i.e., through the workers channeling such poetics constantly across literal space and time, but also chronotopes of these things (narrative, architectural expressions of space-time) that solidify inside the material world once the practice takes root in a wider Gothic imagination.

Whereas Fisher's hauntology denotes a "mind prison" to drug and house the rebellious imagination inside, the Gothic Communist escapes stasis by turning the jailer's tools actively against them on all registers, mediums, and monsters: the target victim's emotions connected to past experiences/ritualistic markers thereof. Empowering these variables happens when workers create their own multimedia renditions of former likenesses, Galatea bucking Pygmalion to fashion cathartic friendly ghosts; i.e., that highlight enrichment and abuse as things to communicate as they are felt in real time—all at once, inside the human brain as something to bombard with impactful reminders of an abusive past. Continuously expressed through borrowed language and images, our holistic (and subversive) aim is to speak to the viewer in ways they'll actually recognize while also leading them away from trauma as a recurring pattern of abuse; i.e., away from the Capitalist-Realist spell woven by Hogle's ghost of the counterfeit during abjection-as-normal; e.g., Kubrick's dead-end worlds and dismal spirits. To challenge profit is to tear down that ghostly wall with spectres of Marx, one and all!

The same cannot be said for canonical ghosts. More severe and permanent versions of neoliberal *cryptomimesis* could be described as transgenerational *zombification*, specifically where attacks on the mind have thoroughly "lobotomized" its owner (the ghost of the counterfeit intimating *actual* lobotomization of rebellious or hysterical, "useless" minds). This menticide leads to a curious and terrifying proliferation—of "braindead" unfriendly zombies who, in a spell of thoughtless undeath, want to eat your brains; not to *use* them, but absorb or discard them uselessly! The same goes for vampires or ghosts, which, despite their trademark attacks, denote the same assimilatory outcome in canonical forms. Yet the fact remains, most people aren't "turned" to serve the state as police; being absorbed into the capitalist system, those Capitalism cannot *use* as soldiers, useful fools, or



state-corporate ideologues are exploited for profit, mulched as such like grist for the mill.

To this, ghosts—if simply left unaddressed—would linger and drain the already-taxed living of even more brainpower and life force. We must camp them, thus make them friendly to our cause in ways that give back:



([source](#))

Pursuant to this salubrious, two-way exchange, here's one final closing note *vis-à-vis* not just ghosts, but all monster types (four pages)!

Friendly ghosts, vampirism, zombification, xeno/necrophilia—you might have noticed how this book frequently invokes "monster puns" or slang as a kind of visual shorthand that *quickly* conveys the co-existence of conflicting ideas and linguistic functions (unfriendly or liminal variants); i.e., that pertain to our four main Gothic theories. The alacrity comes from common Gothic stereotypes whose complex ontological functions—i.e., a "ghost" as multiple things at once, like a Swiss Army knife (a theoretical idea, a signifier/signified representation, a unique object, a counterfeit, a cliché, etc)—didactically benefit from quick, snappy visual metaphors (a comparison between two seemingly unlike things; re: the Swiss Army knife); but also whose ominous visual themes intimate "useful" tools for communicating Gothic critiques of Capitalism: a clear and present danger without oversimplifying the linguistic function of ghosts. Unlike canon, we scare to share knowledge, generally through camp *vis-à-vis* the Four Gs; re: reverse abjection, Communist chronotopes, revolutionary cryptonymy and emancipatory hauntologies.

In keeping with *that* theme, a Gothic Communist is someone who thinks critically on their feet, but also their *toes* by weighing monsters as common symbolic measurements of risk during perilous scenarios that many people can relate to; i.e., as a general mode of consumption; e.g., trading cards, video games or horror movies, etc. Per ludo-Gothic BDSM, all configure the same basic "roll of the dice" (cops or victims, rebel or submit) inside a ludic format—one that literally expresses the taking of chances according to a humanized, highly imaginative and medieval narrative/aesthetic.

However, as symbols of *caution* that relate to the material world *beyond* media, the creation of monsters and their paratextual materials serve as vulgar shorthand (vulgar meaning "common," or things made common like castles, organs or churches—any and all of them denoting a fall from grace, but also an opportunity to change the world for the better).

As rebellious code, vulgarity becomes a useful poetic device to readily clarify capitalist deceptions—of thinking with monsters, both as language to see things

through, but also respond artistically with or towards; i.e., as they appear in the material world through individual worker expression<sup>395</sup> pursuant to older and larger movements. It *should* snowball, happening *for* oneself, alongside one's community in a second-nature, *communal* effort to resist the usual illusions of a bourgeois Superstructure; and in doing so, the recultivation of said Superstructure (for proletarian purposes) should yield *protective caution against* the state's various proponents: any and all who threaten you and your friends by generating canonical variants antagonizing nature to put it to work, policing itself (through all the strange appetites that capital engenders).

Furthermore, the way to recognize these threats is also consumption-based; i.e., to spot in media, but also through people and how they actually consume, produce, perform or play with media as ghostly doubles that haunt the picturesque scene: Derrida's spectres of Marx, which become us—alive and warm—haunting the venue of those who do not wish to announce or acknowledge our presence. We're spooky in ways that suggest what lies beyond Capitalism.

"The beyond," itself, is a common audio-visual and thematic trope in the Gothic. Beyond maps, for example, ghostly music frequently ties to special instruments like the theremin or pipe organ leading people to their doom—not just through walls, but across space and time, in and out of dreams, etc (or into contained, concealed or closed spaces—re: Manuel Aguirre's "[Geometries of Terror](#)"). This can be tied to xenophobia through Red Scare—e.g., "Is my neighbor a Martian?" thus from a hostile, uncolonized "Red planet" (the same inquiry can be applied to other monsters)—but also *xenophilia* fetishizing ghostly things through sex and force; i.e., as normally policed by the state. Either mentality is historically



tied to various forms of communion associated with the past, non-Western ways of life, or values *atypical* to the normative Cartesian experience. We upend all of that, arguing in the games we play, "Love thy neighbor if they are called 'alien'; question or fight anyone playing the cop":

(artist: [Deimos-Remus](#))

In other words, xenophilia and xenophobia are the ghost of the counterfeit trapping the Western consumer between a love and fear of the imaginary past, the dichotomy contrasting weirdly with the bastardized linguistic symbols and

<sup>395</sup> Exhibit 43d's liminal expression of my own trauma, echoing Hamlet's "quintessence of dust"; re: "What a piece of work is a man!" something we must, sure enough, camp through such dust: Jadis made up of such graveyard *poiesis* to yield a new golem like and unlike its former self, but also Shakespeare's titular wackjob.

standards; i.e., Horace Walpole's *Otranto* exhibited a tremendous love of a reimagined, "archaeological" medieval—an attitude reinforced well into the present; e.g., with Richard Matteson's zombie-vampires "attacking" the hero's claim on "his" neighborhood (aped in 1987 when the neighborhood kids from *The Monster Squad* grow suspicious of the friendly old German man, who they simultaneously call "Scary German Guy," a vampire, and "some old dude on welfare").

Gothic Communism seeks to address the unnatural state of affairs that Capitalism brings about, then enforces. Yet, the linguistic properties of monsters are both natural and unnatural. The natural component is how all these monsters seemingly represent *something* beyond themselves, being more intense through room to imagine by looking at the monster in question; the *unnatural* element is a material-technological byproduct of manmade things, including legends, commodities and sex-coercive elements useful to the state inside a *divided* mind.

From a *dialectical-material* standpoint, this canonical symbiosis involves an intense, oft-violent oscillation happening between workers and alienated qualities among other workers, places, and things; i.e., fighting over a claim regarding these things as owned, but also wild. To face monsters—but especially ghosts—and tremble before them is, in essence, to see and confirm one way or the other if something is or isn't owned by the state (commonly disguised through Radcliffe's "ghost pirates" trick; re: *Scooby Doo* having Old Man What's-His-Name dress up as a ghost to scare people off, then steal something valuable buried inside a property site). Once Gothic Communism is attained, this harmful, uncanny oscillation *will* diminish, but the ghosts of all our yesterdays will not lay to rest; they'll walk among us in ways we can camp and communicate as we please!

Never forget: Capitalism alienates and sexualizes everything! So we must



bring all of this home to rescue labor from the state's evil blinders; e.g., to ban books is to ban people, to burn books is to burn people, and to ban books but not guns is to place gun ownership (and abuse) over literacy and the lives of readers killed by guns (often women and children). Listen to the dead, the alien, the unheard, and let the scales fall from your eyes! In a world of natural-to-manufactured confusion, camp anything and everything to show the truth of things. To camp is to sever signifier from signified, swapping real harm out with "harm." And touched by harm, survivors slide into that liminal performative space for the rest of their lives; i.e., as ghosts!

(artist: [Bay](#))

Occupying that magical in-between, ludo-Gothic BDSM is *not* a prison. We camp canon because we must. This includes Marx' ghost, but also anyone else's to raise up new powerfully genderqueer spirits per Gothic (gay-anarcho) Communism; i.e., occupying the same spaces as Capitalism (and state proponents) do, and calling across the void invite you to old pleasures experienced between Heaven and Hell: right now on Earth! To look but not touch, we lead you towards happier circumstances with those in your own lives who *want* to be touched; but perhaps when you do, making those you love tremble and shake, you'll think of us—seeing the original echo in the back of your mind, living rent free!

We ghosts of Grendel's mother sow gender trouble, planting seeds in the boxes, recesses and cleavage of dark forests, wells, and caves—to sit between fantasy and reality as the things that never were, the Withywindle valley "[as] the queerest part of the whole wood – the centre from which all the queerness comes" ([source](#): *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 1954); e.g., druids, witches, nymphs, dryads, spirits; i.e., stewards of nature as something to bond with anew, as all workers must! Life and death are two sides of the same coin, decomposers eating the dead to fertilize the land, restoring it. Imagination and language are similar if viral, in that respect—figurative but no less rich or poor in spirit! The harvest is human, but grimly sliced up by state machines in ways only the heeding of spirits can prevent! You might feel misled by roundabout secrets or sexy people in corpse paint, but such elaborate strategies of misdirection (re: Jameson) routinely give us the flexibility and wherewithal to piece state veils!



(artist, [left](#) and [right](#): [Blxxd Bunny](#))

Simply put, we haunt them—threatening Capitalist Realism with its own bursting through post-scarcity doubles overwhelming the minds of those acclimated towards scarcity as endemic, built-in. Liberation, while occupying the same space as enslavement, must contend with that mentality as something to overwrite; i.e., by reclaiming the same devices from canonical forces. It feels like a deal with the

devil, but rescues everything from state usage as such: using essence as both language and (often enough) bodily fluids that make people separated by space and time, feel whole. Ghosts love cum (those milky sheets restore their whiteness much like blood does a vampire's red lips)!

## Deal with the Devil: Transitioning Modules; or Between Demons and the Undead

*O, what a world of profit and delight,  
Of power, of honour, of omnipotence,  
Is promis'd to the studious artizan!  
All things that move between the quiet poles  
Shall be at my command ([source](#)).*

—Faustus, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (1604)

Now that we've covered zombies, vampires and ghosts, the Undead Module is complete! Its conclusion shall accomplish three basic things: one, acknowledge the transition between ghosts and composites; two, outline my thought process for the Demon Module and my writing it, versus the Undead Module; and three, wrap up with some broad closing objectives about Gothic Communism to keep in mind.

**First**, the transition: Originally the Undead and Demon Module were part of the same document, and the opening to the Demon Module is actually a segue into composite monsters, which walk the line between undead, animal and demonic. Let's discuss that (two pages).

From the Undead Module, the Demon Module shall transition to composites, which are different from the monsters we've examined so far. Zombies, ghosts and vampires are all *discretely* undead, denoting a curse-like presence amid a stigmatized feeding vector. *Pew, pew!* The Straights attack such shooting-gallery gargoyles to protect white pussy from evil black penetration, blood libel and sodomy, etc; we fags occupy the same space to speak spectrally to our own rapes and eventual liberation:



Composites, on the other hand, are *questionably* undead. Often made from inanimate material like clay or stone, but also the *reanimated* flesh of dead pariahs, criminals and slaves, composites fixate on feeding of a more homely kind: family ties, social connection and sexual enrichment. However,

their origins damn them before they are even born. Their "births" are unnatural, tied to a Promethean search for forbidden knowledge by those who made them; i.e., as alienated from nature being the very thing state forces prey upon to deify themselves. As the vain, self-righteous parent ignores, neglects and abuses their

child, they treat them spitefully as the failed "demonic" outcome of a noble-if-vain experiment. This leads the newborn(s) to angrily seek revenge, often by torturing their maker to death before committing suicide; but it just as often speaks to a desire to fit in, oscillating between different states of mind acted out onscreen (androids in *Alien* speaking to the queer/harem servant trope):



Obviously this crisis can be subverted during Gothic Communism, but doing so stems from older stories that were designed "to chill the blood." The queer spectres of such possible worlds endure to camp canon, resisting Cartesian silence and genocide through selective reading during intersectional solidarity's

pedagogy of the oppressed—to take what is useful from all that came before and to leave the rest behind.



(artist: [Alex Ross](#))

For instance, earlier we briefly mentioned the posthuman predicament of the Major from *Ghost in the Shell*. Proceeding into the Demon Module, we'll explore the origins of the posthuman *condition*—not according to ghosts, zombies or vampires, but through a different kind of abstraction: demons as byproducts of our material world as having evolved into its current self. Whether composite, summoned (occult), and/or natural, demons serve as fearful reminders of past pursuits towards presently forbidden knowledge, sealed off by the Cartesian Revolution and its enforcers. This isn't so different from feeding on human tissue and enduring/policing Cartesian war and rape in

practice, but the aesthetic is visually unique and highly ritualized through its own stories critiquing or enforcing state paradigms.

To this, we'll explore how demonic expression can subvert Cartesian trauma through playful, exquisite forms of "torture" scattered across space and time; i.e., not undead feeding but demonic shapeshifting and Faustian knowledge and

Promethean power exchange. To understand our own trauma (and to shove the paradigm shift away from Enlightenment dogma), we'll need to see where it all started: with the Promethean Quest as re-envisioned by Mary Shelley after the Enlightenment was well underway.

**Second**, with the Undead Module completed, and its release eminent, I've written a short little blurb (two pages) concerning my thought process for the Demon Module. The Undead Module, even with several of the initial chapters transplanted to the back end of the Poetry Module, is still a full-size text; i.e., it is a *sub-volume*, that unit of measurement being used to indicate the Undead Module as part of a larger organizational unit, the *volume*, regardless of actual length. Thus, the Undead and Demon Modules are both sub-volumes, even though the Undead Module is finished, whereas the Demon Module is still very much under construction (as of writing this; you can follow its writing process [at the "Deal with the Devil" promo page](#), on my website).

About that. The incomplete status of the second Monster Module reflects where things presently stand with me; i.e., as a trans woman, *I* am currently under construction, my past self already having been brought out and made into various object lessons while likewise taking my previous book volumes (my PhD, manifesto and Poetry Module) into account. In short, the Undead Module was about healing from my past trauma while thinking about it poetically in relation to the undead and how they operate; i.e., through trauma and feeding mechanisms fixated on undead poetics—doing so in order to yield history lessons concerning imaginary/objective forms of reality as part of the same living document, including its aesthetic reclaimed during ludo-Gothic BDSM/revolutionary cryptonymy. Not all sight is done with the eyes!



(artists: [Lucid-01](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#))

Keeping with *that* cumulative, holistic trend, my past is currently alive in an undead sense that faces my uncertain future as transforming more and more into a demonic, witchy and goblin-esque self (left); i.e., one that yields fresh perspective, speculation and—true to

the demonic approach to Gothic poetics—forbidden knowledge and power exchange synthesizing good praxis and catharsis; re: "[Eating a meal, a succulent Chinese meal?](#)" Sanguine or ectoplasm, darkness visible or night soil, things *will* come back around, already synthesized only to be synthesized again. Repeatedly playing with such devils is to play with what we can become, entering a new stage of existence; i.e., an exciting new, demonic chapter in our lives! It hurts so good, but speaks to our half-real, unclothed armor! Truth cannot be covered up, because our confused, blurred realities speak to an ongoing and shapeshifting survival. We become marked, thus must learn to fend off new predatory overtures while getting our kicks; i.e., as devils in disguise that advertise for those who know!

To it, my book chapters are as much an expression of my mastery and transformation as they are my trauma and odd appetites that I might interrogate through holistic expression. There's no logical conclusion or "final number/verdict" to mark where I'll wind up, in that respect; i.e., I'm already a master magician who's written her PhD and three other books, at this point. This fourth book is just the next step in a never-ending journey for which the contents are laid out (the skeleton), but for which I can add additional essays and close-reads, should I wish to.



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

So, despite my consolidation and reifying of wisdom, I still don't know exactly what will happen next or what I'll turn into as I make *my* deal with the devil. Showing the world what we fags always are—something to reclaim from our colonizers in the endless task of complete liberation—is kind of fun, isn't it? And invested in having such fun as that is, I shall keep on making things I know the elite would rather I didn't (as much as they care to concern

themselves with anything but profit). Expect some new fun surprises as I continue hammering the Demon Module into its so-called "final form"—not the end-all, be-all of Persephone van der Waard, but something of a crystallization that can be used in future endeavors by other workers referencing all of my



works as needed. I am your angel and your devil, offering up fatal knowledge to help *you* transform and achieve Gothic Communism yourselves! With music, monsters and theatrical mayhem—with ludo-Gothic BDSM ("Hurt, not harm," my sweets)—we clownish fags strut our stuff. Historically, this would end with us promptly fucking off. Not anymore! We're here and we're queer, bitches!

**Three**, some broad closing objectives to keep in mind as we go between modules; i.e., regarding Gothic Communism, regardless of monster type!

Capitalism Realism would advocate for death and resurrection to keep people stuck in an endless loop of ignorance and pacification—of jumping simply to the end of the world. Except, our *jouissance* in fucking with them—through spectres of Marx per the Four Gs, including hauntology and the cryptonymy process camping canon/making it and its ghosts gay—provides its own delightful paradoxes inside shared spaces that state forces cannot fully control or dominate; i.e., regarding monstrous occupants threatening to return and overthrow the heteronormative nuclear order with dark, super-gay doubles: a danger-disco event horizon that, through all the usual performative combat, castles, noir-style romances, and good-times-had-by-all penetrative thresholds (and party music disguised as "combat"; e.g., [Duke's theme from \*Battle Arena Toshinden\*](#), 1995), brings darkness visible to the state's Capitalist-Realist myopia!

The stairs (and murder), then, aren't the wrong way, Jonathan La'Fey, but a direct line to what yearns to be free and run wild in ways labor never has before:



I am alive inside your wife

Miriam's dead, I am her head, soon I'll be free!  
(King Diamond, "[Abigail](#)," 1987).

So do we pretty-spunky soldiers of class war gleefully and joyously liberate culture (and race) from the usual territorial dialogs/monopolies! [That's all she wrote](#), as we wear our cryptonymic hearts on our sleeves. Bare and exposed, but unbothered and unburdened by state baggage, we prey and pray/duel in duality mid-liminal and holistic expression! We get comfy but stay ready to scrap in the buff! Doing so highlights where bigotry lurks, and what areas need work!

(artist: [Ickpot](#))

As such, we make sure to include others, tie ourselves up in knots, undo state bonds and police cuffs, put on BDSM fetish uniforms, whip with crops, jiggle and shake, play games, put "rape" in quotes, swoon, thunder/starstrike, mutate ("[It's morphin' time!](#)"), matchmake, love you and leave you just as fast—indeed, leave ourselves magically behind like a lover's pair of used panties, a genie's lamp for you to smell and/or wear to better come up with new ideas/inspiration: labors of love, while making love, rubbing clits with elbow grease! Trauma marks us, and during calculated risk, we free ourselves but—like Persephone—remain endemic to Hell, skirting the borderline between itself and heavenly spheres! We become the mistress of our fate, ruling in Hell versus serving in Heaven: stepped on by Mother Nature in mil spec.

In turn, the complexities of play let us host feelings and performances concerning betrayal and catharsis; i.e., on the same stages. There, we can be maiden or whore, having some sense of control over how we are seen, thus humanized. We can recontextualize our abuse, codifying it in ways that speak to what happened to us and what we want as likewise liminal. We expose and entertain, embarrass and embellish where and what is needed.

To it, women (or those treated as women/monstrous-feminine) are not sex machines to force coins into until sex comes out, but capital's us-versus-them will frame us that way to antagonize labor and pimp nature out. In this sense, not only is sex a game *vis-à-vis* new instruction as dialectical-material, but multiple games are happening all at once. Rules can be explained, but just as often negotiate and install invisible, half-real boundaries that play out through trust between individuals and groups alike; re: bondage and blindfolds, erogenous pleasure and non-harmful pain. Subs and doms have needs/can be pushy or noncommittal/predatory to varying degrees.

To prevent "harm," then, is to put it in quotes and learn to tell the difference by synthesizing it in our daily lives; re: our gossip, monsters and camp! "Harder, faster! Stop! No; no means yes [with safewords]!" There's so much fun to be had/empathy to cultivate provided we learn to play smart/subversively! Learn from the past and make the Wisdom of the Ancients perceptive through revolutionary cryptonymy—to create situations of calculated risk that instruct how to hurt, not harm; i.e., how to fuck and have fun without compelled abuse raping nature as the elite always do. The state isn't just incompatible with life, but mutual consent, its hierarchies designed to rape and destroy for the biggest illusions of all: money and power. Gothic Communism illustrates said lessons/struggles in opposition to state forces/class traitors and capital's usual qualities—heteronormativity, Cartesian dualism and settler-colonialism—alienating and sexualizing everything in service to profit, and cultivating strange appetites. ACAB and ASAB! Socialism fucks; we fuck for Communism! Hail, Satan!

So put your backs into it and rise to the challenge, my pretties! Put the carnal in carnival! Take it to the edge! Fuck to metal (or Bach—whatever works)! Summon the slut and "lose yourselves to dance!" ([as Daft Punk puts it](#)); make Gothic Communism your own! From undead to demon to animal, this is where our lost humanity is found; have the courage to go and find it!

Your Commie Mommy,

—Persephone van der Waard

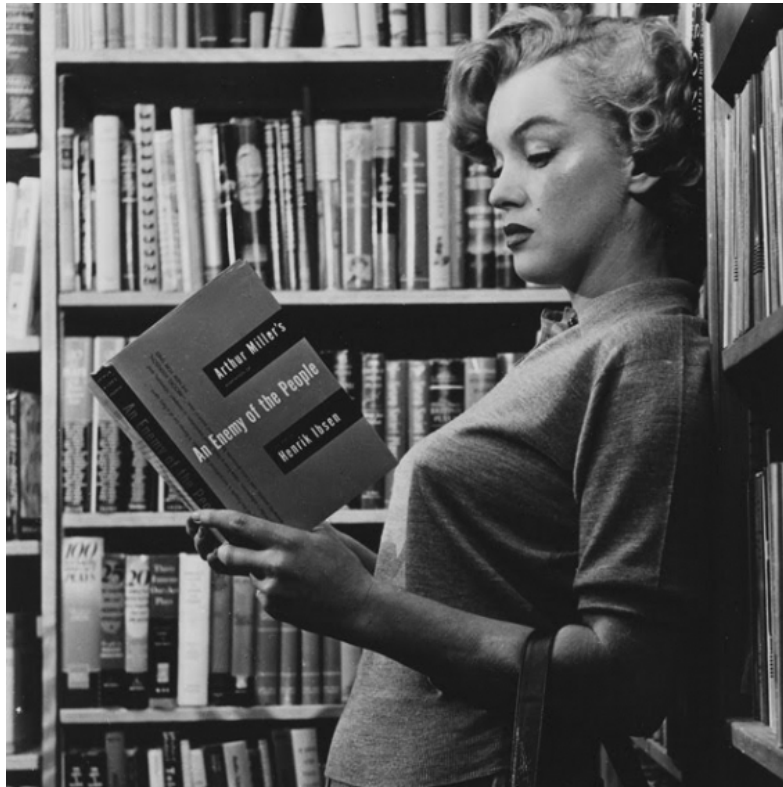


(model and artist: [Persephone van der Waard](#))

# 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.

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

# 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, moderacy 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*,

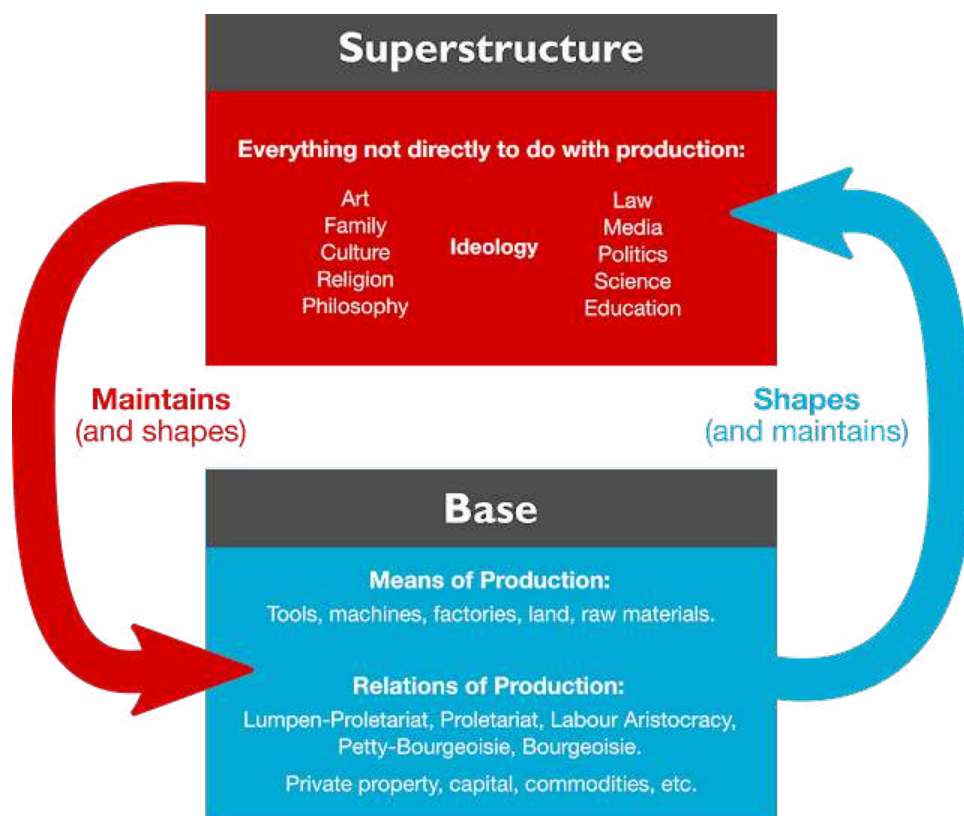
Self-fashioning through culture and education is to be supplemented by technology. For this reason, transhumanists believe that we should add morphological freedom—the freedom of physical and mental form—to

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: *Hitler'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* (1939). 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:

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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 Fisher'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

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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

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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.

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## 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

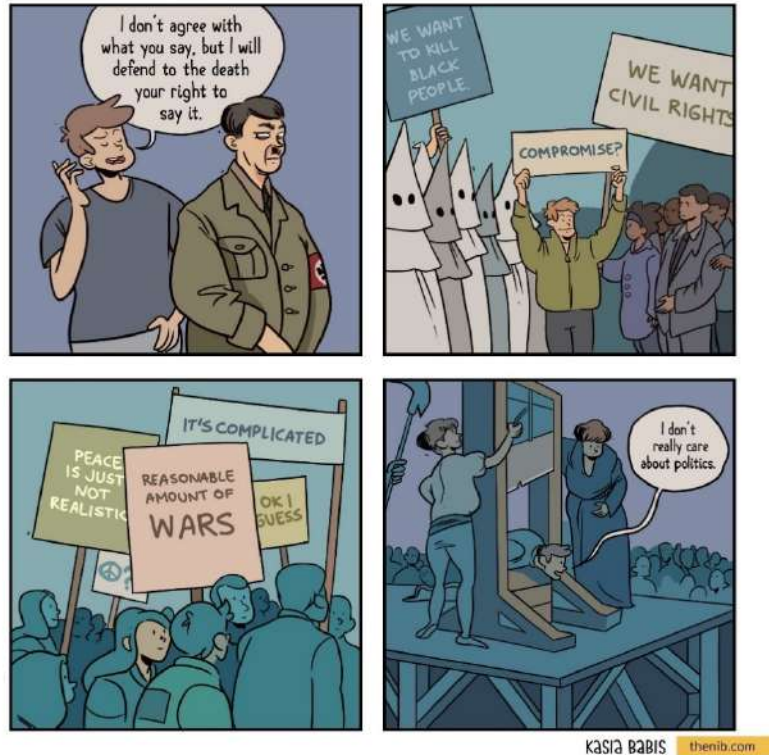
The Communist idea that all human/animal workers deserve fair and equal treatment, which nation-states and corporations historically do not give (they are bourgeois and exploit workers). In Marxist terms, these rights are administered through Communism not according to profit, but "From each according 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

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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

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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](#)).

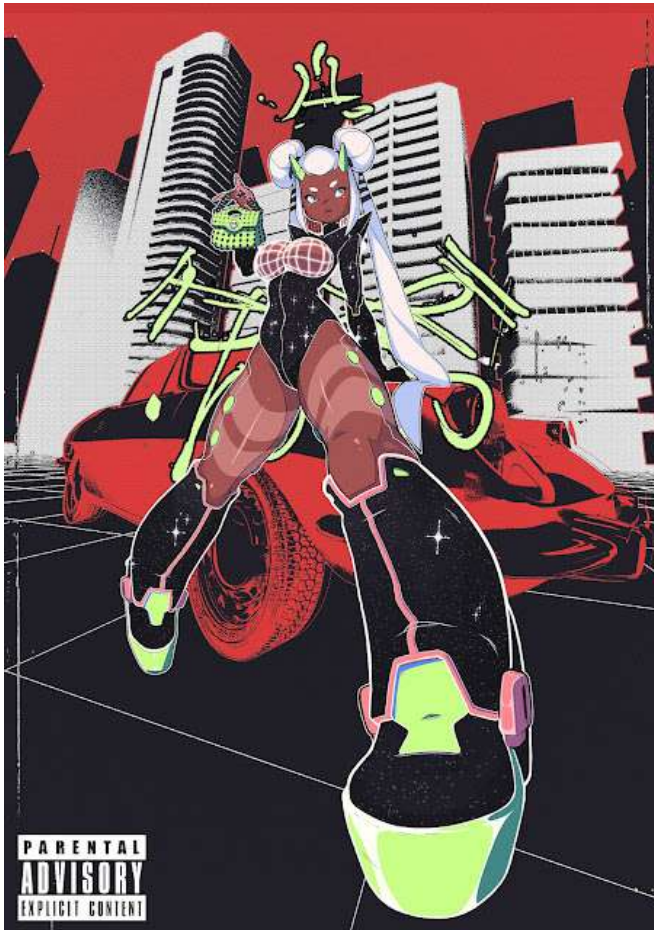
Appropriative performances of voyeurism/exhibitionism (watching or showing sexual activities) that cater to this Gaze uphold the status quo. Those that do not are appreciative (thus sex-positive) in nature, but generally remain liminal and ambivalent.



## 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).

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(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).

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## **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.

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(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.,

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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](#)).

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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,

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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*:

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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"

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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**

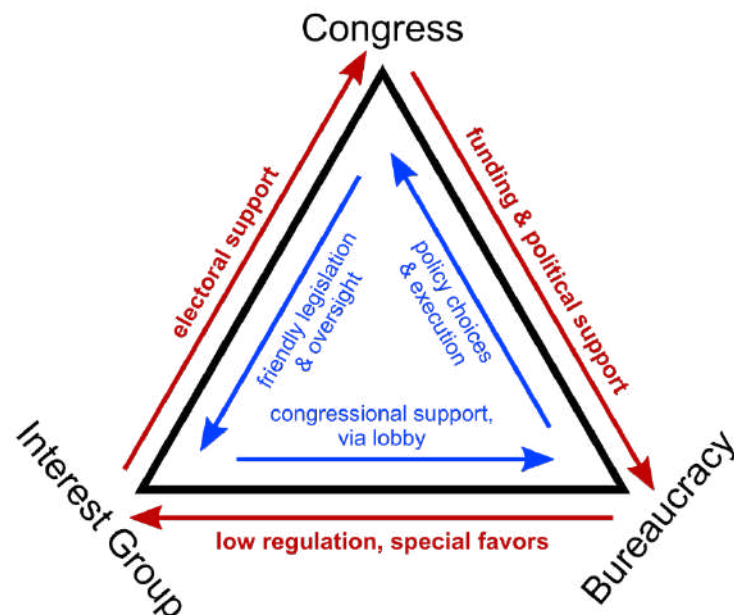
Class war for/against the state-corporate hegemony and its collective bourgeois interests. Proletarian solidarity and collective action fight an uphill battle against fractured/pulverized variants—i.e., worker division and in-fighting through tokenism, assimilation (gaslight, gatekeep, girl-boss) and token normativity as a means of generating class traitors to stall/prevent/regress rebellion and maintain Capitalism.

## class traitors/cops

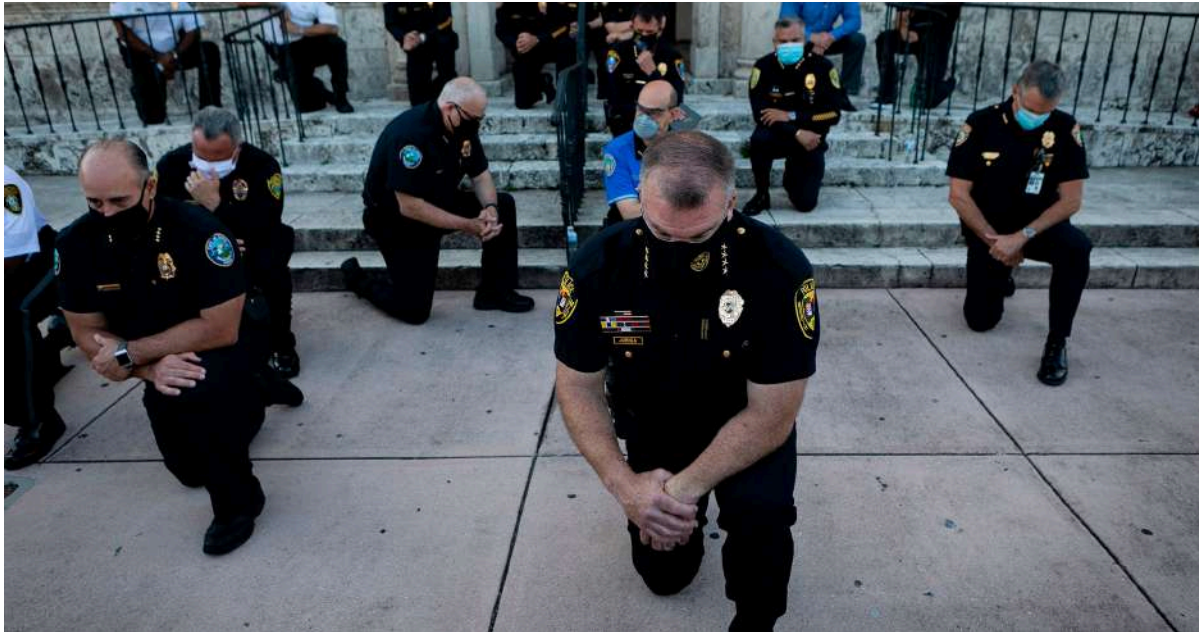
Workers who betray the working class in defense of capital, namely the state as capital, often the military or paramilitary (cops) but also those who take on the same bourgeois function by dividing workers in defense of capital, thus the state. Traitors and exploitation takes many, many forms because 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

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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

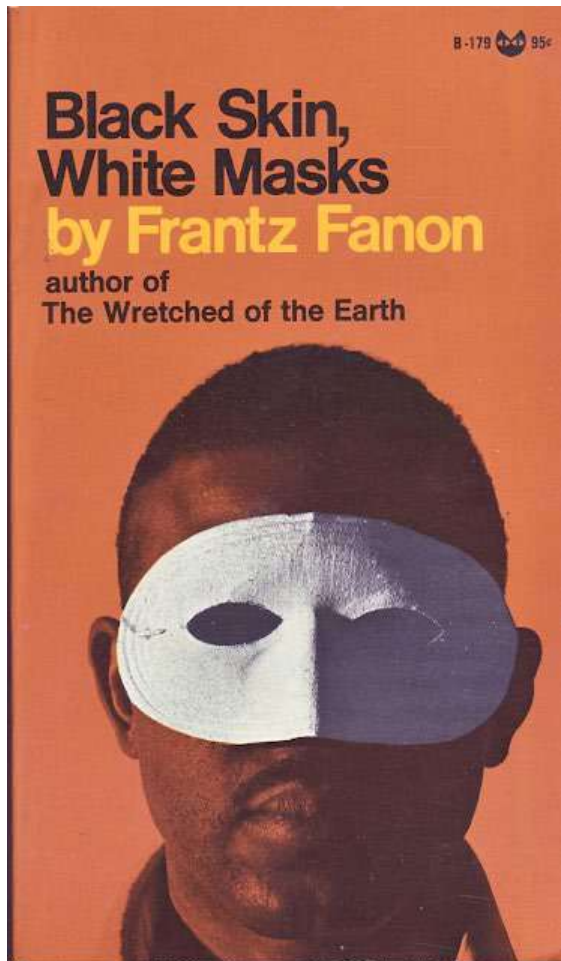
The idea of making critical appeals/arguments that have "class character"/are class conscious. Though this notion is modular, it intersects with race, gender and religion, etc (the deliberate attempt to segregate/prioritize them called reductionism; e.g., "race/class reductionism").

## 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).

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## **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

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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**

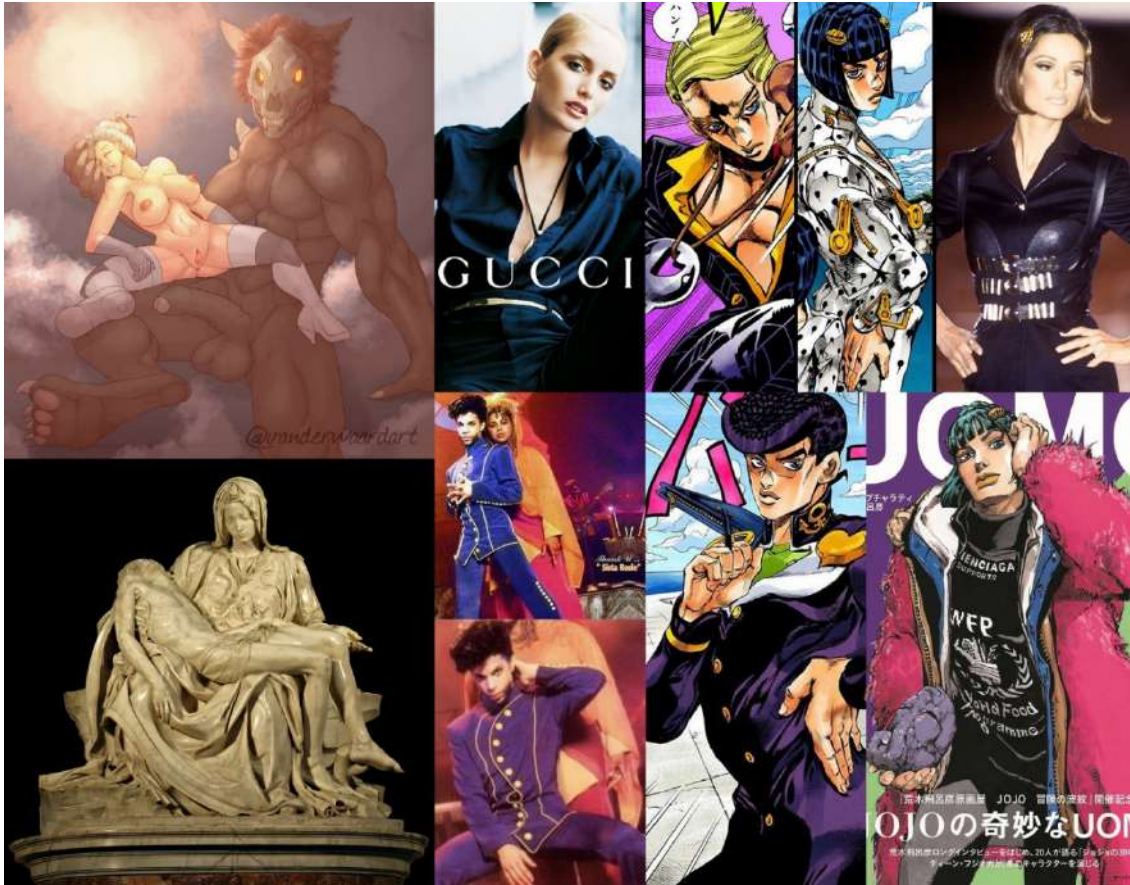
Gameplay intended by the developers; in Marxist terms, this can be considered the bourgeoisie or their proponents.

### **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

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*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).

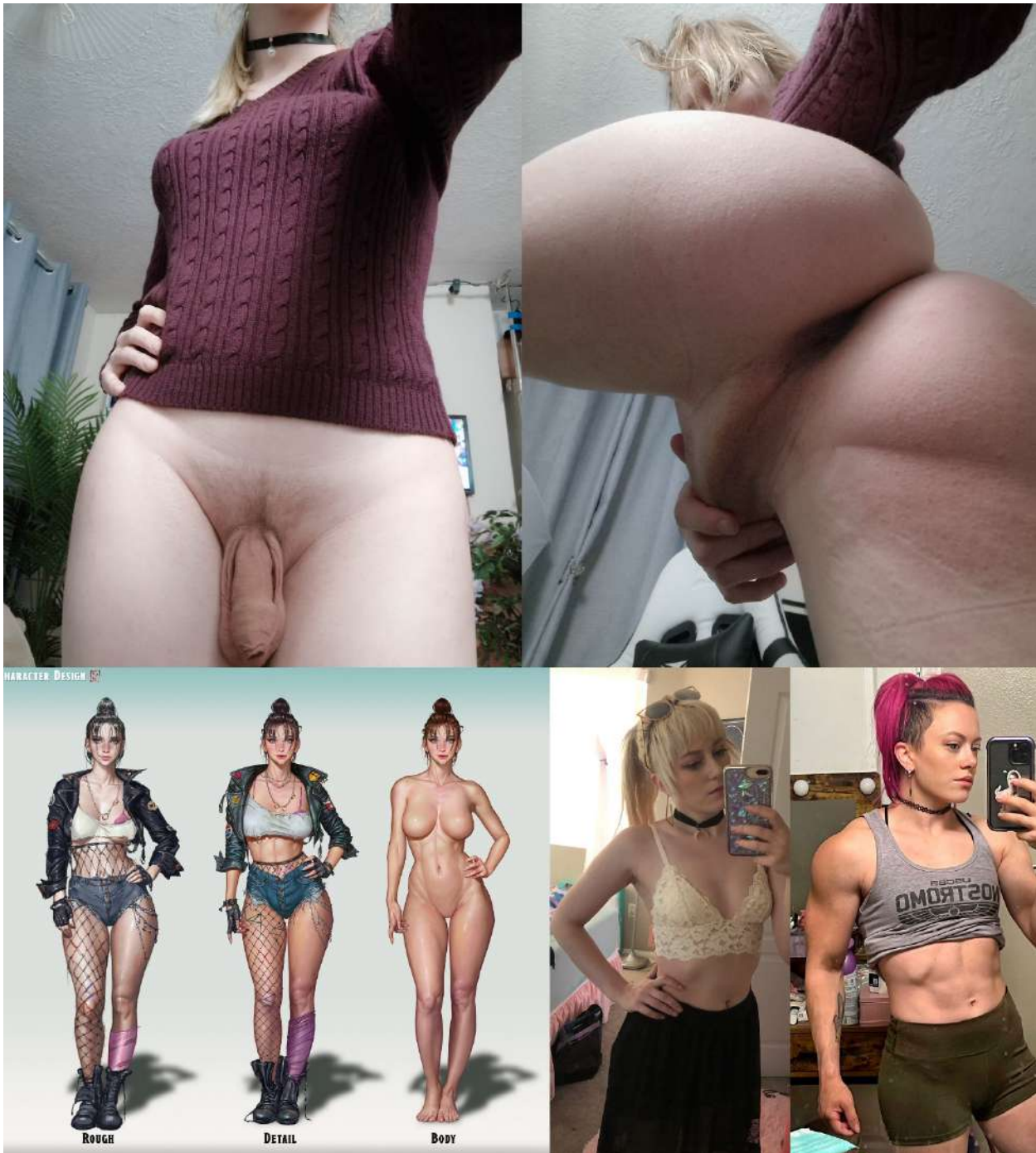
"Prison sex" is the same idea as Man Box culture, except it chooses to focus less on men and more on the unequal power dynamics that occur between dimorphized workers trained not just to rape and kill one another in literal terms, but also theatrical language; i.e., any form of expression that ties into 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 catgirl 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.

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## **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 (not including my *entire* book volumes, but citing some salient essays from those books):

- 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 YouTube video summarizing Metroidvania and its spatial qualities (sort of a precursor to the 2021 "Mazes and Labyrinths" abstract): "[Metroidvania Series #2: Mazes and Labyrinths](#)" (accompanied by its original script, [on Google Docs](#); both 2019)
- 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 Gothacist'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)
- a chapter on Metroidvania from my PhD, aka Volume Zero of *Sex Positivity* (2023), which details extensively my history with Metroidvania from childhood to my graduate and postgraduate work: "['Make it gay,' part two: Camping Tolkien's Refrain using Metroidvania, or the Map is a Lie: the Quest for Power inside Cameron's Closed Space \(and other shooters\)](#)" (2023)
- an essay from Volume Two, part one, which conceptualizes the middle class' constant inheritance and exploring of the imaginary past through a privileged "savior" position, but one that can develop ludo-Gothic BDSM as a sex positive force; features Samus Aran as a "white Indian": "['In Search of the Secret Spell': Digging Our Own Graves; or, Playing with Dead Things \(the Imaginary Past\) as Verboten and Carte-Blanche \(feat. Samus Aran\)](#)" (2024)
- an essay from Volume Two, part one, which critiques Jeremy Parish as a Metroidvania research inspiration of mine: "['Monsters, Magic and Myth': Modularity and Class \(feat. Jeremy Parish and Sorcha Ní Fhlainn\)](#)" (2024)
- an essay from Volume Two, part one, which reflects on how the Gothic is queer as realized through my Metroidvania work and beyond: "[Facing Death: What I Learned Mastering Metroidvania, thus the Abject '90s](#)" (2024)
- a three-part book chapter\* on Metroidvania from Volume Two, part two, which covers *Frankenstein* (aka *The Modern Prometheus*) and talks extensively about the Promethean Quest as it appears in popular media after Shelley's novel—Metroidvania, of course (with close-reads of *Hollow Knight* and *Axiom Verge*), but also movies like *Forbidden Planet* and *Alien*: "['She Fucks Back'; or, Revisiting The Modern Prometheus through Astronoetics: the Man of Reason and Cartesian Hubris versus the Womb of Nature in Metroidvania](#)" (2024).

\*Said chapter combines my PhD research after writing my PhD, making "She Fucks Back" a culmination of my life's work on the subject; I'm very proud of it!

Last but not least, I wanted to share my favorite essay about Metroidvania. Already the culmination of my life's work, I wanted to cap off my magnum opus [re: "She Fucks Back"] with a fun little announcement, letting you all know the last

part of that chapter is now on my website: "[Sleeping Beauties: Policing the Whore; or, Topping from Below to Rise from the Ashes](#)" (2024)!



([source](#): *Materia Collective*)

Normally it'd just be another post in my book sample series for Volume Two, part two, "[Searching for Secrets](#)" (2024). However, "Sleeping Beauties" is extra special because it's the capstone to my Metroidvania work after my PhD and what I esteem to be my crowning achievement; i.e., I write about rape play a great deal, talking about it outside of Metroidvania all the time (e.g., "[Into the Toy Chest, part zero: A Note about Rape/Rape Play; or, Facing the Great Destroyer](#)," 2024), but "Beauties" complements that work by marrying it to one of my favorite games, *Hollow Knight*, and its secret final boss, the Radiance! There's just so much

fun academic stuff to unpack (e.g., Manuel Aguirre, Michel Foucault and Mikhail Bakhtin, to name a few)—with me doing so in a way that's hopefully more accessible, sexy and fun than those authors to read!

To summarize the piece, itself, my website describes it as, "Articulates Aguirre and Bakhtin's ideas per my evolution of ludo-Gothic BDSM after my master's thesis and into my graduate work, then considers the Promethean Quest as something that presents the whore as normally hunted by police forces, only to escape their subjugation and imprisonment by acting out her own rape; i.e., as *Hollow Knight's* final boss, the Radiance, does" ([source](#)). In short, girl's a freak, but camps her abuse at the hero's hands to say something not just about the Pale King, but Capitalism, too, and why *it* sucks. Maybe in reading "Beauties," you'll change how you view not just the game and its approach to sexual violence in Gothic forms, but also the world at large...

In any event, it's a huge relief to have "Beauties" out there, and I'm very proud of it. Give it a look and let me know what you think!



Lost in Necropolis: The Continuation of  
Castle-Narrative beyond the Novel or Cinema,  
and into Metroidvania

Nicholas van der Waard

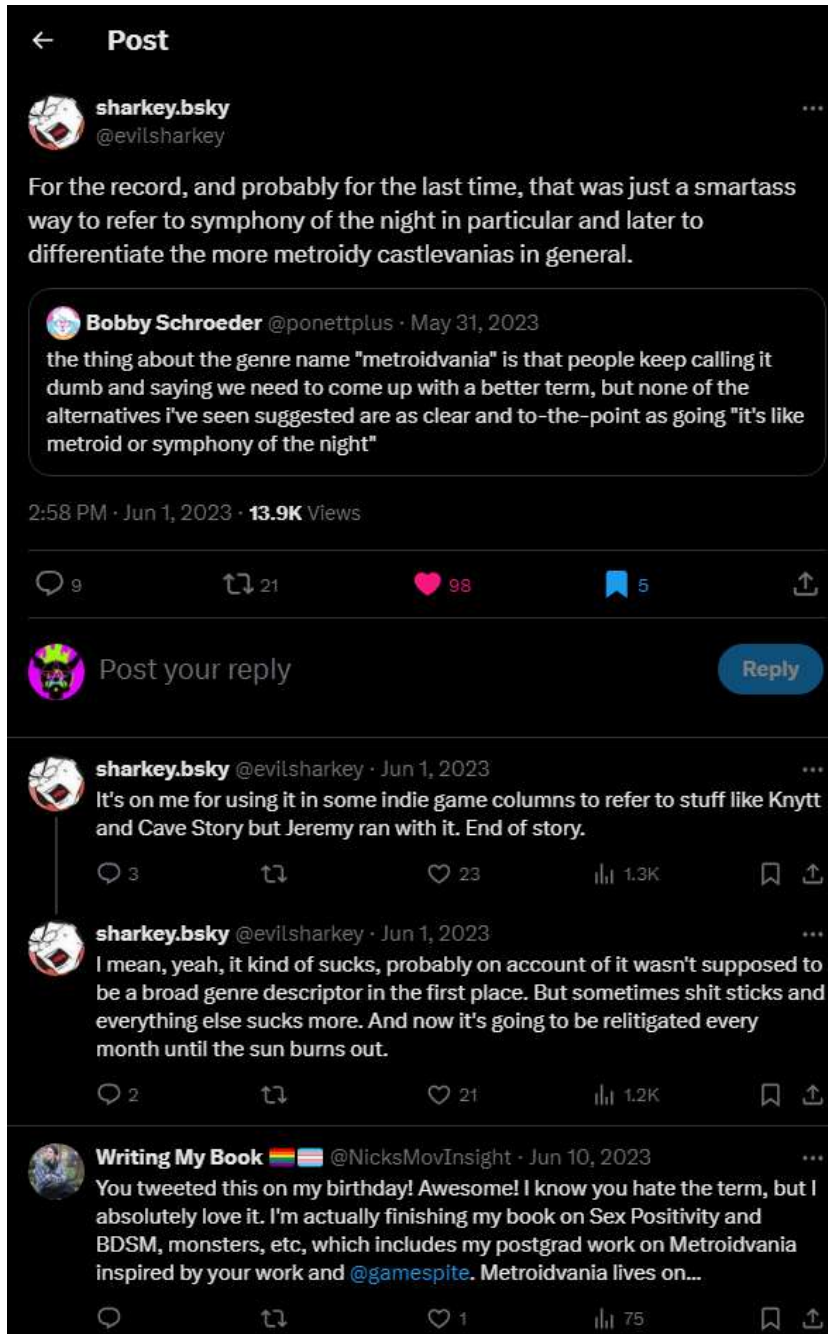
A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Manchester Metropolitan  
University for the MA Degree - English Studies: The Gothic

Department of English  
Faculty of Arts and Humanities  
September 2018

*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:



*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\*

*Sex Positivity versus Sex Coercion, or Gothic Communism* by Persephone van der Waard  
Volume Two, part 2 (the Undead), first edition v1.0c; released: 9/11/2024 — ©2024  
[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.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



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."

**Further Distinctions:** There are further ways to identify if a Metroidvania space is a maze or not. As I explain in my 2019 YouTube video, "[Metroidvania Series #2: Mazes and Labyrinths](#)":

What ultimately determines a Metroidvania's maze-ness are three sequences: the start, the middle, and the end. The start is what I

consider to be the collection of essential items—power-ups you'll need to use for the entire game. Mid-game is the meat of the experience. The end sequence makes the win condition available to the player.

I mention item collection relative to these sequences because they are a core element of Metroidvania play, hence determine what kind of space the player is dealing with. In *Metroid*, for example, the Morph Ball, Bomb and Missiles are essential, and the player can acquire all of them rather quickly. Apart from those, however, there are few items you actually need to complete the game. One of them is Ice Beam, which is required to kill metroids, thus gain access to Mother Brain (the game's end condition). Large portions of the game can be played without it, though. Like many Metroid power-ups, it is a mid-game collectible.

Item collection allows the player to leave the start and enter the middle. This section, I argue, determines whether or not a Metroidvania is a maze. If the majority of the game allows for sequence breaks, RBO (reverse boss order) and low-percent, then it is a maze; if not, it is a labyrinth. A Metroidvania can be either ([source](#): the original script on Google Docs).

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

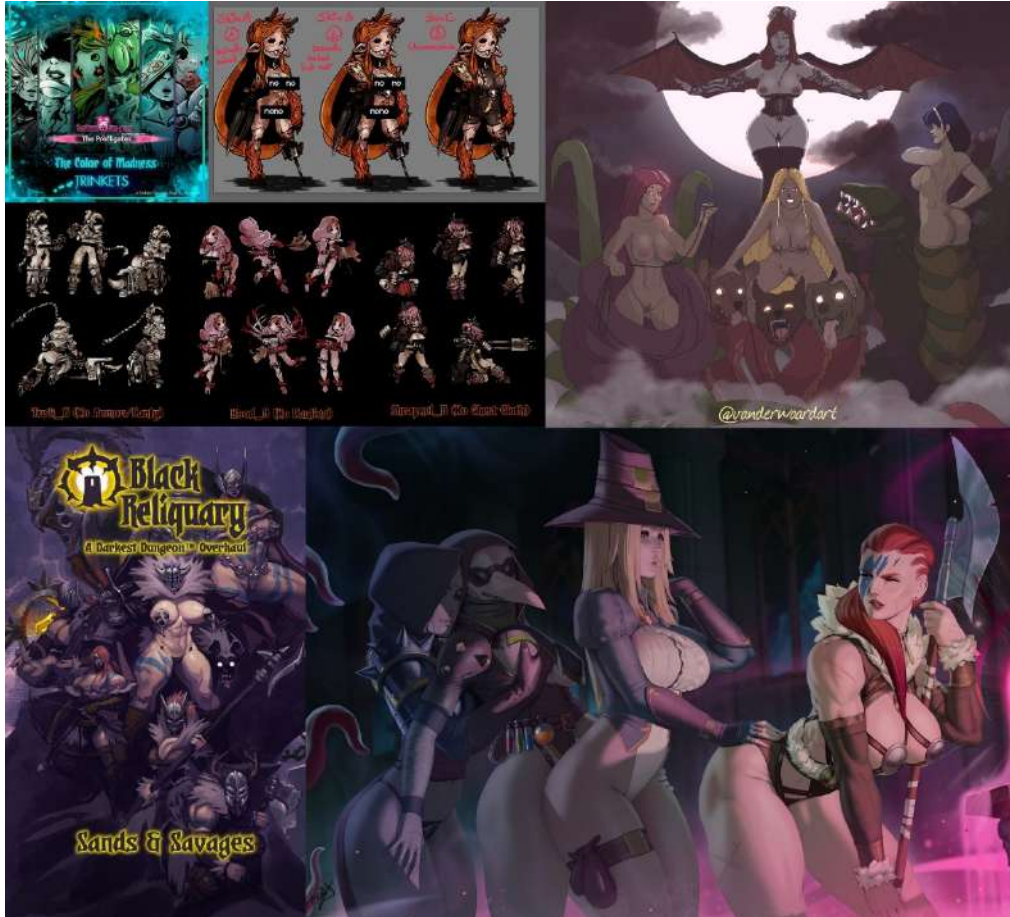
Liminal spaces, in architectural terms, are spaces designed to be moved through; in Gothic terms, these amount to Bakhtin's chronotopes as museum-like times spaces that, when moved through, help past legends come alive, animating in literal and figuratively Gothic/medieval ways. Classically these include 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 Satan's Temple has become the primary religious Satanist 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 Satan's 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 Satan's 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 Satan's Temple, asserting themselves as the only "true" arbiters of Satanism, while The Satan's 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

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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., Marston'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 fifteen muses—[Casper Clock](#), [Crow](#), [Sinead](#), [Bay](#), [Mugiwara Art](#), [Harmony Corrupted](#), [Romantic Rose](#), 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:

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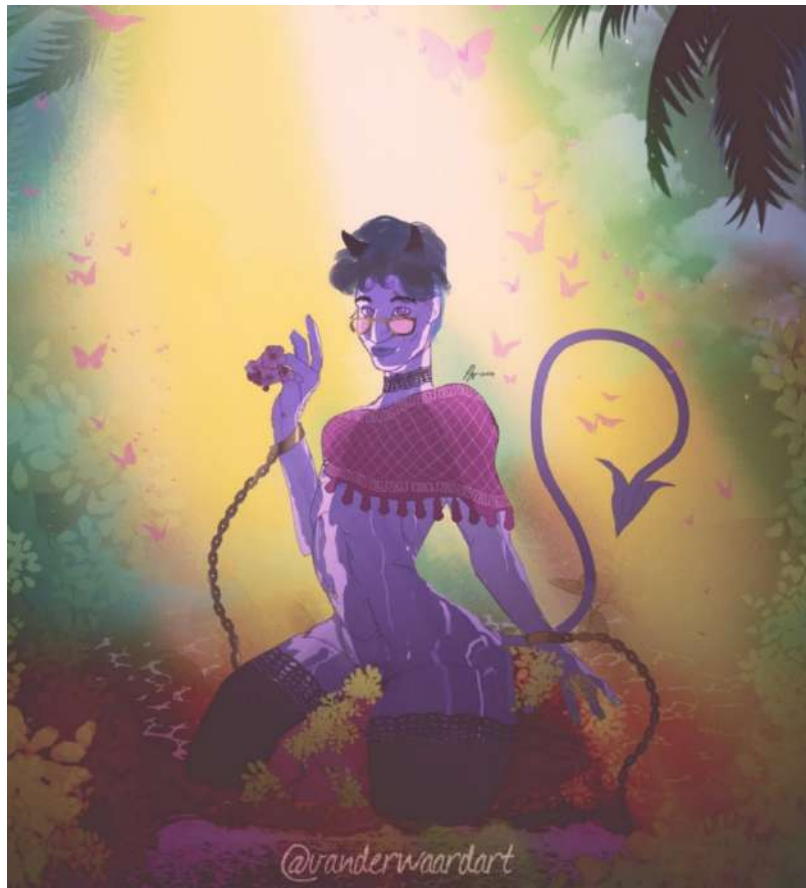
(artist: Mugiwara Art)

- *To 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).
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(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.)

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(artist: [Angel](#))

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- *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](#))



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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](#), [penguinz0](#), [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](#) (for your good detective work, not your racism or pick-up artistry), [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.

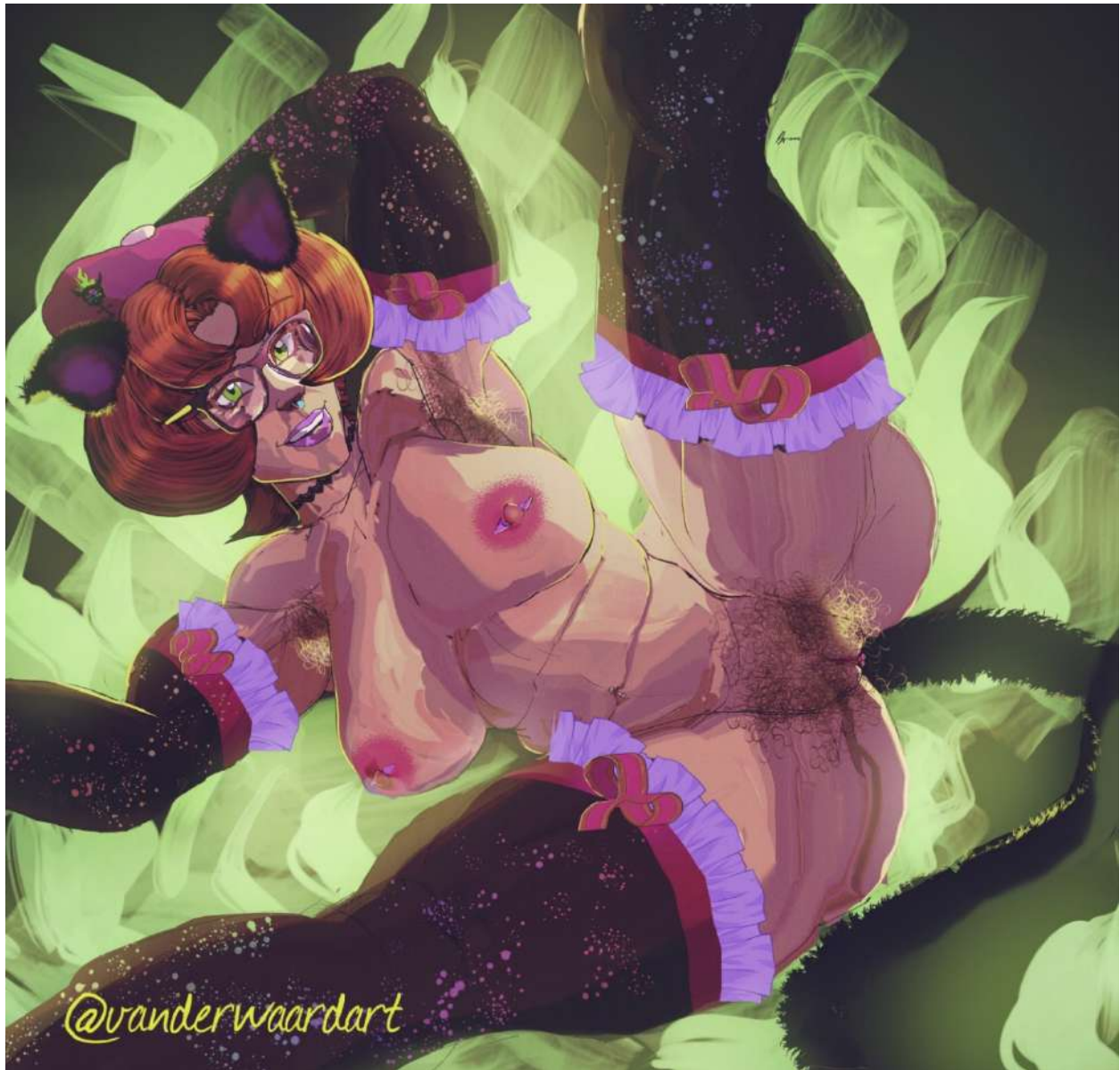
Thanks to Boss Ross, Frank Frazetta, Zdzisław Beksinski, Stephen Gemmill, and Ridley Scott (and associate artists; e.g., Mobius, Giger and Cobb, etc) for having a profound and lasting influence on my artwork, imagination and life. Some of you haunted my childhood; others came later and blew my mind. 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](#))



(model and artist: [Harmony Corrupted](#) and [Persephone van der Waard](#))

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[vanderWaardart.com](http://vanderWaardart.com)

## 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.](#)